**AT: Anti-Blackness Ks**

**at: ontology**

**Prosaic material incentives explain contemporary anti-blackness far better than ontological claims that lack a genuine warrants- their theory reinforces the power of imagined racial hierarchies and mystifies and can’t explain why it’s different from the Hindu Caste system**

**Harari 15** [Yuval Noah Harari, Israeli historian and a tenured professor in the Department of History at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, specializing in World History, Doctorate in Philosophy from Oxford University, and an acclaimed author whose first book, Sapiens, was an international bestseller that received lavish praise by figures ranging from Barack Obama to Bill Gates, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind,* tr. by Yuval Harari with help from John Purcell and Haim Watzman, HarperCollins: Broadway, NY, 2015, p. 133-144]

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN HISTORY IN THE millennia following the Agricultural Revolution boils down to a single question: how did humans organise themselves in mass-cooperation networks, when they lacked the biological instincts necessary to sustain such networks? The short answer is that humans created imagined orders and devised scripts. These two inventions filled the gaps left by our biological inheritance.

However, the appearance of these networks was, for many, a dubious blessing. The imagined orders sustaining these networks were neither neutral nor fair. They divided people into make-believe groups, arranged in a hierarchy. The upper levels enjoyed privileges and power, while the lower ones suffered from discrimination and oppression. Hammurabi’s Code, for example, established a pecking order of superiors, commoners and slaves. Superiors got all the good things in life. Commoners got what was left. Slaves got a beating if they complained.

Despite its proclamation of the equality of all men, the imagined order established by the Americans in 1776 also established a hierarchy. It created a hierarchy between men, who benefited from it, and women, whom it left disempowered. It created a hierarchy between whites, who enjoyed liberty, and blacks and American Indians, who were considered humans of a lesser type and therefore did not share in the equal rights of men. Many of those who signed the Declaration of Independence were slaveholders. They did not release their slaves upon signing the Declaration, nor did they consider themselves hypocrites. In their view, the rights of men had little to do with Negroes.

The American order also consecrated the hierarchy between rich and poor. Most Americans at that time had little problem with the inequality caused by wealthy parents passing their money and businesses on to their children. In their view, equality meant simply that the same laws applied to rich and poor. It had nothing to do with unemployment benefits, integrated education or health insurance.

Liberty, too, carried very different connotations than it does today. In 1776, it did not mean that the disempowered (certainly not blacks or Indians or, God forbid, women) could gain and exercise power. It meant simply that the state could not, except in unusual circumstances, confiscate a citizen’s private property or tell him what to do with it. The American order thereby upheld the hierarchy of wealth, which some thought was mandated by God and others viewed as representing the immutable laws of nature. Nature, it was claimed, rewarded merit with wealth while penalising indolence.

All the above-mentioned distinctions – between free persons and slaves, between whites and blacks, between rich and poor – are rooted in fictions. (The hierarchy of men and women will be discussed later.) Yet it is an iron rule of history that every imagined hierarchy **disavows its fictional origins** and claims to be natural and inevitable. For instance, many people who have viewed the hierarchy of free persons and slaves as natural and correct have argued that slavery is not a human invention. Hammurabi saw it as ordained by the gods. Aristotle argued that slaves have a ‘slavish nature’ whereas free people have a ‘free nature’. Their status in society is merely a reflection of their innate nature.

Ask white supremacists about the racial hierarchy, and you are in for a pseudoscientific lecture concerning the biological differences between the races. You are likely to be told that there is something in Caucasian blood or genes that makes whites naturally more intelligent, moral and hardworking. Ask a diehard capitalist about the hierarchy of wealth, and you are likely to hear that it is the inevitable outcome of objective differences in abilities. The rich have more money, in this view, because they are more capable and diligent. No one should be bothered, then, if the wealthy get better health care, better education and better nutrition. The rich richly deserve every perk they enjoy.

People with lighter skin colour are typically more in danger of sunburn than people with darker skin. Yet there was no biological logic behind the division of South African beaches. Beaches reserved for people with lighter skin were not characterised by lower levels of ultraviolet radiation.

Hindus who adhere to the caste system believe that cosmic forces have made one caste superior to another. According to a famous Hindu creation myth, the gods fashioned the world out of the body of a primeval being, the Purusa. The sun was created from the Purusa’s eye, the moon from the Purusa’s brain, the Brahmins (priests) from its mouth, the Kshatriyas (warriors) from its arms, the Vaishyas (peasants and merchants) from its thighs, and the Shudras (servants) from its legs. Accept this explanation and the sociopolitical differences between Brahmins and Shudras are as natural and eternal as the differences between the sun and the moon.1 The ancient Chinese believed that when the goddess Nü Wa created humans from earth, she kneaded aristocrats from fine yellow soil, whereas commoners were formed from brown mud.2

Yet, to the best of our understanding, **these hierarchies are all the product of human imagination**. Brahmins and Shudras were not really created by the gods from different body parts of a primeval being. Instead, the distinction between the two castes was created by laws and norms invented by humans in northern India about 3,000 years ago. Contrary to Aristotle, there is no known biological difference between slaves and free people. Human laws and norms have turned some people into slaves and others into masters. Between blacks and whites there are some objective biological differences, such as skin colour and hair type, but there is no evidence that the differences extend to intelligence or morality.

Most people claim that their social hierarchy is natural and just, while those of other societies are based on false and ridiculous criteria. Modern Westerners are taught to scoff at the idea of racial hierarchy. They are shocked by laws prohibiting blacks to live in white neighbourhoods, or to study in white schools, or to be treated in white hospitals. But the hierarchy of rich and poor – which mandates that rich people live in separate and more luxurious neighbourhoods, study in separate and more prestigious schools, and receive medical treatment in separate and better-equipped facilities – seems perfectly sensible to many Americans and Europeans. Yet it’s a proven fact that most rich people are rich for the simple reason that they were born into a rich family, while most poor people will remain poor throughout their lives simply because they were born into a poor family.

Unfortunately, complex human societies seem to require imagined hierarchies and unjust discrimination. Of course not all hierarchies are morally identical, and some societies suffered from more extreme types of discrimination than others, yet scholars know of no large society that has been able to dispense with discrimination altogether. Time and again people have created order in their societies by classifying the population into imagined categories, such as superiors, commoners and slaves; whites and blacks; patricians and plebeians; Brahmins and Shudras; or rich and poor. These categories have regulated relations between millions of humans by making some people legally, politically or socially superior to others.

Hierarchies serve an important function. They enable complete strangers to know how to treat one another without wasting the time and energy needed to become personally acquainted. In George Bernard Shaw’s Pygmalion, Henry Higgins doesn’t need to establish an intimate acquaintance with Eliza Doolittle in order to understand how he should relate to her. Just hearing her talk tells him that she is a member of the underclass with whom he can do as he wishes – for example, using her as a pawn in his bet to pass off a jower girl as a duchess. A modern Eliza working at a jorist’s needs to know how much effort to put into selling roses and gladioli to the dozens of people who enter the shop each day. She can’t make a detailed enquiry into the tastes and wallets of each individual.

Instead, she uses social cues – the way the person is dressed, his or her age, and if she’s not politically correct his skin colour. That is how she immediately distinguishes between the accounting-firm partner who’s likely to place a large order for expensive roses, and a messenger boy who can only afford a bunch of daisies.

Of course, differences in natural abilities also play a role in the formation of social distinctions. But such diversities of aptitudes and character are usually mediated through imagined hierarchies. This happens in two important ways. First and foremost, most abilities have to be nurtured and developed. Even if somebody is born with a particular talent, that talent will usually remain latent if it is not fostered, honed and exercised. Not all people get the same chance to cultivate and refine their abilities. Whether or not they have such an opportunity will usually depend on their place within their society’s imagined hierarchy. Harry Potter is a good example. Removed from his distinguished wizard family and brought up by ignorant muggles, he arrives at Hogwarts without any experience in magic. It takes him seven books to gain a firm command of his powers and knowledge of his unique abilities.

Second, even if people belonging to different classes develop exactly the same abilities, they are unlikely to enjoy equal success because they will have to play the game by different rules. If, in British-ruled India, an Untouchable, a Brahmin, a Catholic Irishman and a Protestant Englishman had somehow developed exactly the same business acumen, they still would not have had the same chance of becoming rich. The economic game was rigged by legal restrictions and unoɽcial glass ceilings.

The Vicious Circle

All societies are based on imagined hierarchies, but not necessarily on the same hierarchies. What accounts for the differences? Why did traditional Indian society classify people according to caste, Ottoman society according to religion, and American society according to race? In most cases the hierarchy originated as the result of a set of accidental historical circumstances and was then perpetuated and refined over many generations as different groups developed vested interests in it.

For instance, many scholars surmise that the Hindu caste system took shape when Indo-Aryan people invaded the Indian subcontinent about 3,000 years ago, subjugating the local population. The invaders established a stratified society, in which they – of course – occupied the leading positions (priests and warriors), leaving the natives to live as servants and slaves. The invaders, who were few in number, feared losing their privileged status and unique identity. To forestall this danger, they divided the population into castes, each of which was required to pursue a specific occupation or perform a specific role in society. Each had different legal status, privileges and duties. Mixing of castes – social interaction, marriage, even the sharing of meals – was prohibited. And the distinctions were not just legal – they became an inherent part of religious mythology and practice.

The rulers argued that the caste system rejected an eternal cosmic reality rather than a chance historical development. Concepts of purity and impurity were essential elements in Hindu religion, and they were harnessed to buttress the social pyramid. Pious Hindus were taught that contact with members of a different caste could pollute not only them personally, but society as a whole, and should therefore be abhorred. Such ideas are hardly unique to Hindus. Throughout history, and in almost all societies, concepts of pollution and purity have played a leading role in enforcing social and political divisions and have been exploited by numerous ruling classes to maintain their privileges. The fear of pollution is not a complete fabrication of priests and princes, however. It probably has its roots in biological survival mechanisms that make humans feel an instinctive revulsion towards potential disease carriers, such as sick persons and dead bodies. If you want to keep any human group isolated – women, Jews, Roma, gays, blacks – the best way to do it is convince everyone that these people are a source of pollution.

The Hindu caste system and its attendant laws of purity became deeply embedded in Indian culture. Long after the Indo-Aryan invasion was forgotten, Indians continued to believe in the caste system and to abhor the pollution caused by caste mixing. Castes were not immune to change. In fact, as time went by, large castes were divided into sub-castes. Eventually the original four castes turned into 3,000 different groupings called jati (literally ‘birth’). But this proliferation of castes did not change the basic principle of the system, according to which every person is born into a particular rank, and any infringement of its rules pollutes the person and society as a whole. A persons jati determines her profession, the food she can eat, her place of residence and her eligible marriage partners. Usually a person can marry only within his or her caste, and the resulting children inherit that status.

Whenever a new profession developed or a new group of people appeared on the scene, they had to be recognised as a caste in order to receive a legitimate place within Hindu society. Groups that failed to win recognition as a caste were, literally, outcasts – in this stratified society, they did not even occupy the lowest rung. They became known as Untouchables. They had to live apart from all other people and scrape together a living in humiliating and disgusting ways, such as sifting through garbage dumps for scrap material. Even members of the lowest caste avoided mingling with them, eating with them, touching them and certainly marrying them. In modern India, matters of marriage and work are still heavily influenced by the caste system, despite all attempts by the democratic government of India to break down such distinctions and convince Hindus that there is nothing polluting in caste mixing.3

Purity in America

**A similar vicious circle perpetuated the racial hierarchy in modern America**. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, the European conquerors imported millions of African slaves to work the mines and plantations of America. They chose to import slaves from Africa rather than from Europe or East Asia due to three circumstantial factors. Firstly, Africa was closer, so it was cheaper to import slaves from Senegal than from Vietnam.

Secondly, **in Africa there already existed a well-developed slave trade** (exporting slaves mainly to the Middle East), **whereas in Europe slavery was very rare**. It was obviously **far easier to buy slaves in an existing market** than to create a new one from scratch.

Thirdly, and most importantly, American plantations in places such as Virginia, Haiti and Brazil were plagued by malaria and yellow fever, which had originated in Africa. Africans had acquired over the generations a partial genetic immunity to these diseases, whereas **Europeans were totally defenceless and died in droves**.

It was consequently wiser for a plantation owner to invest his money in an African slave than in a European slave or indentured labourer. Paradoxically, genetic superiority (in terms of immunity) translated into social inferiority: precisely because Africans were fitter in tropical climates than Europeans, they ended up as the slaves of European masters! **Due to these circumstantial factors**, the burgeoning new societies of America were to be divided into a ruling caste of white Europeans and a **subjugated caste of black Africans**.

But people don’t like to say that they keep slaves of a certain race or origin simply because it’s economically expedient. **Like the Aryan conquerors of India, white Europeans in the Americas wanted to be seen** not only as economically successful but also **as pious, just and objective**. Religious and scientific myths were pressed into service to justify this division. Theologians argued that Africans descend from Ham, son of Noah, saddled by his father with a curse that his offspring would be slaves. Biologists argued that blacks are less intelligent than whites and their moral sense less developed. Doctors alleged that blacks live in filth and spread diseases – in other words, they are a source of pollution.

These myths struck a chord in American culture, and in Western culture generally. They continued to exert their influence long after the conditions that created slavery had disappeared. In the early nineteenth century imperial Britain outlawed slavery and stopped the Atlantic slave trade, and in the decades that followed slavery was gradually outlawed throughout the American continent.

Notably, this was the first and only time in history that slaveholding societies voluntarily abolished slavery. But, even though the slaves were freed, the racist myths that justified slavery persisted. Separation of the races was maintained by **racist legislation and social custom**.

The result was a **self-reinforcing cycle of cause and effect**, **a vicious circle.**

Consider, for example, the southern United States immediately after the Civil War. In 1865 the Thirteenth Amendment to the US Constitution outlawed slavery and the Fourteenth Amendment mandated that citizenship and the equal protection of the law could not be denied on the basis of race. However, two centuries of slavery meant that most black families were far poorer and far less educated than most white families. A black person born in Alabama in 1865 thus had much less chance of getting a good education and a well-paid job than did his white neighbours. His children, born in the 1880S and 1890s, started life with the same disadvantage – they, too, were born to an uneducated, poor family.

But **economic disadvantage was not the whole story**. Alabama was also home to many poor whites who lacked the opportunities available to their better-off racial brothers and sisters. In addition, the Industrial Revolution and the waves of immigration made the United States an extremely fluid society, where rags could quickly turn into riches. If money was all that mattered, the sharp divide between the races should soon have blurred, not least through intermarriage.

But that did not happen. By 1865 whites, as well as many blacks, took it to be a simple matter of fact that blacks were less intelligent, more violent and sexually dissolute, lazier and less concerned about personal cleanliness than whites. They were thus the agents of violence, theft, rape and disease – in other words, pollution. If a black Alabaman in 1895 miraculously managed to get a good education and then applied for a respectable job such as a bank teller, his odds of being accepted were far worse than those of an equally qualified white candidate. The stigma that labelled blacks as, by nature, unreliable, lazy and less intelligent conspired against him.

You might think that people would gradually understand that these stigmas were myth rather than fact and that blacks would be able, over time, to prove themselves just as competent, law-abiding and clean as whites. In fact, the opposite happened – these prejudices became **more and more entrenched as time went by**. Since all the best jobs were held by whites, it became easier to believe that blacks really are inferior. ‘Look,’ said the average white citizen, ‘blacks have been free for generations, yet there are almost no black professors, lawyers, doctors or even bank tellers. Isn’t that proof that blacks are simply less intelligent and hard-working?’ Trapped in this vicious circle, blacks were not hired for whitecollar jobs because they were deemed unintelligent, and the proof of their inferiority was the paucity of blacks in white-collar jobs.

The vicious circle did not stop there. **As anti-black stigmas grew stronger, they were translated into a system of ‘Jim Crow’ laws and norms** that were meant to safeguard the racial order. Blacks were forbidden to vote in elections, to study in white schools, to buy in white stores, to eat in white restaurants, to sleep in white hotels. The justification for all of this was that blacks were foul, slothful and vicious, so whites had to be protected from them. Whites did not want to sleep in the same hotel as blacks or to eat in the same restaurant, for fear of diseases. They did not want their children learning in the same school as black children, for fear of brutality and bad influences. They did not want blacks voting in elections, since blacks were ignorant and immoral. These fears were substantiated by scientific studies that ‘proved’ that blacks were indeed less educated, that various diseases were more common among them, and that their crime rate was far higher (the studies ignored the fact that these ‘facts’ resulted from discrimination against blacks).

By the mid-twentieth century, segregation in the former Confederate states was probably worse than in the late nineteenth century. Clennon King, a black student who applied to the University of Mississippi in 1958, was forcefully committed to a mental asylum. The presiding judge ruled that a black person must surely be insane to think that he could be admitted to the University of Mississippi.

The vicious circle: a chance historical situation is translated into a rigid social system.

Nothing was as revolting to American southerners (and many northerners) as sexual relations and marriage between black men and white women. Sex between the races became the greatest taboo and any violation, or suspected violation, was viewed as deserving immediate and summary punishment in the form of lynching. The Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist secret society, perpetrated many such killings. They could have taught the Hindu Brahmins a thing or two about purity laws.

With time, the racism spread to more and more cultural arenas. **American aesthetic culture was built around white standards of beauty**. The physical attributes of the white race – for example light skin, fair and straight hair, a small upturned nose – came to be identified as beautiful. Typical black features – dark skin, dark and bushy hair, a flattened nose – were deemed ugly. These preconceptions ingrained the imagined hierarchy at an even deeper level of human consciousness.

Such vicious circles can go on for centuries and even millennia, perpetuating an imagined hierarchy that sprang from a chance historical occurrence. Unjust discrimination often gets worse, not better, with time. Money comes to money, and poverty to poverty. Education comes to education, and ignorance to ignorance. Those once victimised by history are likely to be victimised yet again. And those whom history has privileged are more likely to be privileged again.

Most **sociopolitical hierarchies lack a logical or biological basis** – they are nothing but the perpetuation of chance events supported by myths. **That is one good reason to study history**. If the division into blacks and whites or Brahmins and Shudras was grounded in biological realities – that is, if Brahmins really had better brains than Shudras – biology would be sufficient for understanding human society. Since the biological distinctions between different groups of Homo sapiens are, in fact, negligible, biology can’t explain the intricacies of Indian society or American racial dynamics. **We can only understand those phenomena by studying the events, circumstances, and power relations that transformed figments of imagination into cruel** – and very real – **social structures**.

**Progress is not only possible, it has consistently occurred since the dawn of the 20th century - prefer overwhelming statistical evidence**

**Pinker 18** (Stephen, professor of psychology at Harvard, “Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress, EM)\*\*Edited for potentially sensitive language

Humans are liable to treat entire categories of other humans as means to an end or nuisances to be cast aside. Coalitions bound by race or creed seek to dominate rival coalitions. Men try to control the labor, freedom, and sexuality of women.1 People translate their discomfort with sexual nonconformity into moralistic condemnation.2 We call these phenomena racism, sexism, and homophobia, and they have been rampant, to varying degrees, in most cultures throughout history. The disavowal of these evils is a large part of what we call civil rights or equal rights. The historical expansion of these rights—the stories of Selma, Seneca Falls, and Stonewall—is a stirring chapter in the story of human progress.3 The rights of racial minorities, women, and gay people continue to advance, each recently emblazoned on a milestone. The year 2017 saw the completion of two terms in office by the first African American president, an achievement movingly captured by First Lady Michelle Obama in a speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2016: “I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves, and I watch my daughters, two beautiful, intelligent black young women, playing with their dogs on the White House lawn.” Barack Obama was succeeded by the first woman nominee of a major party in a presidential election, less than a century after American women were even allowed to vote; she won a solid plurality of the popular vote and would have been president were it not for peculiarities of the Electoral College system and other quirks of that election year. In a parallel universe very similar to this one until November 8, 2016, the world’s three most influential nations (the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany) are all led by women.4 And in 2015, just a dozen years after it ruled that homosexual activity may not be criminalized, the Supreme Court guaranteed the right of marriage to same-sex couples. But it’s in the nature of progress that it erases its tracks, and its champions fixate on the remaining injustices and forget how far we have come. An axiom of progressive opinion, especially in universities, is that we continue to live in a deeply racist, sexist, and homophobic society—which would imply that progressivism is a waste of time, having accomplished nothing after decades of struggle. Like other forms of progressophobia, the denial of advances in rights has been abetted by sensational headlines. A string of highly publicized killings by American police officers of unarmed African American suspects, some of them caught on smartphone videos, has led to a sense that the country is suffering an epidemic of racist attacks by police on black men. Media coverage of athletes who have assaulted their wives or girlfriends, and of episodes of rape on college campuses, has suggested to many that we are undergoing a surge of violence against women. And one of the most heinous crimes in American history took place in 2016 when Omar Mateen opened fire at a gay nightclub in Orlando, killing forty-nine people and wounding another fifty-three. The belief in an absence of progress has been fortified by the recent history of the universe we do live in, where Donald Trump rather than Hillary Clinton was the beneficiary of the American electoral system in 2016. During his campaign, Trump uttered misogynistic, anti-Hispanic, and anti-Muslim insults that were well outside the norms of American political discourse, and the rowdy followers he encouraged at his rallies were even more offensive. Some commentators worried that his victory represented a turning point in the nation’s progress toward equality and rights, or that it uncovered the ugly truth that we had never made progress in the first place. The goal of this chapter is to plumb the depths of the current that carries equal rights along. Is it an illusion, a turbulent whirlpool atop a stagnant pond? Does it easily change direction and flow backwards? Or does justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a mighty stream? I’ll end with a coda about progress in the rights of the most easily victimized sector of humanity, children. By now you should be skeptical about reading history from the headlines, and that applies to the recent assaults on equal rights. The data suggest that the number of police shootings has decreased, not increased, in recent decades (even as the ones that do occur are captured on video), and three independent analyses have found that a black suspect is no more likely than a white suspect to be killed by the police.6 (American police shoot too many people, but it’s not primarily a racial issue.) A spate of news about rape cannot tell us whether there is now more violence against women, a bad thing, or whether we now care more about violence against women, a good thing. And to this day it is unclear whether the Orlando nightclub massacre was committed out of homophobia, sympathy for ISIS, or the drive for posthumous notoriety that motivates most rampage shooters. Better first drafts of history can be gleaned from data on values and from vital statistics. The Pew Research Center has probed Americans’ opinions on race, gender, and sexual orientation over the past quarter century, and has reported that these attitudes have undergone a “fundamental shift” toward tolerance and respect of rights, with formerly widespread prejudices sinking into oblivion.7 The shift is visible in figure 15-1, which plots reactions to three survey statements that are representative of many others. Other surveys show the same shifts.8 Not only has the American population become more liberal, but each generational cohort is more liberal than the one born before it.9 As we will see, people tend to carry their values with them as they age, so the Millennials (those born after 1980), who are even less prejudiced than the national average, tell us which way the country is going.10 Of course one can wonder whether figure 15-1 displays a decline in prejudice or simply a decline in the social acceptability of prejudice, with fewer people willing to confess their disreputable attitudes to a pollster. The problem has long haunted social scientists, but recently the economist Seth Stephens-Davidowitz has discovered an indicator of attitudes that is the closest we’ve come to a digital truth serum.11 In the privacy of their keyboards and screens, people query Google with every curiosity, anxiety, and guilty pleasure you can imagine, together with many you can’t imagine. (Common searches include “How to make my penis bigger” and “My vagina smells like fish.”) Google has amassed big data on the strings that people search for in different months and regions (though not the identity of the searchers), together with tools for analyzing them. Stephens-Davidowitz discovered that searches for the [n word] (mostly in pursuit of racist jokes) correlate with other indicators of racial prejudice across regions, such as vote totals for Barack Obama in 2008 that were lower than expected for a Democrat.12 He suggests that these searches can serve as an unobtrusive indicator of private racism. Let’s use them to track recent trends in racism, and while we’re at it, private sexism and homophobia as well. Well into my adolescence, jokes featuring dumb Poles, ditzy dames, and lisping, limp-wristed homosexuals were common in network television and newspaper comics. Today they are taboo in mainstream media. But do bigoted jokes remain a private indulgence, or have private attitudes changed so much that people feel offended, sullied, or bored by them? Figure 15-2 shows the results. The curves suggest that Americans are not just more abashed about confessing to prejudice than they used to be; they privately don’t find it as amusing.13 And contrary to the fear that the rise of Trump reflects (or emboldens) prejudice, the curves continue their decline through his period of notoriety in 2015–2016 and inauguration in early 2017. Stephens-Davidowitz has pointed out to me that these curves probably underestimate the decline in prejudice because of a shift in who’s Googling. When the records began in 2004, Googlers were mostly young and urban. Older and rural people tend to be latecomers to technology, and if they are the ones who are likelier to search for the offensive terms, that would inflate the proportion in later years and conceal the extent of the decline in bigotry. Google doesn’t record the searchers’ ages or levels of education, but it does record where the searches where the searches come from. In response to my query, Stephens-Davidowitz confirmed that bigoted searches tended to come from regions with older and less-educated populations. Compared with the country as a whole, retirement communities are seven times as likely to search for “[n word] jokes” and thirty times as likely to search for “[f\*g] jokes.” (“Google AdWords,” he told me apologetically, “doesn’t give data on ‘[b word] jokes.’”) Stephens-Davidowitz also got his hands on a trove of search data from AOL, which, unlike Google, tracks the searches made by individuals (though not, of course, their identities). These threads confirmed that racists may be a dwindling breed: someone who searches for “[n word]” is likely to search for other topics that appeal to senior citizens, such as “social security” and “Frank Sinatra.” The main exception was a sliver of teenagers who also searched for bestiality, decapitation videos, and child pornography—anything you’re not supposed to search for. But aside from these transgressive youths (and there have always been transgressive youths), private prejudice is declining with time and declining with youth, which means that we can expect it to decline still further as aging bigots cede the stage to less prejudiced cohorts. Until they do, these older and less-educated people (mainly white men) may not respect the benign taboos on racism, sexism, and homophobia that have become second nature to the mainstream, and may even dismiss them as “political correctness.” Today they can find each other on the Internet and coalesce under a demagogue. As we will see in chapter 20, Trump’s success, like that of right-wing populists in other Western countries, is better understood as the mobilization of an aggrieved and shrinking demographic in a polarized political landscape than as the sudden reversal of a century-long movement toward equal rights. Progress in equal rights may be seen not just in political milestones and opinion bellwethers but in data on people’s lives. Among African Americans, the poverty rate fell from 55 percent in 1960 to 27.6 percent in 2011.14 Life expectancy rose from 33 in 1900 (17.6 years below that of whites) to 75.6 years in 2015 (less than 3 years below whites).15 African Americans who make it to 65 have longer lives ahead of them than white Americans of the same age. The rate of illiteracy fell among African Americans from 45 percent in 1900 to effectively zero percent today.16 As we will see in the next chapter, the racial gap in children’s readiness for school has been shrinking. As we will see in chapter 18, so has the racial gap in happiness.17 Racist violence against African Americans, once a regular occurrence in night raids and lynchings (three a week at the turn of the 20th century), plummeted in the 20th century, and has fallen further since the FBI started amalgamating reports on hate crimes in 1996, as figure 15-1 shows. (Very few of these crimes are homicides, in most years one or zero.)18 The slight uptick in 2015 (the most recent year available) cannot be blamed on Trump, since it parallels the uptick in violent crime that year (see figure 12-2), and hate crimes track rates of overall lawlessness more closely than they do remarks by politicians.19 Figure 15-3 shows that hate crimes against Asian, Jewish, and white targets have declined as well. And despite claims that Islamophobia has become rampant in America, hate crimes targeting Muslims have shown little change other than a one-time rise following 9/11 and upticks following other Islamist terror attacks, such as the ones in Paris and San Bernardino in 2015.20 At the time of this writing, FBI data from 2016 are not available, so it’s premature to accept the widespread claims of a Trumpist surge in hate crimes that year. The claims come from advocacy organizations, whose funding depends on whipping up fear, rather than disinterested recordkeepers; some of the incidents were ironic hoaxes, and many were boorish outbursts rather than actual crimes.21

