# 1AC

## Warr-en-Terror

#### Blackness lives in the prehistory of our times. In this, blackness must always exist as antithetical to *civilizational development*. Frozen in time, Africa represents the geographical, temporal, and cultural depiction of the *primitive* and *tribal* other in which “Africa was ‘a fetish-land, inhabited by cannibals, dervishes and witch doctors”. This is not just an intentional remapping of the globe, but a techno-logistical mechanism used to separate two worlds.

#### Contemporary history has used this “distance” to exonerate ourselves from any worldly attachments to the in-human. Represented as a “*threat to civilization*” Africa must become an American experiment, to “make civilized” the very definition of *incivility*.

#### In this sense, NATO has become America’s new colonial toy through which we can assert an unparalleled level of power over primitive civilizations. Uncontested in its power, the US is able to lead NATO through a new era of imperial dominance that is constituted by “global raciality”.

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Antiblack racism in securitization theory writings on Africa ‘Antiblackness’ is a term used to describe the specificity of racism against people of African descent in the post-Columbus world. Chattel slavery turned people from the African continent into commodities to be traded and accumulated, and thereby placed them as ‘the bottom marker’ of ‘a projected universally human scale of being’ ([Wynter, 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 308; see also [Fanon, 1967](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921); [Hartman, 1997](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921); [Spillers, 1987](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921)). In this imaginary, blackness and black people figured as enslaveable things: the foil against which notions of what it means to be human (and thus a political subject) were invented. Antiblack racism is also complexly entangled with Western gender and sexual formations ([Fanon, 1967](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921); [Hartman, 1997](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921); [Spillers, 1987](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921)): black women’s bodies and their alleged sexual difference were cast as proof of African primitivism.[3](javascript:popRef('fn3-0967010619862921')) Significant here are questions of temporality. For Victorians, Africa was ‘a fetish-land, inhabited by cannibals, dervishes and witch doctors, abandoned in prehistory’ ([McClintock, 1995](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 41). Tropes of ‘the Dark Continent’ as ‘inhabiting not simply a different geographical space but a different temporal zone’ ([McClintock, 1995](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 40) stubbornly persist, including in much international relations theory, which casts Africa ‘as a metaphor for a number of evils: failed states, AIDS, poverty, corruption’ ([Grovogui, 2001](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 426). Such representations of Africa are not incidental in traditional international relations theory. They are intrinsic to it. This is because ‘Africa’ serves as a foil ([Mills, 1997](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 13) to ‘Europe’ and ‘the West’, the ultimate counterpart to not just Western but human development ([Mudimbe, 1988](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921); [Wai, 2012a](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921)). In much international relations scholarship, blackness continues to signify ultimate (moral, sexual, and political) primitivism, an inherent propensity to (sexual and political) violence, and sexual excess and danger. Does securitization theory overcome, replicate, or deepen antiblack thought on ‘Africa’? Certainly, securitization theory sees a tendency towards primal anarchy and the ‘state of nature’ in many non-Western parts of the world (the Balkans; Eastern Europe; Central, South, and East Asia; the Middle East; and South America), but ‘Africa’ is particularly maligned. Often, classic securitization theory treats the entire continent as a single entity, a space where normal politics is weak and oversecuritized, the state or social contract fails (or was never established), and ‘man’ reverts to (or never left) the state of nature. ‘Africa is a pessimist’s paradise, a place where the Hobbesian hypothesis that in the absence of a political Leviathan life for individuals will be nasty, brutish, and short seems to be widely manifest in everyday life’ ([Buzan and Wæver, 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 219). Elsewhere, however, it adds some complexity by seeing Africa in terms of multiple temporalities, being both ‘premodern’, having elements of the ‘modern’, and threatening a ‘back to the future’ scenario. On the one hand, a book like Regions and Powers ([Buzan and Wæver, 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921)) offers a sweeping history of Europe over millennia (containing little mention of colonialism), but a history of Africa that covers only official decolonization and the post–Cold War era: a matter of mere decades. Completely missing is any historical account of how colonialism and enslavement shaped not only African but also European security relations ([Agathangelou and Ling, 2004b](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921); [Barkawi, 2006](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921); [Barkawi and Laffey, 1999](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921); [Krishna, 2001](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921)), and the idea of Europe itself ([Mudimbe, 1988](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921); [Said, 1979](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921)). Conversely, another canonical securitization theory text asserts that ‘in the contemporary international system, some prestate referent objects are still active. The remnants of tribal barbarians still exist in parts of Central Asia and Africa. Some hint of how these tribes worked as referent objects for military security can be gleaned from contemporary civil wars in Afghanistan and Somalia’ ([Buzan et al., 1998](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 53, emphasis added). The past-tense ‘worked’ here implies that we can learn about premodern times (in Europe) by looking at present-day Afghanistan or Somalia, whose backwards ‘tribal barbarian’ populations constitute a prestate referent. These two temporalities come together in the statement that ‘in Africa, the main societal referent objects are a mix of premodern – the extended family, village, clan, and tribe – and modern, the “state-nation”’ ([Buzan et al., 1998](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 126). Securitization theory, then, sees Africa as temporally anomalous – that is, both premodern and modern – because it manifests both a postcolonial present and a potential degeneration to a precolonial/premodern past, as when [Buzan and Wæver (2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 221), drawing from other authors, including Kaplan, speculate that: the period of colonization and decolonization might, in the long view, appear as something of an interlude, a period with its own distinctive characteristics, rather than a point of permanent transformation from premodern to modern. If back-to-the-future pessimism is right, then what we are looking at now is some phase in the terminal collapse of the Westphalian experiment in Africa. This passage outlines a ‘back to the future’ scenario in which Africa returns to its default state of precolonial, tribal, anarchic statelessness. Here, as elsewhere, securitization theory does not entirely ignore histories of colonization: it admits that colonialism had an impact on Africa, but it understands this impact not as an extraction of resources and labor and a violent transformation of people into chattel, but as an ‘experiment’ aimed at bringing the European Westphalian state to ‘premodern’ barbarians (see [Buzan and Wæver, 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 221; [Buzan et al., 1998](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 53, 126). Colonial and ongoing postcolonial and settler-colonial exploitation does not feature in this analysis, and decolonization appears not as a project of liberation but as a potential backslide into primal anarchy ([Buzan and Wæver, 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 345). For securitization theory, histories of colonialism look less like violent ongoing exploitation than a missed opportunity for Africa to become more modern, desecuritized, and European. Why is ‘Africa’ missing this opportunity? Securitization theory’s methodological whiteness leads it to assert, without substantiation, that the cause of this backsliding must not be the ongoing extractive violence of liberal powers but the failure of African people and states to ‘desecuritize’: Because political violence has been such an endemic feature of the African landscape, and because the crisis of the African state is so central to the pervasive insecurity on the continent, we will take the existence of systematic political violence to indicate the presence of a dominant securitization. ([Buzan and Wæver, 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 223) This is strikingly circular reasoning, where premises and conclusions guarantee each other. Securitization theory starts, as we have seen, from the axioms that ‘normal politics’ tames violence and irrational securitizations threaten ‘normal politics’. Seeing Africa as a violent, anarchic space, lacking in ‘normal’ civilized politics, securitization theory assumes this must be because securitization has run amok. As a result, African ‘dominant securitization’ can be taken for granted, as a foil to the supposed peacefulness of Europe, and therefore as evidence that ‘normal politics’ tames violence, and so on. Securitization theory here turns an antiblack narrative of African (a)history (Africa is primitive, violent, anachronistic) into an equally antiblack normative proposition: that Africa is culpable for failing to produce ‘normal politics’. European colonial violence is occluded or, worse, exonerated: many African elites publicly embraced a negative view of globalization, and took the view that their weak position in the global periphery was a major explanation for their difficulties. This led to a convenient rhetoric of ‘neo-colonial’ securitization that sought, often successfully, to divert attention from the indigenous causes of Africa’s difficulties. ([Buzan and Wæver, 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 251) This not only sanitizes the violence of colonialism and enslavement, it goes so far as to cast anti-colonial politics as the problem.[4](javascript:popRef('fn4-0967010619862921')) With Europe exonerated, Africa is then able to appear as a threat to Europe. We have already seen that securitization theory seeks to protect Western ‘progress’ and normal politics from excessive securitization and a potential fall into primal anarchy. It is similarly concerned to defend normal politics outside the West but sees this as more hopeless: ‘In regions dominated by weak or failed states, real prospects exist that the local level will become dominant, with securitization forming microregions. To the list of microregions we should perhaps add the Hobbesian anarchies in some inner cities of megalopolises’ ([Buzan et al., 1998](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 70). Later, this idea is expanded: As argued by [Robert Kaplan (1994)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921), units other than states have created new lines of division…. The booming megacities in the Third World, with their enormous slum suburbs, produce large populations that identify neither with their clans or tribes nor with states or nations…. Large groups of people who focus on immediate material survival needs become nonidentity factors and might enter the sociopolitical realm as the joker at some later point when they suddenly do acquire or generate an identity. ([Buzan et al., 1998](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 127) Here, those who dwell in slums are figured as people without identities, or political subjectivities, not fully political, and perhaps not fully human. (Even cursory empirical investigation would prove this false: there are robust traditions of political activism in slums across the globe, including across the African continent.) Because they exist in this state of nature (i.e. ‘focus on immediate material survival needs’), these racialized ‘jokers’ are potential threats to Europe, though in a way that is particularly tied to securitization theory’s constructivist methodology: ‘Another effect of Kaplanesque anarchy, especially the disease–crime–population–migration circles in Africa, is the unofficial erection of Atlantic and Mediterranean walls by which North Americans and Europeans define a category of Africa and Africans as the major zone of anarchy, danger, and disease to be shut off from “our world”’ ([Buzan et al., 1998](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0967010619862921): 127). This asserts that ‘Africa’ is a space of ‘Kaplanesque anarchy’ and, at the same time, warns against the securitization of ‘Africa and Africans’ in the West. What securitization theory’s analysis of Africa produces, in this formulation, is nothing other than an updated ‘white man’s burden’: it is incumbent on the civilized not to turn away from the plight of the primitive, but the civilized must also take care to avoid being corrupted by their primitive anarchy. We can see here, finally, how little separates this contemporary school of security analysis from the openly antiblack racism of its Victorian predecessors.

#### NATO’s history in Africa is deeply intertwined with antiblackness – from NATO secret armies staging coups in Algeria in the 60s, to covert operations in Libya in the name of stability, to modern day AFRICOM military extraction projects for resources - Africa has been the medium of Western expansion and continuation.

**Rivers 20** – Enzo Rivers is an esteemed writer for the Medium and writes many articles that examine empirical basis for antiblackness and contemporary antiblack operations.  (Enzo Rivers, “AFRICOM: The U.S Imperialist Death Squads in Africa”, Outside of Africa, the operations of AFRICOM are largely unknown, Medium, 12 August 2020, [https://enzorivers.medium.com/africom-the-u-s-imperialist-death-squads-in-africa-a6a59f0ecade](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fenzorivers.medium.com%2Fafricom-the-u-s-imperialist-death-squads-in-africa-a6a59f0ecade&data=05%7C01%7Ctirupnik%40berkeleyprep.org%7Caa34ad22936b42f473bd08da58a53b9a%7Cdef48ebd99c64b0baa6d3ff44364ddad%7C0%7C0%7C637919763936662408%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=D5%2B5kgL3AjgDpwvBSrP2eU%2FedS%2B87A5nxgWye3OivSY%3D&reserved=0) ) || PZ

The U.S has been waging war in Africa for yearswithAFRICOMandtheircovert opsandthrough thesiphoningof Africa’snatural resources. Tocontinuetheexploitationof the land and peopleofAfrica,theU.S used their militarized forcedunderthefacadeoflendingmilitaryaidto these nations when that could be further from the truth. The U.S usesthe facade ofmilitary aidtostealresourcesfromAfricafor multinational corporations to continue the monopolies of capitalism. AFRICOM claims to be a counter terrorism operation and yet the rate of terrorist attacks in Africa have actually increased since the establishment of AFRICOM in October 2008. AFRICOMactivelyworkswithterroristgroupstodestabilizethecountriesthey are based in, alltostealresources.AFRICOMisresponsibleformuch of, if not most of, thedeathanddestructioninAfricawithin the last decade.AFRICOM’s interests solely lie in protecting the neo colonial presence and activities the U.S engages in to compete with China and Russia. Only within the recent year has Amnesty International condemned the frequent use of drones that AFRICOM utilizes. AFRICOMhaddronebombingsordered so frequently thattheywereforcedtomake quarterlyreports of allciviliancasualtiesin their drone strikes, before they never kept any such record. Ever since they have started reporting civilian casualties,theyhaveonlycounted5people,whichentirelyconflictswithlocalreportsfromthecountriesthey bombandtheiroperations continuetobeshroudedin secrecy. Over the last 3 months, AFRICOM’s militarized activity in African countries has increased heavily, particularly in Somalia. Since the beginning of 2020, AFRICOM has announced 39 airstrikes in Somalia. The command announced a total of 36 such bombings from 2009 to 2017, under Obama, peaking in 2016 with 19 declared drone strikes. In 2019, under President Donald Trump, the U.S. conducted 63 air attacks in Somalia, the most ever in a single year. The massive escalation of the U.S military occupation in Somalia comes asU.N. Secretary-General António Guterres has repeatedly appealedfora globalceasefiredue to the Covid-19 pandemic. “There should be only one fight in our world today, our shared battle against Covid-19, we must mobilize every ounce of energy to defeat it” stated Guterres. Thatsamedayon April 3rd, 2020 AFRICOMconductedan“airstriketargeting al-Shabaab terrorists in the vicinity of Bush Madina, Somalia,” according to a command press release. AFRICOM claimed five members of al-Shabab were killed in the strike. According to the Somali newspaper Somali Affairs “The US Africa Command has released a report on civilian casualties in its operations against Al-Shabaab in Somalia. The report acknowledged the death of one civilian as well as three others who were injured following an air raid in the vicinity of Jilib town of Middle Jubba in February this year. US airstrikesacross Somalia regions, aimed at degrading Al-Shabab, have beeninflictingcasualtiesonthecivilianpopulationin those areas.After an outcry over thesedeaths, which werenormallyleftunacknowledgedbytheUSmilitary, Africom started investigating over a dozen reported incidents where civilians were said to have been killed. In more recent Africom operations in Somalia, US drones today reportedly bombed areas in Jilib town believed to have been hosting Al-Shabaab militants, killing even more civilians. One of several missiles fired by the US drones had hit the house of an innocent family, killing two young boys aged between eight and 13 years.” Since April last year, AFRICOM has admitted to killing five Somali civilians and injuring six others, but none of those families or victims have been compensated by the U.S military operation. The response to African protests of the American police murder of black people has reflected that theU.S is inherently anti black intheir own country and in thecountries they occupy. Outrage towards the US emanated from the Congo, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, all condemning the killing.The response from the African Union on May 29th reads “the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat strongly condemns the murder of George Floyd that occurred in the United States of America at the hands of law enforcement officers, and wishes to extend his deepest condolences to his family and loved ones. Recalling the historic Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) Resolution on Racial Discrimination in the United States of America made by African Heads of State and Government, at the OAU’s First Assembly Meeting held in Cairo, Egypt from 17 to 24 July 1964, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission firmly reaffirms and reiterates the African Union’s rejection of the continuing discriminatory practices against Black citizens of the United States of America. He further urges the authorities in the United States of America to intensify their efforts to ensure the total elimination of all forms of discrimination based on race or ethnic origin.” Since thenAFRICOMhasonlyincreasedtheirmilitaryoperationsinAfrica,continuingtomurderinnocentsandstealAfrica’snaturalresources.The consequences of the militarization of U.S. policy toward Africa include an unknown and growing number of civilian deaths, deepening conflict and poverty, and an increase in violent movements in Africa, particularly in the Sahel region. Amnesty International released a report last year on the increase in U.S. airstrikes and civilian deaths in Somalia, deaths that were not reported by AFRICOM or the U.S government, anditwillforeverbeunclearhowmany war crimes AFRICOM has done tothe people ofAfrica. The need for awareness of these horrid deeds is more than urgent as many people in the West and across the world have no idea what AFRICOM even is, the protests to American imperialism all but leave out AFRICOM and their operations throughout the continent of Africa, which is something that needs to drastically change.

