# Aff – AT Setcol/AB – BFHR

## AT Psycho/Anti-Blackness

### AT: Psychoanalysis/Ontology

#### Afro-Pessimism fails to understand failure. Transformative revolutions can make new worlds through relational humanisms.

Gordon 17 (Lewis R, Professor of Philosophy @ UConn, “Thoughts on Afropessimism”, Contemporary Political Theory, Volume 17, Issue, 1, pages 105-137, December 7)

I begin with this tale of philosophical abstraction to contextualize Afropessimism. Its main exemplars, such as Jared Sexton and Frank Wilderson III, emerged from academic literary theory, an area dominated by poststructuralism even in many cases that avow ‘‘Marxism.’’ Sexton (2010) and Wilderson (2007) divert from a reductive poststructuralism, however, through examining important existential moves inaugurated, as Daniel McNeil (2011, 2012) observed, by Fanon and his intellectual heirs. The critical question that Afropessimism addresses in this fusion is the viability of posed strategies of Black liberation. (I’m using the capital ‘‘B’’ here to point not only to the racial designation ‘‘black’’ but also to the nationalist one ‘‘Black.’’ Afropessimists often mean both, since blacks and Blacks have a central and centered role in their thought.) The world that produced blacks and in consequence Blacks is, for Afropessimists, a crushing, historical one whose Manichaean divide is sustained contraries best kept segregated. Worse, any effort of mediation leads to confirmed black subordination. Overcoming this requires purging the world of antiblackness. Where cleansing the world is unachievable, an alternative is to disarm the force of antiblack racism. Where whites lack power over blacks, they lose relevance – at least politically and at levels of cultural and racial capital or hegemony. Wilderson (2008), for instance, explores my concept of ‘‘an antiblack world’’ to build similar arguments. Sexton (2011) makes similar moves in his discussions of ‘‘social death.’’ As this forum doesn’t afford space for a long critique, I’ll offer several, non-exhaustive criticisms.

The first is that ‘‘an antiblack world’’ is not identical with ‘‘the world is antiblack.’’ My argument is that such a world is an antiblack racist project. It is not the historical achievement. Its limitations emerge from a basic fact: Black people and other opponents of such a project fought, and continue to fight, as we see today in the #BlackLivesMatter movement and many others, against it. The same argument applies to the argument about social death. Such an achievement would have rendered even these reflections stillborn. The basic premises of the Afropessimistic argument are, then, locked in performative contradictions. Yet, they have rhetorical force. This is evident through the continued growth of its proponents and forums (such as this one) devoted to it.

In Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism, I argued that there are forms of antiblack racism offered under the guise of love, though I was writing about whites who exoticize blacks while offering themselves as white sources of black value. Analyzed in terms of bad faith, where one lies to oneself in an attempt to flee displeasing truths for pleasing falsehoods, exoticists romanticize blacks while affirming white normativity, and thus themselves, as principals of reality. These ironic, performative contradictions are features of all forms of racism, where one group is elevated to godlike status and another is pushed below that of human despite both claiming to be human.

Antiblack racism offers whites self-other relations (necessary for ethics) with each other but not so for groups forced in a ‘‘zone of nonbeing’’ below them. There is asymmetry where whites stand as others who look downward to those who are not their others or their analogues. Antiblack racism is thus not a problem of blacks being ‘‘others.’’ It’s a problem of their not-being-analogical-selves-and-not-even being-others. Fanon, in Black Skin, White Masks (1952), reminds us that Blacks among each other live in a world of selves and others. It is in attempted relations with whites that these problems occur. Reason in such contexts has a bad habit of walking out when Blacks enter. What are Blacks to do? As reason cannot be forced, because that would be ‘‘violence,’’ they must ironically reason reasonably with forms of unreasonable reason. Contradictions loom. Racism is, given these arguments, a project of imposing non-relations as the model of dealing with people designated ‘‘black.’’

In Les Damne´ de la terre (‘‘Damned of the Earth’’), Fanon goes further and argues that colonialism is an attempt to impose a Manichean structure of contraries instead of a dialectical one of ongoing, human negotiation of contradictions. The former segregates the groups; the latter emerges from interaction. The police, he observes, are the mediator in such a situation, as their role is force/violence instead of the human, discursive one of politics and civility (Fanon, 1991). Such societies draw legitimacy from Black non-existence or invisibility. Black appearance, in other words, would be a violation of those systems. Think of the continued blight of police, extra-judicial killings of Blacks in those countries.

An immediate observation of many postcolonies is that antiblack attitudes, practices, and institutions aren’t exclusively white. Black antiblack dispositions make this clear. Black antiblackness entails Black exoticism. Where this exists, Blacks simultaneously receive Black love alongside Black rejection of agency. Many problems follow. The absence of agency bars maturation, which would reinforce the racial logic of Blacks as in effect wards of whites. Without agency, ethics, liberation, maturation, politics, and responsibility could not be possible.

Afropessimism faces the problem of a hidden premise of white agency versus Black incapacity. Proponents of Afropessimism would no doubt respond that the theory itself is a form of agency reminiscent of Fanon’s famous remark that though whites created le Ne`gre it was les Ne`gres who created Ne´gritude. Whites clearly did not create Afropessimism, which Black liberationists should celebrate. We should avoid the fallacy, however, of confusing source with outcome. History is not short of bad ideas from good people. If intrinsically good, however, each person of African descent would become ethically and epistemologically a switching of the Manichean contraries, which means only changing players instead of the game.

We come, then, to the crux of the matter. If the goal of Afropessimism is Afropessimism, its achievement would be attitudinal and, in the language of old, stoic – in short, a symptom of antiblack society. At this point, there are several observations that follow. The first is a diagnosis of the implications of Afropessimism as symptom. The second examines the epistemological implications of Afropessimism. The third is whether a disposition counts as a political act and, if so, is it sufficient for its avowed aims. There are more, but for the sake of brevity, I’ll simply focus on these.

An ironic dimension of pessimism is that it is the other side of optimism. Oddly enough, both are connected to nihilism, which is, as Nietzsche (1968) showed, a decline of values during periods of social decay. It emerges when people no longer want to be responsible for their actions. Optimists expect intervention from beyond. Pessimists declare relief is not forthcoming. Neither takes responsibility for what is valued. The valuing, however, is what leads to the second, epistemic point. The presumption that what is at stake is what can be known to determine what can be done is the problem. If such knowledge were possible, the debate would be about who is reading the evidence correctly. Such judgment would be a priori – that is, prior to events actually unfolding. The future, unlike transcendental conditions such as language, signs, and reality, is, however, ex post facto: It is yet to come. Facing the future, the question isn’t what will be or how do we know what will be but instead the realization that whatever is done will be that on which the future will depend. Rejecting optimism and pessimism, there is a supervening alternative: political commitment.

The appeal to political commitment is not only in stream with what French existentialists call l’intellectuel engage´ (committed intellectual) but also reaches back through the history and existential situation of enslaved, racialized ancestors. Many were, in truth, an existential paradox: commitment to action without guarantees. The slave revolts, micro and macro acts of resistance, escapes, and returns help others do the same; the cultivated instability of plantations and other forms of enslavement, and countless other actions, were waged against a gauntlet of forces designed to eliminate any hope of success. The claim of colonialists and enslavers was that the future belonged to them, not to the enslaved and the indigenous. A result of more than 500 years of conquest and 300 years of enslavement was also a (white) rewriting of history in which African and First Nations’ agency was, at least at the level of scholarship, nearly erased. Yet there was resistance even in that realm, as Africana and First Nation intellectual history and scholarship attest. Such actions set the course for different kinds of struggle today.

Such reflections occasion meditations on the concept of failure. Afropessimism, the existential critique suggests, suffers from a failure to understand failure. Consider Fanon’s notion of constructive failure, where what doesn’t initially work transforms conditions for something new to emerge. To understand this argument, one must rethink the philosophical anthropology at the heart of a specific line of Euromodern thought on what it means to be human. Atomistic and individual substance- based, this model, articulated by Hobbes, Locke, and many others, is of a non-relational being that thinks, acts, and moves along a course in which continued movement depends on not colliding with others. Under that model, the human being is a thing that enters a system that facilitates or obstructs its movement. An alternative model, shared by many groups across southern Africa, is a relational version of the human being as part of a larger system of meaning. Actions, from that perspective, are not about whether ‘‘I’’ succeed but instead about ‘‘our’’ story across time. As relational, it means that each human being is a constant negotiation of ongoing efforts to build relationships with others, which means no one actually enters a situation without establishing new situations of action and meaning. Instead of entering a game, their participation requires a different kind of project – especially where the ‘‘game’’ was premised on their exclusion. Thus, where the system or game repels initial participation, such repulsion is a shift in the grammar of how the system functions, especially its dependence on obsequious subjects. Shifted energy affords emergence of alternatives. Kinds cannot be known before the actions that birthed them.

Abstract as this sounds, it has much historical support. Evelyn Simien (2016), in her insightful political study Historic Firsts, examines the new set of relations established by Shirley Chisholm’s and Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaigns. There could be no Barack Obama without such important predecessors affecting the demographics of voter participation. Simien intentionally focused on the most mainstream example of political life to illustrate this point. Although no exemplar of radicalism, Obama’s ‘‘success’’ emerged from Chisholm and Jackson’s (and many others’) so-called ‘‘failure.’’ Beyond presidential electoral politics, there are numerous examples of how prior, radical so-called ‘‘failures’’ transformed relationships that facilitated other kinds of outcome. The trail goes back to the Haitian Revolution and back to every act of resistance from Nat Turner’s Rebellion in the USA, Sharpe’s in Jamaica, or Tula’s in Curac¸ao and so many other efforts for social transformation to come.

In existential terms, then, many ancestors of the African diaspora embodied what Søren Kierkegaard (1983) calls an existential paradox. All the evidence around them suggested failure and the futility of hope. They first had to make a movement of infinite resignation – that is, resigning themselves to their situation. Yet they must simultaneously act against that situation. Kierkegaard called this seemingly contradictory phenomenon ‘‘faith,’’ but that concept relates more to a relationship with a transcendent, absolute being, which could only be established by a ‘‘leap,’’ as there are no mediations or bridge. Ironically, if Afropessimism appeals to transcendent intervention, it would collapse into faith. If, however, the argument rejects transcendent intervention and focuses on committed political action, of taking responsibility for a future that offers no guarantees, then the movement from infinite resignation becomes existential political action.

At this point, the crucial meditation would be on politics and political action. An attitude of infinite resignation to the world without the leap of committed action would simply be pessimistic or nihilistic. Similarly, an attitude of hope or optimism about the future would lack infinite resignation. We see here the underlying failure of the two approaches. Yet ironically, there is a form of failure at failing in the pessimistic turn versus the optimistic one, since if focused exclusively on resignation as the goal, then the ‘‘act’’ of resignation would have been achieved, which, paradoxically, would be a success; it would be a successful failing of failure. For politics to emerge, however, there are two missing elements in inward pessimistic resignation.

The first is that politics is a social phenomenon, which means it requires the expanding options of a social world. Turning away from the social world, though a statement about politics, is not, however, in and of itself political. The ancients from whom much western political theory or philosophy claimed affinity had a disparaging term for individuals who resigned themselves from political life: idio¯te¯s, a private person, one not concerned with public affairs, in a word – an idiot. I mention western political theory because that is the hegemonic intellectual context of Afropessimism. We don’t, however, have to end our etymological journey in ancient Greek. Extending our linguistic archaeology back a few thousand years, we could examine the Middle Kingdom Egyptian word idi (deaf). The presumption, later taken on by the ancient Athenians and Macedonians, was that a lack of hearing entailed isolation, at least in terms of audio speech. The contemporary inward resignation of seeking a form of purity from the loathsome historical reality of racial oppression, in this reading, collapses ultimately into a form of moralism (private, normative satisfaction) instead of public responsibility born of and borne by action.

The second is the importance of power. Politics makes no sense without it. But what is power? Eurocentric etymology points to the Latin word potis as its source, from which came the word ‘‘potent’’ as in an omnipotent god. If we again look back further, we will notice the Middle Kingdom (2000 BCE–1700 BCE) KMT/ Egyptian word pHty, which refers to godlike strength. Yet for those ancient Northeast Africans, even the gods’ abilities came from a source: In the Coffin Texts, HqAw or heka activates the ka (sometimes translated as soul, spirit, or, in a word, ‘‘magic’’), which makes reality. All this amounts to a straightforward thesis on power as the ability with the means to make things happen.

There is an alchemical quality to power. The human world, premised on symbolic communication, brings many forms of meaning into being, and those new meanings afford relationships that build institutions through a world of culture, a phenomenon that Freud (1989) rightly described as ‘‘a prosthetic god.’’ It is godlike because it addresses what humanity historically sought from the gods: protection from the elements, physical maledictions, and social forms of misery. Such power clearly can be abused. It is where those enabling capacities (empowerment) are pushed to the wayside in the hording of social resources into propping up some people as gods that the legitimating practices of cultural cum political institution decline and stimulate pessimism and nihilism. That institutions in the Americas very rarely attempt establishing positive relations to Blacks is the subtext of Afropessimism and this entire meditation.

The discussion points, however, to a demand for political commitment. Politics itself emerges under different names throughout the history of our species, but the one occasioning the word ‘‘politics’’ is from the Greek polis, which refers to ancient Hellenic city-states. It identifies specific kinds of activities conducted inside the city-state, where order necessitated the resolution of conflicts through rules of discourse the violation of which could lead to (civil) war, a breaking down of relations appropriate for ‘‘outsiders.’’ Returning to the Fanonian observation of selves and others, it is clear that imposed limitations on certain groups amounts to impeding or blocking the option of politics. Yet, as a problem occurring within the polity, the problem short of war becomes a political one.

Returning to Afropessimistic challenges, the question becomes this: If the problem of antiblack racism is conceded as political, where antiblack institutions of power have, as their project, the impeding of Black power, which in effect requires barring Black access to political institutions, then antiblack societies are ultimately threats also to politics defined as the human negotiation of the expansion of human capabilities or more to the point: freedom.

Anti-politics is one of the reasons why societies in which antiblack racism is hegemonic are also those in which racial moralizing dominates: moralizing stops at individuals at the expense of addressing institutions the transformation of which would make immoral individuals irrelevant. As a political problem, it demands a political solution. It is not accidental that Blacks continue to be the continued exemplars of unrealized freedom. As so many from Ida B. Wells-Barnett to Angela Davis (2003) and Michelle Alexander (2010) have shown, the expansion of privatization and incarceration is squarely placed in a structure of states and civil societies premised on the limitations of freedom (Blacks) – ironically, as seen in countries such as South Africa and the United States, in the name of freedom.

That power is a facilitating or enabling phenomenon, a functional element of the human world, a viable response must be the establishing of relations that reach beyond the singularity of the body. I bring this up because proponents of Afropessimism might object to this analysis because of its appeal to a human world. If that world is abrogated, the site of struggle becomes that which is patently not human. It is not accidental that popular race discourse refers today to ‘‘black bodies,’’ for instance, instead of ‘‘black people.’’ As the human world is discursive, social, and relational, this abandonment amounts to an appeal to the non-relational, the incommunicability of singularity, and appeals to the body and its reach. At that point, it’s perhaps the psychologist, psychiatrist, or psychoanalyst who would be helpful, as turning radically inward offers the promise of despair, narcissistic delusions of godliness, and, as Fanon also observed, madness. Even if that slippery slope were rejected, the performative contradiction of attempting to communicate such singularity or absence thereof requires, at least for consistency, the appropriate course of action: silence.

#### Socialization better explains their libidinal thesis

Hudis 15 [Peter, Professor of English and History @ Queens College, 2015, “Frantz Fanon: Philosopher of the Barricades,” p. 35-37]

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. 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 1 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." 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.” 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 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:''5 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

#### Their account of hope overgeneralizes – they are right about the problem with absolute faith in the government, but that’s not our argument – a pragmatic understanding of hope as inseparable from political life is necessary to mobilize activism and prefigurative politics

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What ought I hope for? This question guides our pursuit of the good life and its answer is often shaped by our social, political, and educational experiences. We aren’t born with ready-made hopes; rather, we shape them through our interactions with others, our growing sense of what is possible as we learn about our environment, and our experiments with the world to see what we can do within it and to change it. Other people play an important role in this process, especially through institutions like schools, social arrangements like families, and political practices like democracy. They shape the traditions and expectations we inherit, as well as the ways in which we test, challenge, and revise what has been passed on to us. Despite this, hope is too often described in individualist terms that **fail to encapsulate** the full **process** of hoping and its potential impact on shared living. Many **theologians** link hope with an individual’s faith in a deity who will act on his or her behalf, 1 some philosophers employ a **narrow understanding** of hope as an individual’s desire for an outcome in the face of uncertainty, 2 while many more psychologists describe hope as an individual’s use of willpower and “waypower” to achieve clear goals. 3 Instead, I will offer a **pragmatist account** of hope, which is firmly rooted in the experiences of individuals and grows out of real life circumstances, yet cannot be disconnected from social and political life. 4 I extend my account to show how a pragmatist view of hope is necessarily connected to other people and can be used to enrich our experiences in communities. Moreover, such hope can help us to **better face current political struggles and social problems**, all the while building a democratic identity together. 5 In this article, I will explain how pragmatism offers an enhanced understanding of hope and its role in our lives together. To examine the ways in which shared hoping and the shared content of our hopes shape our identity and our work together in democracy, I consider both how and what we hope. Unlike other accounts of hope that are **largely divorced from life’s circumstances**, such as **theological accounts** that direct our attention to deities and psychological accounts that tell us we must hope for our goals regardless of real world constraints, pragmatist hope is noteworthy because it is firmly rooted in reality. 6 Moreover, a pragmatist account addresses some of the current obstacles we face in American democracy and is **capable of transforming or improving** them. Perhaps more importantly, such hope can be directly and indirectly cultivated within citizens, thereby offering a feasible way that democratic life can be strengthened. 1 Present Context Before looking at hope in detail, let’s briefly first take stock of current conditions that relate to hopelessness in personal and political life. In pragmatist spirit, the account I offer here must attend to real conditions. Unfortunately, these are conditions where hope is struggling, where democracy may be in jeopardy, and where the dominant form of hope that we do see is largely privatized. To begin, a recent study using the World Values Survey and other polling sources finds that democratic citizens have “become more cynical about the value of democracy as a political system, less hopeful that anything they do might influence public policy, and more willing to express **support for authoritarian alternatives**.” 7 Those citizens have increasingly **withdrawn** from democratic participation, whether that be through formal institutions or alternatives in the public or civic spheres, such as joining in movements or protests. There has been a dramatic shift in how the wealthy view democracy, with 16 percent of them now believing that military rule is a better way of living and an astounding 35 percent of rich young Americans holding such a view. 8 There are likely many factors impacting this current state of affairs and I will touch on a few here. 9 First, in terms of hope most overtly, Alan Mittleman rightly notes that “the legitimacy of politics is damaged in proportion to its failure to fulfil the hopes it has engendered.” 10 Indeed, several recent American candidates ran on messages of hope and yet the visions evoked have often failed to be fulfilled in reality, crushing the heightened expectations of citizens. Politicians often use the rhetoric of hope, but they tend to distort what hope really is and what it requires of citizens, as I will explain later. Instead, they make reference to the supposed destiny of the nation with God as its backer. Or, as in the cases of Barack Obama and Donald Trump, some citizens place their hope in the leader himself, invoking a messianic figure. These forms of hope entail no more citizen action than, perhaps, donating to a campaign or wearing an iconic t-shirt proclaiming “hope.” Instead, I will argue that, rather than passively relying on the hope promised by politicians, citizens must participate in shaping and fulfilling hope, making such hope more genuine and robust. Second, structural violence and inequality, common amongst poor and racial minority communities in America, has wreaked havoc on hope. In some cases, it has eroded hope. 11 In others it has rendered hope exhausting, 12 \*\*\*footnote 12 begins\*\*\* **Calvin Warren**, “Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope,” cr: The New Centennial Review, 15 (2015), pp. 215–248. Shannon Sullivan, “Setting aside hope: A pragmatist approach to racial justice,” in Pragmatism and Justice, ed. by Susan Dielman, David Rondel, and Christopher Voparil (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).\*\*\*footnote 12 ends\*\*\* with marginalized citizens told that they must never give up hope and that they must keep trying to earn a better life for themselves, in part through improving their own character regardless of the stagnant harmful practices of others. Many of those citizens are left either **nihilistically without hope** or perpetually chasing a vision of justice that is (perhaps sometimes intentionally kept) out of reach. 13 \*\*\*footnote 13 begins\*\*\* **Calvin Warren**, “Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope,” cr: The New Centennial Review, 15 (2015): 215–248. \*\*\*footnote 13 ends\*\*\* I intend to describe a form of hope that is more **sustainable** and more **attuned** to the real conditions of life that we can control and others where we have limited control. Third, citizenship in America has increasingly become centered on individuals, personal responsibility, entrepreneurship, and private success. Historical accounts of rugged individualism have now joined forces with calls to educate children in grit and expectations that one will fight to earn one’s position and goods in a competitive marketplace. 14 This environment lacks trust in others and discourages collaborative effort. Often those who have not been successful in the past, or do not see viable avenues for being so in the future, **fatalistically accept** these conditions and become passive about countering or changing them. While others who have enough resources and power to be comfortable with the present conditions, indulge in the privilege of being cynical or apathetic. Some spread these states of hopelessness or jaded negativity through memes and messages on social media, especially about the role and effectiveness of government, **rendering cynicism a collective practice**. 15 Cynics, left believing that their political efforts are useless or ineffective and perhaps that everyone acts on self-interest, are left to look out merely for themselves, without a sense of responsibility to act on behalf of themselves and others. Indeed, cynics may mock others who do not hold such views as naïve and out of touch with reality. Cynicism functions as a **distancing maneuver**, separating citizens from each other, from formal democratic institutions, and from civic organizations, where visions of an improved world and action to achieve it tend to occur. My notion of hope aims to span those divides. Finally, what is left of hope has become **privatized**. 16 This is exacerbated as neoliberalism continues to assert Margaret Thatcher’s claims, “There is no such thing as society, only individuals and families,” and “there is no alternative to the market.” Hope is reduced to a mere drive to achieve one’s own limited dreams, or those of one’s children, typically only through financial terms and material goods. When citizens are rendered isolated competitors, they lose the **ability to detect social problems** and the **motivation to ameliorate them**, especially if the effects on one’s self or family are not immediate. Economist Tyler Cowen describes these citizens as the new “complacent class,” who are content with the way things are as long as they are not directly harmed and as long as they can stay surrounded by people and things that confirm their experience of the world. In their complacency, the members of the complacent class are unable to “inspire an electorate with any kind of strong positive visions, other than some marginal adjustments.” 17 I aim to show how hope is better understand as a social and political endeavor that brings us into contact with others as we craft visions of the future. In sum, these changes in citizens’ lives and views **debilitate individual citizens and democracy as a whole**. They keep us from recognizing and solving collective problems and from leading better lives together. Citizens sit around waiting for reasons to hope, sometimes becoming swept up in campaign rhetoric when election cycles come around, rather than acknowledging that hope is generated through action as subjects working together, as I will argue. I will turn now to depict a pragmatist account of hope that can be formally cultivated in schools and informally in our lives together—a way of hoping together that may better support democratic life in these challenging times. 2 Pragmatist Hope I offer here a pragmatist account of hope, largely based in the philosophy of John Dewey. Notably, Dewey himself does not provide such an account, even though hope underlies much of his work and was evident in his own personal life as he encountered considerable despair at the loss of two of his children and his wife, while also facing two world wars. I construct a view of hope from Dewey’s well-articulated elements of inquiry, growth, truth, meliorism, and habits. Pragmatism begins with the real and complicated conditions of our world. It brings together intelligent reflection with inquiry, habits, and action so that we can understand and change our environments to better align with our needs and desires. Hope plays an important role in that process. Inquiry, Growth, and Truth For Dewey, hope often arises within the midst of despair, when we have lost our way and are struggling to move forward. Dewey describes these moments as “indeterminate situations.” He turns to the process of inquiry via the empirical method to help us explore those situations, consider possible courses of action, and test out various solutions. It is inquiry that helps us to understand, act upon, and reconstruct our environments and our experiences so that we are able to move forward out of the indeterminate situation. In a richly cognitive and often social practice, inquiry invokes curiosity and problem solving to move us out of ruts. Indeed, this method **combats the stagnation of fatalism** by urging us to **formulate and try out solutions**. Growth describes how reconstructions of our experiences through inquiry develops physical, intellectual, and moral capacities, actualizing them and helping them inform one another so that they continue in a chain that enables one to **live satisfactorily**. We **grow** when we learn from inquiry into indeterminate situations and **create ways to re-establish smooth living** that carries us from one activity to the next. Many people **wrongly assume** that growth necessarily has an **end**—as if it were “movement toward a fixed goal.” 18 We tend to think of growth as only progression toward some specific outcome, such as mastering bicycle riding or graduating from high school. But this way of thinking tends to place the emphasis on the static terminus, **rather** than focusing on the **process** of growing as **itself educative and worthwhile**. Dewey’s alternative view of growth does not neatly and linearly move toward a fixed goal. Instead, he describes trajectories that are more complicated, often shifting with the environment. Moreover, holding onto a fixed goal may be undesirable because doing so employs a limited or possibly foreclosed vision of the future. Instead, as changes occur in one’s environment, Dewey asserts that people must continually inquire into moments of uncertainty and changing circumstances, develop new hypotheses about those situations, and revise their aims. Dewey works with what he calls “ends-in-view,” which are relatively close and feasible, even if difficult to achieve, rather than overarching goals at some final endpoint in the future. Those ends-in-view guide our decisions and hypotheses along the way, keeping us resourceful in the present. In Dewey’s words, the discovery of how things do occur makes it possible to conceive of their happening at will, and gives us a start on selecting and combining the conditions, the means, to command their happening…there must be a realistic study of actual conditions and the mode or law of natural event, in order to give the imagined or ideal object definite form and solid substance—to give it, in short, practicality and constitute it as a working end. 19 For Dewey, ends and means are intelligently considered in **light of each other**, with both being **revisable**, and neither **abstracted** from the other. Each fulfilled end-in-view sustains our hope by highlighting meaningful headway and directing our further action. Ends-in-view later become means to future ends, working in an ongoing continuum. This **sustenance of hope** differs from theological accounts which are **difficult to sustain** on faith alone and may leave believers **frustrated** at an apparent lack of action or improvement. It also differs from positive psychology and grit literature which tends to focus on large, far-off, and challenging goals that one holds tenaciously. Many people think of hope as goal-directed and future-oriented. While objects of hope for pragmatists may temporarily serve as ends-in-view, the practice of hope moves us forward through inquiry and experimentation as we pursue our complicated trajectory. It helps to unify our past, present, and future. Hope, then, is not just about a vision of the future, but rather a way of living in the present that is informed by the past and what is anticipated to come. Whereas utopian views of what could be may actually immobilize one and may exhaust one in the present, **pragmatist hope is always tied to what one is doing and feasibly can do in the present**, especially when equipped with knowledge of the past. Central to pragmatist philosophy, ideas become true insofar as they “work” for us, fruitfully combine our experiences, and lead us to further experiences that satisfy our needs. Pragmatists are concerned with the concrete differences in our lived experiences that an idea’s being true will make. Pragmatic truth expresses “the successful completing of a worthwhile leading.” 20 Unlike truth as a corresponding match between proposition and reality, pragmatist truth is something that occurs when the goals of human flourishing are satisfied, at least temporarily. Built into these criteria is consideration of the well-being of others, for successful leading through experiences almost always necessarily requires working and communicating with others. Additionally, the differences an idea will make are quite limited, and therefore less truthful, if relevant only to one person. While not a comprehensive vision of the good life, certain norms including equality and just communication are entailed both in these deliberations and the determination of truth. 21 We must consider how to flourish alongside others as we craft our ends-in-view. This differs considerably from other philosophical and psychological accounts of hope based on the desire of objects or states of affairs regardless of whether they are good for us or other people. Meliorism Pragmatists like Dewey recognize the difficulty of present circumstances, yet approach them practically, rather than idealistically, with thoughtful action, believing that circumstances can be improved. 22 Unlike simple optimists, however, they do not hold that the situation will necessarily work out for the best, but rather they believe people should make efforts to contribute to better outcomes. Such efforts are rarely undertaken alone, instead they are tied to others who are working together to solve problems. In the words of contemporary pragmatist Cornel West, “Optimism adopts the role of the spectator who surveys the evidence in order to infer that things are going to get better. Yet when we know that the evidence does not look good…Hope enacts the stance of the participant who actively struggles against the evidence.” 23 Meliorism entails action in the face of difficulties. Dewey sees hope as a way of living aligned with meliorism, “the idea that at least there is a sufficient basis of goodness in life and its conditions so that by thought and earnest effort we may constantly make better things.” 24 Meliorism is **not a belief in inevitable progress**, but rather a call to human action, especially in the midst of struggle and uncertainty. Dewey firmly argued that it would be foolish to believe that there is “an automatic and wholesale progress in human affairs,” insisting instead that betterment “depends upon **deliberative human foresight** and **socially constructive work**.” 25 Martin Luther King, a champion and practitioner of hope, was enshrined on the floor of Obama’s oval office with his phrase: “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” Importantly, given how many hopes fell flat under the messianic figure of Obama, King later explained in a pragmatist spirit of meliorism, “Human progress never rolls on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the **tireless efforts** of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must **use time creatively**, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right.” 26 We cannot wait until we have a clear picture of our final future goals; rather, we must act now in intelligent ways and through inquiry to bring about better conditions and, thereby, truth. 27 And we must be flexible to change and redirect our efforts as they unfold. Meliorism is an **alternative to both pessimism and optimism**. It cultivates **hope**, **growth**, and **better worlds**. For some pragmatists, like Colin Koopman, this meliorism-based hope is “the pragmatist affect par excellence: ‘hope is the **mood of meliorism**’ (27), ‘the characteristic attitude of pragmatism is hope’ (17).” 28

#### Hope is good – reframing problems as solvable reduces anxious and depressive symptoms.

Chang et al 2019 (Edward C. Chang, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan · Olivia D. Chang, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan · David Rollock, Department of Psychological Sciences, Purdue University · P. Priscilla Lui, Department of Psychology, Southern Methodist University · Angela Farris Watkins, Department of Psychology, Spelman College · Jameson K. Hirsch, Department of Psychology, East Tennessee State University · Elizabeth L. Jeglic, Department of Psychology, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, " Hope Above Racial Discrimination and Social Support in Accounting for Positive and Negative Psychological Adjustment in African American Adults: Is “Knowing You Can Do It” as Important as “Knowing How You Can”?", Cognitive Therapy and Research, 2019, <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s10608-018-9949-y.pdf>, mmv)

Beyond the important findings obtained for racial discrimination and social support, we found clear and consistent evidence for the distinct and central role of hope agency in accounting for both positive and negative psychological adjustment, independent of differences in sociodemographic factors, experiences of racial discrimination, and social support. Specifically, African Americans who believed that they had the ability to achieve their goals reported lower levels of anxious and depressive symptoms, and higher levels of vitality and life satisfaction. Interestingly, in contrast to Snyder et al.’s (1991) contention that both hope agency and pathways uniquely contribute to psychological adjustment, we failed to find compelling evidence for the unique role of hope pathways in accounting for psychological adjustment in African Americans. However, one exception was found. In accounting for vitality, we found that feeling alive was predicated on African Americans’ belief in both their ability to achieve personal goals and their ability to pursue effective means to reach those goals. Although some researchers have argued that the primary component driving the positive effects of hope is agentic thinking (Tong et al. 2010), rather than a combination of agentic and pathways thinking, it is important to appreciate that there has not been enough studies conducted on hope in African Americans to draw any strong conclusions at this time (Chang and Banks 2007). For example, in contrast to the present findings, Davidson et al. (2010) found that hope pathways, but not agency, accounted for suicidal ideation in African American college students attending a leadership conference. Thus, there is a need for more studies that examine the role of hope components across a wider spectrum of positive and negative psychological adjustment outcomes in African Americans. Nonetheless, the present findings do offer some opportunity to consider the usefulness of bolstering hope agency among African American adults with low hope. According to Adams et al. (2003), teaching African Americans to cope effectively with life challenges and threats (e.g., racial discrimination) represents one approach to facilitating hope. Relatedly, applying problem-solving therapy (D’Zurilla and Nezu 2006) techniques that help African Americans to reframe or reimagine their problems as solvable or manageable (i.e., increase positive problem orientation and decrease negative problem orientation) and to engage in greater approach behaviors (i.e., reduce avoidance behaviors) toward resolving their problems, may prove useful in building agentic thinking. Alternatively, or additionally, there might also be value in directly targeting hope in African American adults. For example, in a pilot study of hope therapy in a community sample of adults, Cheavens et al. (2006) showed that an eight-session intervention targeting core elements of hope theory (e.g., setting personal goals, developing pathways to work toward goals, and cultivating personal sources of motivation) was effective in producing significantly greater agentic thinking, between pre- and post-treatment. Moreover, it would be useful to determine if the building of hope in African Americans (as well as in other ethnoracial groups) might also serve to buttress existing strategies to treat or reduce psychological problems (e.g., depression, anxiety; Chang et al. 2018). Within this context, however, we join Lopez et al. (2000) in arguing that the cultivation of hope should be based on a foundation in which efforts have been first made to “level” social disparities and differences across individuals of all ethnoracial backgrounds. That is, what value is there in bolstering hope in individuals if efforts are also not made to acknowledge and change the social conditions that might have led their loss of hope in the first place (Prilleltensky 1989)?

#### Specifically it prevents suicide – we cite the *best* study

Davidson et al 2010 (Collin L. Davidson, MS, LaRicka R. Wingate, PhD, Meredith L. Slish, MS, and Kathy A. Rasmussen, MS, "The Great Black Hope: Hope and Its Relation to Suicide Risk among African Americans", Suice and Life-Threatening Behavior, 40(2) April 2010, The American Association of Suicidology, <https://guilfordjournals.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1521/suli.2010.40.2.170?casa_token=oe9ou4Of_jMAAAAA:uCu69dDS4qbVfEeARTq-LV4u_GPbZ8xXYPkMg_wgPzo9A9Ux18FQ_BWCm3XDbF1pq-d5lIU-_Mek>, mmv)

The results from this study are generally consistent with our hypotheses. Specifically, hope negatively predicted thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness while predicting acquired capability to enact suicide in the positive direction. These results suggest that as a whole, hope may serve to buffer African American individuals against suicide, consistent with previous findings in other ethnic groups (Davidson et al., in press; Range & Penton, 1994). As discussed above and in a previous study (Davidson et al., in press), the marginal positive prediction of hope for acquired capability to enact suicide may be due to the tendency of people with high hopes to set more goals and more challenging goals, thus possibly putting themselves in more situations where they would be likely to experience pain. If the experience of pain became frequent enough, these individuals would theoretically habituate to the pain resulting in higher levels of acquired capability to enact suicide. Further, it was found that hope and the pathways subscale significantly predicted suicidal ideation such that higher hope scores predicted less suicidal ideation. In contrast, the goals and agency subscales did not significantly predict suicidal ideation. This suggests that simply having the goal or agency to enact suicide is not enough—the strength of the relationship is in the pathway or plans to enact suicide. This is consistent with previous research that has shown that plans and preparations for suicide are one of the strongest predictors for suicide completion (Joiner, Rudd, & Rajah, 1997); stronger even than the desire to enact suicide. These findings may relate to the significant prediction of the pathways component to suicidal ideation. Taken together with the aforementioned results, this suggests that hope serves as a protective factor for both suicidal risk as described in the interpersonal-psychological theory of suicide (Joiner, 2005) and suicidal ideation. These results are contrary to previous findings (Davidson et al., in press) which showed that although higher hope did predict lower burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness, hope did not predict suicidal ideation. It is possible that, among African Americans, hope plays a larger role as a protective factor for suicide in comparison to a predominantly Caucasian sample. Additionally, we investigated the differences between the two samples and found that the African American sample had significantly higher levels of hope, goals, and agency and that each of these scales had larger standard deviations than the predominantly Caucasian sample. It is possible that the larger variability of scores contributed to the likelihood of significant findings. Future research should aim to clarify this relationship. Finally, consistent with our third hypothesis, it was found that the components of Joiners (2005) theory of suicidal behavior together predicted suicidal ideation. These results offer further support for the validity of Joiners theory in conjunction with the existing empirical studies that support this theory. Additionally, these results further expand the generalizability of Joiner's theory to an African American sample. Although the components as a set predicted suicidal ideation, when examined individually, only burden-someness and belongingness individually predict suicidal ideation, while acquired capability does not. This finding is not consistent with a previous study that examined the theory in a largely Caucasian population (David- son et al., in press), wherein each component separately predicted suicidal ideation. Joiner proposed that for an individual to desire suicide, thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness must be elevated, whereas for an individual to physically carry out a suicide attempt, they must have higher acquired capability to enact suicide. Theoretically then, it may be that individuals who only have elevated levels of acquired capability may not have suicidal ideation because they have no desire to end their lives. Again, future research should further investigate this relationship. One limitation of the current study is that the sample is not particularly diverse, as it is composed only of people who self-identified as African American. However, it is of note that this is the first study to our knowledge to examine Joiners theory of suicidal behavior in an African American sample. It is ideal to generalize the presence of theoretical findings to many different populations. Regarding this situation. Popper (1959, p. 269) stated, "once a theory is well corroborated, further instances raise its degree of corroboration only very little. This ride however does not hold good if these new instances are very different from the earlier ones, that is if they corroborate the theory in a new field of application" (emphasis added). Although the participants in this study were African American, they were somewhat diverse in their place of living, and came from all over the Big XII conference area, including the states of Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, Texas, and Colorado. In line with the previous limitation, it is important to note that there is a great amount of diversity among Black people, lo elaborate, there are cultural differences related to the geographic location in which a person lives (all of our participants were living in the midwest), as well as their ethnic heritage and recent ancestors' country of origin (United States, Africa, Caribbean Islands, etc.). Given the heterogeneity among Black people in America, it is important that researchers attend to ethnic differences among Blacks in the study of suicide related behaviors. Future studies should work to investigate risk factors within Black groups. Some may consider the focus on a relatively low-risk group of participants (African American college students) a limitation of our study; however, a great deal of research on suicidal behavior and risk factors has been conducted with college samples. In addition, we specifically took the stance of examining suicidal behavior from a positive psychology approach, as suggested in Wingate et al. (2006). Given that the rate of suicide for African Americans has been consistendy low in comparison to Caucasian Americans, it may be beneficial to identify the protective factors that help to temper the risk. Once these protective factors are identified in African Americans, it may then be possible to implement and encourage these factors in other ethnic groups. This emphasis on buffers against suicide risk may serve to supplement the existing emphasis on suicide risk factors in clinical practice. Indeed, research has shown that hope tends to protect individuals from negative outcomes in mental health (e.g., depression and anxiety) and the current study and previous studies have suggested that hope can also protect against suicide risk (Davidson et al, in press; Range & Penton, 1994). It is possible that instilling hope in clients can provide incremental increases in client safety' above and beyond the common clinical practices of identifying and protecting clients from risk factors to ensure their safety'. Indeed, Stellrecht et al. (2006) highlighted the importance of applying research to the clinical setting and provided recommendations for using the interpersonal-psychological theory of suicide in risk assessment, crisis intervention, and general therapy. Specific to African Americans, it may prove beneficial for clinicians to use techniques that encourage increased feelings of belongingness within, and contributions to, the African American community. This could include having the client become involved in activities where they are a member of a group, where they give back, and where they have similarities to others in the group. Cognitive techniques could be used to address distorted cognitions surrounding feelings of burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness. Similarly, drawing from hope theory, clinicians may be able to focus on challenging cognitive distortions related to a lack of hope, subsequendy increasing hope as a protective factor. They may also be able to capitalize on the hope that clients already possess when presenting to therapy, and work to generalize that hope to areas of the clients life where it is lacking. Though the current findings may inform prevention and treatment of suicidal behavior in the future, it should be noted that additional research is required to confirm some of these potential applications. The findings from the current study are important in that they replicate and extend the findings of Davidson et al. (in press), which demonstrated that hope served as a protective factor for suicide risk in a largely Caucasian sample. As mentioned earlier, African Americans tend to be at higher risk for suicide due to overrepresentation in lower socioeconomic-status environments, associated stress, and discrimination, but they enact suicide at lower rates. Some researchers have hypothesized (see Gibbs, 1997) that this paradox is due to protective factors such as religiosity or strong family ties. The current study adds to these assertions by demonstrating that hope is potentially an important protective factor for African Americans. To our knowledge, this is the only study that has investigated suicide from a positive psychology perspective in an African American sample, and one of few studies to do so in a general sample.

#### Structuralism is self-defeating and contradictory.

Carey 20 – School of Humanities and Social Inquiry, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, Australia. (Jane, "On hope and resignation: conflicting visions of settler colonial studies and its future as a field," Taylor & Francis, 2-12-2020, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13688790.2020.1719578, Accessed 5-23-2021, LASA-SC)

In support of this claim he asserted: ‘For the practitioners of the eliminationist paradigm, Indigenous agency tends to be a gesture made at the end of a description of the settler colonial edifice’. Problematically, however, as I detail further below, this assertion fundamentally misrepresented most of the works he cited. Neither Maynard nor Langton responded particularly to Rowse’s comments, perhaps expecting that Indigenous perspectives should be the main focus of the panel.11 A reworked version of Rowse’s paper was published the following year in Australian Historical Studies as part of a forum which included two responses to his article. Neither of the Indigenous scholars who had been part of the original conference panel were represented in this forum.12 The journal’s editorial for this issue described the session as having been ‘framed by Professor Tim Rowse’s discussion of the term “settler colonialism”, and whether it actually could be said, in its various uses, to partly occlude the histories of Indigenous peoples, thereby further silencing their lives in the past’. 13 The presence of Maynard and Langton on the original conference panel was not mentioned. In this move, both Rowse and the journal neatly enacted the very thing he was purporting to critique: Indigenous erasure. Although the published version contained some significant alterations, Rowse’s central critique remained the claim that ‘those writing within this paradigm have trouble dealing with Indigenous agency’. He decried ‘the homogenising, psychologising and dehistoricising tendencies of the “elimination” paradigm’ as unhelpful and characterised its ‘analytical ambition’ as being the establishment of ‘the teleological sameness of all narratives of colonisation’. 14 In outlining his vision of Indigenous heterogeneity, he suggested that Australia’s colonial history had produced ‘opportunities’ for Indigenous survival, in ‘a self conscious series of enclaves’, and thus called into question those who presented colonisation as ‘displacement, dispossession and destruction’. Leaving aside the extraordinary claim that colonialism produced Indigenous survival (rather than being the force that required survival), he argued that historians should have more to say about Indigenous persistence than about erasure. In Rowse’s view, any engagement with Wolfe’s work necessarily foreclosed this possibility. Rowse presented his critique as a major new intervention; but he was, in fact, repeating criticisms that had already been widely aired since the late 1990s. As anyone with more than a passing familiarity with the field knows, Wolfe’s work sparked controversy and critique from his earliest publications. His 1994 article in Social Analysis, ‘Nation and MiscegeNation’, which contained the first major statement of his structuralist interpretation of the nature of settler colonialism, provoked a ‘Review Symposium’ in the same journal in 1997.15 This featured three critical responses from Elizabeth Povinelli, Francesca Merlan and Jeffrey Sissons. These critiques questioned Wolfe’s thesis regarding the ‘structural continuity’ of settler colonialism from a number of directions, but most particularly the way it seemed to risk foreclosing the possibility of Indigenous agency. Merlan’s response was the most critical, rejecting structuralist models in general, and the implications of Wolfe’s thesis for Aboriginal agency specifically: ‘In centring the notion of a continuous logic of settler-colonialism, and regarding this as a “structure rather than an event”, Wolfe succumbs to the appealing closure of all structuralisms, and constitutes this logic as impervious to agency and event’. This, she argued, ‘effectively denies Aborigines and others entry points’ and reduced past and present ‘to a logic of elimination in which Aborigines have no part’. 16 Povinelli, while supporting aspects of Wolfe’s analysis, also noted how his model seemingly positioned Aboriginal people’s own accounts of ‘the hybrid nature of colonial subjectivity’ as ‘assimilationist’ and worse as ‘participating … in the completion of the colonial project of (sub)merging and eliminating Aboriginal people’. 17 Jeffrey Sissons concurred with much of Merlan’s critique, but argued that this called for an expansion of Wolfe’s argument rather than a rejection of it and that ‘the bracketing or deferral of Aboriginal agency does not necessarily preclude its recuperation at some later point’. 18 While Sissons thus supported much of Wolfe’s analysis, he expressed reservations that the model did not account for differences between settler colonies and (in the well-trodden vein of New Zealand exceptionalism) argued that in New Zealand, ‘colonial settlers sought assimilation rather than elimination of Maori’. That is, he did not accept Wolfe’s view that assimilation was a settler strategy of elimination. He particularly rejected Wolfe’s characterisation of the ongoing, present-day salience of these structures: ‘No one could reasonably argue … that the New Zealand State’s strategies conform to a logic of elimination and nor, I suggest, can this be convincingly argued for the post-colonizing Australian state’. 19

#### Repression, free association, and transference are all statistically and empirically disproven – undercuts the fundamental thesis of psychoanalysis

**Grunbaum, 2005 (Adolf, Andrew Mellon Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh, “Critique of Psychoanalysis,” Handbook of Personology and Psychopathology, edited by Stephen Strack)**