**Protests that harness the state have been able to materially reduce police violence in Ferguson**

**Liu 14** [Eric, “Time to turn protests into change,” CNN, December 4, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/03/opinion/liu-meaning-ferguson-protests>]

More than a week after the grand jury's decision in Ferguson, protests continue nationwide. On campuses, in malls, on streets and in stadiums, Americans young and old are voicing their anger about the non-indictments in the deaths of Michael Brown and now Eric Garner in New York -- and about the rigged system that makes such results all too common. This proliferation of protests is good. But it's **not good enough**. First, let's reflect a bit on why it's good. Anytime Americans start seeing themselves as more than mere consumers or spectators -- rather, as citizens and participants -- something healthy is happening. That's especially true when people are willing to flex their citizen muscles during the start of peak shopping season. So seeing protesters from Seattle to New York engage in civil disobedience on Black Friday was heartening. Did all the walk-outs and "die-ins" inconvenience some shoppers and deal-seekers? Sure. The post-Ferguson moment demands, at a bare minimum, that we all raise our sights beyond one-day sale tags. But while the protests are promising and necessary, **they are also insufficient**. A deeper phase of work is needed. And here all of America can learn from what's already been happening in Missouri. The media has tended to focus on the most eye-catching conflict -- either daytime marches with famous activists, or nighttime rioting after the grand jury decision. But off-camera, people on the ground in and around this community have been doing something simple and difficult. They've been moving from protest to power. Faith groups and grassroots organizers like **Communities Creating Opportunity** and the **Organization for Black Struggle** have, since this summer, been engaging people in Ferguson to organize and advocate for reforms, to register, to vote, to understand the makeup and the **methods of the city council** and the state legislature. In short, **to do politics**. This may seem unsatisfying to some, even irrelevant. The members of the millennial generation who are driving so many of the protests today are idealistic and networked -- **but also exceedingly cynical** about traditional politics and government. And young African-Americans who are most often subjected to arbitrary abuses by the criminal justice system have the **most reason** to be mistrustful of the larger political machinery that begat that system. But what the grassroots organizers in Ferguson teach us **is that there is no avoiding politics**. Indeed, there is no way to achieve any **scaled and durable reform** without stepping into the arena of **government**, **policy**, **politics**, and **elections**. A change in **city council representation** can lead to a change in how truly representative one's police force is. A **well-coordinated campaign** to let elected officials know you are part of a **collective with voice**, **clout**, **savvy**, and **votes** can lead to a change in attitude among those elected -- **and then to changes in policy**. What this requires is an **understanding of the institutions** that govern how we govern ourselves. What it requires is **literacy in civic power**. This is why the organization I run, Citizen University, is working with partners around the country to **teach people about the skills and systems of power**. And **it's why everyone**, left or right -- and especially those living on the front lines of racial disparity and violent inequity -- **must learn how to read and to write power**. Wherever you live, ask yourself: Could I teach someone what the activists in Ferguson are teaching people now? Could I teach them how my city makes policy, how politicians respond to public pressure, how to navigate the rules of voting, how to make votes cancel out money? All around the world, from Tahrir Square a few years ago to Hong Kong today, we see young people caught up in what one journalist called "the euphoria of defiance." Alas, in most of those situations, we also see what happens when protesters are **unable to convert civil disobedience into civil self-rule.** **That requires strategy**. It requires **organization**. It requires **patient instruction** in citizenship. Fifty-nine years ago this week, Rosa Parks made a heroic choice not to sit at the back of the bus. But what her story teaches us is this: Heroes are what happens when a moment calls forth people well prepared by institutions. Parks did not arrive randomly at that occasion on that bus. She had been groomed by an ecosystem of civil rights groups like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, trained at places like the Highlander Folk School. She had understood her choice -- her immovable defiance -- to be part of a larger story and a methodical strategy for the attainment of power. This is what unsung but undaunted citizen organizers and educators are doing in Ferguson today. They've moved past "Hands Up, Don't Shoot" gestures. They are getting hands-on about changing their community. And so should we all. That's how we can make this a **season of powerful citizenship**.

**Racial bias is malleable and can be changed---empirical evidence proves**

Dayna Bowen **Matthew 15**. Nonresident senior fellow in the Center for Health Policy. University of Colorado School of Law, Colorado School of Public Health, and Center for Bioethics and Humanities at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. “Just Medicine: A Cure for Racial Inequality in American Health Care.” New York University Press. 2015.

Evidence that Implicit Biases Are Malleable¶ Scientists have developed a body of empirical evidence that implicit biases are **malleable** over the past quarter century. The empirical record is now well established and offers **strong evidence** that implicit attitudes are neither **inaccessible** nor **inescapable**; they are not impossible to control; they are not out of reach. In fact, implicit associations can be influenced both by the individual who unconsciously holds these stereotypes and prejudices and by external factors. Researchers have reported and reviewed numerous studies that put two important misconceptions about implicit biases to rest. First, the evidence demonstrates that unconscious implicit attitudes are responsive to the **deliberate choices and influences of an individual** even though that person is not consciously experiencing the bias. Second, implicit biases are not impervious to relatively short-term change even though they arise from social knowledge that was acquired slowly, and over a lifetime. In fact, the evidence reveals that learning can continue to take place and alter social group knowledge, after initial attitudes and associations are formed. Take, for example, a person who developed bad driving habits over time and subconsciously incorporated those habits into driving behavior for many years. If this person chooses to be mindful of improving his or her driving, either out of a conscious decision to do so or in response to external influences, those bad habits can be altered. External authorities may incentivize improvement through a media campaign, new rules of the road, prosecution for reckless driving, or a driver's education class. Thus, malleability describes an ongoing learning process in which people with old, objectionable implicit biases learn to respond to newer, more appropriate attitudes and beliefs. Put another way, longstanding and **unconscious thinking can change.¶** This understanding of malleability is called the “connectionist" model of implicit bias. Unlike the prior notion that implicit associations are static and inaccessibly fixed, the empirical record reveals that stereotypes and prejudicial beliefs to which we may adhere at any given time are “states” of thinking that form based on past **experiences** and current **inputs**. Biases can be **revised** depending upon current informational inputs gathered and weighed with each new encounter. This flexible view of stereotyping replaces an **outdated rigid one** and allows for the evidence that individuals can constantly **update the stored group knowledge** that produces implicit biases. The connectionist model ex. plains that a stereotype is merely a pattern of activation that, at a given point in time, is jointly determined by current input (i.e., the context) and the weight of the new information’s connection to existing and underlying beliefs. Psychologists now conclude that “stereotypes are quite elastic and thus any individual could hold and even change an infinite number of representations of social category's members, when viewed across time and place?”¶ The connectionist model contrasts with early theories of implicit bias, which focused on their **automaticity**. ‘Automaticity' refers generally to the way that individuals make associations without any awareness, without intentionality, and without responsibility for the influence the associations have in directing their conduct and choices.“ Early researchers concluded that automaticity meant inevitability. For example, one researcher said, “a crucial component of automatic pro~ ceases is their inescapability; they occur despite deliberate attempts to bypass or ignore them.”7 **This view is no longer correct**. Over the past twenty years. researchers have collected a strong record to contradict this notion that implicit attitudes change slowly, if at all, simply because they develop slowly over time. This idea has been replaced by what Dr. Irene Blair has called “the now-bountiful evidence that automatic attitudes and self-reported attitudes-~**are sensitive to personal, social, and situational pressures**." Blair points out that “the conclusion that automatic stereotypes and prejudice are not as inflexible as previously assumed is strengthened by the number and variety of demonstrations. . . . The fact that the tests were conducted in the service of many different goals, and by the similarity of findings across different measmres."9¶ The importance of understanding that implicit biases are malleable cannot be overstated. First, malleability means that interventions may be **strategically introduced** to provide current inputs that alter implicit biases. Thus, we can expect that implicit biases can be reduced. To say that biased attitudes may be “reduced” is to say that current informational inputs can be adjusted so that the resulting stereotype patterns to longer conform to traditional, discriminatory, or inequitable stereotypes, but instead lead individuals and institutions to more equitable judgments and more equitable conduct. Furthermore, malleability also leans that the discriminatory impacts that result from implicit biases so maybe reduced. The research that gave rise to the connectionist mode has provided important insights concerning the several methods available to individuals and institutions wishing to ameliorate the discriminatory impact of decisions and conduct informed by imme biases, stereotyping, and prejudice. Finally, by demonstrating that even subconscious **racial** biases **are within reach and control**, researchers have provided a sound basis for holding individuals and **institutions** responsible for reducing implicit racial and ethnic biases and for reducing the discriminatory harms caused by unconscious racism.

**Antiblackness is** socialized**, not a libidinal and universal drive**

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

**Libidinal economy is a hoax -- neurophysiological phobias and philias are malleable thru habit forming -- cohesion around institutional change solves.**

**Cikara & Van Bavel ’15** [Mina and Jay; June 2nd; Assistant Professor of Psychology and Director of the Intergroup Neuroscience Lab at Harvard University; Assistant Professor of Psychology and Director of the Social Perception and Evaluation Laboratory at New York University; Scientific American, “The Flexibility of Racial Bias: Research suggests that racism is not hard wired, offering hope on one of America’s enduring problems,” <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-flexibility-of-racial-bias/>; GR]

It would be **easy** to see in all this **powerful evidence** that racism is a **permanent fixture** in America’s social fabric and even, perhaps, an **inevitable** aspect of human nature. Indeed, the mere act of labeling others according to their age, gender, or race is a reflexive habit of the human mind. Social categories, like race, impact our thinking quickly, often outside of our awareness. Extensive research has found that these implicit racial biases—negative thoughts and feelings about people from other races—are automatic, pervasive, and difficult to suppress. **Neuroscientists** have also explored **racial prejudice** by exposing people to images of faces while scanning their brains in **fMRI machines**. Early studies found that when people viewed faces of another race, the amount of activity in the amygdala—a small brain structure associated with experiencing emotions, including fear—was associated with individual differences on implicit measures of racial bias. This work has led many to conclude that racial biases might be part of a primitive—and possibly hard-wired—neural fear response to racial out-groups.

There is little question that categories such as race, gender, and age play a major role in shaping the biases and stereotypes that people bring to bear in their judgments of others. However, research has shown that how people categorize themselves may be just as fundamental to understanding prejudice as how they categorize others. When people categorize themselves as part of a group, their self-concept shifts from the individual (“I”) to the collective level (“us”). People form groups rapidly and favor members of their own group even when groups are formed on arbitrary grounds, such as the simple flip of a coin. These findings highlight the remarkable ease with which humans form coalitions.

Recent **research confirms** that **coalition-based preferences** trump **race-based preferences**. For example, both **Democrats and Republicans** favor the resumes of those affiliated with their **political party** much more than they favor those who share **their race**. These coalition-based preferences remain powerful even in the absence of the animosity present in electoral politics. Our research has shown that the simple act of placing people on a mixed-race team can diminish their automatic racial bias. In a series of experiments, White participants who were randomly placed on a mixed-race team—the Tigers or Lions—showed little evidence of implicit racial bias. **Merely belonging** to a **mixed-race team** trigged **positive automatic associations** with all of the members of their own group, irrespective of race. Being a part of one of these seemingly trivial mixed-race groups produced similar effects on brain activity—the **amygdala** responded to **team membership** rather than **race**. Taken together, these studies indicate that momentary changes in group membership can override the influence of race on the way we see, think about, and feel toward people who are different from ourselves.

Although these coalition-based distinctions might be the most basic building block of bias, they say little about the other factors that cause group conflict. Why do some groups get ignored while others get attacked? Whenever we encounter a new person or group we are motivated to answer two questions as quickly as possible: “is this person a friend or foe?” and “are they capable of enacting their intentions toward me?” In other words, once we have determined that someone is a member of an out-group, we need to determine what kind? The nature of the relations between groups—are we cooperative, competitive, or neither?—and their relative status—do you have access to resources?—largely determine the course of intergroup interactions.

Groups that are seen as competitive with one’s interests, and capable of enacting their nasty intentions, are much more likely to be targets of hostility than more benevolent (e.g., elderly) or powerless (e.g., homeless) groups. This is one reason why sports rivalries have such psychological potency. For instance, fans of the Boston Red Sox are more likely to feel pleasure, and exhibit reward-related neural responses, at the misfortunes of the archrival New York Yankees than other baseball teams (and vice versa)—especially in the midst of a tight playoff race. (How much fans take pleasure in the misfortunes of their rivals is also linked to how likely they would be to harm fans from the other team.)

Just as a particular person’s group membership can be flexible, so too are the relations between groups. Groups that have previously had cordial relations may become rivals (and vice versa). Indeed, **psychological and biological** responses to **out-group** members can **change**, depending on whether or not that out-group is perceived as threatening. For example, people exhibit greater pleasure—they smile—in response to the misfortunes of stereotypically competitive groups (e.g., investment bankers); however, this malicious pleasure is reduced when you provide participants with counter-stereotypic information (e.g., “investment bankers are working with small companies to help them weather the economic downturn). Competition between “us” and “them” can even distort our judgments of distance, making threatening out-groups seem much closer than they really are. These distorted perceptions can serve to amplify intergroup discrimination: the more different and distant “they” are, the easier it is to disrespect and harm them.

Thus, not all out-groups are treated the same: some elicit indifference whereas others become targets of antipathy. Stereotypically threatening groups are especially likely to be targeted with violence, but those **stereotypes** can be **tempered** with other **information**. If perceptions of intergroup relations can be changed, individuals may **overcome hostility** toward perceived foes and become **more responsive** to one another’s grievances.

The **flexible nature** of both group membership and intergroup relations offers **reason** to be cautiously **optimistic** about the potential for greater **cooperation** among groups in conflict (be they black versus white or citizens versus police). One strategy is to bring multiple groups together around a common goal. For example, during the fiercely contested 2008 Democratic presidential primary process, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama supporters gave more money to strangers who supported the same primary candidate (compared to the rival candidate). Two months later, after the Democratic National Convention, the supporters of both candidates coalesced around the party nominee—Barack Obama—and this bias disappeared. In fact, merely creating a sense of cohesion between two competitive groups can **increase empathy** for the suffering of our rivals. These sorts of strategies can help **reduce aggression** toward hostile out-groups, which is **critical** for creating more opportunities for **constructive dialogue** addressing greater **social injustices**.

Of course, instilling a sense of common identity and cooperation is extremely difficult in entrenched intergroup conflicts, but when it happens, the benefits are obvious. Consider how the community leaders in New York City and Ferguson responded differently to protests against police brutality—in NYC political leaders expressed grief and concern over police brutality and moved quickly to make policy changes in policing, whereas the leaders and police in Ferguson responded with high-tech military vehicles and riot gear. In the first case, multiple groups came together with a common goal—to increase the safety of everyone in the community; in the latter case, the actions of the police likely reinforced the “us” and “them” distinctions.

Tragically, these types of conflicts continue to roil the country. Understanding the psychology and neuroscience of social identity and intergroup relations cannot undo the effects of systemic racism and discriminatory practices; however, it can offer insights into the psychological processes responsible for escalating the tension between, for example, civilians and police officers.

Even in cases where it isn’t possible to create a common identity among groups in conflict, it may be possible to blur the boundaries between groups. In one recent experiment, we sorted participants into groups—red versus blue team—competing for a cash prize. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to see a picture of a segregated social network of all the players, in which red dots clustered together, blue dots clustered together, and the two clusters were separated by white space. The other half of the participants saw an integrated social network in which the red and blue dots were mixed together in one large cluster. Participants who thought the two teams were interconnected with one another reported greater empathy for the out-group players compared to those who had seen the segregated network. Thus, reminding people that individuals could be connected to one another despite being from different groups may be another way to build trust and understanding among them.

A mere month before Freddie Gray died in police custody, President Obama addressed the nation on the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Selma: “We do a disservice to the cause of justice by intimating that bias and discrimination are immutable, or that racial division is inherent to America. To deny…progress -- our progress -- would be to rob us of our own agency; our responsibility to do what we can to make America better."

The president was saying that we, as a society, have a responsibility to reduce prejudice and discrimination. These recent findings from psychology and neuroscience indicate that we, as individuals, possess this capacity. Of course, this capacity is not sufficient to usher in racial equality or peace. Even when the level of prejudice against particular out-groups decreases, it does not imply that the level of institutional discrimination against these or other groups will necessarily improve. Ultimately, only **collective action** and **institutional evolution** can address **systemic racism**. The science is **clear** on one thing, though: individual bias and discrimination are changeable. **Race-based prejudice** and discrimination, in particular, are created and reinforced by many social factors, but they are **not inevitable** consequences of **our biology**. Perhaps understanding how coalitional thinking impacts intergroup relations will make it easier for us to affect real social change going forward.

**ontology bad – exceptionalism**

**Their attempt to universalize an ontological category of blackness is American exceptionalism ― transcribing American experiences to the world is colonialist and delegitimizes African epistemologies of resistance**

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The **conceptual-geopolitical trappings** of "1865" fundamentally define the discourse of "Afro-Pessimism and the Ends of Redemption," like assorted neo-pessimist texts: "The expanding field of Afro-pessimism theorises [sic] the structural relation between Blackness and Humanity as an irreconcilable encounter, an antagonism. One cannot know Blackness as distinct from slavery, for there is no Black temporality which is antecedent to the temporality of the Black slave."25 Critically, Wole Soyinka details "pre-colonial" African languages of "black" self-identification from the Yoruba to the Ga to the Hausa peoples on continent, for starters, in "The African World and the Ethnocultural Debate" (1989). But these details do not enter modern Eurocentric discussions in the main, be they Marxist or anti-Marxist, etc.26 There is in Wilderson only the slaver's history of slavery—one slaver's official "national" or state history and discourse. The "expanding field" of "Afro-pessimism" (2.0) further expands anti-Black, anti-African conceptions of historical agency. There is nothing outside of, or before, or countering Wilderson's "slavery" for the African enslaved. There is only Wilderson's "Blackness," which is curious. For what he casts as "Black" rather than "black" is more accurately cast as "negro" (in this specifically English usage, moreover, with no memory of the Spanish or Portuguese etymology) and not even "Negro," quiet as it's kept—since all of **Africa is flatly foreclosed by this acutely paradoxical "Afro-pessimism." Both Africa and diasporas eclipsed**, his "Blackness" and "Human Life" turn out to be the blackness and humanism of white Americanism, specifically and restrictively, an **isolationist or exceptionalist Americanism** despite the past and present hegemony of white Western humanism and its "anti-Black racism" worldwide. What is the "Afro" in "Afro-pessimism," therefore, when this Afro-pessimism (2.0) revivifies in disguise the "negro" concept of white settler-slave state history and historiography? It ironically does so in the name of some "Blackness" itself or, rather, the "blackness" of whiteness, of white postulation—not the Blackness of Blackness or the transvaluations of manifold Black liberation movements themselves, even as it blithely misappropriates the ongoing if now naturalized cultural-political labor of that historic Blackness in the upper case. A **dominant Anglo-American discourse of slavery is all that there is and ever was** now when it comes to the Black and African, all anti-slavery discourses and counter-discourses of slavery as well as Blackness somehow vanished. **A glaring absence of Black radical and revolutionary intellectual history** should be expected from any expression of "Afro-pessimism." Indeed, could Afro-pessimism 2.0 take hold as another trend in mainstream academia except in the political void produced after the 1960s and '70s by local as well as global counter-revolution and counter-insurgency? This absence affects the shape and agenda of the critical analysis of "anti-Black racism" in essential ways. Wilderson's critique of the "**ruse of analogy**" in Red, White & Black becomes a refrain that naturalizes academic approaches to politics now institutionalized with the **continued reign of Western bourgeois liberalism**. For older and enduring Black radical perspectives, the existence of "anti-Black racism" among non-Black peoples, organizations, and movements is neither a new nor shocking phenomenon. For many Black revolutionary movement logics of the '60s and '70s, for instance, **this did not preclude alliance** (or the exhaustion of alliances made) or lead to a doctrinaire rejection of "solidarity" work and its international (or "intercommunal") possibilities.27 "Contradictions" were expected, so to speak, in theory and practice, which might be resolved or not, depending on material interest, circumstance, etc. For them, this work was not about gauging identity, or the perfection of a projected analogy, but **mobilization for the political accomplishments of revolution**—a revolutionism that could or may not work toward the **development of a new humanism** not white or racist or anti-Black after all. The reach for potential solidarities was not construed as a gift or an act of good-willed benevolence, wise or unwise given the risks. Even solidarity work with obviously problematic, openly enemy forces could be a **strategic or tactical mode** of advancing Black collective self-interests that might dispense with any alliance at any given moment in time without seeing the relationship as a statement of some total identity or non-identity of condition and interests. **The notion of solidarity has nowadays been superficialized**, remaining riveted on mere rhetorical proclamation and aesthetic or representational identification in neo-colonial culture industries here and there. An older, praxical approach to alliance, perhaps "analogy," and solidarity is not taken up by current analyses of identity conflicts that prevail with the resurgence of a more **academic political-intellectualism** and a now much less contested liberalism. **This is imperial "multiculturalism"** and its malcontents. As much as Afro-pessimism (2.0) may object to certain instances of liberalism, or [End Page 292] regulation white racist liberalism at least, it assumes these Western epistemic frameworks of white academic liberalism all the same, thereby **ensconcing the colonialism and neo-colonialism** it constantly and symptomatically denegates in text after text. Black anti-colonialism / anti-colonialist Blackness The great anti-colonialist poet of Négritude, Aimé Césaire wrote famously in his letter of resignation from the French Communist Party that he wanted Marxism and communism to be placed in the service of Black peoples and not Black peoples in the service of Marxism or communism. He maintained in 1956: "it is clear that our struggle—the struggle of colonial peoples against colonialism, the struggle of peoples of color against racism—is more complex, or better yet, of a completely different nature than the fight of the French worker against French capitalism, and it cannot in any way be considered a part, a fragment, of that struggle."28 As always, he was writing on behalf of Black people who were, proverbially, the only people on the planet who have been excluded from the "human race" by the "modern" history of Western racism and colonialism which obstructs "a true humanism—a humanism made to the measure of the world."29 What is this Négritude if not Blackness, Black anti-colonialism, or anti-colonial Blackness? This tradition is not a tradition in Wilderson who regularly critiques the analogical arrogance of Marxism, feminism, and an academic paradigm of "post-colonialism" with less common reference to "queer" or "gay and lesbian" categories of analysis as well—**all in the name of pessimism**. For him, none of these political frameworks with their privileged identarian subjects can capture the condition of "Blackness" and "slavery" (or "the Black/Slave"). While that perspective can allow for some insights—ones certainly seen before around the Black world and ones certainly avoided by so much institutional scholarship—**it leaves the general categorical grid of established Western political epistemologies intact**. The familiar academic terrain of "race, gender, class, and sexuality" frames the critique for "Blackness" of "gender, class, and sexuality" in addition to "post-coloniality" or "post-colonialism." The most conventional **US academic categories of identity** and analysis are still rendered in full as **discrete, monolithic, and monological** categories and referents (e.g., workers, women, etc.), like the respective political ideologies based upon them in the traditional ideological history of the white West (e.g., Marxism, feminism, etc.). There are "workers" and then there are "women," generically, and then sometimes there are "gays" by whatever name, not to mention "natives" or the colonized in this culturally specific epistemology of a specific culture of colonialism itself. **The upshot is quite conservative**, even anachronistically so. This critique is an internal if damning critique embodying and encouraging **pessimism** largely **from within the established order of knowledge** that it analytically engages and categorically replenishes and preserves. The grid politics of Wilderson's critique of "the ruse of analogy" **leaves all manner of "Blackness" in a wasteland**. The routine categorical contrast with "Native Americans" reduces all that and any colonial condition to a startlingly oversimplified matter of "land" (or "land restoration"); and it occludes "Afro-Indian" history as well as "Red-Black" maroonage all across the Americas. The constant generic contrast with "feminism" or "non-Black women" eclipses the more mammoth criticism of "gender" writ large in Diop and Amadiume's Black-African studies of Europe or "Western Civilization" as a "racial patriarchy" of pessimism and "anti-Black" imperialism. The contrast with Marxism and its "workers" never resurrects any issues of "class" or economics from any other perspective to recognize or to resist, for example, the white invention of Black elites as vital instruments of racism, anti-Blackness, and white-supremacism. **There never appears a trace of any critique of Black "social class'** (or political class) **elitism in "Afro-pessimism"** (2.0), which is a tell-tale sign of petty-bourgeois or "lumpen-bourgeois" articulations. Lastly, Wilderson's occasional categorical contrast of "Blackness" with Palestinians or al-Nakba (which aligns in Arabic with the Swahili substitution for the term "Middle Passage"—Maafa, the "Catastrophe") comprehends no Blackness in Palestine or among Palestinians. His Afro-pessimism can envision no Afro-Palestinianism, unlike a great tradition of Pan-African discourses that also do not dislocate Palestine from an anti-colonialist mapping of the African continent or the Afro-Asian landmass of a Pan-Africanist and "Bandung" imagination, one powerfully shared by Malcolm X and Fayez A. Sayegh. For "Black Power" internationally, Kwame Ture would refer to Palestine as the "tip of Africa" and uphold Fatima Bernawi, the iconic Black woman who's been named the "first Palestinian female political prisoner," as the paragon of "Black and Palestinian Revolutions."30 She is likewise canonized by other Afro-Palestinian icons themselves, such as Ali Jiddeh and Mahmoud Jiddeh of the African community of the Old City of Jerusalem, for example—or, say, Ahmad and Jumaa Takrouri of Occupied Jericho—who are each among the greatest of all icons across Historic Palestine, a country which has produced multiple Black Panther formations in Hebrew as well as Arabic in the 1970s and the 1980s. Again, Wilderson tacitly "nationalizes" his category of "Blackness" although this is scarcely in the interests of Black people in or outside of the US colonized mainland of Americanism; and so none of the above "Blackness" survives the critical grid of a very Anglo-American (and white racist state-bound) critique of "analogy," regardless of the "Afro-pessimist" text at hand. Do not the vulgar colonial-nativist politics of Incognegro's strangely overlooked comment on "West Indians" go full blown then in Red, White & Black and elsewhere?31 There is here a **general critical erasure** of the **massive tradition of Black anti-colonialism**—or anti-colonial Black resistance to "anti-Blackness" and anti-Black colonialism, which transcends nationalization. Wilderson's "Afro-pessimist" rejects the anti-colonialist paradigms of supposedly "other" peoples, and yet in a manner that **reinstates US or Western coloniality nonetheless**—a white colonialism that oppresses "the Black" inside and outside the United States's official geopolitical limits. This position can thus make a virtue out of automatic and absolute anti-alliance postures with no further, actual political action then required for Black people, "the Black critic," or any Black liberation struggle on this view. Such chauvinism **without political commitment or engagement beyond critique** is logically consistent, for pessimism, where **mere resentment** or ressentiment can masquerade as resistance or "pro-Black" "radicalism." After all, Afro-pessimism (2.0) **begins with a proud suspicion** of Black liberation or Black liberation movement, itself, no less than of its potentially "anti-racist" or "anti-Black" **political alliances**. This provincial "American" pessimism reveals more affinities with Créolite in the Caribbean than Césaire's anti-colonialist eruption of Pan-African Négritude, in reality, its narrowly and negatively delimited rhetoric of the "Blackness" of "the Black" (as "Slave," of course) notwithstanding. As if this too is a virtue, pessimism is not just suspicious of power but **possibility**—while, upholding dystopia, it is casually **dismissive of all historical actuality** that does not support a pessimist paradigm, orientation or sensibility. Analytically, moreover, there is somehow no white colonialism for Blacks to fight in Africa or Black countries of Black people anywhere and no terrible landlessness that afflicts the African diasporas of Blackness captive within white settler and/or imperial state formations, for Wilderson and Afro-pessimism (2.0).