#### But, within the plane of territorial domination comes the emergence of a new era in which technological systems of control and biopolitical governance have become the currency for warfare. The cyber-securitized medium of surveillance, information gathering, and scientific metaphysics are all backed by the liberal “objectivity” of artificial intelligence and biotechnology. The racialized heuristic of emerging technologies is rooted in the slow masking and camouflage of anti-black violence away from explicit plantation politics into implicit technical codes.

Howell and Richter-Montpetit 19 (Alison Howell, Rutgers University – Newark AND Melanie Richter-Montpetit, University of Sussex “Racism in Foucauldian Security Studies: Biopolitics, Liberal War, and the Whitewashing of Colonial and Racial Violence” International Political Sociology (2019) 13, 2–19) //NT

Molecular and Digital Revolutions and the Whiteness of Post-human Life FSS’s undertheorization of racism and colonialism also produces inaccurate genealogies of (life) sciences and technologies, most strikingly regarding the so-called digital and molecular revolutions. FSS scholars of these revolutions purport to update Foucault for “the age of life as information” (Dillon and Reid 2009, 106) and to describe epochal breaks in scientific understandings of life, corresponding with an equally epochal shift from a biopolitics of scientific racism to a new postracial form of biopolitics. However, they do so without any serious attention to Foucault’s postcolonial critics or any serious inquiry into lines of continuity between White supremacist scientific racism and these digital and molecular “revolutions.” Thus, for instance, Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero (2008, 273) argue that “biopolitics is critically dependent, epistemically and ontologically, on what the sciences of life say that species life is.” As such, “[i]n the molecular age life is no longer simply the life of population as Foucault documented . . . because molecular science has transformed what we understand a living thing to be” (Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero 2008, 286). Dillon and Reid similarly claim to trace shifting notions of life. They assert that over the past five decades “the very ontology of biological life has shifted to the ground of ‘information’” (Dillon and Reid 2009, 22) and that distinctions between animate and inanimate, biological and nonbiological “have been newly construed and problematized” (Dillon and Reid 2009, 22). Though much of this is derivative of Ian Hacking and Nikolas Rose’s work, attention to the digital and molecular has particular impacts in the international and security fields. According to Dillon and Reid (2009, 22), digital and molecular “reproblematizations” of life have impacted the biopolitical strategies of liberal internationalism: “[t]he very space of enmity is itself re-problematized. Who is dangerous, what is dangerous, how things become dangerous are all transformed” (Dillon and Reid 2009, 107). This has apparently resulted in a shift from scientific racism to “new racism,” with an emphasis on cultural difference rather than biological hierarchies. FSS’s ability to examine how science has shaped the biopolitical strategies of security and liberal internationalism is limited by its persistent Eurocentrism and undertheorization of race. Societal notions of “life” are treated as interchangeable with the life sciences’ supposedly postracial understanding of life as generic data. This fails to engage with either the ingrained (settler) coloniality of technoscience or the stubborn (and institutionalized) persistence of broader structures of White supremacy and anti-Blackness. This has serious empirical implications. For instance, Dillon’s discussion of “new” risk analysis and biometrics does not consider how these security technologies have been designed to police enslaved populations and surveille Black people (cf. Browne 2015), as part of a long-standing legacy of colonial techniques of “identity dominance” (Bell 2013). Similarly, FSS discussions of the molecular fail to engage with the contemporary racial politics of genetic science (Duster 2003; TallBear 2013; Nelson 2016); how molecular life sciences were and are fueled by experimentation on the bodies of racialized and indigenous people (Washington 2006; Dudley 2012; Mosby 2013), including the movement of pharmaceutical clinical trials from US prisons to the Global South (Petryna 2009); or the neo-eugenic functions of genetic reproductive technologies (Roberts 2011, 2013) and related racialized economies of labor in the global surrogacy industry (Twine 2011) to name just a few examples. Instead, highly abstract formulations stand in for historically specific forms of power. Dillon and Reid write that “[p]ower is palimpsestuous. New forms and relations of power become superimposed on older ones. Previous relations and accounts of power are rubbed out but may not be entirely effaced” (Dillon and Reid 2009, 124). This statement comes with no serious empirical engagement with the persistence—and modulation—of scientific racism into the twenty-first century. Instead we are to believe that racism is now cultural, not scientific—and, for that matter, that science itself isn’t cultural. The result is an e(race)sure (Moore 2012) of the ways that racialized subjects continue to always already signify violence that once again shores up the foundational White FSS mythology that everyone is (potentially) dangerous and, therefore, vulnerable to the punitive and/or lethal dimensions of liberal power. Ironically, FSS discussions of post–WWII biopolitical liberal internationalism thus reproduce, rather than challenge, the promise that liberal war will transcend the global color line (Richter-Montpetit 2014b).

#### These emergent technologies are rooted in a scientific calculation and false objectivity that relies upon blackness as metaphysical nothingness that sutures legal epistemology within an anti-black telos.

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The event also put the metaphysical infrastructure into perspective for me. Two philosophical forces were colluding (and at times conflicting) to orient the solutions proposed and the audiences’ responses, and both presented “free black” as a concept with meaning: black humanism and postmetaphysics. I use these two terms to docket a certain posture toward metaphysics—and the ontological ground metaphysics offers. Black hu- manism enters into romance with metaphysics. It appropriates schema- tization, calculation, technology, probability, and universality—all the instruments of metaphysical thinking—to make epistemological, ethical, and ontological claims concerning blackness and freedom. Freedom is possible, then, because metaphysics provides it with ontology; from there, all sorts of solutions, policies, and practices emerge to address antiblackness. Scientific reasoning, technological innovation, and legality are tools black hu- manists use to quantify suffering, measure progress, proffer universal nar- ratives of humanity, and reason with antiblack institutions. All problems have solutions for black humanists, and their task is to uncover the solution the problem conceals, as this uncovering equates to an eradication of the problem. Black humanism relies on an eclectic approach to antiblackness— Hegelian synthesis, Kantian rationalism, Platonic universals/idealism, Car- tesian representation, and empiricism. In short, black humanists lay claim to the  ~~being~~ of the human (and the human’s freedom) through metaphys- ical thinking and instruments. Postmetaphysics, in contrast, attempts the surmounting or twisting [verwunden] of the ground and logic of metaphysics.3 It insists that meta- physics reproduces pain and misery and restricts human freedom. Rep- resenting the human as an object of scientific thinking (e.g., biology, economics, law) destroys the spontaneity and uniqueness of the human— things that make the human special. The ground, then, upon which meta- physics relies is problematic, and this ground must be destroyed (i.e., twisted) and deconstructed (i.e., displaced) to free the human. Postmeta- physics would advocate for a self-consumption of this ground through hermeneutical strategies, unending deconstructions, and forms of plu- rality (such as hermeneutic nihilism). The post is rather a misnomer, if we think of post as an overcoming [überwunden]; the postmetaphysician will never overcome metaphysics. A residue will always remain, but the postmetaphysician hopes to reduce this metaphysical residue to render it inoperative. The postmetaphysician understands antiblackness as a prob- lem of metaphysics, especially the way scientific thinking has classified ~~being~~ along racial difference and biology. The task of the postmetaphysi- cal project is to free blacks from the misery metaphysics produces by un- dermining its ground. Hermeneutical strategies, which contest ultimate foundations, would question the ground of race (racial metaphysics) and its claim to universal truth. Black humanism and postmetaphysics, however, leave the question of  ~~being~~ unattended as it concerns black(ness). Both assume  ~~being~~ is ap- plicable and operative—black humanism relies on metaphysical  ~~being~~ and postmetaphysics relies on multiple interpretations or manifestations of  ~~being~~. In other words, the human’s  ~~being~~ grounds both philosophical perspectives. Although postmetaphysics allows for a capacious under- standing of the human and  ~~being~~, it still posits  ~~being~~ universally as it con- cerns freedom; no entity is without it, even if it manifests differently, or as difference, if we follow Deleuze. This is to suggest that both discourses proceed as if the question of  ~~being~~ has been settled and that we no longer need to return to it—the question, indeed, has been elided in critical dis- courses concerning blackness. Ontological Terror seeks to put the ques- tion back in its proper place: at the center of any discourse about  ~~being~~. Ontological Terror meditates on this (non)relation between blackness and  ~~being~~ by arguing that black  ~~being~~ incarnates metaphysical nothing, the terror of metaphysics, in an antiblack world. Blacks, then, have func- tion but not  ~~being~~—the function of black(ness) is to give form to a ter- rifying formlessness (nothing).  ~~being~~ claims function as its property (all functions rely on  ~~being~~, according to this logic, for philosophical presentation), but the aim of black nihilism is to expose the unbridgeable rift between  ~~being~~ and function for blackness. The puzzle of blackness, then, is that it functions in an antiblack world without  ~~being~~—much like “nothing” functions philosophically without our metaphysical under- standing of  ~~being~~, an extraordinary mystery. Put differently, metaphysics is obsessed with both blackness and nothing, and the two become syn- onyms for that which ruptures metaphysical organization and form. The Negro is black because the Negro must assume the function of nothing in a metaphysical world. The world needs this labor. This obsession, how- ever, also transforms into hatred, since nothing is incorrigible—it shat- ters ontological ground and security. Nothing terrifies metaphysics, and metaphysics attempts to dominate it by turning nothing into an object of knowledge, something it can dominate, analyze, calculate, and schema- tize. When I speak of function, I mean the projection of nothing’s terror onto black(ness) as a strategy of metaphysics’ will to power. How, then, does metaphysics dominate nothing? By objectifying nothing through the black Negro. In this analysis, metaphysics can never provide freedom or humanity for blacks, since it is the objectification, domination, and extermination of blacks that keep the metaphysical world intact. Metaphysics uses blacks to maintain a sense of security and to sustain the fantasy of triumph—the triumph over the nothing that limits human freedom. Without blacks, I argue, nothing’s terror debilitates metaphysical procedures, epistemolo- gies, boundaries, and institutions. Black freedom, then, would constitute a form of world destruction, and this is precisely why humanism has failed to accomplish its romantic goals of equality, justice, and recognition. In short, black humanism has neglected the relationship between black(ness) and nothing in its yearning for belonging, acceptance, and freedom. The Negro was invented to fulfill this function for metaphysics, and the hu- manist dream of transforming invention into human  ~~being~~ is continu- ally deferred (because it is impossible). Ontological Terror challenges the claim that blacks are human and can ground existence in the same  ~~being~~ of the human. I argue that blacks are introduced into the metaphysical world as available equipment in human form. Black thinking, then, must return to the question of  ~~being~~ and the relation between this question and the antiblack violence sustaining the world. It is my contention that black thinking is given a tremendous task: to approach the ontological abyss and the metaphysical violence sustaining the world. Ontological Terror suggests that black thinking cannot be overcome— we will never reach the end of black thinking or its culmination, unlike the end of philosophy describing postmetaphysical enterprises.4 In other words, postmetaphysics has broached the question of  ~~being~~ and has com- menced the destruction [Destruktion] of the metaphysical infrastructure, which systemically forgets  ~~being~~. Postmetaphysics, then, is a project of remnants, as Santiago Zabala suggests. After we have used hermeneutics, deconstruction, rhizomes, and mathematical sets to devastate metaphys- ics, we are left with ontological rubble—a trace of metaphysics and a re- constructed  ~~being~~. Postmetaphysics, then, must ask, “How is it going with  ~~being~~?” Or what is the state of  ~~being~~ in this contemporary moment, and how does the world remain open to  ~~being~~’s unfolding and happening (as well as its withdrawal and abandoning of Dasein)? “How is it going with  ~~being~~?” is the fundamental question of our era, according to postmeta- physics; only the twisting and severe rearranging [verwunden] of meta- physics can usher this question into the world. Both metaphysics and postmetaphysics, however, have forgotten the Ne- gro, just as they have forgotten  ~~being~~—to remember  ~~being~~ one must also re- member the Negro. The Negro Question and the Question of  ~~being~~ are in- tertwined. Postmetaphysical enterprises reach a limit in destruction, since it is the Negro that sustains metaphysics and enables the forgetting of Be- ing (i.e., metaphysics can forget  ~~being~~ because it uses the Negro to project nothing’s terror and forget  ~~being~~). In a sense, the global use of the Negro fulfills the ontological function of forgetting  ~~being~~’s terror, majesty, and incorrigibility. The consequence of this is that as long as postmetaphysical enterprises leave the Negro unattended in their thinking, it inadvertently sustains metaphysical pain and violence. This, I argue, is why we will never overcome [überwunden] metaphysics because the world cannot overcome the Negro—the world needs the Negro, even as the world despises it. This is, of course, a Heideggerian approach to the thinking of  ~~being~~ and Nothing. More than any other philosopher, Heidegger pursued metaphysical violence and the question of  ~~being~~ relentlessly, and for this rea- son I find his philosophy indispensable and necessary. Ontological Terror thinks with and against Heidegger, since I believe Heidegger’s destruc- tion of metaphysics can assist black studies in the tremendous task of thinking  ~~being~~ and blackness, as Grant Farred has suggested.5 Heidegger’s Destruktion covers a wide range of philosophical issues, and it is not my objective to address all of these complexities; my interest is the relation between Heidegger’s critique of metaphysical violence, available equip- ment, and the task of remembering as it concerns blackness. What I hope to broach in this book, with all the aporias such as broaching encounters, is that the Negro is the missing element in Heidegger’s thinking (as well as in that of those postmetaphysicians indebted to Heidegger, such as Jean- Luc Nancy, Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, and Gianni Vattimo). If, as we learn in  ~~being~~ and Time, Dasein uses tools to experience its thrown- ness in the world (establishing its facticity) and to develop its unique proj- ect oriented toward the future (projectionality), the Negro—as commod- ity, object, slave, putative backdrop, prisoner, refugee, and corpse—is the quintessential tool Dasein uses. The use of the Negro metaphysically and ontologically, as a tool, is what black thinking is tasked with pursuing. Thus, black thinking (and postmetaphysics) must ask the unasked ques- tion “How is it going with black  ~~being~~?” Without broaching this question, all forms of destruction are just reconstitutions, since the world continues to use the Negro (as black and nothing) to forget  ~~being~~ and the sadistic pleasure of this forgetfulness.

#### Thus, we endorse an unflinching paradigmatic analysis of social death and the anti-black cyber economy that constitutes the formulation of modernity. This must be the only ethical demand in an anti-black world capable of coming to terms with the racial violence of the status quo.