Let me now turn to my critique of **the core of Freud’s original psychoanalytic theory** and to a verdict on its fundamental modifications by two major post-Freudian sets of hypotheses, called self psychology and object relations theory. **The pillars of the** avowed “**cornerstone” of Freud’s theoretical edifice comprise several major theses: (1) Distressing mental states induce** the operation of a psychic mechanism of **repression, which consists in the banishment from consciousness of unpleasurable psychic states** (1915b, p. 147); (2) **once repression is operative** (more or less fully), **it not only banishes such negatively charged ideas from consciousness, but plays a further crucial multiple causal role: It is causally necessary for the pathogens of neuroses, the production of our dreams, and the generation of our various sorts of slips (bungled actions); and** (3) **the “method of free association” can identify and lift (undo) the patient’s repressions; by doing so, it can identify the pathogens of the neuroses, and the generators of our dreams, as well as the causes of our motivationally opaque slips; moreover, by lifting the pathogenic repressions, free association functions therapeutically, rather than only investigatively**. Freud provided two sorts of arguments for his cardinal etiologic doctrine that repressions are the pathogens of the neuroses: His earlier one, which goes back to his original collaboration with Josef Breuer, relies on purported *therapeutic successes* from lifting repressions; the later one, designed to show that the pathogenic repressions are sexual, is drawn from presumed reenactments (“transferences”) of infantile episodes in the adult patient’s interactions with the analyst during psychoanalytic treatment. It will be expositorily expeditious to deal with Freud’s earlier etiologic argument below, and to appraise the subsequent one, which goes back to his “Dora” case history of 1905, after that. But also for expository reasons, it behooves us to devote an introduction to his account of the actuation of the hypothesized mechanism of repression by “motives of unpleasure.” Negative Affect and Forgetting As Freud told us, “**The theory of repression is the cornerstone on which the whole structure of psycho-analysis rests. It is the most essential part of it**” (1914, p. 16). The process of repression, which consists in the banishment of ideas from consciousness or in denying them entry into it, is itself presumed to be unconscious (1915b, p. 147). **In Freud’s view, our neurotic symptoms, the manifest contents of our dreams, and the slips we commit are each constructed as “compromises between the demands of a repressed impulse and the resistances of a censoring force in the ego**” (1925, p. 45; and 1916–1917, p. 301). **By being only such compromises, rather than fulfillments of the instinctual impulses, these products of the unconscious afford only substitutive gratifications or outlets. For brevity, one can say, therefore, that Freud has offered a unifying “compromise model” of neuroses, dreams, and parapraxes. But what, in the first place, is the motive or cause that initiates and sustains the operation of the unconscious mechanism of repression before it produces its own later effects? Apparently, Freud assumes axiomatically that distressing mental states, such as forbidden wishes, trauma, disgust, anxiety, anger, shame, hate, guilt, and sadness—all of which are unpleasurable—almost always actuate, and then fuel, forgetting to the point of repression. Thus, repression regulates pleasure and unpleasure by defending our consciousness against various sorts of negative affect**. Indeed, Freud claimed perennially that repression is the paragon among our defense mechanisms (Thomä & Kächele, 1987, pp. 107–111). **As Freud put it dogmatically: “The tendency to forget what is disagreeable seems to me to be a quite universal one**” (1901, p. 144), and “The recollection of distressing impressions and the occurrence of distressing thoughts are opposed by a resistance” (p. 146). Freud tries to disarm an important objection to his thesis that “distressing memories succumb especially easily to motivated forgetting” (1901, p. 147, italics added). He says: “The assumption that a defensive trend of this kind exists cannot be objected to on the ground that one often enough finds it impossible, on the contrary, to get rid of distressing memories that pursue one, and to banish distressing affective impulses like remorse and the pangs of conscience. For we are not asserting that this defensive trend is able to put itself into effect in every case.” **He acknowledges as “also a true fact” that “distressing things are particularly hard to forget**” (1916–1917, pp. 76–77). For instance, we know from Charles **Darwin’s** autobiography that his **father had developed a remarkably retentive memory for painful experiences** (cited in Grünbaum, 1994), **and that a half century after Giuseppe Verdi was humiliatingly denied admission to the Milan Music Conservatory, he recalled it indignantly** (Walker, 1962, pp. 8–9). Freud himself told us as an adult (1900, p. 216) that he “can remember very clearly,” from age 7 or 8, how his father rebuked him for having relieved himself in the presence of his parents in their bedroom. In a frightful blow to Freud’s ego, his father said: “The boy will come to nothing.” **But Freud’s attempt here to uphold his thesis of motivated forgetting is evasive and unavailing: Because some painful mental states are vividly remembered while others are forgotten or even repressed, I claim that factors different from their painfulness determine whether they are remembered or forgotten. For example, personality dispositions or situational variables may in fact be causally relevant. To the great detriment of his theory, Freud never came to grips with the unfavorable bearing of this key fact about the mnemic effects of painfulness on the tenability of the following pillar of his theory of repression: When painful or forbidden experiences are forgotten, the forgetting is tantamount to their repression due to their negative affect, and thereby produces neurotic symptoms or other compromise formations**. Thomas **Gilovich**, a professor of psychology at Cornell University, **is** now **doing valuable work on the conditions under which painful experiences are remembered and on those other conditions under which they are forgotten. The numerous and familiar occurrences of vivid and even obsessive recall of negative experiences pose a fundamental statistical and explanatory challenge to Freud that neither he nor his followers have ever met. We must ask** (Grünbaum, 1994): **Just what is the ratio of the forgetting of distressing experiences to their recall, and what other factors determine that ratio? Freud gave no statistical evidence for assuming that forgetting them is the rule and remembering them is the exception**. Yet, as we can see, **his theory of repression is devastatingly undermined from the outset if forgettings of negative experiences do not greatly outnumber rememberings statistically. After all, if forgetting is not the rule, then what other reason does Freud offer for supposing that when distressing experiences are actually forgotten, these forgettings are instances of genuine repression due to affective displeasure? And if he has no such other reason, then, a fortiori, he has no basis at all for his pivotal etiologic scenario that forbidden or aversive states of mind are usually repressed and thereby cause compromise formations**. Astonishingly, Freud thinks he can parry this basic statistical and explanatory challenge by an evasive dictum, as follows: “Mental life is the arena and battle-ground for mutually opposing purposes [of forgetting and remembering] (1916–1917, p. 76) . . . ; there is room for both. It is only a question . . . of what effects are produced by the one and the other” (p. 77). Indeed, just that question cries out for an answer from Freud if he is to make his case. Instead, he cavalierly left it to dangle epistemologically in limbo. The Epistemological Liabilities of the Psychoanalytic Method of Free Association **Another basic difficulty, which besets all three major branches of the theory of repression alike, lies in the epistemological defects of Freud’s so-called fundamental rule of free association, the supposed microscope and X-ray tomograph of the human mind. This rule enjoins the patient to tell the analyst without reservation whatever comes to mind. Thus, it serves as the fundamental method of clinical investigation. We are told that by using this technique to unlock the floodgates of the unconscious, Freud was able to show that neuroses, dreams, and slips are caused by repressed motives**. Just as in Breuer’s cathartic use of hypnosis, **it is a cardinal thesis of Freud’s entire psychoanalytic enterprise that his method of free association has a twofold major capability, which is both investigative and therapeutic: (1) It can identify the unconscious causes of human thoughts and behavior, both abnormal and normal, and (2) by overcoming resistances and lifting repressions, it can remove the unconscious pathogens of neuroses and thus provide therapy for an important class of mental disorders. But on what grounds did Freud assert that free association has the stunning investigative capability to be causally probative for etiologic research in psychopathology? Is it not too good to be true that one can put a psychologically disturbed person on the couch and fathom the etiology of her or his affliction by free association? As compared to fathoming the causation of major somatic diseases, that seems almost miraculous, if at all true**. Freud tells us very clearly (1900, p. 528) that his argument for his investigative tribute to free association as a means of uncovering the causation of neuroses is, at bottom, a therapeutic one going back to the cathartic method of treating hysteria. Let me state and articulate his argument. One of Freud’s justifications for the use of free association as a causally probative method of dream investigation leading to the identification of the repressed dream thoughts, he tells us (1900, p. 528), is that it “is identical with the procedure [of free association] by which we resolve hysterical symptoms; and there the correctness of our method [of free association] is warranted by the coincident emergence and disappearance of the symptoms.” But, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Grünbaum, 1993, pp. 25–26), his original German text here contains a confusing slip of the pen. As we know, the patient’s symptoms hardly first emerge simultaneously with their therapeutic dissipation. Yet, Strachey translated Freud correctly as having spoken of “the coincident emergence and disappearance of the symptoms.” It would seem that Freud means to speak of the resolution (German: Auflösung), rather than of the emergence (Auftauchen), of the symptoms as coinciding with their therapeutic dissipation. Now, for Freud, the “resolution of a symptom,” in turn, consists of using free association to uncover the repressed pathogen that enters into the compromise formation that is held to constitute the symptom. This much, then, is the statement of Freud’s appeal to therapeutic success to vouch for the “correctness of our method” of free association as causally probative for etiologic research in psychopathology. To articulate the argument adequately, however, we must still clarify Freud’s original basis for claiming that (unsuccessful) repression is indeed the pathogen of neurosis. Only then will he have made his case for claiming that free association is etiologically probative because it is uniquely capable of uncovering repressions. The pertinent argument is offered in Breuer and Freud’s “Preliminary Communication” (1893, pp. 6–7). There they wrote: “For we found, to our great surprise at first, that each individual hysterical symptom immediately and permanently disappeared when we had succeeded in bringing clearly to light the memory of the event by which it was provoked and in arousing its accompanying affect, and when the patient had described that event in the greatest possible detail and had put the affect into words. Recollection without affect almost invariably produces no result. The psychical process which originally took place must be repeated as vividly as possible; it must be brought back to its status nascendi and then given verbal utterance.” Breuer and Freud make an important comment on their construal of this therapeutic finding: “It is plausible to suppose that it is a question here of unconscious suggestion: the patient expects to be relieved of his sufferings by this procedure, and it is this expectation, and not the verbal utterance, which is the operative factor. This, however, is not so. (p. 7)” And their avowed reason is that, in 1881, that is, in the “ ‘pre-suggestion’ era,” the cathartic method was used to remove separately distinct symptoms, “which sprang from separate causes” such that any one symptom disappeared only after the cathartic (“abreactive”) lifting of a particular repression. But Breuer and Freud do not tell us why the likelihood of placebo effect should be deemed to be lower when several symptoms are wiped out seriatim than in the case of getting rid of only one symptom. Thus, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Grünbaum, 1993, p. 238), to discredit the hypothesis of placebo effect, it would have been essential to have comparisons with treatment outcome from a suitable control group whose repressions are not lifted. If that control group were to fare equally well, treatment gains from psychoanalysis would then be placebo effects after all. In sum, Breuer and Freud inferred that the therapeutic removal of neurotic symptoms was produced by the cathartic lifting of the patient’s previously ongoing repression of the pertinent traumatic memory, not by the therapist’s suggestion or some other placebo factor (see Grünbaum, 1993, pp. 69–107 for a very detailed analysis of the placebo concept). We can codify this claim as follows: *T. Therapeutic Hypothesis: Lifting repressions of traumatic memories cathartically is causally relevant to the disappearance of neuroses*. As we saw, Breuer and Freud (1893, p. 6) reported the immediate and permanent disappearance of each hysterical symptom after they cathartically lifted the repression of the memory of the trauma that occasioned the given symptom. They adduce this “evidence” to draw an epoch-making inductive etiologic inference, which postulates “a causal relation between the determining [repression of the memory of the] psychical trauma and the hysterical phenomenon” (p. 6). Citing the old scholastic dictum “Cessante causa cessat effectus” (When the cause ceases, its effect ceases), they invoke its contrapositive (p. 7), which states that as long as the effect (symptom) persists, so does its cause (the repressed memory of the psychical trauma). And they declare just that to be the pattern of the pathogenic action of the repressed psychical trauma. This trauma, we learn, is not a mere precipitating cause. Such a mere “agent provocateur” just releases the symptom, “which thereafter leads an independent existence.” Instead, “the [repressed] memory of the trauma . . . acts like a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work” (p. 6). The upshot of their account is that their observations of positive therapeutic outcome on the abreactive lifting of repressions, which they interpret in the sense of their therapeutic hypothesis, spelled a paramount etiologic moral as follows: *E. Etiologic Hypothesis: An ongoing repression accompanied by affective suppression is causally necessary for the initial pathogenesis and persistence of a neurosis*. (This formulation of the foundational etiology of psychoanalysis supersedes the one I gave at the suggestion of Carl Hempel and Morris Eagle [in Grünbaum, 1984, p. 181, last paragraph]. The revised formulation here is faithful to Breuer and Freud’s reference to “accompanying affect” [p. 6] apropos of the traumatic events whose repression occasioned the symptoms.) Clearly, this etiologic hypothesis E permits the valid deduction of the therapeutic finding reported by Breuer and Freud as codified in their therapeutic hypothesis T: The cathartic lifting of the repressions of traumatic memories of events that occasion symptoms engendered the disappearance of the symptoms. And, as they told us explicitly (1893, p. 6**), this therapeutic finding is their “evidence” for their cardinal etiologic hypothesis E. But I maintain** that this inductive argument is vitiated by what I like to call the “fallacy of crude hypothetico-deductive (H-D) pseudo-confirmation.” Thus, note that the remedial action of aspirin consumption for tension headaches does not lend H-D support to the outlandish etiologic hypothesis that a hematolytic aspirin deficiency is a causal sine qua non for having tension headaches, although such remedial action is validly deducible from that bizarre hypothesis. Twenty-five years ago, Wesley Salmon called attention to the fallacy of inductive causal inference from mere valid H-D deducibility by giving an example in which a deductively valid pseudo-explanation of a man’s avoiding pregnancy can readily give rise to an H-D pseudo-confirmation of the addle-brained attribution of his nonpregnancy to his consumption of birth control pills. Salmon (1971, p. 34) states the fatuous pseudo-explanation: **“John Jones avoided becoming pregnant during the past year, for he had taken his wife’s birth control pills regularly, and every man who regularly takes birth control pills avoids pregnancy.” Plainly, this deducibility of John Jones’s recent failure to become pregnant from the stated premises does not lend any credence at all to the zany hypothesis that this absence of pregnancy is causally attributable to his consumption of birth control pills. Yet it is even true that any men who consume such pills in fact never do become pregnant. Patently, as Salmon notes, the fly in the ointment is that men just do not become pregnant, whether they take birth control pills or not. His example shows that neither the empirical truth of the deductively inferred conclusion and of the pertinent initial condition concerning Jones nor the deductive validity of the inference can provide bona fide confirmation of the causal hypothesis that male consumption of birth control pills prevents male pregnancy: That hypothesis would first have to meet other epistemic requirements, which it manifestly cannot do. Crude H-D confirmationism is a paradise of spurious causal inferences, as illustrated by Breuer and Freud’s unsound etiologic inference. Thus, psychoanalytic narratives are replete with the belief that a hypothesized etiologic scenario embedded in a psychoanalytic narrative of an analysand’s affliction is made credible merely because the postulated etiology then permits the logical deduction or probabilistic inference of the neurotic symptoms to be explained**. Yet some apologists offer a facile excuse for the fallacious H-D confirmation of a causal hypothesis. We are told that the hypothesis is warranted by an “Inference to the Best Explanation” (1965, pp. 88–95). But in a careful new study, Wesley Salmon (2001, p. 79) has argued that “**the characterization of nondemonstrative inference as inference to the best explanation serves to muddy the waters . . . by fostering confusion” between two sorts of why-questions that Hempel had distinguished: explanation-seeking questions as to why something is the case, and confirmation-seeking why-questions as to why a hypothesis is credible**. Thus, a hypothesis that is pseudo-confirmed by some data cannot be warranted qua being “the only [explanatory] game in town.” Alas, **“best explanation”—sanction was claimed for psychoanalytic etiologies to explain and treat the destructive behavior of sociopaths to no avail for years** (cf. Cleckley, 1988, pp. 238–239, 438–439). I can now demonstrate the multiple failure of Freud’s therapeutic argument for the etiologic probativeness of free association in psychopathology, no matter how revealing the associative contents may otherwise be in regard to the patient’s psychological preoccupations and personality dispositions. Let us take our bearings and first encapsulate the structure of his therapeutic argument. First, Freud inferred that the therapeutic disappearance of the neurotic symptoms is causally attributable to the cathartic lifting of repressions by means of the method of free association. Relying on this key therapeutic hypothesis, he then drew two further major theoretical inferences: (1) The seeming removal of the neurosis by means of cathartically lifting repressions is good inductive evidence for postulating that repressions accompanied by affective suppression are themselves causally necessary for the very existence of a neurosis (1893, pp. 6–7), and (2) granted that such repressions are thus the essential causes of neurosis, and that the method of free association is uniquely capable of uncovering these repressions, this method is uniquely competent to identify the causes or pathogens of the neuroses. (Having convinced himself of the causal probativeness of the method of free association on therapeutic grounds in the case of those neuroses he believed to be successfully treatable, Freud also felt justified in deeming the method reliable as a means of unearthing the etiologies of those other neuroses—the so-called narcissistic ones, such as paranoia—that he considered psychoanalytically untreatable.) **But the argument fails for the following several reasons. In the first place, the durable therapeutic success on which it was predicated did not materialize (Borch-Jacobsen, 1996), as Freud was driven to admit both early and very late in his career (1925, p. 27; 1937, pp. 23, 216–253). But even insofar as there was transitory therapeutic gain, we saw that Freud failed to rule out a rival hypothesis that undermines his attribution of such gain to the lifting of repressions by free association: the ominous hypothesis of placebo effect, which asserts that treatment ingredients other than insight into the patient’s repression—such as the mobilization of the patient’s hope by the therapist—are responsible for any resulting improvement (Grünbaum, 1993, chap. 3). Nor have other analysts ruled out the placebo hypothesis during the past century. A case in point is a 45-page study “On the Efficacy of Psychoanalysis” (Bachrach, Galatzer, Skolnikoff, & Waldron, 1991), published in the official Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association. Another is the account of analytic treatment process by Vaughan and Roose (1995)**. Last, but not least, the repression etiology is evidentially ill founded, as we saw earlier and will see further in the next section. It is unavailing to the purported etiologic probativeness of free associations that they may lift repressions, because Freud failed to show that the latter are pathogenic. In sum, Freud’s argument has forfeited its premises. Freud’s Etiologic Transference Argument Now let us consider Freud’s argument for his cardinal thesis that sexual repressions in particular are the pathogens of all neuroses, an argument he deemed “decisive.” Drawing on my earlier writings (Grünbaum, 1990, pp. 565–567; 1993, pp. 152–158), we shall now find that this argument is without merit. According to Freud’s theory of transference, the patient transfers onto his or her psychoanalyst feelings and thoughts that originally pertained to important figures in his or her earlier life. In this important sense, the fantasies woven around the psychoanalyst by the analysand, and quite generally the latter’s conduct toward his or her doctor, are hypothesized to be thematically recapitulatory of childhood episodes. And by thus being recapitulatory, the patient’s behavior during treatment can be said to exhibit a thematic kinship to such very early episodes. Therefore, when the analyst interprets these supposed reenactments, the ensuing interpretations are called “transference interpretations.” Freud and his followers have traditionally drawn the following highly questionable causal inference: Precisely in virtue of being thematically recapitulated in the patientdoctor interaction, the hypothesized earlier scenario in the patient’s life can cogently be held to have originally been a pathogenic factor in the patient’s affliction. For example, in his case history of the “Rat-Man,” Freud (1909) infers that a certain emotional conflict had originally been the precipitating cause of the patient’s inability to work, merely because this conflict had been thematically reenacted in a fantasy the “Rat-Man” had woven around Freud during treatment. Thus, in the context of Freud’s transference interpretations, the thematic reenactment is claimed to show that the early scenario had originally been pathogenic. According to this etiologic conclusion, the patient’s thematic reenactment in the treatment setting is also asserted to be pathogenically recapitulatory by being pathogenic in the adult patient’s here and now, rather than only thematically recapitulatory. Freud (1914, p. 12) extols this dubious etiologic transference argument in his History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, claiming that it furnishes the most unshakable proof for his sexual etiology of all the neuroses: “The fact of the emergence of the transference in its crudely sexual form, whether affectionate or hostile, in every treatment of a neurosis, although this is neither desired nor induced by either doctor or patient, has always seemed to me the most irrefragable proof [original German: “unerschütterlichste Beweis”] that the source of the driving forces of neurosis lies in sexual life [sexual repressions]. This argument has never received anything approaching the degree of attention that it merits, for if it had, investigations in this field would leave no other conclusion open. As far as I am concerned, this argument has remained the decisive one, over and above the more specific findings of analytic work.” On the contrary, the patient’s thematically recapitulatory behavior toward his or her doctor does not show that it is also pathogenically recapitulatory. How, for example, does the reenactment, during treatment, of a patient’s early conflict show at all that the original conflict had been pathogenic in the first place? Quite generally, how do transference phenomena focusing on the analyst show that a presumed current replica of a past event is pathogenic in the here and now? Therefore, I submit, the purportedly “irrefragable proof ” of which Freud spoke deserves more attention not because its appreciation “would leave no other conclusion open,” as he would have it; instead, I contend that the “Rat-Man” case and other such case histories show how baffling it is that Freud deemed the etiologic transference argument cogent at all, let alone unshakably so. Marshall Edelson (1984, p. 150) has offered a rebuttal to my denial of the cogency of the etiologic transference argument: “In fact, in psychoanalysis the pathogen is not merely a remote event, or a series of such events, the effect of which lives on. The pathogen reappears in all its virulence, with increasing frankness and explicitness, in the transference—in a new edition, a new version, a reemergence, a repetition of the past pathogenic events or factors.” And Edelson elaborates (p. 151): “The pathogen together with its pathological effects are, therefore, under the investigator’s eye, so to speak, in the psychoanalytic situation, and demonstrating the causal relation between them in that situation, by experimental or quasi-experimental methods, surely provides support, even if indirect, for the hypothesis that in the past the same kind of pathogenic factors were necessary to bring about the same kind of effects.” But how does the psychoanalyst demonstrate, within the confines of his or her clinical setting, that the supposed current replica of the remote, early event is presently the virulent cause of the patient’s neurosis, let alone that the original pathogen is replicated at all in the transference? Having fallaciously identified a conflict as a pathogen because it reappears in the transference, many Freudians conclude that pathogens must reappear in the transference. And in this way, they beg the key question I have just asked. How, for example, did Freud show that the “Rat-Man’s” marriage conflict depicted in that patient’s transference fantasy was the current cause of his ongoing death obsessions? Neither Edelson’s book nor his 1986 paper offers a better answer. Thus, in the latter, he declares: “The psychoanalyst claims that current mental representations of particular past events or fantasies are constitutive (i.e., current operative) causes of current behavior, and then goes on to claim that therefore past actual events or fantasies are etiological causes of the analysand’s symptoms.” And Edelson concludes: “Transference phenomena are . . . nonquestion-begging evidence for . . . inferences about causally efficacious psychological entities existing or occurring in the here and now. (p. 110)” **In sum, despite Edelson’s best efforts, the etiologic transference argument on which both Freud and he rely is ill founded: (1) They employ epistemically circular reasoning when inferring the occurrence of infantile episodes from the adult patient’s reports and then claiming that these early episodes are thematically recapitulated in the adult analysand’s conduct toward the analyst; (2) they beg the etiologic question by inferring that, qua being thematically recapitulated, the infantile episodes had been pathogenic at the outset; and (3) they reason that the adult patient’s thematic reenactment is pathogenically recapitulatory such that the current replica of the infantile episodes is pathogenic in the here and now. Freud went on to build on the quicksand of his etiologic transference argument. It inspired two of his further fundamental tenets: first, the investigative thesis that the psychoanalytic dissection of the patient’s behavior toward the analyst can reliably identify the original pathogens of his or her long-term neurosis; second, the cardinal therapeutic doctrine that the working through of the analysand’s so-called transference neurosis is the key to overcoming his or her perennial problems**.

#### Lacan is a charlatan

Webster, 2002 (Richard, British author, journalist, and essayist, “The cult of Lacan: Freud, Lacan and the Mirror Stage,” http://www.richardwebster.net/thecultoflacan.html)

Lacan's bold decision to use the theories of Wallon in order to create an idiosyncratic French version of psychoanalysis was undoubtedly one of the factors which helped to attract influential supporters like Pichon. Lacan's thirst for recognition was so great, however, that there was never any chance of him remaining bound by any particular intellectual marriage. He paid court to numerous bodies of theory and was endlessly susceptible to being seduced by powerful or fashionable ideologies. During the 1930s his love of Freud, surrealism and Wallon did not stop him, after being drawn to the seminars of the modernist mystic Alexandre Kojève, from engaging in a passionate affair with Hegel. Sitting alongside such intellectual luminaries as Raymond Queneau, Georges Bataille, Merleau-Ponty, Alexandre Koryé and André Breton, Lacan drank in the words of the Russian émigré whose speech had become 'the very language of modernity, the quintessence of the intellectual vanguard.'[[18]](http://www.richardwebster.net/thecultoflacan.html#_edn18)

For many of those who attended them Kojève's seminars were a religious experience. Bataille once wrote that in these seminars he felt suffocated, crushed, shattered, nailed to his place.[[19]](http://www.richardwebster.net/thecultoflacan.html#_edn19) From Kojève Lacan learnt not only a version of Hegel but also the techniques of seduction and intellectual enslavement with which this charismatic teacher, who defined himself as a 'Stalinist of the strictest obedience', enthralled and mesmerised his students.

Lacan's susceptibility to intellectual seduction should not necessarily be construed as a sign of insincerity. In many respects his own attitude to knowledge was merely a more acute version of that shown by Freud and other 'messianic' intellectuals. The tragic predicament of such intellectuals is that, driven by terrifying feelings of emotional emptiness and insecurity, they mistakenly conclude that intellectual truths can be an adequate substitute for emotional warmth. Convinced that difficult or abstract intellectual formulations can alone fill the void they feel within them, they develop a voracious appetite for such formulations, anorexically judging their goodness by the degree of difficulty or abstraction they possess. Believing that what they have devoured is intrinsically nourishing and failing to grasp the poverty of the diet they have adopted through their own self-denying ordinances, they now feel impelled to share their 'truths' with others. Indeed they are driven by their own generosity to do so. Like a starving man who compels others to eat the diet of stones he believes has saved him, they give abundantly of their poverty out of a genuine conviction that they are enriching others. Because their own most generous impulses have become inextricably entwined with their impulse to self-denial they are unable to discriminate between generosity and cruelty and unable to understand that by compulsively sharing with others (or compelling others to share) their own chosen form of intellectual or spiritual wealth they are merely disseminating their poverty.

Lacan's need to feed upon the stones of difficult intellectual truth was certainly not satisfied by Kojeve's seminar or even by his encounter with the thought of Heidegger. Soon after he had published the revised, Hegelian version of his mirror theory in 1949, he was inspired by the appearance of Lévi-Strauss's *Les Structures Elémentaires de la Parenté* to embark upon a study of Saussure and of structuralist linguistics. Although his early writings had shown no interest in such an approach, Lacan gradually elevated Saussure into a major prophet. Just as he had reinvented psychoanalysis in the image of Wallon and Hegel so he now reconstructed his own Lacanian version of Freud in such a way as to make it appear either that Saussure was one of the founders of psychoanalysis or at the very least that he had discovered a key by which the mysteries of Freudianism could finally be unlocked.

Strategically, Lacan's decision to forge an alliance between his own traduced version of Freud and structuralism proved to be one of the most effective of all his intellectual manoeuvres. On the face of it there was nothing to suggest that such a move could ever be successfully completed. Saussure's linguistics had no apparent relation to psychoanalysis. Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology was an even less likely bed-fellow. Lévi-Strauss indeed had made the incompatibility of his own approach with that of Freud abundantly clear. The whole temper of his 'science' was hostile to the realm of affectivity and explicitly ruled out human emotions as a proper object of scientific investigation.[[20]](http://www.richardwebster.net/thecultoflacan.html#_edn20) In his extraordinary efforts to synthesise the unsynthesisable, however, Lacan showed something of his true intellectual kinship with Freud. Frank Cioffi characterises Freud's style of reasoning in the following terms:

Examination of Freud's interpretations will show that he typically proceeds by beginning with whatever content his theoretical preconceptions compel him to maintain underlies the symptoms and then, by working back and forth between it and the explanandum, constructing persuasive but spurious links between them.[[21]](http://www.richardwebster.net/thecultoflacan.html#_edn21)

Lacan's method of dealing with disparate and ostensibly incompatible theoretical systems is very similar. Starting from the assumption that there are links between various ideologies and psychoanalysis, he then elaborates complex chains of reasoning which supposedly reveal these links while actually constructing them ex nihilo. One of the great advantages to Lacan of this approach to theory-building was that it almost inevitably led to the creation of intellectual coalitions with the result that Lacan was able to attract supporters from outside the constituency of psychoanalysis. This ultimately proved indispensable to Lacan when his own idiosyncratic approach, and his increasing insistence on shortening analytic sessions to a matter of minutes (without any proportionate decrease in his fee), led to his expulsion from the International Psychoanalytic Association.

His eclecticism meant that he could draw support from both Marxists and structuralists so that he was eventually able to start a psychoanalytical association of his own which survived in spite of the mother church of psychoanalysis severing all links with it. The most important of all these coalitions was created in 1964 when Louis Althusser, already established as a charismatic Marxist ideologist, ended a period of immersion in structuralist thought by producing an article entitled 'Freud and Lacan' in which he paid homage the latter. The article had the effect of transforming Lacan's intellectual fortunes, converting him almost overnight from an eccentric presence on the margins of French intellectual life to a central figure.

Lacan's project was from now on associated with the work of Barthes, Lévi-Strauss, and Foucault. Now that Lacan's texts had received the imprimatur of French ideological Marxism, they were pored over and expounded by Althusser's students and colleagues at the Ecole Normale Supérieure - who included such figures as Etienne Balibar, Pierre Machéry and the young Jacques Alain-Miller who would soon become Lacan's son-in-law and his faithful lieutenant. Meanwhile Lacan's Paris seminar gained a sudden access of prestige and became, in the words of one sympathetic commentator, 'a glittering socio-intellectual occasion' - a kind of abstruse secular mass which those who saw themselves as intellectual revolutionaries, and who wished to be initiated into the deepest mysteries of structuralism, felt compelled to attend.[[22]](http://www.richardwebster.net/thecultoflacan.html#_edn22)

#### **Ontology is contradictory, self-aggrandizing, and devolves into anti-political moralizing – it ignores institutional engagement which is a better way to engage anti-black racism.**

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At this point, the crucial meditation would be on politics and political action. An attitude of infinite resignation to the world without the leap of committed action would simply be pessimistic or nihilistic. Similarly, an attitude of hope or optimism about the future would lack infinite resignation. We see here the underlying failure of the two approaches. Yet ironically, there is a form of failure at failing in the pessimistic turn versus the optimistic one, since if focused exclusively on resignation as the goal, then the “act” of resignation would have been achieved, which, paradoxically, would be a success; it would be a successful failing of failure. For politics to emerge, there are two missing elements in inward pessimistic resignation to consider.

The first is that politics is a social phenomenon, which means it requires the expanding options of a social world. It must transcend the self. Turning away from the social world, though a statement about politics, is not in and of itself political. As we have seen, the ancients from whom much Western political theory or philosophy claimed affinity had a disparaging term for an individual resigned from political life—namely, idiōtēs, a private person, one not concerned with public affairs, in English: an idiot. I mention “Western political theory” because that is the hegemonic intellectual context of Afropessimism; I have not come across Afropessimistic writings on thought outside of that framework. We do not have to end our etymological journey in ancient Greek. Recall that extending our linguistic archaeology back a few thousand years we could examine the Middle Kingdom (2000 BCE–1700 BCE) of Kmt’s Mdw Ntr word idi (deaf). The presumption, later taken on by the ancient Athenians and other Greek-speaking peoples, was that a lack of hearing entailed isolation, at least in terms of audio speech. The contemporary inward resignation of seeking a form of purity from the loathsome historical reality of racial oppression, in this reading, retreats ultimately into a form of moralism (private, normative satisfaction) instead of public responsibility born of and borne by action. The nonbeing to which Afropessimists refer is also a form of inaudibility.

The second is the importance of power. Politics makes no sense without it. As we have seen throughout our earlier reflections on power, Eurocentric etymology points to the Latin word potis as its source, from which came the word “potent” as in an omnipotent god. If we again look back farther, we will notice the Middle Kingdom Mdw Ntr word pHty, which refers to godlike strength. Yet for those ancient Northeast Africans, even the gods’ abilities came from a source. In the Coffin Texts, HqAw or heka activates the ka (sometimes, as we have seen, translated as soul, spirit, womb, or “magic”), which makes reality.20 All this amounts to a straightforward thesis on power as the ability with the means to make things happen.

There is an alchemical quality of power. The human world, premised on symbolic communication, brings many forms of meaning into being, and those new meanings afford relationships that build institutions through a world of culture, a phenomenon that Freud, we should recall, rightly described as “a prosthetic god.” It is godlike because it addresses what humanity historically sought from the gods—protection from the elements, physical maledictions, and social forms of misery. Such power clearly can be abused. It is where those enabling capacities (empowerment) are pushed to the wayside in the hording of social resources into propping up some people as gods that the legitimating practices of cultural cum political institutions decline and stimulate pessimism and nihilism. The institutions in Abya Yala and in Northern countries, such as the United States and Canada, very rarely attempt to establish positive relations to blacks, and Blacks the subtext of Afropessimism and this entire meditation.

The discussion points to a demand for political commitment. Politics is manifested under different names throughout the history of our species, but the one occasioning the word “politics” is, as we have seen, from the Greek pólis, which refers to ancient Hellenic city-states. It identifies specific kinds of activities conducted inside the city-state, where order necessitated the resolution of conflicts through rules of discourse the violation of which could lead to (civil) war, a breaking down of relations into those appropriate for “outsiders.” Returning to the Fanonian observation of selves and others, it is clear that imposed limitations on certain groups amount to impeding or blocking the option and activities of politics. Yet, as a problem occurring within the polity, the problem short of war becomes a political one.

Returning to Afropessimistic challenges, the question becomes this. If the problem of antiblack racism is conceded as political—where antiblack institutions of power have, as their project, the impeding of Black power, which in effect requires barring Black access to political institutions—then antiblack societies are ultimately threats also to politics defined as the human negotiation of the expansion of human capabilities or, more to the point, appearance, speech, and freedom.

Antipolitics is one of the reasons why societies in which antiblack racism is hegemonic are also those in which racial moralizing dominates; moralizing stops at individuals at the expense of addressing institutions the transformation of which would make immoral individuals irrelevant. As a political problem, it demands a political solution. It is not accidental that blacks continue to be the continued exemplars of unrealized freedom and against whom violence is waged against appearance and speech. As so many from Ida B. Wells-Barnett to Angela Y. Davis, Michelle Alexander, Angela J. Davis, Noël Cazenave have shown the expansion of privatization and incarceration is squarely placed in a structure of states and civil societies premised on the limitations of freedom (Blacks)—ironically, as seen in countries such as South Africa and the United States, in the name of freedom. 21

That power is a facilitating or enabling phenomenon, a functional element of the human world, a viable response must be the establishment of relations that reach beyond the singularity of the body. I bring this up because proponents of Afropessimism might object to this analysis because of its appeal to a human world. If that world is abrogated, the site of struggle becomes that which is patently not human. It is not accidental that popular race discourse refers today to “black bodies” instead of “black people,” for instance. As the human world is discursive, social, and relational, this abandonment amounts to an appeal to the nonrelational, the incommunicability of radicalized singularity, and appeals to the body and its very limited reach, if not isolation. At that point, it is perhaps the psychologist, psychiatrist, or psychoanalyst who would be helpful, as turning radically inward offers the promise of despair, narcissistic delusions of divine power, and, as Fanon also observed, madness.22 Even if that slippery slope were rejected, the performative contradiction of attempting to communicate such singularity or absence thereof requires, at least for consistency, the appropriate course of action: silence.

The remaining question for Afropessimism, especially those who are primarily academics, becomes this: Why write?

It is a question for which, in both existential and political terms, I do not see how an answer could be given from an Afropessimistic perspective without the unfortunate revelation of cynicism. The marketability of Afropessimists in predominantly white institutions—perhaps as an exotic phenomenon that affirms white standpoints as ontological sites of legitimacy—is no doubt in the immediate and paradoxical satisfaction in dissatisfaction it offers. Indeed, if Afropessimists were correct, their only solace would be in black institutions, but that, too, would pose a problem since the argument is that such institutions lack agency because, as black, they are absent. This is not to say that critical black and Black thinkers should not do their work in predominantly white spaces. It is simply that the argument of the impossibility of their doing so makes their location in such places patently contradictory. We are at this point on familiar terrain. As with ancient logical paradoxes denying the viability of time and motion, the best option, after a moment of immobilized reflection, is, eventually, to move on, even where the pause is itself significant as an encomium of thought.

#### Social death theory is wrong---conflates the oppressors’ view with the truth of black of existence, which re-centers the slave owner’s perspective and prevents struggles for re-humanization

George Lipsitz 17. Professor of Black Studies and Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. 2017. “What is this Black in the Black Radical Tradition?” in Futures of Black Radicalism, ed. by Johnson and Lubin, 2017. p. 108-110.

Three miracles seem to characterize the history of Black people in the United States. The very survival of Black people in the face of murderous brutality and genocidal intent qualifies as a miracle. The enduring reality of Black humanity in a society that has used every means at its disposal to destroy Black dignity and deny Black people the opportunity to exercise their full humanity appears miraculous. The historical record of democratic aspiration and achievement by Black people, of creating democratic opportunities for themselves and extending them to others, seems to defy normal rational explanations. Despite the social death at the center of the slave system and the organized abandonments of today's neoliberal capitalism, despite beatings, lynchings, shootings, mass incarceration and systematic impoverishment, Black people have survived and thrived. In slavery, African people in the Americas owned virtually nothing, not even the skin on their backs. They had every reason to give in to despair. Yet they somehow managed to survive, to extend recognition and respect to each other while in bondage, and to maintain a commitment to the linked fate of all humans. Time and time again, Black people have countered vicious dehumanization with determined and successful re-humanization. Insisting on their own humanity and the humanity of all people, even that of their oppressors, they have been at the forefront of what Dr. King called “the bitter but beautiful struggle” for a more just and better world. From the egalitarian politics of abolition democracy in the wake of the Civil War and the participatory democracy of the civil rights movement to the contemporary insurgencies waged under the banners of #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName, struggles for Black survival and Black humanity have repeatedly linked the termination of existing racist policies to the creation of new democratic practices and institutions. Forced to cope with the nadir of political evil over centuries, Black people have responded consistently by forging advanced concepts of a deeply politicized love. Perhaps precisely because brutality and oppression can make people decidedly unlovable, African people in America have been adept at finding ways to perceive something left to love inside themselves and in others. That ability has enabled their survival, the preservation of their humanity, and their emergence as the nation's foremost champions of democracy and social justice. The people who were systematically denied access to the fruits and benefits of democratic citizenship and social membership turned out to be the people who valued democracy the most and who did the most to extend it to others. [END PAGE 108] Cedric Robinson has demonstrated that the three miracles were not really miracles at all, but rather products of a collective intelligence developed over generations of struggle. In Black Marxism, Robinson defines the Black Radical Tradition as “the continuing development of a collective consciousness informed by the historical struggles for liberation and motivated by the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being, the ontological totality.”1 Thus in many ways, the greatest achievement of the Black community was itself, its emergence as an aggrieved and insurgent polity committed to social justice. The “Black” in the Black Radical Tradition is a politics rather than a pigment, a culture rather than a color. Yet this Blackness does not presume a unified homogenous community with only one set of interests, needs, and desires. On the contrary, Robinson's research reveals that the key building blocks for Black survival, Black humanity, and Black democracy came from the lower rungs of Black society, from the plantations and slave quarters, out of the contradictions of the rural regimes of slavery and debt peonage and the living conditions in ghettos of northern and western cities. Experience taught the Black poor and the Black working class that racial capitalism entailed “an unacceptable standard of human conduct”2 that they needed to counter with a politics that was “inventive rather than imitative, communitarian rather than individualistic, democratic rather than republican, Afro-Christian rather than secular and materialist.”3 Robinson's emphasis on political struggle as the main explanation for Black survival, humanity, and democracy reminds us not to confuse the grandiose aspirations and illusions of the powerful with the actual lived experiences of those they control. Slavery did mandate legally and militarily supported social death, but slaves worked assiduously and effectively each day, every day, each year, and every year to create a rich social life.4 As Robinson argues, “Slavery gave the lie to its own conceit: one could not create a perfect system of oppression and exploitation.”5 Domination produces resistance, and resistance plants the seeds of a new society within the shell of the old. As Robinson explains in Black Movements in America, "The resistances to slavery were the [END PAGE 109] principal grounds for the radically alternative political culture that coalesced in the Black communities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the era of revolutionary, liberal and nationalist impulses among Europeans in North America.” 6 Declaring Blacks to be less than human could not make them so, even in the eyes of their oppressors. Research by John Blassingame, George Rawick, Sterling Stuckey, Herbert Gutman, and Stephanie Camp (among others) reveals how slaves fused African retention and New World invention to forge a culture that affirmed their humanity and the humanity of others.7 They recognized this common humanity through multicultural, multiracial alliances with poor whites and others in maroon communities. 8 In colonial Louisiana, Blacks reached out to Native Americans for help in resisting slavery.9 Slave owners, however, were less successful in preserving their own humanity. In order to maintain the illusion of complete control, they tortured, whipped, hanged, burned, and dismembered their "property" when it displayed signs of having human will.10 Black people witnessed white people's inhumanity and pitied them. As early as the 1820s, David Walker argued that while whites lost the moral capacity to perceive the evil they enacted, they nonetheless knew "in their hearts" that Blacks were human. He argued that it was precisely this recognition that propelled their cruelty and brutality: they presumed that Blacks resented them and, if given the opportunity, would do to whites what whites had done to Blacks.11 In his history of the New Orleans slave market, Walter Johnson notes a similar loss of humanity among slave owners. Whites invested more than money in the slave system; they looked to it to elevate them beyond the status of ordinary mortals and became outraged when their chattel refused to conform to the roles they had been assigned. Johnson notes: The greater the transformative hopes slaveholders took with them to the slave market, the more violent their reactions to the inevitable disappointment of their efforts to get real slaves to act like imagined ones ... If they had to, they would use brutality to close the distance between the roles they imagined for themselves and the failings of the slaves they bought as props for their performance. 12 [END PAGE 110]

#### Neurological, racial bias is flexible and determined by coalitional habit forming in the brain---orienting groups around institutional change best breaks down bias. This is offense because their theory rejects these solutions.

Cikara and Van Bavel 15. (Mina Cikara is an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Director of the Intergroup Neuroscience Lab at Harvard University. Her research examines the conditions under which groups and individuals are denied social value, agency, and empathy. Jay Van Bavel is an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Director of the Social Perception and Evaluation Laboratory at New York University. The Flexibility of Racial Bias: Research suggests that racism is not hard wired, offering hope on one of America’s enduring problems. June 2, 2015. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-flexibility-of-racial-bias/)

The city of Baltimore was rocked by protests and riots over the death of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old African American man who died in police custody. Tragically, Gray’s death was only one of a recent in a series of racially-charged, often violent, incidents. On April 4th, Walter Scott was fatally shot by a police officer after fleeing from a routine traffic stop. On March 8th, Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity members were caught on camera gleefully chanting, “There Will Never Be A N\*\*\*\*\* In SAE.” On March 1st, a homeless Black man was shot in broad daylight by a Los Angeles police officer. And these are not isolated incidents, of course. Institutional and systemic racism reinforce discrimination in countless situations, including hiring, sentencing, housing, and even mortgage lending. 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.

### 2ac psychoanalysis---core

#### Perm do both --- integrating the K’s insight into considering the plan is easy

Daniel Tutt 13, Interviewing Todd McGowan, October 27, “Enjoying What We Don’t Have: Interview with Philosopher Todd McGowan”, http://danieltutt.com/2013/10/27/enjoying-what-we-dont-have-interview-with-philosopher-todd-mcgowan/

DT. It seems to me that a frequent critique of psychoanalysis and politics is that in its inability, and perhaps unwillingness to propose concrete policy reforms or political projects, it falls back on a notion that everyone should just undergo analysis. Do you think that a political project that is informed by psychoanalytic teachings implies that we should all undergo analysis? You write in your book for instance that fantasy is a crucial point for facilitating a sort of un-bonding process from the larger capitalist mode of subjectivity. What do you see as the role of analysis and political emancipatory work? TM. I will alienate many of my analyst friends with this response, but I have no political investment at all in psychoanalytic practice. I’ve undergone some analysis myself. However, I don’t believe that everyone undergoing psychoanalysis would change much at all politically. What is important about psychoanalysis to me is its theoretical intervention, its discovery of the death drive and the role that fantasy plays in our psyche. This is the great advance. And political struggle can integrate these theoretical insights without any help from actual psychoanalysis. What allows one to disinvest in the capitalist mode of subjectivity is not, in my view, the psychoanalytic session. Instead it is the confrontation with a mode of enjoyment that ceases to provide the satisfaction that it promises. This prompts one to think about alternatives. Obviously, not everyone can become a theorist, but in a sense, everyone already is a theorist. We theorize our enjoyment when we think through our day and plan out where we’re going to do. Even watching a television show requires an elaborate theoretical exercise. Making this theorizing evident and thus arousing an interest in theory is to me much more important than having a lot of people undergo psychoanalysis. In response to your question about the universalization of psychoanalytic practice, I have more faith in a universalization of psychoanalytic theory.

#### Alt fails and no spillover---nobody listens, and if they fiat compliance perm solves

#### Begs question of whether or not threats are real---they cause quietism

#### Psycho-analysis is wrong---terrible methodology, every refutable claim has been disproven, ineffective results

Robert Bud and Mario Bunge 10 {Robert Bud is principal curator of medicine at the Science Museum in London. 9-29-2010. “Should psychoanalysis be in the Science Museum?” [https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20827806-200-should-psychoanalysis-be-in-the-science-museum/}//JM](https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg20827806-200-should-psychoanalysis-be-in-the-science-museum/%7d//JM) (link credit to EM)

WE SHOULD congratulate the Science Museum for setting up an exhibition on psychoanalysis. Exposure to pseudoscience greatly helps understand genuine science, just as learning about tyranny helps in understanding democracy. Over the past 30 years, psychoanalysis has quietly been displaced in academia by scientific psychology. But it persists in popular culture as well as being a lucrative profession. It is the psychology of those who have not bothered to learn psychology, and the psychotherapy of choice for those who believe in the power of immaterial mind over body. Psychoanalysis is a bogus science because its practitioners do not do scientific research. When the field turned 100, a group of psychoanalysts admitted this gap and endeavoured to fill it. They claimed to have performed the first experiment showing that patients benefited from their treatment. Regrettably, they did not include a control group and did not entertain the possibility of placebo effects. Hence, their claim remains untested (The International Journal of Psychoanalysis, vol 81, p 513). More recently, a meta-analysis published in American Psychologist (vol 65, p 98) purported to support the claim that a form of psychoanalysis called psychodynamic therapy is effective. However, once again, the original studies did not involve control groups. In 110 years, psychoanalysts have not set up a single lab. They do not participate in scientific congresses, do not submit their papers to scientific journals and are foreign to the scientific community - a marginality typical of pseudoscience. This does not mean their hypotheses have never been put to the test. True, they are so vague that they are hard to test and some of them are, by Freud's own admission, irrefutable. Still, most of the testable ones have been soundly refuted. For example, most dreams have no sexual content. The Oedipus complex is a myth; boys do not hate their fathers because they would like to have sex with their mothers. The list goes on. As for therapeutic efficacy, little is known because psychoanalysts do not perform double-blind clinical trials or follow-up studies. Psychoanalysis is a pseudoscience. Its concepts are woolly and untestable yet are regarded as unassailable axioms. As a result of such dogmatism, psychoanalysis has remained basically stagnant for more than a century, in contrast with scientific psychology, which is thriving.

#### Psychoanalysis has zero logical or empirical basis, can’t be scaled up, and totalizes the existence of the human condition in pseudoscientific terms

Robinson 8 [Andrew, political theorist and activist based in the UK Contemporary Political Theory. Avenel: Aug 2008. Vol. 7, Iss. 3; pg. 351, 7 pgs]

The strengths and weaknesses of the text largely follow from the usefulness and limits of the perspective it provides. The Lacanian perspective, as a partial truth, certainly provides interesting insights and a different way of seeing, and as such often generates productive contributions. However, it fails drastically to understand the partiality of its own 'truth'. In Stavrakakis's words, lack can't be signified but it can be formalized (p. 279). In other words, a final map of the structure of reality can still, from this perspective, be drawn -- and has been drawn already by Lacan. In effect, the result is a claim to be the theoretical end of history -- all else is utopian, essentialist and so on. In many respects, the perspective is also reactive, defined by what it is against (anti-essentialist, anti-utopian, anti-fantasmatic). It is less clear what it is for -- although the idea of feminine jouissance begins the task of constructing a positive pole. Its relation to the other is very intolerant and dismissive. It is not open to other voices because it is always ready to judge the other as failing its own rigid internal criteria. It expresses a dangerous urge to drive the other out of the community of speakers, and perhaps out of existence altogether. The chapter on Castoriadis is symptomatic here. Castoriadis in many ways stands for the entire field of horizontalist radicalism -- horizontalists and immanentists (Stirner, Reich, Negri, Deleuze, Marcuse, various critics of Lacan) circle around the text like barbarians at the gates. The dispute between Lacanianism and horizontalism is a dispute the stakes of which Lacanians are reluctant to confront, instead hiding behind the view from one side -- 'they disagree with us, therefore they are wrong'. Except that 'wrong' is usually replaced by one of a number of theoretical epithets -- romantic, utopian, essentialist -- which sound superficially like useful categories of theory but which are never defined and which serve mainly as a name to call people who disagree with one or another basic Lacanian assumption. The impression is given that those who hold these perspectives are somehow naïve, intellectually disreputable or unrespectable, but this connoted claim is never demonstrated. It is simply a choice of one perspective over another, conveyed in loaded language. Like most of its ilk, this book does plenty to show what Lacanian theory does, how it 'works' as a theoretical machine or toolkit, but rather less to say why it should be preferred to other approaches (assuming, of course, that not wanting to be called names is insufficient reason to accept its validity). Lacanian theory suffers from an ontological and epistemological restrictiveness derived from its absolutizing of structural topologies, which limits its explanatory power by rendering far too many specificities of metropolitan statist societies 'necessary' or 'unavoidable'. The theory involves restrictive, totalizing claims that are neither logically necessary nor empirically demonstrated; most often, acceptance of such claims is unnecessary to gain the benefits of the explanatorily or theoretically useful aspects of the perspective. Social phenomena vary in how well they fit this limiting frame. Nationalism and racism, having the right form, fit well, and hence become favourite expository targets for Lacanian theorists. But dogmas will have to be sacrificed if a broader field of social movements is to be encompassed.

### 1ar psychoanalysis wrong

#### Studies don’t support death drive—replicable tests are impossible, variables are too vague to operationalize

Holowchak 12 [Andrew, teaches Philosophy at Rider University. When Freud (Almost) Met Chaplin: The Science behind Freud's "Especially Simple, Transparent Case" Project Muse]

The problem is that psychoanalytic concepts (e.g., "super-ego," "Oedipus complex," and "death drive"30 ), unlike them of say physics ("electron," [End Page 67] "muon," and "quark"), are logical constructs that have not been corroborated by precise observations and replicable tests. Hence Freud's logical constructs as proto-concepts are not even adequate as working hypotheses. As early as 1934, J. F. Brown, who claimed he was in sympathy with Freud's new science, urged, "But, and here almost all critics of psychoanalysis are in agreement, the theory has never been precise enough to allow formulation of working hypotheses for which adequate experimental situations could be found" (1933, p. 333). He went on to acknowledge, perhaps somewhat prophetically, given the amount of attention Freud gets today in philosophy of mind, "Freud's discoveries probably are the most striking and original contributions made to the science of mind in our time." He added, in a manner that vitiates the compliment, that Freud is more prophet than scientist—more Bruno than Galileo (1933, p. 226).

Freud was aware of that. His own view of the concepts of psychoanalysis is ambivalent. At times, he shows impatience and becomes intolerant of his critics. "Only in psychology [is obscurity not tolerated]; here the constitutional incapacity of men for scientific research comes into full view. It looks as though people did not expect from psychology progress in knowledge, but some other kind of satisfaction; every unsolved problem, every acknowledged uncertainty is turned into a ground of complaint against it" (1916–7, S.E., XXII: 6). At other times, Freud seems to agree with his critics. In "Autobiographical Study," when he mentions difficulties with "compulsion to repeat," he adds:

Although it arose from a desire to fix some of the most important theoretical ideas of psycho-analysis, it goes far beyond psychoanalysis. I have repeatedly heard it said contemptuously that it is impossible to take a science seriously whose most general concepts are as lacking in precision as those of libido and of drive in psychoanalysis.