**ontology bad – coalitions**

**The only world they destroy is the one where things can ever improve**

**Haider, 18**—founding editor of Viewpoint Magazine (Asad, *Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump* pg 36-40, ebook, dml)

The assumption that **only black-led organizations** could organize around “**their**” issues, despite the **deep political divergences** among these organizations—some of which represented the elite interests of a black bourgeoisie and explicitly sought to suppress grassroots militancy—would come to have a **deeply damaging effect**. Among intellectuals, the most reactionary separatist tendencies were granted the status of a **pseudo-philosophy** with the ascendance of Frank Wilderson’s so-called **Afro-pessimism**. A fundamental symptom of this trend was the proliferation of the term antiblackness in the place of racism. The latter, more quotidian term implies an antiracist struggle that unites oppressed groups. The “antiblackness” problematic **radicalizes** and **ontologizes** a separatist, black-exceptionalist perspective, **rejecting even the minimal gesture toward coalitions** implied by the term people of color. It claims, on the basis of dubious interpretations of Gramsci and the historiography of slavery, that “blackness” is founded on “**social death**,” the **loss of identity** and **total domination** imposed upon slaves at birth—despite the fact that the source of this term, sociologist Orlando Patterson, used it to define **all forms of slavery**, including **nonracialized ones**.7 It follows from Wilderson’s reasoning that the **whole of “white” civil society** is founded on this absolute violence, the **entire history of which** is reduced to an effect of a **purported white enjoyment of black suffering**—“as though the **chief business of slavery**,” in the inimitable words of historian Barbara Fields, “were the production of **white supremacy** rather than the production of **cotton**, **sugar**, **rice** and **tobacco**.”8 With ideologies of racial unity functioning as a **clear block** to the development of **mass antagonistic politics**, it is no wonder that the seemingly extremist languages of blackness and antiblackness **seduced intellectuals into reconciliation with the status quo**. Of course, when Afro-pessimist discourse course occasionally did discuss the black political class, its tone was one of **severe criticism**. But this criticism **reproduced the political dynamics that led to its rise in the first place**: black leaders were castigated for their coalitionism, thus reinforcing the ideology of racial unity that obscured their class positions; their reformist program of bringing black people greater citizenship rights was **rejected** in language **reminiscent of earlier critiques of integration**, obscuring the political incorporation of the black elite that has been taking place since the end of segregation.9 The ideology of blackness in Wilderson’s Afro-pessimism functions as a **disavowal of the real integration** of black elites into “civil society,” now **hardly a “white” thing**. When the lethal effects of white supremacy are exerted by a racially integrated ruling class, blackness as an **antipolitical void** becomes a **convenient subject position** for the performance of marginality. Separatist ideology **prevents the construction of unity among the marginalized**, the kind of unity that could **actually overcome their marginalization**. In a 2014 radio interview, Wilderson attacked the view that the experience of black people in Ferguson was in **any way comparable to that of Palestinians**. Attributing this view to “right reactionary white civil society and so-called progressive colored civil society,” he proclaimed: “That’s just bullshit. First, there’s no time period in which black policing and slave domination have ever ended. Second, the Arabs and the Jews are as much a part of the black slave trade—the creation of blackness as social death—as anyone else … Antiblackness is as important and necessary to the formation of Arab psychic life as it is to the formation of Jewish psychic life.”10 Listening to Wilderson’s **bewildering repetitions of neoconservative Orientalist tropes**, you wouldn’t know that **activists in Ferguson had been in close contact with Palestinians**, who pointed out that the **same tear-gas canisters were being fired at them** and **shared street-fighting tactics** learned from bitter experience. A solidarity statement signed by a range of Palestinian activists and organizations declared: “With a Black Power fist in the air, we salute the people of Ferguson and join in your demands for justice.” This solidarity was returned in January when a group of movement activists visited Palestine. During the peak of the Black Lives Matter movement, Afro-pessimist language spread rapidly on Twitter and Tumblr, encouraging a wide range of activists to describe police violence in terms of the suffering imposed upon “**black bodies**” and to try to **monopolize the very category of death**. It was a somewhat **stupefying** choice of words at a time when black people in Ferguson were constituting part of a global struggle to **refuse to accept suffering**, to **refuse to die**. As Robin D. G. Kelley has pointed out, reading black experience through trauma can **easily slip into thinking** of ourselves as **victims** and **objects rather than agents**, subjected to centuries of gratuitous violence that have **structured** and **overdetermined** our very **being**. In the argot of our day, “bodies”—vulnerable and threatening bodies—**increasingly stand in for actual people** with names, experiences, dreams, and desires. But in fact, Kelley points out, “what sustained enslaved African people was a **memory of freedom**, **dreams of seizing it**, and **conspiracies to enact it**”—a heritage of resistance that is **erased by the rhetoric** of “**black bodies**.” Furthermore, Kelley argues, if we argue that state violence is **merely a manifestation of antiblackness** because that is **what we see** and **feel**, we are left with **no theory of the state** and have **no way of understanding racialized police violence** in places such as Atlanta and Detroit, where most cops are black, unless we turn to some **metaphysical explanation**.11 Here we get to the crux of the problem. The “metaphysical explanation”—the classic mode of ideological superstition—**obscures** not only the **social relations of the state**, but also the **contradiction between mass insurgency** and the **rising black elite** that claimed to represent it. Wilderson claims that Afro-pessimism seeks to “**destroy the world**” rather than **build a better one**, since the world is **irredeemably founded** on “antiblackness.” In reality, Afro-pessimism has **served as an ideological ballast** for the **emergent bureaucracies** in Ferguson and beyond, since the **supposedly radical rhetoric** of separatism and the reformism of the elite leadership have **converged** to **foreclose the possibilities of building a mass movement**. The “representatives” of the Black Lives Matter movement who got the most media play included the executive director of Saint Louis Teach for America, an organization that has played a driving role in the privatization of education and the assault on teachers’ unions. In fact, a group of these “representatives” enthusiastically met with the aggressively pro-charter and pro-testing secretary of education Arne Duncan during his visit to Ferguson—white civil society or not. If such tendencies **continue unchecked**, the **only world that will be destroyed** is the one in which **poor black students can attend public school** or **expect to get a job with benefits**.

**at: empathy bad / various fiat k’s**

**It’s valuable to use political imagination based upon the principles of entangled and imperfect empathy to construct more ethical relations, both for black and non-black people**

**Gruen 17** [Lori Gruen, William Griffin Professor of Philosophy, and Professor of Feminist, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Science in Society, at Wesleyan University, “Expressing Entangled Empathy: A Reply,” *Hypatia*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Spring 2017, p. 452-462]

The psychological literature is also replete with discussions of empathy as coupled with a motivational state in order for helping action or pro-social behavior to occur.1 Generally, these “psychological” motivational states fall into two mutually exclusive general categories: self-interested motivation and altruistic motivation. If the self is understood as deeply relational, the distinction between these motivational states breaks down. And this is the third sense of motivation I want to mention. Attuned moral perception moves me to **act on behalf of the wellbeing of others who co-constitute my agency**. Directing one's empathetic attention toward others is also shaped largely by whether one is so motivated, so while entangled empathizing moves us to action, we can alter our empathetic focus by acts of will. The process of being moved by entangled empathetic attention and being moved to refine our empathy are part of the **dynamic process of developing our moral perception**.

When one is made aware of a shortcoming in her responsiveness or a failure of her empathetic attention, when she is able, in other words, to see that she is in a “bad” relationship, as I put it—by which I mean one of instrumentalization, exploitation, or violence, for example—she cannot maintain that relationship and hold onto the belief that she is engaged in loving or caring attention. That sort of attention is part of what it means to be a moral agent, I suggest, so one is at least going to be moved to change one's conception, and I would hope, that will also lead to behavioral changes.

But there is a **deeper resonance to the question “why care?”** that addresses a danger that has been mentioned to me on a number of occasions and that all of my critics discuss. That is a worry about the possibility of ever really, truly understanding and empathizing with another. In the book, I discuss a case worth repeating briefly here. Two wealthy black parents who raised their children to be cautious in white society were devastated in the aftermath of an incident in which their son, who was walking near the boarding school he attended in Connecticut, was called the “N” word. The son became scared and angry, and felt vulnerable. This incident had a negative impact on his schoolwork and his confidence. When the father, Mr. Graham, tried to get the attention of the administration at his son's school, he received little response. This led him to realize that he was no better able to understand the perspective of the white people to whom he reported the incident than of those who called his son the “N” word (Graham 2014).

In many ways Mr. Graham is right. White people in a culture of anti-black racism cannot understand the burden of racism. And if white people can't understand Black people, what hope is there to understand a chimpanzee in entertainment, a dairy cow, or a lab rat? **Perhaps entangled empathy is simply too optimistic** to think any sort of meaningful moral perception is possible.

Recently, I was asked by Frank **Wilderson**, whose work I much admire, **why** do I **care?** I got a better sense of the force of his question after reading his paper “‘Raw Life’ and the Ruse of Empathy.”2 In it Wilderson interrogates “an optimism that assumes relationality within and between all sentient beings.” His analysis is that there are some beings who are beyond relationality. “The explanatory powers of empathy and analysis are scandalized when confronted with the Black position, a paradigmatic location synonymous with slavery” (Wilderson 2013, 184). Following on the definition of slavery provided by Orlando Patterson as a permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons (Patterson 1988), **Wilderson sees Blackness as a form of social death**, a state of being deprived of relationality. So “even perceived moments of empathic identification with the Slave are ruses” (Wilderson 2013, 189), as one cannot empathize with objects or beings that are not in the relation. Further, he argues that if empathy is meant to facilitate and produce “civic relation and if anti-Blackness is the generative mechanism of this mode of production, then it becomes understandable how and why” (201) empathy is problematic.

There are two concerns here; the latter is not unlike the worry that Debes raises about epistemic injustice, although in a different register. Debes says “dominant social groups trade on existing, ‘collectively’ shared—perhaps we should say, mainstream—forms of social understanding to reach self- and interpersonal understanding. And disempowered groups are pressed to conform to these normalized, mainstream social understandings” ($$). If these normalized understandings require, as Wilderson says, the social death of Black people, and these understandings are what entangled empathy is relying on, then it looks like entangled empathy is in the service of anti-Blackness and should thus be rejected. Debes is right insofar as this form of understanding is meant to be full understanding, and he is also onto something if the understanding required for entangled empathy inescapably emerges from mainstream “narrative tropes.” **But I'm not sure why either needs to be the case**. Trying to fully understand is not the same as actually achieving full understanding. Understanding among those on the margins happens all the time. Indeed, following the insights of Black feminists, often those on the margins understand more than those at the center, as they have opportunities for understanding both.

What I take us to be doing when we are engaged in entangled empathetic moral attention is working through **complicated processes of understanding one another** and other animals in situations of differential social, political, and species-based power. Usually what we “get” is just a glimpse. We never really “know,” but too many people use the idea that we can't really know as an **excuse to opt out of working at it**. **I take this to be a failure of both imagination and moral agency**.

The second worry will be something I continue to work out, and that is a more robust description of relationality. On the relational ontology I envisage, there is no place beyond relations; anti-Blackness or speciesism, for example, are political and ethical relations that view whites and humans as justified in regarding Blacks and animals as fungible, disposable, and perhaps paradoxically, outside of relationality. But as I've suggested, **the relations we are in are not** always, perhaps not even often, **the sorts of things we choose**. Some relations I am forced into, some I seek to develop, some are unjust, some are harmful, some may even seek to forever deprive me of my subjectivity. And since we are constituted in various ways by these relations, when some relations make it hard to see ourselves and others, entangled empathy will seem almost impossible. But that these relationships are part of us means that we can, **indeed must**, work with them and try to change them for the better.

I think **that is something to care about**.

**hope good (wingate)**

**Hope is good for mental health**

LaRicka R. **Wingate** et al., **2016**. \*\*Associate Professor and Director of Africana Studies, Oklahoma State University (OSU). \*\*David W. Hollingsworth, currently an Assistant Professor of psychology, Fairfield university; at the time of this publication, graduate student in clinical psychology, OSU. \*\*Raymond P. Tucker, graduate student in psychology, OSU. \*\*Victoria M. O’Keefe, currently assistant professor of health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; at the time of this publication, graduate student in psychology, OSU. “Hope as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Interpersonal Predictors of Suicide and Suicidal Thinking in African Americans.” *Journal of Black Psychology* 42(2): 175-90. Emory Libraries.

Discussion The current study investigated the relationships between hope, suicidal ideation, and the interpersonal risk factors of suicidal desire (Joiner, 2005) in a sample of African American college students. **Consistent with previous literature**, hope was **negatively correlated** to symptoms of depression, thwarted belongingness, and perceived burdensomeness. Hope was not significantly correlated to suicidal ideation in this sample. However, the **agency** subscale of hope was **negatively correlated** to suicidal ideation. To expand on the simple associations between hope and suicidal ideation previously established in the literature, the current study took a contextualist approach. More specifically, through the use of moderation analyses this study sought to better understand the circumstances of the established relationship between hope and suicidal ideation in an African American sample. It was hypothesized that levels of hope would moderate the relationship between feelings of perceived burdensomeness and thoughts of suicide. As hypothesized, the relationship between perceived burdensomeness and suicidal ideation was moderated by hope. High levels of hope weakened the relationship between perceived burdensomeness when **statistically controlling** for symptoms of depression. In other words, at **high levels of hope**, the relationship between perceived burdensomeness and suicidal ideation was no longer strong and positive as seen with low levels of hope. These results suggest that those who are naturally more hopeful are **buffered against deleterious effects** (i.e., suicidal ideation) when experiencing feelings of perceived burdensomeness. Individuals who feel comfortable setting goals and are motivated to achieve them may be **better equipped to cope** with feelings of perceived burdensomeness. Those who are more hopeful but feel as though they are a burden on others may be better equipped to cope with these feelings, as they may be able to naturally identify ways they can contribute to the well-being of others and are motivated to achieve these goals. This, in turn, may **protect against thoughts of suicide** when experiencing feelings of perceived burdensomeness. Also consistent with hypotheses, high levels of hope weakened the relationship between thwarted belongingness and suicidal ideation after controlling for symptoms of depression. Simple slope analyses indicated that the relationship between thwarted belongingness and suicidal ideation was strong and positive at low levels of hope but unrelated at high levels of hope. This result suggests that even though extreme feelings of social disconnection and unreciprocated caring are strongly associated with suicidal thinking, this relationship may only exist in those who are low in hope. Individuals who naturally engage in goal-directed thinking and are motivated to identify and use pathways to obtain their goals may feel as though they are more equipped to find solutions to feeling disconnected from others. Thus, when a hopeful individual feels thwarted in their belonging, they may be less likely to experience the negative effects of this feeling because they are better able to work toward connecting with others. Generally, the results of the current study indicate that African Americans who exhibit higher levels of hope (i.e., engage in goal-directed thinking, can identify pathways to achieve goals, and are naturally motivated to achieve their goals) may be **buffered against suicidal ideation** even in the presence of prominent interpersonal predictors of suicidal desire (i.e., thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness). This investigation is timely, as the ITS has received empirical support as a strong model of understanding suicide in the general population (i.e., Joiner et al., 2009), African Americans (Davidson et al., 2010), American Indian/Alaska Natives (O’Keefe et al., 2013), elderly populations (Jahn & Cukrowicz, 2011), and veterans (Anestis, Bryan, Cornette, & Joiner, 2009). Although feelings of thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness have been linked to thoughts of suicide in African Americans in both the current investigation and previous work (Davidson et al., 2010; Hollar, 2010; Lamis & Lester, 2012), the current study indicates that this relationship may only detrimentally affect those African Americans who are less hopeful. Specifically, for less hopeful participants, as their perceptions of being a burden and not belonging increased, so did their thoughts of suicide.

**More ev**

Daniel B **Lee** **2012** -- A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Art in the Department of Psychology (“The Role Of Optimism And Religious Involvement In The Relationship Between Race-Related Stress And Well-Being” <Https://Pdfs.Semanticscholar.Org/F353/5119dd12f21106b881b8ea23970ff4125ab9.Pdf>) mba-alb

Although racial discrimination experiences are negatively associated with psychological well-being outcomes, studies have also reported considerable heterogeneity in well-being outcomes (Miller & MacIntosh, 1999; Neblett, White, Ford, Philip, Nguyên, & Sellers, 2008). To explain this variation, researchers have examined the role of “protective factors,” or variables that mitigate the harmful effect of exposure to stress and adversity (Luthar & Zelazo, 2003). One such factor is optimism. **Several studies suggest that optimism may modulate the negative relationship between stress and well-being outcomes** (Peterson, 2000; Taylor, Larsen-Rife, Conger, Widaman, & Cutrona, 2010). **More specifically, optimism has been found to protect the psychological well-being of African Americans from race-related stress** (Utsey, Giesbrecht, Hook, & Stanard, 2008).

**Activism combats race-related stress**

Caroline **Reid 18**, “Activism as a Source of Strength for Black College Students at Predominately White Institutions,” https://encompass.eku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1588&context=honors\_theses

Racism is deeply ingrained in American society, and white supremacy and the oppression of people of color has greatly contributed to the establishment of the very institutions that continue to perpetuate its existence today. Racism manifests itself in a variety of ways, and its most constant and daily appearance is in instances of microaggressions. These experiences contribute to feelings of invisibility, frustration, and anger, an experience known as racism- related stress, which research has shown to severely and negatively impact mental health. In order to combat the insidious effects of racism, Black Americans have utilized coping mechanisms for generations. This resiliency is astoundingly powerful, however, dealing with the omnipresence of racism is a constant and significant internal labor. For Black college students at predominately white institutions, microaggresions and systemic racism create a difficult environment to navigate. **Unique opportunities in activism manifest** themselves **as tools to combat** discrimination and **racism-related stress**. However, some argue that caution is needed in viewing activism as panacea for improving the lives of people of color, particularly Black people. Indeed, some research has suggested that activism is harmful to mental health, as it increases the intensity and frequency of experiences of perceived racism among some populations. This thesis includes a **meta-analysis** that examines the findings on the effects of activism on mental health. As a result of this analysis, a counter argument argues the potential of the **utilization of activism** as a source of strength that may combat the harms of racism, supporting the earlier claim that certain factors involved in activism may be protective in nature.

**hope good (at: sullivan 17)**

**Their Sullivan evidence about battle fatigue is based on 3 sources –**

**One is a lifestyle magazine with no qualifications**

**Another one is a news article from the Boston Globe**

**We’ll insert this passage and footnotes ---**

**\*\*don’t read**

**Sullivan 17** - Chair and Professor of Philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She teaches and writes on feminist philosophy, critical philosophy of race, American pragmatism, and continental philosophy (Shannon, “Setting Aside Hope: A Pragmatist Approach to Racial Justice” page 238-239, <https://www.academia.edu/27794394/Setting_Aside_Hope_A_Pragmatist_Approach_to_Racial_Justice_2017_>)

De facto white class privilege in the form of racial microaggressions contributes to people of color's 'racial battle fatigue," which entails "the constant use' or redirection of energy for coping against mundane racism which depletes psychological and physiological resources needed in other important, creative, rand productive-areas of 'life" (**Smith, Hung, and Franklin 2012**, 40). Racial battle fatigue has been 'linked empirically to de- pression, tension, and generalized anxiety disorderin African Americans, and the stress associated with all of these 'psychological problems also contributes to physiological weathering that harms black health, contribut- ing to high rates of hypertension, cardiovascular-disease, pre-term birth rates, and infant mortality to name a few (**Smith, Hung and Franklin** 2012, 37, 40; D. Smith 2012). The effects of whige r4Cism literally get inside and help constitute they bodies of black people in harmful ways. They wear down the body's various systems by creating a high allostatic load via stressors that accumulate over tinie. The results are health problems such as disproportionately high rates of pre-term birth, infant mprtality, cardio- vascular disease, diabetes, and-accelerated physiological aging (**Blitstein 2009**). Racism also kills in Ways that are subtler but no less deadly than the lyncher's noose or the neighbor's bullet (**Drexler 2007**), These effects, moreoverj can'be transgenerational physiologically passed onto subsequent generations \*through 'varioås epigenetic changes (Sullivan 2013).

**Works Cited/Footnotes**







**The only STUDY is bad news for the K –**

Income **was the** *comparatively* **the** biggest factor**– proves it’s not ontological and class outweighs**

**Smith et al 12** (William, Associate Professor in the Department of Education, Culture & Society and Associate Professor, Ethnic Studies Program (African American Studies division). He serves as the Associate Dean for Diversity, Access, & Equity in the College of Education and has a Presidential Appointment as the Special Assistant to the President & Faculty Athletics Representative, Dr. Smith coined the term racial battle fatigue as a theoretical framework to better understand how the biopsychosocial approach is a valuable method for examining the impact of race-related stress to the biological, psychological, and social factors and their complex interactions in the health of People of Color, Man Hung, Assistant Professor in the Department of Orthopaedics at the University of Utah. She is also affiliated with the Huntsman Cancer Institute, the Center for Clinical & Translational Science, and the Division of Epidemiology, Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Utah, & Jeremy D. Franklin, doctoral student in the Department of Education, Culture & Society at the University of Utah, “Between Hope and Racial Battle Fatigue: African American Men and Race-Related Stress,” Journal of Black Masculinity, Vol.2, No. 1)

**\*MESS = mundane extreme environmental stress**

Results As Table 1 shows, the Moderate Hope group had a slightly higher proportion of younger people whereas the High Hope group had slightly higher proportion of older people. Across all three levels of hope, at least a third of the participants had a high school diploma. Among High, Moderate, and Low Hope individuals, about 50%, 43%, 33% had at least some college experience or was a college graduate, respectively. While categories of annual household income were distributed rather evenly among the High and Moderate Hope groups, **approximately half of the people in Low Hope group had an annual household income of less $30,000**. Over 40% in the High Hope group were married. Approximately 34% and 32% of Moderate and Low Hope individuals, respectively, were married. Table 4 presents the relationship among age, income, education, racial microaggressions, and societal problems. We found that age and educational level significantly affected MEES. After controlling for age, **annual household income**, educational level, and racial microaggressions (b = 0.327, β = 0.258, p < 0.01) and societal problems (b = 1.199, β = 0.346, p < 0.01) still **significantly affected** MEES in the High Hope group. Racial microaggressions accounted for **6.4%** of the variation in MEES, while **societal problems** accounted for **11.9%.** However, when we looked at the group of African American males with Moderate Hope, we found that societal problems was not significant. Only racial microaggressions (b = 0.382, β = 0.317, p < 0.01) significantly predicted MEES in this group after controlling for demographic characteristics. The variations in MEES accounted for by racial microaggressions were 9.8%, a nd the variations accounted for by societal problems were 3.4%. Among African American males in the Low Hope group, the results indicated that none of the factors (i.e., ag e, annual household income, educational level, racial microaggressions, and societal problems) have any significant influence in MEES. Racial microaggressions and societal proble ms were no longer significant, and they only explained 3.4% and 0.5% of the variance in MEES, respectively. Altogether, age, annual household income, educational level, racial microaggressions, and societ al problems accounted for 24.3% of the total variation in MEES in the High Hope group, 27.7% in the Moderate Hope group, and 6.8% in the Low Hope group.