Kaplan 2022 (Andrew Santana Kaplan (2022): From the Katechōn of Anti-Black Original Sin to the Mystery of Black Messianic Lawlessness: Notes on a Form-of-Life-Toward-Social-Death, Political Theology, DOI: 10.1080/1462317X.2022.2087554. [Andrew Santana Kaplan](https://www-tandfonline-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/author/Kaplan%2C+Andrew+Santana)Comparative Literature, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, USA)//GUCCISUSHI

When I started reading Afropessimism, I intuitively hypothesized that it was revealing the modern “secularization” and re-articulation of original sin. That is, Afropessimism’s paradigmatic analysis shows how the epidermalization and a priori social death of Blackness (re)constitutes modern Humanity as fundamentally “fallen”—even while this fallenness is intrinsically projected onto Blackness. I find Jesse Couenhoven’s summation of Augustine’s five-fold doctrine in my first epigraph particularly elucidating in this regard. By reading Couenhoven’s breakdown through an Afropessimist lens, I can present my hypothesis as follows: 1) the source of original sin is the (modern) Human’s primal scene of inventing Blackness as the politico-onto-theological incarnation of Slaveness. 2) All Humans share in this sin because of our solidarity through anti-Blackness, the progenitor of (the) race. The results of the primal scene are twofold. 3) From birth (qua natality), all Humans have an inherited sin (original sin itself), which comes in two forms: common guilt qua ontological parasitism, and a constitutional fault of disordered desire (qua libidinal parasitism) and ignorance of this parasitism. 4) In addition, the Human suffers a penalty because of sin: Humans’ (im)potentialities are weakened— namely, the potentiality to not be (anti-Black) and the attendant potentiality to end the World—and we will experience (being-toward-)death as our ontological condition of possibility.30 5) Finally, both anti-Black original sin and penalty are transmitted from generation to generation as the condition of possibility for natality. In turn, I understand Wilderson’s gesture in my second epigraph as a demand to confront the ramifications of this original sin so as to render its anti-Black economy of redemption inoperative. That is, if critical theory and radical politics—subtended by the Human’s grammar of suffering—are to rid themselves of their inheritance and ignorance of both this (ontological) original sin and its (unconscious) penalty, then they must refuse the logics of loss that catalyze their desire and capacity for redemption/restoration. Such refusal, meanwhile, must be informed and sustained by an unflinching contemplation of Black absence as the new paradigm for radical theory and politics. This would entail, I suggest, a mode of becoming absence31—beyond Being and redemption. In Maurice Blanchot’s words: “When the subject [qua Human] becomes absence, then the absence of a subject, or dying as subject, subverts the whole sequence of existence, causes time to take leave of its order, opens life to its passivity, exposing it to the unknown, to the stranger—to the friendship that never is declared.” 32 The aspiration of this essay—and the Black messianic33—is to theorize a fidelity to Black absence that can only “honor” its irreparable dishonor as follows: by coming to grips with 1) the Human’s constitutive-parasitic inheritance of presence34 and 2) the Black demand for a mode of (becoming) absence. Such a radically passive35 encounter may help cause (historical) time to take leave of its (progressive) order and subvert the whole grammar of Being, exposing the Human to the Black in a friendship that can never be declared as such.

#### The ROTB is to endorse advocacies not actions – reject the dogma of ideological heg – it’s the foundation of anti-black sentiments

**BAPTISE 22** - Bala James Baptiste - professor of mass communication and the chair of the Division of Communications at Miles College, earned the doctorate at Indiana University, 5-25-2022, "Ideological Hegemony: A Precursor to Institutional Racism," AAIHS, https://www.aaihs.org/ideological-hegemony-a-precursor-to-institutional-racism///vi

Intellectuals advanced the concept of ideological hegemony, which is applicable to the establishment and change of relationships between Caucasians and African Americans. Marxist theorists Antonio Gramsci, Stuart Hall, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, and others expounded in regards to ideological hegemony, the ideas and structures wherein individuals without access to power reinforce instruments of action of the powerful despite their potentially harmful and silencing effects. Marxism analyzes the relationship between the powerful and the powerless. The writings of Karl Marx, a German sociologist, historian, and economist, who published in 1848 with Friedrich Engles the Communist Manifesto, heavily influenced the intellectuals. The celebrated Manifesto pamphlet concluded that the creation of a society with one class of people would end problems between the haves and have nots. Hall, the Jamaican-born British Marxist sociologist, cultural theorist, and political activist articulated his view of ideology. The concept is more than a belief system or a way of thinking. Ideology is an actionable principle enabling the organization of political or economic functions in a society or a sector of a populace. Ideology aims to create public annunciation of policies for the realization of a set of beliefs. Communism, capitalism, liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, and multiculturalism are examples of ideologies. During the modern Civil Rights Movement, academics and activists recognized Hall as one of the first scholars to articulate the ideology of multiculturalism, which represents the development and organization of institutions and societies that include on an equal basis African Americans and their culture in white-dominated societies. Multiculturalism included other ethnicities and people of color. Ideology is relevant because the concept significantly explains the materialization and perpetuation of white supremacy. The ideas of white supremacy diffuse from powerful individuals and settle upon subordinates. The theory of white supremacy began with imperial, national, or intellectual leadership and percolated down to the masses. In the United States, the framing of ideology applicable to race relations originated at the top of the political structure and diffused to the bottom social realms of the population. The writers of the U.S. Constitution codified Black inferiority during the mid-1770s to late 1780s. Instead of legislation requiring states to take the census of 100 percent of the Black population, Article 1, Section 2, Clause 3 of the Constitution authorized states to count enslaved people as representing only three-fifths of the total Black population. Other early constitutional provisions were also racist. Congress prohibited states from outlawing the trade of enslaved Africans, required white people to return the captured escaped-enslaved to their masters, and embedded the federal government with the power to suppress insurrections by the enslaved. State legislatures and federal courts undergirded white supremacy with the enactment or support of racist laws, such as the separation of Blacks and whites in public spaces. White supremacists committed murder, physical violence, rape, political oppression, and psychological abuse against Black people. As racial integration began to emerge, anti-Blackness gradually became less overt, but African Americans were denied favorable treatment and access to decision-making positions. The theory of ideological hegemony materializes when a populous takes part in reinforcing power structures and societal ideas willingly, even when the structures and ideas only marginally benefit those without meaningful access to power. Social groups embrace ideological hegemony despite its capability to harm or silence dissent. Gramsci wrote in one of the sections of the Notebooks that the government is responsible of hegemony. “…to gain the upper hand, to propagate itself throughout society… and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups….. It is true that the State is seen as the organ of one particular group, destined to create favourable conditions for the latter’s maximum expansion…”1 In colonial America, the political and military elite established dominant domestic power and held onto it in part by convincing the masses to accept their versions of reality, among which were proclamations of an exploitative British monarch, victimized colonists, superior white men, and inferior people of color. The ideologies disseminated in written form but mostly orally and consistently. Over time, white people and Black people interpreted the ideas of race relations as commonplace. By then coercion of the white masses was unnecessary. Authorities used intimidation and force against Black people to accept white supremacy. The elite continuously encouraged the ideology of the superiority of white people and their culture and the inferiority of people of color and their ways of life. Hall said the government is not always the reason the public adopts certain belief structures. Ideological hegemony often originates with the elite private sector. “It is quite easy to see why the only ideology that gets reproduced is the dominant one. But the far more pertinent, but difficult, question is how a society allows the relative freedom of civil institutions to operate in the ideological field, day after day, without direction or compulsion by the State.”2 When assessing the validity of a claim, the enlightened might say that a scholar’s intellectual viewpoint should be considered separately from his or her personal beliefs. Intellectualism includes well thought out propositions, sometimes based on the results of an analysis of empirical data. To the contrary, beliefs are rooted in cultural practices that are personal, deeply felt, and sometimes unprovable. Gramsci’s views on the distribution of power and influence changed the formulation of a wave of scholarship concerning ideological hegemony that evolved between the 1850s to the 1960s. Gramsci proposed that the ideas of the powerful are diffused and maintained among groups who are oppressed or otherwise powerless. Ideological hegemony is also applicable to race relations in the late 1960s and early 1970s during which racial integration began to occur in American institutions. With that said, one might argue that Gramsci’s personal viewpoint on Black people too should be separated from his intellectual analysis. Gramsci’s Eurocentrism contained some of the same negative views of Africans and African Americans as the segregationists in the south.3 Gramsci’s writing included his personal expression of ideological hegemony applicable to the relationships between powerful white men and the formally enslaved African Americans whose lineage Gramsci suggests was backward. One further phenomenon in the United States is worth studying, and that is the formation of a surprising number of negro intellectuals who absorb American culture and technology. It is worth bearing in mind the indirect influence that these negro intellectuals could exercise on the backward masses in Africa, and indeed direct influence if one or another of these hypotheses were ever to be verified: 1. that American expansionism should use American negroes as its agents in the conquest of the African market and the extension of American civilization.4 Gramsci’s position on the then-modern relationship whites foisted on Blacks coincides with the views of critics of race relations in the United States. Gramsci also wrote that powerful white Americans reserved decision-making authority for Caucasians, who limited the progression of Black people. “It seems to me that, for the moment, American negroes have a national and racial spirit which is negative rather than positive, one which is a product of the struggle carried on by the whites in order to isolate and depress them.”5 Gramsci also wrote of his interpretation that Africans, Black people in the United States by extension, that they were devoid of intellect. He said Africans lived in a state of ignorance that Europeans discovered upon their first encounters with them on the African continent. “One got the impression that it was all rather like the first contacts of English merchants and the negroes of Africa: trashy baubles were handed out in exchange for nuggets of gold.”6 In other words, Gramsci suggests that African Americans, the decedents of ignorant Africans, existed devoid of intellectual prowess. Therefore, Caucasians were justified with excluding Black people from realms wherein white people practiced ideological hegemony: the superior Caucasians and inferior Black people. The concept of racism employed the same mechanism as ideological hegemony wherein the purveyors of dominant idealistic power transferred racists ideas from the upper-class to the lower-classes. At the level of the upper class, systemic racism represents a series of actions of interacting mechanisms wherein white leadership made available opportunities exclusive of Black people. Institutional racism, on the other hand, refers to leaders of organizations or operations that distribute opportunities and services inequitably based on race. Institutional racism is the mechanism by which systemic racism functions. Education, healthcare, financing, and justice are among the institutions providing societal resources that Caucasians reserved for white people. The concept of ideological hegemony preceded that of racism, but it laid the foundation on which racism rested and explains why white leaders drastically delayed opening institutions to Black people to work at professional functions.

# 2AC

## FW

### Interp

#### Our interpretation is that debate should be about competing theoretical and political imaginaries

#### Prefer it –

#### Subject formation – advantage choice controls topic education -- doesn’t preclude good clash, this is in depth -- topic research -- perfectly predictable

#### Solvency – plan-based debate makes critical thought impossible because we never learn the critical thinking skills we are supposed to get from debate

#### the impact is education -- not a question of fairness but education, switch side doesn’t solve, resolving the underlying anti-black assumptions of the debate space easily o/w them not being able to “read/win” on a DA

#### And consider any of their offense on framework as a new link – ideological hegemony

#### 3. Only our paradigmatic analysis forces self-reflexivity – allows for critical interrogations of ideological hegemony

**HOWARD 11** - Natasha Howard - appointed in Geography and Environmental Studies and Africana Studies. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Thought and Sociocultural Studies and her Masters in Latin American Studies. Dr. Howard’s research centers on unveiling the structures of anti-black racism and the production of anti-black racial discourses in the Americas. 7-2-2011 “Black in the Non-Black Imagination: How Anti-Black Ideology Shapes Non-Black Racial Discourse”, University of New Mexico UNM Digital Repository, <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1013&context=educ_llss_etds//vi>

Methodology This study takes a critical hermeneutical approach. According to Gallagher (1992) critical or depth hermeneutics is concerned with engaging ideology critique. He notes that, “critique calls for a special and suspicious interpretation of those ideologies and institutions which support and maintain ruling power structures” (Gallagher, 1992, p. 240). He cites four guiding principles related to critical hermeneutics: 1) reproduction, 2) hegemony, 3) critical reflection and 4) application. Drawing from Habermas, Gallagher states that the purpose of critical interpretation is not simply to attempt to reproduce original meaning but rather to interrogate ideological positions presented in texts. A critical or depth hermeneutic methodological approach proposes that reproduction of texts without any critical reflection on ideological representation only serves to maintain unequal power relations. This stands in sharp contrast to traditional methodologies that follow strict non-critical, non-reflective approaches concerned with reproducing the supposedly pure words of the texts (or in the case of empirical research, the voice/s of the subject/s of study). Related to the second principle, hegemony, a depth hermeneutical approach would take the perspective that ideology is embedded within linguistic symbols. Once again, drawing from Habermas, Gallagher notes that problematic ideology distorts and serves the purpose of maintaining oppressive social relations. Critical hermeneutics is concerned with undistorting distorted communication, which takes place through engaging in ideological critique. In other words, depth hermeneutics questions the meaning behind linguistic symbols and to what extent does the meaning collude in the reproduction of oppression. The third principle, critical reflection places the interpreter in relationship to that being interpreted. Gallagher states that “the purpose of critical reflection is to assist in the achievement of emancipation the objectivity of interpretation is seen either as a tool to be used in the pursuit of emancipation or as a result of emancipation, but not as an end in itself (p.244). The fourth principle of critical hermeneutics is application or the idea that there exists ideal undistorted communication, which we strive to achieve. A critical hermeneutic approach is guided by the pursuit of freedom and transformation. In reflecting on Habermas‟ and the principle of application, Gallagher (1992) writes, For Habermas, application, which is the result of critical interpretation in the sense that it always comes along with the practice of depth hermeneutics, involves an escape from prejudice, a radical modification of the anterior relation with the tradition process. The “deep” meaning discovered by the critically suspicious interpretation is not only enlightening but also emancipation for the interpreter. (p. 246) My methodological framework, depth hermeneutics, is grounded by Derrick Bell‟s theory of racial realism (1992). This theory makes us aware of the real dynamic and effects of a racialized social system for Blacks. Although race may be a social construct, the social outcomes produce concrete forms of inequality. Bell also concludes that racism has such a dynamic in our society that it is unlikely that Blacks will achieve full equality since American society is premised upon a system of white supremacist domination. This ideology penetrates American consciousness to the point that no institution, individual or group has not been touched or affected by it. Racism will always re-invent itself in such a way as to maintain the hierarchy and the subordinate status of Blacks. Thus, with each racial gain achieved by Blacks, there are subsequent setbacks. We can see the evidence of this in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement. Of course, the movement led to significant gains for Blacks. However, antidiscriminatory laws have not successfully leveled the playing field. Furthermore, in recent decades we have witnessed some backlash against any goals or principles that might presumably lead to any potential advantage for Blacks. We see how the language of the Civil Rights Movement and subsequent laws are currently being used to deter from the goal of racial equality and now a racial hierarchy. Racial realism tells us that we must acknowledge the historical endurance of anti-Black racism and understand that it has often been disguised. This is particularly true in our contemporary age of colorblind race politics. Therefore, we must be mindful of how anti-Blackness manifests in the postCivil Rights era. A study influenced by racial realism would critique the idea of abstract neutrality or pure deductive reasoning, and instead acknowledge that research is also interpreted through social knowledge. A study grounded in a racial realist approach would work toward exposing and confronting anti-Black ideology in fields of thought that collude in the perpetuation of a racial hierarchy. For example, from a racial realist perspective even those discourses that are presented as “critical” or still yet “anti-racist” discourses may also be complicit in the preservation of anti-Black ideology. This means that even presumably critical discourses on race must be studied from the perspective that they take a particular social position, also understand Blacks from a particular social position and maneuver theoretically based upon that understanding. Racial realism is premised upon ideological critique. My study is rooted in this method of inquiry. In Ideology and Modern Culture, Jon Thompson (1990) highlights the debate in defining the notion of ideology. Ideology has its origins in Marxist theory and the idea of false consciousness. Ideology is seen as negative in that it supports the status quo and delimits the development of counter-hegemonic consciousness among the working class. Ideology illusively hides unequal relations of power between dominant and subordinate groups. Other theoretical perspectives propose that ideology is neutral, moving away from the purely pejorative connotation. Ideologies can be regarded then as „systems of thought‟, „systems of belief‟, or „symbolic systems‟ which pertain to social action or political stance” (Thompson, 1990, p.5). In this light, all political action and thought is ideological. I concur with Thompson‟s (1990) critical conception of ideology in which he finds that, the analysis of ideology is primarily concerned with the ways in which forms intersect with relations of power. It is concerned with the ways in which meaning is mobilized in the social world and serves thereby to bolster up individuals and groups who occupy positions of power. To study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination. Ideological phenomena are meaningful symbolic phenomena in so far as they serve, in particular social historical circumstances, to establish and sustain relations of domination. (p.56) Nicolas Burbules (1995) proposes five forms of ideology critique including (1) scientific, (2) immanent, (3) deconstructionist, (4) argument from effects, and (5) counter-ideology. Scientific critiques see ideologies as distorted and irrational. They examine ideologies for the ways in which they distort the truth. Immanent critiques reveal how ideologies often do not “measure up to their own standards” (p.57). The critic reveals the contradictions that belie a particular standpoint or position. Burbules states that the third form, the deconstructivist approach, takes the position that there are no universal truths or metanarratives. The fourth form of ideological critique, argument from effects, takes the stand that we must examine the outcome or consequences of ideological positions and then critique those that uphold domination or perpetuate unequal systems of power. The final form of critique is counter-ideology, which proposes that ideological critic challenge ideologies with other counter-hegemonic ideologies. Burbules (1995) notes that there are both possibilities in and limitations to each form of ideological critique he describes. He proposes that we approach the process from the perspective of critiquing ideology as a way of working on developing critical thought. Additionally, he proposes that the work of the ideological critic is to understand people on their own terms, in their journey towards changing perspectives as they are introduced to new ways of thinking about the world. And while, as an educator, I do tend to concur to some degree with the position, I strongly disagree with his presupposition that we must not refute ideologies but rather attempt to induce people towards transformative thinking. For instance, I see my role as ideological critic as one that is guided by racial realism and the commitment to refute and challenge forms of antiBlackness or what I see as ideologies that uphold the oppression and subjugation of Black people. By intersecting racial realism with ideological critique I propose a study that will critique the presence of anti-Black ideology in post-Civil Rights racial discourses on multiracialism, culture, and those defined as moving beyond the Black/white paradigms (e.g., LatCrit and AsianCrit). I have selected these fields of thought because they represent contemporary discourses on race that purported reject binary racial thinking in an attempt to offer new theoretical insight into U.S. race relations. Each field of thought dedicates substantial scholarship to problematizing the presence of Blackness in U.S. racial thought. Though individual texts were selected and interpreted in relationship to anti-Black ideology, taken as a whole, these texts represent a larger pervasive anti-Black discourse that works to sustain the racial hierarchy. As an ideological critic I am concerned with challenging ideology that sustains unequal power relations. Anti-Black discourse sustains a racial hierarchy that places Blacks at the bottom. My responsibility as an ideological critic is to unpack that ideology colluding in the oppression of Blacks. As Thompson (1990) states, ideological critique proposes a contestation or challenge to systems of domination by unveiling precisely how they manifest, are defended and also become unquestionably part of social reality. I first will begin with a review of literature comprising the following areas: racial hierarchy in the post-Civil Rights era; globalized anti-Blackness; ethnicity and the structure of racism; and the construction of the Black body.