(1925, S.E., XX: 57)

In "Why War?," Freud writes to Einstein in a manner to explain his ambivalence: "It may perhaps seem to you [Einstein] as though our theories are a kind of mythology and, in the present case, not even an agreeable one. But does not every science come in the end to a kind of mythology like this?" (1933, S.E., XXII: 211)

In sum, the bedrock concepts of Freudian psychoanalysis are conceptually indeterminate. That means that the fundamental principles of Freudian psychoanalysis are conceptually indeterminate and, thus, obscure or meaningless. Unfortunately, as we have seen, Freud was evasive when it [End Page 68] came to the question of the status of the bedrock concepts of psychoanalysis and even said that psychoanalysis, with the exception of "repression" and "unconscious," could do just as well without them31 (1914, S.E., XIV: 16; 1925, S.E., XX: 32–3). Without referents to the concepts he employs so significantly, Freud is writing gobbledygook.

A related difficulty is conceptual change. Freud, as a scientist, was committed to conceptual flexibility, insofar as his postulates were avowedly data-driven. Nonetheless, many of the conceptual changes he made—e.g., his rejection of his Seduction theory and his adoption of the death drive and structural model—were prompted more by theoretical difficulties than they were driven by observational data. In addition, Freud surrounded himself with lackeys, albeit intelligent lackeys, that allowed him, as founder of psychoanalysis, the privilege of being final arbiter on issues of conceptual change within psychoanalysis.32

#### Attempting to use it to create solutions fails

**Rosen-Carole 10** [Adam, Visiting Professor of Philosophy at Bard College, 2010, “Menu Cards in Time of Famine: On Psychoanalysis and Politics,” Psychoanalytic Quarterly, Vol. LXXIX, No. 1, p. 205-207

On the other hand, though in these ways and many others, psychoanalysis seems to promote the sorts of subjective dispositions and habits requisite for a thriving democracy, and though in a variety of ways psychoanalysis contributes to personal emancipation— say, by releasing individuals from self-defeating, damaging, or petrified forms action and reaction, object attachment, and the like—in light of the very uniqueness of what it has to offer, one cannot but wonder: to what extent, if at all, can the habits and dispositions—broadly, the forms of life—cultivated by psychoanalytic practice survive, let alone flourish, under modern social and political conditions? If the emancipatory inclinations and democratic virtues that psychoanalytic practice promotes are systematically crushed or at least regularly unsupported by the world in which they would be realized, then isn’t psychoanalysis implicitly making promises it cannot redeem? Might not massive social and political transformations be the condition for the efficacious practice of psychoanalysis? And so, under current conditions, can we avoid experiencing the forms of life nascently cultivated by psychoanalytic practice as something of a tease, or even a source of deep frustration? (2) Concerning psychoanalysis as a politically inclined theoretical enterprise, the worry is whether political diagnoses and proposals that proceed on the basis of psychoanalytic insights and forms of attention partake of a fantasy of interpretive efficacy (all the world’s a couch, you might say), wherein our profound alienation from the conditions for robust political agency are registered and repudiated? Consider, for example, Freud and Bullitt’s (1967) assessment of the psychosexual determinants of Woodrow Wilson’s political aspirations and impediments, or Reich’s (1972) suggestion that Marxism should appeal to psychoanalysis in order to illuminate and redress neurotic phenomena that generate disturbances in working capacity, especially as this concerns religion and bourgeois sexual ideology. Also relevant are Freud’s, Žižek’s (1993, 2004), Derrida’s (2002) and others’ insistence that we draw the juridical and political consequences of the hypothesis of an irreducible death drive, as well as Marcuse’s (1970) proposal that we attend to the weakening of Eros and the growth of aggression that results from the coercive enforcement of the reality principle upon the sociopolitically weakened ego, and especially to the channeling of this aggression into hatred of enemies. Reich (1972) and Fromm (1932) suggest that psychoanalysis be employed to explore the motivations to political irrationality, especially that singular irrationality of joining the national-socialist movement, while Irigaray (1985) diagnoses the desire for the Same, the One, the Phallus as a desire for a sociosymbolic order that assures masculine dominance. Žižek (2004) contends that only a psychoanalytic exposition of the disavowed beliefs and suppositions of the United States political elite can get at the fundamental determinants of the Iraq War. Rose (1993) argues that it was the paranoiac paradox of sensing both that there is every reason to be frightened and that everything is under control that allowed Thatcher “to make this paradox the basis of political identity so that subjects could take pleasure in violence as force and legitimacy while always locating ‘real’ violence somewhere else—illegitimate violence and illicitness increasingly made subject to the law” (p. 64). Stavrakakis (1999) advocates that we recognize and traverse the residues of utopian fantasy in our contemporary political imagination.1 Might not the psychoanalytic interpretation of powerful figures (Bush, Bin Laden, or whomever), collective subjects (nations, ethnic groups, and so forth), or urgent “political” situations register an anxiety regarding political impotence or “castration” that is pacified and modified by the fantasmatic frame wherein the psychoanalytically inclined political theorist situates him- or herself as diagnosing or interpretively intervening in the lives of political figures, collective political subjects, or complex political situations with the idealized efficacy of a successful clinical intervention? If so, then the question is: are the contributions of psychoanalytically inclined political theory anything more than tantalizing menu cards for meals it cannot deliver**?** As I said, the worry is twofold. These are two folds of a related problem, which is this: might the very seductiveness of psychoanalytic theory and practice—specifically, the seductiveness of its political promise—register the lasting eclipse of the political and the objectivity of the social, respectively? In other words, might not everything that makes psychoanalytic theory and practice so politically attractive indicate precisely the necessity of wide-ranging social/institutional transformations that far exceed the powers of psychoanalysis? And so, might not the politically salient transformations of subjectivity to which psychoanalysis can contribute overburden subjectivity as the site of political transformation, blinding us to the necessity of largescale institutional reforms? Indeed, might not massive institutional transformations be necessary conditions for the efficacy of psychoanalytic practice, both personally and politically? Further, might not the so-called interventions and proposals of psychoanalytically inclined political theory similarly sidestep the question of the institutional transformations necessary for their realization, and so conspire with our blindness to the enormous institutional impediments to a progressive political future?

#### AND doesn’t match up with social contingencies NOR allow contesting them.

Nancy Fraser 13. Louise Loeb Professor of Political and Social Science and Professor of Philosophy, The New School. Fortunes of Feminism. Verso Books. 140-9.

Let me begin by posing two questions: What might a theory of discourse contribute to feminism? And what, therefore, should feminists look for in a theory of discourse? I suggest that a conception of discourse can help us understand at least four things, all of which are interrelated. First, it can help us understand how people’s social identities are fashioned and altered over time. Second, it can help us understand how, under conditions of inequality, social groups in the sense of collective agents are formed and unformed. Third, a conception of discourse can illuminate how the cultural hegemony of dominant groups in society is secured and contested. Fourth and finally, it can shed light on the prospects for emancipatory social change and political practice. Let me elaborate. First, consider the uses of a conception of discourse for understanding social identities. The basic idea here is that people’s social identities are complexes of meanings, networks of interpretation. To have a social identity, to be a woman or a man, for example, just is to live and to act under a set of descriptions. These descriptions, of course, are not simply secreted by peoples’s bodies; nor are they simply exuded by people’s psyches. Rather, they are drawn from the fund of interpretive possibilities available to agents in specific societies. It follows that, in order to understand the gender dimension of social identity, it does not suffice to study biology or psychology. Instead, one must study the historically specific social practices through which cultural descriptions of gender are produced and circulated.3 Moreover, social identities are exceedingly complex. They are knitted together from a plurality of different descriptions arising from a plurality of different signifying practices. Thus, no one is simply a woman; one is rather, for example, a white, Jewish, middle-class woman, a philosopher, a lesbian, a socialist, and a mother.4 Because everyone acts in a plurality of social contexts, moreover, the different descriptions comprising any individual’s social identity fade in and out of focus. Thus, one is not always a woman in the same degree; in some contexts, one’s womanhood figures centrally in the set of descriptions under which one acts; in others, it is peripheral or latent.5 Finally, it is not the case that people’s social identities are constructed once and for all and definitively fixed. Rather, they alter over time, shifting with shifts in agents’ practices and affiliations. Even the way in which one is a woman will shift— as it does, to take a dramatic example-, when one becomes a feminist. In short, social identities are discursively constructed in historically specific social contexts; they are complex and plural; and they shift over time. One use of a conception of discourse for feminist theorizing, then, is in understanding social identities in their full socio-cultural complexity, thus in demystifying static, single variable, essentialist views of gender identity. A second use of a conception of discourse for feminist theorizing is in understanding the formation of social groups. How does it happen, under conditions of domination, that people come together, arrange themselves under the banner of collective identities, and constitute themselves as collective social agents? How do class formation and, by analogy, gender formation occur? Clearly, group formation involves shifts in people’s social identities and therefore also in their relation to social discourse. One thing that happens here is that pre-existing strands of identities acquire a new sort of salience and centrality. These strands, previously submerged among many others, are reinscribed as the nub of new self-definitions and affiliations.6 For example, in the current wave of feminist ferment, many of us who had previously been “women” in some taken-for-granted way have now become “ women” in the very different sense of a discursively self-constituted political collectivity. In the process, we have remade entire regions of social discourse. We have invented new terms for describing social reality— for example, “sexism,” “ sexual harassment,” “ marital, date, and acquaintance rape,” “ labor force sex-segregation,” “ the double shift,” and “ wife-battery.” We have also invented new language games such as consciousness raising and new, institutionalized public spheres such as the Society for Women in Philosophy.7 The point is that the formation of social groups proceeds by struggles over social discourse. Thus, a conception of discourse is useful here, both for understanding group formation and for coming to grips with the closely related issue of socio-cultural hegemony. “Hegemony” is the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci’s term for the discursive face of power. It is the power to establish the “common sense” or “doxa” of a society, the fund of self-evident descriptions of social reality that normally go without saying.8 This includes the power to establish authoritative definitions of social situations and social needs, the power to define the universe of legitimate disagreement, and the power to shape the political agenda. Hegemony, then, expresses the advantaged position of dominant social groups with respect to discourse. It is a concept that allows us to recast the issues of social identity and social groups in the light of societal inequality. How do pervasive axes of dominance and subordination affect the production and circulation of social meanings? How does stratification along lines of gender, “race,” and class affect the discursive construction of social identities and the formation of social groups? The notion of hegemony points to the intersection of power, inequality, and discourse. However, it does not entail that the ensemble of descriptions that circulate in society comprise a monolithic and seamless web, nor that dominant groups exercise an absolute, topdown control of meaning. On the contrary, “hegemony” designates a process wherein cultural authority is negotiated and contested. It presupposes that societies contain a plurality of discourses and discursive sites, a plurality of positions and perspectives from which to speak. Of course, not all of these have equal authority. Yet conflict and contestation are part of the story. Thus, one use of a conception of discourse for feminist theorizing is to shed light on the processes by which the socio-cultural hegemony of dominant groups is achieved and contested. What are the processes by which definitions and interpretations inimical to women’s interests acquire cultural authority? What are the prospects for mobilizing counter-hegemonic feminist definitions and interpretations to create broad oppositional groups and alliances? The link between these questions and emancipatory political practice is, I believe, fairly obvious. A conception of discourse that lets us examine identities, groups, and hegemony in the ways I have been describing would be of considerable use to feminist practice. It would valorize the empowering dimensions of discursive struggles without leading to “culturalist” retreats from political engagement.9 In addition, the right kind of conception would counter the disabling assumption that women are just passive victims of male dominance. That assumption over-totalizes male dominance, treating men as the only social agents- and rendering inconceivable our own existence as feminist theorists and activists. In contrast, the sort of conception I have been proposing would help us understand how, even under conditions of subordination, women participate in the making of culture. 2. LACANIANISM AND THE LIMITS OF STRUCTURALISM In light of the foregoing, what sort of conception of discourse will be useful for feminist theorizing? What sort of conception best illuminates social identities, group formation, hegemony, and emancipatory practice? In the postwar period, two approaches to theorizing language became influential among political theorists. The first is the structuralist model, which studies language as a symbolic system or code. Derived from Saussure, this model is presupposed in the version of Lacanian theory I shall be concerned with here; in addition, it is abstractly negated but not entirely superseded in deconstruction and in related forms of French “women’s writing.” The second influential approach to theorizing language may be called the pragmatics model, which studies language at the level of discourses, as historically specific social practices of communication. Espoused by such thinkers as Mikhail Bakhtin, Michel Foucault, and Pierre Bourdieu, this model is operative in some but not all dimensions of the work of Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray. In the present section of this chapter, I shall argue that the first, structuralist model is of only limited usefulness for feminist theorizing. Let me begin by noting that there are good prima facie reasons for feminists to be suspicious of the structuralist model. This model constructs its object of study by abstracting from exactly what we need to focus on, namely, the social practice and social context of communication. Indeed, the abstraction from practice and context are among the founding gestures of Saussurean linguistics. Saussure began by splitting signification into langue, the symbolic system or code, and parole, speakers’ uses of language in communicative practice or speech. He then made the first of these, langue, the proper object of the new science of linguistics, and relegated the second, parole, to the status of a devalued remainder.10 At the same time, Saussure insisted that the study of langue be synchronic rather than diachronic; he thereby posited his object of study as static and atemporal, abstracting it from historical change. Finally, the founder of structuralist linguistics posited that langue was indeed a single system; he made its unity and systematicity consist in the putative fact that every signifier, every material, signifying element of the code, derives its meaning positionally through its difference from all of the others. Together, these founding operations render the structuralist approach of limited utility for feminist purposes." Because it abstracts from parole, the structuralist model brackets questions of practice, agency, and the speaking subject. Thus, it cannot shed light on the discursive practices through which social identities and social groups are formed. Because this approach brackets the diachronic, moreover, it will not tell us anything about shifts in identities and affiliations over time. Similarly, because it abstracts from the social context of communication, the model brackets issues of power and inequality. Thus, it cannot illuminate the processes by which cultural hegemony is secured and contested. Finally, because the model theorizes the fund of available linguistic meanings as a single symbolic system, it lends itself to a monolithic view of signification that denies tensions and contradictions among social meanings. In short, by reducing discourse to a “symbolic system," the structuralist model evacuates social agency, social conflict, and social practice.12 Let me now try to illustrate these problems by means of a brief discussion of Lacanianism. By “Lacanianism," I do not mean the actual thought of Jacques Lacan, which is far too complex to tackle here. I mean, rather, an ideal-typical neo-structuralist reading of Lacan that is widely credited among English-speaking feminists.'5 In discussing “ Lacanianism,” I shall bracket the question of the fidelity of this reading, which could be faulted for overemphasizing the influence of Saussure at the expense of other, countervailing influences, such as Hegel.'4 For my purposes, however, this ideal-typical, Saussurean reading of Lacan is useful precisely because it evinces with unusual clarity the difficulties that beset many conceptions of discourse that are widely considered “ poststructuralist” but that remain wedded in important respects to structuralism. Because their attempts to break free of structuralism remain abstract, such conceptions tend finally to recycle it. Lacanianism, as discussed here, is a paradigm case of “neostructuralism.” '5 At first sight, neo-structuralist Lacanianism seems to promise some advantages for feminist theorizing. By conjoining the Freudian problematic of the construction of gendered subjectivity to the Saussurean model of structural linguistics, it seems to provide each with its needed corrective. The introduction of the Freudian problematic promises to supply the speaking subject that is missing in Saussure and thereby to reopen the excluded questions about identity, speech, and social practice. Conversely, the use of the Saussurean model promises to remedy some of Freuds deficiencies. By insisting that gender identity is discursively constructed, Lacanianism appears to eliminate lingering vestiges of biologism in Freud, to treat gender as sociocultural all the way down, and to render it in principle more open to change. Upon closer inspection, however, the promised advantages fail to materialize. Instead, Lacanianism begins to look viciously circular. On the one hand, it purports to describe the process by which individuals acquire gendered subjectivity through their painful conscription as young children into a pre-existing phallocentric symbolic order. Here the structure of the symbolic order is presumed to determine the character of individual subjectivity. But, on the other hand, the theory also purports to show that the symbolic order must necessarily be phallocentric since the attainment of subjectivity requires submission to “the Father s Law.” Here, conversely, the nature of individual subjectivity, as dictated by an autonomous psychology, is presumed to determine the character of the symbolic order. One result of this circularity is an apparently ironclad determinism. As Dorothy Leland has noted, the theory casts the developments it describes as necessary, invariant, and unalterable.16 Phallocentrism, womans disadvantaged place in the symbolic order, the encoding of cultural authority as masculine, the impossibility of describing a nonphallic sexuality— in short, any number of historically contingent trappings of male dominance— now appear as invariable features of the human condition. Womens subordination, then, is inscribed as the inevitable destiny of civilization. I can spot several spurious steps in this reasoning, some of which have their roots in the presupposition of the structuralist model. First, to the degree Lacanianism has succeeded in eliminating biologism— and that is dubious for reasons I shall not go into here17 — it has replaced it with psychologism, the untenable view that autonomous psychological imperatives given independently of culture and history can dictate the way they are interpreted and acted on within culture and history. [INSERT FOOTNOTE 17] 17 Here I believe one can properly speak of Lacan. Lacan’s claim to have overcome biologism rests on his insistence that the phallus is not the penis. However, many feminist critics have shown that he fails to prevent the collapse of the symbolic signifier into the organ. The clearest indication of this failure is his claim, in The Meaning of the Phallus,” that the phallus becomes the master signifier because of its “turgidity” which suggests “ the transmission of vital flow” in copulation. See Jacques Lacan, “ T h e Meaning of the Phallus,” in Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the ecole freudienne, eds. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982. [END FOOTNOTE 17] Lacanianism falls prey to psychologism to the extent that it claims that the phallocentricity of the symbolic order is required by the demands of an enculturation process that is itself independent of culture.18 If one half of Lacanianism’s circular argument is vitiated by psychologism, then the other half is vitiated by what I shall call symbolicism. By symbolicism I mean, first, the homogenizing reification of diverse signifying practices into a monolithic and all-pervasive “symbolic order,” and second, the endowing of that order with an exclusive and unlimited causal power to fix people’s subjectivities once and for all. Symbolicism, then, is an operation whereby the structuralist abstraction langue is troped into a quasi-divinity, a normative “symbolic order” whose power to shape identities ~~dwarfs~~ [renders insignificant] to the point of extinction that of mere historical institutions and practices. Actually, as Deborah Cameron has noted, Lacan himself equivocates on the expression “the symbolic order.” '9 Sometimes he uses this expression relatively narrowly to refer to Saussurean langue, the structure of language as a system of signs. In this narrow usage, Lacanianism would be committed to the implausible view that the sign system itself determines individuals’ subjectivities independently of the social context and social practice of its uses. At other times, Lacan uses the expression “ the symbolic order” far more broadly to refer to an amalgam that includes not only linguistic structures, but also cultural traditions and kinship structures, the latter mistakenly equated with social structure in general.20 In this broad usage, Lacanianism would conflate the ahistorical structural abstraction langue with variable historical phenomena like family forms and childrearing practices; cultural representations of love and authority in art, literature, and philosophy; the gender division of labor; forms of political organization and of other institutional sources of power and status. The result would be a conception of “the symbolic order” that essentializes and homogenizes contingent historical practices and traditions, erasing tensions, contradictions, and possibilities for change. This would be a conception, moreover, that is so broad that the claim that it determines the structure of subjectivity risks collapsing into an empty tautology.21 The combination of psychologism and symbolicism in Lacanianism results in a conception of discourse that is of limited usefulness for feminist theorizing. To be sure, this conception offers an account of the discursive construction of social identity. However, it is not an account that can make sense of the complexity and multiplicity of social identities, the ways they are woven from a plurality of discursive strands. Granted, Lacanianism stresses that the apparent unity and simplicity of ego identity is imaginary, that the subject is irreparably split both by language and drives. But this insistence on fracture does not lead to an appreciation of the diversity of the socio-cultural discursive practices from which identities are woven. It leads, rather, to a unitary view of the human condition as inherently tragic. In fact, Lacanianism differentiates identities only in binary terms, along the single axis of having or lacking the phallus. As Luce Irigaray has shown, this phallic conception of sexual difference is not an adequate basis for understanding femininity22— nor, I would add, masculinity. Still less, then, is it able to shed light on other dimensions of social identities, including ethnicity, color, and social class. Nor could the theory be emended to incorporate these manifestly historical phenomena, given its postulation of an ahistorical, tension-free “symbolic order” equated with kinship.23 Moreover, Lacanianism’s account of identity construction cannot account for identity shifts over time. It is committed to the general psychoanalytic proposition that gender identity (the only kind of identity it considers) is basically fixed once and for all with the resolution of the Oedipus complex. Lacanianism equates this resolution with the child’s entry into a fixed, monolithic, and all-powerful symbolic order. Thus, it actually increases the degree of identity fixity found in classical Freudian theory. It is true, as Jacqueline Rose points out, that the theory stresses that gender identity is always precarious, that its apparent unity and stability are always threatened by repressed libidinal drives.24 But this emphasis on precariousness is not an opening onto genuine historical thinking about shifts in peoples social identities. On the contrary, it is an insistence on a permanent, ahistorical condition, since for Lacanianism the only alternative to fixed gender identity is psychosis. If Lacanianism cannot provide an account of social identity that is useful for feminist theorizing, then it is unlikely to help us understand the formation of social groups. For Lacanianism, affiliation falls under the rubric of the imaginary. To affiliate with others, to align oneself with others in a social movement, would be to fall prey to the illusions of the imaginary ego. It would be to deny loss and lack, to seek an impossible unification and fulfillment. Thus, from the perspective of Lacanianism, collective movements would by definition be vehicles of delusion; they could not even in principle be emancipatory.25 Moreover, insofar as group formation depends on linguistic innovation, it is untheorizable from the perspective of Lacanianism. Because Lacanianism posits a fixed, monolithic symbolic system and a speaker who is wholly subjected to it, it is inconceivable that there could ever be any linguistic innovation. Speaking subjects could only ever reproduce the existing symbolic order; they could not possibly alter it. From this perspective, the question of cultural hegemony is blocked from view. There can be no question as to how the cultural authority of dominant groups in society is established and contested, no question of unequal negotiations between different social groups occupying different discursive positions. For Lacanianism, on the contrary, there is simply “ f/ie symbolic order,” a single universe of discourse that is so systematic, so all-pervasive, so monolithic that one cannot even conceive of such things as alternative perspectives, multiple discursive sites, struggles over social meanings, contests between hegemonic and counterhegemonic definitions of social situations, conflicts of interpretation of social needs. One cannot even conceive, really, of a plurality of different speakers. With the way blocked to a political understanding of identities, groups, and cultural hegemony, the way is also blocked to an understanding of political practice. For one thing, there is no conceivable agent of such practice. Lacanianism posits a view of the person as a non-sutured congeries of three moments, none of which can qualify as a political agent. The speaking subject is simply the grammatical “I,” a shifter wholly subjected to the symbolic order; it can only and forever reproduce that order. The ego is an imaginary projection, deluded about its own stability and self-possession, hooked on an impossible narcissistic desire for unity and self-completion; it therefore can only and forever tilt at windmills. Finally, there is the ambiguous unconscious, sometimes an ensemble of repressed libidinal drives, sometimes the face of language as Other, but never anything that could count as a social agent.

**It’s wrong.**

Scott Alexander 14 (Scott Alexander is a San Francisco Bay Area Psychiatrist, 7/2/14, accessed 4/10/22, “HOW COMMON ARE SCIENCE FAILURES?, https://slatestarcodex.com/2014/07/02/how-common-are-science-failures/)AGabay

Psychoanalysis **wasn’t** an honest mistake. The field already had a **perfectly good alternative** – denouncing the whole thing as **bunk** – and sensible non-psychoanalysts seemed to do exactly that. On the other hand, the more you got “**educated**” about psychiatry in psychoanalytic institutions, and the more you wanted to become a psychiatrist yourself, the more you got biased into think psychoanalysis was **obviously correct** and **dismissing** the **doubters** as science denalists or whatever it was they said back then. So this seems like a genuine example of a **scientific field failing**.

### 1ar at: libidinal econ

#### Libidinal economy misidentifies causality---racist social systems influence the psyche, not the other way around. Habitual racism can be psychological but that doesn’t mean it’s predetermined or impossible to correct..

#### History proves---can’t explain why some white people are white nationalists, others choose liberal forms of racism, and others are simply non- instead of anti-racists---proves there are significant exogenous variables.

#### Psychoanalysis doesn’t disprove---drives, even if real, are conflicting.

---Conflicting drives---psychology proves single behavioral traits don’t dictate action because humans are complex and can’t be compelled by any single imperative

Adrian **Johnson 05**. PhD from SUNY-Stony Brook, Professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque and a faculty member at the Emory Psychoanalytic Institute in Atlanta, “Time Driven: Metapsychology and the Splitting of the Drive,” p. 340-1

Despite the apparent bleakness and antiutopianism of an assessment of human nature as being perturbed by an irreducible inner antagonism, there is, surprisingly, what might be described as a liberating aspect to this splitting of the drives. Since drives are essentially dysfunctional, subjects are able to act otherwise than as would be dictated by instinctually compelled pursuits of gratification, satisfaction, and pleasure. In fact, subjects are forced to be free, since, for such beings, the mandate of nature is forever missing. Severed from a strictly biological master-program and saddled with a conflict-ridden, heterogeneous jumble of contradictory impulses—impulses mediated by an inconsistent, unstable web of multiple representations, indicated by Lacan's “barring” of the Symbolic Other—the parlêtre has no choice but to bump up against the unnatural void of its autonomy. The confrontation with this void is frequently avoided. The true extent of one's autonomy is, due to its sometimes-frightening implications, just as often relegated to the shadows of the unconscious as those heteronomous factors secretly shaping conscious thought and behavior. The contradictions arising from the conflicts internal to the libidinal economy mark the precise places where a freedom transcending mundane materiality has a chance briefly to flash into effective existence; such points of breakdown in the deterministic nexus of the drives clear the space for the sudden emergence of something other than the smooth continuation of the default physical and sociopsychical “run of things.” Moreover, if the drives were fully functional—and, hence, would not prompt a mobilization of a series of defensive distancing mechanisms struggling to transcend this threatening corpo-Real—humans would be animalistic automatons, namely, creatures of nature. The pain of a malfunctioning, internally conflicted libidinal economy is a discomfort signaling a capacity to be an autonomous subject. This is a pain even more essential to human autonomy than what Kant identifies as the guilt-inducing burden of duty and its corresponding pangs of anxious, awe-inspiring respect. Whereas Kant treats the discomfort associated with duty as a symptom-effect of a transcendental freedom inherent to rational beings, the reverse might (also) be the case: Such freedom is the symptom-effect of a discomfort inherent to libidinal beings. Completely “curing” individuals of this discomfort, even if it were possible, would be tantamount to divesting them, whether they realize it or not, of an essential feature of their dignity as subjects. As Lacan might phrase it, the split Trieb is the sinthome of subjectivity proper, the source of a suffering that, were it to be entirely eliminated, would entail the utter dissolution of subjectivity itself. Humanity is free precisely insofar as its pleasures are far from perfection, insofar as its enjoyment is never absolute.

#### Asserting psychology overrides reifies contingent tendencies---humans are socialized into racism.

Brad Evans 15, senior lecturer in international relations at the School of Sociology, Politics & International Studies (SPAIS), University of Bristol, Intolerable Violence, symploke Volume 23, Numbers 1-2, p. muse

If the second order of politics in the age of the spectacle is to harvest our attention and seduce us into desiring our own oppression, our task is to [End Page 220] recognize our own shameful compromises with the spectacle. This requires modes of critical reflection which not only forces us to be alert to the ways in which our attentions might be harvested by the seduction of violent images, but how we might be co-opted by forms of depraved aesthetics that debase the political subject. We need to learn to live with violence less through the modality of the sacred than through the critical lens of the profane. By this we mean that we need to appreciate our violent histories and how our subjectivities have been formed through a history of physical bloodshed. This requires more of a willingness to interrogate violence in a variety of registers (ranging from the historical and concrete [registers] to the abstract and symbolic) than it does a bending to the neoliberal discourses of fate and normalization. We need to acknowledge our own seductions with the varied forces of violence. And we need to accept that intellectualism and the ideas it generates, the imaginaries it creates, and the visions of the world it endorses shares an intimate relationship with violence both in its complicity with violence and as an act of violence. Having said this, we cannot divorce here the idea of the desiring subject of violence from wider systemic relations and historical configurations. Too often, the mediation of suffering through the formal qualities of tolerability and design are presented as matter of personal pleasure and taste rather than part of a broader engaged social-political discourse. This all too easily leads to questions of individual pathology altogether removed from any sense of the conditions that give rise to libidinal investments. If we are to have a better picture of the debasement of the human subject, we need to address the relationships between individual desires, representations of human suffering, humiliation and death as part of a wider economy of pleasure that is collectively indulged. As decadence and despair are normalised in the wider culture—though this is very different from accomplished in the goal to remove all dissent—people are increasingly exploited for their pleasure quotient while any viable notion of the social is subordinated to the violence of a deregulated market economy and its production of cultures of cruelty.

## AT: Set Col

### AT: NATO Bad Links---2AC

#### NATO isn’t capitalist or imperialist---its strength and cohesion militates against authoritarian and militarist backsliding

Hudson ’22 [Sam; March 29; Natural Sciences at Cambridge; Areo, “The Progressive Case for NATO,” https://areomagazine.com/2022/03/29/the-progressive-case-for-nato/]

Some of NATO’s left-wing critics argue that it is the organisation’s expansion into Eastern Europe that has forced Russia onto a paranoid warpath, but this argument does not hold water either. Countries join NATO by democratic consent—a fact that only the most absurd CIA conspiracy theories can explain away. Had Russia been a good neighbour to its Eastern European former client and satellite states, perhaps NATO would not have expanded beyond Germany. Instead, Russian leaders since Boris Yeltsin have viewed Russia’s former sphere as the country’s birth right, crushing nascent separatist movements within Russia’s own borders with horrific brutality, while supporting pro-Russian separatist movements in Moldova and Georgia. This cynical policy would have collapsed under the weight of its own contradictions had it not devolved into the blood-and-soil imperialism that we see playing out in the invasion of Ukraine. Yeltsin may be remembered through rose-tinted glasses as a cheery drunkard, but his desperation to maintain Russia’s status as a superpower set Russian foreign policy on course to where it is today. Putin has now simply taken that foreign policy to its logical conclusion. No wonder much of Eastern Europe wished to join NATO, the one alliance that could give these nations credible anti-imperialist protection.

NATO is too often viewed reductively, as an American sphere of influence, in much the same way as the Warsaw Pact countries comprised a Soviet sphere of influence. It is true that a degree of alignment with some American foreign policy goals and values is implicit in NATO membership, but this is in no way equivalent to the influence the Soviets exerted over their client states during the Cold War. NATO members are sovereign states and have acted against US interests in the past. For instance, Turkey recently (wrongly) invaded America’s Kurdish allies in Syria. Likewise, NATO (rightly) refused US requests for assistance during the invasion of Iraq. As these concrete actions demonstrate, NATO is far more than an American-led sphere and has remained grounded in the democratic principles upon which it was founded, even though the US is able to leverage more power than it did at NATO’s founding in 1949. The characterisation of NATO as a tool of American imperialism, then, is demonstrably false.

Criticism of NATO is not limited to the realm of geopolitical machinations. Many on the left see it as a vessel for American business interests and neoliberal capitalism. History has shown otherwise. It was Clement Attlee’s British Labour government that signed the North Atlantic Treaty in 1947, founding NATO. And while Article 2 of the treaty stipulates that signatories should “eliminate conflict in their international economic policies” and “encourage economic collaboration,” this did not prevent Attlee’s government from being one of the most transformative in British history: it established the modern welfare state and continues to be widely celebrated by the Labour left today. Norway and Denmark, both founding members of NATO, are flourishing social democracies where social democrats and democratic socialists have spent more time in power than in opposition since 1949.

Clearly, NATO has not impeded progressive political movements within its member states. In fact, the existence of NATO has had positive repercussions for the European left. The unification of Western Europe under a single military alliance forced member states to abandon the nationalist and revanchist grudges that had dogged European politics for centuries. The political moderation this encouraged has meant that—even in those European countries where social democrats have not had much political success—the right-wing opposition generally takes the form of Christian Democrats, who are far more moderate than the reactionary, nationalist conservative parties that were prominent prior to World War II. At the same time, the strength of NATO’s collective opposition to the Soviet Union prevented that brand of highly authoritarian and reactionary socialism from gaining traction in Europe. Instead, leftist movements have been largely characterised by a more liberal tradition, which opposes state-sponsored violence and emphasises human rights.

Far from propping up the military-industrial complex—as NATO is often accused of doing—mutual defence and the guarantee of peace have allowed defence spending to be dramatically decreased throughout Europe. Part of this decrease may be attributed to the end of the Cold War—but defence spending has been on the decline since the 1960s and this is at least partly due to the peace between Western European neighbours that NATO has assured. In fact, defence spending has arguably declined too much. Most nations in the alliance have still not met NATO’s defence spending target of 2% of GDP, leaving America to foot the remaining bill. While this has meant that many European nations have been able to develop their welfare states, this has been at the expense of Americans, who still face a particularly vicious brand of capitalism with limited safety nets.

As Germany’s overnight policy shift following the invasion of Ukraine has shown, committing to the 2% target is not a tall order. It would enable us to maintain our collective defence while allowing America a much-needed financial reprieve. It would also diminish America’s influence upon the alliance, allowing European nations more of a say on collective defence policy and procurement. Hopefully, this would encourage a shift away from the American military-industrial complex and toward a more competitive, less monopolised defence industry, which holds less sway over governments.

History is often viewed as an inexorable march of progress and development from the barbarism of war to enlightened peace. This seems to be the underlying thinking of NATO’s left-wing detractors. But just as Rome fell, peace and progress are never inevitable, nor should they ever be taken for granted. Francis Fukuyama’s argument that we have reached the end of history has been widely derided by many on the left who find the idea that humanity will not progress past neoliberal democracy absurd. I agree with them—but in looking only forward, they have failed to look back. The fact that they see capitalist liberal democracy as the archenemy of peace and progress is not only extraordinarily privileged but terrifyingly dangerous. The west’s terrible interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan have confirmed this narrative for many. This thinking explains Young Labour’s tweets: NATO is to blame for Putin’s invasion, since neoliberalism is the sole force of evil in the world. However, as the tanks rolled into Ukraine, history returned once more to remind us that there are far darker, more dangerous enemies of progress. It is these enemies that NATO continues to forestall and, in doing so, allow for the peace and progress of which we Europeans are beneficiaries today. While it is a tragedy that it has taken the whiplash of war for us to look back at history, I hope these events may foster newfound gratitude for NATO and the peace and progress that it has helped achieve. I look forward to the day when the progressive left—of which I am proud to be a part—will view NATO, alongside the NHS and the welfare state, as one of Labour’s greatest achievements.

### AT: Foreign Focus Bad---2AC

#### To claim that [coloniality/anti-blackness] should proceed the “international” violence the US commits against foreign bodies is unethical—they can’t explain particulars of interethnic conflicts and undermines effective racial politics

**Sunstrom 8** [Ronald R. Sunstrom is a black Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of San Francisco; additionally, he teaches for USF's African American Studies program and the Master of Public Affairs program for the Leo T. McCarthy Center of Public Service and the Common Good. He was awarded the 2008 Sankofa Faculty Award from USF's Multicultural Student Services, USF's 2009 Ignatian Service Award, and was a co-winner of the 2010 USF Distinguished Teaching Award. His areas of research include political theory, critical social and race theory, and African American and Asian American philosophy, “The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice”, 2008, p. 65-92]

It would be odd and troubling for the nation to merrily work toward justice at “home,” all the while neglecting the demands of those whom the nation regarded as perpetual foreigners (and not really being at “home” in the nation) and the demands of global justice. Such a vision of justice is self-serving and morally hollow. Long-existing civil rights claims should not delimit the nation’s moral boundaries and its conception of civil rights, thus ipso facto severing them from internationally determined human rights. The reactions of some citizens to the browning of America, unfortunately, open up this possibility, which is yet another evasion of social justice.7 When I broach these issues, or any of the particular issues discussed in this book, the response I frequently receive is that these issues are red herrings that divert our attention away from the real enemy, that of white supremacy.8 I am dubious about this complaint; after all, focusing on “white supremacy” does not directly address the particulars of the interethnic confl icts that arise from the browning of America. Perhaps, though, these critics mean that we should focus on how “white supremacy,” in the form of institutionalized racism or white power, divides minority groups, so as to conquer them and leave them to fi ght over a limited set of resources. Alternatively, these critiques would have us focus on how Latinos, Asian Americans, Americans who identify as multiracial, and immigrants adopt anti-black racism and the privileges of whiteness as they assimilate into American society. I think the latter argument is bogus, and chapter 3 is devoted in part to explaining why. As for the former, I think “white supremacy” is too broad and vague a category to be helpful, and that focusing on such a fl awed category of power can be positively harmful. Such moves simply sidestep the particular issues that are raised in interethnic confl icts and may even contribute to the evasions I outlined earlier. The people of the United States, as they experience and participate in the browning of America, should resist both types of evasions. The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice argues, in contrast, that the people of the United States should see in its demographic change the transformation of social justice. They should welcome that transformation and view it as an opportunity to satisfy old debts and expand in a cosmopolitan direction the very idea of social justice.

#### Turn – anti-war advocacy bolsters activism against ideological problems AND their starting point is more likely to tradeoff than ours – qualitative and quantitative data proves – prefer our evidence sequencing analysis corrects for endogeneity problems

**Rojas 12** [Fabio Rojas, Associate Professor of Sociology @ Indiana University, and Michael T. Heaney Assistant Professor of Organizational Studies and Political Science University of Michigan, “Antiwar Politics and Paths of Activist Participation on the Left,” <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~mheaney/Antiwar_Activist_Paths.pdf>]

Activism changes people's lives. Previous scholarship demonstrates that the paths that people take into and through activism affect how their lives are changed (Blee 2011; Fisher 2006; Fisher and McInerney 2012; Han 2009; McAdam 1989, 1999; Munson 2010; Viterna 2006). For example, how people are recruited into activism (Fisher 2006; Fisher and McInerney 2012) and the organizations that they join (Han 2009; Munson 2008) makes a difference for how long they remain involved in activism and what types of activities they engage in. These studies, however, fail to distinguish between movements in terms of how participation in one movement may influence an individual's activist path differently than participation in another movement. Given that activists live in a world of multiple, interacting social movements (Evans and Kay 2008; Isaac and Christiansen 2002; Isaac, McDonald, and Lukasik 2006; McAdam 1995; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Meyer and Whittier 1994; Minkoff 1997; Voss and Sherman 2000), the question arises as to whether or not the sequence through which activists come into contact with movements matters for how they participate in activism. The antiwar movement is a very common gateway into progressive/left activism. In this article, we argue that activists who are initiated into activism through antiwar events have different patterns of movement participation than those who are initiated into activism through another movement. This article proceeds, first, by considering the extant scholarship on paths to and through activism. These paths are shaped by the ebb and flow of particular movements. As protest cycles play out, activists are presented with opportunities to adopt new issues or migrate to other movements. Special attention is paid to the antiwar movement and how its mobilization capacity is affected by the nature of its main policy issue, war. Second, we argue that antiwar activists are likely to pursue paths that diverge from those of other progressive/left activists. Third, we examine the methods and rationale for conducting a survey of 691 activists who attended the 2010 US Social Forum, one of the largest assemblies of progressive/left activists in the United States. Fourth, we explain sequence analysis as an approach to analyzing data on activist paths. Fifth, we demonstrate the distinctiveness of antiwar activists’ paths by estimating a series of regression models on the results of the sequence analysis. We find that antiwar activist paths are more likely to "spill over" into other movements than are other progressive/left activist paths. The article concludes by explaining the aggregate consequences that these paths have for the broader environment of progressive/left activists. Social movements have the potential to change the world by influencing public opinion and state policies. They also have the potential to change the lives of people who participate in them. By drawing people into social activism, movements, in turn, expose people to even further opportunities for political participation (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Carrol and Ratner 1996; Osa 2003; Ansell 2003; Hadden and Tarrow 2007). Over time, individual activists may develop a multitude of ties to different movements. We call an individual’s sequential participation in one or more movements an "activist path." Activist paths matter for a number of reasons. Initial mobilization may be linked to longterm behaviors, whether they are political (Demerath, Marwell, and Aiken 1971; Marwell, Demerath, and Aiken 1987) or personal, such as having children (McAdam 1989, 1999). The depth of participation in a movement may be correlated with political behavior later in life, such as the strength of left-leaning attitudes and the extent of political participation (McAdam 1999: 121-2; Giugni 2007, 2008). Scholars draw attention to the complexity and contingency of activist biographies. Jasper (1999: 210-28) recounts the story of Geoff Meredith, a man who was involved in environmental protest movements. Meredith had an extensive history that touched on support for AIDS patients, avant-garde art, and disabled rights, which depended on chance meetings with other activists. Carroll and Ratner (1996) find that a significant proportion of Vancouver-area activists participated in more than one type of movement organization (e.g., indigenous rights and labor groups). Rojas and Heaney (2009) report that 79% of antiwar protesters in the 2000s had participated in non-antiwar movements, suggesting a significant degree of "spillout" from established movements into new movements (see also Hadden and Tarrow 2007) Individuals’ characteristics may be linked with specific types of activist biographies. Fisher and McInerney (2012) find that people who are recruited to participate in an organization through their social ties are less likely to continue to participate in the organization than people that did not have prior connections within the organization. Corrigall-Brown (2012: 53) documents that religiosity, income, and political knowledge are significant factors that predict an activist’s path. Furthermore, her research demonstrates that activists vary in their persistence, with some activists maintaining heightened participation in multiple movements and others participating on a more episodic basis. Social contexts play a critical role in shaping activist paths. Viterna (2006) discusses the lives of women in Salvadoran revolutionary groups and finds that factors such as living in an urban environment predict mode of participation. She argues that people who enter activism from different starting points have distinct experiences. Caren, Ghoshal, and Ribas (2011) conclude that the generational cohort that an individual is a part of makes a difference for whether and how s/he participates in activism. Munson (2010) analyzes the role that life-course transitions have in determining activist biographies. His analysis of conservative Christian college students suggests that graduation is an important life course point that creates opportunities for activism. As academic demands decrease near the senior year, movement organizations provide new forms of participation for college students that deepen their involvement in activism. Prior research on activist paths connects individual and contextual factors to different types of paths. However, it is an open question as to whether all movements generate the same activist paths. Do movements differ in movement among political causes over the life course of participants? The forces that shape activist paths reflect the available options for political participation. Activist paths are made possible, in part, by the structures of multi-movement environments (Meyer and Whittier 1994; McAdam 1995; Carrol and Ratner 1996). Even though an individual may be initially recruited through an organization with a specific policy objective, activists may embrace new causes and participate in a wide range of movements over the course of their lives. They may form ties with activists who mobilize on behalf of other causes or join multiple organizations. The result is that, over time, individuals develop complex paths that reflect the different opportunities presented to and seized by them (Corriggall-Brown 2012). The multi-movement environment is an ever-changing social field because individual movements rise and fall, affecting the options available to activists. This fluctuation stimulates an individual's oscillation between, or simultaneous participation within, multiple policy areas. A movement is able to attract more recruits when its issues are viewed as more salient by the public. There are numerous ways that an issue may gain prominence. An exogenous event, such as a natural disaster, may make one policy issue highly visible (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Kingdon 1997). Political entrepreneurs may attract attention by having allies in the media discuss their issues (Sobieraj 2011). Conversely, there are factors that may decrease the visibility of a movement, leading to demobilization. A successful movement may demobilize once the state institutes policies that were promoted by the movement (McAdam 1982). Electoral victories may be correlated with demobilization, as partisans feel less inclined to protest once their party has taken control of the legislative or executive branch (Heaney and Rojas 2011). For these varied reasons, Tarrow (1994) notes that movements experience regular oscillation, or "protest cycles," over time. Protest cycles factor into activist paths by encouraging individuals to migrate from one issue domain to another. For example, the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act encouraged a number of activists to move from the issue of voting rights to the issue of poverty, while others adopted the issue of nationalism (see Rojas 2007; Joseph 2006). Voting rights was one of the issues used to unify the various elements of the civil rights coalition. Once voting rights were addressed, attention turned to a host of other issues, which contributed to the transformation of the civil rights movement and led activists to migrate away from activities such as voter registration and promoting poor people's rights. The fluctuating nature of multi-movement environments means that activists are presented with a changing menu of issues. As movements rise and fall, activists have incentives to migrate to new movements or jointly participate in multiple movements. Activists who participate in a receding movement do not always completely demobilize. Rather, they often continue in some other capacity by joining other movements, a path that is called the "transfer" trajectory by Corrigall-Brown (2012: 6-7). Multi-movement participation may allow the activist to promote her/his original issues or to continue working for social change in a new context. These options generate a variety of paths reflecting the complexity and diversity of the multimovement environment. Activist paths reflect the changing relationships between individuals and movements, with some movements providing a platform for continued political participation while other movements are in remission. Thus, the connections between activists and movements represent one type of abeyance structure – the organizations, and other social structures, that "absorb the surplus of marginal groups" (Mizruchi 1983; Taylor 1989: 762). We argue above that the particular path that an activist follows may depend on the way in which s/he encounters the multi-movement environment. Involvement in one movement may lead an individual down a different activist path than involvement in another movement. In this section, we argue that the antiwar movement, specifically, engages individuals in activism in ways that tend to depart from the typical movement. As a result, involvement in antiwar activism has the potential to shape an activist’s path differently than is the case in many other movements. The antiwar movement stands out from the typical social movement in that its issue portfolio consists of a mix of extremely urgent and very long-term issues. War is an extremely urgent issue because whether or not people die today depends on the government’s actions today. For example, the largest internationally coordinated demonstration in history was held on February 15, 2003, slightly more than a month before the U.S. invasion of Iraq (Walgrave and Rucht 2010). Many of the demonstrators believed that it was necessary to act now to make a difference. After the U.S. invasion had begun, demonstrations subsided. Part of this decline – in the United States, at least – may have been due to a “rally around the flag” effect (Lee 1977). But part of this decline was also likely due to the perception by some that, with war already underway, political opportunities for the movement had evaporated and the prospect of making a difference had passed (Meyer and Corrigall-Brown 2005). The urgently felt need to oppose war now often draws activists away from other pursuits. Tom Hayden, a former leader of Students for a Democratic Society who remained engaged in activism from the 1960s through the 2010s, recounts that: The story of my life is trying to do something about my country, my community, and finding out there's another war. I can't quite tell you why I get so upset by it. Except that I think that when you're in a fight, in a war, and the blood is flowing, there's an urgency that, like it or not, is not the same as chronic problems like poverty (Hayden 2008). In fact, antiwar organizers rely on the fact that many of their supporters are likely to come from allied movements focused on longer-term problems. When antiwar activists face the need for “sudden mobilizations,” they structure their calls for action in ways that are easily conformable with the goals of other movements (Reese et al. 2010; Vasi 2006, 2011). Hence, antiwar mobilizations build their strength by welcoming hybrid organizations that bridge antiwar activism with the concerns of other movements (Goss and Heaney 2010). As a result, participation in antiwar activism becomes a way, not only to rally against war, but also to meet people tied to an array of other causes on the progressive/left side of the political spectrum. The antiwar movement is most successful in mobilizing largest number of supporters when war is imminent. Yet, the agenda of antiwar protests exposes participants to a range of longer-term concerns about militarism and other threats to peace, such as the extensive network of U.S. military bases around the world (Yeo 2011) and the threat of nuclear war (Meyer 1990). By offering a mix of urgent and long-term issues, the antiwar movement attracts a broad swath of progressive/left activists to its ranks. In a study of protests in Washington, DC from 1961 to 1983, Bearman and Everett (1993) uncover that peace organizations and non-military intervention groups are highly central in the network of progressive/left causes. Carroll and Ratner’s (1996) survey of activists from Vancouver, British Columbia reveals that peace activists have a greater degree of multi-movement involvement than those in any other movement category.