**Concludes negative –**hope **resolves the problems of racial battle fatigue, optimism** turns the k

**Smith et al 12** (William, Associate Professor in the Department of Education, Culture & Society and Associate Professor, Ethnic Studies Program (African American Studies division). He serves as the Associate Dean for Diversity, Access, & Equity in the College of Education and has a Presidential Appointment as the Special Assistant to the President & Faculty Athletics Representative, Dr. Smith coined the term racial battle fatigue as a theoretical framework to better understand how the biopsychosocial approach is a valuable method for examining the impact of race-related stress to the biological, psychological, and social factors and their complex interactions in the health of People of Color, Man Hung, Assistant Professor in the Department of Orthopaedics at the University of Utah. She is also affiliated with the Huntsman Cancer Institute, the Center for Clinical & Translational Science, and the Division of Epidemiology, Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Utah, & Jeremy D. Franklin, doctoral student in the Department of Education, Culture & Society at the University of Utah, “Between Hope and Racial Battle Fatigue: African American Men and Race-Related Stress,” Journal of Black Masculinity, Vol.2, No. 1)

Hope appears to play a different role for the African American men in this study when compared to previous research. Race-related socialization appears to influence how much **hope is healthy** or realistic (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Brown, 2008; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, & Sellers, 2006). African American men with high to moderate levels of hope had more stress associated with racial microaggressions and societal problems than did men who had low hope. Like similar findings in the study by Danoff-Burg, Prelow, and Swenson (2004), we are encouraged from our findings that hope works differently for African American men. **Hope appears to be correlated with a more realistic assessment of the possibilities of experiences that African American men might face.** Possessing a more realistic understanding of the potential for racist discrimination offers these men additional avenues for coping. Hope does not always have to be based in reality. Therefore, by having a more accurate understanding of racial microaggressions and societal problems, these men learn to avoid extremely harmful external control behaviors that can destroy typical or mainstream avenues for reaching their goals. It should be clear that we are not suggesting that African American men with low or moderate levels of hope are playing into a negative self-fulfilling prophecy or that they are not reaching their expected goals. However, we are suggesting that **low and moderate hope men are taking into account additional realities that their high hope peers appear to overlook and** therefore they **are struggling with more self-reported stressors.** Under these circumstances, the opening quote from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is still appropriate in the present lives of African American men. Moreover, in our study, to be an African American man is to hope against hope that racial microaggressions, societal problems, and racial battle fatigue will diminish in the near future. Thus, we agree with Stevenson (1997), African American men must possess three important forms of racial socialization as forms of coping: proactive, protective, and adaptive. In our study, it appears that **adaptive racial socialization** might be playing a significant role in reducing stress among low hope African American men. Adaptive racial socialization is an **orientation** that **recognizes** the racial microaggressions and **racist discrimination** that pervades, **identifies it**, and then **keeps it at bay** long enough to develop room for creative counterstrategies (Stevenson, 1997). Consequently, high hope African American men, who tend to be slightly more formally educated, older, hold full-time jobs, higher incomes, and who married in greater numbers, are more at-risk from the relative safety that adaptive racial socialization provides. Maintaining or developing adaptive racial socialization strategies can enhance African American men’s belief in a world that is obfuscated with racists relations while promoting healthy self-development despite the obstacles they face (Stevenson, 1997).

**at: agathangelou**

**Agathangelou reduces groups to stereotypes and reproduces imperial IR.**

Christopher **Murray 20**, PhD candidate in the Department of International Relations at the London School of Economics, “Imperial dialectics and epistemic mapping: From decolonisation to anti-Eurocentric IR,” European Journal of International Relations 2020, Vol. 26(2) 419–442.

Then there are definitions of epistemic difference based on ‘**lived experience’**. Although an improvement on territorial or raciological accounts, the ascription of **cultural difference** to a generic lived experience or social subjectivity can also **reduce groups of people** to **stereotypes** and **monolithic value sets**. This is evident in the work of some scholars who take Fanon primarily **as a source of ‘epistemic blackness’**, without fully addressing his concerns about **racialisation** and the **geopolitical dimensions** of **decolonisation**. For example, the philosopher Lewis R. Gordon writes that ‘Fanon’s body. . . is a subtext of all his writings. ... Anxiety over embodiment is a dimension of Western civilization against which Fanon was in constant battle. The body, he laments, is a denied presence, and black people are a denied people’ (Gordon, 2015: 8). Even in as sophisticated an analysis of Fanon as Gordon’s, there is a danger of **essentialism** through the **association** of **black identity** with a **particular way of thinking**. For Fanon, black people were not so much **universally ‘denied’** as **relegated to certain roles** within a **social hierarchy** – the **French empire** most specifically. Blacks could be of **higher** or **lower** status, but **race** was the **basis for social relegation**, which **alienated** the subject from a **full**, **dynamic** **humanity**. For Fanon, every **particular experience** is an **instantiation of the universal**, and his analysis of his own experience is a demand to be recognised as a fellow human with an equal stake in humanity. Blackness is not a **generalisable perspective** from which we can **derive a non-Western knowledge**, but a reminder to pay attention to the **social** and **historical specificity** of relation.9

Embodiment arguments are usually the **vehicle** for **Fanon’s presence in IR,** and are often accompanied with the claim that **non-Westerners** have profoundly **different ways** of **practising politics** or **being modern**. For example, Vivienne **Jabri** (2014) invokes Fanon to theorise the ‘**embodied presence’** of non-Western agency within international order. Anna **Agathangelou** (2016) links different aspects of Fanon’s revolutionary dialectics to his conception of the **subjugated black body.** She is particularly interested in how Fanon’s **conception of racial experience** might present **alternatives** or ‘different’ ways of doing politics (Agathangelou, 2016: 111; cf. Sekyi-Otu, 2009). In a similar argument, John M. Hobson contrasts the ‘different critique’ of ‘African-American Marxists’, including Du Bois, with ‘white Eurocentric institutional thinkers’ like Leonard Woolf (Hobson, 2012: 17, n. 20). However, the difference is not as stark as Hobson might hope. It is true that Woolf’s anti-racism was qualified by a belief in elite institutional development, but so was Du Bois’s anti-imperialism.10 Areas of overlap are, thus, obscured by the assumption that there are ‘**black’** and ‘**white’** **ideas**, which can be **mapped** onto **generic ‘black’ and ‘white’ social realities.**

Aside from its **dubious reliability**, the problem with epistemic mapping is essentially **the same** as the problem with the **ethnicised counter claims** of Du Bois or Senghor: it is **too amenable** to the purposes of **imperial ordering** and **elite representation**. It **creates** and **services** the two worlds of Said’s **orientalist divide**, **rather** than building an agenda based on analytical approaches that constructively **problematise the divide.**

**Liberal root cause of war is an ahistoric myth – their “Empire” impact can’t explain why Western intervention happened in Libya and Iraq but not in Yemen**

Benno Gerhard **Teschke 11**, IR prof at the University of Sussex, “Fatal attraction: a critique of Carl Schmitt's international political and legal theory”, International Theory (2011), 3 : pp 179-227

For at the centre of the heterodox – partly post-structuralist, partly realist – neo-Schmittian analysis stands the conclusion of The Nomos: the thesis of a structural and continuous relation between liberalism and violence (Mouffe 2005, 2007; Odysseos 2007). It suggests that, in sharp contrast to the liberal-cosmopolitan programme of ‘perpetual peace’, the geographical expansion of liberal modernity was accompanied by the intensification and de-formalization of war in the international construction of liberal-constitutional states of law and the production of liberal subjectivities as rights-bearing individuals. Liberal world-ordering proceeds via the conduit of wars for humanity, leading to Schmitt's ‘spaceless universalism’. In this perspective, **a straight line is drawn from WWI to the War on Terror to verify Schmitt's long-term prognostic** of the 20th century as the age of ‘neutralizations and de-politicizations’ (Schmitt 1993). **But this attempt to read the history of 20th century international relations in terms of a succession of confrontations between the carrier-nations of liberal modernity and the criminalized foes at its outer margins seems unable to comprehend the complexities and specificities of ‘liberal’ world-ordering, then and now**. For in the cases of Wilhelmine, Weimar and fascist Germany, the assumption that their conflicts with the Anglo-American liberal-capitalist heartland were grounded in an antagonism between liberal modernity and a recalcitrant Germany outside its geographical and conceptual lines runs counter to the historical evidence. For this reading presupposes that late-Wilhelmine Germany was not already substantially penetrated by capitalism and fully incorporated into the capitalist world economy, posing the question of whether the causes of WWI lay in the capitalist dynamics of inter-imperial rivalry (Blackbourn and Eley 1984), or in processes of belated and incomplete liberal-capitalist development, due to the survival of ‘re-feudalized’ elites in the German state classes and the marriage between ‘rye and iron’ (Wehler 1997). It also assumes that the late-Weimar and early Nazi turn towards the construction of an autarchic German regionalism – Mitteleuropa or Großraum – was not deeply influenced by the international ramifications of the 1929 Great Depression, but premised on a purely political–existentialist assertion of German national identity. Against a reading of the early 20th century conflicts between ‘the liberal West’ and Germany as ‘wars for humanity’ between an expanding liberal modernity and its political exterior, there is more evidence to suggest that these confrontations were interstate conflicts within the crisis-ridden and nationally uneven capitalist project of modernity. Similar objections and caveats to the binary opposition between the Western discourse of liberal humanity against non-liberal foes apply to the more recent period. For how can this optic explain that **the ‘liberal West’ coexisted** (and keeps coexisting) **with a large number of** pliant **authoritarian client-regimes** (Mubarak's Egypt, Suharto's Indonesia, Pahlavi's Iran, Fahd's Saudi-Arabia, even Gaddafi's pre-intervention Libya, to name but a few), **which** were and **are actively managed** and supported by the West **as anti-liberal** Schmittian **states of emergency**, with concerns for liberal subjectivities and Human Rights secondary to the strategic interests of political and geopolitical stability and economic access? Even in the more obvious cases of Afghanistan, Iraq, and, now, Libya, the idea that Western intervention has to be conceived as an encounter between the liberal project and a series of foes outside its sphere seems to rely on a denial of their antecedent histories as geopolitically and socially contested state-building projects in pro-Western fashion, deeply co-determined by long histories of Western anti-liberal colonial and post-colonial legacies. If these states (or social forces within them) turn against their imperial masters, the conventional policy expression is ‘blowback’. And as **the Schmittian analytical vocabulary** does not include a conception of human agency and social forces – only friend/enemy groupings and collective political entities governed by executive decision – **it** also **lacks the categories of analysis to comprehend** the social dynamics that drive the **struggles around sovereign power and the eventual overcoming**, for example, **of Tunisian and Egyptian states of emergency without US-led wars for humanity**. Similarly, it seems unlikely that the generic idea of liberal world-ordering and the production of liberal subjectivities can actually explain why Western intervention seems improbable in some cases (e.g. Bahrain, Qatar, Yemen or Syria) and more likely in others (e.g. Serbia, **Afghanistan, Iraq**, and Libya). Liberal world-ordering consists of differential strategies of building, coordinating, and drawing liberal and anti-liberal states into the Western orbit, and overtly or covertly intervening and refashioning them once they step out of line. These are conflicts within a world, which seem to push the term liberalism beyond its original meaning. The generic Schmittian idea of a liberal ‘spaceless universalism’ sits uncomfortably with the realities of maintaining an America-supervised ‘informal empire’, **which has to manage a persisting interstate system in diverse and case-specific ways**. But it is this persistence of a worldwide system of states, which encase national particularities, which renders challenges to American supremacy possible in the first place.

**at: redaction alt**

**The alt forecloses meaningful political action**

**Shulman, 21**—teaches political theory at The Gallatin School of New York University (George, “Fred Moten’s Refusals and Consents: The Politics of Fugitivity,” Political Theory, Vol. 49(2), 272–313, dml) [inserted “when” for grammatical integrity—insertion denoted by brackets]

In turn, radical democrats may refuse his reduction of politics to sovereignty, but if we then identify the **properly political** as **nonsovereign** action, as nonrule or (fugitive) **refusal** to be governed, we remain **captive** to this **demonic picture** of power and its **idealized other**. By affirming **only** the “**power to**” of solidarity and action in concert, we risk **disavowing** power “**over**,” as **participation in rule**, as **explicit rule-making**, and as “**ruling out**” antidemocratic interests and practices. Do we imagine that generativity thrives **only by refusing rule**, and not also through forms of **structure** and even **imposition**, as parents and teachers know? As Prospero, a personification of both sovereignty and theory, finally acknowledged Caliban as the “dark thing” he must “own as mine,” the trope of fugitivity entails a disavowed remainder, the **problem of power** and **rule**, which **needs to be acknowledged**. For freedom requires **not only flight from rule**, but **flight into it**, as a problem that **no one can escape**, but that a democratic politics **explicitly acknowledges** and undertakes to **rework by participatory practices** of contest.40

Using Moten’s own idiom, I would ask: “What if” we **do not dichotomize** the informal assembly and praxis of fugitive sociality, and politics-as-rule predicated on exclusion and regulation of difference? “What if” a democratic theory must **blur** the social and political but also acknowledge **inescapable**, **fraught**, yet **potentially fruitful tensions**—between tacit grammar and explicit acts of translation, between **informal** form and **organized** forms of power, between fugitive aliveness as resistance to rule, and organizing democratic power to make claims on how the world is ruled? “What if” we **refuse** (**not reverse**) the **abstract polarity** between subjection to sovereign rule as such, or statelessness as **refusal to be governed** as such, and “come down to earth” as Marx put it? We then find politicality **not in rule** or **nonrule**, as such, but in the **judgments** and **actions** by which subalterns address **who makes decisions** (and **how**) about **which practices**, **values**, and **inequalities** are being **ruled out**, or which **encouraged**, in the communities they are building by socio-poetic insurgency? In difficult historical contexts they **rework** and **mediate tacit grammars**, **customary practices**, and **explicit forms of organized power** as they reconstitute **democratic forms** of rule-making.41

These what-ifs suggest a conversation between Moten and Sheldon Wolin. The parallels are striking. Wolin depicts a “system” so “immovable and interconnected as to be unreformable as a totality”; he calls “pessimism” a “reasoned insight” and “suppressed revolutionary impulse”; and he endorses a “rejectionism” whereby citizens “withdraw and direct their energies and civic commitment to finding new life forms.” Moreover, “instead of imitating most political theories,” which adopt “the state as the primary structure, and adapt the activity of citizens” to it, Wolin refuses “the state paradigm” and the “liberal-legal corruption of the citizen.” He affirms how “common life resides in cooperation and reciprocity that human beings develop to survive, meet their needs, and explore their capacities and the remarkable world into which they have been cast.” He thus rejects Arendt’s splitting of political and social, and her valorization of the “who,” and in Moten’s terms he instead values how “entanglement and virtuosity” are negotiated in the “common life” of the ordinary. Both theorists thus defend “preservation” of customary ways of “taking care of beings and things,” as Wolin says, against neoliberal correction, progressive promises of incorporation, and radical romances of emancipation.42

Moten’s two antagonisms—between the few who run things and things that run, and between informal form and formalization—echo Wolin’s critique of bureaucracy, of “institutionalized systems of power,” and of “constitutional democracy”; and Moten’s refusals resonate with Wolin’s late claim that democracy names not a form of government but “fugitive” moments of insurgency. And though Wolin seems to mean “fugitive” only in its temporal sense of transient or fleeting, he also depicts democracy as interdicted by idioms of governance, contained by constitutions and organized power, and pathologized by norms stipulating the legal and proper. Like blackness— though Wolin never makes this association—his democracy is (called) criminal, transgressive, and chaotic; it is feared, hunted, and enclosed, though also “wanted,” desired, and used for legitimation. Both theorists embrace such epithets while showing how insurgency bespeaks “jurisgenerative” energies, engendered by commonality and memory, that precede and surround formal (state-centric) politics. Their fugitive protagonists—an undercommons or popular insurgency—claim a spatial and symbolic distance from a deranged modern regime, and in Wolin’s words “replace the old citizenship” by “a fuller and wider notion of being, whose politicalness will be expressed not in one or two activities—voting or protesting—but in many.” Of course, this very “politicalness” is one mark of deep differences.43

Though Wolin’s awareness of racial inequality appears in repeated associations of democratic moments and social movements with black insurgency, he does not grasp how “commonality” names not (only) a resource against enclosure but the historical production of whiteness and settler colonialism. He laments the gap between formal citizenship and genuine participation, which effectively disempowers legally enfranchised citizens, but never construes citizenship as a racial status, “standing” as white, constituted by a racial state of exception. His hard-pressed “citizens” draw on tacit (local, rooted) customs, but he does not credit how their “commonality” reproduces popular power by racial terror. Moten thus brings to this idiom of commonality and democracy, as to Arendt’s “common sense” and “world,” a justified presumption that such predicates of the political mean antiblackness. But acknowledging this truth is also the premise of thinking abolition and radical democracy together.44

For if Wolin’s commonality risks racial innocence, his idea of the political remains **essential** because it highlights the **foreclosures** in Moten’s sociality. First, Wolin depicts both tacit commonality and explicit insurgency as contingent and, in that sense, as political. Whereas Moten depicts sociality **underwritten by ontology**, and **reproduced** as antiblackness generates “common habitation and flight,” Wolin sees every (under)common undone by political economy and individualism, not only by **incorporation** into formal politics. Whereas Moten imagines the “absolute sufficiency” of sociality informally reproduced, Wolin argues that commonality itself is (re)generated and remade **only** by practices that, though “emerging out of” sociality, **politicize**—**acknowledge**, **(re)articulate**, or **(re)organize**—**tacit customs** and **vernacular memories**. Tacit commonality is at once discovered, remade and regenerated **only** [when] people make **explicit claims** in “**public declarations**,” or **visibly exercise** “**collective power**” to “promote or protect the well-being” of a “**collectivity**,” including an undercommon.45

Second, Wolin also links and distinguishes sociality and politicality by depicting the experience and practice of sharing and exercising power. For Wolin, local or customary “institutions and practices are sustained” only by our “capacity to share in power, to cooperate in it.” “Power to,” generated and shared by the **ongoing practices of assembly** and **cooperation** that Moten calls **planning**, is thus the **basis** of all other goods. But, as “distilled” from the “relations and circles we move within”—call this Moten’s sociality—this power, at once “**symbolic**, **material**, and **psychological**,” “**enables political beings to act together**.” As the political dimension of sociality, “power” can be **extracted by states** or **undermined by individualism**, and thus alienated, a loss that **devitalizes the solidarity**—and thereby the **generative capacity**—of sociality. The recurring “loss of the political,” as capacities to articulate the tacit and organize power, reveals the nature of the political as a distinctive “mode of experience,” for “we are always losing it and having to recover it.” But “**renewal**” is **always possible**, partly “as human beings rediscover the common being of human beings,” partly by “creating **new patterns of commonality**” across differences, and partly by (re)making “**modes of action**” by which to “**concert their powers**.” Though grounded in sociality, Wolin’s political thus opens an interval between the tacit and the explicit, in which experience is metabolized and (re)articulated. In this interval people **question the organization of power** and **rules of justice**, and they **answer** as they “**reinvent forms** and **practices**” that express “a **democratic conception** of collective life.”46

For Moten, of course, “democratic” and collective” signal the alienated rule that abstracts from lived sociality to “designate” a political to represent us, whereas black fugitives refuse to be governed or represented by others but also to translate themselves into legible political terms. In contrast, Wolin offers a potentially fruitful, not only correctional or appropriative—we might say agonistic—relation between the tacit and the explicit. In fact, practices of “**fugitive democracy**” recurrently emerge in and from black sociality, as the practices of **Black Lives Matter** activism most recently demonstrate. For sure, practices of **concealment** and **evasion**, which defend black fugitivity from surveillance, regulatory correction, and violence, **and** practices of **public action** that **engage whites** and the **state**, are **contradictory in crucial ways**, as Juliet Hooker has argued. But as Rom Coles and Lia Haro argue, frontline communities on the underground railroad also **engaged repeatedly** in “**flagrantly public**” action in **concert**, both in **literal self-defense** of black autonomy in its fugitive illegality, and to **contest the rule(s)** of police, the law, and the state; as recent protests suggest, they viewed **formal political institutions** both as “**integral to white supremacy so far**,” but also “as **potential instruments toward emancipatory ends**.”47

If Hooker sees temporal shifts between moments of “black fugitivity” and moments of “fugitive democracy” in the thought and practice of Frederick Douglass, Coles/Haro depict an ongoing “oscillation” between inward-facing and outward-turning practices. Likewise, Neil Roberts defends grand marronage for seeking a “sustainable rather than fleeting form of flight” by forging autonomous spaces, and yet, because “freedom in our world lies **not in permanent evasion of Leviathan**” but in “**taming**” it, he proposes an idea of “sociogenic marronage” to reconstruct “an order in need of systemic repair.” Not coincidentally, Wolin’s fugitive democracy, though “**rejectionist**” and **antistatist** in its major chords, includes a **social democratic minor key**, which notes the **limits of localism** and the **necessity of seeking** and **using state power** to address structural inequality and collective fate.48

Complex and generative tensions are lost, then, as Moten recovers the **freedom schools** organized by Fannie Lou Hamer but **not her organizing** for the **right to vote**, to **exercise popular sovereignty locally**, especially around police and schools, but also to create a “**Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party**” that entered national politics. Hamer (like the Black Panthers and Black Lives Matter) models how black radicalism has lived in an **interval** between the tacit grammar and ongoing “**planning**” of black fugitivity—as loopholes of retreat practiced and concealed in plain sight—and **flagrant publicity** as **fugitive democracy**. Whereas for Moten, the historical failure or defeat of outward-facing public action proves the futility of fugitive democracy, I would ask: “what if” we follow his own fugitive view that any being or act is both incomplete and excessive, to infer that specific historical experiments are **not definitive failures**, but **unfinished in meaning**, examples we could **retrieve** and **refashion** now? If keeping open such possibility **risks cruel optimism**, foreclosing it **reifies the impasse** he generatively transvalues in so many other ways.