### Turn

#### Theory of ideological hegemony materializes when a populous reinforces haphazard trust in power structures – capital-T-TRUE this round – representations like the 1AC conceive of a reality that is intrinsically exclusionary of opposing viewpoints – means we never critically engage with conversations about anti-blackness because utility will always be an apriority -- that’s 2NC Baptise

### Extra cards

#### Temporal narrative of progress bad

**Chandler and Chipato 21** – David Chandler is Professor of International Relations at the University of Westminster. He currently edits the open access journal Anthropocenes: Human, Inhuman, Posthuman and the book series Routledge Studies in Resilience. David Chandler has contributed more than one hundred articles to international peer-reviewed journals (in the spheres of international relations, social theory, security, development, democracy, history, geography, political theory, philosophy, ethics and law) including: New Left Review; Radical Philosophy; Current History; Review of International Studies; International Political Sociology; European Journal of Social Theory; European Political Science; Security Dialogue; Political Studies; Millennium: Journal of International Studies; Human Rights Quarterly; Cambridge Review of International Affairs; International Politics; International Relations; British Journal of Politics & International Relations; Journal of International Relations and Development; Politics; Policy and Politics; Democratization; Finnish Yearbook of International Law; Ethics & Global Politics; Globalizations; Global Society; Global Dialogue; Area: Journal of the Royal Geographical Society; The Monist: An International Journal of General Philosophical Inquiry; Development Dialogue; International Journal of Human Rights; Ethnopolitics; International Peacekeeping; Journal of Conflict, Security and Development; Cooperation and Conflict; Critical Studies on Security; Global Change, Peace & Security; Peacebuilding; International Journal of Peace Studies; WeltTrends: Zeitschrift für internationale Politik; Wissenschaft & Frieden; Cahiers Marxistes; Politique Africain; Alternatives Sud; Studia Diplomatica: The Brussels Journal of International Relations; Papeles de Cuestiones Internacionales; Stratejik Öngörü Dergisi and Filozofski Godišnjak. Dr. Farai Chipato is a CIPS postdoctoral fellow (2020-2022) for the Changing Orders project. Farai has a PhD in Political Science from Queen Mary University of London. His thesis research investigated the relationship between international development donors and local civil society organisations in Zimbabwe, focusing [A call for abolition: The disavowal and displacement of race in critical security studies] neil

Security Dialogue’s call comes out of a **wider move to include race in discussions of international relations**, amid calls **to ‘decolonize’ a discipline that has always been at the heart of colonial power structures** ([Sabaratnam, 2017](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413)). Yet, in order to understand **what is at stake in this move** to include race in a discipline that formerly seemed to ignore it, **we must consider the relationship between Blackness and the world**, the ontological condition that makes anti-Blackness inextricable from security. In short, we must realize that questions of race and racism have always been the ground that critical security studies stands on. **The idea that racism can be isolated and extracted from an academic discipline while its effects are therapeutically addressed is challenged** **by** the weight of **Afropessimist scholarship**, critical Black feminist and anti-colonial thinking. The urge to ‘decolonize’ academia suggests that coloniality is a condition that can be uprooted within the university without addressing the broader anti-Black world that universities are in. Some prominent decolonial scholars have challengingly argued that ‘decolonization is not a metaphor’ ([Tuck and Yang, 2012](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413)), and **others have suggested the need for pluriversal approaches to security that allow for inclusion of a multitude of non-Western ontologies** ([Escobar, 2018](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413)). However, **even pluriversal approaches risk retaining parts of the edifice of modernity without addressing its anti-Black foundations**, **leaving open the possibility of ‘re-enchanting and pluralising** [international relations]’ (Rothe, 2019: 9), assuming that redemption and reparation is possible. The temporality at stake is that which **seeks to salvage ‘critique’ through an imaginary telos of progress – learning the lessons and moving onwards, ever opening and exploring new avenues and new approaches** – hence **the appeal to an ethico-political ‘openness’ that the making of reparative politics is held to enable.** This **attempt to move ‘beyond’ the problem of ‘the spectres of race and racism’** is laudable but, we argue, misguided. **It is precisely critical narratives of ‘progress’ that critical Black studies and Afropessimism seek to problematize** ([Ray et al., 2017](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413)). **Rather** than considering **anti-Blackness as an epiphenomenon of modernity, a glitch in our system that needs to be fixed**, **it may be understood as constitutive of a modern ontology** ([Wilderson, 2010](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413)). As [Nahum Dimitri Chandler (2014](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 130) states, ‘there is no contemporary discourse that is free or independent of the itinerary of the concept of race’. **The existence of Blackness is ontologically crucial in providing the boundaries of humanity, in creating the Outside, the Other, that is necessary to define the inside of modernity, civil society and human subjectivity** ([Warren, 2018](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413)). As [Saidiya Hartman (2017](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 33) argues, ‘**the texture of freedom is laden with the vestiges of slavery, and abstract equality is utterly enmeshed in the narrative of black subjection’**. Thus, for Afropessimists, it **is not merely the contemporary order of humanity that is enmeshed with anti-Blackness**, **but** also **the** **struggles for emancipation by those within that order**. This does not mean that there is no oppression among those who are recognized as human, but that their struggles for freedom within this space are of a different order from that of Black people, as the space of these internal conflicts is constituted by anti-Blackness. In order for there to be security for humanity, in order for the liberal subject, civil society and a world of progress to function, Blackness must remain outside, as the counterpoint to the telos of modernity. This **throws into question** calls for inclusion, for justice and for reparation, **as well as the** ability **for the** global system to be accountable for the suffering and death of Black peopl**e**. If anti-Blackness is a structural necessity for the system to exist**, then there can be no justice, no end to violence against Black people if the current system persists.** The drive to include Black people in civil society, to promote multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion, **leaves untouched the ontological condition of Blackness, which is required to maintain the borders of humanity**. The radical force of **Black liberation movements was blunted by the drive to assimilate them, to include Black people in the political sphere, to recognize and celebrate their ‘ethnic identity’, without addressing the fundamental condition of Blackness**. In the USA, anti-Black violence remains a necessity to maintain security, despite the inclusion of Black people at all levels of government. Inclusivity does not ameliorate the problem; it merely obfuscates it. As [Frank Wilderson (2010](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 103) argues, **‘few characters aestheticize White supremacy more effectively and persuasively than a Black male cop’**. American governance is not ‘haunted’ by race, it is constituted through race. Thus the line between humanity and Blackness is not shattered through the inclusion of some Black people in the space of civil society; rather, it is reinforced. In South Africa, the Black inhabitants of townships continue to endure state violence and poverty despite the formal end of apartheid. Black activists now protest against their government by ‘black boers’ (settlers), those who have crossed the line into humanity only to fortify it against their former compatriots ([Madlingozi, 2017](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413)). This is because, as [Tsepho Madlingozi (2017](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 14) argues, ‘the main edifice of the ontological structure of colonial-apartheid . . . remains in place’. In order to ensure the security of settler society, those few who have been inducted into it must maintain the violence of the anti-Black order that is said to be overturned. **Security, then, is sustained through anti-Blackness**, for if the abject non-subject of the Black experience does not exist as a point of contrast, then humanity cannot be safe. The subjectivity of the (non-Black) human is imperilled, without the safety of anti-Black violence that ensures its ontological integrity. If this is the case, then we must re-read the call to bring considerations of race and racism into critical security studies and question the feasibility of achieving an ethico-political reparation in a discipline that relies on the structure of an anti-Black system. Disavowal: ‘Spectres’ and ‘foundations’ Having grasped the nature of the relationship between anti-Blackness and security, let us reflect on the assumptions underpinning the desire to rejuvenate the criticality of the field through reparative approaches to race. We see a potential problem with the argument that the recent important work by the scholars like [Sabaratnam (2020)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413) and [Rutazibwa (2020)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413) on **security’s racial underpinnings has cleared the ground for a project of accounting and reparation while maintaining existing academic fields recognizably intac**t. Indeed, recent work on race in security and global politics has highlighted many potential issues, demonstrating the substantial challenge facing reparative projects. As [Anna Agathangelou and Kyle Killian (2016)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413) demonstrate, considered ontologically, coloniality is much more than a set of space- and time-specific policy practices, but rather a world-making (and worlds-destroying) practice through which our understanding of global space and time is constructed (see also [Grovogui, 2014](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413); [Jackson, 2020](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413); [Silva, 2007](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413)). Moreover, critical sociological accounts of security and international relations argue that the imposition of racial difference is intimately tied to colonial and settler-colonial power as a technique of control and regulation that naturalizes and reproduces differential powers and capacities (e.g. [Henderson, 2013](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413); [Nisancioglu, 2020](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413)). **Race and white supremacy are thus inextricable from hegemonic regimes of power and imposition, at the heart of the discipline, despite the abstract categories of liberal political theory that structurally operate to occlude the centrality of race to contemporary political divisions and understandings.** As [Gurminder Bhambra argues (2017)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413), the location of race is often displaced – to claims to identity and difference, seen to be racial – while white-coded framings of ‘sovereignty’ and ‘class’ obscure their racialized grounding. T**his important work on the nature of race and racism in security studies shows that the problem is not so much one of a lack of incorporation of questions of race and racism, but rather that of a thoroughgoing saturation in issues of race**. This ontological saturation implies that there can be no definitive temporal break between the colonial past and a postcolonial present. **Coloniality remains** in the present not only in residue, but rather **as an ‘ongoing and quotidian atrocity’**, inevitably problematizing attempts at reparation (see discussion in [Sharpe, 2016](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 20). We are thereby fully sympathetic to [Howell and Richter-Montpetit’s (2019)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413) understanding that ‘questions of race and racism’ cannot be disentangled from critical security studies or, for that matter, the broader field of international relations. As [Jared Sexton (2008](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 22) powerfully notes, **any attempt to separate ‘questions of race and racism’ from systems, structures and institutions of power already risks disavowing the centrality of race and its reduction** to a secondary or contingent aspect.

#### Disavowal of its racist history “inverts the problem…. Becomes the solution”

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We have seen above that **disavowal operates on the basis of stipulating that the problem of race and racism is one that can be located in the past, intimating that the problem is a difficult one of ‘spectres’ or legacies that must and can be overcome**. This is possible **because the assumption is that questions of race are somehow separable from the field of critical security studies itself, rather than constitutive of i**t. The successful accomplishment of disavowal**, then, enables a focus upon how critical security studies might move forwa**rd. This leap, we argue, is a displacement that then puts questions of the future of critical security studies at the forefront of concern. The displacement accomplishes the inversing of the problematic: critical security studies is now the solution rather than the problem. The precondition for reparative work is the disavowal that race and racism are inextricably entangled with critical security studies. The shift of displacement **is the move to reparation, the imaginary of an anti- or non-racist critical security studies**.

The problem with this move of displacement is that the ethico-political stance of reparation is necessarily an affirmative one. As [Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 150–151) suggests, it is through this displacement that we can learn from the ‘ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture – even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them’. As Tiffany Lethabo King powerfully argues, while it is the case that reading ‘for what is generative and provides openings’ ([King, 2019](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 230n74) is vital for coalition and collaboration, reparative work advocated in LGBT and queer theory presupposes the positionality of a shared humanist sexual subject position. As [Fred Moten (2018](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 11–12) notes in his essay on race and the work of Levinas, the reparative stance of being ‘open to the world’ or ‘available to the world’ **can only work as a critical project for those for whom the world is accessible in these ways**. **For those structurally excluded from this political ontology of the subject**, this **openness would be critical only insofar as relationality is understood** to be an expression of power, **structured by the givenness of a transcendental subjectivity that the black cannot have** but by which the black can be had; **a structural position that he or she cannot take** but by which he or she can be taken. ([Moten, 2018](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 204)

Any project of reparative work for generative ethico-political openings **would have to be undertaken after the abolition or dismantling of critical security studies**, **not as a substitute for this, displacing the problem to that of the repair of the disciplinary field**.

Reparative work proffered from within a system where race is not merely the ‘oil’ in the engine but the engine itself offers little hope of real change. How can critical security studies offer a space for a new antiracist political ethics, from within the wider ‘prison of colonial modernity’ ([Blaney and Tickner, 2017](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413))? Surely, if reparative work is to be undertaken, **it should be carried out on the terms of those who are wronged, rather than on the grounds of the perpetrator of the offence**. If **critical security studies exists on the ground of the ‘human’**, as a science of the humanity from which Blackness has always been excluded, then **it cannot ameliorate the oppression that was required to clear that ground** ([Wynter, 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413)). Instead, we might follow [Alexander Weheliye (2014](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 137) in arguing that humanity, the idea of the ‘human’, can only be overhauled from without, transformed by those who, he argues, ‘live behind the veil of the permanent state of exception’. Thus, we might argue that reparation ultimately leads us back to subjection (see [Coulthard, 2007](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 453).