#### Specific issue focus is comparatively better than ideological critique – their pedagogy gets sidelined and perpetuates the status quo

**Lieberfeld 8** [Daniel, Associate Professor of Public Policy @ McAnulty College, “WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT? THEME-ISSUE INTRODUCTION,” International Journal of Peace Studies, Volume 13, Number 1, <https://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol13_1/IJPS13n1%20Intro%20-%20Lieberfeld.pdf>]

Important definitional considerations concern the temporal and issue dimensions of antiwar protest. Opposition to a particular war motivates some movements. These ad hoc movements seek to change government policy regarding a specific, ongoing war. While this goal may be linked to other political agendas—be they anti-militarist, feminist, anti-imperialist, pro-democracy, and so forth—these are secondary to the primary focus on bringing a particular war to an end. The time-horizon of such movements is limited and they typically dissolve or become inactive after the war ends. A different type of antiwar activism transcends protest against specific wars. It has a more extensive temporal dimension and greater prominence of ideologically based motives and goals—such as pacifism, or liberal internationalism that seeks to institutionalize world order through the United Nations or a federation of countries. Ongoing protests by secular pacifist groups or by peace churches against armaments and militarism can have much more diffuse goals than do ad hoc antiwar movements. In addition to disarmament, these goals may include strengthening of international disputeresolution processes, promoting international understanding, and peace education. One can designate ad hoc protests “antiwar movements” and more ideologically motivated and long-running protests “peace movements”—although these categories are not mutually exclusive and protesters against particular wars may also have transcendent ideological motives. Open-ended, more ideologically motivated movements may have less potential, at least in the near term, to influence public opinion and change public policy. In part this reflects the more diffuse goals of ongoing peace movements: Insofar as a single-issue focus tends to correlate with greater ability to achieve movement goals (Gamson, 1990, 45-46), ad hoc antiwar groups may be more successful. Of course, the task of ending a particular war is more achievable than that of ending war generally. Peace groups whose demands include the expansion of international law at the expense of state sovereignty are also politically radical in the sense that they challenge “present distributions of wealth and power,” and advocate replacing the authority over security policy claimed by domestic elites (Ash, 1972, 230). Scholars debate how the radicalism of a movement’s demands affects its prospects for success, but the goal of displacing established political authorities is highly correlated with protest-group failure (Gamson, 1990, 42). Antiwar groups that focus on ending a particular war do not generally seek to replace the authority of domestic elites. Rather, their challenge is directed toward particular policies and practices that they believe depart from the responsible exercise of officeholders’ authority. Thus, a key question that bears on questions of antiwar movements’ effectiveness and influence is “What is the relative importance to movement leaders of ideological goals broader than ending a particular war?” It may also be useful to locate movement goals on a continuum from domestic to international politics, with world peace and disarmament goals located on the more international and abstract end and also implying the potentially radical displacement of domestic elites. Peace groups with broader time horizons and more abstract goals generally find it harder to achieve favorable public responses and typically remain politically marginal. Ad hoc protests with a single agenda of ending a war have greater potential to attract mainstream support and to contribute to changes in policy.

### AT: Fiat K/Nuclear Technocracy K

#### The 1AC is both necessary and sufficient to challenge nuclear managerialism—we control uniqueness, debates about presidential nuclear authority barely touch on the fallibility of deterrence and its status as a cultural phenomenon—simply reframing the terms as the 1AC did is net better than normative policy debates. Nuclear weapons are an ontological tangle of both discursive and material phenomena—investigating presidential authority can widen the gaps in that tangle for alternative rhetorical strategies to gain traction.

**Taylor, 7**—University of Colorado-Boulder (Bryan, “‘The Means to Match Their Hatred’: Nuclear Weapons, Rhetorical Democracy, and Presidential Discourse,” Presidential Studies Quarterly, Vol. 37, No. 4, Shadows of Democracy in Presidential Rhetoric (Dec., 2007), pp. 667-692, dml) [ableist language modifications denoted by brackets]

In his related critique of rhetoric surrounding the global war on terror, Robert Ivie (2005) establishes that the continued degradation of American political culture stems from long-standing "demophobia." In this condition, democracy is an ideal that must be enforced on international others to preserve essential American interests. Simultaneously, however, it is viewed as a threatening source of domestic dissent and change that offends the republican and federalist sense of political order. Ivie unflinchingly probes this throbbing paradox in the history of U.S. war making: even as they claim to serve democracy through military adventurism abroad, U.S. officials consistently distort the interests of their opponents and ~~cripple~~ [devastate] citizen deliberation. They do so through use of a "decivilizing" rhetoric that blends irrational, aggressive, rigid, paranoid, and exceptionalist discourses to demonize Other-ness and delegitimate domestic dissent. The conse quences of this practice, Ivie argues, are grave indeed. It degrades cultural diversity required for successful adaptation to changing political conditions; it suppresses the contradiction between the ideal of deliberation and the coercive use of armed force; it exacerbates tensions that lead to war's irrevocable destruction; and it marginalizes alternate formats (such as poetry) that may serve political deliberation. Ivie's solution to these problems is neither direct nor simple: he calls for nothing less than a radical reorientation to the possibilities of political discourse. Here, political speakers would privilege the comic pole of Burkean discourse and reject short-sighted, cynical, desperate, and self-indulgent discourses. Instead, political actors resign themselves to continuous and "adventurous" struggle (Peterson 2007) and cultivate the civil possibilities of rhetoric and performance for achieving tolerance, coexistence, and dialogue. As a result, militarist and imperialist discourses of national security that have attained unwarranted authority and autonomy may be rejoined with a full range of democratic voices.

The presidency is a rich site for this inquiry. It is an article of faith among rhetoricians that presidents not only represent "the people" in their public speech but also strategically constitute citizen identities—and influence associated actions—by symbolically depicting the demos in ways that serve administration agendas (Campbell and Jamieson 1990, 5-6; Ivie 2005, 162; Medhurst 1996, xvii). In characterizing its tradi tions, essences, and missions, presidential rhetoric shapes how the American public imagines the possibilities for its participation in deliberation. Their rhetoric also scripts the content of frames and arguments that citizens might bring to that activism (Stuckey and Antczak 1998, 420). Here, critics note how presidential rhetoric provides specific, persuasive definitions of conditions, events, actors, and policies (Kuypers 1997) and also, more broadly, constitutes political culture as the source of meanings and practices that sustain or subvert robust democracy. One example here includes the negotiation by Cold War-era presidents of the diminishing possibilities for heroic action created by mutual assured destruction (MAD) as a castrating institutionalization of vulnerability (Beasley 2001, 22; Chaloupka 1992; Engelhardt 1998).

These arguments guide my consideration of the relationship between nuclear weapons, presidential rhetoric, and democracy. Specifically, I am concerned with the following questions (see Beasley 2001): How and to what extent has presidential rhetoric invoked the ideal of democracy as a means or an end of nuclear deliberation? How have U.S. presidents signified the demos in relation to the nuclear condition? How has that discourse represented the actual diversity of interests animating nuclear-political culture, and how has it articulated those interests with the deliberation of nuclear policy? What specific images of nuclear deliberation, of the presidency, and of nuclear citizenship are subsequently produced? How do these "necessary fictions" correspond with the actual nuclear desires of the American? How do they change over time in relation to the evolving conditions of nuclear technology, foreign policy, military strategy, and shifting relationships between the presidency, Congress, the media, and the people? These questions are heuristic. They cannot be fully answered here; they potentially yield libraries and careers. Instead, they establish the scope and agenda of my discussion below. In that discussion, I integrate existing findings on nuclear democracy and presi dential rhetoric to consolidate their claims, assess them in light of new theorizing about rhetorical democracy, and offer suggestions for future work. First, however, I begin with a general sketch of the relationship between nuclear weapons, democracy, and rhetoric. Nuclear Weapons and Rhetorical Democracy

Liberal scholars and other commentators who assess the relationship between nuclear weapons and democracy balance cynicism and optimism (see, for example, Falk 1982; Mitchell 2000; Peterson 2007). Their tone frequently evokes the morbid genres of diagnosis, autopsy, and obituary, but their grieving, condemnation, and pleading also seek a healing—if not outright resurrection—of the nuclear-democratic body. This activity typically grows more active during periods of nuclear instability, in which possibilities for reconfiguring the relationship between nuclear officials and citizens are at least temporarily opened. During the late Cold War and post-Cold War periods, then, several speakers addressed this relationship in the context of extraordinary changes in international politics (Deudney 1995; Falk 1982; Rosen 1989; Rosow 1989; Stegenga 1988). Collectively, these speakers considered how institutions sediment around the artifact of nuclear weapons and how that process yields rhetoric that undermines the possibility of robust democratic speech.

To varying degrees, these critiques all assert a fundamental incompatibility between nuclear weapons and the ideals of the democratic state. They argue that oppres sive conditions surrounding the development of nuclear weapons subvert the capabilities of citizens to acquire, deliberate, and act on information concerning nuclear policy. As a result, the nuclear public is characterized as fragmented, alienated, uninformed, and unable to participate in deliberation with forceful and reasoned discourse. Commonly listed elements in this indictment include: an official regime of secrecy which suppresses and distorts nuclear information; official cultivation of a climate of permanent emergency that promotes public inertia and acquiescence to authoritarian rule; undue deference by nominal agents of congressional oversight to the interests of military elites and corporate defense contractors; a timid and amnesiac news media; and official demonization of anti-nuclear dissent as extreme, irrelevant, and unpatriotic (Rosen 1989). "This long train of official lies," argues James Stegenga (1988, 89), "has made truly informed consent an impossibility" (emphasis in original).

These critiques grow more valuable as they conceptualize the relationships between rhetoric, democracy, and nuclear weapons. One provocative claim here addresses how, under conditions of MAD, all aspects of postwar American society were enrolled in the semiotic project of signifying to the Communist enemy both capability and willingness to use nuclear weapons in the national defense. Rhetorical scholars have largely failed to appreciate how, under these conditions, the demos itself was conscripted and disciplined as an element in this apparatus:

The continuous task of the president and his subordinates is to make their essentially incredible threats seem credible. So leaders have wanted to present themselves as speaking forcefully on behalf of a monolithically supportive American population. Naysayers needed to be discouraged, the democratic debate on these matters minimized, in the interest of promoting the credibility of the threats. The people are meant or supposed to avoid thinking about or speaking out on these matters. (Stegenga 1988, 89, emphasis in original; see also Bok 1989)

Clarifying this condition helps us to conceptualize nuclear weapons as an ontological tangle of discursive and material phenomena. It also establishes that—far from being a mere adornment of policy language—rhetoric is an inherent, inevitable, and reflexive challenge for the nuclear nation-state. Official rhetoric, in other words, must be developed and deployed in tandem with nuclear weapons to ensure that the whispers, conversation, and shouts of the people do not subvert the principal—and, according to Jacques Derrida's (1984) famous critique, sole—function of those weapons as rhetoric.

This interdependency between security and rhetoric is further clarified in argu ments conceptualizing nuclear weapons as a legitimation crisis for the liberal-democratic nation-state (Deudney 1995, 209). Rosow (1989) argues that traditional conceptualization of nuclear deterrence as a strategic issue obscures its status as "a system of social relations**"** (564). In adopting this alternate perspective, Rosow argues, we may reclaim nuclear weapons from official discourses that have sheared off from their necessary grounding in—and authorization by—the discourses of the nuclear life world: "[Strate gic] debate scarcely touches on the experience of nuclear deterrence as a cultural and political-economic production. . . . The result is a serious discontinuity between the claims on which the validity of nuclear policy rests . . . and the actual effects of nuclear deterrence on the material well-being and consciousness in the advanced capitalist West" (564). Rosow's argument establishes the democratic status of nuclear weapons as a rhetorical problem: he conceptualizes nuclear deterrence as a discourse composed of "interpretive claims" and imperative expressions and theorizes its mediation of both institutional structures and forms of identity. Viewed in this light, we can recognize how, as artifacts, nuclear weapons clarify a fundamental contradiction between their destructive potential and their legitimating cultural discourses: "The same forces that are to produce peace and prosperity, i.e., science, knowledge, rationality, also produce the tools for destroying the very civilization they are designed to protect and whose values and future they embody." Richard Falk (1982, 9) has suggested the implications of this condition for a nuclear-rhetorical democracy: "Normative opposition to nuclear weapons or doctrines inevitably draws into question the legitimacy of state power and is, therefore, more threatening to governmental process than a mere debate about the property of nuclear weapons as instruments of statecraft." As a result, Rosow concludes, changes in nuclear policy may exacerbate inherent conflict between "the [cultural] consciousness of democratic citizenship" and the legitimacy of the state (1989, 581). As the state increas ingly rests its security on weapons systems requiring centralized control and automated decision making, it becomes increasingly difficult to assert that the legitimacy of those weapons arises from authentic popular consent. Fault lines in this hegemony are opened when public rhetoric informs Americans about the international consequences of nuclear imperialism and encourages their identification with negatively affected groups. In the post-Cold War era, Rosow predicted, it will become increasingly difficult for the state to normalize nuclear weapons as a familiar and legitimate icon.

### Greer—Imperialism R/C—2AC

#### Imperialism explains settler colonialism, not the other way around. Their theory neglects settler responsibility by flattening history.

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In January 1788 the First Fleet dropped anchor in Botany Bay and began disgorging its cargo of convicts, marines, and officials to inaugurate the colonial history of Australia. It arrived in the middle of global revolutionary changes that were ushering in the modern world. Britain was industrializing, capitalism was beginning to conquer the world, and political upheavals flying the banner of popular sovereignty were bringing down established regimes across the Americas and Europe. Fundamental reconfigurations of space and power were central to these transformations. More than ever before, territorial states were taking shape with clear, hard outer boundaries and uniform internal sovereignty. And within these states, land was being reconfigured as private property. From Thomas Jefferson’s Virginia to Napoléon Bonaparte’s expanded France, the absolute rights of owners were proclaimed. Political and property boundaries were now construed as precise and measurable, with fuzzy and overlapping claims relegated to the past. When it came to Indigenous lands and the processes of colonization in the wake of the American Revolution, there was little room for ambiguity: once territory entered the settler sphere, it was supposed to be fully subject to American sovereignty and a settler property regime. Indigenous peoples were utterly excluded.1

Unlike the Americas, Australia was settled entirely under the auspices of the modern, absolutist conception of political and economic space. Its history of colonizing was also marked by some further peculiarities: sponsorship by a global superpower, an absence of interimperial competition, and an indigenous population that was, under these circumstances, militarily weak and lacking in commodities that colonists might be willing to trade for. The expansion of settler control, by no means unopposed, advanced rapidly through massacres, forced migrations, and assimilation. Given this power imbalance, the invaders saw no need to negotiate treaties of land cession. Instead they treated the country as legally empty—terra nullius—a striking contrast with North and South America, where the centuries-long and highly competitive European invasion had spawned powerful coalescent societies such as the Mapuche, the Comanches, and the Lakotas, capable of keeping colonization at bay for a long time.2 Australia therefore appears as a kind of “ideal type” of modern settler colonialism, a place where Indigenous resistance was weak, where the complexities of pre-Enlightenment territoriality were absent, and where the brutal logic of appropriation could operate on what looked like (but was not) a clean slate. It was with this Australian history in mind that Patrick Wolfe first developed his theory of settler colonialism, largely as a response to a postcolonial scholarship focused on colonies of exploitation.3 An omnivorous reader with a probing mind, Wolfe also engaged deeply with the histories of India, the United States, and Israel, among other sites of colonization. But his thinking was strongly shaped by the Australian case as the prototypical instance of settler colonialism.

The most rigorous of the settler colonial theorists in my opinion, Wolfe insisted that his subject was not an ideology or a set of ideas but rather a logic. “Although predicated on land rather than on human bodies,” he writes, “settler colonialism is premised on a cultural logic of elimination that insistently seeks the removal of indigenous humans from the land in question.”4 The “logic of elimination” is a basic drive to get rid of the Indigenous presence by one means or another and to replace it with a new society. This approach encompasses material as well as discursive aspects; massacre, removal, assimilation, and immigration are part of its repertoire, and so too are various forms of racism, legal instruments of dispossession, and historical narratives denying violence.5 Heavily indebted to Marxism and postcolonial theory, Wolfe grounded his concept in material considerations: the basic distinction between settler colonialism and the “ordinary” colonialism of the sort one finds in nineteenth-century India or Africa is that the latter depends on the exploitation of native labor while the former had no real need for the natives’ work and only wanted their land.6

Extending this basic analysis, Wolfe developed a highly suggestive, if somewhat schematic, theory of race formation.7 With the United States mainly in mind, he argued that the racism directed at African Americans and that focused on Native Americans were different species of exclusion. Whereas the one had to do with denigrated, unfree labor, the other targeted peoples whose very existence stood as an obstacle to the expansion of settler society—it was the racism of work versus the racism of land. Wolfe pointed to the divergent treatment of African Americans and Indigenous people where “race mixing” was concerned, arguing that the “one-drop rule” that treated anyone with the slightest African ancestry as black reflected the colonizer’s concern to maximize the laboring population, whereas the tendency to assimilate people of European and Indigenous ancestry to the white category (particularly characteristic of Australian practice) stemmed from an impulse to reduce and eliminate the Native population.

All very well where the nineteenth century is concerned, but readers of the Quarterly may legitimately ask whether the concept of settler colonialism helps us to understand North America prior to the late eighteenth century. Or is Wolfe’s framework stuck in the modern? Is it indeed a theory of modernity? Wolfe did have much to say on early America and settler colonialism, but insightful though his writings on that subject are, they are quite different from the reflections he derived from the Australian case. The materialism has faded, replaced by a preoccupation with colonialist doctrines and discourses. He emphasized an imperialist legal notion, the “doctrine of discovery,” whereby European monarchies supposedly asserted both sovereignty and dominium from the moment of contact, reducing Indigenous peoples to mere occupants of the land. This he saw as the basis for a future physical dispossession and replacement by settlers.8 On this point, Wolfe seems to be swallowing the historical fable promulgated in the 1820s by Chief Justice John Marshall to justify Indian removal and other legal techniques of dispossession. Marshall notoriously propounded the view that “discovery” was tantamount to conquest and that the United States had inherited Britain’s claim not only to rule but also to own vast portions of the continent.9 Wolfe took this breathtaking distortion of the colonial past as a description of early modern colonization rather than as a more modern ideological justification for contemporary practices of dispossession. More generally, he tended to exaggerate the importance and misconstrue the thrust of the arrogant pronouncements of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century imperialists, reading into their vague territorial pretensions a real program for replacing Natives with settlers. Apart from the fact that colonial charters and other early assertions of sovereignty were more likely to suggest the incorporation than the elimination of Indigenous peoples, these expressions of imperialist chutzpah cannot be taken as guides to what actually happened, any more than the Epistles of Saint Paul can explain the Crusades.

In Wolfe’s wake, a whole school of settler colonial history has arisen with the aim of reexamining world history through this lens. This intellectual movement has spawned many valuable studies of modern colonialism, notably in applying the concept to the case of Israel as well as to numerous other nineteenth- and twentieth-century contexts. Insofar as more remote periods are concerned, however, results have been less impressive. A recently published handbook attempts to sum up the history of settler colonialism over the millennia and around the world through an array of essays on topics ranging from ancient empires to present-day New Caledonia.10 Readers of the volume learn about the Portuguese settlement of the islands of Madeira and the Azores (where there were no indigenous populations to eliminate) and about Roman colonia, which reinforced Roman presence on the edges of their multiethnic empire but which only pushed aside natives from small enclaves. Some of the premodern cases show affinities to settler colonialism à la Wolfe, but the contributors generally conclude that the fit is partial at best. The scholarship on display is very good but in most cases fairly conventional in approach, and it is hard to see what value settler colonial theory adds. In this volume and in other programmatic publications, definitions of settler colonialism are rather amorphous, generally lacking the theoretical bite of Wolfe’s early writings.

In my own field, attempts to reconceive New France’s history on a settler colonial basis have led to lamentable results. Emboldened by theory and unencumbered by substantial knowledge of the topic, Edward Cavanagh argues that early New France needs to be understood as a “corporate” colony founded on the principle of terra nullius.11 That legal notion had long served as a justification for the colonization of Australia, so why not New France? Aware of, but undeterred by, Lauren Benton and Benjamin Straumann’s demonstration that this phrase was unheard of before the nineteenth century, Cavanagh constructs a new, ad hoc definition of the term by which it comes to stand for a failure to recognize “Aboriginal title” (which is actually a twentieth-century concept) linked to a willingness to settle land without purchase or cession. “The practice of terra nullius—whereby settlers acquire title, improve, and alienate, in a colonized region where no purchases, cessions, or conquests take place—was prevalent in New France.”12 In fact, the French never maintained that North America was empty; to the contrary, their program of colonization was all about incorporating Indigenous nations into their empire. In New France, as in New Spain, officials repeatedly proclaimed Indigenous lands inviolable, and the layered land tenures of Canada left considerable room for settler-Indigenous coexistence. That said, French settlers did indeed dispossess and displace Natives (if not on a large scale, given the demographics); however, purchases and cessions are neither here nor there. The practice of purchase and cession, initiated in some of the English colonies in the seventeenth century and later enshrined in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, was an instrument of unusually thoroughgoing dispossession.13 It was a quintessential settler colonial technique for utterly eliminating Indigenous property, and so the fact that the French took a less absolutist approach makes a poor justification for equating them with the colonizers of Australia.

Unarguably, there are places and periods in the early modern history of North America where the “logic of elimination” was operative in both its material and its discursive aspects, where Natives were massacred and pushed aside to make way for colonists who proclaimed the land rightfully and exclusively theirs. For readers of this journal, it is hardly necessary to enumerate the sites along the Atlantic coast where colonists displaced Indigenous peoples and established jurisdictions, sovereignties, and property regimes for themselves, for the basic outlines of this story of appropriation and dispossession have long been familiar to historians. It is not entirely clear that labeling it an instance of settler colonialism adds much to our understanding of the phenomenon. More importantly, it is not obvious that settler colonial studies have much to contribute to the study—central to current work in the field—of the broader, continental context in which North American colonies took shape.

The European invasion of America was extensive and variegated; settler colonies were but one dimension of the larger process and, until the nineteenth century, not the most spatially significant. North of New Spain and east of the narrow English and French settlements lay the vast bulk of the North American continent, Indigenous country that was neither conquered nor colonized. Yet even in the absence of the eliminationist workings of settler colonialism, it was strongly affected by the European presence, more so in some periods and regions than in others. Consider, for example, the large southeastern region often referred to as the “shatter zone,” where waves of violence and disease succeeded one another, beginning with Hernando de Soto’s entrada of 1539–42 and continuing through successive slave raids and the rise of militaristic coalescent societies that Robbie Ethridge and others have tracked.14 Trade with South Carolina, especially of guns for slaves, was the main driver of this destructive upheaval, and so, of course, colonization was centrally implicated. Something generally similar was occurring in the southwestern borderlands due to the presence of the colony of New Mexico.15 Only in a settler national narrative of the most providentialist sort could the emergence of these regional shatter zones be seen as simply paving the way for settlement and colonization.

Further north, the Great Lakes region was similarly shaken by more than a century of wars and migrations following Haudenosaunee and French intrusions that started in the 1660s. This was a site where French, and later British, intruders played a transformative role through trade, religious evangelism, diplomatic negotiation, sex, and war. They did not conquer or rule—and they certainly did not settle, except in the tiniest enclaves—but they did exert influence and claim imperial sovereignty.16 Coming to terms with French sovereignty claims to the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi requires us to recognize a more complex, less fully territorialized and exclusive concept of political authority than the modern definition that dominates Wolfe’s thinking on the subject. French imperial sovereignty here was a matter of infiltration rather than full takeover; certainly it had nothing to do with eliminating the Native, for it was entirely dependent upon that Indigenous presence. As was the case in the Southeast, there was a colony in the picture, in this case French Canada on the Saint Lawrence River, the source of commercial supplies, missionaries, coureurs de bois, and military officers. The whole pays d’en haut phenomenon was unimaginable in the absence of this European settlement (and vice versa). Consequently, it would be problematic to isolate the colonized colonies from the interior zones of influence and subject them to analysis as instances of settler colonialism. Canada and the pays d’en haut were inextricably connected. In this respect, New France was exceptional only in the scale of its imperial hinterland. All across the trans-Appalachian interior in the eighteenth century, Indigenous territories were affected by direct and indirect Euro-American infiltration, without conquest or real colonization. Settler colonial theory seems ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of these commercial/imperial incursions except as a prelude to settlement.

To take full account of the larger continental field and the upheavals occasioned by European intrusion, we need to think about empires as well as settler colonies—or rather we need to consider settler colonialism as an aspect of early modern imperialism. Recent work on the history of empires underscores the wide variety of spatial practices employed in the creation of overseas empires in the early modern period, the nodes and networks, the reliance on sea-lanes and interior waterways to extend power and extract wealth.17 Colonial settlements were one element of a broader pattern of imperial expansion, especially prominent in the British American Empire. Settler colonial theory, valid and useful though it may be in certain settings, has the effect of isolating processes of colonization from larger processes of imperial penetration. It also has the effect of flattening long-term historical change by assimilating early modern colonialism to patterns of settlement and dispossession more characteristic of the nineteenth century.

That said, let me acknowledge one of the important contributions of settler colonial theory to the practice of history. Regardless of the period we study, historians inhabit the modern world (call it postmodern if you prefer; it makes no difference to the present point), and many of us are non-Indigenous residents of settler colonial countries. Since, as Patrick Wolfe never tired of repeating, settler colonialism is “a structure not an event,” we are the beneficiaries of eliminationist practices that continue to victimize Native peoples.18 As citizens and as scholars, we should be mindful of our subject positionality in this respect. And surely that means scrutinizing the past for differences and transformations, not for pieces of evidence taken out of context to suggest an eternal always-already condition.

### Harris—Arms Focus Good

#### The development of imperial weaponry explains the mechanisms of settler dispossession better—debate should focus on those technical details. Err aff—even if we’re wrong, you can’t determine that with their [ontological/pedagogical/etc] lens without contextualizing it via the burden of rejoinder.

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The emphasis on culture in studies of colonialism tends to obscure other forms of colonial power while making it impossible to contextualize the cultural argument and assess its salience. Rather than focusing on texts, systems of signification, and procedures of knowledge generation, as the colonial discourse literature is wont to do, a fuller understanding of colonial powers is achieved by explaining colonialism’s basic geographical dispossessions of the colonized. In so doing, the issue of power is not prejudged and the particular roles of different modes and theories of colonial power come into focus. I explore these propositions by considering the powers underlying the reserve (reservation) system in British Columbia, a system that, by allocating a tiny fraction of the land to native people and opening the rest for development, facilitated the geographical reorganization of the province. My conclusions are these: the initial ability to dispossess rested primarily on physical power and the supporting infrastructure of the state; the momentum to dispossess derived from the interest of capital in profit and of settlers in forging new livelihoods; the legitimation of and moral justification for dispossession lay in a cultural discourse that located civilization and savagery and identified the land uses associated with each; and the management of dispossession rested with a set of disciplinary technologies of which maps, numbers, law, and the geography of resettlement itself were the most important. Although no one body of theory explains colonial power, several theoretical perspectives yield crucial insights. Key Words: colonialism, colonial discourse theory, deterritorialization, colonial land policies, governmentality, reservations, British Columbia. Influenced by Michel Foucault’s analysis of the relationships of power and knowledge (1972), by Edward Said’s examination of Orientalism (1978), by textual theory harnessed to colonial discourse analysis, and by many studies of the values and ideologies enmeshed in particular colonial encounters, most postcolonial scholars now identify culture and associated procedures of knowledge generation as the dominant power relations associated with colonialism. Whereas Frantz Fanon (1963) emphasized violence—the power of the gun—and Marx, to the extent that he wrote on colonialism, the aggressive reach of capital, postcolonial research and writing situates the momentum of colonialism in the culture of imperialists and colonists. A central goal, therefore, of colonial discourse theory is to identify the assumptions and representations inherent in colonial culture—in the binary of civilization/savagery, in the erasures of Aboriginal knowledge of time and space, in assumptions about race and gender, in the concept of the land as empty (terra nullius), and so on—and then, insofar as possible, to expose their contemporary manifestations. This work has focused much scholarly energy and has yielded important theoretical and practical results, but it is less clear that it has revealed the principal momentum and power relations inherent in colonialism. Originating in literary and cultural studies, colonial discourse theory, indeed postcolonial scholarship generally, privileges the investigation of imperial texts, enunciations, and systems of signification. In so doing, it exposes implicit modes of seeing and of understanding that are held to infuse and validate colonialism while imparting much of its momentum. If Said offered broadly inclusive descriptions of colonial culture, and if others, more recently, have emphasized the variety of colonial voices and the importance of a local, contextual appreciation of different colonial cultures (e.g., Thomas 1994), in either case, culture is treated as a primary locus of colonial power. Moreover, as elements of colonial culture are assumed to have outlived formal colonial regimes, their identification becomes an active political project—the decolonization of representation (Hall 2000, 5). In itself, this is commendable enough, but if studies of colonial culture are not contextualized among other forms of colonial power, then it is well nigh impossible to assess the particular work and the relative salience of colonial culture itself. A study of travel writing, for example, may yield an appreciation of the inflected seeing of travelers and of the complicity of such seeing with colonial projects, while not beginning to address the relative importance of travelers’ seeing and writing in the whole colonial enterprise. Given its focus, it cannot. At best, it can yield a nuanced understanding of traveler perceptions and values, and suggestive ideas about their relationships with colonialism. Colonialism’s complexity may be affirmed, so too, perhaps, the discursive construction of reality comments tied more closely to theory than to a situated knowledge of colonial practices and power relations. In the hands of some of its most able practitioners, postcolonial scholarship is a potent means of exploring the reworking (‘‘provincializing’’) of European thought at and for the margins of empire (Chakrabarty 2000, 16). However, most postcolonial scholarship is written out of British or American universities and emanates from the heart of a recently superceded empire or of a recently ascendant one that hesitates to acknowledge its own imperial background. American postcolonial scholarship is not preoccupied with America (Hulme 1995; Thomas 1994 172–73). In the background of such scholarship are European theorists, particularly Foucault, Derrida, and Gramsci; in the foreground, European colonial thought and culture. In these circumstances, as many have pointed out, it tends to be Eurocentric—or as the Australian anthropologist Patrick Wolfe puts it, occidocentric (1999, 1). So positioned, it is well placed to comment on the imperial mind in its large diversity, and even—especially in the hands of scholars like Homi Bhabha and Dipesh Chakrabarty who grew up in former colonies—on the ways in which European thought has been inflected and hybridized by its colonial encounters, but not on the diverse, on-the-ground workings of colonialism in colonized spaces around the world. A central claim of the distinguished Indian subaltern historian, Ranajit Guha, is that if British historical writing on the subcontinent reveals something of Britain and the Raj, it reveals nothing of India (1997). Somewhat similar criticisms have been made of much of the postcolonial literature: that it (or parts of it) anticipates a radically restructured European historiography, that it allows for nothing outside the (European) discourse of colonialism, that it is yet another exercise in metatheory and in European universalism (e.g., Slemon 1994; McClintock 1994). As the literary theorist Benita Parry puts it, the postcolonial emphasis on language and texts tends to offer ‘‘the World according to the Word’’ (1997, 12)—and the word tends to be European. But unless it can be shown that colonialism is entirely constituted by European colonial culture (a proposition for which it is hard to imagine any convincing evidence unless the concept of culture is understood so broadly that it loses any analytical value), then studies of colonial discourse, written from the center, must be a very partial window on the workings of colonialism. The discipline of geography has responded to postcolonial thought in a variety of ways (Clayton 2003). Among others, studies of colonialism itself have come into vogue, most of them written in Britain, a few from the edges of empire. I am struck by how much the character of these studies has been influenced by the locations of their authors. Consider, for example, two recent books by historical geographers: Felix Driver’s Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire (2000), and Frank Tough’s ‘‘As Their Natural Resources Fail’’: Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870–1930 (1996). From opposite perspectives, they treat a fairly similar period of British colonialism. Driver analyzes the culture of exploration, particularly the sites and nature of its production and consumption—as at the Royal Geographical Society. His is a study of the ways in which the British imperial mind, both popular and academic, processed explorers’ information. Tough’s work is embedded in the materiality of a declining fur trade in the northern Manitoba bush. It deals with forts and trade routes; with economies and survival strategies as a twohundred-year-old system of commercial capital vacated the region; and with native livelihoods found in a precarious balance between what remained of a hunting, fishing, and gathering economy and intermittent employment in uncertain industrial resource economies. Each is an authentic study, yet they have little to say to each other, and this is basically, I think, because one is written from London, the heart of an empire, and the other from the Canadian Shield, one of its many colonial margins. At least, as Derek Gregory has put it, ‘‘what seemed plausible in the lecture hall of the Royal Geographical Society in London . . . might well become a half truth on the ground’’ (1998, 21). The distinction, perhaps, is between studies of imperialism and of colonialism: imperialism ideologically driven from the center and susceptible to conceptual analysis, colonialism a set of activities on the periphery that are revealed as practice (Young 2001, 16–17). Only a few geographers have tried to bring both the imperial mind and the particularities of local colonial circumstances into focus (e.g., Clayton 2000 and Lester 2001). But if the aim is to understand colonialism rather than the workings of the imperial mind, then it would seem essential to investigate the sites where colonialism was actually practiced. Its effects were displayed there. The strategies and tactics on which it relied were actualized there. There, in the detail of colonial dispossessions and repossessions, the relative weight of different agents of colonial power may begin to be assessed. If colonialism is the object of investigation, then Tough’s sparse Canadian Shield is promising terrain. It was not detached from London, of course, and may have been profoundly influenced by elements of imperial thought and culture, but the extent of this influence cannot be ascertained in London. Rather, I think, one needs to study the colonial site itself, assess the displacements that took place there, and seek to account for them. To do so is to position studies of colonialism in the actuality and materiality of colonial experience. As that experience comes into focus, its principal causes are to be assessed, among which may well be something like the culture of imperialism. To proceed the other way around is to impose a form of intellectual imperialism on the study of colonialism, a tendency to which the postcolonial literature inclines. The experienced materiality of colonialism is grounded, as many have noted, in dispossessions and repossessions of land. Even Edward Said (for all his emphasis on literary texts) described the essence of colonialism this way: ‘‘Underlying social space are territories, land, geographical domains, the actual geographical underpinnings of the imperial, and also the cultural contest. To think about distant places, to colonize them, to populate or depopulate them: all of this occurs on, about, or because of land. The actual geographical possession of land is what empire in the final analysis is all about’’ (1994, 78). Frantz Fanon held that colonialism created a world ‘‘divided into compartments,’’ a ‘‘narrow world strewn with prohibitions,’’ a ‘‘world without spaciousness.’’ He maintained that a close examination of ‘‘this system of compartments’’ would ‘‘reveal the lines of force it implies.’’ Moreover, ‘‘this approach to the colonial world, its ordering and its geographical layout will allow us to mark out the lines on which a decolonized society will be reorganized’’ (1963, 37–40). Along the edge of empire that was early-modern British Columbia, colonialism’s‘‘geographical layout’’ was primarily expressed in a reserve (reservation) system that allocated a small portion of the land to native people and opened the rest for development. Native people were in the way, their land was coveted, and settlers took it. The line between the reserves and the rest—between the land set aside for the people who had lived there from time immemorial and land made available in various tenures to immigrants— became the primary line on the map of British Columbia. Eventually, there were approximately 1,500 small reserves, slightly more than a third of 1 percent of the land of the province. Native people had been placed in compartments by an aggressive settler society that, like others of its kind, was far more interested in native land than in the surplus value of native labor (Wolfe 1999, 1–3). Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the scale of dispossession. At these sites of colonial dispossession, it seems particularly fruitful to ask by what means it came about. The common emphasis in the colonial discourse literature is reversed. By starting not with texts, language, and strategies of representation, but with the dispossession of colonized peoples of their land— with, as it were, Figures 1 and 2—the relative weight of different colonial powers is not prejudged, and the question becomes simply: how was colonial power deployed to achieve this geographical effect? Rather than writing from the imperial center, rather than investigating colonial subtexts within a particular category of texts, the analysis turns on the primary effect of a particular settler colonialism and on the gamut of colonial powers that facilitated it. So situated, the distinctive roles of different components of the colonial arsenal should begin to come into focus (including maps like Figures 1 and 2). The cultural discourse of colonialism should begin to be contextualized, and some basis should be established for the evaluation of salience. Moreover, different theoretical points of attachment should come into focus, and it should be possible to sketch the work that particular bodies of theory accomplish. This article is a rather schematic attempt to undertake such an analysis and, on that basis, to offer some preliminary conclusions. In a recent book on the reserve system in British Columbia (Harris 2002), I provide more texture for those who wish it. Yet the very starkness of an article that surveys an array of colonial powers may serve to emphasize my argument and encourage the discussion of the relationships among different forms of colonial power— and of different ways of theorizing them—out of which, I think, a more balanced geographical contribution to the study of colonialism is likely to emerge. I deal with British Columbia while assuming that my arguments bear, to some fair extent, on other theaters of settler colonialism. The Power to Dispassess The problem of reserves in British Columbia arose with the establishment of colonies and settlers some 70 years after people of European background began to frequent its coastal waters. After commercial capital reached the coast in the 1780s and 1790s, and the interior in the first decade of the 19th century, trade became the basis of the relationship between natives and nonnatives. The relationship was frequently mediated by violence, sexual liaisons of various sorts, and cross-cultural borrowing, but land was not at issue. Except for the few acres within their palisaded forts and, in some cases, a little land beyond for a farm or two, traders did not need it. For their purposes, it was sufficient to insert a handful of outsiders in ships or forts into native space. But a territory had become known to the outside world, and its outline had been mapped. In French sociologist Bruno Latour’s terms, such ‘‘inscriptions’’ were transported to distant ‘‘centers of calculation’’ (1987, ch. 6). Sketchy information about a distant corner of North America was processed, thousands of miles from its source, within complex calculuses of diplomatic ambition, ideology, cultural stereotypes, and raw geopolitical power (Clayton 2000). Spain relinquished any claim to sovereignty along the north Pacific coast in 1795. Britain and the United States contended much longer, an intricate diplomacy at times verging onwar thatwas settled only in 1846 when the border between British North America and the United States was extended along the 49th parallel to the Pacific. This agreement, the Oregon Treaty, was a legal understanding between distant governments ‘‘respecting the sovereignty and government of the territory on the northwest coast of America.’’ It did not mention native people. In the eyes of the governments involved, the issue of sovereignty was settled. Three years later, in response to the American settlement of Oregon and the news of gold in California, the British government established the proprietary colony of Vancouver Island. Then, in 1858, following a rush of underemployed miners from California to the Fraser River, it established the crown colony of British Columbia. As Daniel Clayton puts it, ‘‘native space was reproduced as an absolute space of British sovereignty,’’ (2000, 236) although initially, in the aftermath of the Treaty of Waitangi and judicial rulings in New Zealand, officials in the Colonial Office were uncertain about the extent to which British sovereignty in these colonies was burdened by native title (Harris 2002, 15–16). With the creation of these two colonies, land was framed in a new problematic. Colonies entailed settlers, and settlers required land, which could be got only by dispossessing native people. A relationship based on trade was replaced by one based on land. As their land was taken away, native people had to be put somewhere. A solution with many precedents in other settler colonies was to put them on reserves. Dispossession began in the 1850s and continued through the rest of the century. Physical violence, the imperial state, colonial culture, and self-interest all underlay it. Violence. The establishment of colonies on Vancouver Island and the mainland changed the nature of violence there. It had long accompanied the fur trades. Coastal trading ships bristled with arms, greed was rampant on both sides, cross-cultural misunderstandings were frequent, and killing was the common result (Clayton 2000, ch. 6; Gibson 1992, 163, 170). In the interior, an axiom of the land-based fur trade was that perceived assaults on the personnel or property of the traders would be met with quick, spectacular displays of violence—sovereign power in the Foucaultian sense, though without a validating regime of rights (Harris 1997, ch. 2). Nor was the gold rush peaceable. Miners arrived with the latest weaponry (including six-shooters and spiral-bored rifles) and tactics of Indian fighting worked out in the American southwest. At the first sign of trouble, they organized themselves into companies, elected officers, and advanced in paramilitary formation. But with the creation of settler colonies, a new level of organization and calculation—the British military—was built into the equation of violence (Gough 1984). British warships operated along the coast; a detachment of Royal Engineers was sent out to survey land and maintain order. Such power was more often displayed than used—a few quick and very public hangings of suspected murderers after summary trials on the quarterdeck of one of Her Majesty’s warships, or a few villages shelled and destroyed—spectacles intended to instill fear. Officials considered such power ‘‘a grand persuasive.’’ Some held that it saved lives by preventing settler–native wars. Frequently, they judged it sufficient to anchor a warship just off a native village and ostentatiously prepare the guns. In the interior, the space beyond the reach of a ship’s guns, the military equation was more balanced. In the 1870s, as settlers were moving in and preempting land, many natives leaders talked of war. Settlers feared, perhaps with justification, that a native uprising could wipe all of them out in a single night. But, as the chiefs knew, a shortterm victory was one thing; keeping at bay settlers and the armies that, sooner or later, would back them up was quite another. The results of wars across the border in which native warriors (some from British Columbia) had fought federal U.S. troops, was evidence in hand. Those who counseled war did so out of desperation. One chief put it this way: ‘‘A war with the white man will end in our destruction, but death in war is not so bad as death by starvation’’ (cited in Harris 2002, 206). Overall, the balance of physical power lay overwhelmingly with the state. The imperial state. From the vantage point of London, Vancouver Island and British Columbia were two remote and relatively inconsequential colonies. Imperial attention focused, rather, on India and Ireland. After the advent of free trade in 1846, the role of settler colonies in the imperial scheme of things had become increasingly murky. Earl Grey, secretary of state for the colonies when the colony of Vancouver Island was created, held that colonies returned important image value for a great power and also that the honor of the crown required it to protect British settlers overseas (who had chosen to settle within the British empire) and also to protect native people from settlers who, left to their own devices, would probably exterminate them (Grey 1853, vol. 1, letter 1). Yet the coffers of the Lords of the Treasury opened reluctantly for honor, and British settler colonies around the world were expected to support themselves. Moreover, the duty of the crown to protect native people from settlers conflicted with the Colonial Office’s growing willingness to accord responsible government. As liberal humanitarian sentiments about the essential oneness of human kind and the opportunity to create a world of civilized, Christian people faded, responsible government came to dominate protection in Colonial Office thought (Metcalf 1996; Porter 1999). In settler colonies, where access to land was the predominant issue, only a hollow form of responsible government would exclude land policy from colonial jurisdiction. In effect, by the late 1840s and 1850s, the Colonial Office had no clear, consistent native policy. As a result, when the colony of Vancouver Island was created, it was readily inclined to turn over the management of native people to the Hudson’s Bay Company (which, it thought, had handled them much better than the Americans) and to rely on the judgment of the fur trader-cum-governor (George Douglas), who managed both colonies until his retirement in 1864. Thereafter, land policies were formulated by local settler politicians. The Colonial Office hardly interfered, and in 1871 when BritishColumbia became a Canadian province, land policy, now constitutionally a provincial responsibility within the Canadian confederation, remained in the hands of these same politicians. The state created a framework for the ordered development of a settler society, but did not, itself, provide the momentum for the development of that society or for the dispossessions and repossessions of land that accompanied it. When power passed to local politicians, they reflected the values and interests of their constituents. Culture. The assumptions about the colonized other analyzed in the colonial discourse literature were pervasive in early modern British Columbia. Hardly a white person questioned the distinction between civilization and savagery or the association of the former with Europeans and the latter with native people. Nor did they question the proposition that civilized people knew how to use land properly and that savages did not. From these assumptions it followed that until Europeans arrived, most of the land was waste, or, where native people were obviously using it, that their uses were inadequate. Nor was there room for alternative understandings of civilized modernity. Rather, thought about native people focused on a simple binary: civilization and savagery with little of consequence between. From this it followed that if native people did not become civilized, and if, in a changing world, it was no longer possible for them to be savage, then they would die out, a common prediction in British Columbia well into the 20th century. These social constructions were assumed, not debated. They pervaded thought about native people in the Colonial Office, in political, administrative, legal, and missionary circles in British Columbia, and in the settler mind. An Indian reserve commissioner, charged with laying out reserves, said this to a native audience on Vancouver Island in 1876: Many years ago you were in darkness killing each other and making slaves was your trade. The Land was of no value to you. The trees were of no value to you. The Coal was of no value to you. The white man came he improved the land you can follow his example—he cuts the trees and pays you to help him. He takes the coal out of the ground and he pays you to help him—you are improving fast. The Government protects you, you are rich—You live in peace and have everything you want. —(cited in Harris 2002, 108) At the time, few if any white settlers would have disagreed. There were arguments about how quickly native people could be assimilated and, therefore, about how much land should be allocated to them. Some settlers, biological racists to the core, considered natives utterly lazy, degenerate, and unredeemable; but a few found much to appreciate or pity in native lives, were well disposed toward native people nearby, and now and then supported their pleas for more reserve land. But even kindness— tinged by an educated, romantic appreciation of nature and, therefore, of lives assumed to live close to nature— was situated within the assumptions of the civilization/ savage binary. So was salvage anthropology, which in the influential presence of Franz Boas reached the coast late in the 19th century, there intent upon recovering the uncontaminated primitive condition. Boas had little interest in the native societies around him(which, he thought, were becoming civilized), except insofar as they supplied informants about earlier, precontact times. These values had not been invented in British Columbia. As a considerable literature has shown (e.g., Seed 1995; Hulme and Jordanova 1990; Buckle 1991; Arneil 1996), some of them were as old as the European connection with the New World and had surfaced in the first European theorizing about their rights there by the Spanish theologian Francisco de Vitoria in the 1530s, or by the Dutch legal theorist Hugo Grotius a century later. They were powerfully and influentially elaborated by John Locke ([1690] 1947, ch. 5) in his labor theory of property. Locke held that God’s gift of land to Adam and his posterity acquired value only as labor was expended on it, and that labor justified individual property rights. Those who did not labor on the land wandered over what Locke called unassisted nature, land that yielded little and lay in common. This, he thought, was the condition of America before European settlers arrived. The land was ‘‘a wild common of Nature,’’ the original condition of the world before labor was expended on land and benefits accrued therefrom. Hence his famous dictum: ‘‘In the beginning, all the world was America.’’ In all the early settler colonies, ordinary (frequently illiterate) settlers—people who had never heard of Vitoria, Grotius, or Locke—held unsophisticated versions of these views. By the mid-19th century, these old and pervasive ideas were powerfully reinforced by an increasingly strident racism and the achievements of industrial production. These years were the high water mark of ‘‘scientific’’ racism. The ideas of phrenologists, craniometricians, and polygenesists were in the air, and after Darwin’s The Origin of Species (published in 1859), it could be argued that, even if humans shared a common origin, there had been ample time for evolution to take different courses and produce different peoples. The very achievements of industrial society were the measure, it seemed, of an evolutionary advantage. The lurid tales of the massacres of English women and children at Morant Bay in Jamaica, or, later, at Lucknow and Cawnpore during the Indian Mutiny, confirmed in many minds the absurdity of treating natives as the equal of whites. Such judgments reached British Columbia. Even more important, I think, as the historian Michael Adas has pointed out, was the growing technological gulf between Europe and the rest of the world and the tangible measure it provided of the disjunction between civilization and savagery (Adas 1989). European weaponry and military discipline had made conquest relatively easy (Headrick 1981). Contrasts between Europeans and others seemed obvious: machine power versus animal or human power, progress versus stagnation, science versus superstition. The whole material paraphernalia of European modernity was a tangible yardstick of superiority, and the idea of progress, conceived in these material terms, was in the air as never before. Moreover, as the historian Mark Francis has shown, if civilization and progress came to be equated with technology and material wealth, then a measurable standard had been invented that native people could not attain (Francis 1998). They could be mannered, but they could not match European technologies or material wealth. Nor did they have the Europeans’ growing ability to dominate nature, another measure of progress. People who marked the land lightly and lived within the rhythms of nature were obviously unprogressive and backward. If civilization were measured in these terms, then native societies must be savage. For British Columbians of European background, the conclusion was obvious, and the rhetoric surrounding civilization, savagery, and unused land awaiting development was pervasive and uncontested.

### Kuokkanen—Consequentialism/FW

#### Decolonizing the academy from within debate is impossible without taking responsibility for debate’s dialogical form. Simply theorizing indigenous perspectives is not enough—contextualizing those perspectives to particular demands, defending their consequences, and submitting them to oppositional testing are all prerequisites to decolonial praxis.