**Redaction fails**

**Bickerstaff 17** (Jovonne Bickerstaff is a Post-Doctoral Associate, “Of Wake Work and We Who Would Build: Centralizing Blackness in Digital Work”, February 2017, <http://aadhum.umd.edu/2017/02/centralizing-blackness-digital-work/> ///ghs-sc)

In my own research, I am drawn to Christina Sharpe’s conception of “wake work.” **Wake work does not seek to amend Black suffering through the frames of juridical, philosophical, or historical solutions.** Wake work theorizes Black life in both the “wake” and the “hold” of the slave ship, requiring recognition “of the ways that we are constituted through and by vulnerability to overwhelming force, though not only known to ourselves and to each other by that force.” This is critical Black study that does not seek to make room for the full scope of Black humanity to be recognized by the white consciousness. Rather, it works to “defend the dead” through the cultivation of a ‘blackened consciousness’ that would inhabit the ways that we are both living and dying in the wake. In my own digital humanities work centered in New Orleans, 11 years after the storm, this means staring unflinchingly at the political, economic, and intellectual assemblages that over-determine Black life/death, while simultaneously understanding how insurgent Black social life can undermine these over-determinations. Is digital wake work possible? If so, what can it look like? That is the question that I intend to work through as a researcher within the AADHum Initiative. If it is indeed true that, as Moya Z. Bailey says, “All the Digital Humanists Are White, All the Nerds Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave,” then it’s time to say—in the words of Jonathan P. Jackson—“Gentlemen, we will be taking over from here.” In our work, how can we discover and further develop digital lines of escape, made possible by the apertures that emerge at the collision of Black Studies and the digital humanities? We who would build: Re-visioning resistance & theorizing beyond the gaze —Jovonne Bickerstaff, Ph.D. We have two hands: one is to battle, one is to build. We battle. We resist by calling out threats to our dignity by name. We build. We actively protect our dignity by creating what works. Those two hands may be on one person, one organization may be set up to do both. For others, they are the battling or the building kind. Either way, the battlers need the builders. The builders need the battlers. This is a discipline of resistance. —Brittany Packnett, activist Outlining her concept of “Black studies in the wake,” Christina Sharpe emphasizes its call “to be at the intellectual work of a continued reckoning the longue of Atlantic chattel slavery, with black fungibility, antiblackness… accounting for the narrative, historical, structural, and other positions black people are forced to occupy.” Drawing on Alexander Weheliye, Kim Gallon, by contrast, characterizes Black Studies as “a mode of knowledge production” that “investigates processes of racialization with a particular emphasis on the shifting configurations of black life.” Building on the Duboisian tradition of intellectual activism that advances scholarship while furthering social justice, both suggest that the real and vital work on black people necessarily speaks to race—that is, analyzing the consequences of and resistance to the project of racialization. I can see how interrogating the racial project of whiteness that shapes black folks’ lives can be a way of speaking truth to power for African Americanist scholars. Still, focusing so acutely on unpacking racism and racialization as sole or primary path of resistance gives me pause. I wonder if we’ve framed what Black Studies does—and more importantly can do—**too narrowly**. Might our pre-occupation with black struggle, whether in the conditions of or resistance to oppression, **make us complicit in the diminishing the fullness of black humanity** and what we might explore in it? Can we imagine examining black experience without making America’s racialization project the dominant idiom? Recently, activist Brittany Packnett developed a Twitter thread which began, “**We have two hands: one is to battle, one is to build**.” Certainly, we African Americanists know how to battle. So much of our training as scholars prepares us for it; we’re socialized to privilege the work of critique and deconstruction. Given how black folk have been conceptualized or written out of cannons, our proclivity towards confrontational debate may be more pronounced. We feel the pulse of that resistance when Gallon characterizes Black Studies as “the comparative study of the black cultural and social experiences under white Eurocentric systems of power.” But… is that enough? Is our conception of black scholarly resistance too narrow? Taking Packnett’s call for a multifaceted strategy of resistance to heart, I must ask, when do we build? These questions are central to who I’ve become as a scholar. Surely, I do my share of confrontational resistance, interrogating problematic paradigms, particularly when I teach. Still, as my research agenda solidifies, **I’m more compelled by that call to build**. Centering black experience has been my entry point for moving beyond critique to imagine new narratives and inquiry to engage in what I term theorizing beyond gaze—orienting my own work and my hopes for the AADHum Initiative. “From my perspective there are only black people. When I say “people”, that’s what I mean… No African American writer had ever done what I did… even the ones I admired… I have had reviews in the past that have accused me of not writing about white people… As though our lives have no meaning and no depth without the white gaze. And I have spent my entire writing life trying to make sure that the white gaze was not the dominant one … I didn’t have to be consumed by or concerned by the white gaze… The problem of being free to write the way you wish to without this other racialized gaze is a serious one for an African American writer” [emphasis added]. —Toni Morrison Freedom for her, Nina Simone once quipped, was the absence of fear. As a scholar and writer, my vision of freedom is more akin to Toni Morrison’s and begins with one radical tool: choice. I name, frame, and lay claim to different terrains: examining understudied populations (couples in enduring relationships), raising novel questions (how emotional strategies for resilience impact intimacy), and situating my research in unorthodox literatures (sociology of emotions vs. “the black family”). In every case, each she/he/they that I describe is, by default, black. Refusing to explicitly qualify race in work on black people can be jarring because having non-white experiences centered is so rare. In addition to disturbing notions of black folks as the perpetual other, theorizing beyond the gaze forces us to recognize how failing to fully account for positionality undermines our theorizing. If we uphold confrontation as the primary or most effective tool of resistance, I fear we risk neglecting how resistance requires and has always relied as much on subversive tactics like theorizing beyond the gaze as on direct action. In the AADHUM initiative, I hope that helps us think through how can we begin to construct a “meaningful intellectual and activist challenge that circumvents the analyses of injustice that re-isolate the dispossessed, à la McKittrick’s invocation of Gilmore. It’d be easy (and reductive) to see black Twitter simply as an offshoot of mainstream Twitter use. But what if we saw it instead as innovation narrative, à la Steve Jobs and iPods and iPhones, whereby they’re responsible for optimizing technology use in ways that reveal its fullest potential? Or conversely, could we invert the arrows of co-optation, which typically focuses on stolen African American products, to reveal how communities of color used Twitter and Vine towards subversive ends of mobilizing social change (i.e. BLM), celebrating black joy in the mannequin challenge or viral memes on Vine? Ultimately, how, when and why we enter as African Americanists, seems to turn largely on who we are working for and what we are working towards. The aim is not to abandon the battle, but simply to recognize that, while necessary, it is insufficient.

**at: curry 13 / anti-ethics**

**Anti-blackness doesn’t corrupt all ethics.**

Naomi **Zack 17**. University of Oregon. 03/07/2017. Review of Stain Removal: Ethics and Race. Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews, https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/stain-removal-ethics-and-race/.

Miller begins by claiming that there cannot be an ethics of race because an ethics of **anything** presupposes that its **subject** can be **perceived** or correctly described in some "factual" or value-neutral way, because it is "outside" of ethics. But race is **already evaluative** (evaluated) throughout the modern period, beginning systematically in philosophy with Kant's ordinal (ranked, with whites first) taxonomy of human races. Miller's insistence that race is already inexorably evaluative is based on his emphasis of the importance of myths about the transfer of value through heredity and physical embodiment. Physical embodiment is the object of perception, so that racial identities are what Bernard Williams has called "prejudicial objects." Miller claims that value-laden myths about race have **criminalized some** human bodies in a tradition of "blessing and curses." By contrast, and in **opposition**, **Enlightenment** ideas about moral responsibility made it possible for individual **autonomy** in a **single lifetime** -- the individual creates her own fate through choices. Ethics is thereby born, but only in **opposition** to the tradition of **hereditary** blessings and **curses**. And the ethical tradition of individual responsibility **requires** the tradition **against which it reacted**, as well as those who remain identified with the "blessing and curses" tradition, that is, **racialized "others."** Miller outlines these core ideas in his Introduction. In chapter 1, he argues that ethical emphases on deeds neglect accompanying evaluations of the agent. Chapter 2 considers how subjectivity could be "reconfigured" in terms of affiliative relations that transfer value, when awareness of what is determined could operate as a "circuit breaker" on the forces determining value (pp. 77-8). Chapters 3 and 4 are an analysis of ancient Greek and early Christian thought about the origination of value and ethical knowledge as part of the natural world. Here, Miller shows how value first emerged after action was deemed criminal, a structure that is proto-typical for the historical emergence of race. Miller's Conclusion is not a "happy ending," because ethical inheritance still dominates the subject seeking freedom and nothing, not even a reversal of existing racial power structures, can undo the past. Miller ends with a passage by James Baldwin which expresses a tension between acceptance of cursed/criminalized inheritance in the first paragraph and a thirst for vengeance in the second: The custodian of an inheritance, which is what blacks have had to be, in Western culture, must hand the inheritance down the line. So, you, the custodian, recognize, finally that your life does not belong to you: nothing belongs to you. This will not sound like freedom to Western ears, since the Western world pivots on the infantile, and, in action, criminal delusions of possession, and of property. . . . But the people of the West will not understand this until everything which they now think they have has been taken away from them. In passing, one may observe how remarkable it is that a people so quick and so proud to boast of what they have taken from others are unable to imagine that what they have taken from others can also be taken from them. (p. 171) The controversy I predicted at the start of this review is unlikely to unite moral philosophers and philosophers of race, because both traditional moral philosophers and progressive anti-racist philosophers will recognize a fundamental criticism of their entire enterprise in this work. Enigmatic questions are raised for both groups of scholars: Is race such a **fundamental category** of human existence that it **overrides** basic assumptions about how we can develop our characters and regard others? Can the **historical contingency** of race **override** the **more important** concerns and **projects** involving **character** development and assessment**?** How does the importance of what we now take to be ethical concerns and projects compare with the power of the value-imbued **ontology** of race? If race is already embedded in racial **ontology**, why is it not possible to **resolve that circularity through careful analysis** that **recognizes** this problem, without seeking to **purify racial ontology** as it is commonly taken to be? Philosophers of race might already recognize the morally bad aspects of race throughout history and advocate mourning and memorial, as well as resolve to resist the morally bad aspects of race in their own discourse. In fact, most philosophers of race who seek to retain racial categories proceed exactly in that way. Similarly, ethicists could take special care to cultivate **awareness** of how **their moral prescriptions** and systems **exclude** or already criminalize **nonwhites**. Although, as noted, Miller **claims** that the **enterprise of ethics** is **impossible** without **nonwhite** **racial others** who are already considered morally bad or not qualified to be ethical subjects or objects, he has given **little support for this sweeping assertion**. Surely, the **abolitionist movement** against slavery, white supporters of the U.S. **civil rights** movement, and international humanitarian discourse **disturb** that generalization, if only as an **empirical matter**. Finally, although Miller resists addressing race as racism, it is difficult to understand how his analysis of race as a stain that cannot be removed from ethics and his analysis of ethics as **ineradicably white** (or not nonwhite) does **not amount to deep analysis** of anti-nonwhite racism. Miller's book is a short, dense, brilliant, and fascinating work that is very important for its historical and phenomenological depth of analysis. Miller's analysis proceeds by unveiling or positing a horrible but compelling prophecy that to remove ideas of nonwhite race as curse would also remove the need for ethics. The question is whether there would be interest in taking responsibility if some individuals were no longer burdened by hereditary criminalization. The **illogic** of this question, that A is motivated to be ethical **because B is not ethical**, is **alleviated** if those "others" so burdened are **recognized as projections of the ethical self** -- that is, criminalized B is a projection of ethical A. Still, **removing the need for ethics** by removing what it is a rebellion against, namely the tradition of **determined badness or criminalization**, does **not** necessarily **preclude** some people from **gratuitously choosing** to be **good**. That already happens when ethics is purely secular and **some are kind.**

**at: pornotroping (leong)**

**Abandoning relational empathy as pornotroping fails**

**Raengo 17**. Alessandra. Associate Professor of Moving Image Studies, Georgia State University and coordinator of liquid blackness, a research project on blackness and aesthetics. “Dreams are colder than Death and the Gathering of Black Sociality.” Black Camera 8(2): 120-36. Emory Libraries.

Arthur Jafa's 2013 essay film Dreams are colder than Death begins as a lyrical meditation on the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech conducted through interviews with African-American intellectuals—the specialists, as Jafa calls them—such as Hortense Spillers, Fred Moten, Saidiya Hartman, and Nicole Fleetwood; filmmaker Charles Burnett; ex–Black Panther and professor Kathleen Clever; musician Flying Lotus; and visual artists Kara Walker and Wangechi Mutu, among others.1 Quickly, however, the film detours toward more fundamental and open-ended questions, [End Page 120] such as "What is the concept of blackness? Where did it come from? And what does it mean for people of color living in America today?"

Weaving together lyrical slow-motion images of black people—the uncommon folks—mostly in outdoor spaces hanging out, walking around, or talking to one another, with images of dark waters or deep space, the film creates a tapestry within which the voices of some of the most powerful contemporary black artists and thinkers engage in a meditation on the ontology of blackness and its relationship to life, death, and the concept of the human in the context of the "afterlife of slavery."2

That the social existence of blackness has to be understood within the context of the "afterlife of slavery" is the position held by scholars that identify with the conversation described as Afro-Pessimism,3 while the ascendance of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, founded by three **queer women**—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi—can be seen to **vindicate** the "**Afro-Optimist**" position that affirms instead the primacy, vibrancy, and generative capacity of black social life.4

To be sure, this opposition stands more strongly in the eyes of critics of Afro-Pessimism than those of its supporters, as Jared Sexton has recently articulated in his article "Afro-Pessimism: The Unclear Word," where he describes Afro-Pessimism as an ars vita "because it emerges from within a global catastrophe so total that the creation or production of a black poetry, a black art, a stylization of the black body, a black sense of place cannot but be invented wholesale [. . .] without a future promising anything different or, rather, better."5 In what, to date, is the most explicit alignment of the goals of Afro-Pessimism with those of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, the overarching question Afro-Pessimism, as an art vita, poses then becomes, "How do we create a world where black lives matter, to everyone or, rather, to everyone else as well? What economies—political, libidinal, symbolic—must be destroyed or negated, what others forged or affirmed?"6

The film addresses this issue through the words of Moten, who asks, "When you say that black people are just an effect of slavery you raise a question: can black people be loved? Not desired, not wanted, not acquired, not lusted after . . . can blackness be loved?" By posing this question, especially in the current context within which the intimacy between blackness and death has become increasingly obscenely clear, the film holds these apparent opposites in suspension.7

This essay reads Dreams as the aesthetic articulation of the fact of black love. The film's structure, I argue, effectively performs the very networks of solidarity, grief, and grievance that are some of the goals of #BlackLivesMatter.8 In other words, my reading finds in the film's edits—which I approach as passages, as I will explain below—the expression of its own balancing act between the commemoration of a speech so closely associated with **fantasies of equality** and freedom, and the philosophical and artistic decision to frame [End Page 121] it through the concept of death.9 In other words, the decision is to approach all this **from the midst of an ongoing genocide**, a place where the dream has given way to the coldness of an endless deferral, to the solitude of a corpse abandoned too long in the middle of the street.10

The film holds these two poles in balance while reflecting on their implications: on the one hand, the recognition, as Spillers puts it in the film, that slavery is such a powerful and huge phenomenon that in some ways it is still present—a statement we hear over an image of dark waters—and, on the other hand, the repeated association of blackness with images of galaxies and deep space, which, instead, affirm its life-giving force and cosmic reach. Through its aesthetic "liquidity"—i.e., the way in which it enacts unobstructed and yet unprecedented "passages" between seemingly disparate and incongruous concepts and situations, as well as the facility with which it travels across scale, from the molecular to the celestial—the film connects experiences of personal grief to the expression of grievance, to reflections on the challenges blackness poses to the conception of the human subject and her freedom. It performs, in other words, what Sexton describes as a series of conceptual moves "from the empirical to the structural or, more precisely, from the experiential to the political ontological."11

One methodological premise of this essay is that the film's edits have to be regarded as types of passages, that is, as very similar, at least in spirit, to those L.A. Rebellion filmmaker Larry Clark adopted in his film Passing Through (1977). For years, Jafa has been "obsessed" about this cult film that, by many accounts, has successfully transposed the compositional principles of jazz improvisation into filmmaking and thus reached a powerful synergy between free jazz and film form.12 In his work, Clark leverages the adventurous expansiveness of free jazz to connect, and therefore pass through, a variety of seemingly incongruous or remote spaces, making adjacent, for example, sites of artistic improvisation and sites of systemic oppression, spaces of addiction and spaces of healing, the US racial scene and Third World revolutionary struggles. These very passages, which Jafa has carefully studied since his time at Howard University, which had purchased a print of the film through his mentor Haile Gerima, are precisely what joins so essentially the aesthetics and politics of the film. They also stand as testimony that blackness requires incredibly capacious frameworks to gather and comprehend its audacious transitions.

Thus, methodologically speaking, this essay interprets the film's editing structure—beautifully executed by Dreams' producer and editor Kahlil Joseph—and, in particular, the elements that the film posits as adjacent, as indices of the network of love and care that #BlackLivesMatter also seeks to establish as a way to counteract state-sanctioned antiblack violence.

The balance that Dreams performs between the thinking of life and the thinking of death is also attained by the particular way in which the film [End Page 122] dislodges some of the very conditions for black surveillance by having voices disjointed from bodies, faces made hardly legible because shot against intense natural light sources and a pervasive use of slow motion that creates a sense of another space, an alternative—perhaps suspended—dimension, and different sets of expectations and constraints, within which black bodies can move at their own chosen pace.13

This image/sound disjunction, whereby the interviewees' voices are strategically recorded independently from the image, establishes its own passages connecting otherwise distant or disparate things, including the passage from the "particular universal" of the queer identities of #BlackLivesMatter's founders to the capaciously collective ("All Black Lives Matter" is the claim on their website) and, by extension "all people," which is one of the main guiding ideas of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.14 It is in this way, I will show, that the film claims for blackness an expansiveness and intelligence that reaches across space and time and therefore can be seen to attain its own “fugitivity,” a line of escape, as Moten describes it, an optimistic thinking "on the run," rendered here, in Melissa Louidor's words, as a "mobilization of Black vitality, in which biomechanic and metaphysical forces are deployed to activate effort; an effort that is integral to claiming survival."15

Dis-joining and Re-joining

The study of filmic movement and sound has been a central preoccupation for Jafa since his collaboration with Julie Dash in Daughters of the Dust (1991). For years he researched ways to bring "intonation and inclination down to actual movement" and to manipulate motion in concordance with black people's handshakes—that is, to find a different integrity and comfort or ease between black sound and black body, black image and black motion.16 For this film, he decided to record the sound of the interviews separately from their images, which are consistently overexposed or shot at oddly tilted and unusual angles, or in extreme close-up, so that the faces might be present but not necessarily legible, and legibility quickly becomes irrelevant anyway (fig. 1).

There are two main reasons for this choice. First, the decision not to use direct sound in his practice came in part as a matter of production circumstances. Early on, after his experience on the set of Charles Burnett's My Brother's Wedding (1983), shot on location in Watts, Jafa realized that if he wanted to film in black neighborhoods, he would have to add sound in post-production: as he explained, black neighborhoods have all kinds of environmental noises that cannot be put on hold. He adopted this practice because of his commitment to working on location, with nonprofessional actors, to cast against (the industrial) grain, on the footsteps of neorealist filmmakers. [End Page 123]

At the same time, Jafa's decision about sound recording performs a powerful critique of the problem of forced coherence between black voice and black body that has been a staple of the film industry since Hollywood's transition to sound.17 This is what he has attempted to reproduce by casting from the streets: for example, the possibility to choose on the basis of people's natural movements and then pair them in postproduction with someone whose voice has the right sound. This affords the possibility to combine various voices to produce transgender sounds, ultimately, as he describes it, to take the same liberties with sound and voice that black musicians have historically taken with their music. In many ways, this is a particularly "black move" in the sense that this disarticulation of image and sound performs a critique of the very properties of self-possession that constitute "the existential issue for Black Americans."18

While, on the one hand, as Kahlil Joseph also confirmed, separate sound recording creates a different comfort zone where people can speak freely, without being policed by the camera, it also affords a different rendering of aural style in the sense that ultimately the sound of what one says, as well as the posture and movements that go with it, might have a deeper stylistic mark than the specific content of what is being said.19 Movement, including the movement induced by editing, in other words, might attempt to translate a speaking style, or the sound design might strive to render the texture of a stroll, and so on.

To push this strategic disconnection and reconnection between sound and image even further, at some point the interviewers—i.e., Jafa or Greg [End Page 124] Tate—asked the interviewees what were the things they truly believed. Recorded independently from the image, the interviewees express themselves rather freely. As a result, the film is punctuated with exceptionally powerful statements—" I know that . . . I know that"—one of which opens the film. This knowledge, the film argues, is a combination of knowing, feeling, and believing; it is ultimately what Moten describes as a type of knowing "under the rubric of faith," which he considers to be the theological component of Black Studies. Even more profoundly, this knowledge is the expression of a "thinking [that is] irreducible in blackness," a statement that is overlaid to the image of a filament spectacularly detaching from the sun (fig. 2).

Black Flesh

The film opens with a quasi-still and fairly flat image of a young man slowly turning his head right to left while also looking into the camera, as Spillers's voice is heard making a commanding and unconditional assertion: "I know that." Her voice continues over the image of a backward movement: we see young men somersaulting out of (instead of into) a swimming pool in slow motion, their bodies remaining temporarily suspended in midair: "We are going to lose this gift of black culture unless we are careful," she elaborates, "this gift that is given to people who don't have a prayer." Her [End Page 125] voice screeches for emphasis around the word "prayer" and is cued to the frozen close-up of one of the young men in the pool who looks intensely at the camera (fig. 3). [End Page 126]

Juxtaposed to two lynching images, Spillers's in Selma voice continues: "beat our skins off our bodies; kill and rape our mamas in front of us." As she repeats for the last time that "we didn't have a prayer," the film's first "abstract" image appears, possibly the picture of a molecular structure, with clearly visible filaments and small translucent masses; it is an image enigmatic enough that it suggests a dimension blackness possesses that does not necessarily belong to the phenomenological world but rather expands unbound across scale (fig. 4).

Spillers continues over slow motion images of people walking down the street:

Now we are heads of international courts, President of the United States, we sit in the United States Supreme Court, Presidents of Universities, CEO of American Express. . . . Some black person is it.

But the price of that is to lose this precious insight that connects you to something human and bigger than white folks—I don't give a fuck what color the folk—something bigger than that.

We are losing that connection because we are buying this other shit.

"I know that. I know that," she concludes over increasingly hazy images of semi-opaque glass panes at dusk, as the camera is looking onto trees and green outside (fig 5).

Here transparency is blocked in favor of an emphasis, not on the haptic properties of these images, but rather on their "intransitive" character—they [End Page 127] don't convey any clear and readable relation to what she is saying, they don't lead anywhere else—so that they can also be "arresting" and create a moment of philosophical suspension.

After a fade to black, one of the filmmakers explains in voice-over how Dreams began as an assessment of "the roles and ambitions of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States," fifty years after Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech to gather "thoughts and conversations of an America that is rarely heard." These words unfold over two images of deep space and a close-up of colorful light reflections on dark waters that show all the chroma of the visible spectrum, as if slipping into blackness and back to color, from color into blackness. (fig. 6).

The voice-over continues:

"In the process the filmmakers discovered even a more fundamental set of questions: What is the concept of blackness? Where did it come from? And what does it mean for people of color living in America today?" The last question is posed over the image of a black star-child that fades into the title, Dreams are colder than Death, while the sound design bears an outer-space quality reminiscent of 2001: A Space Odyssey (dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1969).

This transition embodies the connection with something bigger that Spillers described earlier. It is also steeped in Jafa's admiration for Stanley Kubrick's film, which he saw when he was ten and which provided him with "a model for how powerful art could be."20 Despite being initially utterly puzzled by 2001, he eventually understood his fascination with the "glacial pageantry" of the film in part because a "nascent melancholy" emerged as he began to recognize "categorical constraints" dictated by his blackness. Yet, he also registered the "transfixing" and "unprecedented blackness" of the inhabitants of the Mississippi Delta region where he grew up, including their [End Page 128] "arresting beauty and dense corporeal being," which he ultimately described as "the dark matter of black being."21 In this context, he read 2001's horror vacui as animated by a profound fear of "black being contaminating white being, which, by the very nature of the self-imposed fragile ontological construction of white being, equals the annihilation of white being."22

Yet, what happens when the dark matter of black being, rather than the atavistic whiteness of 2001, is placed at the center of the textual system?23

One way Jafa attempts this radical recalibration is through Spillers's influential notion of the flesh. She discusses how her sister was subjected to a partial amputation and yet continued to feel an excruciating pain in her phantom leg, as if her pain remembered, so to speak, the part of the leg that was no longer there. She calls this "flesh memory" in a manner that echoes Elizabeth Alexander's argument in her article "Can You Be Black and Look at This?," that is, the idea that there is a bodily archive of practical memory that is reactivated at the moment of collective spectatorship of the black body in pain.24 For Spillers, the flesh results from the "theft of the body" that occurs in the Middle Passage.25 It is also a way to describe, as Alexander Weheliye has done, the ungendering inscription of domination onto the biopolitical dimension of the slave body as well as the slave's availability as raw material.26

"We were available in the flesh to the slave master," her voice-over explains, "immediate; hands on," and these words are layered over a slowmotion image of a woman crossing the street. "I can pluck your nappy head from wherever it is. Bang!," Spillers continues. The sound of her "Bang!" is cued to the image of the same woman, who now turns in slow motion toward the camera with a puzzled and inquisitive look, as if reacting to Spillers's mimicked slap (fig. 7). [End Page 129]

"How many kids you have here? Bang! Bang!" Spillers continues.

This layering establishes a call-and-response between the scholar's voice and the "uncommon people" it is laid over by moving through the "passage" that this very layering produces and toward **the experience of the flesh as a source of empathy; it also reinforces the very connection that Spillers worries might be lost.**

Not only does the empathy of the flesh, as rendered here, vividly materialize the network of solidarity, grief, and grievance that #BlackLivesMatter supports, but it locates it within a cosmic context. As Spillers introduces the concept of empathy, the film transitions from a close shot of her face temporarily obscured by foliage as she is walking under a tree, to a shot of the word "TERROR" carved on a black man's chest—a quite literal representation of Spiller's concept of the "hieroglyphics of the flesh"—to an image of the Centaurus galaxy. The flesh here is what binds people who slavery deprived of their "body," and yet, this passage suggests, it is also, possibly, cosmic black matter.

The Dark Matter of Black Being

Key to Jafa's understanding of the "dark matter of black being" in 2001 is the fact that the monolith is a sentient black object, although its blackness, as well as its perfectly smooth and polished modernist surface, might ultimately obscure this very sentience.27 In Christina Sharpe's words, black sentience, just like black pain, is "anagrammatical blackness," an "index of violability," which also means, as Calvin Warren explains, that the metaphysical violences directed at black lives "are indecipherable because they constitute a non-sense sign within the grammar of redress and humanism." While unreadable to the outside, they are affectively felt, where affect provides "form for an experience anti-blackness places outside ethics."28 Drawing on Hortense Spillers's field-defining essay "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," one of the issues both Afro-Pessimism and #BlackLivesMatter insist on is the need to find an appropriate grammar for black pain. If "suffering," as Sexton puts it, is a "simple enough term for withstanding the ugliness of the world—and learning from it—[then] Afro-Pessimism is, among other things, an attempt to formulate an account of such suffering, to establish the rules of its grammar."29

Black sentience and suffering are appropriate "black matter" for the type of knowledge and flesh memory on which Dreams insists. Saidiya Hartman, for example, shares her relationship with premature death: how she knows too many people who died young, including all the guys she had crushes on in her youth. Similarly, she knows her life could end at any [End Page 130] minute because of an act of gratuitous violence. The social existence of blackness, she says, is one of "intimacy with death."30 Yet images of human suffering in the film are all historical rather than contemporary, and even this latter statement happens in conjunction with an image of a mother and three girls absorbed in their own thoughts, walking in slow motion toward the camera (fig. 8).

Horizontal passages such as this one register as assertions of the equal preciousness, and equal enigma, of all black lives. They establish affective links and therefore enact what Sharpe might call "wake work" and which Warren would describe as "black care."