‘**Questions of race and racism’ are not the spectre haunting critical security studies, they are its life blood, its arteries and the muscles that power it.** Critical security studies can have no reparative access to ‘questions of race and racism’ no matter how hard or how genuinely it tries. ‘**Questions of race and racism’ are what enable the cuts and binaries, the world, the subjects, the concerns, the practices, the methods, the understandings of critical security studies**. Critical. Security. Studies. What is it about these three words, singularly, together, in whatever order, that could make anyone think, in today’s world, there was a way beyond their imbrications in ‘questions of race and racism’? Critical of what? On what grounds? Security of what? On what grounds? Study of what? On what grounds? Answer: the grounds of anti-Blackness or ‘questions of race and racism’.

Being critical necessitates having a standpoint, being a subject in relation. For the white world of modernity, critical standpoints enabled the overturning of the relation, freeing the subject from its oppression, alienation or exploitation. As [Frank B. Wilderson (2010](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/09670106211024413): 37) notes, **these ‘grammars of suffering’ are grounded upon anti-Blackness, grounded upon the construction of the human as an abstract, autonomous, interest-bearing, rational subject**. Wilderson argues that the exclusion of Blackness from humanity was required as a counterpart, an outside that allowed for the construction of the modern human subject. Thus, **critique, in the sense of striving for emancipation under the conditions of modernity, is ontologically grounded in anti-Blackness**. For ‘**critique’, then, ‘questions of race and racism’ are problems of management and damage limitation, problems of experience not problems of ontology**. **Addressing ‘questions of race and racism’ is the form that governance takes, the practice of grounding this governance itself. Critique is what puts anti-Blackness to work in its ceaseless desire to reproduce itself,** to improve, **to better,** to be more adaptive**, to** be more inclusive **– ever changing, ever learning, ever transforming**. Therefore, the mere inclusion of questions of race and racism, which maintain the ontological structure of anti-Blackness, must perpetuate an anti-Black world. Critique is **the endless search for the emancipation of the huma**n, the quest for the realization of the full potential of an anti-Black world. The flight of critique today can be rewritten as **the perpetual denial of and war on Blackness**, that which enables **and ‘makes invisible’ its** grounds of **violence**.

## 2AC A2

### A2 AI Good

#### Ethical AI discourse is a façade – only serves to stall tech regulations

**OCHIGAME 19** - Rodrigo Ochigame - PhD candidate in science, technology, and society at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a former researcher of artificial intelligence at the MIT Media Lab, 12-20-2019, "How Big Tech Manipulates Academia to Avoid Regulation," Intercept, https://theintercept.com/2019/12/20/mit-ethical-ai-artificial-intelligence///vi

THE IRONY OF the ethical scandal enveloping Joichi Ito, the former director of the MIT Media Lab, is that he used to lead academic initiatives on ethics. After the revelation of his financial ties to Jeffrey Epstein, the financier charged with sex trafficking underage girls as young as 14, Ito resigned from multiple roles at MIT, a visiting professorship at Harvard Law School, and the boards of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the New York Times Company. Many spectators are puzzled by Ito’s influential role as an ethicist of artificial intelligence. Indeed, his initiatives were crucial in establishing the discourse of “ethical AI” that is now ubiquitous in academia and in the mainstream press. In 2016, then-President Barack Obama described him as an “expert” on AI and ethics. Since 2017, Ito financed many projects through the $27 million Ethics and Governance of AI Fund, an initiative anchored by the MIT Media Lab and the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. What was all the talk of “ethics” really about? For 14 months, I worked as a graduate student researcher in Ito’s group on AI ethics at the Media Lab. I stopped on August 15, immediately after Ito published his initial “apology” regarding his ties to Epstein, in which he acknowledged accepting money from the financier both for the Media Lab and for Ito’s outside venture funds. Ito did not disclose that Epstein had, at the time this money changed hands, already pleaded guilty to a child prostitution charge in Florida, or that Ito took numerous steps to hide Epstein’s name from official records, as The New Yorker later revealed. The discourse of “ethical AI” was aligned strategically with a Silicon Valley effort seeking to avoid legally enforceable restrictions of controversial technologies. Inspired by whistleblower Signe Swenson and others who have spoken out, I have decided to report what I came to learn regarding Ito’s role in shaping the field of AI ethics, since this is a matter of public concern. The emergence of this field is a recent phenomenon, as past AI researchers had been largely uninterested in the study of ethics. A former Media Lab colleague recalls that Marvin Minsky, the deceased AI pioneer at MIT, used to say that “an ethicist is someone who has a problem with whatever you have in your mind.” (In recently unsealed court filings, victim Virginia Roberts Giuffre testified that Epstein directed her to have sex with Minsky.) Why, then, did AI researchers suddenly start talking about ethics? At the Media Lab, I learned that the discourse of “ethical AI,” championed substantially by Ito, was aligned strategically with a Silicon Valley effort seeking to avoid legally enforceable restrictions of controversial technologies. A key group behind this effort, with the lab as a member, made policy recommendations in California that contradicted the conclusions of research I conducted with several lab colleagues, research that led us to oppose the use of computer algorithms in deciding whether to jail people pending trial. Ito himself would eventually complain, in private meetings with financial and tech executives, that the group’s recommendations amounted to “whitewashing” a thorny ethical issue. “They water down stuff we try to say to prevent the use of algorithms that don’t seem to work well” in detention decisions, he confided to one billionaire. I also watched MIT help the U.S. military brush aside the moral complexities of drone warfare, hosting a superficial talk on AI and ethics by Henry Kissinger, the former secretary of state and notorious war criminal, and giving input on the U.S. Department of Defense’s “AI Ethics Principles” for warfare, which embraced “permissibly biased” algorithms and which avoided using the word “fairness” because the Pentagon believes “that fights should not be fair.” Ito did not respond to requests for comment. Joichi Ito, director of MIT Media Lab, speaks during a press conference in Tokyo, Japan, on Friday, July 8, 2016. Dentsu Inc., Japan's dominant advertising agency, launched a specialized digital marketing company Dentsu Digtial Inc. today. Photographer: Akio Kon/Bloomberg via Getty ImagesJoichi Ito, then-director of MIT Media Lab, speaks during a press conference in Tokyo on July 8, 2016. Photo: Akio Kon/Bloomberg/Getty Images MIT LENT CREDIBILITY to the idea that big tech could police its own use of artificial intelligence at a time when the industry faced increasing criticism and calls for legal regulation. Just in 2018, there were several controversies: Facebook’s breach of private data on more than 50 million users to a political marketing firm hired by Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, revealed in March 2018; Google’s contract with the Pentagon for computer vision software to be used in combat zones, revealed that same month; Amazon’s sale of facial recognition technology to police departments, revealed in May; Microsoft’s contract with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement revealed in June; and IBM’s secret collaboration with the New York Police Department for facial recognition and racial classification in video surveillance footage, revealed in September. Under the slogan #TechWontBuildIt, thousands of workers at these firms have organized protests and circulated petitions against such contracts. From #NoTechForICE to #Data4BlackLives, several grassroots campaigns have demanded legal restrictions of some uses of computational technologies (e.g., forbidding the use of facial recognition by police). Meanwhile, corporations have tried to shift the discussion to focus on voluntary “ethical principles,” “responsible practices,” and technical adjustments or “safeguards” framed in terms of “bias” and “fairness” (e.g., requiring or encouraging police to adopt “unbiased” or “fair” facial recognition). In January 2018, Microsoft published its “ethical principles” for AI, starting with “fairness.” In May, Facebook announced its “commitment to the ethical development and deployment of AI” and a tool to “search for bias” called “Fairness Flow.” In June, Google published its “responsible practices” for AI research and development. In September, IBM announced a tool called “AI Fairness 360,” designed to “check for unwanted bias in datasets and machine learning models.” In January 2019, Facebook granted $7.5 million for the creation of an AI ethics center in Munich, Germany. In March, Amazon co-sponsored a $20 million program on “fairness in AI” with the U.S. National Science Foundation. In April, Google canceled its AI ethics council after backlash over the selection of Kay Coles James, the vocally anti-trans president of the right-wing Heritage Foundation. These corporate initiatives frequently cited academic research that Ito had supported, at least partially, through the MIT-Harvard fund. To characterize the corporate agenda, it is helpful to distinguish between three kinds of regulatory possibilities for a given technology: (1) no legal regulation at all, leaving “ethical principles” and “responsible practices” as merely voluntary; (2) moderate legal regulation encouraging or requiring technical adjustments that do not conflict significantly with profits; or (3) restrictive legal regulation curbing or banning deployment of the technology. Unsurprisingly, the tech industry tends to support the first two and oppose the last. The corporate-sponsored discourse of “ethical AI” enables precisely this position. Consider the case of facial recognition. This year, the municipal legislatures of San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley — all in California — plus Somerville, Massachusetts, have passed strict bans on facial recognition technology. Meanwhile, Microsoft has lobbied in favor of less restrictive legislation, requiring technical adjustments such as tests for “bias,” most notably in Washington state. Some big firms may even prefer this kind of mild legal regulation over a complete lack thereof, since larger firms can more easily invest in specialized teams to develop systems that comply with regulatory requirements. Thus, Silicon Valley’s vigorous promotion of “ethical AI” has constituted a strategic lobbying effort, one that has enrolled academia to legitimize itself. Ito played a key role in this corporate-academic fraternizing, meeting regularly with tech executives. The MIT-Harvard fund’s initial director was the former “global public policy lead” for AI at Google. Through the fund, Ito and his associates sponsored many projects, including the creation of a prominent conference on “Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency” in computer science; other sponsors of the conference included Google, Facebook, and Microsoft. Although the Silicon Valley lobbying effort has consolidated academic interest in “ethical AI” and “fair algorithms” since 2016, a handful of papers on these topics had appeared in earlier years, even if framed differently. For example, Microsoft computer scientists published the paper that arguably inaugurated the field of “algorithmic fairness” in 2012. In 2016, the paper’s lead author, Cynthia Dwork, became a professor of computer science at Harvard, with simultaneous positions at its law school and at Microsoft. When I took her Harvard course on the mathematical foundations of cryptography and statistics in 2017, I interviewed her and asked how she became interested in researching algorithmic definitions of fairness. In her account, she had long been personally concerned with the issue of discriminatory advertising, but Microsoft managers encouraged her to pursue this line of work because the firm was developing a new system of online advertising, and it would be economically advantageous to provide a service “free of regulatory problems.” (To be fair, I believe that Dwork’s personal intentions were honest despite the corporate capture of her ideas. Microsoft declined to comment for this article.) After the initial steps by MIT and Harvard, many other universities and new institutes received money from the tech industry to work on AI ethics. Most such organizations are also headed by current or former executives of tech firms. For example, the Data & Society Research Institute is directed by a Microsoft researcher and initially funded by a Microsoft grant; New York University’s AI Now Institute was co-founded by another Microsoft researcher and partially funded by Microsoft, Google, and DeepMind; the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI is co-directed by a former vice president of Google; University of California, Berkeley’s Division of Data Sciences is headed by a Microsoft veteran; and the MIT Schwarzman College of Computing is headed by a board member of Amazon. During my time at the Media Lab, Ito maintained frequent contact with the executives and planners of all these organizations. Comp-7-for-spot-2-1576795206Illustration: Yoshi Sodeoka for The Intercept BIG TECH MONEY and direction proved incompatible with an honest exploration of ethics, at least judging from my experience with the “Partnership on AI to Benefit People and Society,” a group founded by Microsoft, Google/DeepMind, Facebook, IBM, and Amazon in 2016. PAI, of which the Media Lab is a member, defines itself as a “multistakeholder body” and claims it is “not a lobbying organization.” In an April 2018 hearing at the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, the Partnership’s executive director claimed that the organization is merely “a resource to policymakers — for instance, in conducting research that informs AI best practices and exploring the societal consequences of certain AI systems, as well as policies around the development and use of AI systems.” But even if the Partnership’s activities may not meet the legal threshold requiring registration as lobbyists — for example, by seeking to directly affect the votes of individual elected officials — the partnership has certainly sought to influence legislation. For example, in November 2018, the Partnership staff asked academic members to contribute to a collective statement to the Judicial Council of California regarding a Senate bill on penal reform (S.B. 10). The bill, in the course of eliminating cash bail, expanded the use of algorithmic risk assessment in pretrial decision making, and required the Judicial Council to “address the identification and mitigation of any implicit bias in assessment instruments.” The Partnership staff wrote, “we believe there is room to impact this legislation (and CJS [criminal justice system] applications more broadly).” In December 2018, three Media Lab colleagues and I raised serious objections to the Partnership’s efforts to influence legislation. We observed that the Partnership’s policy recommendations aligned consistently with the corporate agenda. In the penal case, our research led us to strongly oppose the adoption of risk assessment tools, and to reject the proposed technical adjustments that would supposedly render them “unbiased” or “fair.” But the Partnership’s draft statement seemed, as a colleague put it in an internal email to Ito and others, to “validate the use of RA [risk assessment] by emphasizing the issue as a technical one that can therefore be solved with better data sets, etc.” A second colleague agreed that the “PAI statement is weak and risks doing exactly what we’ve been warning against re: the risk of legitimation via these industry led regulatory efforts.” A third colleague wrote, “So far as the criminal justice work is concerned, what PAI is doing in this realm is quite alarming and also in my opinion seriously misguided. I agree with Rodrigo that PAI’s association with ACLU, MIT and other academic / non-profit institutions practically ends up serving a legitimating function. Neither ACLU nor MIT nor any non-profit has any power in PAI.” Worse, there seemed to be a mismatch between the Partnership’s recommendations and the efforts of a grassroots coalition of organizations fighting jail expansion, including the movement Black Lives Matter, the prison abolitionist group Critical Resistance (where I have volunteered), and the undocumented and queer/trans youth-led Immigrant Youth Coalition. The grassroots coalition argued, “The notion that any risk assessment instrument can account for bias ignores the racial disparities in current and past policing practices.” There are abundant theoretical and empirical reasons to support this claim, since risk assessments are typically based on data of arrests, convictions, or incarcerations, all of which are poor proxies for individual behaviors or predispositions. The coalition continued, “Ultimately, risk-assessment tools create a feedback-loop of racial profiling, pre-trial detention and conviction. A person’s freedom should not be reduced to an algorithm.” By contrast, the Partnership’s statement focused on “minimum requirements for responsible deployment,” spanning such topics as “validity and data sampling bias, bias in statistical predictions; choice of the appropriate targets for prediction; human-computer interaction questions; user training; policy and governance; transparency and review; reproducibility, process, and recordkeeping; and post-deployment evaluation.” To be sure, the Partnership staff did respond to criticism of the draft by noting in the final version of the statement that “within PAI’s membership and the wider AI community, many experts further suggest that individuals can never justly be detained on the basis of their risk assessment score alone, without an individualized hearing.” This meek concession — admitting that it might not be time to start imprisoning people based strictly on software, without input from a judge or any other “individualized” judicial process — was easier to make because none of the major firms in the Partnership sell risk assessment tools for pretrial decision-making; not only is the technology too controversial but also the market is too small. (Facial recognition technology, on the other hand, has a much larger market in which Microsoft, Google, Facebook, IBM, and Amazon all operate.) In December 2018, my colleagues and I urged Ito to quit the Partnership. I argued, “If academic and nonprofit organizations want to make a difference, the only viable strategy is to quit PAI, make a public statement, and form a counter alliance.” Then a colleague proposed, “there are many other organizations which are doing much more substantial and transformative work in this area of predictive analytics in criminal justice — what would it look like to take the money we currently allocate in supporting PAI in order to support their work?” We believed Ito had enough autonomy to do so because the MIT-Harvard fund was supported largely by the Knight Foundation, even though most of the money came from tech investors Pierre Omidyar, founder of eBay, via the Omidyar Network, and Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn and Microsoft board member. I wrote, “If tens of millions of dollars from nonprofit foundations and individual donors are not enough to allow us to take a bold position and join the right side, I don’t know what would be.” (Omidyar funds The Intercept.) It is strange that Ito, with no formal training, became positioned as an “expert” on AI ethics, a field that barely existed before 2017. Ito did acknowledge the problem. He had just received a message from David M. Siegel, co-chair of the hedge fund Two Sigma and member of the MIT Corporation. Siegel proposed a self-regulatory structure for “search and social media” firms in Silicon Valley, modeled after the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, or FINRA, a private corporation that serves as a self-regulatory organization for securities firms on Wall Street. Ito responded to Siegel’s proposal, “I don’t feel civil society is well represented in the industry groups. We’ve been participating in Partnership in AI and they water down stuff we try to say to prevent the use of algorithms that don’t seem to work well like risk scores for pre-trial bail. I think that with personal data and social media, I have concerns with self-regulation. For example, a full blown genocide [of the Rohingya, a mostly Muslim minority group in Myanmar] happened using What’s App and Facebook knew it was happening.” (Facebook has admitted that its platform was used to incite violence in Myanmar; news reports have documented how content on the Facebook platform facilitated a genocide in the country despite repeated warnings to Facebook executives from human rights activists and researchers. Facebook texting service WhatsApp made it harder for its users to forward messages after WhatsApp was reportedly used to spread misinformation during elections in India.) But the corporate-academic alliances were too robust and convenient. The Media Lab remained in the Partnership, and Ito continued to fraternize with Silicon Valley and Wall Street executives and investors. Ito described Siegel, a billionaire, as a “potential funder.” With such people, I saw Ito routinely express moral concerns about their businesses — but in a friendly manner, as he was simultaneously asking them for money, whether for MIT or his own venture capital funds. For corporate-academic “ethicists,” amicable criticism can serve as leverage for entering into business relationships. Siegel replied to Ito, “I would be pleased to speak more on this topic with you. Finra is not an industry group. It’s just paid for by industry. I will explain more when we meet. I agree with your concerns.” In private meetings, Ito and tech executives discussed the corporate lobby quite frankly. In January, my colleagues and I joined a meeting with Mustafa Suleyman, founding co-chair of the Partnership and co-founder of DeepMind, an AI startup acquired by Google for about $500 million in 2014. In the meeting, Ito and Suleyman discussed how the promotion of “AI ethics” had become a “whitewashing” effort, although they claimed their initial intentions had been nobler. In a message to plan the meeting, Ito wrote to my colleagues and me, “I do know, however, from speaking to Mustafa when he was setting up PAI that he was meaning for the group to be much more substantive and not just ‘white washing.’ I think it’s just taking the trajectory that these things take.” (Suleyman did not respond to requests for comment.) REGARDLESS OF INDIVIDUAL actors’ intentions, the corporate lobby’s effort to shape academic research was extremely successful. There is now an enormous amount of work under the rubric of “AI ethics.” To be fair, some of the research is useful and nuanced, especially in the humanities and social sciences. But the majority of well-funded work on “ethical AI” is aligned with the tech lobby’s agenda: to voluntarily or moderately adjust, rather than legally restrict, the deployment of controversial technologies. How did five corporations, using only a small fraction of their budgets, manage to influence and frame so much academic activity, in so many disciplines, so quickly? It is strange that Ito, with no formal training, became positioned as an “expert” on AI ethics, a field that barely existed before 2017. But it is even stranger that two years later, respected scholars in established disciplines have to demonstrate their relevance to a field conjured by a corporate lobby. UNITED STATES - APRIL 17: Eric Schmidt, Chairman of the Defense Innovation Board, takes his seat for the House Armed Services Committee hearing on "Promoting DOD's Culture of Innovation" on Tuesday, April 17, 2018. (Photo By Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call)Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt, now chair of the Department of Defense’s Defense Innovation Board, takes his seat for the House Armed Services Committee hearing on “Promoting DOD’s Culture of Innovation” on April 17, 2018. Photo: Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call/Getty Images The field has also become relevant to the U.S. military, not only in official responses to moral concerns about technologies of targeted killing but also in disputes among Silicon Valley firms over lucrative military contracts. On November 1, the Department of Defense’s innovation board published its recommendations for “AI Ethics Principles.” The board is chaired by Eric Schmidt, who was the executive chair of Alphabet, Google’s parent company, when Obama’s defense secretary Ashton B. Carter established the board and appointed him in 2016. According to ProPublica, “Schmidt’s influence, already strong under Carter, only grew when [James] Mattis arrived as [Trump’s] defense secretary.” The board includes multiple executives from Google, Microsoft, and Facebook, raising controversies regarding conflicts of interest. A Pentagon employee responsible for policing conflicts of interest was removed from the innovation board after she challenged “the Pentagon’s cozy relationship not only with [Amazon CEO Jeff] Bezos, but with Google’s Eric Schmidt.” This relationship is potentially lucrative for big tech firms: The AI ethics recommendations appeared less than a week after the Pentagon awarded a $10 billion cloud-computing contract to Microsoft, which is being legally challenged by Amazon. The majority of well-funded work on “ethical AI” is aligned with the tech lobby’s agenda: to voluntarily or moderately adjust, rather than legally restrict, the deployment of controversial technologies. The recommendations seek to compel the Pentagon to increase military investments in AI and to adopt “ethical AI” systems such as those developed and sold by Silicon Valley firms. The innovation board calls the Pentagon a “deeply ethical organization” and offers to extend its “existing ethics framework” to AI. To this end, the board cites the AI ethics research groups at Google, Microsoft, and IBM, as well as academics sponsored by the MIT-Harvard fund. However, there are caveats. For example, the board notes that although “the term ‘fairness’ is often cited in the AI community,” the recommendations avoid this term because of “the DoD mantra that fights should not be fair, as DoD aims to create the conditions to maintain an unfair advantage over any potential adversaries.” Thus, “some applications will be permissibly and justifiably biased,” specifically “to target certain adversarial combatants more successfully.” The Pentagon’s conception of AI ethics forecloses many important possibilities for moral deliberation, such as the prohibition of drones for targeted killing. The corporate, academic, and military proponents of “ethical AI” have collaborated closely for mutual benefit. For example, Ito told me that he informally advised Schmidt on which academic AI ethicists Schmidt’s private foundation should fund. Once, Ito even asked me for second-order advice on whether Schmidt should fund a certain professor who, like Ito, later served as an “expert consultant” to the Pentagon’s innovation board. In February, Ito joined Carter at a panel titled “Computing for the People: Ethics and AI,” which also included current and former executives of Microsoft and Google. The panel was part of the inaugural celebration of MIT’s $1 billion college dedicated to AI. Other speakers at the celebration included Schmidt on “Computing for the Marketplace,” Siegel on “How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Algorithms,” and Henry Kissinger on “How the Enlightenment Ends.” As Kissinger declared the possibility of “a world relying on machines powered by data and algorithms and ungoverned by ethical or philosophical norms,” a protest outside the MIT auditorium called attention to Kissinger’s war crimes in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, as well as his support of war crimes elsewhere. In the age of automated targeting, what atrocities will the U.S. military justify as governed by “ethical” norms or as executed by machines beyond the scope of human agency and culpability? No defensible claim to “ethics” can sidestep the urgency of legally enforceable restrictions to the deployment of technologies of mass surveillance and systemic violence. Until such restrictions exist, moral and political deliberation about computing will remain subsidiary to the profit-making imperative expressed by the Media Lab’s motto, “Deploy or Die.” While some deploy, even if ostensibly “ethically,” others die.