Kuokkanen, 10—Assistant Professor in Political Science and Aboriginal Studies at the University of Toronto, Sámi (Rauna, “The Responsibility of the Academy: A Call for Doing Homework,” Journal of Curriculum Theory Vol. 26, Iss. 3, (2010): 61-74, dml)

It is important to note that when we talk about indigenous peoples' relationship with their lands, it is not a question of whether an individual may or may not have a relationship with her or his environment. Obviously, it is important to distinguish between a philosophy or a worldview and individual thinking and behaviour which may not always reflect or comply with the former. Moreover, my intention here is not to evoke the stereotype of 'ecological Indian' or any other variety of the Noble Savage, but to consider how certain aspects of indigenous life philosophies can inform our rethinking the notion of responsibility and how that could be applied in endeavours aimed at decolonizing and transforming the hegemonic academy characterized by sanctioned epistemic ignorance. In the context of rapid corporatization of the academy, there is a pressing need to envision alternatives that oppose the destructive agendas affecting all of us. The pervasive nature of neoliberal corporate mentality is also reflected in the (willy-nilly) adoption of its values such as the externalization of social responsibility by many academics. It seems that the ethos and values of corporations and consumer culture are increasingly influencing the academy. In the former, social responsibility is considered a distortion of business principles (Bakan, 2004, p. 35), whereas in the latter, "we are actively prevented from exercising care and living in ecologically-embedded and responsible ways" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 16). As a result, we have academics, including many 'revolutionary scholars,' who prefer to point fingers rather than start examining their own roles in espousing new forms of social responsibility. As Grande (2004) contends: In this context, the voices of indigenous and other non-Western peoples become increasingly vital, not because such peoples categorically possess any kind of magical, mystical power to fix countless generations of abuse and neglect, but because non-Western peoples and nations exist as living critiques of the dominant culture, providing critique-al knowledge and potentially transformative paradigms. (p. 65) What is more, elaborating a different logic-that of the gift-in and for contemporary contexts is different from the trend of evoking (often undefined) 'traditions' and formulating action plans grounded on cultural authenticity, nationalism or separatism. An uncritical reinscription of tradition is problematic for many reasons but particularly because of the real dangers of further excluding already marginalized groups such as indigenous women (Green, 2004; LaRocque, 1997). However, the reality is that contemporary indigenous peoples generally continue to be culturally, socially, economically and spiritually more directly dependent on their lands and surrounding natural environments. This thinking is still a central part of indigenous philosophies while for many other peoples, this previously existing connection and relationship with the physical surroundings started to erode generations ago as a result of modernization, colonization and other developments since the Renaissance and Enlightenment which continue today in the form of neocolonialism and patriarchal global capitalism. In cultures and societies that foreground reciprocity, individuals are brought up with an understanding and expectation of acting for others. In other words, the notion of responsibility is an integral part of being human and an inseparable part of one's identity. Armstrong (1996), an Okanagan writer and educator, articulates her identity and thus, her responsibilities, as follows: I know the mountains, and by birth, the river is my responsibility: They are part of me. I cannot be separated from my place or my land. When I introduce myself to my own people in my own language, I describe these things because it tells them what my responsibilities are and what my goal is. (p. 461) By recognizing her responsibilities, Armstrong knows her location and her role in her community; in short, she knows who she is. This notion of responsibility stems from a perception of interrelatedness of all life forms-that it is her responsibility to ensure the well-being of the mountains and river because it is directly related to her personal as well as to her community's well-being. Nuu-chah-nulth hereditary whaling chief and the founding Chair of the World Council of Whalers, Happynook (2000), elaborates this understanding as follows: When we talk about indigenous cultural practices we are in fact talking about responsibilities that have evolved into unwritten tribal laws over millennia. These responsibilities and laws are directly tied to nature and are a product of the slow integration of cultures within their environment and the ecosystems. Thus, the environment is not a place of divisions but rather a place of relations, a place where cultural diversity and bio-diversity are not separate but in fact need each other. (n.p.)4 In western philosophical tradition, responsibility is considered a complex concept discussed and theorized by numerous scholars. Gasché (1995), for example, argues that "[t]here is perhaps no theme more demanding than that of 'responsibility'" (p. 227). A normative definition in this tradition views responsibility "as a mechanical application of a framework of rules that simultaneously relieves the subject of the onus of decision and, hence, of all liability" (Gasché, 1995, p. 227). On the other hand, however, responsibility implies a responsible response which can take place "only if the decision is truly a decision, not a mechanical reaction to, or an effect of, a determinate cause" (Gasché, 1995, p. 227). Gasché (1995) further notes that considering responsibility involves a number of risks and thus, "[a] responsible discourse on responsibility can indeed only assert itself in the mode of a 'perhaps'" (p. 228). For Heidegger, responsibility is "a response to which one commits oneself" (as cited in Gasché, 1995, p. 228). This idea of responsiveness or respondence is further explicated by Spivak whose notion of responsibility reflects Bakhtin's articulation of 'answerability.'6 Spivak (1994) proposes that response: involves not only 'respond to,' as in 'give an answer to,' but also the related situations of 'answering to,' as in being responsible for a name (this brings up the question of the relationship between being responsible for/to ourselves and for/to others); of being answerable...( p. 22) Responsibility signifies the act of response which completes the transaction of speaker and listener, as well as the ethical stance of making discursive space for the 'other' to exist. For Spivak, "ethics are not just a problem of knowledge but a call to a relationship" (Spivak, Landry, & Maclean, 1996, p. 5). If responsibility cannot be merely mechanical expectation to answer, what does it mean, then, to call for a willingness to give a response and for ability to response (i.e., response-ability)? Responsibility necessitates knowledge. It requires knowing how to respond but also act in a responsible manner. Derrida (1992) suggests that "not knowing, having neither a sufficient knowledge or consciousness of what being responsible means, is of itself a lack of responsibility" (p. 25). If knowledge is a prerequisite for responsibility, ignorance presents a serious threat to responsible, response-able behaviour and thinking. Moreover, responsibility demands action: If it is true that the concept of responsibility has, in the most reliable continuity of its history, always implied involvement in action, doing, a praxis, a decision that exceeds simple conscience or simple theoretical understanding, it is also true that the same concept requires a decision or responsible action to answer for itself consciously, that is, with knowledge of a thematics of what is done, of what action signifies, its causes, ends, etc. (Derrida, 1992, p. 25) Responsibility as action beyond theorizing poses a possibility of an interruption: "there is no responsibility without a dissident and inventive rupture with respect to tradition, authority, orthodoxy, rule, or doctrine" (Derrida, 1992, p. 27). Responsibility as a rupture of tradition may sound at odds with indigenous perceptions and practices of responsibility which emphasize the continuance of tradition. However, no tradition is static, remaining unchanged throughout history, as indigenous people also repeatedly stress, particularly when confronted by irresponsible demands for authenticity. There has always been a rupture, both inventive (usually from within) and intrusive, and interventionist (usually from without).6 In the context of the academy, responsibility with an inventive rupture implies, first and foremost, the ability of interrupting the self, of moving beyond the 'I' as the ethical subject (Derrida, 1997, p. 52). Although the academy is prone to list its responsibilities in its lofty vision statements and to call for the responsibilities of students and researchers, we frequently witness the unwillingness of the institution itself to respond, to be answerable and take action. Instead of opening up toward the other, the representatives who feel implicated become defensive or remain silent. As Derrida notes in the above quote, responsibility links consciousness with conscience. It is inadequate to merely know one's responsibilities; one also has to be conscious of the consequences of one's actions. Without conscience, there is a risk of the arrogance of a 'clean conscience.' Derrida further calls for "new ways of taking responsibility" in the academy which are critical of the professionalization of the university (Derrida, 1983). These new ways would signify rethinking the university institution, examining its disciplinary structures and in particular, "a new way of educating students that will prepare them to undertake new analyses" (Derrida, 1983, p. 16). Moreover, Derrida (1983) notes: New responsibilities cannot be purely academic. If they remain extremely difficult to assume, extremely precarious and threatened, it is because they must at once keep alive the memory of a tradition and make an opening beyond any program, that is, toward what is called the future. ( p. 16)

### Reed—Reappropriating Sovereignty Good—2AC

#### Strategic reappropriation of sovereignty is an essential part of decolonization.

Reed, 14—Vassar College (Kaitlin, “We Are Salmon People: Constructing Yurok Sovereignty in the Klamath Basin,” <https://digitalwindow.vassar.edu/senior_capstone/304/>, dml)

The problem of the political is also especially relevant in understanding the construction of Yurok sovereignty broadly, and resource conflict in the Klamath Basin more specifically. The concept of sovereignty, when used in an indigenous context, “signif[ies] a multiplicity of legal and social rights to political, economic, and cultural self-determination” (Barker 1). Sovereignty is portrayed by both American and tribal governments as the paved road toward autonomy and self-determination, a means of economic prosperity and the ability to enforce rights over land, water and other resources (Wilkinson, 2005: xiii). Indeed, it is rather indisputable that sovereignty, as a discourse and mode of pressing political claims, has brought tangible and material benefits to tribal communities (Barker 18; Alfred 39). Yurok sovereignty is utilized as means to protect the Klamath River and its salmon; as noted above, sovereignty frames the constitution and exercise of authority, including authority over water.

Often portrayed as a stand-in attempting to represent all indigenous rights (Barker 1), “sovereignty as a discourse is unable to capture fully the indigenous meanings, perspectives, and identities about law, governance, and culture, and thus over time it impacts how those epistemologies and perspectives are represented” (19). The continual (re)production of sovereignty holds the potential to permeate indigenous forms of governance and thereby change the very relation indigenous peoples hold with the land. This is particularly pertinent for indigenous communities because relationships with the land and resource stewardship are fundamental components of an indigenous sovereignty (Tsosie 1302). Native peoples are tied to the land in ways Western thinkers often cannot understand (Champagne 7; Deloria, 1973: 1). The land itself is sacred; Native epistemologies and worldviews are predicated on an ability to live and care for the land they occupy (LaDuke, 2005: 189). And thus, the ability to protect the vitality of natural resources -- understood as gifts from the Creator -- is paramount in the assertion of an indigenous sovereignty (Fenelon 112).

With notions of land in mind, the processes of exclusion and drawing boundaries become evident in discourses of sovereignty. Indeed,

One of the major problems in the indigenous sovereignty movement is that its leaders must qualify and rationalize their goals by modifying the sovereignty concept...[which] itself implies a set of values and objectives that put it in direct opposition to the values and objectives found in most traditional indigenous philosophies. (Alfred 43).

Alfred is articulating constructions of epistemological boundaries wherein indigenous relationships to land and resources are not adequately represented within discourses of sovereignty. What is at stake is not only our connection to the land, the very essence of indigeneity, but the unique tribal identity defining indigenous peoples since time immemorial. Indeed, when “sovereignty [is] treated as unitary, pre-formed universals” (Lindner 13), it aims to standardize hundreds of very diverse groups of indigenous people. Alfred argues that “the actual history of our plural existence has been erased by the narrow fictions of a single sovereignty” (33). And thus, it becomes increasingly important for alternative narratives to be shared. The point, therefore, is that 'Native American' is not a unified body with a common governance structures; nor should individual tribes be expected to conform to structures of Western governance (Tsosie 1307).

Western constructions of sovereignty, however, can be (and have been) resisted and refashioned by indigenous peoples. Indeed,

'Native sovereignty' – is founded on an ideology of indigenous nationalism and a rejection of the models of government rooted in European cultural values. It is an uneven process of reinstituting systems that promote the goals and reinforce the values of indigenous cultures, against the constant effort of the Canadian and United States governments to maintain the systems of dominance imposed on indigenous communities during the last century. (Alfred 40)

Indeed, though the ‘colonial stench’ of sovereignty is problematic, that is not to say it cannot be a useful tool for indigenous peoples. Though the colonial term ‘sovereignty’ is “incomplete, inaccurate, and troubled...it has...been rearticulated to mean something altogether by indigenous peoples” (Barker 26). And what that something else means must always be tribally specific.

Essentially, sovereignty in and of itself is a colonial tool. But -- like Native writers' use of English in storytelling -- can be reappropriated to represent another reality altogether and utilized to reconstruct meaning. Indigenous scholars have articulated the problematic origins of the term, yet also the benefits it has brought. Simultaneously, however, some scholars disown the concept as an appropriate political objective. And thus, it is helpful to examine Yurok notions of sovereignty in the context of the political. The Yuroks' entrance into a Western political framework, however, must not be read as an abandonment of culture or traditional forms of governance. Rather, the construction and assertion of Yurok sovereignty was in response to the creation of an unbalanced society over the past century -- a society that depends upon environmental exploitation to function. Yurok sovereignty, therefore, will be understood in this context as a means in which to negotiate with larger governing structures; a means in which to legitimize sought after authority; and ultimately, one of the last remaining options available to protect their ways of life. Ironically, sovereignty will be essential in the larger decolonization project unfolding across the continent.

### Rosenow—Ontology Wrong

#### Sweeping theories of radical indigenous ontological difference ignore the nuances of actual struggles that strategically repurpose settler categories

Rosenow, 19—Senior Lecturer in International Relations at Oxford Brookes University (Doerthe, “Decolonising the Decolonisers? Of Ontological Encounters in the GMO Controversy and Beyond,” Global Society, 33:1, 82-99, dml)

Despite the force and importance of this argument, I have felt slightly uneasy when reading those conclusions. Focusing on radical ontological difference can easily lead to a romanticised reification of other peoples’ difference that is in danger of ignoring actual political struggles and demands on the ground. As Cusicanqui argues, those struggles might very well emerge out of an “indigenous modernity”, rather than an insistence on the right to one’s difference. By this she means that some Indigenous people aim to formulate a hegemonic vision for how to structure a society that is valid for everyone (Indigenous AND non-Indigenous): they work for a society that is in their “image and likeness”, and to use modern notions such as “citizenship” for this purpose, rather than rejecting the latter as irreconcilable with one’s own world.39 By contrast, some North American Indigenous intellectuals call for an Indigenous “resurgence” that, rather than seeking hegemony, altogether turns away from seeking recognition by wider (colonial) “society”. As Leanne Betasamosake Simpson points out, in such “resurgent mobilization … there is virtually no room for white people”. 40 But my unease was also emerging from something else, which is what I want to focus on in this article: the problem that encounters and conflicts are yet again made sense of within overarching structures of knowledge production rather than cultivation (despite the intention to do otherwise). As de la Cadena herself makes clear in the quotation above, what is encountered as “different” is inevitably described “in forms that I could understand” (my emphasis)—even whilst simultaneously recognising that one’s description does not capture what the encountered practices actually do. Sense-making, for de la Cadena, takes place at what could be called two levels: At a first level, there is the inevitable process of making sense of an alienating affective experience on the spot, from within one’s own framework of understanding the world. At a second level, then, de la Cadena attempts to make legible her grappling and not-understanding in the context of a book for an academically literate and interested audience—in other words, in the writing-up of her ethnographic research. In Rojas’ and Blaney and Tickner’s case, given that their articles do not aim to make an empirical contribution, sense-making takes place at what could be called a third level: what is drawn upon is the understanding that emerged out of the ethnographic work of others, which is brought into conversation with various bodies of theoretical work in order to make a conceptual contribution. This takes place via the coining of central concepts and the outlining of all-encompassing frameworks that are meant to help us understand the analytical, normative and political consequences of their argument for scholarly work more broadly. The ontological encounters of others are used to delineate the merits of ontological encounters in general, in IR and beyond. This objective leads to a particular way of developing and structuring a generic argument that makes it difficult to move beyond sense-making frameworks that are necessarily geared towards settling all those unsettling and disconcerting experiences that were the focus of the articles in the first place. This is also the problem of some central decolonial work. Drawing on Edouard Glissant, Mignolo, for example, critiques the “requirement of transparency” that forms the basis for understanding in Western social science scholarship. He argues for the “right to opacity” of those located on the other side of the colonial difference.41 But this claim sits at odds with his simultaneous desire to write a new, all-encompassing history of “the modern/colonial world system”. 42 And like in Rojas’ and Blaney and Tickner’s articles, terms such as “pluriversality”43 or “diversality”44 are coined in order to have a (one!) concept for a similarly all-encompassing solution to domination. While de la Cadena is critical of her own “anxiety to understand coherently (with which I meant clearly and without contradiction”), and while she points out how this “was often out of place”, 45 Mignolo as well as Rojas and Blaney and Tickner seek to place such anxiety in yet another coherent framework that holds everything together. The question arises whether this can be any different in scholarly work that is not directly based on ethnographic research itself, and which can therefore not lay claim to a direct experience of ontological controversies. This has become an important question for my own (likewise third-level) work on anti-GMO activism. My work to date has primarily aimed at making a conceptual contribution, and has relied on a conversation between the ethnographic research of others and various bodies of conceptual work, including decolonial and “ontological turn” literature.46 But as I have already indicated in relation to de la Cadena’s work, when writing up their research for academic purposes, even those who have directly experienced ontological encounters find it hard to resist the tendency to conclude their work with stringent, overarching, coherent conclusions that the Westerneducated reader can grasp and “take home”. In the next section, I will draw on two anthropological ethnographic texts that are significant for research on the GMO controversy to show how this works. The two texts that will be analysed in the next section engage with the GMO controversy in Paraguay and Mexico respectively, and they have stood out for me in the way they manage to convey a sense of unease and grappling with ontological encounters and conflicts. However, as the next section will show, they as well end up providing a framework and conclusions that can accommodate and make sense of the encountered ontological difference. 3. Ontological Encounters in the GMO Controversy According to Susana Carro-Ripalda and Marta Astier, much of the research that is carried out in relation to the question of what smallholder producers in the Global South truly think of (and say about) agricultural biotechnology is unable to grasp the “ontological incompatibility” that exists between the experienced human/nonhuman relations in small-scale agriculture on the one hand, and the logic that underlies genetic engineering (GE) on the other.47 This is precisely because most social research is itself grounded in the crucial modern/colonial nature-culture divide: the former can only be known through scientific means, while the latter can be known through the study of social/cultural/political practices. Knowledge about nature is about establishing “facts”, which are either true or false (i.e. nature as “one” is either correctly or incorrectly represented), while knowledge about culture is about studying meaning, which is necessarily (due to the existence of different cultures) multiple. The question of whether GMOs do or do not pose a “factual” danger consequently lies outside of the remit of the social sciences, which therefore focus on the social dimension of statements that are made about nature. But as Kregg Hetherington’s reflections on his own anthropological research journey in Paraguay make clear, this tacit signing-up to modern ontology can lead to difficulties in understanding the reality of the people one is interested in.48 Coming from a position in which he took for granted the scientific distinction between (proven) “fact” and “error”, Hetherington explains how he “translate[d]” the claims of the leader of a local peasant movement49 (Antonio) about the truth of (GM) soy “killer beans” into something else: Until this point, I had approached ethnography as an extended discussion with and about humans, and I was less interested in beans than I was with what Antonio said about them … To be blunt, Antonio kept pointing at the beans, and I kept looking at him … I was comfortable saying that this was a figure of speech, a kind of political rhetoric, or even to claim that this is what Antonio believed, all of which explicitly framed ‘la soja mata’ (soy kills) as data for social analysis, rather than analysis itself worthy of response.50 However, Hetherington points out that not believing in the truth of the killer bean did not prevent him from “participating in Antonio’s knowledge practices”. 51 Becoming involved in the anti-soy bean activism of the peasants, Hetherington became “part of the situation” that made the killer bean turn into a crucial agent in a court case that was brought against two soy farmers for the murder of two activist peasants. As a result, killer beans became transformed into a matter of national concern. Crucially for Hetherington, participation involved more than joining the situation in spite of his lack of belief: it led to him becoming immersed in a relation with both peasants and beans that started to have a physical impact on him—in de la Cadena’s words, he indeed became “partially connected”: 52 Beans didn’t scare me at first. Indeed, as a foreigner to the situation that gives rise to killer beans (a Canadian no less), giant fields of soy were a familiar, even a comforting sight. But it took only a few months with Antonio for me to start feeling the menace from those fields. Soon, the sweetish smell of glyphosate, recently applied, and especially the corpselike smell of 2, 4-D mixed with Tordon, could ruin my appetite and make me expect to see people emerge from their homes to show me pustules on their legs and stomachs.53 Similar observations are also found in Carro-Ripalda and Astier’s contribution to the 2014 Agriculture and Human Values symposium on the challenges of making smallholder producer voices being heard in relation to agricultural biotechnology.54 While most of the contributions to the symposium concentrate on how to tease out smallholders’ “real” voices in the most effective way, Carro-Ripalda and Astier critically reflect on their own perceived failure to become knowledgeable about smallholders’ voices in their research on GM maize cultivation in Mexico. It was through ethnographic fieldwork in rural areas in Central Mexico, in-depth structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation and, finally, a National Workshop in Mexico City with over 50 stakeholders (including smallholder producers) that Carro-Ripalda and Astier attempted to get a better sense of what the actual voices of peasants in the GM controversy were trying to convey.55 However, particularly the final workshop, which aimed to create conditions under which Mexican smallholder producers could speak on their own terms about GM maize cultivation, “unwittingly reproduced the conditions of exclusive, techno-scientific and regulatory spaces”. 56 The public discourse that centres on questions of safety, science, possibilities of regulation and problems of potential contamination, and which is upheld by both GM maize proponents and antiGMO activists, dominated the workshop debate. Even when present smallholders raised different concerns, the discussion always returned to the previous, main ones, as if those who had spoken differently “had not spoken at all”. The way that smallholders could articulate “their perceptions, ideas, and desires” was thereby “severely limited”. 57 Carro-Ripalda and Astier are focused on the dominance of one particular (techno-scientific, regulatory) discourse that, they maintain, disabled smallholder voices engaged in different discourses from speaking up or, when speaking, from being heard. In other words, smallholders were unable to adequately represent their own understanding of what is at stake in the GM maize controversy in Mexico. Considering what I have pointed out in the previous section, based on Rojas, difference is thereby transformed into an epistemological, rather than an ontological one: Carro-Ripalda and Astier’s argument is implicitly based on the assumption that, under the right conditions, difference can be translated into something that can be communicated to, and discussed with, other stakeholders. But the term “ontological incompatibility” that the authors themselves use indicates there is something else at play, which cannot easily be translated: the nature of the relation of smallholder producers to their “land, seed, crop, climate … as told and understood by themselves”; the “central place” that Maize continues to occupy in Mesoamerican pre-Hispanic cosmology, and “the social and cultural significance” that goes along with that.58 Carro-Ripalda and Astier’s emphasis on the problem of the dominant discourse, and the overarching Mexican structures of domination this discourse is related to (such as the “neoliberal vision of the Mexican agricultural future”59), makes it occasionally difficult to understand what the problem of “ontological incompatibility” really is about. At the end of the article, the place of the smallholder producers whom they have engaged seems once again clearly delineated and knowable: at stake for smallholders are, Carro-Ripalda and Astier argue, “their lives as maize cultivators, their pride in their craft and knowledge, and their ceremonially demanded right to information, choice and access to their ‘own resources’”. It is not just about “retaining ‘traditional’ ways of agriculture”, as the anti-GMO movement maintains, but also about claiming “political, economic and socio-cultural rights.”60 Though this certainly adds a significant dimension to the debate, it indeed simply seems to add to, rather than radically challenge, the frameworks that are conventionally used in the anti-GMO debate, as well as the frameworks that focus on how to bring out and represent other people’s “voices” in a better way. Is this simply unavoidable when it comes to the production of academic knowledge through/in academic writing? As already indicated in the previous section, academic writing pursues by definition the objective of enhancing knowledge and providing improved insight into a certain situation. In its very structure, an academic piece of work aims to resolve and settle, rather than to dislocate, to destabilise, or to provide discomfort. Carro-Ripalda and Astier’s article is meant to render legible their own encounter of ontological difference for an academic audience. Is it possible for the reader to dig below these representational strategies, and to relate more directly to their encounter of what they themselves call ontological incompatibility? And which has led them to brand their final workshop, in a quite un-academic way, as a “failure”? There are a few places in the article in which their inability to put into words and arguments all of “the complexity of experiences, relations and reasons that bind people to maize”61 is more obvious. Becoming attuned to this complexity is linked to the authors having to become at least “partially connected”—to yet again use de la Cadena’s phrase—to the relations they attempt to trace. It is interesting, for example, that Carro-Ripalda and Astier talk about “voices” as going beyond the semantic level, as conveying something acoustically, and as requiring a form of listening that shies away from asking pre-given questions. It is also interesting that some of that took place when they literally walked together with their interlocutors; precisely as it is emphasised by Blaney and Tickner:62 Despite the shortcomings of the workshop … we felt that that, through our research on the ground, we had engaged with male and female farmers, heard about their perspectives on GM and their visions of a rural future, and accompanied them to work in milpas and markets. So, what do smallholder farmers’ voices sound like? What meanings did they convey to us? We will provide here but a few of those sounds and meanings … 63 Despite returning to the idea of voices as conveying “meaning” in this quote, meaning is related to sounds, to walking together, to particular places with their own sounds, smells, and colours. The sample of actual “voices” Carro-Ripalda and Astier then choose to present yet again invoke an intricate sense of the relationality of farmers and nonhumans: It is a joy to plant, getting hold of the maize, of a beautiful cob which is pleasant, to go to the harvest, to look at pretty cobs, all regular. Because this is what sustains me. You can see the difference in the seeds straight away … You need to look at the cob and as soon as I grab it I see the difference. It is the person who knows the seed the one who chooses it [for replanting the following year].64 By contrast, GM maize is associated by the smallholders whom Carro-Ripalda and Astier cite with feelings of “artificiality, estrangement and distrust towards the created object (the GMO) in itself, not only because of deep ontological considerations … but because of the political and economic motives which are ‘assembled’ into it.”65 Although the authors make a distinction between ontology and politics/ economics here, their invoking of the “assemblage” precisely shows how the latter becomes part of ontology itself, and then (as in the case of Hetherington) impacts on the sensual, bodily connection with the maize. Understanding the relation between “things” in this way allows for an analysis of power and domination that has at least the potential of moving beyond pre-given frameworks; strategically suspending them in order to “sharpen [the] analysis of exactly how power operates, how relations are made and undermined, and with what consequences”. 66 Genetically modified maize is a problem because it is part of particular Mexican neoliberal visions and strategies, but in the context outlined by Carro-Ripalda and Astier, that vision is not only (and not even primarily) made sense of through given frames of knowledge, such as Marxist theories of the exploitation of labour, but sensually, through the way it disrupts the (physical) pleasure and joy that has sustained the farmer-maize-assemblage so far.67 GM technology externalises the maize from farmers and estrange them from their ways of life; and it is only through this externalisation that GM maize becomes perceivable as a potential source of “contamination”, as a danger against which farmers need to “defend” their seeds.68 Now, some might counter that the previous paragraph in practice only provides a fancy repackaging of the two well-rehearsed arguments brought forward by many anti-GMO activists: (a) that the problem of GMOs is an intrinsic property that makes it “unsafe” (which activists try to scientifically prove), and/or (b) that the fundamental problem of agricultural biotechnology is that it estranges farmers from their traditional, ancestral way of life, that it allows for their exploitation, and that it provides a further foothold for neoliberal visions of how the world should be ordered. Both arguments are grounded in modern ontology: the first goes down the route of science (contesting “facts” about the “nature” of GMOs on the basis of science itself), while the second goes down the “social” route by either making a case for the need to respect cultural multiplicity, or for the need to prevent economic exploitation. Some activists make use of all of these routes and arguments. Famous environmental activist and intellectual Vandana Shiva, for example, determines the alienating character of the GMO to be an intrinsic property, while at the same time depicting smallholder producers as intrinsic “‘reservoirs’ of local or indigenous knowledge or as ‘natural’ conservators of biodiversity through their traditional practices”. 69 According to Carro-Ripalda and Astier, this “unwittingly reinforce[es] images of smallholder producers as passive, timeless and voiceless.”70 This leads to precisely the sort of romanticised reification of “difference” that I have critiqued in the previous section of this article—paradoxically, in this case, on the basis of an ontology that is deeply modern, as it regards both “things” and “people” as ontologically stable and classifiable. By contrast, the authors of the two texts I have analysed in this section trace ontological encounters that cannot be contained by the nature/culture dichotomy. There is no pre-given (social) theory of neoliberalism and global power relations that dictates how the “voice” of the farmer needs to be made sense of. There is also no pregiven understanding of the “factual” (scientific) nature of GMOs. The notion of radical difference that comes up in these two texts emerged from precisely the “misunderstandings” that the encounter of ethnographers with “other people” and their relations brought to the fore; but importantly, it did not make any clearer to the ethnographer what the “stuff” that grounded the misunderstandings is actually composed of.71 Yet, somewhat paradoxically, despite all this emphasis on misunderstandings, incompatibility, grappling, failure, and critical self-reflection of one’s own assumptions—at the end of the day what is left for the readers (at least if they do not explicitly focus on the “ethnographic excess” found in the writings) is the impression that they know more about “stuff” than they did before: that they understand the situation better, that new knowledge has been produced, that the object of analysis is more transparent than it has been before. How can this subjugation of the encountered ontologically difference to academic strategies of comprehensive sense-making avoided (if at all)? This article itself is now coming up to what would normally be a conclusion—i.e. the treacherous waters of nailing its contribution to knowledge. Given that this article is yet again another “third-level” engagement with questions of ontology and decoloniality, the question is whether there is any way to avoid this pull of hegemonic modes of academic knowledge production. Rather than providing a conclusion and reiterate the core argument that the article has made, I will attempt to finish this piece by raising even more questions, and by providing some further reflections. 4. Turtles all the Way Down: (Further) Reflections on What Questions to Ask The pull of hegemonic systems of academic knowledge production is difficult to avoid. This is the case even in writings that are directly based on ontological encounters and controversies, and that reflect on the displacement that encountering different ontologies has entailed. But as I have indicated, this problem is even more pronounced in writings—like my own—that provide what I have previously called “third-level” sense-making of ontological encounters. The contribution of third-level analysis is usually a conceptual one, which makes it by definition veer towards the general and abstract rather than the concrete. In relation to the literature on decolonial thought and the ontological turn, this becomes manifest in three different (yet interrelated) ways: first, in the desire to provide an understanding of ontology that enables a conceptualisation of the former as multiple. Drawing on the work of Mario Blaser and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro respectively, Rojas and Blaney and Tickner argue that ontology can be thought of as multiple if reality is understood as always being “enacted” or “performed”. 72 This is what Blaser calls an understanding of ontology as “materialsemiotic”: one that defines reality as “always in the making through the dynamic relations of hybrid assemblages”. 73 Pinpointing it like this is inevitably geared towards answering the question of what reality as such, in general is about. Secondly, there is an ambition to coin the general normative-political project that arises out of this understanding with a singular concept, such as the pluriverse. Thirdly, arguments about ontological multiplicity and the emancipatory-decolonial political projects that arise out of its recognition are written for an audience of a particular discipline, such as IR: the aim is to provide a wholesale, general rethinking, or, indeed, “reconstruction” of the latter.74 What sort of questions drive conceptual work into that direction, and what desire “to know” underlies the questions? According to Cherokee philosopher Brian Yazzie Burkhart, for Native Americans “the questions we choose to ask are more important than any truths we might hope to discover in asking such questions”. 75 By contrast, Western knowledge is always (at least in the mainstream) propositional knowledge: “knowledge of the form ‘that something is so’”. Here, knowledge cannot be verified by referring to direct experiences: “there must be something underlying them and justifying them”. 76 Burkhart gives the example of the “routine response” given by “Western people” to Indigenous accounts of creation: “In [one] account, the earth rests on the back of a turtle. The Western response to this account is simply the question, ‘What holds the turtle?’” This question makes no sense to the Native storyteller, because the truth of the story lies in the paths to rightful action that it outlines, rather than what it has to say about the “reality” of the world. But when the Westerner insists on the question, the answer finally is: “‘Well, then there must be turtles all the way down’.”77 Equating Rojas’ and Blaney and Tickner’s work with European mainstream (hence analytic) philosophy seems, at first glance, incredibly unfair. After all, those authors precisely advocate the cultivating of knowledge by direct awareness or acquaintance in exactly the way that Burkhart identifies as typical for Native Americans. But on the other hand, the framework that circumscribes their emphasis on the need for “concreteness” is still an abstract one that wants to answer the question of how things really are and should be: enacted, performed, pluriversal, … The point is not whether this argument about reality and politics is right or wrong. The point is to recognise that it is driven by particular questions that might make no sense in the context of other intelligence systems, but that need to be addressed in an academic article in order to make a conceptual argument compelling, convincing and original for an audience that primarily sits (whether it likes it or not) within a Western, colonial, hegemonic system of knowledge production.78 And even when the contribution to knowledge production is not primarily conceptual, as in the “second-level” work that I have analysed in the previous section in relation to the GMO controversy, the final argument that is made (e.g. about peasants’ economic and cultural rights) is yet again lucid and comprehensible to an audience that seeks to comprehend “stuff” within modern parameters. Where to go from here (particularly as a white, European scholar)? As suggested by Tucker, one way might be to engage in much more direct, ethnographic research, which would enable more direct experience of ontological encounters. Despite previously-mentioned problems of even that research not going far enough, there is without doubt more space for providing a sense of grappling and dislocation if the originality of a piece of work is not purely grounded in the conceptual contribution it aims to make. However, not every scholar is able— body-, context- or funding-wise—to spend extensive periods of time in different places, and the ethical and political pitfalls of researching “radical difference” through fieldwork with—but often rather on—others have been pointed out by Indigenous scholars numerous times.79 But even for those unable or unwilling to do more primary, empirical research, there is space to push the boundaries of what can and should be written about (and how). For decades there have been attempts to provide “innovative” platforms, for example at conferences, to talk about “stuff” in different ways (e.g. through storytelling or artistic practices; not at least by e.g. Indigenous peoples themselves80). However, these “innovations” are still at the margins, and they will most likely never be able to compete with acknowledged knowledge production outlets such as journal articles and scholarly books. But even within the latter, there is always at least some space to push for more open-endedness, more reflection on the author’s embodied positionality, more auto-critique, more uncertainty and grappling (even if this is based on reading about the ontological encounters of others). Although this sort of embodied self-reflection on a writer’s “situatedness” (which in my own case means being “on the colonising side of a divide”81) has obviously been advanced by many critical scholars for decades (including feminists and post- as well as decolonial scholars), this article has hopefully shown that there is still (always) a need to go further, in order to more fundamentally challenge hegemonic, modern/colonial modes of knowledge production. The sense of unease that I have outlined in section two was particularly strong when reading conclusions that were geared towards making recommendations for the discipline of IR, or for “international politics”, as such. Aiming to make generic conclusions for entire disciplines, political fields, or global “issues” pushes the generality and abstraction of a contribution even further away from an advocacy of the concrete. Why, and to whom, does it matter whether IR, as a discipline, or international politics, as object of study, becomes more pluriversal or not? What are the actual benefits of the concept of the pluriverse in the first place? Or to pick up the theme of this special issue: why does it matter whether IR is, or should move into, a mode of affirmation rather than critique?82 Why is this a good question to ask—and for whom? This is not just a theoretical problem, but it has real-life consequences for actually-existing decolonial struggles. The desire for making a generic argument about relational ontologies and a pluriversal politics harbours the danger of making a huge variety of demands and struggles that often exist in tension and contradiction with each other commensurable. Indigenous demands for the repatriation of “their” land might be at odds with the social justice demands for redistribution and “the commons”. 83 For Blaney and Tickner, decolonial thought is commensurable with not just the ontological turn literature, but also feminist and other critical interventions.84 Mignolo and Arturo Escobar advocate a transnational fight for global justice and are enthusiastic about the potential of global movements to achieve that aim together.85 Like Mignolo, Rojas explicitly draws on the World Social Forum slogan “Another world is possible” as well as the Zapatistas slogan of “a world where many words fit” to make her case about the need for a pluriversal understanding of emancipatory-decolonial politics.86 While it can be argued that this problem of seeing all these struggles and demands as commensurable goes back to a lack of actual engagement with particular decolonial practices and battles, what I have argued in this article is that it is also related to the problem of how and what sort of knowledge is produced and valued in the Western academy: knowledge that is abstract, generic, and applicable beyond a specific context. Knowledge that is driven by the desire to know what is. Knowledge that desires to know what holds the turtle—all the way down.

### Weiss—Sovereignty/Futurity Good—2AC

#### Forwarding sovereignty claims in the name of a collective future within debate iteratively fractures settler colonialism.

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At the same time, there is an inescapably political dimension to the attempt to render Haida Gwaii as the homeland of a still open Haida future. The assertion of the (located) openness of the future does not necessarily make it so. As I noted in the first part of this dissertation, the flow of Haida departures and returns unfold in the broader context of the settler, capitalist state; indeed, they are made necessary in part by the current absence of economic opportunity on island, just as the arrival of potentially threatening strangers is a result of their privileged position in the very capitalist economy they seek to escape. Constituting futures in which Haida people have the freedom to engage with that economy (and settler society more generally) as they see fit while retaining the capacity to come home (complicated as that process might be) also reiterates the inescapability of some form of engagement with that socio-economy. Likewise, the notion of Haida Gwaii as Haida homeland cannot be separated from current Haida struggles to assert their rights to the lands and waters of Haida Gwaii, the resources found therein, and their sovereign capacity to govern themselves and the islands in the ways they find appropriate. This is, recall, the very crux of the CHN’s own commitment to the assurance of futurity, as it is only by positioning itself as the rightful, sovereign government of the Haida Nation and its homeland of Haida Gwaii that it can adequately care for the islands and protect them from external threat. And the continuing advance of the Enbridge project despite fierce opposition from CHN, the Old Massett Village Council, their Haida constituents, and the non-Haida actors with whom they are “united against Enbridge” (and this alongside protest all over the northwest coast) gives the nightmare futures of environmental collapse – pushed through by corporate interests and Canadian politicians - a frightening immanence. The assertion of the openness of the future is made, in short, in (and against) a context in which closures remain endemic.

And yet, something has changed in this landscape from the initial erasures of Native futurity we drew out in the first chapter. In the narratives of colonial actors like Duncan Campbell Scott, it was absolutely clear that “Indians” were disappearing because their social worlds were being superseded by more “civilized” ways of living and being, ones that these Native subjects would also, inevitably, in the end, adopt (or failing that, perish outright). There was a future. It was simply a settler one. But the nightmare futures of that my Haida interlocutors ward against in their own future-making reach beyond Haida life alone. Environmental collapse, most dramatically, threatens the sustainability of all life; toxins in the land and the waters threaten human lives regardless of their relative indigeneity, race, or gender (e.g. Choy 2011; Crate 2011). Put another way, the impetus for non-Haida (and non-First Nations subjects more generally) to be “united against Enbridge” with their indigenous neighbours comes in no small part because an oil spill also profoundly threatens the lives and livelihoods of non-Aboriginal coastal residents, a fact which Masa Takei, among others, made clear in Chapter 3. Nor is the anxiety that young people might abandon their small town to pursue economic and educational advantage in an urban context limited to reserve communities. Instead, the compulsions of capitalist economic life compel such migrations throughout the globe. The nightmare futures that Haida people constitute alternative futures to ward against are not just future of indigenous erasure under settler colonialism. They are erasures of settler society itself.

There is thus an extraordinary political claim embedded in Haida future-making, a claim which gains its power precisely because Haida future-making as we have seen it does not (perhaps cannot) escape from the larger field of settler-colonial determination. Instead, in Haida future-making we find the implicit assertion that Haida people can make futures that address the dilemmas of Haida and settler life alike, ones that can at least “navigate,” to borrow Appadurai’s phrasing, towards possible futures that do not end in absolute erasure. If Povinelli and Byrd are correct and settler liberal governance makes itself possible and legitimate through a perpetual deferral of the problems of the present, then part of the power of Haida future-making is to expose the threatening non-futures that might emerge out of this bracketed present, to expose as lie the liberal promise of a good life always yet to come and to attempt to constitute alternatives.

It is no coincidence that we find this in the midst of a struggle over sovereignty. And this not just in the sense of the Council of the Haida Nation’s ongoing assertion of its sovereign right to govern the lands and waters of Haida Gwaii on behalf of all Haida people, as we saw in Chapter 5. Rather, as Joanne Barker has argued, over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century sovereignty has emerged as a:

particularly valued term within indigenous scholarship and social movements and through the media of cultural production. It [is] a term around which analyses of indigenous histories and cultures were organized and whereby indigenous activists articulate their agendas for social change (Barker 2005:18).

Through the assertion of sovereignty, indigenous political leaders, activists and scholars refute “the dominant notion that indigenous people [are] merely one among many ‘minority groups’ under the administration of state social service and welfare programs.” Instead, “sovereignty defines indigenous people with concrete rights to self-government, territorial integrity, and cultural autonomy under international law” (18). The trouble is, of course, that indigenous claims to sovereignty are always made within the context of colonial nation-states, ones whose own legitimacy is put at considerably risk both by the prospect of self-determining indigenous Nations (re)-emerging within their boundaries and the troubling of their own historical narratives of sovereign rights (cf: Comaroff and Comaroff 2003b). (One of these narratives, which reinterpreted indigenous lands as terra nullius and thus open to occupation, we’ve encountered already in Chapter 3). Thus, while sovereignty might indeed “define” indigenous peoples with concrete rights to territorial Title and self-determination, in theory equal under international law to the states who also lay claim to their territories, that definition does not in and of itself make possible the practice of this sovereignty. In this regard settler states such as Canada have shifted in their response to First Peoples’ sovereignty claims from outright rejection to a set of policies of selective recognition,5 but even the latter still positions Native nations as being subject to the authority and oversight (if not the structural forms) of the state.

This means, as we have seen in Chapter 5, that indigenous governments such as the Council of the Haida Nation are in a precarious position, attempting to constitute their own sovereign authority without access to many of the conventional means of sovereignty in Western political thought – e.g., the monopoly on legitimate violence (Weber 1946), decisive authority to make and enact law (Schmitt 2005), or exclusive territorial control (Brown 2010; cf: Hobbes 1994). Alongside this precarity is the equally anxious question of whether or not sovereignty is even an appropriate analytical to center indigenous rights around precisely because it is historically a Western concept, one that had been drawn on to dispossess indigenous peoples over the course of settler colonial history (Barker 2005:18–19). (Indeed, the very next essay in Barker’s edited volume, by Mohawk scholar Taiake Alfred, categorically rejects sovereignty as an inappropriate tool for indigenous political assertions for these reasons and, also, because it draws attention away from developing and furthering “genuinely” Aboriginal political modes of thought (Alfred 2005; cf: Alfred 2009).

The fact that sovereignty remains such a preeminent concept in the struggle for indigenous rights even though it is both epistemologically problematic and politically constrained has meant that there has been a recent push in both anthropology and indigenous studies to “widen” the definition of sovereignty, so that it might encompass multiple forms of indigenous social, political and legal practice outside of the conventional purview of “sovereign power” (e.g. Cattelino 2008; Richland 2011; Simpson 2000; Simpson 2014). Or, as Joanne Barker puts it:

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, nation, 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. How and when it emerges and functions are determined by the “located” political agendas and cultural perspectives of those who rearticulate it into public debate or political document to do a specific work of opposition, invitation, or accommodation. It is no more possible to stabilize what sovereignty means and how it matters to those who invoke it than it is to forget the historical and cultural embeddedness of indigenous peoples’ multiple and contradictory political perspectives and agendas for empowerment, decolonization, and social justice (Barker 2005:21, emphasis original).

The opening up of sovereignty as flexible, multiple, and subject to all manner of diverse rearticulations carries particular weight (and, perhaps, ambiguity) since, as a historical concept in Western political theory, sovereignty was overwhelmingly concerned with closure. As Wendy Brown argues in her Walled States, Waning Sovereignty, the classic vision of sovereign power rests in the capacity to divide the inside from the outside, to make borders around a people – a “nation” – and separate that people from those outside it. Thus Schmitt’s “friend-enemy” distinction, for instance, or even John Locke’s consistent preoccupation with fences as a way of marking the existence of territory (Brown 2010; cf: Schmitt 1996; Locke 1988). The historical conditions of indigenous sovereignty claims in the context of settler colonialism make such absolute closures impossible for indigenous peoples.

We might add, though, that their persistent presence also challenges the closure of the settler nation-state. Indeed, this is part of Brown’s point. The very fact that we see ever more spectacular performances of sovereign power on the part of contemporary nation-states – e.g., the titular “walls” that are being constructed along the borders of an increasing number of states - is a sign of the very insecurity of their political authority (Brown 2010).6 The conditions of settler colonial sovereignty, in other words, may be rather more “open,” and thus closer to those of indigenous “nation-within-nations,” then they may at first appear. If this means, in turn, that the future of settler political life is becoming as uncertain as the future for indigenous life has always been since the advent of settlement, then this means only what we have already begun to see: the dilemmas that Haida people confront in their future-making practices are also the dilemmas facing settler society. Take Chapter 4, in which the absence of any “one” definitive governing entity compels the constitution of an aspirational framework of accountability which could, were it realized, render navigable Haida relations to the many governments that claim their loyalties. As I hinted at there, such dilemmas are not restricted to the Haida sociopolitical world; rather, they may in fact be endemic to contemporary democratic societies and the multiple forms of governance (licit and otherwise) that emerge therein.

In suggesting that there are Haida ways of refiguring a shared Haida-settler set of contemporary problematics, we might think of Haida future-making as simultaneously an instantiation of the multiple, flexible and always contingently located practices of sovereignty to which Barker points and a different way of thinking about indigenous political potentiality. In the former sense, Haida future-making is without doubt concerned with carving out spaces in which Haida existence can continue, expand, and change without losing the capacity to reproduce itself as, precisely, Haida existence. Thus the processes of homecoming we explored in Chapter 2, or Chapter 5’s explicitly political attempts to establish control over the islands for future generations. If the absence of indigenous sovereignty is the absence of the capacity of an indigenous people to (self)-determine their own futures, then the constitution of Haida futures can be seen exactly as sovereign work, whether in the overt sense of the Council of the Haida Nation’s assertions or the somewhat more implicit mode of Alice Stevens’ proposed mass adoptions. Significant here, though, is the fact that these acts of future-making carry meanings beyond their status as “responses” to the social and political dilemmas of contemporary Haida life. Thus Alice Stevens’ adoptions bring “hippie” children into the framework of Haida kinship relations, in one sense neutralizing their potential threat, but also constituting a complex new network of social relations between Haida and non-Haida whose potential significances go well beyond the protection of Haida territory and resources; thus the Council of the Haida Nation emerges as a “state-like” governing entity through its authorizing promise to “take care” of the islands, but in so doing takes on a series of new roles in Haida political life whose full consequences remain to be seen. If it is a sovereign action to envision an opening of possible futures for Haida people, then this very openness might also exceed the boundaries of sovereignty as a problematic for indigenous people even as it responds to them.

Which is also, perhaps, why Haida futures seem so consistently to sketch out social, ecological, and political fields that encompass non-Haida; more, that are futures for Canada as well as for the Haida people living within the nation-state’s borders. Or, at least, futures that have the capacity to be so. What would it mean to figure an indigenous sovereignty that speaks beyond itself, one that promises to invert the order of settler domination through reconfiguring the shared futures of indigenous and settler peoples? This would not be a sovereignty premised on territorial closure, or even absolute political autonomy. It would, however, decisively overturn any settler colonial anticipations of the inevitable erasure of Native peoples. Quite the opposite, it would position indigenous practices of anticipation, aspiration, certainty, and anxiety at the forefront of contemporary modes of political imagination.

Unsettling Futures

A question remains, however. Could such a refiguring of the temporal and political horizon of settler and indigenous relationships remain possible even if the futures that indigenous people work to constitute remain unrealized in the settler colonial present? Or, put another way, we must always be careful not to conflate a capacity to form new futures for settler nation-states with the actual materializations of these futures. The Haida futures that I have discussed, even as they promise possible ways of navigating – of restructuring, even – the settler-Haida present, remain firmly bound by the colonial constraints of this present. But perhaps the stakes here have never been about overthrowing the Canadian colonial order outright. Rather, what I hope this dissertation has shown is that Haida future-making has the capacity to unsettle the settler colonial present, to challenge its received categories and demonstrate how, slowly, gradually, Haida people are reconfiguring its terms through the work of producing the future. Certainly, the sheer fact of Haida futurity should put to the lie any further notion that Haida people exist only to replicate their past or live only in the deferral of their eventual disappearance. The future is alive and well in Old Massett, although this does not meant that it is not also a site of profound anxieties.

In working to ward off those anxieties through the juxtaposition of nightmare futures against their more desirable alternatives, then, Haida people unsettle the epistemological foundations of the forms of settler colonialism and liberalism against which Byrd and Povinelli write. At the same time (if you’ll pardon the pun), I think we can see the social work that futuremaking does iteratively, as a gradual reshaping of the actual conditions of Canadian society. Here I borrow Judith Butler’s suggestion, following Foucault, that the regulatory norms of society function only through their consistent and unstable reiteration (and materialization) in everyday social life.7 From this perspective, the ways in which Haida people work within and even reiterate the constraints and demands of Canadian settler mainstream society can also slowly and strategically shift those very constraints and demands, materializing a HaidaCanadian future that might in fact be quite different from the present even as it does not ever fully “escape” from its dilemmas. Perhaps the most unsettling potential of all here lies simply in the ways in which Haida people incorporate the conditions of the settler colonial present as being paths towards Haida futures. Not vanished, or vanquished. Ongoing.