At the same time, and overall, they can be seen as a form of gathering in a way that stages also the "Thingness of blackness" in the Heideggerian sense that Moten follows in his essay "The Case of Blackness." There, he claims for blackness that status of Thing, a "gathering as contested matter"—both Sache, that is, gathering, and Ding, that is, the "matter under discussion"—a thingness that pours out of the object, and, like troubled air, escapes from its vestibule. This "breath," he argues, this outflowing of "stolen life," describes the ontological vitality of blackness—its unbound and ungraspable Thingness—as a constitutive and dangerous supplementarity, a "transplanted organ, always eliciting rejection."31

This type of gathering, as Sarah Cervenak similarly writes in her reading of Leonardo Drew's sculptures, "ceremoniously aestheticizes rejectable life, making way for the im/proper regard of its unencroachable (always [End Page 131] unfigurable) value."32 Thus, in this gathering of the "dark matter of black being" across scale—from the microscopic to the cosmic—as well as horizontally, Dreams too institutes the networks of care that transform #BlackLivesMatter from a concept to a movement, insofar as in their very gathering, black lives acquire "the weightedness of being [which] comes through precisely through a kind of deregulated togetherness."33

Indeed, structurally speaking, the film can be regarded as an archival "gathering" of still and moving images—both archival and contemporary images, found and original, recognizable and unrecognizable—which include footage of the interviewees as well as other people who are not named, whose connection to the speaking voices is not known and cannot be guessed.

The film features a number of still images that also appear on APEX\_TNEG, a "proof of concept" piece, originally developed with Malik Sayeed, in which still images quickly flash by in a variety of different orders and combinations. Jafa has modified this montage several times over the years, and it follows rather closely Jafa's "collecting" practice and his sense that individual elements acquire a measure of additional density just by virtue of being gathered together.34

A great part of the film's gathering occurs in the "bosom" of the cosmos itself. When Rich Blint asks, "How do you know that you are free without captivity?" his question is posed over a stunning image of Saturn's moon Dione (fig. 9).35 [End Page 132]

The image of the NGC 3621 Galaxy shown while Nicole Fleetwood explains that "there is something unique about black expressive culture" also underscores this dimension. We can say that anagrammatical blackness reappears here but this time as an index of potentiality, "blackness anew, blackness as a/temporal, in and out of place and time putting pressure on meaning and that against which meaning is made."36 More specifically, this Galaxy is believed to have a system of three black holes at its center, one of which is active and swallows matter while producing radiation.37

Fleetwood explains that she was raised with a working-class black female religious sensibility, and that, at the church where her grandmother was the music director, it was music, and not the sermon, that would drive the service. Indeed, music acted as a mechanism capable of generating energy. Her words are laid over images in part inspired by Hart Leroy Bibbs's Manifesto Optksorption, a 1977 collection of poems and long-exposure photographs of jazz musicians as they are playing. The traces of the musicians' movements linger around their figures as squiggles of light that blur the figures' contours, arguably one of the closest photographic counterparts to the "intensities" that traverse Francis Bacon's paintings, which Deleuze discussed to illustrate the "logic of sensation" (fig. 10).38

Jafa knows Bibbs's work, and he too has been making similar images because he is equally invested in the energizing and expansive intensity of black music. A similar jazz image comes back during Moten's discussion of blackness as a critique of ownership and of the proper. "We have been placed in a position that requires us to break the law, to disobey," Moten explains, and [End Page 133] thus blackness displays an irreducible relation between law making and law breaking, legality and criminality. Not contingently, but historically: during slavery, he elaborates, black gathering was illegal. Yet this also means that blackness is involved in a jurisgenerative process whereby formal innovations are necessarily types of lawbreaking (while lawbreaking might also always conduce to formal innovation). What Miles Davis and John Coltrane were doing, he elaborates, was to break the very rules that they had established the night before, while their improvisatory acts performed a disruption of both property and propriety.

There are no imaginable circumstances within which #BlackLivesMatter could make a similar claim. In the discourses and practices in which it intervenes, where "white safety equals black murder," criminality does not have a philosophical meaning, but it is rather the overarching framing within which blackness is seen to operate, before and regardless of any actions actually taken.39 Yet, Moten and Harney insist, in an essay devoted to Michael Brown, "If we refuse to show the image of a lonely body, of the outline of the space that body simultaneously took and left, we do so in order to imagine jurisgenerative black social life walking down the middle of the street—for a minute, but only for a minute, unpoliced, another city gathers, dancing."40

Mattering Blackness

Filling the frame in extreme close-up, and barely emerging into visibility, silhouette artist Kara Walker rubs her eyes.

"When I work . . . I find myself in this kind schism, in this kind of mercurial space, that is sort of non-gendered and non-raced," she says over some of her most famous silhouette installations. "My skin keeps trying to stick itself back on. . . . I become aware of the skin and everything that comes with it. . . . And then it comes detached, only slightly, not all the way." Now an extreme close-up of her lips occupies the left side of the frame. "I am getting this image of retinal detachment. The skin is literally folding away and it's gory and grotesque and that's where I feel like when I am at home." Seen in extreme close-up now, her eyelid occupies the right side of the frame (fig. 11).

"It is not a safe place to be," she continues, "but one where you can kind of look at the underside of race . . . what is being escaped from." She proceeds: "What is this existential horror that one can feel about being kind of invisible . . . being kind of a heavy presence / a heavy non-presence?" It is a question heard over an image of waves hitting a shore dotted with black rocks.

The space she describes is no longer purely cosmic but also mental and epistemological—a space for the skin to slightly detach and raciality [End Page 134] to be placed in suspension. This is a space for the flesh to be not the product of dispossession but rather the location of pure sentience, one that the film translates through a process of mattering: from Walker's actual flesh, seen from an unnaturally close proximity, as if the camera aspired to eliminate any distance whatsoever between itself and its profilmic subject, to "dark waters," and eventually to the extreme close-up of an older man slowly nodding his head. Here, too, black gathering produces weight, density, and mass.

Black matter gathers, Dreams shows, but also remembers. Spillers narrates the loss of family members: her father and mother, her niece, her nephew, and her last sibling. The details seem at first very specific to her contingent experience; yet she claims that in this process she discovered something she didn't know: "dying is really real. It is really nonnegotiable." The particular universal of her loss traces the same network #BlackLivesMatter attempts to travel by giving way to the capaciously collective, and beyond that, to the universal fact of dying. All lives end. Not just black lives.

It is at this point that, through Moten's words, the film poses its crucial question about loving blackness regardless of its relationship to the after-life of slavery:

I know there is such a thing as blackness—not an effect of horror—it survives horror and terror. It can be loved, and it has to be loved; it should be defended; it should be nurtured. [End Page 135]

I know those things to be true.

I know those things.

As he explains the source and nature of his knowledge, he also affirms the constant thinking that is "irreducible in blackness." The image of the sun mentioned at the beginning then transitions to a slow-motion close-up of Spillers laughing broadly (fig. 12), as if exhilarated, perhaps in passage toward a suspended lightness that springs from the knowledge of black love.

**If we win that black relationality is possible, it disproves pornotroping. They assume that the relationship between non-Black and Black is SOLELY one of domination. This denies Black agency and the history of resistance**

Tamura A. **LOMAX 11**. Doctoral Student in Religion, Vanderbilt. Hortense Spillers served on Lomax’s doctoral committee. “Changing the Letter: Theorizing Race and Gender in Pop Cultural ‘Media’ Through a Less Pornotropic Lens.” Dissertation. May. http://etd.library.vanderbilt.edu/available/etd-03282011-101108/unrestricted/LomaxDissertatonFull.pdf.

However, it is important to note that while black women and girls are impacted by superimposed pornotropic ways of being seen, a distinction is to be drawn between identities as produced by others and identities as appropriated and performed by black women and girls themselves. Therefore, although identities are superimposed onto black women and girls’ bodies, they are **always contested** and appropriated. Despite contestation and appropriation, culturally produced and maintained ideas about identities are also so hegemonicly determined that they appear normative and are thus internalized. Although the pornotropic gaze may be internalized, **simultaneously operating** may also be their **contestations**, notwithstanding how difficult resistance to pornotropic gazing may be, particularly as they are intermeshed with reality and as such, difficult to resist altogether.¶ Exploring the pornotropic gaze and its determinacy within contemporary black religion 12 and cultural media 13 is the major aim of this dissertation. Womanist theologians and ethicists created a cross-pollinated theo-ethical trajectory that demarginalized and re-presented North American black women as thinking and feeling moral agents with experiences worthy of academic inquiry. Pivotal to their discourse is demythologizing black womanhood and its variety of cultural representations. However, a major proposition circulating throughout this dissertation is that, while womanist theoethical discourse opens space for examining North American black women’s experiences and representations, what is needed to move that discourse forward in African American Religion14 from its dependencies on restricted analyses of black women’s experiences, methodological limitations and normative conceptual restrictions, is an examination of the manner in which the force of representational epistemes operate in black religion and culture to over-determine contemporary black women and girls’ experiences within a pornotropic gaze.¶ This dissertation argues that religious and cultural media are socially organized technologies of power that reproduce, maintain, circulate, and exchange historical myths on black womanhood, which black women and girls both resist and appropriate. 15 Notwithstanding how they may be resisted or appropriated, operative historical myths need to be deconstructed and, in many cases, disoriented. This dissertation achieves this by “changing the letter.” “Changing the letter,” which refers to the essay, “Changing the Letter: The Yokes, the Jokes of Discourse, or, Mrs. Stowe, Mr. Reed,” written by Spillers, frames both my theory and strategy for reading (deconstruction) and writing (retheorizing). It holds that words (“letters”) can be manipulated (“changed”) in a **variety of ways** to tell a story that may be either **liberative** or oppressive (“yoke”). Therefore, meanings are not fixed, 16 but are **constantly influx**, although sometimes appearing stabilized.¶ This dissertation takes issue with the latter perception: the ways that cultural meanings are stabilized over time and presented as “truth.” 17 Pornotropia 18 thrives off of controlling ideas that are stabilized and taken for granted. The phrase, “taken for granted,” highlights what Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann refer to as un-reflected inclinations toward certain actions developed in the ‘natural attitude’, which **presume** inter-subjective realities of the life-world to be similarly experienced or imagined, for example, the idea that there was a world prior to our existence, made up of subjects, objects and nature, the former of which (human subjects) are endowed with consciousnesses that interpret meanings amongst themselves in horizontal and cognitive ways. However, “reality,” the conditions that we encounter, is **mediated through interpretation**, which gives rise to certain kinds of conduct (over others), given our stock of previous experiences, either our own or inherited. Previous experiences frame our “stocks of knowledge” and motivate our attitudes and actions toward certain ends, given the anticipation of what is believed to be both conventional and probable. 19¶ The “taken for granted” within the ‘natural attitude’ neglects **critical queries** that might take up how relationships between the subject and representation might be situated, or, as interpreters, how we may be positioned towards either (or both), given attitudes. This kind of thinking leads to **reductive practices** such as reading one’s identity in light of the appearance of a (projected) profile such as the taken for granted “black-female-aswhore” stereotype, as opposed to her **complex subjectivity**. The latter enables a variety of readings, thus **“lessening” pornotropia**, which depends on the rigidity of a closed script.¶ This dissertation highlights a struggle for truth that is inextricably linked to lived experiences, that is, **social-cultural-historical-political conditions**. One aim of this dissertation is to confuse previous readings of “black womanhood” by blasting the habits of language, linguistic and representational, its internal signals, inferred ideologies, encodings, and operation. These strategies enable the mass-reproduction and continued circulation and closure of the script of black womanhood. Circulating myths of black womanhood need to be taken up. However, they also need to be taken up differently than they have been previously in African American religion, culture, and womanist theoethical scholarship. This dissertation explores their deployment in religion and culture and the critiques thereof. Both deployment and criticisms produce layers of meanings that are reproduced and circulated. I will examine the strategies by which myths of black womanhood travel, getting realigned and re-appropriated from generation to generation.¶ These moves “loosen the yoke” and decrease the jolts of “America’s Grammar Book” on race and gender. The following chapters emphasize loosening the yoke, while the overall aim of this dissertation is significantly inspired by the reality of the jolt. “The jolt” refers to the ongoing threat of symbolic and material violence caused by day-to-day representational terror, which is mass-produced in and transmitted through media that “projects”20 and inform certain opinions and attitudes regarding ‘normativity’ and ‘difference’.

**Presenting a strategy to solve suffering isn’t voyeurism.**

**Craps ’12** [Steph; 2012; Professor of English at Ghent University, Director of Centre for Literature and Trauma; *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds*, *Palgrave*, “Conclusion,” p. 126-127; GR]

Cogent though these various critiques are in their own terms, it seems to me that they unduly homogenize and simplify different forms of interest in and inquiry into trauma. While it is true, of course, that trauma research does not in and of itself lead to political transformation, I would argue that a **trauma** theory revised along the lines I have suggested is not destined to serve as the handmaiden of the status quo or a mere academic **alibi** for the indulgence of **voyeuristic inclinations**. On the contrary, it can help identify and understand situations of **exploitation and abuse**, and act as an **incentive** for the kind of sustained and systemic critique of **societal conditions** called for by Berlant and Brown. In fact, the expanded **model of trauma** I have proposed, based on the work of Laura Brown, Frantz **Fanon**, and others, bears a close resemblance to the model of suffering that Berlant puts forward as an **alternative** to the (traditional) trauma model, which she finds inadequate: "a model of suffering, whose etymological articulation of **pain** and patience draws its **subject** less as an **effect** of an act of **violence** and more as an effect of a **general atmosphere** of it, peppered by **acts**, to be sure, but not contained by the presumption that trauma carries, that it is an effect of a single scene of violence or toxic taxonomy" (338). Berlant's observation that "the pain and suffering of subordinated subjects in everyday life is an ordinary and ongoing thing that is underdescribed by the (traumatic) identity form and its circulation in the state and the law" (344) is perfectly in line with the argument I have presented in this book.

That **trauma research** can act as a **catalyst** for astute **political analysis** and **meaningful activism** would seem to be borne out by the [END PAGE 126] development in Fanon's writing, from Black Skin, White Masks, which describes the psychological impact of racial and colonial oppression, to the overtly political The Wretched of the Earth, which confronts the source of the mental strife he saw in the clinic.3 Since Douglas Crimp's plea for "[m]ilitancy, of course, then, but mourning too: mourning and militancy" (18) in relation to the AIDS movement back in 1989, several scholars have argued that an interest in issues of trauma, loss, and mourning is in fact compatible with a commitment to radical activism. A desire to make **visible** the creative and **political**-rather than **pathological** and negative-aspects of an **attachment** to loss is the thread that binds together the essays gathered in David Eng and David Kazanjian's volume Loss: The Politics of Mourning (2003), which seeks to "extend[] recent scholarship in trauma studies by insisting that ruptures of experience, witnessing, history, and truth are, indeed, a starting point for political activism and transformation" (10). Eng and Kazanjian see their collection as moving "from trauma to prophecy, and from epistemological structures of unknowability to the politics of mourning" (10). As one of the contributors, Ann Cvetkovich, puts it, trauma can be "the provocation to create **alternative lifeworld’s**" ("Legacies of Trauma" 453).

Recognition of suffering serves as a **necessary first step** towards the amelioration of that suffering. In Judith Butler's words, "The recognition of **shared precariousness** introduces strong normative commitments of equality and invites a more robust universalizing of rights that seeks to address basic **human needs** for food, shelter, and other conditions for persisting and flourishing" (28-29). Without wishing to overstate its likely impact, I believe that rethinking trauma studies from a postcolonial perspective and providing nuanced readings of a wide variety of narratives of trauma and witnessing from around the world can help us understand that shared precariousness. By fostering attunement to previously unheard suffering and putting into global circulation memories of a broad range of traumatic histories, an inclusive and culturally sensitive trauma theory can assist in raising awareness of injustice both past and present and opening up the possibility of a more just global future-and, in so doing, remain faithful to the ethical foundations of the field.5

**at: alt solves IR**

**The alt can’t solve states going to war AND makes alleviating “concrete human woes” irrelevant.**

**Isacoff ’15** [Jonathan; 2015; Associate Professor of Political Science and the Chair of Environmental Studies at Gonzaga University; *Why IR Needs Deweyan Pragmatism*, “Perspectives on Political Science,” p. 26-33; GR]

I mean that what **IR is or is not** is not **nearly as important** as what it **achieves**. So the question should not be whether IR is scientific, but rather, how scientific does it need to be to get the job done? To this, there are many answers, but I suggest a line of reasoning: the scientific method in the most general sense is useful in helping to explain how and why, all else equal, causal processes work. Put differently, if we want to know **how and why** some states **go to war** and others do not, it would be **more useful**—in the sense of getting **logically coherent**, **empirically verifiable** answers—to analyze **historical cases systematically** than it would be to consult with a shaman or use a crystal ball to obtain an answer. This is not say that there is not an important role for textual interpretation in the process of studying war and other international phenomena. Indeed, I elsewhere argue that interpretation of historical texts is crucial to making valid claims about wars.47 But the main point here is that interpretation is a means toward an end, namely, the process of coping with the world via human experience. Toward that end, interpretation is necessary and useful, but it is not the end itself.

A second point is that there is clearly a pragmatic and justifiable need for certain types of quantitative methods, namely, statistics, though not necessarily formal models, in some segments of IR. Taking a simple example for illustrative purposes, if one wished to study the effect of speed limits on motor vehicle fatalities, the use of aggregate data statistically analyzed would be far superior to standing on the corner waiting for an accident to observe or reading several diary accounts of individual accidents. The key point here, however, is not that statistical methods are inherently better, or more “rigorous” than any other type of method. Rather, the use of **statistically analyzed data** to find answers to problems of highway fatalities creates **knowledge** that if properly applied, **would alleviate** “concrete **human woes,”** which is to say it would help to save lives. That is **pragmatic political science**.

48 What Is a Problem?

Many political scientists believe in the idea of having a “problem orientation” for the field. For example, Atul Kohli asserts that there is a strong consensus among leading experts “that comparative politics is very much a problem-driven field of study.” “What motivates the best comparative politics research are puzzles of real-world significance,” writes Kohli, in “The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium.”49 Similarly, Ian Shapiro, responding to the question of what would be a better alternative than RCT asks the question: “What is the phenomenon to be explained?… The formulation of alternative explanations, in other words, should be a problem-driven activity.”50 This is clearly consistent with Deweyan pragmatism; in fact, it is inherently pragmatist. “A Deweyan pragmatic approach to political inquiry,” writes Maurice Meilleur, “would transform political science from a discipline, based on a set of methods, into a profession, based on a set of problems.”51 But what, more specifically, is a “problem orientation?” First, it is clear that Kohli and his colleagues mean an empirically driven problem orientation. That is, the study of politics should be driven by **empirical**, **not theoretical**, or **methodological problems**. Careful not to push this point too far, a Deweyan pragmatist would suggest that theorization is an important activity, but it must not lose its link to problems of human experience, which is to say empirical problems. However, Kohli and others advocating an empirically driven problem orientation have little to say about how to identify and value problems. After all, there is a limitless supply of political problems only a fraction of which can be studied.

In response, I would argue that some problems are more significant to the detection and response to human suffering and thus more deserving of study, than others. This is itself a tricky ethical problem, for who is to say what is or is not a “real problem?” One reader of this manuscript suggested that “What is really going on here, when one scratches the analytical surface, is not that IR theorists aren't discussing problems; it's that they are discussing problems that the author does not feel are worthy of attention. But why should we accept that the author's “problems” are more important or privileged? Why does the author get to decide what a “real” problem is?” This is a good question but it is a misreading of the argument. Nowhere does Dewey or this author imply that any individual could or should decide or dictate which problems matter and which do not. To the contrary, the question of “who decides” is a public deliberation problem, a subject Dewey addressed exhaustively in his classic The Public and Its Problems.52 According to Dewey, problems are the direct outcome of a public's determination of its common good. A full analysis of how this works, or in some cases, fails to work in practice is beyond the scope of this article. But it is important to note that there is no argument here for the privileging of one private individual's notion of what constitutions “real problem” versus that of another. That is for the public to decide.

Human Woe and Issues That Matter

The final point to be made about reconstruction stems directly from the previous discussion: some problems matter more than others with regard to the alleviation of concrete human suffering. Which issues matter the most in our world? Ultimately, per Dewey's political philosophy touched on above, that is for the public to decide. Assuming that there ever could be a “common good,” we can hypothesize that people might **choose** to **focus on** issues that affect them daily, issues such as **climate change**, **poverty**, health care, education, **racism**, and **sexism**, as well as **war and peace**, all issues that are of **grave importance** to **humanity**. IR, especially in its American form, with its disproportionate emphasis on global security and great power war, has given scant attention to too many other issues, and when attention is given to the “lesser” topics, they are relegated to sub-sub-specializations within the discipline, “Gender and IR,” for instance. More **problematic** from the standpoint of pragmatism, the **approach-driven wing** of the discipline is **more concerned** with which **paradigm** has scored **more points** in the **epic contest** for **paradigmatic supremacy** than with the matter of how the world **could or should** respond to climate change or why hundreds of million of children lack basic nutrition and medical care. The interpretivist/linguistic wing, in contrast, is more concerned with how texts are interpreted in graduate seminars than with the fact that children in inner cities cannot even read a text at all.

53 Many IR scholars are still fighting over whether and to what extent “unit-level variables” should be taken into consideration in understanding international politics (and if so, whether one might still rightly be accepted in the club of realism).54 Others are **trying** to demonstrate that IR constructivism is really “**liberalism in disguise**.”55 This is not a stab at “why realism is (yet again) wrong.” It is a critique of the **self-definitionally obsessed**, paradigm-driven culture of academic IR. I would not go so far as to claim that there are no scholars who study everyday politics; many clearly do.56 Rather, the problem is that that the incentive structure to contribute to the “big debates” of the discipline, namely, those at the paradigmatic level, is a project that drifts **ever afar** from the problems of “**concrete human woe**” that affect the **other millions of people** who happen not to have **graduate degrees in IR**.

**at: death k (omalade etc)**

**Biological life is better than death – even if society is rigged against minorities, fighting to protect the global commons is the only option**

**Alice Walker 82** [Alice Walker, “Only Justice Can Stop a Curse”, Anti-Nuke Rally speech at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco CA, won Pulitzer Prize and lots of other white awards for the Color Purple, other books by her which are also incredible are less known but still great, March 16, 1982]

Life is better than death, I believe, if only because it is less boring, and because it has fresh peaches in it. In any case, Earth is my home—though for centuries white people have tried to convince me I have no right to exist, except in the dirtiest, darkest corners of the globe.¶ ¶ So let me tell you: I intend to protect my home. Praying—not a curse—only the hope that my courage will not fail my love. But if by some miracle, and all our struggle, the earth is spared, only justice to every living thing (and everything alive) will save humankind.¶ ¶ And we are not saved yet.¶ ¶ Only justice can stop a curse.

**AT: Anti-Blackness Ks (Rememory Aff)**

**2AC -- RC -- Essentializing**

**Root cause debates are bad---they rely on exceptionalism from violence and reduces other literature to liberalism---causes scapegoating of indigenous/black communities because “they’re succumbing to the state” and movement failure through lack of solidarity and intercommunal violence**

**Leroy 16** (Justin Leroy, Ph.D., Assistant Professor at UC Davis, 2016, “Black History in Occupied Territory: On the Entanglements of Slavery and Settler Colonialism,” <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/633276>; accessed 8/16/2021) ng

Roberts's analysis was not without flaws. He did not consider the limits of British emancipation, either in terms of expectations for continued black labor productivity or how it legitimized the British imperial project writ large. Yet Roberts was among the first to articulate the idea that black freedom cannot be premised upon indigenous death and displacement. Inspired by Roberts, I begin with the claim that slavery and settler colonialism share deep and overlapping histories. What insights might emerge from thinking of settler colonialism as a logic of indigenous erasure that has sustained its coherence partly through the language of anti-blackness? Or from considering anti-blackness as dependent upon militarized discourses of security with roots in settler colonialism? Conversely, what intellectual pathways are foreclosed when slavery and settler colonialism vie for primacy as the violence most foundational to the modern social order? **Recent work in black studies, on the one hand, and indigenous and settler colonialism studies, on the other, has made claims to exceptionalism that leave the two fields at an impasse**. After surveying this work, I argue that twentieth-century colonial projects have relied upon both anti-blackness and a logic of settlement. **Social movements have been able to express radical forms of solidarity by suspending claims to exceptionalism so pervasive in scholarly analysis**. I conclude with a brief sketch of contemporary black-Palestinian solidarity activism, paying particular attention to how the anti-blackness at work in the Israeli settler project makes blackness resonate in Palestine and occupation resonate among black Americans. Frameworks of Exceptionalism Indigenous and black critical theory are extraordinarily robust fields. They have challenged the notion that the United States could live up to its universalist foundations (“liberty and justice for all”) if only it could address the structuring exclusions of race, gender, sexuality, and class. Rather than framing such exclusions as the unfortunate effect of lingering prejudices that could be remedied by inclusion within the fabric of the nation-state, indigenous and black theory frame settler colonialism and racial slavery, respectively, as the very conditions of possibility for the United States. The violence of these processes is enduring and ongoing, and the hinge of inclusion/exclusion both misnames that violence and narrows any sense of possibility for how it can be redressed. These fields have emerged in isolation from one another. Each has supplanted facile notions of racial exclusion, but in doing so has proposed alternatives—colonialism and slavery—premised upon exclusive claim to accounting for the violence of modernity.2 These claims are internally coherent and broadly useful, but are incompatible. Either colonialism or slavery must be subordinated to the other, forcing them into aporetic tension. **Each field reduces the other to a variation on the theme of liberal multiculturalism in order to maintain the integrity of its own exceptionalist claims**. Yet **these theories cannot fully account for the historical messiness of black and indigenous encounters with one another and with the US state.** **What might emerge if scholars suspended—even momentarily—such claims in order to consider the impasse of settlement and slavery using historical methods?** Recent work in black studies has argued for a reconceptualized notion of black racialization in which blackness emerges at the edge of humanity—that is, the category “black” is defined against the category “human.” In such formulations, black/non-black is the primary division of the modern social, epistemological, and ontological order, exemplified by Atlantic slavery and its legacies. Although this group of scholars has disagreed about whether slavery's transformation of human life into a commodity was radically generative or a shattering obliteration of the self, they are united by the idea that our ways of knowing the modern world and imagining alternatives to it require centering the violence of enslavement.3 While this work is incredibly helpful for understanding the epochal impact of slavery, it relegates forms of racialization and colonialism that do not self-subordinate to slavery to the realm of anti-blackness or liberal multiculturalism. Such framing has led Tiffany King to claim that **black studies is “inarticulate in the face of settler colonialism**.” 4 Put another way, the field of black studies has not fully reckoned with the historical intimacy between colonialism and slavery. In his seminal work Empire As a Way of Life, William Appleman Williams asserted that the imperial life of the United States “is predicated upon a charming but ruthless faith in infinite progress fueled by infinite growth.” 5 The liberty so central to the founding mythology of the United States was defined by its limitlessness —not in terms of whom it applied to, as in the fantasies of liberalism, but in terms of its spatial expansion. To be free was to face no limits to growth. Tepid versions of black studies have made the assumption that the struggle for justice is an inclusionary one, defined by access to rights and liberties guaranteed by the language of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. This type of black studies has not reconciled with the fact that freedom has never been purely abstract; it is always enacted over and against the ongoing history of colonialism. Thus Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri can claim, “between the presidencies of Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson, the open space of the frontier became the conceptual terrain of republican democracy.” 6 Such scholarship has refused to grapple with what it means to diagnose oppression and demand its redress from within a settler state. Even the more robust formation of black studies concerned with the exceptionalism of slavery has not reckoned with the relationship between this drive to growth and the expansion of human chattel.7 It has not reckoned with how black racialization occurred in tandem with settler ideology and not merely adjacent to it. To be clear, this problem is not one of black studies ignoring the presence of indigenous people, but of how **the field theorizes black racialization in a way that precludes a serious engagement with indigenous dispossession**. If blackness is exclusion from the category of the human or access to a knowable self, the loss of sovereignty can only be framed as a lesser loss with a subordinate grammar. For example, Jared Sexton has argued that slavery “precedes and prepares the way for colonialism,” and describes colonialism as “the issue or heir of slavery, its outgrowth or edifice or monument.” 8 While this may be a generative theoretical claim that lends conceptual coherence to Sexton’s insightful framing of slavery and antiblackness, it is simply not historically accurate.