#### The aff attempt to embrace vulnerability is an attempt at blurring the relationship between the personal and the political

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The ‘wounded attachments’ of political whiteness In her 1995 book States of Injury, Wendy Brown argued that progressive movements tended to coalesce around ‘wounded identities’ that demanded recognition and protection, whether from hate speech, harassment or violence. For Brown (1995: 55), such politics not only reified said identities but ontologised trauma, producing a ‘politics of recrimination and rancor’ with deep investments in victimisation and suffering. Second-wave feminism in particular, Brown argued, had instantiated ‘woman’ as an identity based on injury. She interpreted feminist consciousness-raising and the ‘speak out’ as akin to Foucault’s (1978) ‘modern confessional’ in their production of accounts that could be appropriated by punitive (and therapeutic) state governmentalities. Solidifying the ‘truth’ of women’s experience through ‘speaking out’, she contended, was not necessarily liberation (Brown 1995: 42). As I have argued elsewhere (Phipps, 2019), the ‘wounded attachments’ Brown attributed to feminism are likely to be those of middle-class whiteness, given the domination of both first and second waves of mainstream feminism by bourgeois white women (such as myself) (Ware, 1992: 18). By ‘mainstream feminism’, I largely mean Anglo-American public feminism. This includes media feminism (and some forms of social media feminism), institutional feminism, corporate feminism and policy feminism. This is not a cohesive and unified movement, but it has clear directions and effects. Building on HoSang (2010), I call the modus operandi of this feminism ‘political whiteness’. This goes beyond the implicitly or explicitly ‘whites first’ orientation of most politics dominated by white people: it has a complex affective landscape involving attachments to the self (often the wounded self) and to power (often in the form of the state). These attachments produce a number of dynamics: narcissism, alertness to threat (which in white women’s case is often sexualised), and an accompanying need for control. Political whiteness characterises both mainstream feminism and the backlash against it, as they ‘battle it out’ (Banet-Weiser, 2018: 1) on the contemporary cultural stage. Victimhood is central to these battles (Banet-Weiser, 2018: 4). Women’s sexual victimisation has been at the forefront of recent mainstream feminist campaigns, exemplified by actions such as the Women’s March as well as the viral iteration of #MeToo. Responding to this, the backlash has been preoccupied with who the real victims are. One of its central claims is that ‘feminism has gone too far’ (Nicholas and Aguis, 2017: 31), and that men are now fearful because harmless touching has been defined as abuse. These narratives are bolstered by broader stories of white victimhood which have underpinned Brexit, the election of Trump, and the elevation of other far-right figures and parties worldwide (Corredor, 2019). Crying ‘white-lady tears’ On International Men’s Day 2019, Good Morning Britain host Piers Morgan broadcast a monologue comparing middle-class white men to endangered rhinos. ‘Yes, we do need a day’, he said. ‘We are now the most downtrodden group of men in the world’. Assertions such as this, from the heart of the backlash, have been given short shrift by white feminists who often use the idiom of ‘male tears’. In 2014, writer Jessica Valenti tweeted a picture of herself wearing a T-shirt with the slogan: I BATHE IN MALE TEARS (Phipps, 2020: 69). However, white feminists have been slower to acknowledge our own tendency to be lachrymose, which is often an attempt to avoid accountability in response to criticism by women of colour. Historically, bourgeois white women’s power has been based on ideas of virtue and goodness (Ware, 1992: 37–38): as Hamad (2019: 105) argues, this makes being criticised for bad behaviour deeply threatening. White women can also be so invested in our oppression as women that we resist addressing our privilege as white (Accapadi, 2007: 208). Robin di Angelo (2011: 57) argues that white people in general exist in a state of fragility ‘in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering defensive moves’. di Angelo has been critiqued for her individualised focus on selfimprovement rather than structural change (Jackson, 2019). However, an understanding of whiteness as the performance of structural supremacy still involves fragility, whether this is the angry brittleness of hegemonic white masculinity or the ‘delicacy’ of white bourgeois femininity (the source of its power). If anger is the main expression of white power in a masculine register, tears are its feminine equivalent. ‘Tear’, as a both a noun and a verb, has multiple meanings: bourgeois white womanhood both tears (in the sense of becoming torn or damaged), and consequently tears (in the sense of tearing up), easily. This ‘damsel in distress’ evokes a protective response: and simultaneously, colonial archetypes of people of colour as aggressive and frightening come into play. This is the pretext on which white men, enraged, tear the place apart. Hamad (2019: 105) terms this Strategic White Womanhood, a historical dynamic which endures in the contemporary, in various forms. She recounts a relevant incident in 2018 involving Cambridge professors Mary Beard and Priyamvada Gopal. Beard was challenged by Gopal and others over a tweet she had posted on allegations of sexual abuse by Oxfam staff in Haiti and elsewhere. ‘I do wonder how hard it must be to sustain civilised values in a war zone’, it said. In response to criticism, Beard tweeted a picture of herself crying; afterwards, Gopal in particular was the target of racist attacks (Hamad 2019: 102–105). For Hamad (2019: 25, 229), this exemplifies the abusive relationship women of colour have with white womanhood. When the going gets tough, she argues, white women ‘turn their sanctioned victim status’ on women of colour. While privileged white women bathe in male tears, women of colour can drown in ours. Our sanctioned victim status shields privileged white women from accountability in interpersonal interactions and in the political sphere. In her discussion of the 2017 Women’s March, Brittney Cooper (2018: 182) highlighted exit polls that found 53 percent of white women voted for Trump, compared to 94 percent of Black women who voted for Clinton (despite their reservations). Watching white women protest Trump’s election, she wrote, when we were partly responsible for it, felt like ‘an exercise in whitelady tears if I ever saw one’. Read in a structural way, the Women’s March could be seen as an action that hid white women’s complicity in Trump’s success (Phipps, 2020: 120) – in Hamad’s terms, Strategic White Womanhood writ large. Phipps 85 In May 2019, Theresa May wept outside 10 Downing Street as she resigned the UK premiership. These tears did political work, creating amnesia in some quarters over May’s record as Prime Minister, and previously as Home Secretary. Perhaps most strikingly, domestic abuse charity Women’s Aid posted a (subsequently deleted) tweet thanking May for her service to women and survivors. This prompted a critical response: prior to her resignation, May had failed to guarantee that women’s refuges would not close as part of an overhaul of supported housing. In 2015, she had been accused of allowing ‘state-sanctioned’ rape and abuse of vulnerable migrant women at the Yarl’s Wood detention centre. Her government presided over the rollout of Universal Credit, the punitive benefits system that has made it more difficult for women to leave abusive relationships. It appeared that, for some, May’s tears washed these acts out of the picture (Phipps, 2020: 70). haunting photo. Whatever you think about Theresa May's record as prime minister, it's impossible not to feel sorry for her as a person’.3 This attempt to separate the personal and political is central to white women’s tears as a strategic device. We demand to be treated as ‘just a person’ who should be granted the benefit of the doubt, who exists outside racialised structures and power relations even as our actions perpetuate them. However, while privileged white feminists deny the relationship between the personal and the political in response to critique, in our own theory and politics this relationship (and in particular, our own personal experience or that of women like us) takes centre stage. This is more than just hypocrisy; it is white supremacy. Whether we deny or emphasise the relationship between the personal and political, white women’s tears enable us to centre ourselves and marginalise women of colour. In an article on #MeToo, Jamilah Lemieux (2017) commented, ‘white women know how to be victims. They know just how to bleed and weep in the public square, they fundamentally understand that they are entitled to sympathy’. Lemieux was not claiming the disclosures of #MeToo were not genuine; she was highlighting the power brought to mainstream feminism by the power of white women’s tears. White-lady tears, to use Cooper’s phrase: bourgeois white women’s tears are the ultimate symbol of femininity, evoking the damsel in distress and the mourning, lamenting women of myth (Phipps, 2020: 71). It is likely that this power is not fully accessible to working-class white women, who are often figures of classed disgust (Tyler, 2008). While it might date back to the ancients, the power of bourgeois white women’s tears was solidified in the modern colonial period, as ‘women’s protection’ became key to the deadly disciplinary power that maintained racialised and classed regimes of extraction and exploitation. White tears, white rage, white personhood White supremacy produces both white tears and white rage, and colonialism relied on a circuit between bourgeois white women’s tears and white men’s punitive power. This was often activated by the vocabulary of rape: Indigenous, colonised and enslaved men were maimed and killed after allegations made by bourgeois white women (Ware, 1992: 11, 37). As Angela Davis (1981: 106–111) argues, both mass rape of Black women and allegations of rape against Black men have been instruments of white supremacy (Davis, 1981: 106–111). In earlier phases of capitalism, rape laws functioned to protect upperclass men, whose wives or daughters (their property) might be violated (Davis, 1981: 101). In the genocidally violent relations of theft, capture and chattel that characterised colonial capitalism, rape prohibitions took on similar meanings at the levels of community, nation and race. In colonial Australia, rape was a ‘violation of female purity’ punishable by death: politicians insisted this was necessary to keep Aboriginal and ‘disreputable’ (poor) white men under control (Kaladelfos, 2012: 159). The vulnerable bourgeois white woman was central to accounts of insurrections such as the Indian Mutiny and the Morant Bay uprising in Jamaica (Ware, 1992: 39–42): fear of rape was fear of revolution. In the United States, following the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, white Americans used lynching to terrorise and control Black people. Rape of a white woman was one of the most common pretexts for attacks on growing Black social and economic power (Ware, 1992: 179–182). In 1921, white mobs (many of them deputised and/or given weapons by city officials) killed between 100 and 300 Black people and destroyed 1000 houses in Greenwood, Tulsa, after a Black man was falsely accused of assaulting a white female elevator operator. Greenwood Avenue had been known as ‘Black Wall Street’ because it was one of the most affluent African-American communities of the early 20th century (Madigan, 2001). The story of Emmett Till is perhaps the best-known of this history of what Sharpe (2016: 15) calls the ‘ongoingness of the conditions of capture’. A 14-year-old Till was brutalised and killed by two white men in Mississippi in 1955, after Carolyn Bryant falsely accused him of ‘uttering obscenities’ and grabbing her by the waist. Jessie Daniels (2018) has called Bryant ‘the foremother of contemporary white women who call the police on Black people sitting in a Starbucks, barbecuing in a park or napping in a dorm’, acts that have also led to fatal violence (Sharpe, 2016: 52). The 2020 Black Lives Matter protests following the police murder of George Floyd reiterated that Black lives are still the price of white affective security (see Schuller, 2018: 2), and Black death is still crucial to the operation of the white supremacist state (see Sharpe, 2016: 9). White women’s ‘safety’ is also central to contemporary border regimes, which purport to protect us from immigrants and traffickers but actually create the conditions for mass exploitation and abuse (Mac and Smith, 2018: 59–60, 75–76). Political whiteness involves a will to power: in the case of bourgeois white women, this was and is often achieved through performances of powerlessness. We exist at the intersections of capitalism, white supremacy and heteropatriarchy, with little control over the means of production (Lugones, 2008: 15) but with raced and classed dominance that requires feminine submission. Like Penelope in Homer’s Odyssey, we fling ourselves on the floor and cry. This activates the settler’s and master’s revenge, now embodied in the necropolitical (Mbembe, 2003) criminal punishment and border control that captures Black and brown people and/or leaves them to perish: what Sharpe (2016: 16) terms the ‘reappearance of the slave ship in everyday life’. This circuit between white tears and white rage means that the relationship between the personal and political in white feminism has always been corruptible or perhaps even inherently corrupt. In contrast to the damsel in distress, the woman of colour has had her innocence stripped by colonialism, often through rape (Hamad, 2019: 18–19). As Angela Davis Phipps 87 (1981) argues, colonial ideas about Black sexual ‘savagery’ created both the notions of the Black man as rapist and the Black woman as un-rapeable, encased in the notion of Black people’s bodies as objects to which anything could be done (Sharpe, 2016: 13). During #MeToo, the only allegations Harvey Weinstein publicly refuted were from actors Salma Hayek and Lupita Nyong’o: Hamad (2018: 55) argues that this was because brown and Black women are easier to discredit. Women of colour, and particularly Black women, are not able to politicise their pain in the way white women do: this both reflects and perpetuates their thingification (Césaire, 1950: 42) and ‘abjection from the realm of the human’ (Sharpe, 2016: 12).4 It is not just that the tears of white women are valued while those of Black women are dismissed. It is that race itself (and perhaps class, at least to a certain extent) is defined by the perceived capacity to cry, that the performance of bourgeois white emotion accomplishes the dehumanisation of people of colour. As Kyla Schuller (2018) has shown, in 19th-century sex and race ‘science’, ideas about sex difference (seen as a property of bourgeois whiteness) intermingled with ideas about feeling. This divided the ‘civilised’ body into two halves: ‘the sentimental woman . . . and the less susceptible and more rational man’ (Schuller 2018: 16). The bourgeois white woman’s capacity to cry was fundamental to her dominant status, as was the capacity of her male counterpart to respond to her tears with action. Humanness came to refer to both an assumed capacity for feeling and the capacity to control it.