### AT: Trickster Hermeneutics/Semiotics/Baudrillard-y Args

#### Their thesis is wrong – and trickster hermeneutics backfires and precludes tactical opportunism employing those essentialisms, which some indigenous peoples have said is a vitally important tool for their survival

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Gerald Vizenor: A Little Upsetting Is Necessary In 1996 Kimberly Blaeser’s book, Gerald Vizenor: Writing in the Oral Tradition, was published. Since Vizenor himself had featured literary criticism in works such as Manifest Manners: Postindian Warriors of Survivance (1994) and had contributed an essay and an introduction to Narrative Chance: Postmodern Discourse on Native American Indian Literatures (1993), some might wonder, Why not go directly to the source instead of to a study of the author in question? Manifest Manners, however, is not exclusively a work of literary criticism; one chapter, for example, is about Indian casinos. And his introduction to Narrative Chance is a brief one. Moreover, distinguishing between genres traditionally described as literary criticism, fiction, cultural critique, autobiography, and journalism is difficult in Vizenor’s oeuvre, where any given writing could contain all these elements and more. Looking at a book such as Blaeser’s, an overview of Vizenor’s prolific output, and one written by a Native critic of his own tribe, helps to locate Vizenor’s attention to literary criticism in the wide range of the genres he writes in, since an examination of the more than twenty-five books he had written by the time of Blaeser’s study is impossible. Blaeser’s book, further, contains many continuities with the first two works of this study, The Sacred Hoop and Other Destinies. I want to make a personal observation about Gerald Vizenor at the outset: this is a writer I greatly admire. To engage a fellow author at the level of ideas, and to critique those ideas, is not to dismiss the man or his work; rather, it is to take him seriously. The heterodoxy of Vizenor’s work is one of the best things to have ever happened to Native studies. But, like all heterodoxies, as well as all orthodoxies, it is fraught with its own set of problems. This statement is necessary in order to point out that here I neither dismiss Vizenor nor do I analyze other critics (with whom I might have certain affinities) in purely celebratory terms. I want readers to be clear about my intent. I often reveal my biases in terms of critical stances I agree and disagree with—this introduction is not a purely descriptive effort—but I try to point to the philosophical underpinnings that influence my stance, and I hope to reveal a little bit of literary history that surrounds my choices. This is not a party for friends nor a snubbing of enemies. For reasons I am not quite sure I understand, saying anything about Vizenor, whether positive or negative, has a tendency to get people all riled up. One camp says one is only allowed to praise him, another that it is one’s moral duty to bring the man down. I ascribe to neither of these positions. Given that Vizenor, more than any other Native critic, is often associated with poststructuralism, I want to say more about its impact on cultural studies. Poststructuralism has influenced a diverse range of disciplines—feminist criticism, postcolonial theory, film studies, and queer theory, to name a few. An important concept in poststructuralism is the infinite capacity for language to take on different meanings. According to Vincent Lcitch: Because the signifier (word) is disconnected from the signified (concept) and the referent (thing), language floats or slides in relation to reality, a condition made more severe with the additional sliding introduced into language by figurative language, such as metaphors and metonymies. Such rhctoricity (as it is called) adds layers of substitutions and supplements (more differences) to floating signifiers. Textuality and rhetoricity are conditioned by yet a third sliding or differential element, intertextuality—a text’s dependence on prior words, concepts, connotations, codes, conventions, unconscious practices, and texts. Every text is an intertext that borrows, knowingly or not, from the immense archive of previous culture. The term (inter)textuality, with parentheses, captures the sense of textuality as being conditioned by this inescapable historical intertest.\*'5 One might see, especially in the last part of this definition, some compatibilities with orality, particularly the notion of a passed-on tradition, the way storytellers are informed by those tellers who came before them, those contemporary to them, and those to come. In terms of the first part of Leitch’s definition, Vizenor borrows from the poststructural idea of liberating signifier from signified to open up static definitions of Indianness (in simple language, to challenge stereotypes). Labeling ossified or overly generalized definitions as “terminal creeds,” Vizenor has expended great energy on attempting to open up the signifier “Indian” to a wider range of signification. Vizenor’s sophisticated take on stereotypes is not only related to popular nonIndian representations of Native peoples but to the stereotypes Natives cling to about themselves. One might also worry, however, about some of poststructuralism’s incompatibilities with oral traditions, instead of assuming a perfect fit, a subject Blaeser largely avoids in her study, as does Vizenor in his own work. This might be of particular concern in relation to the way words seem to be moving away from the things they represent in poststructuralist thought. Some might wonder how to reconcile notions of nonrepresentation with certain ceremonial settings, where spoken words are sometimes seen as having a physical component or a physical effect on the world: words cause things to happen, a very special relationship between signifier and signified. Often the very things words represent come to be, and the happenings are not exclusively the domain of human efforts, influences, mediations. These are complicated matters. Ceremonial language is also mediated by the humans who speak it and the ritual circumstances that surround it where humans are involved, but in some tribal worldviews the powers of language arc not created exclusively by humans. In puzzling through these realities, we might wonder what N. Scott Momaday means, for example, when he says, “A word has power in and of itself. It comes from nothing into sound and meaning; it gives origin to all things.”66 If all language is socially mediated, as some would claim, some Native thinkers might respond, “Yes, but it is also mediated by others besides humans.” A further word of caution might be appropriate. How much free rein do we want to give definitions? Do we want to remove “Indian” so far from its social referents that definitions are no longer possible? How would tribes manage in the world of federal Indian law if “Indian” is a matter of infinite signification and ultimately undecidable? Can historical claims be made from a philosophical vantage point that emphasizes that events can never be separated from perceptions, thereby denying any kind of certitude? What happens if a historically silenced minority group wants to amend the historical record to include their side of the story? Can they do this if normative truth claims are no longer considered viable? Is simply presenting a competing narrative very satisfying if one’s community is telling its story for the first time while the dominating group has controlled the discourse for centuries? Does Native studies want to become like queer studies in its refusal to define the parameters of its own discipline so that anything and everything becomes its potential subject matter? Does this ambiguity of audience and mission help or hurt in light of a history of erasure and underrepresentation? What of the goal of Native critics who might want to focus on their own communities for a change instead of making everybody else central to their efforts? Blaeser’s focus, for better or worse, does not include a discussion of the broader ramifications of the theoretical field Vizenor plays in, at least in terms of the more problematic aspects of poststructuralism. On the other hand, in terms of poststructuralism’s power to disrupt, Native studies needs a good, strong kick in the butt to move it beyond some of the static cliches that have kept it from addressing difficult issues. The temptation has been to fall back on the opposition of a balanced, communal utopia offset against a menacing Western hierarchical society. Native people might want more agency than this; they might want the freedom to imagine themselves anew, to act in ways that intervene in their destinies, to view themselves as more than the victims of Western dystopias or the happy inhabitants of a communal lark. Native studies practitioners might want to expand into other subject areas that heretofore have been ignored. Tol Foster’s essay in our own collection here analyzes the way Native studies has largely ignored Will Rogers because he does not signify “Indian” in a fashion familiar to the public at large, or even to people in contemporary Native studies. Vizenor’s work provides some of the tools for this rearticulation of an expanded field. Blaeser demonstrates how Vizenor’s poetics, which allow for opening up texts, can contribute to such liberation by allowing Native people to go beyond fixed, terminal definitions and empowering them to articulate identities whose only limits are their imaginations. One of the jobs of poststructuralism, then, is to break down conventional oppositions by questioning binary pairs such as writing/orality, male/female, nature/culture, purity/contamination, civilization/savagery, straight/gay, and white/black. Poststructuralism questions the reasons for privileging one half of the binary pair over the other and demonstrates how each half is dependent on the other for its existence. For example, taking the nature/culture opposition, we might ask how metropolitan centers such as New York City, often seen as the mecca of literate culture and art in the so-called New World, can exist apart from a relationship to nature? Is there not earth under New York streets? The city’s inhabitants, being human and a part of the natural world, breathe air, shovel snow, give birth, return to the earth, and experience other natural phenomena, as do people everywhere. Poststructuralists might question a viewpoint that presents a big city as a threatening menace because of its distance from the natural world. Meaning is a key issue in poststructural theory, as it is in every theory. In the New Criticism of the 1930s meaning was difficult, a puzzle composed of ambiguity, paradox, irony, contradictions, and tensions. With enough patience, however, a puzzle can be put together by the person who is smart enough to figure out how all the pieces fit. In poststructural thought meaning is undecidable in the sense of yielding one definition that remains the same in all times and places. Meaning is there, somewhere, and we can even describe it, but we cannot say definitively what it is in singular terms—it always has multiple possibilities. Some skeptics might say poststructuralism makes meaning impossible; in reality, it makes meaning infinitely possible: words that depend on other words that depend on... well, you get the point. Here our puzzle does not have five hundred pieces; it has more pieces than anyone could ever count, given all the words that have been spoken and written and thought throughout history and all the different ways people meant them and did not mean them and the meanings their listeners or readers attributed or did not attribute to them. Meanings, then, are not stable but infinitely contextual. If we ask thirty people to define the word “table,” few, if any, will have the exact same words in their definition. When my students start throwing around terms like “European mindset” in order to point out Native people do not think like Them, I ask the class what would happen if we went around the room and had each person decide who there has a European mindset and who does not and explain the reasons why. We never do that, of course, since I like to avoid bloodshed whenever possible, but the statement makes a certain point about monolithic cliches. Extending these issues to literature, readings, from a poststructuralist point of view (given that they are readings of language), are undecidable. One can make a literary claim; one cannot make a definitive literary claim. Poststructuralism, however, is not necessarily a descent into meaninglessness (whether or not it is a descent into relativism is a thornier issue): “The redoubled reading typical of much deconstruction rests on claims of interest and insight, not of validity and truth. A reading or interpretation of a text does not prove but persuades; it is more or less compelling, productive, original, or useful. This pragmatic set of criteria links deconstruction with contemporary U.S. neopragmatism, an influential philosophy that insists on the contingency of all human arrangements and concepts.”67 My reading might be more convincing than yours; however, it cannot be inherently more valuable. Yours might be more convincing than mine in the right set of circumstances. In Native literary studies these ideas will come back to haunt us later when it becomes theoretically difficult (although I would argue not impossible) to mount an argument for prioritizing Indian readings of Indian literature, as it will also create a serious disruption in other areas of minority studies in terms of trying to base academic disciplines on distinctions between insiders and outsiders by privileging one group over the other. In describing Vizenor’s oral influences, Blaeser draws on the theories of Walter Ong’s Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word (1982). Ong studied the dynamics of oral performance, especially emphasizing the role of audience, which is immediate, for an oral storyteller as opposed to imagined for a writer. Ong describes how stories in societies that are primarily oral evolve systems that allow narratives to be remembered through various forms of rhythms, repetitions, and multiple reinforcement. Ong argues that oral storytelling depends on strong narrative styles that emphasize action over abstraction. Primary orality changes the very way people think, according to Ong. Unfortunately, when one reads Ong, the characteristics that he attributes to the thought processes of communal cultures, which he claims are resistant to conceptualization and abstraction, sound a bit like the way his Jesuit forefathers described the people they encountered in the New World. A further problem is the opposition Ong creates between writing and orality, which seems to contradict the poststructuralist theories Vizenor relies on. One might well argue, for example, that a writer finds ways to try to compensate for an oral performance, as do readers, even if those processes are often subconscious ones. We might also find ways in which orality is created by writing. In Native American studies, for example, we might point out trends in which written texts, that is, oral tradition collections, are passing into verbal tellings in Native communities these days. The same kind of oppositions that make Ong’s work troubling are sometimes part of the Blaeser analysis. In the introduction, for example, Blaeser says that Vizenor “strives to compensate for the inadequacies of written language.” She goes on to show how Vizenor’s story “Almost Browne” “comments on the origin and existence of the words outside the static written tradition, on the authenticity of the oral and the actual, on the presence and power of sound and language, on the ‘almost’ quality of mere words.”68 Blaeser seems to privilege orality over writing, as evidenced by the phrase “static written tradition.” One question might be to what degree does Vizenor himself do the same thing? Blaeser’s comments about his work seem to point to an innate inauthenticity in writing. One of Derrida’s famous theoretical postulates was that he “deconstructed the speech/writing opposition by showing how writing precedes speech; characteristically, he reinscribes the concept of writing (ecriture in French) to mean any and all forms of inscription and at the same time undercuts the privileging of speech as face-to-face spontaneous utterance.”69 One might compare Blaeser’s statements about Vizenor, for example, with Warrior’s Tribal Secrets, published in the previous year, that made a case for a written tradition that had been understudied, a claim Warrior makes without privileging the written over the oral or vice versa. While Blaeser seems to inadvertently demonstrate Vizenor’s problematic relationship with poststructuralism, not much is said up front about his philosophical inconsistencies and sometimes haphazard relationship with theory. Vizenor’s life story includes an early involvement with Indian activism in the Twin Cities in the mid-1960s, which in later years evolved into a writerly relationship with activism as a cultural critic rather than a physical participant. Some might say that Vizenor’s interest in the nonrepresentational modes of postmodernism, in this case liberating fiction from social realism, freeing it up for the world of imagination (Vizenor would argue that the oral tradition is not based exclusively on a mimetic realism), marks a similar movement in his fiction away from the real world—that he has traded tropes for reality. In understanding these controversies, however, a challenge for any critic of Vizenor is the enormous breadth of his creative output—fiction is only one element. A gritty, antiromantic, journalistic commitment composes another significant aspect of Vizcnor’s writing, which has dealt with Sand Creek, AIM members, incarcerated Indians, and many other topics profoundly engaged with the world of daily Indian life. Vizenor also often writes of popular culture stereotypes and the ways that Native people themselves fall prey to them, a point he makes in regard to what he calls the tribal “kitschymen,” in Manifest Manners. He uses the term to describe “bone-choker Indians” and the way prominent activists have posed as simulations of Indianness in order to capture the public’s attention, feeding into preconceived notions. Vizcnor’s personal critiques are almost always surrounded by ambiguities—while he might be making fun of these individuals, he also seems strangely appreciative of the opportunities they provide for laughter. If someone becomes the target of Vizenor’s irony, he or she at least might be comforted by the fact that readers may not quite be able to tell if the person is being made fun of or not, given the ambiguities with which Vizenor loves to surround these depictions. Vizenor is particularly interested in the manifestations, so to speak, of Manifest Destiny in the modern world, where the notion of divinely ordained American exceptionalism seems to be even more pervasive today than it was in the nineteenth century. He coined the term “manifest manners” as a neologism for triumphalism, and there is a whole vocabulary of Vizenor words that do not exist in any dictionary. Some find this playfulness liberatory, others simply annoying. The strength of Blaeser’s analysis lies in her description of the ways in which Vizenor parts company with realistic representation—and the reasons he does it. Vizenor disrupts journalistic and autobiographical claims to objectivity, bringing to bear the skills of a fiction writer on his nonfiction efforts. He works in narrative forms and brings a sense of mythic traditions to an interpretation of factual events. While journalism and autobiography often explore causality, Vizenor allows for competing versions of stories that complicate explanations as to why things happened. He is interested in the “shadows” of stories, the truths behind the facts, that which does not get reported, the meanings of what goes unsaid, those things that can be imagined, the larger, ongoing tribal story beyond its textual representation. Vizenor believes that a metaphorical approach to nonfiction can often reveal more than a “factual” one that claims realistic representations. Readers can be empowered if they can be encouraged to create their own shadows, their own interpretations, rather than simply reading the story as transparent, unmediated discourse. In these regards Vizenor’s nonfiction might be related to the gonzo journalism of the 1960s made famous by Tom Wolfe and Hunter S. Thompson, as well as to poststructural notions of infinite signification, undecidability, multiple interpretations. Journalism and autobiography, like fiction and poetry, rely on language that “floats or slides in relation to reality.”70 Important to all of Vizenor’s writing, no matter the genre, is the idea of the reader’s responsibility to participate in the creation of the text and the writer’s responsibility to facilitate that participation, to leave part of the story open for the reader’s completion. The text becomes an invitation for the reader to go beyond the words on the printed page, an encouragement for her to seek out her own experiences. Blaeser does an especially good job of discussing how the poetics of haiku, an early form Vizenor wrote in, become the basis for all his writing. Tribal songs, dreams, and haiku, because of its extreme beauty, leave a space open for the reader to imagine his own meaning, a space that “propel[s] the reader beyond mere words toward the imaginative dream vision.”71 Blaeser characterizes Vizenor’s fiction in relation to what Vizenor has called a “trickster consciousness.” The ideology Vizenor has developed around an analysis of tricksters is his strongest link to poststructuralist theory. I want to begin here by questioning a common assumption. Tricksters do not originate in Native American cultures. The word “trickster” is not a term indigenous to an Indian language; it is an ethnographic one. While many Native American cultures, as well as many European, American, African American and Asian cultures, have story characters that resemble what we often call tricksters, it is a mistake to assume that tricksters originate in Indian stories. One might approach the current universal application of trickster theories to Native cultures with some caution. Certainly, the use of the word “trickster” in Native literature has sometimes meant simply resorting to laziness—the substitution of a cliche for substantive analysis with attention to historical and cultural particulars. Trickster then is a trope rather than a reality within Native cultures. Yet it is the very nature of this nonrepresentational aspect of trickster that most interests Vizenor. He wants fiction to accomplish more than simply repeat social science definitions of Indians, pop culture representations, litanies of Indian tragedies at the hands of whites, accounts of reservation poverty, reports on Indian activism, and so on. Vizenor allows his characters to take flight beyond the literal, to have access to imaginary worlds as much as real ones. Mythic vision itself embodies worlds of possibilities rather than reports on reality. Vizenor borrows the shape-shifting abilities of tricksters to explain his own understandings of language, poststructural theory, and issues of representation. Postmodern interpretations of literature have questioned the role of mimesis—of the idea of literature holding up a mirror to society—instead emphasizing the mediated nature of the representation that is the product of a whole host of culturally shaped institutions as well as processes that occur while reading. Language, with its tricksterlike capacity to take on many guises, shapes, and manifestations, has the potential to liberate Indians from static definitions, and Vizenor is especially critical of the tendencies within the social sciences to categorize Native people rather than open up the signifier “Indian” to multiple possibilities. One of the qualities of the trickster that seems to most attract Vizenor is his inscrutability, and this is beautifully illustrated in the symbolism of the story “Ice Tricksters,” from Landfill Meditations: before you can figure trickster out, he melts on you. Vizenor’s life and body of work might be described as a resistance to easy definitions. Another important aspect of Vizenor’s tricksters is the way in which they are linked to mixed-blood identity. Mixed-bloods, in Vizenor’s writing, become “cross-bloods.” The name change is significant. Critics writing in the 1980s and 1990s often claimed that early Native writers had depicted the mixed-blood as a tragic victim tom between two worlds, unable to fit in either. These critics had emphasized that the more contemporary mixedblood writer was able to mediate between the white and Indian worlds and was inclined toward much less negative depictions, as we observed in our discussion of Louis Owens’s Other Destinies. In Vizenor’s work this is carried a step further than much of the 1980s criticism and certainly further than in the novels from the early part of the twentieth century. The cross-blood is inextricably linked to comic, rather than tragic, modes of representation. Tragedy often works toward an inexorable conclusion, comedy toward multiple possibilities where endings only kick off new beginnings with lots left for the reader’s imagination. Because of its openendedness, the comic mode was extremely important in postmodern fiction after World War II. Mixed-bloods, in Vizenor’s fiction, like tricksters, are not easy to define. They are betwixt and between. Poststructural theories have been interested in those identities that break down oppositions, that challenge distinctions between insider and outsider status, that remain ambiguous. Fluid boundaries, cross-cultural exchange, skepticism about pure culture, and challenges to cultural authenticity have all been a part of the movements we have been tracing. Mixed-bloods obfuscate clear-cut distinctions between Indian and non-Indian. At times such theories have gotten Vizenor in trouble. Native people have not always responded enthusiastically to statements, for example, that Indians are anyone who imagines himself or herself to be Indian, one of Vizenor’s attempts to “liberate” Indians from static definitions. The Blaeser book would have been better, to my way of thinking, if it had more thoroughly acknowledged some of the counterarguments. Particularly damning book reviews, for example, by Robert Berner and other occasional critics, might have been acknowledged, at least to the point of defending Vizenor against the charges levied against him. A real value of Blaeser’s book is her ability to provide an explanation of Vizenor’s famously difficult style; its impenetrability, abstraction, theoretical jargon, puzzling contradictions. Parsing Vizenor’s prose and coming up with a reasonable explanation is a formidable task, and Blaeser takes on her mission with great aplomb. Yet even after reading Blaeser’s plausible defense, some readers might be left wondering why Vizenor does not simply say what he means. Others more prone to provide a justification for what Vizenor does might see a reflection of contemporary theory in Vizenor’s writing, especially in relation to French deconstruction and its U.S. version in the 1980s, where communicating with an audience does not exactly seem to be the goal of the writer; a proliferation of prose styles during this time period seemed to mirror the notion of indeterminacy. Still, some might wonder if a theoretical approach that values obfuscation as much as clarification is consistent with Native worldviews. Skeptics might question the relevance of an inaccessible prose style toward intervening in the real world, where every year Native people face issues of land loss, threats to jurisdiction, new calls from redneck politicians for the federal government to end the trust relationship with tribes, and so on. Vizenor’s oeuvre is so varied that a generalized critique is almost always reductive. For all the post-Indian gobbledygook in Manifest Manners and some more recent works, other writings are entirely straightforward in their use of terminology. Manifest Manners, in fact, has a perfectly lucid chapter on the problems caused by Indian casinos. Many readers would defend the wisdom of the neologisms in more obtuse passages, seeing much more than gobbledygook, noting, in fact, the power of Vizenor’s playfulness to open up a dialogue between theory and Indian studies. A larger problem is the grab-bag relationship with theory, latching on to ideas without much consideration of their broader implications. In her chapter on the difficulties of Vizenor’s style, Blaeser does explain that he often purposefully exposes the artifice of written language so that the usual process of suspending disbelief is interrupted. When this happens, the reader sees not so much the story but how the story is made—the nature of its construction— and is encouraged to consider the world outside the text. Blaeser points out that Vizenor’s is a style that requires a response, not just a consumption of the literary work. His writing is composed of a multilevel discourse, a network of literary, social, and critical subtexts that break down distinctions between genres. Ambiguity and indeterminacy are reinforced by contestatory views within the same story. Characters speak in puzzling and contradictory ways, plot lines are seldom smooth, and sometimes little is resolved. Like much of postmodern fiction, basic story development of character, plot, and setting is sometimes missing. Old-fashioned critics might see postmodern works as simply bad writing in which authors fail to do the work of a writer in terms of fleshing out the story for readers. Postmodern writing, however, is often based on the assumption that readers can and should flesh out the story for themselves. Vizenor’s writing, likewise, “gesture(s] broadly beyond itself”;72 it is strongly allusive. Given the history of cultural studies and poststructuralism we have traced out, it is somewhat problematic when Blaeser says in her introduction that “Vizenor’s work runs counter to the dominant literary aesthetic.”73 Vizenor’s writing is deeply reflective of “the dominant literary aesthetic,” not counter to it. If his work runs counter to anything, it would be the formalism of the 1930s New Critics, not the “dominant literary aesthetic.” It is not very convincing to claim Vizenor as a remarkable exception in relation to contemporary aesthetics, astonishingly gifted as he may be in his ability to draw from theory and incorporate it into a tribal perspective. Along somewhat different lines, it is not fruitful to consider Vizenor’s work as the embodiment of another kind of exceptionalism. Elvira Pulitano, in Toward A Native American Critical Theory, argues that Vizenor completely escapes any essentialist traps in his writing while other Indian writers are immersed in them: “More forcefully and more provocatively than the other theorists I have discussed, Vizenor combines revolutionary content and revolutionary style, presenting a significant alternative to Western hermeneutics. Rejecting any form of separatism and essentialism as far as Indian identity is concerned, he celebrates a discourse that is communal and comic.”74 Vizenor’s exceptionalism is not the case. No one can write, or say, anything about the world without ever using generalizations. Essentialism can be mediated; it cannot be escaped or “rejected” in “any form.” Monolithic treatments can be tempered by citing historical and cultural particulars, emphasizing differences as often as similarities. To escape essentialism entirely one would have to quit writing and speaking. This is one of the reasons why naming essentialists sometimes feels more like a witch hunt than a scholarly endeavor—to point out an essentialist will always require having four fingers pointed back at oneself. This is not a call to end the critique of monolithic treatments. Obviously, we have to question some such claims when they become overly reductive if we are to engage in serious scholarship.

### AT: Extinction/Dalley 16

#### Anticipating nuclear extinction breeds empathy and care – distancing ourselves from considering extinction reifies detached elitism

Offord, 17—Faculty of Humanities, School of Humanities Research and Graduate Studies, Bentley Campus (Baden, “BEYOND OUR NUCLEAR ENTANGLEMENT,” Angelaki, 22:3, 17-25, dml) [ableist language modifications denoted by brackets]

You are steered towards overwhelming and inexplicable pain when you consider the nuclear entanglement that the species Homo sapiens finds itself in. This is because the fact of living in the nuclear age presents an existential, aesthetic, ethical and psychological challenge that defines human consciousness. Although an immanent threat and ever-present danger to the very existence of the human species, living with the possibility of nuclear war has infiltrated the matrix of modernity so profoundly as to paralyse [shut down] our mind-set to respond adequately. We have chosen to ignore the facts at the heart of the nuclear program with its dangerous algorithm; we have chosen to live with the capacity and possibility of a collective, pervasive and even planetary-scale suicide; and the techno-industrial-national powers that claim there is “no immediate danger” ad infinitum.8 This has led to one of the key logics of modernity's insanity. As Harari writes: “Nuclear weapons have turned war between superpowers into a mad act of collective suicide, and therefore forced the most powerful nations on earth to find alternative and peaceful ways to resolve conflicts.”9 This is the nuclear algorithm at work, a methodology of madness. In revisiting Jacques Derrida in “No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives),”10 who described nuclear war as a “non-event,” it is clear that the pathology of the “non-event” remains as active as ever even in the time of Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un with their stichomythic nuclear posturing. The question of our times is whether we have an equal or more compelling capacity and willingness to end this impoverished but ever-present logic of pain and uncertainty. How not simply to bring about disarmament, but to go beyond this politically charged, as well as mythological and psychological nuclear algorithm? How to find love amidst the nuclear entanglement; the antidote to this entanglement? Is it possible to end the pathology of power that exists with nuclear capacity? Sadly, the last lines of Nitin Sawhney's “Broken Skin” underscore this entanglement: Just 5 miles from India's nuclear test site Children play in the shade of the village water tank Here in the Rajasthan desert people say They're proud their country showed their nuclear capability.11 As an activist scholar working in the fields of human rights and cultural studies, responding to the nuclear algorithm is an imperative. Your politics, ethics and scholarship are indivisible in this cause. An acute sense of care for the world, informed by pacifist and non-violent, de-colonialist approaches to knowledge and practice, pervades your concern. You are aware that there are other ways of knowing than those you are familiar and credentialed with. You are aware that you are complicit in the prisons that you choose to live inside,12 and that there is no such thing as an innocent bystander. You use your scholarship to shake up the world from its paralysis, abjection and amnesia; to unsettle the epistemic and structural violence that is ubiquitous to neoliberalism and its machinery; to create dialogic and learning spaces for the work of critical human rights and critical justice to take place. All this, and to enable an ethics of intervention through understanding what is at the very heart of the critical human rights impulse, creating a “dialogue for being, because I am not without the other.”13 Furthermore, as a critical human rights advocate living in a nuclear armed world, your challenge is to reconceptualise the human community as Ashis Nandy has argued, to see how we can learn to co-exist with others in conviviality and also learn to co-survive with the non-human, even to flourish. A dialogue for being requires a leap into a human rights frame that includes a deep ecological dimension, where the planet itself is inherently involved as a participant in its future. This requires scholarship that “thinks like a mountain.”14 A critical human rights approach understands that it cannot be simply human-centric. It requires a nuanced and arresting clarity to present perspectives on co-existence and co-survival that are from human and non-human viewpoints.15 Ultimately, you realise that your struggle is not confined to declarations, treaties, legislation, and law, though they have their role. It must go further to produce “creative intellectual exchange that might release new ethical energies for mutually assured survival.”16 Taking an anti-nuclear stance and enabling a post-nuclear activism demands a revolution within the field of human rights work. Recognising the entanglement of nuclearism with the Anthropocene, for one thing, requires a profound shift in focus from the human-centric to a more-than-human co-survival. It also requires a fundamental shift in understanding our human culture, in which the very epistemic and rational acts of sundering from co-survival with the planet and environment takes place. In the end, you realise, as Raimon Panikkar has articulated, “it is not realistic to toil for peace if we do not proceed to a disarmament of the bellicose culture in which we live.”17 Or, as Geshe Lhakdor suggests, there must be “inner disarmament for external disarmament.”18 In this sense, it is within the cultural arena, our human society, where the entanglement of subjective meaning making, nature and politics occurs, that we need to disarm. It is 1982, and you are reading Jonathan Schell's The Fate of the Earth on a Sydney bus. Sleeping has not been easy over the past few nights as you reluctantly but compulsively read about the consequences of nuclear war. For some critics, Schell's account is high polemic, but for you it is more like Rabindranath Tagore: it expresses the suffering we make for ourselves. What you find noteworthy is that although Schell's scenario of widespread destruction of the planet through nuclear weaponry, of immeasurable harm to the bio-sphere through radiation, is powerfully laid out, the horror and scale of nuclear obliteration also seems surreal and far away as the bus makes its way through the suburban streets. A few years later, you read a statement from an interview with Paul Tibbets, the pilot of “Enola Gay,” the plane that bombed Hiroshima. He says, “The morality of dropping that bomb was not my business.”19 This abstraction from moral responsibility – the denial of the implications on human life and the consequences of engagement through the machinery of war – together with the sweeping amnesia that came afterwards from thinking about the bombing of Hiroshima, are what make you become an environmental and human rights activist. You realise that what makes the nuclear algorithm work involves a politically engineered and deeply embedded insecurity-based recipe to elide the nuclear threat from everyday life. The spectre of nuclear obliteration, like the idea of human rights, can appear abstract and distant, not our everyday business. You realise that within this recipe is the creation of a moral tyranny of distance, an abnegation of myself with the other. One of modernity's greatest and earliest achievements was the mediation of the self with the world. How this became a project assisted and shaped through the military-industrial-technological-capitalist complex is fraught and hard to untangle. But as a critical human rights scholar you have come to see through that complex, and you put energies into challenging that tyranny of distance, to activate a politics, ethics and scholarship that recognises the other as integral to yourself. Ultimately, even, to see that the other is also within.20

### 2AC – L/T – Set Col

#### Populism increases settler colonialism – otherizes indigenous peoples as not meeting a standards a true nation state citizen

Balestrini 20 [Nassim W. Balestrini is professor of American Studies and Intermediality, and Director of the Centre for Intermediality Studies in Graz (CIMIG), Austria. Her publications and research interests include American literature and culture (predominantly of the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries) as well as adaptation and intermedial relations (as in her monograph From Fiction to Libretto: Irving, Hawthorne, and James as Opera, 2005, and in the edited volume Adaptation and American Studies, 2011). Currently, she is working on hip-hop artists’ life writing across media, American theatre history, contemporary American drama and opera, and the poet laureate traditions in the United States and in Canada, 3-26-2020, Performing Settler-Colonialism, SpringerLink, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41244-020-00171-2] Eric

While twenty-first-century populism is closely linked to social media and twentieth-century populism to radio and television, the theater provides insights into pre-1900 forms of populism. As the young American democracy, which was widely perceived as a daring experiment, sought to establish and legitimize itself and to create a democratic public between the American Revolution and the late-nineteenth-century Gilded Age, theatrical performances were often geared toward strengthening a sense of the white mainstream as the ›real‹ core of U.S. democracy and toward fostering notions of the United States being exceptional.

In the theater, both the artistic work that is performed and whatever we may know about those who paid to watch the show can provide insight into specific historical contexts in which a sense of who ›the people‹ are and what they stand for is communicated. This communication process is not only reciprocal (contents and performance, on the one hand, and audience response, on the other), but its microcosmic setting and temporally limited occurrence also invite discussion of larger socio-cultural considerations. In times when many people, especially from the lower classes, were illiterate, public address directed at ›common people‹ used theatrical performance to enthrall large audiences and sway public opinion. The theater thus was a venue where notions of being-in-common were negotiated: Who was to be considered part of the ›common people‹? Which rights and duties did these individuals have? How were those who did not belong to be treated? As the Early American Republic was fundamentally shaped by so-called settler-colonialism, such questions often revolved around the right place of Native Americans and other non-whites within American national imaginaries, as the first two plays will demonstrate. And in plays in which indigenous peoples of North America did not figure as racial ›Others‹ that vanished either by assimilation or death, notions of belonging to and owning land put a hands-on, common-man masculinity center stage.

#### Russian imperialism is worse – actively exiling indigenous peoples

Mirovalev 22 [Mansur Mirovalev is a Kyiv-based correspondent and television producer who has worked with the AP, Al-Jazeera, the BBC, CNN, the Los Angeles Times, National Geographic, The New York Times, RFE/RL, and Vice News, among others, in most of the former U.S.S.R, 1-23-2022, In Russia, Indigenous land defenders face intimidation and exile, No Publication, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/1/23/in-russia-indigenous-land-defenders-face-intimidation-and-exile] Eric

The police officers could have planted drugs in his backpack, Andrey Danilov says.

So he refused to show its contents to the officers who did not identify themselves or say why they approached him in late August 2021 in the Arctic town of Monchegorsk in northwestern Russia.

Drugs planted by police have become a routine part of a crackdown on liberal opposition, independent journalists and human rights activists.

But Danilov is none of the above.

He is a community leader of some 1,600 Saami living in Russia’s Murmansk region near Norway. They are a fraction of the Saami Indigenous nation that primarily lives in Arctic Scandinavia in the region which the Saami call Sapmi, a place also known as Lapland and advertised to tourists as Santa’s home.

Danilov says the search and subsequent detention were part of perennial official pressure on him, payback for leading a campaign against platinum and palladium mining on Saami lands, and for his victory in July in the Constitutional [Court](http://www.ksrf.ru/ru/News/Pages/ViewItem.aspx?ParamId=3623) which ruled that unlicensed hunting is the birthright of any Indigenous person as part of their traditional way of life.

Russian law suggests that only Indigenous people living in the wilderness and not in urban centres can hunt without a licence, but Danilov, who lives in the town of Severstal, proved that hunting is part of his culture and beliefs.

Danilov was released hours after the news of his detention reached other activists and independent media. But he knows the pressure is far from over.

“Their main goal is to either push me to flee abroad or to force me to shut up,” Danilov, 51, who is head of the grassroots group the Saami Heritage and Development Foundation, tells Al Jazeera.

In early November, 116 human and Indigenous rights groups and dozens of individuals signed an open [letter](https://indigenous-russia.com/archives/17091) to Russian President Vladimir Putin detailing the persecution of Danilov and other Indigenous activists across Russia. So far, the Kremlin has not replied.

## AT Grove and AB/Setcol

### 2AC FW

#### Humanist legal imaginaries are a valuable part of combatting anti-blackness. Refusing to compare material consequences of our methods reproduces exclusion of Black feminist thought.

Kupupika, 21—J.D. candidate at the University of Virginia School of Law (Trust, “Shaping Our Freedom Dreams: Reclaiming Intersectionality through Black Feminist Legal Theory,” Virginia Law Review, Vol. 107, (2021): 27-47, dml)

The collective struggle of the Black women in Beloved mirrors the essential function of Black feminist legal theory. Heeding Baby Suggs's call, Black feminist legal theorists imagine beyond the confines of the legal academy's margins, skillfully developing their own legal theory in order to write themselves into larger conversations. The push to imagine beyond erasure, as is emphasized tenderly by Baby Suggs's invocation, is a will to love hard the core, human elements of Black women's belonging. Not a holy mission, but a human one meant to unearth the depths of selfhood that are constantly denied until a new and liberating understanding is discovered.

It is critical to contextualize the function of Black feminist legal theory because, since it exists as a distinctly humanizing practice, it demands respect. Humanizing, here, distinguishes Black feminist practice from the normative approach of the legal academy.2 Legal scholarship offers well meaning, oftentimes essential, theoretical tools to the legal field, but there is no prescriptive requirement that scholarship operate in the service of any particular community. And while there is some merit to wrestling with intangible, looming social issues for its own sake, Black feminist legal theorists must contend with the specific, material realities present within their community with the goal of eradicating oppression.3 Black feminist legal theory has produced frameworks with deliberate and urgent liberatory purpose; any misuse of these frameworks is, at best, irresponsible and, at worst, a continuation of the legal field's devaluation of Black female scholarship.4

### 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.

### AT: Derivative Communism---2AC

#### “Derivative communism” fails

Gardiner, 20—Professor of Sociology at the University of Western Ontario (Michael, “Automatic for the People? Cybernetics and Left‐Accelerationism,” Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory, August 6, 2020, dml)

The notoriety of Project Cybersyn in Left‐accelerationist circles and beyond is perhaps not entirely surprising insofar it is the best‐known example of consciously deploying cybernetic principles for what were felt to be emancipatory ends, rather than the augmentation of state or corporate power.3 Due to circumstances very much beyond its control, the system was never brought fully online, and of course we will never know the directions in which it might have developed. However, thanks to Medina's detailed and exacting research, we have been made aware of the sometimes yawning gap between Beer's vision and how it aligned politically with the undeniably admirable goals of Chilean socialism, and the actual nature of Cybersyn's attempted implementation. For instance, worker participation was token at best, and not an integral part of system design; engineers and factory managers didn't really overcome their professional and class bias; and gender inequities with regard to design and organizational management were barely acknowledged, never mind meaningfully addressed (see also Espejo, 2009, p. 79). However, we are less concerned here with the historical realities of Cybersyn or the specific features of Chilean socialism than more general cybernetic principles and how they might lend support to any viable postcapitalist transition. Put differently, to indulge in a spot of “immanent critique,” do the claims of Left‐accelerationist cybernetics regarding enhanced possibilities for human freedom, solidarity, and autonomous self‐actualization match the reality (or potential reality)? What is crucial vis‐à‐vis any such discussion is the (often implicit) suggestion, outlined in the previous section, as to the qualitative differences between first‐ and second‐order cybernetics, together with the idea that Left criticisms typically, and illegitimately, conflate the two. Rather than the use of negative feedback oriented to the maintenance of order by inhibiting counteraction, so the argument goes, second‐order cybernetics is concerned with positive feedback, working through amplification and enhancement of the original signal, whereby the presence of complexity and chaotic states demonstrates the non‐linearity of systems and their capacity for unpredictable change in the pursuit of open‐ended (but self‐correcting) goal attainment. And yet, a careful examination of writings by the likes of Tiqqun or Châtelet demonstrate that they were generally aware of different currents in cybernetic thinking, but nevertheless argue that, whatever its ostensible methods and goals, second‐order cybernetics promulgates a new regime of power and control that dovetails in many respects with the requirements of today's supercharged technocapitalism. Going further, they intimate that even some version of “cybernetic socialism,” with presumably novel human‐machine assemblages, might not necessarily escape this morass.

Arguments concerning this shift to a new regime of power often make reference to one of Deleuze's late essays, or at least show its influence: the brief but tantalizing “Postscript on Societies of Control.” In nuce, Deleuze's position is that the type of “disciplinary” society theorized by Foucault, marked by various enclosures (schools, factories, military barracks, bureaucracies) wherein social behaviors were scrutinized and minutely organized in space‐time so as to enhance their productive efficacy during an era of industrial capitalism, has been superseded by a quite different system of ruling more relevant to the present situation of powerful global corporations and the centrality of the “knowledge economy.” That is, whereas disciplinary societies concern themselves with a process of homogenizing subjectification largely through panoptical means, by which compliant individuals are integrated seamlessly into the mass, control societies are post‐panoptical, and rely instead on “ultrarapid forms of free‐floating control” (Deleuze, 1992, p. 4). Crucial with regard to the latter is the continuous accumulation of statistical information via the elicitation of communicative exchange across the entire social field. The focus ceases to be the atomized individual, but rather a numerically‐based assessment of the “dividual,” by which Deleuze means a generically average subject made comprehensible through opinion surveys, sampling techniques, and market research. Control is now exercised, not through hierarchical, top‐down management, much less by fostering techniques of hermeneutical self‐examination, but the pattern analysis of myriad electronic traces and the subtle shaping (or “nudging”) of micro‐behaviors via what Deleuze calls “universal modulation.” The key is that these environments are not segmented and closed, but fluid and open, and that social actors participate in and maintain the system dynamically through their own seemingly voluntaristic choices and actions, à la Lefebvre's “splendid impression of spontaneity and harmony.”4

The relevance of Deleuze's “Postscript” to our concerns should be fairly obvious. First‐order cybernetics is in lockstep with the nature and demands of what we might call late‐disciplinary societies. Second‐order cybernetics, by contrast, appears more compatible with progressive, even liberatory aims. An indication of this latter orientation is that many of the key figures in British cybernetics situated themselves on the Left of the political spectrum, and cultivated non‐conformist and often explicitly anti‐authoritarian interests, even if Beer himself was something of a “champagne socialist.” Yet, in embracing complexity, contingency, and openness, second‐order cybernetics is not wholly immune to the mentality of control and governance. Indeed, the types of non‐linear self‐organization as discussed by Deleuze are necessarily premised on disequilibrium and chaos: the multiplication of horizontal, autonomously‐structured communicative networks is the new mode of control, not any sort of emancipation from prevailing systems of power. Control societies depend precisely on the constant elicitation of affects and desires, as opposed to their repression or curtailment, provided they can be channeled into forms of communicative action subject to ongoing surveillance and statistical quantification. In second‐order cybernetics, as Maroš Krivý (2018, p. 18) usefully puts it, “power relations reproduce through proliferating indeterminacy, nonlinearity and complexity, rather than by curbing these into determinate, linear and unidirectional forms.”

Writing from the perspective of the French context of the 1990s, but hardly irrelevant to our own era of “nudge theory,” smart cities, and the like, Châtelet (2014, p. 23) suggests that the mania for incorporating concepts of “chaos” and “self‐organization” into what he regards as pseudo‐liberationist thinking was part and parcel of the intellectuals’ post‐1968 capitulation to “market democracy.” The latter is foursquare in favor of the “right to difference,” calling for an end to heavy‐handed state interference and concomitantly eulogizing social mobility and permanent “nomadism.” But that's only because the neoliberal market itself loves fluidity, movement, and constant acceleration, seeking to capture the “creative power of chaos” through a “cyberpolitics” that generates order out of the disorder of self‐regulation. Authoritarianism of the obvious variety is replaced by the covert injunction to produce and consume information, to subscribe enthusiastically to a universal “will to communicate.” Yet the encouragement to speak in the context of today's “social (or “global”) factory,” to cooperate, to express one's “authentic” thoughts and feelings, is ultimately a coerced and deadening gesture. For Châtelet, the “chaos of opinions and microdecisions” relies on a rhetoric of freedom via auto‐emergence, but there is always an apparatus of control working discretely behind the scenes, and hence a crucial distinction to be made between powerful designers and operators and those being operated on. Since the conventional state apparatus is now too slow and clumsy to respond effectively to the demands of the new fluid social ontology, scientific management of political sovereignty is rendered much more palatable when presented in the guise of refined “pressures exerted by an anonymous and nonlocalized entity” (p. 33). This constitutes a “ventriloquism” of power‐effects operating through such ubiquities as globalized market forces, intermeshed communicative networks, and the relentless organization of “public opinion.” Any particular social atom, the locus classicus of disciplinary societies, is irrelevant here; echoing Deleuze, for Châtelet what's important is the modulation of network fluidity via “hydro‐cybernetics,” and the effectuation of valuational equivalences across numerous domains through a universal system of inputs and outputs. Whereas the Young Turks of the new cybernetic order (the children of Lefebvre's cybernanthropoi?) conflate horizontality with enhanced democracy, Châtelet is adamant that the former does not in any way necessarily vouchsafe the latter. Indeed, horizontal formations concentrate power in vital nodal points, and are more effective for being anonymous and unseen, everywhere and nowhere at once, in contrast with “overly visible verticalities” that might precipitate resentment and opposition. The result is the “well‐mannered anarchism” of the market, which, unlike the “romantic” anarchism of old, threatens no societal upheavals ‐ first, because geared towards optimal management of a coolly technocratic nature, but also insofar as there is no worker “downtime” in an age of 24/7 networked production/consumption, and hence little opportunity to foment dreams of revolt.

From the vantage‐point of the early 2000s, in The Cybernetic Hypothesis Tiqqun takes some of these arguments further. Although Cybersyn isn't referenced directly here, they hone in on the technophile Left's contemporaneous fascination with cybernetic possibilities, anticipating later positions advanced by the Left‐accelerationists and “fully automated luxury communists.” According to Tiqqun, the period of upheaval around 1968 could be interpreted as the last reverberation of a cycle of struggles that dominated Western societies over the two previous decades. Facing the manifold shocks of rising worker militancy, the energy crisis, and precipitously‐declining rates of profit, global capitalism required full‐scale reconstruction, and, as discussed above, cybernetics fit the bill very well. However, the logic of cybernetics appealed to certain technologically‐oriented critics of capitalism as well, such as those advocating an “ecosocialism” premised on equilibrium and a steady‐state economy through decentralization and differentiation, especially in light of the Club of Rome's famous 1972 document “Limits to Growth.” For Tiqqun (2020b, p. 98), however, this represents a kind of “social capitalism” seeking change through the democratization or socialization of the “decisions of production,” as if a full‐blown post‐Fordist society could emerge spontaneously from a dispersed, popular “collective intelligence.” As an example, a “new social contract” like universal basic income adopts the logic of the current system's emphasis on “human capital” and the metaphysics of production. It is not incompatible with money, commodity exchange, or markets, and would only free up more disposable income so as to accelerate the circulation of goods and information at the behest of processes of value‐capture (see also Beech, 2019, p. 93). Ultimately, for Tiqqun this would make the labor force itself more, rather than less pliable. If the “new spirit of capitalism” is cybernetic to the core, so are “Left” solutions to the present crisis that rely extensively on repurposing existing infrastructures, neoliberal subjective dispositions, and logistics, so as to end up with a “communism of capital.” Or, to put it differently, any approach advocating the “framing of the world in terms of problems” is not a genuine communist project, but in reality another path to capitalism (Tiqqun, 2020b, p. 109; also Culp, 2018, p. 167). In this way, cybernetic capitalism has absorbed its ostensible opponents into an overarching paradigm of social regulation governed by a managerial reason, disposed to what The Invisible Committee (2015, p. 124) terms the “cult of the engineer,” that can serve the political objectives of “Left” just as well as “Right.” Even Pickering (2010, p. 273) admits that Cybersyn could have been re‐engineered by technicians and state functionaries of the Pinochet regime, and deployed to more nefarious ends than Beer would probably have imagined, which is likely not the kind of “repurposing” Left‐accelerationists have in mind.

It is noteworthy that Alex Williams has written independently about the relationship between Deleuze's theory of control societies and cybernetics, and it is therefore important to consider his arguments here. Rather than contrast the US and UK developments, and primarily associate “first‐order” cybernetics with the former and “second‐order” with the latter (a convention we have followed here), Williams advances a different set of distinctions. That is, he reserves the term first‐order for 20th‐century cybernetics in general, whatever the differences between, say, Weiner or Beer (odd in light of his admiration for Cybersyn, which gets only passing mention here), and suggests second‐order is a phrase better‐suited to the networked “platform” systems of the 21st‐century, such as Airbnb, Facebook, or Uber. First‐order cybernetics, by Williams’ reckoning, follows the domineering control logic as characterized above: it aims to modulate action via recourse to homeostatic equilibrium so as to realize pre‐set goals. In contrast, “platforms” are design architectures that work primarily not through constraint, but by enabling actions through positive feedback circuits that cannot be prefigured in advance. Platforms, writes Williams (2015, p. 223), are “materialised transcendentals – they act as conditions of possibility for other processes and entities to exist.” As “entrenched” infrastructures they do restrain in certain ways (for example, Microsoft owns the vast majority of home computer operating systems and forces users to conform to its licensing arrangements and surreptitious forms of data collection), but they also provide the ground for unpredictably contingent or “generative” outcomes, and hence contain hitherto‐untapped potentialities for autonomous self‐organization outside the aegis of state and capital. Yet, Williams is notably vague on what forms of such self‐organization might be possible here, or what exactly is being “enhanced” through the utilization of such platforms in ways that might be considered “emancipatory,” assuming this doesn't bolster the hegemonic power and virtual ubiquity of existing platforms. As argued earlier, control systems work precisely through such “enhancements,” via the solicitation, reinforcement, and augmentation of myriad desires and affects, so long as they can be successfully captured and “put to use.” “Platform capitalism” emerged after the 2008 crisis, argues Sebastian Olma (2016, p. 171), because of capital's need to both create and exploit a situation of permanent entrepreneurialism and precariousness in an era of falling profits, disinvestment, and declines in manufacturing productivity. In other words, the harnessing of auto‐exploitation is integral to these systems’ very design, whereby “platform proletariats” are pauperized both materially (participants in the “gig economy,” once time, expenses, and insurance are factored in, earn much less than even the minimum wage) and in terms of a relentless degradation of skill and knowledge. As such, it's difficult to see the liberatory potential here, insofar as such platforms are essentially about extending market logic into any and all domains of human life. In this context, Beer's algedonic meters, however crude or well‐intentioned, seem to anticipate today's omnipresent data capture and the vast amounts of unpaid digital labor it exploits (Amazon user reviews, Facebook “likes,” etcetera), which are all forms of “soft” coercion encouraging the formation of certain subjective dispositions in line with the demands of hyper‐productivity and acquisitive consumption. Towards the end of the article, Williams belatedly suggests that alternative platforms could be constructed in the service of non‐capitalistic ends. Yet, it's far from clear how these “socialized” systems could ever be designed and implemented, never mind constitute any sort of threat to the monopolistic, privately‐owned platforms dominating Western societies today, and even if they were, such a scheme remains vulnerable to the objections of Tiqqun et al. as to the foibles of “social capitalism.”