**Their exceptionalist reading of sovereignty misidentifies the sovereign possibility of the Native – *from the settler/master perspective* the Native is void and there is no possibility of humanity – turns all Sexton args and is a solvency deficit to the alt.**

**Robinson, 2020** (Rowland – member of the Menominee Nation (Ka͞eyes-Mamāceqtawak) and PhD Candidate in Sociology @ the University of Waterloo, “An Autoethnographic Account of the Imaginarium of Late Capitalist/Colonialist Storytelling”, dissertation, shae)

7.1 Being-outside-Settler-Time In his text Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms, Wilderson provides us with an ontological taxonomy of life under settler colonialism of human-Savage-Slave57. Within his necessarily arboreal theorization the white/settler/master occupies the space of the ‘human’, alongside all other non-Native and non-Black people of colour, while the Black Slave is the abjected non-human. Between these two positions is the Native Savage, which for Wilderson occupies a liminal position of half-humanness (2010). The reasoning for the half-human positionality of the Native Savage for Wilderson is found within his understanding of the grammars of Native life: genocide and the loss of sovereignty. Within his theorization of the structure of U.S. antagonisms, the former is unable to be made legible within the rhetorical world of the human cum settler, and rather finds articulation with the grammars of Black suffering: accumulation and fungibility. However, so Wilderson theorizes, the latter, which is the loss of sovereignty, is able to be reincorporated and made legible within the human’s register of structural re-adjustment (2010). Wilderson notes: On the semantic field on which the new protocols are possible, Indigenism can indeed become partially legible through a programmatics of structural adjustment (as fits our globalized era). In other words, for the Indians’ subject position to be legible, their positive registers of lost or threatened cultural identity must be foregrounded, when in point of fact the antagonistic register of dispossession that Indians “possess” is a position in relation to a socius structured by genocide. … [T]he Indigenous position is one for which genocide is a constitutive element, not merely an historical event, without which Indians would not, paradoxically, “exist” (2010:9-10). He continues this line of thinking elsewhere, writing: whereas the genocidal modality of the “Savage” grammar of suffering articulates itself quite well within the two modalities of the Slave’s grammar of suffering, accumulation and fungibility, Native American film, political texts, and ontological meditations fail to recognize, much less pursue this articulation. The small corpus of socially engaged films directed by Native Americans privilege the ensemble of questions animated by the imaginary of sovereign loss (2010:28). As powerful and insightful as Wilderson’s ontological mapping of white/settler/master and Black life may be, there are certain theoretical miscues within his analysis which cause him to misallocate the Native Savage as liminal to human life, as not-quite-human, rather than fully outside of it. Indeed, in later work, Wilderson completely abjures this formulation under the influence of Jared Sexton’s work in “The Vel of Slavery” (2016)58, and places the formerly liminal Native Savage fully inside of the category of the Man qua the human (2011). Focusing on his earlier and more textually substantial work however, for Juárez—who’s own work repositions Wilderson’s grammar of Redness from genocide and sovereignty to clearing and civilization—this is because Wilderson: compartmentalizes the Red ontological position of clearing into genocide and (the loss of) sovereignty, ultimately failing to recognize the nature of Red life as the condition of being cleared a priori to existence, what Wilderson articulates as the shift from clearing as a verb to clearing as a noun at the moment of the “discovery” [emphasis mine] (2014). This essential element of recognition for Juárez is the entry point of the Native as out-of-settler-time. In drawing this development out of the settler order of things, we turn to the Marshall Trilogy of decisions at the U.S. supreme court in the early-to-mid-19th century, seminal decisions in the juridical reckoning of the Native within the northern bloc. Johnson v. McIntosh, Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, and Worcester v. Georgia were three of the single most important decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court with regards to Native Law and Indigenous rights, setting forth the legal terrain upon which much the proceeding governance of settler colonialism would be built. For example, the Court’s unanimous decision in 1823 in the Johnson case, despite no actual representation for Indigenous peoples, re-inscribed into the law of the new, secular american republic the older, christian european “doctrine of discovery”, which decidedly relegated Indigenous peoples to secondary status on the question of their possession of their own land, which was transferred into the realm of being squabbles over territory by competing european and settler actors. Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, and Worcester v. Georgia continued this legal colonialism, refining the process over the period of these two subsequent Supreme Court cases (Williams 2005). Lumbee critical legal scholar Robert A. Williams, Jr. says of their foundational role in the settler order of things that: the Marshall Model of Indian Rights plays much the same kind of inaugural and paradoxical organizing role in the Supreme Court’s Indian law as Bhabha’s wondrous “English book” plays in the cultural writings of English colonialism (2005:50). In particular, these three court decisions have had a profound and lasting implication for any understanding of Native sovereignty and the loss thereof. In this regard, Juárez notes, “The Marshall rulings ontologically determine Redness from the moment the Settler meets the Savage (2014). The temporal dimension of the Marshal rulings is likewise noted by Wolfe, who states: Native sovereignty existed out of (or at least, prior to) colonial time, which is to say, it did not exist at all—or rather, it only existed in order to be diminished. Paradoxically, therefore, Native sovereignty was a creation of discovery. Propositionally, it was an imperative generated by Marshall’s commitment to diminution, which required an undiminished prior state that could be diminished from (2012:10-11). Finally, Mark Rifkin describes the cognition of Native sovereignty in light of the Marshall Decisions as a “peculiar status.” In particular, he says of the place of Native sovereignty within the juridical worlding of the settler that it is “less as a way of designating a specific set of powers than as a negative presence, as what Native peoples categorically lack” (2017b:297). The notion of Native sovereignty is a void, a nullity, a simulacrum par excellence; it does not hide some genuine truth, some deeper reality, that Natives are, or were, in fact, sovereign self-subjects and that this status was lost within the cognition of the white/settler/master. As Baudrillard himself notes, in a simulated reference to the new testament, “The simulacrum is never what hides the truth—it is truth that hides the fact that there is none” (1994:1). This is, as Juárez articulates, the essence of “being cleared a priori to existence” (2014). On the ontological implications of this, and of the resultant construction of the Native within the symbolic order of the settler, he notes: For the concept that the United States had eminent domain over the land to gain coherence it must presume, in the a priori, that the terra nullius of the Americas always was. Here, Native Americans emerge barred from sovereignty at the ontological level, and thus can only be regarded as non-human occupants. This a priori clearing becomes the necessary grounding for the Marshall ruling to make sense because the clearing of land must be scaled to the level of a hemisphere in order for colonial land-grabbing to even begin to play out within the Americas. … as far as the Settler is concerned, as far as the world is concerned, the Red Indian never had sovereignty, never had any claim to the land at all (2014). The above discussions of the Marshall Rulings in the United States also reveal an additional problem with Wilderson’s theorization of the Native as a kind of liminal half-human or not-quite-human. This is that while he sees the loss of sovereignty for the Native as a point of articulation with the grammars of suffering of the human, what he fundamentally misses is that where the same linguistic taxons may be used to seemingly describe a notion of Native sovereignty that is superficially similar to the sovereignty of the white/settler/master, it is, in fact, something of a categorically, and fundamentally different, and inferior, kind. While not in my reading a direct critique of Wilderson, Wolfe makes this distinction clear, noting: In keeping with the doctrine of discovery, the Marshall judgments presuppose, and can only consistently be read as presupposing, a fundamental asymmetry between Indians’ right of occupancy and the property rights that white settlers could obtain once Native title had been extinguished. Under certain conditions, Natives’ immemorial occupation of their land entitled them to a right of soil or usufruct, which was understood as hunting and gathering rather than as agriculture. This right was inalienable. It could not be sold to private individual or corporation but, under the principle of pre-emption, could only be surrendered to the crown. Once Native title had been surrendered to the crown and extinguished, however, the crown could transfer to settlers an entitlement (fee simple) that was greater than the right of occupancy that the Natives had surrendered. Thus the process yielded more than land for settlers. It also yielded sovereign subjecthood: they became the sort of people who could own rather than merely occupy. The asymmetry between occupancy and title reflected a thoroughgoing discrepancy whereby Indian and white were categories of a different order (2012:10). Thus, the trap for which Wilderson falls in his discussion of (the loss of) Native sovereignty as one of the two modalities of Red suffering, and as a point of articulation with the alienation and exploitation of the white/settler/master, is one of language. As he claims in Red, White & Black: At every sale—the soul, the body, the group, the land, and the universe—they [the settler and the Indian] can both practice cartography, and although at every scale their maps are radically incompatible, their respective “mapness” is never in question.

This capacity for cartographic coherence is the thing itself, that which secures subjectivity for both the Settler and the ‘Savage’ and articulates them to one another in a network of connections, transfers and displacements’ (2010:181). Wilderson’s predicament is made clearer in his more recent essay “Afro-Pessimism and the End of Redemption,” in which he creates a juxtaposition between Simon Ortiz’s poem “Sand Creek” (2000) alongside his own, “Law Abiding” (2013). Through his reading of Ortiz’s poetic work he claims: [T]he relational status of both the Indian victims and the White oppressors is established—a reciprocal dynamic is acknowledged (between degraded humanity, Indians, and exalted humanity, White settlers). This reciprocal dynamic is based on the fact that even though one group is massacring the other, both exist within the same paradigm of recognition and incorporation. Their relation is based on a mutual recognition of sovereignty. At every scale of abstraction, body, family, community, cosmology, physical terrain, Native American sovereignty is recognized and incorporated into the consciousness of both Indians and settlers who destroyed them. The poem’s coherence is sustained by structural capacity for reciprocity between the genociders and the genocided (2016). Speculatively: Wilderson’s trap of language here and elsewhere is perhaps as a result of the insufficiencies in, and inherent ideological and affective working of, settler juridical and philosophical linguistic taxonomies59. In essence he mistakes the outward linguistic conceptual coverings of these two concepts of supposed sovereignty for their actual ontological content; two things which in fact could not be more distinct—thus allowing for his argument that Natives and the white/settler/master share a mutual cognition of the sovereignty of the other, united in a joint paradigm of “recognition and incorporation.” As Wolfe notes, however, “The same words meant different things when applied to either” (2012:10). Tracing a similar path Joanne Barker likewise notes that: There is no fixed meaning for what sovereignty is—what it means by definition, what it implies in public debate, or how it has been conceptualized in international, national, or indigenous law. Sovereignty—and its related histories, perspectives, and identities—is embedded within the specific social relations in which it is invoked and given meaning. … The challenge, then, to understand how and for whom sovereignty matters is to understand the historical circumstances under which it is given meaning. There is nothing inherent about its significance (2005:21). We can follow the old structural linguistics of Saussure (2013) through Baudrillard (2019; 2006; 1994) and Derrida (2016) that any sign within a given assemblage gains its meaningful content in their relationships to other signs and other concepts; through what it is not. Native sovereignty is not, and never has been the same thing as the sovereignty of the white/settler/master. This is born out explicitly within the juridical judgements of the Marshall Trilogy and the legal rendition of prior Native possession as mere usufruct, rather than the fulsomeness of free-holding private property—true sovereignty—something which, via a technology of settler governance that appears more as a form of the alchemy, it could be transformed into and granted forthwith to genuine human (ethnoclass (bourgeois) Man) subjects through of the sovereign power of the Crown or the Republic. Wilderson is hardly alone in this movement, however, which seeks, as Wolfe notes, “to minimize Indian difference and assimilate it to Whiteness” (2016a:8), or more specifically, to assimilate it to Man in its overrepresentation as the human, and thus make it inimical to all other forms of life and decolonial, abolitionist and liberation struggles. For Wilderson’s close fellow traveller Jared Sexton this is most explicit (2016), as it is in the work of Migration and Transnationalism scholar Nandita Sharma (2008-09; 2015). Thus, for them, as Melanie K. Yazzie and Nick Estes describe, moves towards a critique of settler colonialism as a distinct modality of domination and towards a decolonial Nativeness are, “in their recent assaults on Native sovereignty and nationhood, racist to the point of treachery against all oppressed people” (2016:20). What is certainly the case here is that, as critical as their thought may be with regards to the struggles of racialized and colonized peoples, all three of these theorists, within the bodies of their work, effectively re-inscribe and recapitulate a settler-colonial order of things. As Wolfe puts it, speaking specifically of Sharma, but easily applicable to all, colonial resonances pervade their work (2013b:266). Quite on the contrary to this kind of world-building, counterpoised as they are to white supremacy, rather than form a point of legibility and articulation between the human and the Savage, as Wilderson argues (2010), Native sovereignty and the sovereignty of the white/settler/master ultimately occupy fundamentally different and incommensurable registers, on planes of linguistics, the political and the ontological. This in and of itself upsets much of Wilderson’s theorization that sovereignty its loss places the Native in the liminal state of half-humanness—or his later moves to simply fully assimilate the Native into the human—without necessary recourse to Juárez’s shift of the grammars of Native suffering from genocide and (the loss of) sovereignty to clearing and civilization, though I do prefer his general outline for the depth it pursues. In short, the void and the fulsome are neither coeval nor coterminous and can never be. And this is the ultimate trap that Wilderson and similar theorists face when they find themselves confronted by the personage and the position of the Native Savage and mistake superficial linguistic outer-trappings for the inner ontological and political content of the sign. As Juárez eloquently, if painfully, states: The pain and anger over a loss without name is the formation of the social group, it transforms all narratives into narratives of surviving, every act of “culture” by Native Americans becomes a survival strategy in which the dualism between the overwhelming violence of being a Being of nothingness and the deathly comfort of alcoholism and drug use is put off. Wilderson’s concern with the irreconcilable “worlds” of the Settler and the Savage is far too reductionist in the intricacy of the violence inflicted against Red bodies. It is not that there is a Savage world that stands in irreconcilable opposition to the world of the Settler, but rather that Red life (as far as it can be called life) is a survival strategy that no longer possesses the potential for world creation. … He ignores that the violence Red bodies face extends far beyond the reservation into time and space because it is a violence that silenced languages, burned books, obliterated people, erased history, and shattered families (2014). In this project of worlding, of world creation by the white/settler/master as Man as its overrepresentation as the human, there can be no reckoning, no casting of a decolonial face into the future anterior, where there is present something that we might recognize as a genuine Native sovereignty so long as the world of the settler persists. Any futurity which preserves settler colonialism with its civil society, governmental, ontological, and symbolic orders is one that by its very constitution voids any notion of Native self-determination, not only from the present but from the past and the future as well, as anything other than pure simulacra. Returning to the results of the Marshall Decisions60, what they mean for any ontology of Nativeness are profound. On the question of temporality, they must be taken as key to my understanding, because they not only evacuate any possibility of Native sovereignty from the spatial coordinates of the northern bloc of settler colonialism, but indeed from all possible coordinates of temporal cartography as well. Native sovereignty is not just a sovereignty that was lost, in that it is no longer part of the present-now but is, in fact, a sovereignty that never was. While the Native—or, more correctly, the myriad of diverse Indigenous nations that would come to be confined within the legal category of the Native through the governance techniques of settler coloniality—may have been self-governing and self-determining prior to the arrival on these shores of the european, within the worlding of the euro-american/euro-canadian settler the Native qua the Native is not, and never has been, sovereign. The extent to which we can even begin to discuss Native sovereignty and the Native as containing a cogent meaning under the rubrics of settler governmentality, we must first recognize that they have been, and always have been, determined by and through the prerogative of the settler. There is no possibility of structural re-adjustment; only a relationship of aporia and antagonism. This brings into sharp relief Byrd’s two-headed questioning of “do Indians live the ordinary life in the contemporary now?” and “are Indians part of the present tense?” (2011:37). In short, for me, the answer is a resounding no. For Byrd herself, in her reading of Alexis de Tocqueville and the removal of the Choctaw from their traditional homelands in the southeastern United States, she notes that “Even in the present of their removal, the Choctaws are always already past perfect: they had left, they had stepped, they had been promised” (2011:37). Beyond questions of pure legality, as in the questions of sovereignty in the Marshall Trilogy, these issues of temporal abjection for the Native are significant. Mark Rifkin in his work Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination asks, “What does it mean to be recognized as existing in time?” before going on to note that: The representation of Native peoples as either having disappeared or being remnants on the verge of vanishing constitutes one of the principal means of effacing Indigenous sovereignties. Such a portrayal of Indigenous temporal stasis or absence erases extant forms of occupancy, governance, and opposition to settler encroachments. Moreover, it generates a prism through which any evidence of such survival will be interpreted as either vestigial (and thus on the way to imminent extinction) or hopelessly contaminated (as having lost—or quickly losing—the qualities understood as defining something, someone, or some space as properly “Indian” in the first place) (2017a:5). In the worlding of the white/settler/master, the Native is always, and has always been, “was” and “were,” never “is” and “are.” Certainly, if we take this line of logic through its terminal point, not only is the Native was/were and not is/are, the Native can indeed never truly be, so long as the world of the settler continues to be. This is precisely why Byrd, building upon Judith Butler’s articulation of when life is grievable (2016), asks whether the Native is able to cast a life into the tense of the future anterior “in which Indians will have been decolonized” (2011:38). The Native is a being-out-of-time if ever there was one.61

**2AC -- RC -- Defense**

**but their theory can’t explain the aff---indigeneity is the mirror opposite of blackness, historically a site to be exterminated rather than to be continually reproduced---theorizing settler colonialism in conjunction with antiblackness is specifically key to understanding white settlerism**

**Day 2015** [Iyko, Associate Professor of English and Chair of the Critical Social Thought program at Mount Holyoke, “Being or Nothingness: Indigeneity, Antiblackness, and Settler Colonial Critique,” *Critical Ethnic Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2]

According to Sexton, no other oppression is reducible to antiblackness, but the relative totality of antiblackness is the privileged perspective from which to understand racial formation more broadly. But unlike the way feminist and queer critical theory interrogate heteropatriarchy from a subjectless standpoint, Sexton’s entire point seems to rest on the very specificity and singularity—rather than subjectlessness—of black critical theory’s capacity to understand race. The privilege of this embodied viewpoint similarly relies on rigidly binaristic conceptions of land and bodily integrity. He writes, “If the indigenous relation to land precedes and exceeds any regime of property, then the slave’s inhabitation of the earth precedes and exceeds any prior relation to land—landlessness. And selflessness is the correlate. No ground for identity, no ground to stand (on).”57 In other words, the slave’s nonrelation to her body precedes and exceeds any other body’s relation to land. However, the settler colonial designation of the United States and Canada **as terra nullius**—as legally empty lands—**denies the very corporeality of Indigenous populations to inhabit land**, much less have any rights to it. Alongside genocidal elimination, the erasure of Indigenous corporeal existence is **inseparable from the ground it doesn’t stand on, or is removed from**. For the same reason that the economic reductionism of orthodox Marxism has been discredited, such an argument that frames racial slavery as a base for a colonial superstructure similarly **fails to take into account the dialectics of settler colonial capitalism**. The political economy of settler colonial capitalism is more appropriately figured as an **ecology of power relations than a linear chain of events**. Relinquishing any conceptual privilege that might be attributed to Indigeneity, alternatively, Coulthard offers a useful anti-exceptionalist stance: “the colonial relation should not be understood as a primary locus of ‘base’ from which these other forms of oppression flow, but **rather as the inherited background field within which market, racist, patriarchal, and state relations converge.**”58 From this view, **race and colonialism form the matrix of the settler colonial racial state**. Putting colonial land and enslaved labor at the center of a dialectical analysis, we can see that blackness is neither reducible to Indigenous land nor Indigeneity to enslaved labor. Indigenous peoples and slaves are not reducible to each other because settler colonialism abides by a dual logic that is originally driven to eliminate Native peoples from land and mix the land with enslaved black labor. If land is the basis of settler colonialists’ relationship to Indigenous peoples, it is labor that frames that relationship with enslaved peoples. We can draw on Patrick Wolfe’s important points about the heterogeneous racial effects of such a settler formation based on Indigenous land and enslaved labor. To summarize those points, the *racial* content of Indigenous peoples is the **mirror opposite of blackness**. From the beginning, an eliminatory project was driven to reduce Native populations through genocidal wars and later through statistical elimination through blood quantum and assimilationist policies. For slaves, an opposite logic of exclusion was driven to *increase*, not eliminate, the population of slaves**. One logic does not cause the other; rather, they work together to serve a unitary end in increasing white settler property in the form of land and an enslaved labor force**. As a result, in the postemancipation, postfrontier era, the **racial content of Indigenous peoples is entirely dissolvable and eradicable**. Alternatively, the racial content of blackness remains absolute and essential, and **maintains an infinite capacity to contaminate**. As Wolfe states, “the respective racializations . . . were **diametrically opposed, in a manner that reflected and preserved the foundational distinction between land and labor.** For whereas race for black people became an indelible trait that would survive any amount of admixture, **race for Indians became an inherently descending quantity that was terminally susceptible to dilution**.”59 One consequence is that the phrase “separate but equal” can take two meanings: as either an injurious legal relic or a sovereign politics of the future.60 Given this stark **distinction in racial ontologies**, any critical theory that views race and colonialism as a causal rather than dialectical relation is **incapable of exposing these inextricable logics of settler colonialism**.

**2AC -- AT: Ontology**

**Anti-blackness is not an ontological antagonism---conflict is inevitable in politics, but does not have to be demarcated around whiteness and blackness**

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Thus the self-same/other distinction is necessary for the possibility of identity itself. There always has to exist an outside, which is also inside, to the extent it is designated as the impossibility from which the possibility of the existence of the subject derives its rule (Badiou 2009, 220). But although the excluded place which isn’t excluded insofar as it is necessary for the very possibility of inclusion and identity may be universal (may be considered “ontological”), its content (what fills it) – as well as the mode of this filling and its reproduction – are contingent. In other words, the meaning of the signifier of exclusion is **not determined** once and for all: the place of the place of exclusion, of death is itself over-determined, i.e. the very framework for deciding the other and the same, exclusion and inclusion, is **nowhere engraved in ontological stone** but is political and never terminally settled. Put differently, the “curvature of intersubjective space” (Critchley 2007, 61) and thus, the specific modes of the “othering” of “otherness” are nowhere decided in advance (as a certain ontological fatalism might have it) (see **Wilderson** 2008). **The social does not have to be divided into white and black**, and the meaning of these signifiers is never necessary – because they are signifiers. To be sure, colonialism institutes an ontological division, in that whites exist in a way barred to blacks – who are not. But this ontological relation is really on the side of the **ontic** – that is, of all contingently constructed identities, rather than the ontology of the social which refers to the ultimate unfixity, the indeterminacy or lack of the social. In this sense, then, the white man doesn’t exist, the black man doesn’t exist (Fanon 1968, 165); and neither does the colonial symbolic itself, including its most intimate structuring relations – division is constitutive of the social, not the colonial division. “Whiteness” may well be very deeply sediment in modernity itself, but respect for the “ontological difference” (see Heidegger 1962, 26; Watts 2011, 279) shows up its ontological status as ontic. It may be so deeply sedimented that it becomes difficult even to identify the very possibility of the separation of whiteness from the very possibility of order, but from this it does not follow that the “void” of “black being” functions as the ultimate substance, the transcendental signified **on which all possible forms of sociality** are said to **rest**. What gets lost here, then, is the **specificity** of colonialism, of its constitutive axis, its “ontological” differential. A crucial feature of the colonial symbolic is that the real is not screened off by the imaginary in the way it is under capitalism. At the place of the colonised, the symbolic and the imaginary give way because non-identity (the real of the social) is immediately inscribed in the “lived experience” (vécu) of the colonised subject. The colonised is “traversing the fantasy” (Zizek 2006a, 40–60) all the time; the void of the verb “to be” is the very content of his interpellation. The colonised is, in other words, the subject of anxiety for whom the symbolic and the imaginary never work, who is left stranded by his very interpellation.4 “Fixed” into “non-fixity,” he is eternally suspended between “element” and “moment”5 – he is where the colonial symbolic falters in the production of meaning and is thus the point of entry of the real into the texture itself of colonialism. Be this as it may, whiteness and blackness are (sustained by) determinate and **contingent practices** of signification; the “structuring relation” of colonialism thus itself comprises a knot of significations which, no matter how tight, can always be undone. **Anti-colonial** – i.e., anti-“white” – modes of struggle are not (just) “psychic” 6 but involve the “**reactivation**” (or “de-sedimentation”)7 **of colonial objectivity** itself. No matter how sedimented (or global), colonial objectivity is not ontologically immune to antagonism. Differentiality, as Zizek insists (see Zizek 2012, chapter 11, 771 n48), immanently entails antagonism in that differentiality both makes possible the existence of any identity whatsoever and at the same time – because it is the presence of one object in another – undermines any identity ever being (fully) itself. Each element in a differential relation is the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of each other. It is this dimension of antagonism that the Master Signifier covers over transforming its outside (Other) into an element of itself, reducing it to a condition of its possibility.8 All symbolisation produces an ineradicable excess over itself, something it can’t totalise or make sense of, where its production of meaning falters. This is its internal limit point, its real:9 an errant “object” that has no place of its own, isn’t recognised in the categories of the system but is produced by it – its “part of no part” or “object small a.”10 Correlative to this object “a” is the subject “stricto sensu” – i.e., as the empty subject of the signifier without an identity that pins it down.11 That is the subject of antagonism in confrontation with the real of the social, as distinct from “subject” position based on a determinate identity.