### A2 Democracy

#### K of democracy – calvin warren

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Samuel A. Chambers defines the imagination as a “synthetic power of creation and re-creation—an ability to combine the uncombinable, to surpass binaries without merely collapsing them, to fashion something new” (620). **And from such synthesis, we are told that a democratic imagination is possible, since we would “think the limits (and their transgression) of democratic theory and of democracy as well**” (620). Here, we see that the **democratic imagination recasts limits as possibilities rather than complete failures. Limits become the resource for creation and re-creation rather than evidence of destruction and uselessness**. A couture Kantianism / Hegelianism (mixed with a splash of deconstruction) **salvages democracy from the perils of its absurdity, devastation, and brutality**. **Why** this **investment in democracy’s “intrinsic” creative power**? **Can this creativity finally bring an end to anti-Black violence and Black suffering**? Or is the knowledge of democracy’s fabulousness enough to sustain Blacks through police terrorism, environmental racism, re-enslavement through incarceration, and food / housing insecurity and discrimination? I would suggest that what makes such creative synthesis possible is an unacknowledged dependence on time. For proponents of democracy**, it is time that is malleable for creative enterprises of re-imagination, of progress fetishization, and an “ontology of change” that need not justify (or prove) itself, declaration of change seems to be enough** (Badiou, “Ontology”). What if, however, democracy is clinging to a depleted resource**? What if time is no longer enough to orient existence, especially for those inhabitants of an abyss—within which time, space, ethics, and law are weaponized against existence? Put somewhat differently, democracy has exhausted the imagination**. It is a **speculative vampire that drains the imagination of any vital resource for its own survival. This speculation is an outrageous expenditure of energy, an enjoyment without end, a scholarly surplus-pleasure requiring an incessant (and useless)** political repetition (Johnston). I would describe this speculation—the conjoining of time, democracy, and the imagination—as an interminable quest, or a certain “stuckness” in a scene of failure (a constant encircling of political and legal vacuity). This repetition is most dramatically demonstrated, for me, in **Black political participation—voting, protesting, keeping hope alive, returning to the kernel of authoritarian violence (i. e., anti-Blackness) with unbridled hope, temporal determination, and an investment in the ontology of change** (Warren; Farred). **Time mocks Blacks, requiring historical déjà vu to be re-imagined, redeemed, rethought, or ignored, rather than accepting time as anti-Black enmity and democracy as the Abandoning Time: Black Nihilism and the Democratic Imagination** Amst 66.1 (2021): 247-51 249 permanence of anti-Blackness. Chants of “yes we can!” “your vote matters!” “we have power!” “we’re moving forward,” etc., serve to **neglect the failure of Black political participation and to imprison the imagination within futurity**. As I am writing these remarks, I am witnessing the absurdity of this democratic imagination and its unrelenting time. On one news program, I hear that police shot unarmed Andre Hill, a forty-seven-yearold Black resident of Columbus, Ohio, without cause, and rather than offering him medical assistance, decided to handcuff him (just in case the supine, dying man finds a gun, magically, I guess). On the other news program, I hear Black politicians importuning, begging, and guilting Blacks into voting for change. Black political pundits assure voters that the ontology of change is realizable if you just exercise your right to vote. “Never again!” “We will transform police practices!” “This time will be different!” Did Blacks not vote when police shot twelve-year-old Tamir Rice as he was playing with his toy gun on the playground? (By the way, no federal charges will be brought against the police officers who shot him). Did Blacks not vote when Sandra Bland lost her life in police custody? Did Blacks not vote after police deprived Eric Garner and George Floyd (and apparently 70 other people) of breath (Baker et al.)? In answer to my inquiry “why should we continue to vote if anti-Black violence is not changing?” I am told, “Just keep believing, we can vote people in that can change things!” When I then ask, “But I voted for President Obama (suspending my nihilism in an intoxication of hopeaffect), I thought things were going to change for Blacks? I feel just as unsafe and endangered post-Obama as pre-Obama,” I am told, “Obama wasn’t a ‘magic Negro.’ He did the best he could.” Then I ask, “So why vote if it will take an act of magic to address the existential threat of anti-Blackness?” **Time mocks the cyclical movement of such inquiries, they are, indeed, unanswerable within the creative, synthetic, and powerful democratic horizon**. Voting **becomes the premier instrument of the democratic imagination—supposedly, it activates the imagination with futurity, avoids paralysis with action, and can be repeated. What type of creativity will finally eradicate anti-Black brutality**? And could such creativity even operate within time**? Could we still call such creativity democracy? Must we abandon time to enable the imagination to perform the mystical, the magical, and the ineffable?**

### A2 NATO Good

#### Nato racializes representations

Murray 20 (A*nti-imperial world politics: race, class, and internationalism in the making of post-colonial orde*rs " Christopher Patrick ,PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science)

The **discourses of Africans and people of African descent**, which ultimately helped bring about the end of formal empire in Africa and the Caribbean, took place during a particularly important moment in the formation of ‘the international.’ 62 While the first and second waves of decolonisation comprised similar dynamics of empire-colony relations, and the internal divergences within colonised societies, the third wave of decolonisation came as the result of a uniquely global discourse around the role of imperialism in the First World War, **the threat this represented to ‘world civilisation’, and the new forms of international governance and social relations needed to address global conflict. During this moment, empire came to be seen as in need of reform by some, and inherently destructive and regressive by others**. In each case, the emergence of more powerful and organised racial advocacy networks and the **depreciating returns of white imperial legitimacy galvanised arguments for non-white inclusion in governance.** **Objection to white supremacy proliferated in various transnational advocacy organizations and through colonial and metropolitan print cultures**. These ideas were facilitated by the synchronisation of racial grievance throughout colonised populations, but also by the ideological and organisational resources supplied by the COMINTERN and the United States. Black anti-imperialism is not reducible to Soviet communism or American liberalism, but its entanglements with other political movements often led to important consequences, such as the crackdown on its print materials and organising by colonial authorities.63 **The focus on black internationalism also has a rationale related to the relative neglect of certain discourses and ideologies in the formation of the international/states system**. While it would be possible to dig deeper into the **anti-imperial politics of white metropolitan activists, the view that independence was gifted to the colonies by benevolent whites does not need further elaboration.** The notion that white **Western societies came around on their own to new moral positions on practices like colonialism already forms the bedrock for a plethora of liberal constructivist studies** and popular histories.64 Analysis of the world political discourse of individuals like Marcus Garvey, Cyril Briggs, J.E. and Adelaide Casely Hayford, Paulette Nardal, George Padmore, among others, forms part of the unique contribution of this study. Although they usually referred to peasant and worker communities, the discourses I analyse here were relatively elite. However, **there is more in the history of anti-imperial, intra-elite discourse than has been sometimes suggested by historians of the subaltern. Excluded socially and politically**, but rich in cultural capital, sufficiently resourced to travel between colony and metropole, and tailored towards low level, white collar professions, many anti-imperial writers and leaders were acutely aware of the transnational pecking order, and occupied a position of relative subalternity. For the most part, these individuals fit Edward Said’s category of the ‘secular intellectual.’65 Said defines secular intellectuals by six axes of activity and thought: 1.) the ‘archival function’ of preserving and deploying ‘counterinformation’ which is hidden by the ‘prevailing consensus’; 2.) translating specialized knowledge and literature into forms accessible to broad groups of people; 3.) demystifying the language of authority which appeals to so-called pragmatic common-sense in order to highlight the underlying ethical or political implications; 4.) disrupting attempts to privatize knowledge by challenging the boundaries of specialized domains of practice; 5.) resisting a culture’s slide into total domination or trivialization; and 6.) insisting on the irreconcilability and irreducibility of oppositions.66 In Antonio Gramsci’s problematic and the European context, such figures would normally be considered intellectuals proper, the ‘organizers of culture’ contrasted with the ‘organic intellectuals’ who derive their ideology from the ‘essential task of economic production.’67 But the relative marginality of colonial anti-imperial activists created a unique position where the function of intellectual critique often needed to be exercised outside the realms of formal knowledge production—in the function rooms and public parks of metropolitan centres, through art and literature, and in transnational print media **Through its empirics and approach this study seeks to contribute to the ‘(re)turn’ to empire and race in IR**.69 A few scholars now recognise that analysis of contemporary international relations, whether it concerns Brexit; **Russian, Chinese, and Western rivalry in Africa; NATO operations in the Middle Eas**t; Salafist movements; **transnational protest movements like Black Lives Matter**; or developments in organisations like CARICOM, the African Union, or ASEAN, **is often poorer for not attending to legacies of empire and colonialism, as well as ongoing imperial relations. Critical histories of IR have pointed to IR as an academic discipline which got its start through the policy science of race development and imperial management**70; which continues to advance self-flattering myths about Western exceptionalism; and which claims or assumes the universality of European history, institutions, and technologies. This can have the effect of whitewashing Euro-American world politics, or, more insidiously, continuing to normalise state-sanctioned violence and inequality. **71 These critiques of IR as a Eurocentric discipline, historically bound up with white supremacy, have carried the discipline to a crossroads**. Down one road, **there is the possibility of attempting to address these omissions and biases with analysis based in liberal pluralist inclusion: adding a host of ‘non-Western’ categories and biases, which posit cultural and territorialised particularities**. **I argue that the likely outcome here is not an amelioration of Eurocentrism, but an extension of it. The West is still granted the terrain of the universal, with ‘the non-West’ granted tolerance to tack on a variety of cultural ‘differences’**, as long as it largely continues to adhere to disciplinary shibboleths, such as order, sovereignty, and recognition. **Another path – though not the only one -- is the relational-historical approach to empire and race I put forward in this study. This understands relations between former empires and colonies as asymmetrical and differentiated but connected, constituted through resistance and alliance as well as oppression**, and interpretable through discourse, which often concerned bounded communities, but was usually also boundary-crossing.