### AT: Girard/Mimetic Desire (Bauman ’15)

#### Their Bauman evidence uses ‘mimetic violence’ to predict the aff’s drive for mastery---this is vapid---not all desire is mimetic

Wilson ‘17 [Andrew, Teaching Pastor at King’s Church London, and has theology degrees from Cambridge (MA), London School of Theology (MTh), and King’s College London (PhD). “Debunking Girard” <https://thinktheology.co.uk/blog/article/debunking_girard>)NFleming

René Girard is intriguing for several reasons, but for me the most intriguing is that so many people take his famous mimetic theory seriously. I've been pointed in his direction numerous times by well-meaning readers (often, it must be said, eager to dissuade me from preaching substitutionary atonement), and there are sections of the academy where his (admittedly fascinating) concept is revered as if it has been demonstrated, rather than merely suggested. So Joshua Landy's article, Deceit, Desire and the Literature Professor: Why Girardians Exist, is very welcome, not just for its readability and caustic wit—though that too—but for its compelling critique of a widespread idea. Landy certainly pulls no punches. “What’s the difference between Girardianism and Scientology?” he asks early on. “Why has the former been more successful in the academy? Why is the madness of theory so, well, contagious?” He begins by summarising Girardianism for the uninitiated: (1) all desire is “mimetic,” in that we desire things because other people desire them; (2) therefore we have rivalry, and thus violence; (3) thus we have scapegoating, as a single victim takes the collective rage of a society; (4) at which point we turn to Jesus, and find that the victim of collective violence is actually innocent, which exposes the structure of society and thus removes its power. Elements (3) and (4) are, he suggests, “so fanciful that it’s hard to know what to say about them,” but the body of the article is taken up with rejecting (1) and (2), both sociologically and literarily. So, for a start, shared desire does not produce rivalry or violence unless, as Hobbes argued a long time back, there is not enough to go round: Is it really true that all violence is a by-product of mimetic rivalry? Here’s the kind of situation Girard is asking us to imagine. Two men, Jimmy and Joey, stand beside a lake on a hot day. Jimmy decides to go for a swim. Joey, who would never have had this idea in his life, immediately decides to do likewise. Inevitably, this causes a death struggle between the two men as they fight over the lake. The scenario above is of course absurd. Not only is it ludicrous to imagine that Joey couldn’t have had his own, autonomous hankering to take a dip (we’ll come to that in a moment); it’s also ludicrous to imagine that anyone in their right mind would start a fight in these circumstances. (Beaches are simply littered with people not fighting with each other.) But why not? Isn’t it true that “as soon as we desire something that is desired by a model sufficiently close to us in space and time . . . we strive to snatch the object away from him”? No, of course it isn’t. Jimmy and Joey are standing right next to each other, yet Joey has no desire whatsoever to deprive Jimmy of his opportunity to swim. And the reason is simple: there’s plenty of lake to go around. Mimetic desire is not enough to cause rivalry; in order to have rivalry, you also need scarcity of resources. Neither is all desire mimetic in the first place: “Nothing is more mimetic,” declares Girard, “than the desire of a child.” One wonders, has he ever met a child? Has he ever tried to feed one a brussels sprout? “Yum yum,” we say, absurdly hoping that our desire for healthy food will carry over mimetically. “Blech,” says the child, unceremoniously spitting it out. You can’t get a child to want to eat brussels sprouts, because this kind of desire depends on liking, and children just don’t like brussels sprouts. They do not get all their desires from parents (even in such a wonderfully closed environment, with so little outside stimulus). They can see their parents eagerly eating healthy food till the cows come home, but they will stand right by their decision to yell for marshmallows. (Not to mention their decision to yell for more. Where did little Suzie get the desire to hear the same story ninety-six times in a row? Surely not from the grownup she’s tormenting with it.) At this point, Girard’s defenders might be inclined to respond that although desire is not always mimetic, it sometimes is, and that’s what Girard really meant. To which Landy responds: Well, yes and no. I mean, imagine if I tried to stage a comeback for Thales, that famous preSocratic philosopher who claimed (more or less) that everything is made of water. Here I am, then, running around saying “everything is water” to anyone who will listen. “Don’t be ridiculous,” you tell me, “not everything is water.” “All right,” I concede, “only some things are water (namely, the watery things); but isn’t that more modest observation an important one to bear in mind?” The problem with my “Some Things Are Water” campaign is not that the claim is false; it’s that everyone already knows it.

#### Mimetic theory’s scapegoating argument is literally that sin, in the Christian sense, makes human culture ontologically irredeemable via mimesis---this monolithic characterization of culture erases nuance AND turns itself.

Ormerod ’18 [Neil’ 2018; Professor of Theology, in the Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry, Australian Catholic University; “René Girard, Unlikely Apologist”, https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/rene-girard-unlikely-apologist]

Girard and Culture As Kaplan notes, Girard argues that the scapegoating mechanism marks the **origins of** religion and **culture**, which are somewhat to be identified, sort of religion-culture (109). In this way Girard renders the universal presence of primal religion more transparent, not as merely the product of primitive superstition, but as inherent in the notion of culture itself. My **concern** here is that Girard’s portrayal of the origins of culture **present culture itself as intrinsically problematic**; or as Milbank suggests, there is more than a hint here of the **ontological priority of violence**. Culture’s origins lie in a primitive originating murder, recast as a founding religious myth to mask its true nature. Culture/religion is then built on a lie. The gospel is then cast as the unmasking of this lie and the laying bear of the scapegoating mechanism and our complicity in it. Again my concern is not with the plausibility of this construct to explain important features of primal religious culture. **The question is whether it is a complete account**. Is there a place in our story of culture’s origins for **intelligence**, **reasonableness** and **responsibility?** Is there a place for a **non-mimetic wonder** and **awe** in an awaking into consciousness of the universe of being in those first human beings? In a more down-to-earth way, is there a place for the **practical intelligence** that developed the **axe heads** and **spears**, the **pottery and leatherwork**, the **nascent agriculture** and the like, that allowed human populations to **grow and flourish** creating the leisure for an emerging mathematics and science to raise above the demands of common sense and strive for genuine explanatory knowing? If I may draw on Eric Voegelin’s cultural typology, Girard is strong on cosmological culture in his account of primal religious culture; and equally cognizant of soteriological culture in the role he gives to the gospel; but what is missing is any recognition of the role of **anthropological culture** (always keeping in mind that these are types, not cultures per se).7 While Girard acknowledges the importance of Karl Jasper’s notion of an axial period (115), it seems to me that he does not attend to the two different **responses that emerge** at this time **to cosmologically dominated cultures**: one anthropological as exemplified in the person of Socrates; the other soteriological as initially revealed in the Old Testament culminating in the person of Jesus. These represent two different **responses to the mimetic crisis**. The first seeks an **intelligent**, **reasonable** and **responsible** resolution to the crisis; the second is to recognize the innocence of the victims of history. These possibilities suggest three ways of resolution: the way of sacrificial violence (the scapegoating mechanism); the way of self-transcendence (anthropological); and the way of self-sacrificing love (soteriological).8 One advantage here is that it allows us to understand the scapegoating mechanism as parasitic on a more fundamental good; it is a privation of the good and hence not in itself foundational to culture. While it may share in the omnipresence of sin, still sin is not fundamental to what it is to be human. Conclusion It seems to me what we have playing out here in the realm of cultural anthropology is the very traditional theological schema of grace, nature and sin. Girard’s approach, it seems to me, is a transposition into the cultural realm of a very **Augustinian grace-sin dialectic**, and carries with it all the **problems** associated with that dialectic: e.g., rather than the total corruption of the sinner we now have the **totally corrupt origins of human culture**. Into this dark picture the recognition of a human nature **teleologically oriented to meaning, truth and goodness** offers **a shard of light**, something that may be diminished by sin but **never extinguished**. Indeed I might go so far as to suggest that without the recognition of this “natural” element, Girard’s cultural grace-sin dialectic runs the risk of **perpetuating a further system of “us graced—them sinners” and consequent mimetic doubling and the very scapegoating that he was seeking to avoid.**

### AT: General Strike/Cognitive Strike---2AC

#### Cognitive strikes are utopian, empirically impotent, and get cracked down on.

Nowak and Gallas, 14—PhD in political science AND Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Kassel (Jörg and Alexander, “Mass Strikes Against Austerity in Western Europe – A Strategic Assessment,” Global Labour Journal, Vol. 5, No. 3, dml)

The frequency of general strikes during the crisis years surpasses anything seen post-1980: the number of general strikes in the EU-15 plus Norway was 18 between 1980 and 1989, 26 from 1990 to 1999 and 27 between 2000 and 2009 (Hamann et al., 2013). In contrast, there were 38 general strikes in the period between 2010 and May 2014 (own count). The focus of this strike wave is in the five countries with the highest incidence of general strikes since 1980, which are all severely affected by the Eurozone crisis: 19 of these 38 strikes were in Greece, six in Italy, five in Portugal, four in Spain and three in France. In Belgium, there was one general strike in January 2012, the first one since 1984 (ibid.).

But this increase in the incidence of general strikes is no reason for optimism on the side of labour: The context of the wave of general strikes is a long-term decline of the relevance of economic strikes in the same countries. While the average number of strike days per year had been 16.6 per 10,000 employees in 1980-2 for the EU-15 plus Norway, it fell continuously to 1.1 in 2004-6 (Hamann et al., 2013). The strike activity also fell if we consider the share of workers (out of 1,000) on strike: In Western Europe, it plunged from 97 in the 1970s to 67 in the 1980s and 29 in the 1990s (Scheuer, 2006: 148f). In the 2000s, the number went down again, this time to 21 (European Commission, 2011: 46; Vandaele, 2011: 29). In other words, unions were increasingly unable to organise sectoral strikes, which can be explained with the restructuring of work and labour relations in the neoliberal era and its results: the overall decline of industries with a strong union presence; a secular decline of union density; and the fact that many trade unions focussed their strategies on (industrial) core workers, whose numbers also decreased (Vandaele, 2011: 32f.).

The upsurge of general strikes is a consequence of the fact national governments increasingly adopted neoliberal and austerity agendas: welfare state retrenchment moved the terrain of struggle to the political level. Governments curtailed social rights and workers rights, as well as cutting public expenditure. This development gained traction in the course of the global financial and economic crisis when governments started to impose draconian austerity agendas in an authoritarian fashion. This suggests that the increasing popularity of political strikes and general strikes is due to the fact that governments on the whole refused to negotiate with unions when they adopted the politics of austerity.

While the participation in general and political strikes since 2008 was spectacular, they were on the whole unsuccessful. There is not a single case of a government offering substantial concessions after one of the general strikes since 2008. Similarly, there were minor concessions only in one case, the general strike in Belgium in January 2012. This in stark contrast to the period before 2008: Between 1980 and 2011, there were government concessions in 27 of 68 cases (40 per cent; substantial: 8, minor: 19) and no concessions in 41 of 68 cases (60 per cent) (Hamann et al., 2013). Post-2008, one and two day general strikes (and even the fighting strike in France in 2010) were ineffective regarding material concessions. In other words, the class relations of forces in the crisis were unfavourable to labour.

The Limits of Quantitative Analyses

Interpretations of the strike wave since 2008 diverge considerably. Stefan Schmalz and Nico Weinmann argue that there is a trend towards more irregular conflicts and more incoherence between countries compared with the wave of mass strikes from 1968 to 1973 (Schmalz and Weinmann, 2013). Kurt Vandaele contends that there is an increasing convergence between European countries, both in terms of the long term decline of economic strikes (Vandaele, 2011) and the growing significance of political mass strikes (Vandaele, 2013). Gregor Gall also sees a trend towards convergence, which consists in the growing significance of political mass strikes and the emergence of the public sector as the centre of trade union activities (Gall, 2012).

Both Vandaele and Gall highlight that there are limits to quantitative analyses as they have been conducted in the past 30 years, thus questioning to some extent their own approaches. Vandaele implies that if strike action takes place in the public sector, it is not primarily at decreasing profits, but at disrupting everyday life through the suspension of public services. In this context, the number of days not worked, or of workers participating, are not the best indicators for the strength of a stoppage because it is possible to block a service with a small number of workers (Vandaele, 2011: 33). It follows that analyses of labour activism should take on board qualitative factors in order to grasp the full picture. Gall highlights other aspects when he discusses the limits of quantitative approaches: Many political strikes in the public sector and many general strikes are not counted in the official statistics – despite the fact that they have been a dominant form of industrial action in Europe at least since the 2000s (Gall, 2012: 14f). For Gall the decrease of strike activity is exaggerated if one operates on the grounds of these numbers.

The limits of quantitative approaches are visible in Schmalz and Weinmann’s analysis, which draws its political conclusions almost entirely from an evaluation of quantitative data about ‘nonnormative conflicts’. They state that trade unions exercise less control over mobilizations than they did between 1968 and 1973 (Schmalz and Weinmann, 2013). It disappears from the picture that many of the big trade union-led stoppages in the 1970s drew their momentum from wildcat strikes (Birke, 2007: 218f, 274f.; Gallas and Nowak, 2013), which is not the case for the current European strike wave, where union federations predominantly instigate the action.1 Hamann et al. (2013) also work with a quantitative approach, trying to detect patterns that explain under which circumstances general strikes yield successful results. Since the current strike wave is marked by the general absence of concessions, this methodology is difficult to apply. In contrast, Gall’s analysis considers the political context of the European strike wave, explaining its novelty by highlighting that unions are either excluded ‘from the process of political exchange’ (Gall, 2012: 2) or that political negotiations increasingly yield poor results for workers. Following him, there has been an erosion of corporatism, which means that the political strike became the primary means of struggle in France, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal. According to Gall, this form of strike has strength to it because it entails big political mobilizations as ‘expression of collective discontent against and contestation of neoliberal policies’ (Gall, 2012: 20).

A Luxemburgian Typology

In this section, we propose a qualitative account of mass strikes inspired by Rosa Luxemburg. With regard to the recent wave of mass strikes, we can show what type of industrial action we are examining, and where its strategic limits lie. For this purpose, we develop a typology of strikes based on a qualitative description with four axes.

LUXEMBURG’S UNDERSTANDING OF MASS STRIKES

While scholars tend to reflect on the political context of political mass strikes and its strategic implications, they tend to neglect two aspects: The strikes are defensive strikes, and they are, to a large extent, without success, -- despite the unprecedented size of the mobilizations. Before we elaborate on these aspects, we will discuss the concept of the ‘mass strike’, which is used by Gall and Vandaele without providing a proper definition. We believe that Rosa Luxemburg’s work provides some insightful observations on mass strikes, which can be used to determine the concept. These can be found in her text The Mass Strike, the Political Parties and the Trade Unions, written in 1906, after the strike wave that led up to the (failed) Russian revolution in 1905. Obviously, there is no revolutionary situation in contemporary Europe (quite the contrary), but we believe that we can gain some general insights from Luxemburg by isolating her observations from their historical context.

She does not confine the concept of ‘mass strike’ to political strikes and highlights that purely economic strikes sometimes very quickly get a political dimension. One of her examples is a stoppage in the railway repair workshops in Kiev in July 1903. The strike movement grew after the police arrested two delegates of the railway workers. The subsequent blockade of the local railway station led to a police massacre with more than 30 dead workers. On the next day, a general strike started in all parts of Kiev. Inspired by these events, there was a general strike in Jekaterinoslaw in early August 1903 (Luxemburg, 1906/2008: 125). The famous strike in Petersburg in January 1905 exhibits a similar dynamic: Two workers were dismissed because of their membership in a legal official workers’ association. About one week later, 200,000 workers attended a march to the castle of the Tsar in order to submit a petition. A bloodbath followed, leaving between 200 and 1,000 workers dead. This in turn paved the way for a wave of mass strikes that lasted until the summer of that year, which led to the introduction of the 8-hour day in many sectors of the Russian economy (12 to 14 hours were the standard before the events) and to wage increases of around 15 per cent all over the country (Luxemburg, 1906/2008: 127f).

But Luxemburg underlines differences as well: While the strikes in 1903 started as sectoral, economic strikes and became political conflicts in their final phase, the mass strikes in 1905 reversed the pattern: they started with a unified political programme and led to many partial and independently organized economic strikes all over Russia. This distinction is not just of historical importance, but pertains to a central feature of Luxemburg’s understanding of mass strikes: The mass strike does not exhibit a unified pattern and cannot be identified ahead of its unfolding in a concrete struggle: ‘Its adaptability, its efficiency, the factors of its origin are constantly changing’ (Luxemburg, 1906/2008: 140). It is only possible ex post to chart mass strikes in a given conjuncture. But there are some defining features, which we can extract from Luxemburg’s account of the events in Russia: First of all, they disrupt political life, affect public discourse and provoke massive responses from governments or other state bodies (Luxemburg, 1906/2008: 140f). A second central aspect is the mobilizing character of mass strikes for the working class: Workers experience the power that goes along with collective action, gain experience in political struggles and see the need for organization. Importantly, these are qualitative features: the mass strike is not defined on the grounds of simple numbers (be they absolute numbers of participants or working days lost or relative numbers compared to the size of the population), but in terms of its effects, both on the political scene and the working class. In this sense, the 1984-5 Miners’ Strike in Britain can be seen as a mass strike (even though it was confined to one industry); in contrast, the public sector strikes in Germany in 1992 and 2006 involving hundreds of thousands of workers are not necessarily mass strikes, because they did not have persistent effects on the political scene and their mobilizing character for the German working class was limited.

Importantly and contrary to some readings of her work, Luxemburg does not glorify the mass strike. She underlines that there are limits to its effectiveness in the Russian context: While the first general strike in January 1905 led to a national wave of economic strikes, and a second national strike in October ended with political concessions of the Tsar, the third general strike in December resulted in defeat: An armed uprising of workers in response to state repression against the strike in Moscow was crushed by the military, and efforts by the social democrats to organize a fourth national strike in 1906 were not successful (Luxemburg, 1906/2008: 139f.). Luxemburg concludes the chapter with the following words: ‘The role of the political mass strike alone is exhausted, but, at the same time, the transition of the mass strike into a general popular rising is not yet accomplished. (…) The stage remains empty for the time being.’ (Luxemburg, 1906/2008: 140). This suggests that calls for mass strikes are only useful in specific conjunctures, and that other forms of political and social action prevail in other periods.

FOUR ANALYTICAL DISTINCTIONS

Against this backdrop, we propose a typology of the mass strike inspired by Luxemburg’s analysis (cf. Gallas and Nowak, 2012: 25f.). We use four distinctions to describe the different types of the mass strike. These distinctions are inspired by Luxemburg, who operated in a similar way without providing a systematic conceptual elaboration. They are analytical in character. Of course, the reality of a particular strike is always messy and sometimes produces grey zones that complicate or even defy categorization. But it is impossible to understand the causes, dynamics and effects of strikes without the use of analytical distinctions.

1. The first distinction concerns the aims of strikes. It runs between economic strikes that relate predominantly to the workplace, and political strikes that address extra-economic issues. Economic strikes address issues such as wages, layoffs and working conditions. One example for a political strike is the fight for universal suffrage: the labour movements in Belgium, Britain and Germany in the 19th and early 20th century demanded the vote not just through demonstrations, but also by going on strike. Luxemburg emphasizes that political and economic strikes constantly blend into each other (Luxemburg, 1906/2008: 144).

2. The second distinction relates to the extension of strikes: there are ‘partial’ strikes that affect just one sector of the economy (sectoral strikes) or one particular region or city (local or regional strikes), and general strikes that cut across sectors and are held at the national level (for Luxemburg’s use of the term ‘partial’, see 1906/2008: 142).

3. The third distinction is about the direction of a strike movement: Offensive strikes aim to reach a goal set by the strikers themselves (that is, wage increases or the recognition of independent unions by the state and employers), while defensive strikes try to block measures proposed by the government or employers (that is, layoffs or cutbacks of pensions) or are intended to defend rights such as universal suffrage or freedom of the press (Luxemburg, 1906/2008: 119).

4. The fourth distinctions reflects the form of strike: Demonstrative strikes voice the opinion of workers and are limited to one or two days, while fighting strikes are about striking until the goal of the stoppage or a compromise has been reached, or until the workers decide to give in (Luxemburg, 1906/2008: 143).

The vast majority of the mass strikes in Western Europe since 2008, on the grounds of our typology, are political strikes because they are directed against plans of the government to restrict rights and cut social expenditure. Furthermore, they are defensive and general strikes. Finally, they are usually demonstrative strikes limited to one or two days.2 In a nutshell, the type of strike dominating the Western European wave of mass strikes is the political, general, defensive and demonstrative strike.

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC PATTERNS

Vandaele stresses that there are regional patterns of strike activity, and he is grouping European countries into five categories according to their different industrial relations regimes (Vandaele, 2011). For a group of ‘Southern’ European countries – France, Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal – he describes a common pattern characterized by ‘long-lasting employer hostility towards union recognition’ (Vandaele, 2011: 16) and a weak institutionalization of collective bargaining. Similarly, Gall argues that the political mass strike became the main strike method in the same countries since the late 1990s, reflecting the fact that the ties between social democratic parties and the union movement have not been very close in these countries, given the huge weight of communist trade unions (Gall, 2012: 20ff).

What is noteworthy is that the countries in question are also those where the vast majority of political strikes against austerity happened after 2008. So one could see this as a case of path dependency rather than a new political dynamic. But there is still a much higher frequency of these strikes since 2009. This suggests that two factors come together: First, the countries already had an established tradition of the political strike, which emerged in the late 1990s; and, second, the countries are worst hit by the Eurozone crisis (with the exception of France). Besides, there is a genuinely new development in that the strike wave reaches countries that do not belong to this first group: there were political strikes against austerity in the UK (which, according to Vandaele, belong to a Western European group) and in Belgium (which belongs to a Western-central European group). In the UK, the strikes have so far been confined to the public sector, but there are debates among the unions about the possibility of a genuine general strike (Gallas and Nowak, 2012: 70ff) – something that has not taken place in the country since 1926.

Political Strikes Against Austerity as a Reflection of the Conjuncture

The type of strike that is prevailing in the Eurozone Crisis, the defensive political strike, is both a reflection of a specific political conjuncture and of class relations of forces unfavourable to labour. Two aspects of this situation are important for debates on strategies: the fact that the strikes have been unsuccessful to a large extent and the fact that they are facing ‘physical limits’ in the form of violent state repression.

Against this backdrop, it appears that many of the big trade unions in the countries that are affected heavily by the crisis are halfway stuck between organizing protests against austerity and attempts to keep channels of negotiations open. This is changing slowly in some of the countries, for example in Britain, Spain and in Portugal, where unions are beginning to take a more confrontational stance vis-à-vis governments. To illustrate the two aspects, we will take a closer look at the strike against the pension cuts in France in October 2010, given that they were most advanced form of protest against austerity: it went against the dominant pattern insofar as the strike was not a demonstrative strike limited to one or two days; in fact, it lasted for about three weeks.

THE FRENCH STRIKE AGAINST PENSION CUTS

In spring 2010, the French government announced pension cuts. As a reaction, a three-week general strike against pension cuts erupted in October 2010, the main issue being the increase of the retirement age from 60 to 62. Similar mobilizations in 1995 and 2006 had brought substantial concessions (Lindvall, 2011). The strongholds of the 2010 strike were the refineries.

The strike was unsuccessful despite the fact that there was a broad consensus among the main trade unions behind the strike and public opinion was in favour: According to opinion polls, 60 to 70 percent of the population supported it. Furthermore, participation in demonstrations was high – much higher than in 1968 and comparable to 1995 (1968: 500,000; in 2010, 2.5-3 millions on various occasions). However, in 2010, the number of workers on strike was comparably low: estimates run between 500,000 and 1,000,000. In 1968, nine million workers were on strike, and in 1995, it was considerably more than one million workers. (During the 2006 protest movement, there were no mass strikes) (Gallas and Nowak, 2012: 56ff; USS, 2010).

In 2010, participation rates among important groups like railway workers and students were low because these groups had just been defeated in drawn-out conflicts that had taken place only a few months before the strike. The main bases of the strike were the oil refineries, the ports, and the public sector in the region of Marseille. Outside these main bases, the strikers were very much dispersed across sectors and workplaces, so that demonstrations became the focal points of the mobilization. Obviously, these demonstrations did not have much of an impact on the economy or the public infrastructure. The strikes in the refineries, which led to a shortage of fuel, had not been organized properly by the unions. As soon as the police and military arrived at the scene, the strikers gave up blockading (Gallas and Nowak, 2012: 59ff).

Arguments between the main unions (CFDT - Confédération française démocratique du travail and CGT - Confédération générale du travail) resulted in a moderate strategy: When the fuel shortages led to problems in the productive sector, the main unions distanced themselves from blockading refineries and fuel stores. The main unions were not prepared to start a proper confrontation with the Sarkozy government, because they believed that the Socialist Party (PS) was not ready for a change of government: The PS was divided on the issue of pensions and quarreled about the party leadership. Sarkozy’s strategy to refrain from offering negotiations or concessions surprised the unions. It was a new pattern of class politics in France.

The conditions of struggle throughout Europe had changed considerably with the onset of the financial crisis, but the main unions in France used the same old political strategies (Gallas and Nowak, 2012: 59ff): they wanted to change public opinion. Furthermore, they banked on the PS gaining the presidency in 2012 and repealing the restructuring of the pensions system. Hollande was carried to office by the strike movement but did not deliver on the demands of the strikers that he had included in his agenda. His attempt to restore the status quo ante in the area of pensions was half-hearted: the return to a lower pension age (60) will only affect 110,000 people. The focus of the unions on a change of government turned out to be a strategic mistake.

DEADLOCK

The French example reveals the deadlock that trade unions in many European countries face in the crisis. The old strategies of working with threats and blockades as well as hoping for negotiations and changes of government do not appear to work any longer. The political strikes against austerity conform mostly to what Beverly Silver (2003: 20) calls ‘Polanyi-type of labor unrest’: they are struggles predominantly based in sectors where layoffs, privatisations and restrictions of workers’ rights pose a threat to the existing labour force. This constellation of struggle produces specific challenges and dilemmas for labour, which mean that winning is difficult: If public sector workers, who were crucial for most of the mobilisations in Europe, go on strike, the state saves money. The strikers can make up for this by interrupting the economic and social infrastructure, for example by blockading public transport and roads, but this is difficult to sustain and creates tensions with the infrastructure users. Furthermore, if workers are indeed blockading key sites of the infrastructure or of production, there is a real danger that the repressive state apparatuses break strikes with force: this happened when air traffic controllers struck in Spain in 2010, and also in France in 2010 at the refineries.

Surely, the political strikes against austerity had a mobilizing character. But the fact that unions in the crisis countries on the whole did not gain any concessions – neither through negotiations nor through attempts to exert ‘influence from without’ (Gall, 2012) – reveals that the working classes in these countries generally lacked any sort of political leverage, which goes further than just saying that we are witnessing the ‘end of social democracy as a credible political force’ (ibid.). And in those cases where workers were able to mount effective resistance and put pressure on governments, repressive state apparatuses intervened on their behalf. How is it possible to overcome this impasse? There are three possible ways: (1) blockades are so widespread and massive that there are not enough repressive forces available to effectively break them; (2) political pressure is strong enough that the government withdraws from violent intervention; or (3) labour activists develop new tactics that deal with violence in one way or another. The first option of an all-out blockade seems utopian, and it is difficult to build effective political pressure. But the labour movements across Europe cannot evade the question of how to build up effective pressure when faced with governments unprepared to make concessions, but ready to break strikes with violent means. If organized labour is not able to address this question, ‘the stage will remain empty’ for the time being.

Strategic Lessons

Unions are faced with a dilemma in the European crisis. They find themselves in a situation of weakness where it would be better to lay low and gain strength first, but they are not controlling the conditions under which they operate. They are under attack and cannot afford to lose because this would have devastating consequences: unemployment and impoverishment for the working people in the crisis countries and a seriously constrained room for manoeuvre for labour. In this situation, they tend to resort to staging symbolic political strikes, which thus become the terrain for the reconstitution for working class movements across Europe. The strikes are supposed to represent shows of strength, but their results in terms of concessions are meagre. In other words, governments across the Eurozone have called the bluff of the trade unions by choosing not to move in response to the strikes.

In this situation, unions have to rethink their strategies. But it is not enough to simply call for a radicalization of trade unionism. There are reasons why unions resort to the rather moderate means of the symbolic political strike. Thanks to the crisis, their members are faced with the serious economic hardship caused by wage cuts. Furthermore, they are under the threat of being laid off, and finding a new job is very difficult under conditions of a deep economic crisis. The ‘silent compulsion of economic relations’ (Marx, 1867: 899) is further amplified through cuts in the welfare system, which make it even harder to cope with unemployment. Finally, it is difficult to call for a radicalization when people have already been defeated at various occasions, which has a demoralizing effect. In this situation, simplistic calls for militant action have a ring of radical posturing. As a result, the starting point of any debate on union strategy should be on the existing pattern of struggle, and how its elements can be recomposed to lead to a more forceful result.

### AT: Mbembe/Necropolitics

#### Macro-level transformation is a *prerequisite* to solving necropolitics – micropolitics fails and turns their impact

Airewele 15 (Peyi, Professor of International Relations & Comparative Studies and Carnegie Fellow at the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Covenant University, “THE END OF POLITICS? RECLAIMING HUMANITY IN AN AGE OF BIOPOWER AND NECROPOLITICS,” Covenant University Public Lecture Series, Vol. 4, No. 2, March 2015, p. 33—35, <http://covenantuniversity.edu.ng/content/download/35623/245151/file/40th+Public+Lecture.pdf>)

But what would emerge in its place? Still politics, but hopefully a reformed politics that can travel into the future. The word ‘reform’ sounds tame besides our preferred terms of revolution and transformation but I use it advisedly in the context of Foucault‘s caution against constructing utopias that degenerate into biopower. The dilemma with necropolitics is that even as we protest its putrid formations, we often lose sight of how much it has entwined itself around our lives, swamped and overwhelmed our vision, language, relationships, communities and lives. We ignore how deeply we are invested in and complicit with its norms and enticements. So perhaps seeking reform or transformation is a first step to recognizing, unlike the local party bosses of China, our own complicity in corruption and in systems of power and fear. Although the medical field utilizes surgical debridement to save lives threatened by necrotic trauma, the only assured mode the human species has of defeating death is ensuring that life is constantly birthed. So at various levels of the polity, we must continue to mobilize, debate and seek to elect ethical, visionary and responsive leaders; demand a national political structure rooted in true federalism; and hold leaders in all societal sectors accountable for their discourses and actions or lack thereof. However, at an individual and collective level, we must also be prepared to birth new modes of life. This is the ultimate challenge to necropolitics. In practical and basic terms, it translates to our genuine personal and sustained commitment to protect human dignity, to fulfill our personal determination to eradicate and alleviate poverty, provide just employment, support those who are marginalized and in need, respond to those rendered vulnerable in the mounting humanitarian crisis, protect the environment in trust, deal with honesty and integrity and generate progressive social relations rooted in the desire for justice, equity and peace. Despite our global and national context of violence, we are surrounded by numerous examples of those who deploy a politics of life to challenge systemic necrotic decay. To highlight one example, the Stephen‘s Children‘s Home in Abeokuta is an initiative birthed by a Nigerian committed to children who lost one or both parents in the various eruptions of religious violence in northern Nigeria. The residential center cares for over four hundred displaced children who all have heartbreaking narratives of trauma, rape and lossthey have experienced necropolitics in a manner that is irreversible, but the courageous determination of their Nigerian caregiving team and supporters challenges necropower in the lives of the children more effectively than some more popular modes of engagement that left them exposed and vulnerable to continued violence and suffering. This is not about mere acts of charity. It is about taking committed steps to self-transformation and actualization, breaking free of the ~~paralyzing~~ legacies of biopower and necropolitics, creating models and sustaining visions of the future, and re-establishing a national framework for lasting voice and change within the citizenry and political leadership. There is no simple set of rules for reforming the nation, but among other things we do need: 1. Acceptance of the fact that Biopower and Necropolitics will not vanish in the near future. 2. Readiness to be discomfited and challenged, to occasionally lose faith in the system and its promises, to find oneself intellectually and socio-politically afloat. 3. New visions and the capacity to live as practical visionaries, reimagining and reconstructing alternative and progressive spaces at every level. We must re-examine each space we inhabithome, work, community and nationand conceive of how to transform that space to enhance human dignity and equity, to establish microsystems that meet critical needs in a manner that is principled, collaborative, effective and sustained. 4. A focus on critical mass transformation that recognizes the limitations of one individual and the capacity of the state to coopt and constrain solo idealists. As democratic activists, human rights workers, environmentalists, socio-politicians and progressive institutions, we must seize on innovative ways to create collaborative networks that will achieve and sustain our struggles for socio-political change without being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task 5. Ethical courage and integrity: Necropolitics generates decay throughout a system and the most difficult battle is the individual struggle to sustain personal integrity and voice in a framework that entices us to do otherwise.

### AT: Redaction Alt

#### 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.

#### 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.

### AT: World Computer---2AC

#### The World Computer is overly simplistic.

Markland, 21—Teaching Fellow in Politics and International Relations at Aston University (Alistair, “Epistemic Transformation at the Margins: Resistance to Digitalisation and Datafication within Global Human Rights Advocacy,” Global Society, February 3, 2021, dml)

As established in the first section of this article, proponents of what I have heuristically defined as the “transformation thesis” have emphasised the revolutionary ruptures wrought by digital connectivity and datafication. Some of these proponents illustrate these changes using field specific case studies, as with Duffield’s (2018) suggestion that the transition to a “cybernetic episteme” is reflected in humanitarian practice. Other authors have taken a more abstract view, including Chandler’s (2018) discussion of new modes of governance in the digital era, or the post-humanist drive to reconceptualise “humanity” under conditions of technological entwinement (Cudworth and Hobden 2013). These assertions of macro-level transformation are also supported by network sociology, led principally by Manuel Castells (2010) analysis of how revolutions in information technology, economic globalisation and an emergent “space of flows” interact to produce a new kind of “network society”. This linkage of societal transformation to economic forces is also characteristic of more critical anti-capitalist perspectives, as with the Marxist critique of “cognitive capitalism” (Moulier-Boutang 2012; Zukerfeld 2017). Although these approaches differ in their conceptual frameworks, they are united in their ambition to highlight universal epistemic transformations brought about by technological change.

One of the pitfalls of these totalising perspectives is the neglect of the particular in favour of the universal. For instance, networked thinking encourages assumptions about lateral transformation across socio-political fields that are connected to the digital universe. But not all spheres of social or political activity move at the same pace when they are exposed to technological innovation. Datafication and digitalisation are processes that have uneven impacts on different social and political fields. For example, the testimony of Facebook’s CEO Mark Zuckerberg to the Senate Judiciary and Commerce Committees in April 2018, where US lawmakers appeared confused by the social media giant’s basic business model, is a stark illustration of the gap that still exists between the world of Big Tech and the operating logics of mainstream democratic politics (Stewart 2018). Bigo and Bonelli (2019, 115) have found that even in the field of transnational intelligence, a sphere that could have much to gain from algorithmic techniques, technological expertise tends to be contracted out to third parties while traditional, human-sourced intelligence approaches remain dominant. Therefore, grasping for totalising processes risks ignoring the empirical specificity of divergent social microcosms.

To remedy this blind side in transformationalist thinking, I assert the utility of applying Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory when conceptualising how certain spheres of social or political activity—including the field of global human rights advocacy discussed in the previous section—mediate pressures for epistemic transformation and potentially isolate technological changes and agents to the margins. Employing field theory, Ole Jacob Sending (2015, 11) sees global governance as divided into separate fields, where “actors compete with each other to be recognised as authorities on what is to be governed, how, and why”. Examples of such fields include international development, security, peacebuilding, humanitarianism, and human rights advocacy. However, each field varies in terms of its specific “rules of the game” (Bourdieu and Waquant 1992, 99). Fields are bounded, game-like social structures that are constituted by a unique constellation of actors. These actors struggle for authority according to the field’s principles of legitimation (Bourdieu 1989, 17). These principles of legitimation, which define a field’s cultural capital, are durable to the extent that dominant actors remain invested in their reproduction. Actors’ prolonged immersion in these fields subsequently shapes their own practical sensibilities, so that the field’s logics are internalised as common sense within the habitus (Bourdieu 1990, 53). It is the embedment of the field’s doxa (common sense) within the habitus of invested actors that makes fields durable and resistant to radical transformations. As seen in the previous section, the rules governing the human rights field are associated with its logic of political influence, persuasion, and moral authority.

Critics of Bourdieusian field theory have argued that it is overly structuralist, reproductive, and cannot grasp “the ever-shifting constellations of actors, institutions, data and forms of expression that make up the expertise” (Waever and Leander 2018, 2). However, alternative approaches such as actor-network theory or assemblage-based theories fail to centralise the importance of social and political struggles between agents which are key in defining the trajectory of digitalisation and datafication. As Ruppert, Isin, and Bigo (2017, 3), “[d]ata does not happen through unstructured social practices but through structured and structuring fields in and through which various agents and their interests generate forms of expertise, interpretation, concepts, and methods that collectively function as fields of power and knowledge”. Similarly, “data is not an already given artefact that exists (which then needs to be mined, analysed, brokered) but an object of investment (in the broadest sense) that is produced by the competitive struggles of professionals who claim stakes in its meaning and functioning” (Bigo, Isin, and Ruppert 2019, 11). Technological change can influence the trajectory of different global political fields by enabling the entry of new types of actors (such as data consultants in the case of human rights advocacy), as well as by producing emergent sources of cultural capital and associated epistemic practices (such as expertise in geospatial imaging).

As Bigo and Bonelli (2019, 120) have observed in the case of the transnational intelligence field, technological change can be accompanied by the growing influence of private companies who “have played a substantial role in the recruitment of IT specialists, network engineers, data analysts, integration platform software designers, language and coding specialists, cryptologists, and mathematicians tasked with creating or combining algorithms”. Such entryism can have a revolutionary effect if those new actors are able redefine a field’s organising logic, cultural capital, and principles of legitimation. For example, looking at the case of Sudan in the 1990s as an antecedent to the transformation of humanitarianism, Duffield (2018, 85) traces how donor governments asserted greater control over NGOs, who subsequently “seamlessly morphed into the ‘implementing partners’ of donor governments”. Alongside growing private sector partnerships, these developments stimulated the neoliberal re-alignment of the humanitarian field away from Third World solidarity and the progressive support for autonomous change and towards the governance of precarity. This exposed the field to an epistemic transformation that privileged datafication based on a “surveillance logic of command and control” (ibid., 168).

However, not all global political fields are so structurally conducive to this kind of radical transformation. The example of the human rights advocacy field illustrates how a strong autonomous organising logic—a logic of persuasion—generates entrenched forms of field-specific cultural capital—qualitative and humanistic accounts of raw suffering that establish clear legal responsibilities. Actors can mobilise digital or data infrastructures to diversify the range of tools and media at their disposal, as illustrated by the (limited) use of geospatial technology, data visualisations in human rights reporting, and a growing reliance on social media platforms to engage audiences. However, they do not necessarily threaten the epistemic practices that are at the centre of human rights advocacy. This is because the transformative potential of new technologies and methods depends on their epistemic, political, social, or moral value in the eyes of the fields’ dominant actors. The integration of data-based approaches has been one of slow adaptation, not revolution, and technological specialists—often employed as third-party consultants rather than as full-time human rights professionals—remain at the margins. The Bourdieusian concept of habitus is also helpful in illuminating how fields with strong professional structures and specific educational and career trajectories can endow members with enduring dispositions that favour both the reproduction of existing epistemic practices and resistance to new ones. The habitus of human rights professionals is still primarily defined by legal, journalistic, and liberal-cosmopolitan moral/political dispositions, rather than technological expertise. So long as processes of doxic reproduction remain stable, the potential for epistemic transformation through datafication remains limited.

Conclusion

This article has cautioned against the analytical trend towards treating datafication as a general process acting to radically transform the epistemic and governance practices across global political fields. Because different social and political fields are unique social microcosms that contain divergent organising principles, readers should be wary of post-humanist analyses making totalising claims about alleged transformations in the human condition. The polemical teleology of transformationalism, an approach that is in vogue among Silicon Valley hype merchants like Elon Musk, public intellectuals, and a growing number of social scientists, is certainly attention grabbing, but it does not measure up against the actual way in which technological and methodological innovations are instituted within different fields of practice. International relations and global governance scholars working on the interstitial cross-roads between technology and various political or social lifeworlds need to be attentive to how digital and data transformations are mediated at the meso level of global politics. This article has demonstrated how epistemic transformation can be resisted at the meso level through observing changes and continuities among elite human rights organisations. Bourdieusian field theory, with its emphasis on legitimacy, social reproduction, and the durability of practical dispositions, offers a suitable framework for conceptualising the absence of epistemic rupture within the field of human rights advocacy. However, because digitalisation and datafication processes are mediated through the specific logics of a given field, more work needs to be done on examining how different organising principles shape the potentialities for epistemic transformation. Thus, in the future, more comparative empirical research will be needed to observe technological changes across different areas of global governance.

### AT: Libdinal Economy

#### Every neg arg about a psychic drive compelling racism is warrantless and believing it ensures fatalistic attitudes that turn any positive impact to the K

Hook, 21—Associate Professor of Psychology at Duquesne University (Derek, “Pilfered pleasure: on racism as “the theft of enjoyment”,” *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity, and Psychoanalytic Theory*, Chapter 2, pg 36-39, dml)

What is immediately striking in these extracts is the role played by affect, or more accurately yet, by the “pained stimulation” of the aroused passions of enjoyment. What both authors highlight—and this speaks to the analytical value of the concept—is that forms of excess stimulation (the “negative pleasure” of jouissance) underlie and propel Symbolic and political constructions of otherness. Different cultural modes of enjoyment are, furthermore, fundamentally discordant. We have then not so much a “Clash of Civilizations”—to reference the Samuel Huntington’s (1997) much cited thesis—as a clash of enjoyments.

Moreover, the difficulty that we have in realizing “full” enjoyment—something that is impossible in Lacanian theory for “castrated” speaking beings—is dealt with by imagining the supposedly unimpaired and inevitably disturbing enjoyment possessed by cultural/racial/sexual others. In short, the fact that we cannot attain the jouissance we feel we deserve results in perceptions of an unhindered, illegitimate, and undeserved enjoyment on the part of others. As Sheldon George notes: “the other’s jouissance, or enjoyment, [is] … the very core around which … otherness articulates itself” (2016: 3). Political jealousy, as Žižek calls it, is thus (at least in part) the result of incompatibilities and more importantly yet, perceived sacrifices of jouissance.

Jouissance: unserviceable tool of political analysis?

Despite having offered only a brief introduction to the above Lacanian ideas, we should pause here for a moment to voice a number of prospective methodological and conceptual problems implied by the racism as (theft of) enjoyment thesis. Doing so will help us focus the expository comments to follow, and indeed, to highlight the potential analytical advantages the thesis may have to offer.

The first critique, which applies to a wide historical range of psychoanalytic theories of racism (see Cohen, 2002; Frosh 1989; Stavrakis 1999), is that of psychological reductionism. Simply put: the complexity of the various historical, discursive, and socioeconomic causes of racism are invariably deprioritized and accorded a peripheral explanatory role once the domain of the psychological is privileged. Accounts of the psychological factors underlying various instances of racism are thus not only de-historicizing and hopelessly generalizing; they are also invariably depoliticizing.

A second critique: is jouissance not a hopelessly open-ended concept? Virtually any cultural behaviour, bodily intensity or libidinal activity can, it seems, be considered to be an instance of jouissance. In view of racism, for example, the other’s enjoyment can refer to everything from their incomprehensible cultural customs and/or religious beliefs (epitomized, for example, in odd food and dress restrictions), to perceived aspects of their distinctive physicality/sensuality (their food, the way they dance, the sound of their music), to attributions of superabundant vitality (they are excessively promiscuous, religious, lazy, etc.)? The concept of jouissance seems thus to be both underdifferentiated and overly inclusive, applying to a potentially endless array of behaviors and experiences. Without a clearer sense of how to differentiate what qualifies as enjoyment and what does not, the concept loses analytical value.

A third line of critique: different modes of enjoyment are implied within the literature, without being properly distinguished. In Žižek’s descriptions of racism and jouissance, for example, jouissance is used broadly to refer to: visceral or passionate modes of experience (the “thrill of hate”); an array of enviable possessions (our “libidinal treasures”) perceived as under threat by cultural others; and a type of noxious “surplus vitality” possessed by such others. So, whose enjoyment are we most fundamentally concerned with in these notions of racism as jouissance, the other’s, or our own? What is the relationship between these two types of jouissance? And how are they related to a third mode, namely the “negative pleasure” of making—experiencing—such troubling attributions in the first place?

Fourth, there is ever-present problem of de-contextualization in “shorthand” applications of the term. This leads to a situation in which enjoyment itself is treated as a causative force beyond adequate consideration of a series of accompanying concepts (the frame of fantasy, the operation of the signifier, the role of the law, the “object a” as cause of desire) that necessarily accompany its proper psychoanalytic application. What auxiliary terms must thus be utilized alongside the concept if it is to serve us as a viable analytical tool?

Critique 1: the notion of enjoyment as psychologically reductionist

There is a crucial passage that is repeated in a number of Žižek’s earlier books (1992, 1993, 2005) and that serves as perhaps his most direct exposition of racism as the theft of enjoyment:

What is at stake in ethnic tensions is always [a kind of ] possession: the “other” wants to steal our enjoyment (by ruining our “way of life”) and/ or he has access to some secret, perverse enjoyment. In short, what gets on our nerves, what really bothers us about the “other” is the peculiar way he organizes his enjoyment (the smell of his food, his “noisy” songs and dances, his strange manners, his attitudes to work—in the racist perspective, the “other” is either a workaholic stealing our jobs or an idler living on our labour)” (1992: 165).

While this seems, in many ways, a gripping account, from a sociologist or historian’s perspective, the degree of reductionism is staggering. The multiple complex sociological, economic, and socio-historical variables underlying distinctive historical forms of racism are brushed aside in favor of a generalizing psychoanalytic formula. Racism = reaction to perception that the (perversely enjoying) other has stolen our enjoyment. This reduction of racism to an affective equation is evident also in Žižek’s precursor in this conceptual domain, Jacques-Alain Miller:

Why does the Other remain Other? What is the cause for our hatred of him, for our hatred of him in his very being? It is hatred of the enjoyment in the Other. This would be the most general formula for the modern racism we are witnessing today: a hatred of a particular way the Other enjoys … The question of tolerance or intolerance is … located on the level of tolerance or intolerance toward the enjoyment of the Other, the Other who essentially steals my own enjoyment (Miller, cited in Žižek 1993: 203).

The depoliticization (indeed, the implicit psychologization) inherent in such a conceptual move is surprising inasmuch it is something that Žižek has proved critical of elsewhere. In a 1998 text, for example, Žižek outlines the charge of psychological reductionism against standard psychoanalytic explanations of racism, which offer

a way of explaining racism that ignore … not only racism’s socioeconomic conditions but the sociosymbolic context of cultural values and identifications that generate reactions to the experience of ethnic otherness (1988: 154).

Surely this also applies to the racism as theft of enjoyment formula outlined above? Explanations of racism as jouissance are surely prone to psychological reductionism inasmuch as they often appear to privilege a series of psychoanalytic assumptions (drive, fantasy, libido, projection, etc.) as existing prior to—or independently of—considerations of economic, historical, political, and socio-symbolic context?

#### 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: Alternative

#### Localism Turn – redaction atomizes collectives and preclude effective solutions for shared conditions – turns K.

Brown 95 (Wendy Brown, prof at UC Berkely, States of Injury, 37-8)

When these precepts “without which we cannot survive” issue from the intellectual or political Right, they are easy enough to identify as both reactionary and fundamentalist.It is fairly clear what they oppose and seek to foreclose: inter alia, democratic conversation about our collective condition and future. But when they issue from feminists or others on the "Left,” they are more slippery, especially insofar as they are posed in the name of caring about political things, caring about “actual women\*” or about women's “actual condition in the world.” and are lodged against those who presumably do not or cannot care, given their postmodern or poststructurahst entanglements.¶The remainder of’ this essay turns this argument on its head. I will suggest that feminist wariness about postmodernism may ultimately be coterminous with a wariness about politics, when politics is grasped as a terrain of struggle without fixed or metaphysical referents and a terrain of power's irreducible and pervasive ce in human affairs. Contrary to its insistence that it speaks in name of the political, much feminist anti-postmodernism betrays a preference for extrapolitical terms and practices: for Truth (unchanging, incontestable) over politics (flux, contest, instability): for certainty and security (safety, immutability, privacy) over freedom (vulnerability, publicity); for discoveries (science) over decisions (judgments);for separable subjects armed with established rights and identities over unwieldy and shifting pluralities adjudicating for themselves and their future on the basis of nothing more than their own habits and arguments.This particular modernist reaction to postmoder- nism makes sense if we recall that the promise of the Enlightenment was a revision of the old Platonic promise to put an end to politics by supplanting it with Truth. In its modern variant, this promise was tendered through the multiple technologies of nature's rationality in human affairs (Adam Smith); science, including the science of administration (Hobbes); and universal reason (Kant. Hegel. Marx). Modernity could not make good on this promise, of course, but modernists do not surrender the dream it instilled of a world governed by reason divested of power.\*\*• Avowed ambivalence about Western reason and rationality notwith- standing. feminist modernists are no exception, but the nature of our ¶ 38¶ attachment to this ironically antipolitical vision is distinctively colored by feminist projects. To the particulars of this attachment we now turn.

### AT: Pornotroping (Leong)

#### They obviously link to this --- if all suffering impacts are commodified towards suffering, they link

#### No impact- no causal link towards any increased material harm towards black people.

#### 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’.

### AT: Curry 13 / Anti-Ethics

#### Being anti-ethical is circular logic that collapses in on itself---the only reason to be anti-ethical is to act more ethically but they’ve said that being ethical is bad which proves it’s incoherent---absent an alternative vision of ethics should look like---vote NEG on presumption.

#### 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: Nuclear K

#### Nuclear fear is compatible with avowing the everyday apocalypse of black people -- BUT -- assessing the world before a nuclear strike as no different than a world after one is whitewashing.

Thompson ’18 [Nicole; April 4th; Creative Writer; RaceBaitR, “Why I will not allow the fear of a nuclear attack to be white-washed,” https://racebaitr.com/2018/04/06/2087/]

I couldn’t spare empathy for a white woman whose biggest fear was something that hadn’t happened yet and might not. Meanwhile, my most significant fears were in motion: women and men dying in cells after being wrongly imprisoned, choked out for peddling cigarettes, or shot to death during ‘routine’ traffic stops. I twitch when my partner is late, worried that a cantankerous cop has brutalized or shot him because he wouldn’t prostrate himself.