**Claims of blackness as structural are essentializing and unduly skeptical – prefer black optimism to escape cycles of oppression – net benefit to the permutation.**

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What is often overlooked in blackness is bound up with what has often been over- seen. Certain experiences of being tracked, managed, cornered in seemingly open space are inextricably bound to an aesthetically and politically dangerous supplementarity, an internal exteriority waiting to get out, as if the prodigal's return were to leaving itself. Black studies’ concern with what it is to own one`s dispossession, to mine what is held in having been possessed, makes it more possible to embrace the underprivilege of being sentenced to the gift of constant escape. The strain of black studies that strains against this interplay of itinerancy and identity - whether in the interest of putting down roots or dis- claiming them - could be said, also, to constitute a departure, though it may well be into a stasis more severe than the one such work imagines (itself to be leaving). In contradistinction to such skepticism, one might plan, like Curtis Mayfield, to stay a believer and therefore to avow what might be called a kind of metacritical optimism. Such optimism, **black optimism**, is bound up with what it is to claim blackness and the appositional, run- away, phonoptic black operations-expressive of an autopoetic organization in which flight and inhabitation modify each other-that have been thrust upon it. The burden of this paradoxically aleatory goal is our historicity, animating the reality of escape in and the possibility of escape from. What if the study of comparative racialization begins to extend and deepen its critical and imaginative relation to the terms abolition and reconstruction in a genuine, fundamental, fantastic, radical collective rethinking of them that will take into account their historical ground while also propelling them with the greatest possible centrifugal force into other, outer, space? Then, even though these terms index a specific history in the United States, their continued relevance and resonance will be international as well as intranational insofar as the ongoing aggressive constitution of the modern nation-state as a carceral entity extends histories of forced migration and stolen labor and insofar as the imperial suppression of movements that would excavate new aesthetic, political, and economic dispositions--as well, of course, as those movements themselves- is a global phenomenon. Abolition and reconstruction might then be seen as ongoing projects animating the study of comparative racialization as well as black studies, two fields that will be seen as each other’s inner- most ends, two helds that will be understood as constituted through the claim they make on-their thinking of and in-blackness. Finally, one might plan to continue to believe that there is such a thing as black- ness and that blackness has an essence given in striated, ensemblic, authentic experience (however much a certain natural bend is amplified by the force of every kind of event, however productive such constant inconstancy of shape and form must be of new understandings of essence and experience). It is obvious (particularly after the recent lessons of Lindon Barrett, Herman Bennett, Daphne Brooks, Nahum Chandler, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Brent Edwards, Saidiya Hartman, Sharon Holland, and Achilles Mbembe, among others) that blackness has always emerged as nothing other than the richest possible combination of dispersion and permeability in and as the mass improvisation and protection of the very idea of the human. Thus, concern over the supposedly stultifying force of authenticity exerted by supposedly restrictive and narrow conceptions of blackness, or worry over the supposed intranational dominance of blackness broadly and unrigorously conceived (in ways that presuppose its strict biological limitation within an unlimited minoritarian field), or anxiety over the putatively intradiasporic hegemony of a certain mode of blackness (which presumes national as well as biological determinations that are continually over- and underdetermined) indexes some other trouble, which we would do well to investigate. Such investigation is best accompanied by vigilant remembrance of and commitment to the fact that blackness is present (as E. P. Thompson said of the English working class) at its own making and that all the people who are called black are given in and to that presence, which exceeds them (in an irrevocable, antenational combination of terror and enjoyment, longing and rejection, that Hartman, in particular, illuminates). Ultimately, the paraontological force that is transmitted in the long chain of life and death performances that are the concern of black studies is horribly misunderstood if it is understood as exclusive. Everyone whom blackness claims, which is to say everyone, can claim blackness. That claim is neither the first nor the last anticipatory reorientation but is, rather, an irreducible element of the differentially repeating plane that intersects and animates the comparativist sphere. In this regard, black studies might best be described as a location habitually lost and found within a moving tendency where one looks back and forth and wonders how utopia came to be submerged in the interstices and on the outskirts of the fierce and urgent now. The temporal paradox of optimism-that it is, on the one hand, a necessarily futurial attitude while being, on the other hand, in its proper Leibnizian formulation, an assertion of the necessity, rightness, and timelessness of the always already existing-resonates in the slim gap between analytic immersion and deictic reserve. This bitter earth is the best of all possible worlds, a fact that necessitates the renewed, reconstructed, realization of imaginative intensities that move through the opposition of voluntary secrecy and forced exposure in order to understand how the underground operates out in, and as, the open. What's the relation between the limit and the open? Between blackness and the limit? Between a specific and materially redoubled finitude called blackness and the open? The new critical discourse on the relation between blackness and death has begun to approach these questions. That discourse reveals that optimism doesn’t require-indeed, it cannot persist within-the repression of that relation; rather, it always lives (which is to say, escapes) in the faithful, postfatal assertion of a right to refuse, in the prenatal instantiation of a collective negative tendency to differ, and in the resistance to the regulative powers that resistance, differing, and refusal call into being. The general insistence that we don't mind leaving here is inseparable from the fact that it's all right. Black optimism persists in thinking that we have what we need, that we can get there from here, that there’s nothing wrong with us or even, in this regard, with here, even as it also bears an obsession with why it is that difference calls the same, that resistance calls regulative power, into existence, thereby se- curing the simultaneously vicious and vacant enmity that characterizes here and now, forming and deforming us. However much trouble stays in mind and, therefore, in the light of a certain interest that the ones who are without interests have in making as much trouble as possible, there is cause for optimism as long as there is a need for optimism. Cause and need converge in the bent school or marginal church in which we gather together to be in the name of being otherwise.

**2AC -- Perm**

**perm do the aff and non-mutually exclusive parts of the alt---a joint analysis of settler colonialism and antiblackness can allow us to conceptualize new ways to challenge settler colonialism and antiblackness---only through this simultaneous vision can we create possibilities for collaboration that prevents exceptionalism and intercommunal violence**

**King 13** (TIFFANY JEANNETTE KING, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies, 2013, dissertation, “IN THE CLEARING: BLACK FEMALE BODIES, SPACE AND SETTLER COLONIAL LANDSCAPES,” <https://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/14525/King_umd_0117E_14499.pdf?sequence=1>; accessed 8/16/2021) ng

In this chapter, I explore the possibility of decolonizing sight. Decolonizing sight requires that we understand what directs our sight. It also means that we interrogate a social world ordered by conquest. What kinds of inner eyes direct the way that we view bodies and space in settler societies?6 How have the ways that we have been taught to survive, self actualize and know ourselves in settler societies shaped the ways that we look, see and know? In this chapter, I focus on the visual orders and optic regimes of settler colonialism as sites of knowledge creation and power that skew our vision. In this chapter, we will be developing new ways of looking at old landscapes. I draw upon the creative work of Julie Dash and Catherine McKinley, and the scholarly writing of Sylvia Wynter, Jennifer Morgan, Saidiya Hartman, Hortense Spillers, Frank Wilderson and Oyeronke Oyewumi in order to challenge the visual and cognitive regimes of the settler colonial order. These cultural producers and theorists help us apprehend, conceptualize, and develop inner eyes that help us visualize the ways that Blackness and slavery shape the settler colonial landscape. They help us bring the plantation and the body of the slave back into settler colonialism’s analytic frames. **These new units of analysis and conceptual tools can help change our inner eyes so that we can see how settler colonialism and slavery structure one another. They make simultaneous vision possible**.7 Simultaneous vision is difficult to obtain. It requires that we retrain our thought, inner eyes and eyes to adjust their focus in order to attend to the ephemeral and moving traces of power that at times recede or disappear into the background or a realm of the seemingly invisible depending on the landscape. The power of settler colonialism’s and slavery’s spatial and ontological formations does not appear on the landscape with equal intensity, in the same hue, or equally positioned on the landscape. **At times the productive and repressive power that makes the slave will be the foreground color and the power of settler colonialism will provide a bit of texture.** The texture in the background is just as crucial as the foreground color. My reorganization of these units of analysis is what is new. Scholars of slavery and settler colonialism have inherited analytic units like the plantation, the homestead/settlement, the Master, the Settler, the Slave which often work to sequester Native Studies, Black Studies, settler colonial studies and scholarship on slavery. I want to reframe some of the key analytics from each of these fields of study by looking at them simultaneously. However, **what happens when we think about the plantation as a result of settler colonial spatial patterns? What is possible when we ask, how is Native subjectivity and space obliterated by the plantation? What is possible when ask, how is the slave master also a settler? Reframing allows us to view key units of analysis in new ways and think about them as co-constituting one another.**

**Slavery and anti-blackness are inadequate to understand and must be theorized in conjunction with settler colonialism as structuring modernity and constituting blackness**

**King 13**

[2013, Tiffany Jeannette King, “IN THE CLEARING: BLACK FEMALE BODIES, SPACE AND SETTLER COLONIAL LANDSCAPES”, PhD Dissertation]

We must consider that Settler colonialism shapes and constitutes Black life, **specifically slavery and its afterlife in America.** While slavery and anti-Black racism should be active and robust analytic frames that guide Black Studies and help us understand Black subjectivity in the Western Hemisphere, settler colonialism also structures Black life. The genocide of Native peoples, the perpetual making of Settler space and Settler subjectivity—as unfettered self actualization—do not immediately stop existing as forms of power when they run into Black bodies. The way that settler colonial power looks and manifests itself **just changes;** **it does not stop.** Settler colonialism, as a subjectless discourse, is a form of productive power that touches all that live in the US and Settler colonial nations.30 Though it touches and shapes everyone’s life it does so in very different ways. For the purposes of my own research I am arguing that settler colonialism’s normalizing power enacts genocide against Native peoples (disappears Native people) but it also shapes and structures antiBlack racism. The ontological positions that were created by slavery, specifically the Slave are still alive and well however, **settler colonial power intersects with, works through and structures the repressive and productive power that makes the Black captive fungible and socially dead**. Throughout, In the Clearing poses the question, in what ways does settler colonial power help structure slavery and anti-Black racism? This project ultimately argues that **slavery and anti-Black racism are not adequate to fully understand the material and discursive processes that create Blackness in all of its embodied genres in North America**. Slavery and anti-Black racism are also not the only repressive powers that make the Black body abject, fungible and situated at the outer limits of being-ness. Both **slavery and settler colonialism structure modernity and need to be fully conceptualized as forms of power that help constitute Blackness**. Conceptualizing the ways that settler colonialism and slavery co-constitute one another is an essential component of this dissertation.

**Blackness is fundamentally a question of land relations – black fungibility is a result of forced removal**

**King 13** [Tiffany Jeannette, Doctor of Philosophy, “IN THE CLEARING: BLACK FEMALE BODIES, SPACE AND SETTLER COLONIAL LANDSCAPES”, PhD Dissertation, 2013, <http://drum.lib.umd.edu/bitstream/handle/1903/14525/King_umd_0117E_14499.pdf;jsessionid=7DA8E0EAD56156407235132AB4145B8E?sequence=1>]

Redefining Settlement: Settlement within the disciplines of colonial history, US history, Native Studies and the emerging field of settler colonial studies is often defined through the space and time of contact. The first moments of European contact with the lands of the New World and the Native people of the hemisphere give us our spatial and temporal frame for the origins of settlement.10 Dash’s reorganization of the Eliza Lucas Pinckney archive allows us to reorganize the spatial and temporal frames of settlement. For Dash, settlement is reorganized along similar coordinates as Sylvia Wynter’s frame for conquest. In her novel, Dash takes us back to West Africa to give us some context and explains how the cultivation of indigo that would become a part of the process of settling the land in the British colonies is a protracted process that in fact starts before arrival on these shores. In the novel, Dash takes us to West Africa and introduces us to Ayodele (Elizabeth Peazant) when she is a twelve year old girl. Twelfth year come, Ayodele in the indigo fields with mama, learning all she able bout growing indigo and making it into paste to be sent to de market. It was a long an difficult process, but she patient, an after her first successful batch, they call her ‘My Indigo Girl’ as her mother did.11 The expertise that Ayodele gains as a child makes her valuable to Arab and European slave traders.12 Eventually Ayodele is then sold to the “Pinchney”13 family and is forced to tame the soil and plant in order to cultivate indigo in Charleston on the Wappoo plantation. Nobody know how, but some way the mistress found out that Ayodele knew how to grow indigo. Maybe she see this piece of cloth that Ayodele bring with her colored with indigo. So mistress gave her some seedlings an a small piece of land to work. The mistress told the Boss Man that Ayodele was only to work that bit of land. Oooh, he not like that one bit, but her would not hear nothing else. Well, Ayodele did all right, an the mistress very pleased. All the white men, the master, that planter from Jamaica they brought in, the Boss Man, they fit to be tied. They spent a lot of money bringing that man over here, and he sposed to be the expert, an he was white. Ayodele was just a girl and she was black.14 Settling the land by cultivating indigo required Black bodies from Africa. While Native genocide and the theft of Native land is at the core of settlement, the transport of Black bodies and the knowledge that those bodies have is also a part of settlement. The spatial process of settlement includes the theft and use of Black bodies from across the Atlantic. Settlement straddles the Atlantic Ocean and exceeds the White-Settler/Native conflict. This is not an appeal to expand the category of the settler, as I have argued before Black slaves and descendants of slaves are not settlers. However, the processes which make Black bodies fungible flesh, a form of terra nullius, and embed their bodies in the land as settled-slaves needs to be theorized as modalities of settlement. Settlement needs to be retheorized along the contours of the bodies that it renders materially and socially dead. Scholarship from Marxist geographies, cultural landscape studies, anthropology and the emerging field of settler colonial studies is useful for helping us think about space, however, it does not help us think about the ways that the process of settlement also materializes Blackness as an ontological position. Native studies and Black studies enable a discussion of how the production of Settler and Master or Settler-Master subjectivity comes about due to its parasitic relationship to Native death and Black fungibility/accumulation (social death). When we think about the Settler-Master as parasitic we can also begin to think about their process of settlement as one that also requires the making of ontological categories occupied by the dead. The process of settlement allows the Settler-Master to become a human with spatial coordinates because the Native dies and the Black becomes a non-being (a settled-slave).15 Settlement is more than transforming the land. It is more than the teleological process of weary white people making a home and Native people naturally disappearing over time. Settlement is an assemblage of technologies and processes of makings and unmakings. Its processes require the making and unmaking of bodies, subject positions, space, place and claims to various forms of autonomy, self actualization and transcendence. In Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview, Lorenzo Veracini, a founding scholar of the emerging field of settler colonial studies describes the process of settlement as a process that enables the “unfettered mobility” of the settler.16 While abject others within settler colonial nations are “principally characterized by restrained mobility” the settler experiences the capacity for “unfettered mobility.” This description of the kind of state of existence that settlement allows the settler is instructive. While Veracini’s description moves us closer to a discussion of states of being, I want to reframe Veracini’s description and introduce a few more elements to the equation. Settlement as an intricate, dynamic and contradictory relationship to Native bodies, Black bodies and the land/nature. Settlement structures the Settler’s relationship to the Native, the Black and nature as a relation of negation. Settlement also creates complex ontological positions that are constituted by both states of stasis and flux. What I mean by this is that some bodies (Native and Black) are relegated to a permanent position of flux. Native bodies are always slipping into death, Black bodies are always sliding into states of fungibility and accumulation**.** The flux and instability of the Black and the Native enable the Settler to experience a self actualizing state of both libratory stability and transcendent autonomy. The ontological positions of the Native (slipping into death) and the Black (sliding into fungibility and accumulation) are positions of fixed-flux. As Wilderson argues these positions do not occupy the universal liberal orienting and humanizing frames of time and space. They are fixed and rooted in a place of elimination and expanding use for the settler’s unending pursuit of self actualization. By settling, or gaining an exclusive claim to time and space, the Settler is able to simultaneously become a stable, coherent and autonomous human subject who occupies space while they also experience hyper mobility, transcendence and self directed transformation. The Settler moves back and forth at will between states of rootedness and mobility, stability and postmodern (self determined) constructedness. The Settlers’ unfettered movement between these contradictory spaces and states is predicated on the “fixed-flux” of Native and Black bodies. Fixed-flux is the underside of the Settler’s unfettered mobility and self actualization. It is always being susceptible to having the world flipped upside down at the whim of another (the Settler). Settlement functions like a violent form of deconstruction. Settlement as a gratuitously violent project that kills the Native and accumulates the Black also reorganizes discourse.The relationship that exists between the signifier and signified for concepts like autochthony and indigeneity and words like clearing under conditions of settlement become shifting ground beneath our feet.17 The prior meanings held by the terms and words autochthonous, indigenous and clearing are destabilized and then completely evacuated due to the material and discursive muscle of settlement. At the site of the clearing, Settlers are able to become autochthonous and indigenous at the same time. Frank Wilderson helps us think about the kind of discursive and material violence that occurs within what he calls the “Settler/Master/Human’s grammatical structure.”18 Within this grammatical structure, Wilderson argues that there is a disavowal of the violence of genocide in the way the settler narrates the formation of the US. On one level, the disavowal occurs through the settler’s preferred part of speech. Clearing is only spoken of as a noun in the Settler/Master/Human’s grammatical structure. Clearing is never used as a verb in the human’s grammatical structure. Wilderson draws our attention to its use: “Clearing, in the Settler/Savage” relation, has two grammatical structures, one a noun and the other as a verb. But the Western only recognizes clearing as a noun. **But prior to the clearing’s fragile infancy,** that is before its cinematic legacy as a newborn place name**, it labored not across the land as a noun but as a verb on the body of the “Savage,” speaking civil society’s essential status as an effect for genocide.”**19 This discursive displacement represents an actual displacement. As the Settler/Master/Human renders the clearing a static place, void of settler violence and absent of indigenous bodies and relations to the land, the Settler also indigenizes themselves to this abstract space. The Settler is allowed to merge with the land as they root themselves. They become autochthonous people that “sprang up from the land.”20 Settlers are now the group of humans that establish a right/righteous relationship with the land. Settlers proclaim themselves the new indigenous population. The original indigenous peoples are stripped of their indigeneity and rendered dead. Within the process of settlement, the indigenous people become embedded in or are literally buried as the dead within the land. The Settler then assumes a new autochthonous identity and emerges from the earth anew. Even when the Settler indigenizes or roots themselves into the land; they do not become stuck there like Native peoples. In her book, Black Body: Women, Colonialism and Space, Radhika Mohanram spends time explaining how enlightenment notions of the Indigene and European binary operate.21 The body conceived as incarcerated by nature is partially achieved by the discursive construction of the native as a “person who is born and thus belongs to a certain place,” and is in fact over determined by that place.22 The European on the other hand can be of a place but is not incarcerated by it like the Native. Their settler “indigeneity” offers them “unfettered mobility” as well as unfettered self actualization. Native people do not acquire this through their indigenous status. Upon encountering the settler (who becomes indigenous) the Native experiences their indigeneity as non-existence and death. The clearing also shapes Blackness as it carves out the settlement-plantation. The clearing in its verb form certainly labored across the bodies of Native people. However, the clearing also worked on and transformed the bodies of Blacks. The Black body is turned into the Settled-slave. Nana and Elizabeth Peazant are Settled-slaves whose bodies evince the way that the process of settling “cleared” Blacks of all spatial coordinates that could make them human during this process of making the settlement/plantation. Blacks become mere ‘states of flux,” and the atomic potential for space. At the site of the clearing, both a spatial and ontological production, Black bodies are the raw material and precursor to space. While Black bodies are geographic and necessary to the production of space they are not geographic subjects that humanly inhabit space at the site of the clearing.23 As geographic—dark—matter and material under settlement they make space possible but cannot occupy it. Existing in a continual state of liminality and change Black femaleness is a place making unit but not in place. Place is where humanness resides. According to Tim Cresswell, place and its links to humanness, morality and identity are a part of a humanistic project.24 For the humanist undertaking geography, “ontological priority was given to the human immersion in place rather than the abstractions of geometric space.”25 The humanist concept of place is accompanied by the baggage of morality, identity, authenticity and exclusion.26 Within modern thought systems, there is a tendency to locate people with certain identities in certain places. There is also a tendency within this metaphysical framework to imagine “mobile people in wholly negative ways.”27 Bodies on the move or sentient beings in a state of “fixed-flux” who slip into death like the Native or slide and transform as fungible flesh have no place and are considered suspect within this worldview. McKittrick argues that Black subjects, specifically Black women are geographic subjects. Wilderson on the other hand argues throughout Red, White and Black that Blacks have no spatial coordinates or place for that matter. I however, hold these two thinkers understandings of Black peoples relationship to space in tension. I argue that Blacks are crucial to the production of Settler space, however can not occupy it on the Settler’s terms. Cresswell argues that since antiquity, western philosophy has enshrined space as universal and abstract. People, bodies and the particular aspects of mere place did not belong there. That is until the 1970s when “humanistic geographers” attempted to repeople space and focus on the “geographical nature of being in the world.” 97 Through humanist articulations and re-theorizations of place, the universal and abstract notion of space becomes humanized and exclusionary admitting only a select group of people. Making a place is also about making a home.28 Place (and space) as home was functioning within imperialist endeavors of the enlightenment far before human geographers of the 1970s named it as such. As a geographer, Tuan has focused a great deal of attention on the extent to which people have attempted to “create order and homeliness out of the apparent chaos of raw nature.”29 In fact “the concept of place is central to our understanding of how people turn nature into culture by making it their home.”30 What happens when this humanist endeavor of turning nature/chaos into culture/order/home meets up with the imperialist endeavor? Sylvia Wynter argues that both the Native and the Black are considered states of non-Reason and chaos within Enlightenment humanism. Under imperialism, both the bodies and the lands of Native and Black people were states of chaos that needed to be ordered. While Tuan’s configuration of place and the transformation of raw nature into a home for humankind does not have the violent and exclusionary form of the human in mind, my reconfiguration of the place of settlement does. The landscapes of settlement, when they appear to the eye as a tranquil pasture with a log cabin or people sun bathing on a beach conceal the violent processes hidden in the clearing. One way of revealing what is hidden is through rethinking what a landscape is and how it functions. Richard Schein presents an interpretation of landscape as a process. 98 In fact, Schein argues that landscape is always in the “process of becoming.”31 Another aspect of Schein’s theorization of the landscape that is productive is that he construes the landscapes as having material and epistemological value. The epistemology of the landscape disciplines those who come into contact with it. The disciplinary element of landscape is embedded in the fact that the material aspect of the landscape is seen, and presents itself as linear and objective.32 The landscape is in fact not self evident but duplicitous.33 Likewise settlement as a process and what it achieves even in its materiality (clearing, settlement-plantation) is not self-evident but multivalent and at times counter intuitive. What is hidden is that settlement is not just the making of a physical location for the Settler; rather, what is concealed is the simultaneous process of the Settler rooting in order to launch. Settlement is the subjugation and sinking/fixing of others into a state of flux (death, fungibility) in order for the Settler to transcend into a state of humanness. As the ultimate self actualizing human, the Settler can actually overcome the particularity of place (body, gender, race, abject sexuality) and launch into universal and abstract space (humanness). To be human in Frank Wilderson’s terms is to have “cartographic capacity.”34 “Spatial and temporal capacity is so immanent on the field of Whiteness that the effects and permutations of its ensemble of questions and the kinds of White bodies that can mobilize this universe of combinations are seemingly infinite as well.”35 To be a 99 Savage or to be Black is to exist in the realm of no time and space.36 An apt visual for what happens when the Settler (noun) settles (verb) both people and land is one of a propelling long jumper. A long jumper is a subject who plants in order to launch oneself into space. This process of disciplining bodies, land and the viewers’ eye is hard to always perceive. One of the ways that landscapes come into view and also obscure themselves is through the representational work of archives. Archives often stand as material records, locations, buildings, people, narratives and discourses where we are often told that truth can be found. Schein’s description of a cultural landscape as “discourse materialized” opens up the possibility of reading the archive, specifically Eliza Lucas Pinckney’s archive as a discourse that “touch[es] ground.”37 I would like to unsettle and disrupt the ways that the Eliza Lucas Pinckney archive creates a landscape of settlement that veils the ways that place/non-place and human/non-human ontologies are being created at her Wappoo, Waccamaw and Garden Hill settlement plantations. I also want to expose the way that she is made to function outside of the category of the Settler/Master. Many historians can remark on the rather pristine and harmonious depictions of her as a slave master. Few remark on the fact that she had great stakes in and supported the death of the Cherokee in the Indian Wars. And there are almost no analyses of the ways that both her Master and Settler status constituted one another and required the negation of both the Native and the Black in order to make her a human.