As a woman of color, I am aware of the multiple types of violence that threaten me currently—not theoretically. Street harassment, excessively affecting me as a Black woman, has blindsided me since I was eleven. A premature body meant being catcalled before I’d discussed the birds and the bees. It meant being followed, whistled at, or groped. As an adult, while navigating through neighborhoods with extinguished street lights, I noticed the correlation between women’s safety and street lighting—as well as the fact that Black and brown neighborhoods were never as brightly lit as those with a more significant white population.

I move quickly through those unlit spaces, never comforted by the inevitable whirl of red and blue sirens. In fact, it’s always been the contrary. Ever so often, cops approach me in their vehicle’s encouraging me to “Hurry along,” “Stay on the sidewalk,” or “Have a good night.” My spine stiffening, I never believed they endorsed my safety. Instead, I worried that I’d be accused of an unnamed accusation, corned by a cop who preys on Black women, or worse. A majority of my 50-minute bus ride from the southside of Chicago to the north to join these women for the birthday celebration was spent reading articles about citywide shootings. I began with a Chicago Tribute piece titled “33 people shot, seven fatally, in 13 hours,” then toppled into a barrage of RIP posts on Facebook and ended with angry posts about police brutality on Tumblr. You might guess, by the time I arrived to dinner I wasn’t in the mood for the “I can’t believe we’re all going to die because Trump is an idiot” shit.

I shook my head, willing the meal to be over, and was grateful when the check arrived just as someone was asking me about my hair. My thinking wasn’t all too different from Michael Harriot’s ‘Why Black America Isn’t Worried About the Upcoming Nuclear Holocaust.” While the meal was partly pleasant, I departed thinking, “fear of nuclear demolition is just some white shit.”

Sadly, that thought would not last long.

I still vibe with Harriot’s statement, “Black people have lived under the specter of having our existence erased on a white man’s whim since we stepped onto the shore at Jamestown Landing.” However, a friend—a Black friend—ignited my nuclear paranoia by sharing theories about when it might happen and who faced the greatest threat. In an attempt to ease my friend’s fear, I leaned in to listen but accidentally toppled down the rabbit hole too. I forked through curated news feeds. I sifted through “fake news,” “actual news,” and foreign news sources. Suddenly, an idea took root: nuclear strike would disproportionately impact Black people, brown people, and low-income individuals.

North Korea won’t target the plain sight racists of Portland, Oregon, the violently microaggressive liberals of the rural Northwest, or the white-hooded klansmen of Diamondhead, Mississippi. No, under the instruction of the supreme leader Kim Jong-un, North Korea will likely strike densely populated urban areas, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington D.C., and New York City. These locations stand-out as targets for a nuclear strike because they are densely populated U.S. population centers. Attacking the heart of the nation or populous cities would translate to more casualties. With that in mind, it’s not lost on me that the most populous cities in the United States boast sizeable diverse populations, or more plainly put: Black populations. This stresses me out! There’s a creeping chill that follows me, a silent alarm that rings each time my Google alert chimes letting me know that Donald Trump has yet again provoked Kim Jong-Un, a man who allegedly killed his very own uncle. I’ve grown so pressed by the idea of nuclear holocaust that my partner and I started gathering non-perishables, candlesticks, a hand-crank radio, and other must-buy items that can be banked in a shopping cart. The practice of preparing for a nuclear holocaust strike sometimes feels comical, particularly when acknowledging that there has long been a war on Black people in this country.

Blackness is bittersweet in flavor. We are blessed with the melanized skin, the MacGyver-like inventiveness of our foremothers, and our blinding brightness—but the anti-blackness that we experience is also blinding as well as stifling. We are stuck by rigged systems, punished with the prison industrial complex, housing discrimination, pay discrimination, and worse. We get side-eyes from strangers when we’re “loitering,” and the police will pull us over for driving “too fast” in a residential neighborhood. We get murdered for holding cell phones while standing in our grandmother’s backyard.

The racism that strung up our ancestors, kept them sequestered to the back of the bus and kept them in separate and unequal schools still lives. It lives, and it’s more palpable than dormant. To me, this means one thing: Trump’s America isn’t an unfortunate circumstance, it’s a homecoming event that’s hundreds of years in the making, no matter how many times my white friends’ say, “He’s not my president.”

In light of this homecoming, we now flirt with a new, larger fear of a Black genocide. America has always worked towards Black eradication through a steady stream of life-threatening inequality, but nuclear war on American soil would be swift. And for this reason I’ve grown tired of whiteness being at the center of the nuclear conversation. The race-neutral approach to the dialogue, and a tendency to continue to promote the idea that missiles will land in suburban and rural backyards, instead of inner-city playgrounds, is false.

“The Day After,” the iconic, highest-rated television film in history, aired November 20, 1983. More than 100 million people tuned in to watch a film postulating a war between the Soviet Union and the United States. The film, which would go on to affect President Ronald Reagan and policymakers’ nuclear intentions, shows the “true effects of nuclear war on average American citizens.” The Soviet-targeted areas featured in the film include Higginsville, Kansas City, Sedalia, Missouri, as well as El Dorado Springs, Missouri. They depict the destruction of the central United States, and viewers watch as full-scale nuclear war transforms middle America into a burned wasteland. Yet unsurprisingly, the devastation from the attack is completely white-washed, leaving out the more likely victims which are the more densely populated (Black) areas.

Death tolls would be high for white populations, yes, but large-scale losses of Black and brown folks would outpace that number, due to placement and poverty. That number would be pushed higher by limited access to premium health care, wealth, and resources. The effects of radiation sickness, burns, compounded injuries, and malnutrition would throttle Black and brown communities and would mark us for generations. It’s for that reason that we have to do more to foster disaster preparedness among Black people where we can. Black people deserve the space to explore nuclear unease, even if we have competing threats, anxieties, and worries.

### AT: Cruel Optimism

#### Time is a glimpse of possibility, futures imagined by fiat aren’t the cruelly optimistic impasse of the present

Wilder 17—Associate Professor of Anthropology at CUNY Graduate Center [Gary, 2017, “Anticipation,” Political Concepts: A Critical Lexicon Issue 3, <https://www.politicalconcepts.org/anticipation-gary-wilder/>, language edited change denoted by brackets] AMarb

There is no doubt that cruel optimism and benevolent pessimism have produced, and leveraged the concept of anticipation in order to prohibit or require certain kinds of citizen action, to legitimize or exempt certain state interventions, to produce docile and anxious subjects who become trapped in states of what Berlant has nicely phrased “animated suspension.”15 The constant exhortation to self-manage, improve, and promote is accompanied by precarity and exhaustion, uncertainty and anxiety, disorientation and meaninglessness. But does this mean that all future-oriented thinking or action is intrinsically disabling, normalizing, and depoliticizing? It would be a mistake to reduce futurity as such to a liberal conception of progress, or anticipation to a liberal ideology or affect. Doing so is precisely what has led some of these scholars to draw dubious political conclusions from their own important insights. Think here of Berlant’s assertion of the present as an impasse in relation to which affective beings must focus on survival, maintenance, and adaptation, “without futurity.”16 She dismisses the wish for new images of the good life as a symptom of the current situation.17 Or, consider David Scott’s melancholic ruminations about our being tragically stranded in a post-socialist political present. Adams, Murphy, and Clarke ask us to refuse anticipation as such.18 And Edelman promotes an anti-political opposition to “every realization of futurity,” any aspiration to forge “some more perfect social order,” any action oriented toward future “good.”19 Instead he celebrates jouissance as bound up with the death drive and an absolutist negation of social form.20 By treating the present as one-dimensional and unsurpassable, such criticism accedes to existing arrangements and discounts politics oriented toward a future good life as intrinsically delusional, self-undermining, or conservative. But to abandon good-life imaginaries and future-oriented practices is to erase the crucial space between how things are and how they ought to be. It is no surprise, therefore, that such thinking often turns to (post-political understandings of) affect, bodies, objects, or deep history as the only way to think outside or against existing conditions and ideologies. How then are we to pursue progressive politics when relations of domination are mediated by the idea and reality of progress itself?21 Against the liberal tendency to plan and predict we must insist on a radically open future, and refuse to define that which it might hold. But against the liberal tendency to project present arrangements, forward, we must also fashion images of the good life. Of course this imperative leads immediately to a further challenge. How are we to envision alternative social arrangements when the concepts, frameworks, and forms with which to do so can only really be furnished by an open future that has not yet arrived? This is the very dilemma implied by Marx’s claim that “the social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot take its poetry from the past but only from the future.”22 Radical politics is thereby fated to imagine the unimaginable. And this is the challenge posed by Adorno’s call to contemplate the world from the standpoint of redemption. 3. The Price of Messianism Some thinkers have attempted to challenge liberal progressivism without abandoning futurity by turning to ungrounded utopianism, blank futurism, or Messianic apocalypticism. But such moves also tend to leave present arrangements undisturbed—whether by idly fantasizing about ideal worlds, refusing to name possible alternatives, or either fetishizing or waiting for the sudden event that will produce an absolute rupture. Think here of Bloch’s “principle of hope,” Derrida’s “waiting without expectation,” and Badiou’s “fidelity to the event.”23 We might usefully recall Gershom Scholem’s remarks on “the paradoxical nature” of the Messianic idea in Judaism whereby the wished-for redemption can have no concrete relationship to previous history. As a “transcendence breaking in upon history . . . from an outside source,” he explains, Jewish redemption rejects the Enlightenment idea of historical progress. But it also rules out the possibility of immanent developments or history-making practices. Scholem thus suggests that the “price demanded by Messianism” has been “endless powerlessness in Jewish history . . . There is something grand about living in hope, but at the same time there is something profoundly unreal about it . . . in Judaism the Messianic idea has compelled a life lived in deferment.”24 Although Benjamin invoked this Messianic tradition, his reflections “On the Concept of History” do not imply powerlessness, pessimism, or deferment. Noting the Jewish prohibition on “inquiring into the future,” he endorsed its focus on “remembrance” as a way to “disenchant the future, which holds sway over those who turn to soothsayers for Enlightenment.”25 But Benjamin was less concerned with renouncing futurity as such than with challenging the homogeneous empty clock time and the associated continuum that underlie bourgeois conceptions of predictable futures, automatic progress, and historicist history. Benjamin seeks to break the spell of bourgeois progress by understanding history in terms of “Now-time, which, as a model of messianic time, comprises the entire history of mankind in a tremendous abbreviation.”26 But this was neither a call to adapt to the present nor to wait for a divine irruption. It was a reminder that “every second was the straight gate through which the Messiah might enter.”27 But by Messiah, he means us—contemporary human actors. We can recognize this as a political, and not a strictly theological, claim when we read it alongside of Benjamin’s second thesis: “there is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one . . . our coming was expected on earth . . . like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a weak messianic power on which the past has a claim.”28 In this formulation, living historical actors are themselves quasi-Messianic agents who, at any second and in the name of past generations, might initiate a revolutionary irruption, break the historical continuum, stop clock-time and redeem the world. Benjamin invoked revolutionary Messianism to challenge the political passivity of Social Democrats whose faith in automatic human progress, he argued, had opened the door to fascism and diverted the working classes from making their own history here and now. By exploding the continuum of history and transcending clock time, he believed, they would liberate humanity from the “progressive” processes that had enslaved them and their ancestors. In this way modern society would be emancipated from an infernal history of ongoing catastrophe whereby human actions fueled the quasi-autonomous force that was propelling them blindly into a future over which they had no control.29 At the very least, Benjamin suggested that this revolutionary interruption would end the “storm” of progress, free humans from their “servile integration in an uncontrollable apparatus,” and, maybe even allow actors “to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed” (as the Angel of History wished to, but could not, do).30 But despite the Jewish injunction not to inquire into the future, Benjamin is not only offering a formal definition of revolution as redemptive rupture. We often forget that he also elaborates substantive ideas about what a redeemed, or post-revolutionary, society would entail. He relays that it would mark the end of a “positivist” and “corrupted conception of labor” based in “the Protestant work ethic” which collapses human progress with “technological development” and is “tantamount to the exploitation of nature.”31 In contrast, Benjamin envisions a new form of “cooperative labor” that would “increase efficiency to such an extent that . . . far from exploiting nature, would help her give birth to the creations that now lie dormant in her womb.”32 Emancipated from alienated labor, historical “progress,” and the meaningless tyranny of clock time, human actors (honoring their responsibility to enslaved ancestors) would make their own worlds within a qualitative now-time. Benjamin thus offers us an orientation to futurity that breaks with the logic of deferment contained in both liberal progressivism and blank Messianism. With the idea of a revolutionary rupture that can be initiated in any given second, his insights point to an understanding of anticipation as a kind of political disposition whereby radical actors cultivate a state of readiness for any possibility at every possible moment. But by also offering a positive vision of what a better society might look like, his call to act in the name of oppressed ancestors, provide concrete content to such anticipatory action. Yet, Benjamin does not try to account for how these actors might move from this now to a next-now. Beyond routing future possibilities through past eras, he does not indicate how subjects might orient their action, recognize what might actually be possible or even desirable, or what conditions might facilitate this or that leap. He beautifully triangulates revolutionary classes, past generations, and historical materialists, but does not work out the mediations between radical thinking and revolutionary praxis. He directs our attention to “now time” as cause and consequence of a revolutionary interruption, but does not address the dialectical movement between acting and imagining, naming and discovering, making and seizing. 4. Practicing Anticipation Adorno too sought to overturn the bourgeois conception of progress without paying the price of Messianism. In his 1962 essay, he argues argues that if we are to reclaim a real concept of progress we need to avoid both “atemporal theology” (which expects redemption from a “transcendental intervention”) and “the idolization of history” (as if progress were automatic or human actions necessarily led toward a more perfect world).33 Adorno explains that the term progress promises “an answer to the doubt and the hope that things will finally get better, that people will at last be able to breathe a sigh of relief.”34 Like Benjamin, he insists that “Wherever bourgeois society satisfies the concept it cherishes as its own, it knows no progress; wherever it knows progress, it violates its own law.”35 But rather than simply reject the concept of progress, he seeks to sublate its bourgeois form. He writes, “The nexus of deception surrounding progress reaches beyond itself . . . the devastation wrought by progress can be made good again, if at all, only by its own forces, never by the restoration of the preceding conditions that were its victims.36 He does this by seeking real progress precisely in those places where bourgeois “progress” is interrupted and the bourgeois concept is called into question. He writes, “Progress means: to step out of the magic spell, even out of the spell of progress . . . in that . . . humanity . . . brings to a halt the domination it exacts upon nature . . . In this way it could be said that progress occurs where it ends.”37 One thereby pursues that which progress promises precisely by interrupting or undoing that which purports to be progress (as well as the conceptual framework that reduces progress to domination and misrecognizes domination as progress). Despite Adorno’s reputation for political pessimism and philosophical abstraction (and vice versa), he does not only insist on the possibility of real human progress, but suggests that it must be pursued concretely. He writes, Too little of what is good has power in the world for progress to be expressed in a predictive judgment about the world, but there can be no good, not a trace of it without progress . . . Every individual trait in the nexus of deception is nonetheless relevant to [progress’s] possible end. Good is what wrenches itself free, finds a language, opens its eyes. In its conditions of wresting free, it is interwoven in history that, without being organized unequivocally toward reconciliation, in the course of its movement allows the possibility of redemption to flash up.38 Adorno thus offers an orientation to futurity, at once political and dialectical, that is organized around human action in the present. Beyond the opposition between gradual reformism and revolutionary rupture, through the everyday work of finding and wrenching free bits of good which can be associated with new languages and rewoven into history, the possibility of reconciliation is opened and glimpses of redemption are possible. Adorno thus suggests that these glimpses of future possibility must be pursued concretely. But he also reminds us that these glimpses are no less important than the pursuit. He explicitly links prospect for transformation to acts of political imagination. As with “progress,” Adorno tries to think utopia against “utopia.” In his 1964 exchange with Ernst Bloch, he criticizes ideological forms of “cheap” and “false” utopias which present the given world as already reconciled and realized.39 And he recognizes the value of the (Jewish) prohibition against picturing the future concretely “insofar as we do not know what the correct thing would be.”40 At the same time, he insists that “something terrible happens due to the fact that we are forbidden to cast a picture . . . the commandment against a concrete expression of utopia tends to defame the utopian consciousness and to engulf it.”41 In the West, he explains “people have lost . . . the capability to imagine the totality as something that could be completely different . . . people are sworn to this world as it is and have this blocked consciousness vis-à-vis possibility.”42 Such concessions to the given, he suggests, can only be overcome through some kind of utopian orientation that insists, for example on “the evident possibility of fulfillment” in modern society or that “a life in freedom and happiness would be possible today.”43 But he is equally concerned by the fact that “the idea of utopia has actually disappeared completely from the conception of socialism,” explaining, “the apparatus, the how, the means of a socialist society have taken precedence over any possible content, for one is not allowed to say anything about the possible content. Thereby the theory of socialism that is decidedly hostile toward utopia now tends really to become a new ideology concerned with the domination of humankind.”44 Adorno warns that any claim to know the future should be avoided. Yet he also insists that unless some kind of “picture” of what might be possible can “appear within one’s grasp, then one basically does not know at all what the actual reason for the totality is, why the entire apparatus has been set in motion.”45 He concludes by agreeing with Bloch that there can be no transformation, no socialism, no fulfillment without the utopian-transcendent belief that “something’s missing.”46 In short, Adorno invites critics to undertake a tricky, if not paradoxical, practice of envisioning without defining. This balancing act between identifying concrete possibilities through utopian imagination while not foreclosing outcomes through predictive naming is a crucial dimension of what I am calling anticipation. This orientation to the future breaks with the liberal faith that things will automatically and progressively work themselves out. But does so in ways that differ fundamentally from either “waiting without expectation” or nihilistic calls to accept the impasse of the present, abjure transformative projects, or renounce propositions about a future good life. The concrete utopian orientation to futurity suggested by Adorno resonates with a similar position formulated by Henri Lefebvre, another heterodox Marxist who sought to make sense of late capitalist alienation in the postwar period. In the first volume of his Critique of Everyday Life (1947), Lefebvre argued that material progress had created unprecedented possibilities for the good life, but its benefits were only enjoyed by the few; real power was stolen from community and placed in the hands of an elite, and the domination of things was transformed into domination of humans by other humans.47 He thus describes the colonization of everyday life by capital. But because capitalism develops unevenly, he believed, “traces of ‘another life,’ a community life” organized around different social logics and values, persisted within a heterogeneous modernity.48 At the same time, Lefebvre contended, a paradoxical situation of “backwardsness” emerged in which “life is lagging behind what is possible” — behind the very different set of arrangements that capitalist modernization had actually made possible.49 It is precisely this proximity between, on the one hand, an alienated existence and, on the other, that which is no longer possible and that which is newly possible which, according to Lefebvre, creates opportunities, through everyday practices, for different ways of being to emerge.50 In cities especially, he suggests, alternative modes of living and new forms of solidarity appear in the theater of everyday life.51 In response to optimistic “partisans of Progress,” Lefebvre points out “the decline of everyday life since . . . Antiquity.” But it also differs from nihilistic calls for adapting to the impasse of the present, abjuring transformative projects, or renouncing propositions about a future good life. Conversely, in response to the pessimistic philosophers of decadence, he insists on “the breadth and magnificence of the possibilities which are opening out for man, and which are so really possible . . . (once the political obstacles are shattered).”52 Such anarchist pessimists, he argues, mistakenly accept “this life as the only one possible” and are unable to recognize the potential “greatness” that may shine through alienated forms.53 Rather than focus on the false opposition between progress and decline, Lefebvre directs our attention to the difference between quantitative and qualitative forms of progress. He dismisses as a “childish error” the tendency to base our image of “the [hu]man of the future on what we are now” and “simply granting him a greater quantity of mechanical means and appliances.”54 Rather, he insists, “we should acquire a sense of qualitative changes, of modifications in the quality of life – and above all of another attitude of the human being toward himself.”55 He thus calls on us to envision a future organized around “total life” and a “living totality” in which a “truly human” and “total man” may be realized.56 For Lefebvre, the task of recognizing the possible in the actual requires creative acts of political imagination. But he also criticizes idle speculation about fantastic futures, insisting that understandings of alternatives must emerge through experimental practices. He asserts that “man as a total problem” – “the possibility of the total” and “truly human man” – can only be “posed and resolved on the level of everyday life.”57 Challenging the kind of critique or revolt promoted by “mystics and metaphysicians,” he proposed a dialectical approach that would overcome false oppositions between “everyday life and festival – mass moments and exceptional moments . . . seriousness and play – reality and dreams.”58 According to Lefebvre, everyday life, especially in cities, becomes the scene of a certain utopianism which combines imaginative vision with experimental practices in order to identify and pursue what he called the “possible-impossible.”59 At once future-oriented and now-centered, aesthetic and political, a serious strategy and an end in itself, such everyday practices contribute to what a more human “art of living.”60 We might also call this an art of anticipation in which visionary thinking and experimental acts come together in a type of “play acting” that “explores what is possible.”61 In the late 1950s, Lefebvre further developed this thinking about lived utopianism. Under modern capitalist conditions, he explains, previous modes of envisioning a truly human form of life (whether based on fantasies of natural living or classical antiquity) had either been lost or discredited as fictive or mythical, but new ones had not taken their place. Far from celebrating this development, he regarded it as tragic that the postwar Left had no myth of “the new life” and spoke only in the language of industrial rationalism, technocratic planning, and productivist acceleration.62 But Lefebvre also argued that in the new era of postwar planning there was a resurgence of utopian thinking because “the advanced countries are lagging behind their own possibilities” and are “less able to satisfy those who ought to be happy with it.”63 He writes, “Utopianism lives again . . . It is exploring the possibilities of praxis . . . Imagination is adopting or rediscovering a creative power. It is pooling forces with an obscurely rediscovered spontaneity.”64 And, “If we are to build a revitalized life . . . we must use utopian method experimentally, looking ahead to what is possible and what is impossible and transforming this hypothetical exploration into applicable programs and practical plans.”65 Lefebvre called this orientation a “philosophy of the possible” which attends to “relations with the real and the here-and-now” in order to discover “the opening, by which [we] may enter in a practical way into the ‘possible-impossible’ dialectic.”66 Lefebvre’s call in the late 1950s for a new “revolutionary romanticism” seemed to receive an uncanny answer in what he regarded as “the irruption” of May ’68. For him this unforeseen event “broke into” everyday life even as everyday practices constituted that which was revolutionary about the event.67 For Lefebvre, May ‘68 was neither an unmediated presentist eruption nor the working out of a blueprint for the future. He writes, “A theory of the movement has to emerge from the movement itself, for it is the movement that has revealed, unleashed, and liberated theoretical capacities.”68 His analysis of ‘68 emphasizes spontaneous popular contestation and mass participation, the commitment to transform society as a whole and create new forms of life, and above all the emergence of experiments in self-management which were at once concrete and utopian, practical and performative, actual and prefigurative, political and cultural. For Lefebvre, this “irruption” demonstrated that “everyday existence” cannot be “transcended in one leap” but only through “the process of self-management.”69 He characterized it as an “unthinkable movement” that nevertheless “actually existed” and therefore allowed and compelled people to “think the unthinkable.”70 Not surprisingly, he called May ‘68 a “concrete utopia.”71 The dialectic movement between utopian imagination and experimental practice allowed May ‘68 to make real a supposedly impossible form of life in the “anticipated urban society.”72 He writes, “The specifically utopian function of cultural contestation will thus supersede itself by fulfilling itself in practice.”73 This kind of collective anticipation through concrete utopian experiments in self-management comes through clearly in Kristin Ross’s insightful analysis of the Paris Commune. Ross writes: More important than any laws the Communards were able to enact was simply the way in which their daily workings inverted entrenched hierarchies and divisions . . . The world is divided between those who can and those who cannot afford the luxury of playing with words or images. When that division is overcome, as it was under the Commune . . . what matters more than any images conveyed, laws passed, or institutions founded are the capacities set in motion.74 If social relations are to be radically transformed, Ross suggests, it will not be by teaching people how to be citizens of a future society, but by mobilizing such capacities, which are at once practical and theoretical, political and aesthetic, actual and potential.75 In a similar spirit Massimiliano Tomba examines the “insurgent universality” that was practiced and performed by the more radical and subaltern forces within the French Revolution. He writes, this insurgency not only interrupted the continuum of a specific historical configuration of power, but . . . disclosed and anticipated new political pathways, which indicated alternative trajectories beyond political modernity. These pathways were molten in the red-hot magma of many experiments, abandoned or repressed. The experiment was the virtuous “skidding off course (dérapage)” of the Revolution during which slaves, women and the poor gained voice and acted as if they were citizens.76 More recently, we might consider the category confounding character of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the everyday practices of “horizontalism” following the 2001 financial crisis in Argentina, in recent Occupy struggles, and autonomous popular movements worldwide. Concrete utopian anticipation has assumed more robust forms in the Zapatista experiment in Chiapas, Mexico and the ongoing Kurdish experiment in Rojava, Syria. 5. Reconstruction, Transfiguration, Improvisation These brief examples should make clear that the politics of anticipation are not only symbolic and performative. An anticipatory dialectic of prefiguration and transfiguration – or the circular relation among envisioning, enacting, and realizing – has been especially well developed within the black radical tradition. Consider, for example, W.E.B. Du Bois’s plan during the early 1930s to organize African Americans into self-managing consumer cooperatives. He took as his staring points the refractory character of the color line (which proved to be invulnerable to rational refutation or legal challenges), the mutually reinforcing relation between racism and poverty, the white supremacy of the American labor movement, and the devastating effect of the Great Depression on the black community. Given this historical condition, Du Bois sought to identify immanent possibilities within alienated forms by turning the fact of segregation into a source of social strength and political education. He argued that if planned and organized, existing networks of black sociality and exchange could ground a new form of solidarity and autonomy through which to confront capitalism and racism. He believed that self-managing cooperatives organized around mutualist lines could create opportunities for work without exploitation, production without profit, exchange without stratification, knowledge production without exclusion – in ways that would reinforce bonds across different social sectors of the black community.77 On one level, Du Bois’s multi-faceted program was a pragmatic response to an immediate predicament. These consumer cooperatives would create a basis for economic survival under conditions of Jim Crow segregation during the Depression. By doing so without depending on either state aid (that might not come) or legal reform (that might not matter), it was also meant to transform formal liberty into substantive freedom. Du Bois emphasized that these economic efforts were meant to complement, and help to realize, rather than replace the existing civil rights struggle. He offered a strategy for achieving full citizenship from a position of economic security, strength, and leverage. But Du Bois’s call for economic self-management was also a concrete utopian project to radically reconstruct American democracy by abolishing the color line and overcoming capitalist social relations. In his view, these self-managing cooperatives would allow black actors to develop alternative forms of labor, exchange, and sociality – the new subjectivities, everyday practices, ethical relations, and spiritual/cultural orientations that would: 1. prepare themselves for the future order they desired, 2. model (to themselves and others) what was possible and what that future might entail (through experimental practices), 3. help to hasten that future by enacting it here and now (to materialize it by envisioning it, and to come to see it through material practices). With this plan for strategic self-segregation, Du Bois was not calling for blacks to withdraw from American society. He was recognizing that their involuntary status as a nation-within-a-nation offered them an opportunity (and perspective) to lead the nation as a whole (beginning with the white working class) on a different path beyond the color line and towards socialist democracy. His program was based on the conviction that racial domination could never be overcome under capitalist conditions and that socialism could never be realized until the color line was abolished.78 It envisioned self-managing black communities playing a vanguard role in a process whereby a whole range of cooperative movements among different communities would form, federate, and help to create a new “cooperative commonwealth” in and beyond America. It thereby anticipated both a multi-racial socialist democracy within America and a new order of international solidarity among self-managing peoples of color against global imperialism. In this way, Du Bois believed that the black freedom struggle could realize American democracy, empower and unite colonized peoples, redeem the West, and emancipate humanity – through concrete everyday practices that anticipated, in all of these ways, a seemingly impossible future already made plausible by present conditions and glimpsed through the subaltern’s privileged critical insight. On the one hand, his plan was a revolutionary rejection of liberal progress. It insisted that no change would come automatically and that real emancipation would not be possible by merely adjusting the existing framework. On the other hand, this was a program for radical transformation that refused the fantasy of sudden revolutionary rupture. Du Bois was mindful of the long black Atlantic history during which each emancipatory break enabled a new forms of domination. He suggested that the process of subjective and objective transformation that he was proposing might take decades, or even generations. It was this long view that helps explain why Du Bois developed this plan during the period when he was writing Black Reconstruction in America, and vice versa. In his 1935 masterwork, Du Bois demonstrates how black slaves interrupted the historical continuum through a “general strike” whereby they fled plantations and withdrew their labor power from the Confederate war effort. He famously recounts how freed slaves experienced emancipation as an apocalyptic rupture. But, as importantly, he demonstrates how an alliance of freed blacks, Southern white workers, and Northern abolition democrats (black and white) was briefly able to leverage the Freedman’s Bureau to open the possibility for an experiment in non-racial socialist democracy that, in challenging the very basis of capitalist private property and American social divisions, far exceeded the intentions of the U.S. government and Northern interests who had supported its creation. Much of his study is devoted to describing the revolutionary attempt to reconstruct the very bases of American democracy through experimental practices made possible by a contingent set of conditions that created a unique historical situation which was seized by an alliance of actors who anticipated – envisioned, performed, pursued – an alternative future in their everyday acts. This nexus of vision, conjuncture, and practices, he suggests, positioned freed blacks to be the vanguard of a socialist revolution and truly democratic society that might have been. But Du Bois explains how this revolutionary “Southern Experiment” was ultimately foreclosed by white working class racism. When white workers allied with the planter class against freed blacks, Northern capital was allowed to destroy the prospect of real democracy (and racial equality) in America and across the imperialist world. Du Bois demonstrates how this process allowed slave emancipation to evolve into a regime of legal segregation and social stigmatization – the very regime into which Du Bois was born and against which he spent his life in militant struggle. Du Bois’s interwar plan for self-managing black cooperatives can thus be read as an untimely attempt to pursue the unrealized promise of the post-Civil War Southern Experiment. In the 1930s Du Bois sought to revitalize the unrealized 1870s project to reconstruct American democracy on multi-racial and socialist lines.79 The anticipatory character of Du Bois’s account of Reconstruction and his program for cooperative self-management may be situated in a long history of black Atlantic concrete utopianism which combined visionary projects with experimental practices. Here we might think of maroon communities throughout the New World slave system, Toussaint Louverture’s 1801 black republic, and the emergence of what Laurent Dubois, following Jean Casimir, called the “counter-plantation” system in post-revolutionary Haiti. Thomas Holt describes how a similar movement for peasant self-sufficiency immediately followed the emancipation of slaves in 19th century Jamaica. As I have argued elsewhere, Aimé Césaire’s and Léopold Senghor’s constitutional struggle to transform imperial France into a postnational democratic federation may be located in this tradition of anticipatory politics. But so too can Frantz Fanon’s account of the new forms of life that emerged through the lived experience of revolutionary struggle for Algerian independence and Patrice Lumumba’s untimely experiment in popular democracy in the Congo. In each of these anticipatory initiatives, we can recognize what Paul Gilroy has called the dialectic of fulfillment and transfiguration. In The Black Atlantic, Gilroy describes a pragmatic “politics of fulfillment” whose “normative content focuses attention on . . . the notion that a future society will be able to realize the social and political promise that present society has left unaccomplished.”80 Gilroy distinguishes this orientation from a utopian “politics of transfiguration” that strives “continually to move beyond the grasp of the merely linguistic, textual, and discursive. . . This politics exists on a lower frequency, where it is played, danced, and acted, as well as sung and sung about, because words . . . will never be enough to communicate its unsayable claims to truth.”81 Gilroy treats black musical expression as an especially rich locus and medium for such utopian acts. Gilroy argues that this “tradition of expression” “refuses to accept that the political is a readily separable domain. Its basic desire is to conjure up and enact the new modes of friendship, happiness, and solidarity that are consequent on the overcoming of the racial oppression.”82 He suggests that these two modes of politics are not mutually exclusive; within the black Atlantic tradition they have long co-existed and complemented each other. But if the politics of fulfillment has generated a black “counter-discourse” through which to make political claims, Gilroy argues, the politics of transfiguration constitutes a “counterculture of modernity” that seeks to expand the very domain and meaning of politics itself – partly by linking it to ethics and aesthetics, imaginative practice and cultural performance, embodied practices and lived memories.83 I would like to underscore the anticipatory dimensions this politics of trasnsfiguration, which conjures and enacts new ways of being and relating. According to Gilroy, it emphasizes the emergence of qualitatively new desires, social relations, and modes of association within the racial community of interpretation and resistance and between that group and its erstwhile oppressors. It points specifically to the formation of a community of needs and solidarity which is magically made audible in the music itself and palpable in the social relations of its cultural utility and reproduction.84 These transfigurative practices create new continuities among politics, ethics, and aesthetics; Gilroy speaks of “grounded ethics” and “grounded esthetics.85 Gilroy thus describes a set of concrete utopian practices that anticipate (by enacting in both form and content) an alternative good life. He writes, progress from the status of slaves to the status of citizens led [western blacks] to enquire into what the best possible forms of social and political existence might be. The memory of slavery, actively preserved as a living intellectual resource in their expressive political culture, helped them to generate a new set of answers to this enquiry. They had to fight – often through their spirituality – to hold on to the unity of ethics and politics sundered from each other by modernity’s insistence that the true, the good, and the beautiful had distinct origins and belong to different domains of knowledge.86 This path from broken present to utopian future, by way of living memory and embodied performance, resonates with the ways that Benjamin conjugated remembrance and rupture. It is indeed likely that Gilroy had both Benjamin and Adorno in mind when he writes, The history and utility of black music. . . enable us to trace something of the means through which the unity of ethics and politics has been reproduced as a form of folk knowledge. This subculture often appears to be the intuitive expression of some racial essence but is in fact an elementary historical acquisition produced from the viscera of an alternative body of cultural and political expression that considers the world critically from the point of view of its emancipatory transformation. In the future, it will become a place which is capable of satisfying the (redefined) needs of human beings that will emerge once the violence – epistemic and concrete – of racial typology is at an end. Reason is thus reunited with the happiness and freedom of individuals and the reign of justice within the collectivity.87 Gilroy affirms that this political orientation converges with Marxism, even if the convergence is also undercut by the simple fact that in the critical thought of blacks in the West, social self-creation through labour is not the centre-piece of emancipatory hopes. For the descendants of slaves, work signifies only servitude, misery, and subordination. Artistic expression, expanded beyond recognition from the grudging gifts offered by the masters as a token substitute for freedom from bondage, therefore becomes the means towards both individual self-fashioning and communal liberation. Poiesis and politics begin to coexist in novel forms [– autobiographical writing, special and uniquely creative ways of manipulating spoken language, and, above all, the music.]88 The important point here is not the extent of Gilroy’s Marxism or the accuracy of his interpretation of Western Marxist desires regarding labor, but that he is describing a tradition of concrete utopianism through which a future good life is anticipated (envisioned, enacted, conjured ) through experimental practices that are at once political, ethical, and aesthetic.89 Gilroy writes eloquently about an “ethics of antiphony” and “the tactics of sound developed as a form of black metacommunication.”90 His attention to music and performance as black radicalism’s privileged media, and to utopian enactment or untimely anticipation as central features of black aesthetics, has been extensively elaborated by Fred Moten. Referring to blackness as “the extended movement of a specific upheaval, an ongoing irruption that annaranges every line,” Moten links this upheaval and irruption to (an ethics, politics, and aesthetics) of “the cut” and “the break.”91 Moten uses this multivalent term to index variously the gap between (as well as the elevated conjunction of): sound and words, music and text, poetry and philosophy, phenomenology and semiotics, experience and expression, scream and message, being and knowing, description and explanation, performance and analysis, showing and naming, deconstruction and reconstruction, objectivity and subjectivity, body and spirit, substance and sign, violence and joy, absence and abundance, visibility and invisibility, tragedy and elegy, singularity and totality, emotion and structure, spontaneity and preparedness, individuality and collectivity, event and process, situatedness and ongoinginess, return and birth, origin and repetition, past and future. It is through this cut, by lingering in this break – at once existential, epistemological, and temporal – that the (radical) work and play of “improvisation,” in and through and for what he calls “ensemble,” unfolds. This is a dazzling intervention on blackness and/as improvisation in the break where form mirrors content, or each reworks the other, in every instant. Among the many ramifying images that Moten offers is that of improvisation as the performance of an “old new language – tragic, hopeful, fallen” that registers “the fantasy of what hadn’t happened yet” and works “to activate the foresight that is not prophecy but description . . . embodied and silently sounded in the music’s knowing echo of shriek and prayer.”92 Descriptive foresight (in an old-new language) of what has not yet happened wonderfully expresses the peculiar political logic of anticipation that I have been trying to outline. Moten explains how this improvisational practice links vision, performance, and action. He relates blackness (and critique) to the practice of “lingering” in the “shattering tremble of the improvising ensemble’s music . . . Not in the interest of an understanding or adequate representation of the action whose performance would occur in this lingering, but in the interest of an enactive invocation, a material prayer, the dissemination of the conditions of possibility of . . . action.”93 In short, Moten conjures a space and practice of imaginative performance and embodied desire that is at once aesthetic, ethical, and political. It recognizes aesthetic performances as political acts and political performances as aesthetic acts within a relational, which is to say ethical, ensemble. For Moten, the practice of improvisation also confounds reified past-present-future distinctions. His discussion does not only imply that such aesthetic-ethical-political practices may anticipate, by enacting, what hasn’t yet happened. It also suggests that they anticipate that which is not yet known, a wish that can only emerge through present practice and performance. He thus links improvisation to the “unsayable claims of black utopian political desire, an unrequited love imaged after the fact.”94 Raising the question of “improvisation’s time and the time of ensemble’s organization” Moten writes of the “attempt . . . to sustain the desire that you anticipate, that you’ll have felt even now, to stop to look up, to sing the inscription.”95 This will and capacity to see and sing the inscription in order to sustain the desire that you anticipate is one way to understand prophecy. In a recent interview Moten remarks, “The prophet is the one who tells the brutal truth, who has the capacity to see the absolute brutality of the already-existing and to point it out and to tell that truth, but also to see the other way, to see what it could be. That double-sense, that double-capacity: to see what’s right in front of you and to see through it to what’s ahead of you.”96 Moten thereby voices an insight that has long been recognized by Jewish Marxist and black radical thinkers – namely that anticipation is less a matter of predicting the future than of “foreseeing the present.”97 In 1940 Walter Benjamin described the paradoxical character of the “prophetic relation to the future” by noting that “the seer’s gaze is kindled by the rapidly receding past . . . the prophet has turned away from the future: he perceives the contours of the future in the fading light of the past as it sinks before him into the night of times.”98 A few years later, during the war that would take Benjamin’s life, Aimé Césaire identified “the ground of poetic knowledge” as “an astonishing mobilization of all human and cosmic forces” in which “all lived experience. All the possibility . . . all the pasts, all the futures . . . Everything is summoned. Everything awaits.”99 And the “visionary” speaker in his 1946 poem declares, “my ear to the ground, I heard Tomorrow pass.”100 Decades later, but in a similar spirit, Edouard Glissant writes about the existence within Caribbean thought and consciousness of “a prophetic vision of the past” based on “the identification of a painful notion of time and its full projection forward into the future.”101 Perhaps people compelled by history to inhabit a painful sense of time are gifted with a prophetic sense of the past and a capacity (and necessity) to foresee the present. Running through these otherwise distinct reflections is the insight that anticipation entails sudden or stolen glimpses across epochal divides. It names the proleptic power of acting “as if” impossible futures were already at hand. 6. Dialectics of Anticipation What links these various concrete utopian experiments, thinkers, and traditions is not only a commitment to radical politics, direct democracy, or autonomous socialism. They also share a distinctive orientation to futurity. Their reflections and actions point beyond both the fiction of liberal progress and the fantasy of apocalyptic rupture. They reject the given order, envision a better world, and act as if the impossible were possible – even while mindful that new forms cannot be planned and implemented but can only emerge practically, experimentally. We can thus think of anticipation as a kind of political disposition whereby radical actors cultivate a state of readiness for any possible possibility and a will to overcome existing arrangements by acting from the standpoint of a not-yet redeemed world. We can think of anticipation as an untimely desire to recognize and pursue alternative possibilities that are enabled by and condensed within present arrangements. From this perspective, anticipation prefigures by enacting the supposedly impossible. It indexes a politico-temporal orientation, rather than an affective state or an ideological discourse. As a critical political concept, anticipation is neither about planning nor waiting. It rejects nihilistic presentism but also avoids the false opposition between liberal progress and apocalyptic rupture. (Or we can say that it rejects liberal progress while avoiding the false opposition between nihilistic presentism and apocalyptic rupture.) Through an immanent critique of actual relations that allows actors to recognize supposedly impossible possibilities, by tacking dialectically between creative imagination and experimental practices, anticipation seeks to balance the dual imperative to insist on an open future and to envision envisioning a good life. We might therefore refer to a dialectics of anticipation marked by the dual imperatives to be open to the impossible and to imagine the possible, to envision and enact, to seize the sudden illumination as it appears and seek to produce it through everyday life. A dialectical concept of anticipation is a calling for that is also a calling forth, an enacted idea that may bring into being what it desires through the performance itself (even as that very image of future possibilities only arises through such performative acts). Anticipatory politics are therefore also aesthetic operations (and vice versa). Neither about optimism nor pessimism, these concrete utopian practices cut across reified distinctions between immanence and transcendence, present and future, actual and possible, instrumental and utopian, imagination and action, strategy and spontaneity, politics and performance. Anticipation signals a readiness to interrupt the continuum and a commitment to live otherwise. They are not only “practices” in the sense of doing, they are forms of practice in the sense of learning, of getting better at – in this case, getting better at being the kind of person, living the kind life, entering into the types of social relations that will only be really possible, or possibly realized, in a future order.

## Random Space Updates

### Space Aff UQ Updates

#### Solar-cycle 25 is imminent---scientists are predicting a peak in 2025.

Rahul Rao 4-25. Graduate of New York University's SHERP and a freelance science writer, regularly covering physics, space, and infrastructure. His work has appeared in Gizmodo, Popular Science, Inverse, IEEE Spectrum, and Continuum. “Why so much solar activity? Sun may be outpacing predictions.” Space. 4-25-2022. https://www.space.com/sun-activity-peak-prediction-2022-update //EM

It's no coincidence that the headlines have been full of solar flares and storms: Solar cycle 25, as astronomers call it, is now well underway.

Solar activity, which space weather experts measure by the number of visible sunspots, rises and falls on a cycle that lasts roughly 11 years from minimum to minimum, although one cycle can be as short as nine years or as long as 13. The sun's new cycle is about two years in and should peak around 2025; although cycle 25 is expected to be stronger than its predecessor, it is still predicted to be feebler than average.

"There's a few predictions that [cycle 25] might be strong, but we'll wait and see," Mark Miesch, a space weather observer at the University of Colorado Boulder, told Space.com.

Looking at the progression of the latest trend line, cycle 25's intensity might seem to be higher than expected. This apparently high activity is partly because the cycle began around six months earlier than scientists had anticipated — a natural difference, according to Miesch, who told Space.com that this cycle so far is still within the range of most predictions.

Current trends point to the sun having about 125 sunspots when cycle 25 peaks. That's more than the 115 sunspots visible at the peak of cycle 24, but still much lower than the 180 of cycle 23, which peaked in March 2000 and was about middling in recorded history.

Excitingly for some, the cycle 25 peak will likely occur around the same time as the total solar eclipse of April 2024, which will be visible from an arc across North America stretching from Sinaloa in Mexico to Newfoundland in Canada. A more active sun sports a more dynamic corona, the outer atmosphere of the sun that we can see only when the moon blocks out the main disk.

"We'll have a pretty interesting corona to see during the eclipse," Miesch told Space.com.

In watching the sun, astronomers hope to gain more knowledge about the long-term trends that potentially drive these cycles. Even though scientists have compiled a continuous record of solar cycles back to the mid-18th century, with occasional data from well before that date, astronomers still don't know very much about how solar cycles change and evolve over the long term.

For instance, over the past four solar cycles going back to the 1970s, each successive cycle has had a weaker peak than its predecessor.

"It's not very common to have a trend last more than four solar cycles," Miesch told Space.com.

If solar cycle 25 turns out to be stronger than its predecessor, that weakening trend would end, supporting an idea called the Gleissberg cycle. This theory holds that cycles' peaks grow stronger then weaken in a waveform that repeats every century. Indeed, the weak cycles of today seem to mimic similarly weak cycles in the early 20th and early 19th centuries, while the cycles of the mid-20th century were especially strong.

#### The Sun’s activity cannot be explained with a single explanatory theory---rather, it is scientifically valuable to listen to predictions based on 140 years of data that project cycle-25 to be the strongest solar storm in modern history.

Tereza Pultarova 6-30. London-based science and technology journalist, aspiring fiction writer and amateur gymnast. “NASA's solar forecast is turning out to be wrong. This team's model is still on track.” Space. 06-30-2022. https://www.space.com/why-solar-weather-forecast-doesnt-work //EM

Solar cycle 25 kicked off last year. Forecasters thought it would be a mild one, but it's turning out to be quite the opposite. From its onset, this solar cycle has been steadily outpacing predictions, producing more sunspots and spewing way more solar wind, flares and eruptions than the world's leading experts predicted.

But while most space weather scientists are scratching their heads, saying "We still know very little about our star," one heliophysicist has become the dark horse in space weather forecasting. His model of the sun's behavior seems to have gotten it right.

A brief glance at the sun's radiant disk reveals little about the star's dynamic life. As ordinary Earthlings, we feel more affected by pesky clouds obstructing its rays. But astronomers equipped with telescopes have known since the 17th century that the sun's surface changes from day to day, breaking out with dark spots that grow and shrink, change shape and move across the sun's surface, and disappear over time to be replaced with new ones. Since 1749, astronomers have been carefully recording those sunspots. By the middle of the 19th century, they realized that the number and size of these spots ebbs and flows following a roughly 11-year solar cycle. Since records began, the star has completed 24 cycles, with cycle 25 currently underway.

But there is more to this ebb and flow. Just like the number of sunspots grows and recedes within a single cycle, the productivity of these cycles varies from one cycle to the next, following patterns that are still little explored.

Cycle 24, which officially ended in December 2019 but overlapped with the ensuing cycle 25 for quite a while, was one of the weakest on record. When a group of experts from NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) came together to estimate the sun's activity for cycle 25, they predicted that the upcoming cycle would be just as weak.

But at about the same time, another forecast came out. Put together by a team led by Scott McIntosh, a solar physicist and deputy director of the U.S. National Center for Atmospheric Research, this forecast predicted the exact opposite: that cycle 25 might be among the stronger ones in recorded history.

"We looked back over 140-plus years of data about the sun's magnetic activity and its relation to the number of sunspots," McIntosh told Space.com. "And there was a pattern that shaped how large or small the upcoming sunspot cycle was going to be. We predicted the same pattern to take place before solar cycle 25. Based on that, we made a wild scientific guess that cycle 25 could possibly be as high as double the amplitude of cycle 24."

The team published their predictions in the journal Solar Physics(opens in new tab) in November 2020. Since then, while experts at NOAA and NASA were puzzled, McIntosh and his colleagues watched the sun do exactly what they expected.

For example, whereas NOAA and NASA predicted a meager 27 sunspots for December 2021, the sun produced 67 — more than double the estimate. And in May 2022, instead of the 37 sunspots predicted by NOAA and NASA, there were 97, producing solar flares and coronal mass ejections. The intense solar activity also caused geomagnetic storms on Earth, wreaking havoc on satellites in orbit and triggering magnificent auroral displays.

The official forecast for the peak of the solar maximum, which is expected in April 2025, is 115 sunspots that month. But if the curve follows the current trend, which reflects McIntosh and his team's forecast(opens in new tab), the sun will easily reach 115 monthly sunspots by the end of this year and peak two years later at over 210 monthly sunspots.

"It's really wild that the sun continues to do this," McIntosh said. "Month after month, it continues to follow the track. But we'll see. The sun sometimes does weird things, and the cycle could completely fall over tomorrow."

Tzu-Wei Fang, a space scientist at NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center, agrees that the official solar cycle forecast is not working out and admits that scientists' current understanding of the factors driving the sun's behavior is rather limited.

"We don't know what is driving this strong solar activity," Fang told Space.com. "The sun's behavior changes based on different cycles, from short cycles of 11 days to long cycles of 80 years. There are still a lot of unknowns, and we just don't have enough data points or knowledge to [accurately predict] solar activity.

Sunspots are cooler regions on the surface of the sun that can spawn eruptive disturbances, such as solar flares and coronal mass ejections.

The amount of sunspots varies within the sun's 11-year cycle of activity. (Image credit: NASA/SDO)

The Hale cycle

So on what, exactly, do McIntosh and his colleague base their "wild scientific guess"? The team studied the relationship between the roughly 11-year cycle of sunspot generation and the so-called Hale cycle, a 22-year cycle of magnetic activity during which magnetic waves of opposite polarity move from the sun's poles toward the equator, where they eventually meet and cancel each other out.