Predictive analytics use a variety of techniques (e.g., statistical methods, machine learning algorithms) to make predictions about future events. Although predictive analytics have been used in many disciplines since the early 20th century (e.g., actuarial science, business intelligence, financial forecasting), increasingly, this computationally intensive technique has been employed by law enforcement and other government agencies to generate predictions about future criminal behavior. While the function of predictive analytics in policing appears to be well intentioned, upon a closer examination, one may find that the decisions generated by ‘black--box’ modeling techniques like supervised machine learning encourage a ‘blind faith’ in the mathematical process and in the ability of algorithms to produce meaningful and informative predictions. Thus, despite their widespread use, predictive policing tools are complex systems with many aspects that remain a mystery. In this paper, we critically examine the employment of predictive analytics in US criminal justice policy, with a particular focus on the ways in which these technological practices are reproducing and reinforcing structural relations of difference. We are specifically motivated by the following questions: In what ways do the algorithms become part of a larger sociotechnical apparatus of sociopolitical relations? How are the data that the algorithms inherit alwaysalready imbued with structural relations of difference? To what extent do algorithms predict or performatively enact differential patterns of sentencing decisions or recidivism? In what ways might bodies, spaces, and practices be materially formed and shaped from the performative acts of algorithmic legal reasoning? And, in what ways might the cloaking of algorithmic legal reasoning as objective, precise, and efficient enable the proliferation of racializing assemblages in the juridical field? Each of these motivating questions will be examined through a new materialist lens that posits algorithms as more--thanhuman ontologies and racializing assemblages. As argued by the first author elsewhere, we need to move beyond the dominant tendency to treat algorithms as mechanical operations that are contingent on human intervention or design and, as such, a prosthetic tool to human cognition. The concept of algo--ritmo reconceptualizes the algorithm as 1 2 3 4 D-- 3/41 engaging in more--than--human performative acts that are produced from the immanent forms of what Luciana Parisi refers to as the “soft” thought of algorithmic reasoning. As a concept, algo--ritmo not only accounts theoretically for how the more--than--human performative acts of algorithms function but also considers the ways in which those algorithmic acts are forming, shaping, hierarchizing, and differentiating bodies. Thus, algo--ritmo also refers to the ways in which algorithms become racializing assemblages**.** As articulated by Alex Weheliye, racializing assemblages are a system of sociopolitical relations that hierarchizes and differentiates bodies, designating bodies as human, notquite--human, and nonhuman; rendering certain bodies as exceptional and others as disposable. Algo--ritmo postulates that the bodily disciplining is both human and more--than--hum an. Thus, there are not just human bodies that are racialized but algorithms too. In other words, we argue that inside of the proverbial “blackbox” , algorithms become immanent agencies of racializing assemblages. By doing a close reading of policy documents and existing research literature, we critically examine the racializing assemblages of algorithmic law enforcement logic, policies and practices, followed by ethical and social policy considerations. We begin by discussing the literature on big data and the rise of predictive policing. Policing Crime & Predictive Analytics Big Data & The Rise of Predictive Policing In recent years, the private sector and government have focused their efforts on harnessing the power of big data to find meaningful patterns and make datadriven decisions. Private corporations such as Target and Walmart have analyzed their customer data to inform marketing strategies and product sales and placement. Government agencies are also leveraging big data and analytics to improve policy decision--making. Most notably, in 2012, the Obama Administration unveiled a Big Data Initiative, which sought to “improve the tools and techniques needed to access, organize, and glean discoveries from huge volumes of digital data.” Arguably, where there have been even more advancements on these fronts has been in local city governance and institutional practices. While many government institutions have turned to big data analytics to make more “intelligent” decisions, law enforcement and criminal justice have emerged as two of the most prevalent areas in which these techniques have been developed and applied. 5 6 7 8 9 10 D-- 4/41 Policing Bodies Numerically Before delving into the use of analytics in policing, it is important to understand the history of the use of statistics and numbers more broadly in criminal justice research. Prediction and forecasting have been used for nearly a century to study crime in the U.S. While much of this research has been focused on studying criminal behavior , other work has used forecasting methods to predict trends in crime and prison populations. That said, no matter the outcome, criminal justice researchers have long been obsessed with using data —and in particular quantitative data—to understand crime. One prevailing belief is that, culturally speaking, the predominance of quantitative methods in criminal justice research reflects a broader societal notion about what it means to do science, and in this context it should not be surprising that to do science requires the manipulation and calculation of numbers. The act of defining and explaining social phenomena using numbers or quantitative data is nothing new. In fact, this phenomenon has its roots in positivism. Positivism refers to the philosophical writings (circa 1830--1842) of Auguste Comte in which the scientific method—the standard procedure for gaining and producing knowledge in the natural sciences—was applied to the study of human behavior and social phenomena. According to Comte, there are three premises of positivism: 1. Universal truths exist for human behavior and social phenomena. 2. Empirical observation is the only rational means by which universal truths in the social world can be discovered. 3. Through the application of the scientific method, causal relationships among social phenomena can be established Imbued within positivist philosophy is the notion that truth cannot only be discovered but also replicated through (precise and certain) scientific measurement. It was through the application of positivism to the study of the human condition and social life that quantification and the scientific method become central features of social and behavioral science and the preferred ways of understanding populations. While the rise of positivism led to the growing use of quantitative methods in the human sciences, why were these methods so readily and widely accepted? 11 12 13 14 15 D-- 5/41 Theodore Porter in his seminal work Trust in Numbers historically traces the rise of objective empiricism and ubiquity of quantification in the modern world. To Porter, and largely society as a whole, we are drawn to numbers not only because they can be used to describe social phenomena, but also because a decision ‘made’ by numbers appears impartial and indisputable. This notion of numbers as ‘truth’ is rooted in the belief that mathematics is the language and logic of the natural world. When applied to the study of human and social life, however, in what ways and to what extent do numbers become political and reflect the normative assumptions about what is counted, how it is counted, and why it is counted? This critical question is at the heart of Porter’s work, and through the use of historical case studies he demonstrates that numbers are never void of subjectivity or judgment. Rather, numbers are “strategies of communication” that are used to legitimize one’s actions and “provide standards against which [to measure progress and compare information].” In this way, numbers become “an agency for acting on people [and] exercising power over them.” If we build off Porter’s claim about the nature of numbers and take seriously the proposition that numbers are capable of exerting power, then we must consider the possibility that numbers, which can describe the social world, can just as easily be used to control it. Michel Foucault takes up this subject in many of his works, and characterizes discipline as a mode of power that “separates, analyses, differentiates…measures…and hierarchizes in terms of value.” Importantly, for Foucault, while discipline is “exercised on the bodies of individuals…the individual is not the primary datum on which discipline is exercised.” Although this statement may seem paradoxical, it can be explained by examining Foucault’s two lecture series Security, Territory, and Population and Governmentality. In both works, Foucault provides a historical account of the evolution of government, and describes how society’s transition from feudalism to capitalism led government to be concerned with the population within its territory in order to successfully govern the territory over which it has control. Driving this concern was the desire to organize, optimize, and regulate state affairs. This, of course, required the collection of data from individuals, while privileging quantified population trends. Viewed through a Foucauldian lens, then, methods of quantification such as statistics are a means through which the state controls, categorizes, and classifies its citizens. The Rise of the Carceral State 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 D-- 6/41 If statistics and numbers have had historical significance in criminal justice research, then we must inquire about the role they have played in policing bodies in the U.S. In particular, we ask how have numbers shaped policing and legitimized mass incarceration? We contend that the origins of mass incarceration in the U.S. can be traced to the Johnson era’s War on Poverty. When Lyndon B. Johnson assumed the presidency, he not only vowed to enforce civil rights, but he also declared war on poverty. After a few years in office, however, what began as a commitment to nationwide anti--poverty programs quickly turned into something more sinister—namely, an agenda to target and punish urban, black communities across America. In 1965, Daniel Moynihan, a politician and sociologist, released a report titled The Negro Family: The Case for National Action. In the report, Moynihan used employment data to identify the causes of poverty and social--ill (e.g., crime, corruption) in the U.S. Often citing dire statistics to shock the reader (e.g. “Almost One--Fourth of Negro Families are Headed by Females”), Moynihan’s report largely painted the poverty problem in the U.S. as a “negro problem” rooted in the disintegration of the black nuclear family. Though President Johnson would come to distance himself from the blatantly racist report authored by Moynihan, by the end of his term in office, the damage had already been done. The carefully crafted communication strategy embedded within Moynihan’s report had legitimized the government’s desire to control the “negro problem,” and culminated in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. Crime & Carceral State The Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 signaled a profound shift in the government’s attitude and response to the root causes and correlates of crime. The Act enabled the federal government to provide financial assistance to local law enforcement agencies for the procurement of police equipment and laid the foundation for massive federal investments in crime control and prevention strategies. More importantly, however, the Act expanded the federal government’s (e.g., Department of Justice) role in local law enforcement and criminal justice matters, with the goal of creating an interconnected, coordinated system for the provision of justice and crime 24 25 26 27 28 D-- 7/41 prevention. Ultimately, the Crime Control and Safe Streets Act represented a major step by the government to federalize crime and codified the prioritization of law enforcement over welfare as a means to address social problems. Less than a decade after President Johnson signed the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act into Law, and after decades of stability in the rates of incarceration, the U.S. began to experience substantial growth in its prison population, a trend that has yet to be reversed. By the late 1960s, fear of rising urban crime and drug related activities, coupled with social and political unrest, fueled bilateral support for the United States’ punitive approach to law and order. This support translated into harsher punishments for minor offenses and mandatory minimum sentences and, ultimately, resulted in extraordinarily high rates of incarceration after 1970. According to estimates published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, approximately 500,000 people were incarcerated in 1980. By 2000, however, the total incarcerated population had exploded to more than 1.9 million. Though the shift towards tougher penal policies exerted a significant influence on national incarceration rates, time trends show that growth in incarceration in the U.S. has not been uniform across offenses or offenders. It is commonly recognized that the War on Drugs has contributed to the rise in incarceration rates over the last 40 years. Thus, it should come as no surprise that drug offenses over time have begun to comprise a disproportionate share of arrests and prison admissions. Figure 1 shows the time trends from 1980 to 2012 in the rate of arrests for select crimes. The most striking pattern revealed in the figure is the sharp increase in the rate of arrests for drug abuse violations compared to arrests for other criminal offenses. Specifically, over the 32 years for which we have data, arrests for drug related offenses rose from 255.65 per 100,000 persons in 1980 to just under 500 per 100,000 in 2012, peaking at 633.25 per 100,000 persons in 2006. An examination of incarceration rates over the same period shows a similar pattern, where in 1980 the incarceration rate for a drug related offense was 15 per 100,000 persons, but by 2000, that rate had increased over tenfold to more than 150 per 100,000. 29 30 31 32 33 D-- 8/41 Figure 1: Arrests per 100,000 persons by offense, 1980 to 2012. Other offenses include aggravated assault and sex offenses. SOURCE: Snyder, Howard N., and Joseph Mulako--Wangota. “Arrest in the United States, 1980--2012.” Bureau of Justice Statistics, FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program, September 2014. Accessed February 28, 2017. www.bjs.gov. On the surface, the movement toward punitive crime control in the U.S. appeared to be broad and far--reaching. When disaggregated by race, however, the data present a more troubling picture. Despite comprising less than 12% of the U.S. population in 1980, African Americans made up 44% of the total amount of state and federal inmates in the same year. By 2000, the population of African Americans in the U.S. had increased to 12.9%, and yet they accounted for 46% of all inmates in U.S. state and federal correctional facilities. In the end, the U.S.’ policy of mass incarceration not only led to an overrepresentation of African Americans in jails and prisons, but it also reflects a clear policy choice to inscribe race into the criminal justice system. Perhaps John Ehrlichman, a former Nixon domestic policy chief, best expresses these sentiments: 34 35 D-- 9/41 “You want to know what this was really all about…The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I’m saying. We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.” Policing in the Information Age Today, across the U.S., dozens of police departments, from Boston to Los Angeles, have turned to sophisticated data analytics to address criminal justice practices. Although the use of quantitative data to address crime is not novel, newer technologies fueled by algorithms, artificial intelligence, and machine learning enable law enforcement agencies to harness the power of big data to predict criminal behavior. This strategy is often referred to as predictive policing. We adopt our definition of predictive policing from the RAND Corporation and National Institute of Justice. They define predictive policing as the “the application of analytical techniques—particularly quantitative techniques—to identify likely targets for police intervention and prevent crime or solve past crimes by making statistical predictions.” Predictive policing and its tools permit law enforcement to use data to predict where crime is most likely to happen; assess who is most likely to (re)offend or be victimized; and form typologies of offenders. While the goals of predictive policing may be clear, what remains muddied is what they are doing to accomplish these goals. However, before we can examine what predictive policing tools are doing, we must have a better understanding of some of the keywords that are often used when discussing the subject, namely, artificial intelligence, supervised machine learning, and algorithm. Artificial intelligence is an umbrella term used to describe the science and engineering of creating machines and/or software with the ability to achieve a goal. , Nested within AI is supervised machine learning. Supervised machine learning, as a branch of AI, is concerned with using historical information (i.e., a dataset that includes known input (x) and output (y) data) to train a model that can be used to predict future events (or 36 37 38 39 40 41 D-- 10/41 behavior). An algorithm, on the other hand, can be defined as a list of instructions for a step--by--step execution of a specific task. Supervised machine learning algorithms, then, are computer programs that not only try to achieve a specific goal (e.g., predict the likelihood of crime in location Y) but also are capable of improving (or maintaining) their performance in service to that goal when fed new input data As Foster and colleagues note: “One key distinction in [supervised] machine learning is that the goal is not just to find the best function F that can predict Y for observed outcomes (known Ys) but to find one that best generalizes to new, unseen data.” Machine learning algorithms have been applied to a variety of criminal justice contexts. These algorithms can be used at all stages of the criminal justice process, from determining where to deploy police officers for maximum impact , to informing bail decisions (also known as pretrial risk assessment) , to assessing risk for recidivating among parolees and probationers. Police departments and other branches of the criminal justice system in cities around the country have adopted these tools, drawing on both researchers and university--based partnerships, as well as proprietary software, to develop and implement the desired algorithmic tools. One widely known proprietary tool, PredPol, is the product of a research partnership between UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, and the Los Angeles Police Department. According to their website, “PredPol’s mission is to provide a crime prevention platform to keep communities safer. Our…technology places public safety officers at the right time and location to give them the best chance of preventing crime.” Using machine learning techniques, PredPol claims to be able to predict where crime is most likely to occur using only three data points: “crime type, crime location, and crime date and time.” Another example is the COMPAS tool produced by Northpointe, which applies machine learning algorithms to risk assessment at the levels of policing and case management, promising users both a “prospective” and “retrospective look at risk and needs factors.” Yet despite widespread use of these algorithms, touted as powerful and technologically advanced methods for improving public safety, their propensity to disproportionately target individuals from lower--class neighborhoods and communities of color remains starkly understudied and underreported outside of popular news media. 41 43 41 41 46 47 48 49 50 51 D-- 11/41 Algorithmic Reasoning as Racializing Assemblages Machine learning algorithms are being employed in many sectors of US society including in the practices of predictive policing and criminal justice. Yet, we know less about the ways in which the algorithms may become part of a larger sociotechnical apparatus of sociopolitical relations. In order to examine this, we put the concept of algo--ritmo to work in analyzing the algorithmic legal reasoning of predictive policing. Algo--ritmo seeks to account for both the immanent agencies of algorithmic acts and the ways in which those acts become racializing assemblages. In conceptually developing an understanding of how algorithms may become racializing assemblages, the first author has argued that it is through the data that the algorithms inherit sociopolitical relations of society. Data are not pure, objective extractions of the world but rather are assemblages that are produced from a multiplicity of entwined and mutating apparatuses. The apparatuses of data assemblages include political economy, forms of knowledge, practices, governmentalities and legalities, and subjectivities and communities, among others. As assemblages, they are both materially and discursively produced from forces of human and more--than--human ontologies. Among the multiplicity of forces that make up data assemblages include sociopolitical relations that consist of forces that differentiate and hierarchize bodies. Thus, all assemblages of data are always--already imbued with varying degrees of sociopolitical relations and, as such, become part of the (re)programmed architectures of algorithmic reasoning. For algo--ritmo, algorithmic reasoning is not understood to be mechanical operations that are contingent on human intervention or design. It is postulated that the systematic operations of algorithms are not simply humanly designed and modeled or the prosthetic tool to human cognition. In accordance with Parisi, algorithms are understood to be actual entities that consist of finite operations of calculation as well as incomputable data sequences. As actual entities, they are sociotechnical ontologies that are always in process of becoming in relation with **sociopolitical systems,** **legal practices**, programmed inputs, and data assemblages. These are not simply humanly designed technologies, but rather as algorithms process and are trained on data assemblages they become more--than--human ontologies. For Parisi, it is the 52 53 54 D-- 12/41 actuality of incomputabilities that provide instantiation of the immanent forms of algorithmic cognition. That is to say, operating between the space of finite algorithmic operations and the incomputability of the world’s infinite complexity (i.e., information) are forms of speculative reason that are immanent to computation. If machine learning algorithms consist of immanent forms of reasoning, then the iterability of predictions or speech acts are more--than--human performative acts. Performative acts, or intra--actions, are relational acts within entangled entities that produce ongoing material (re)configurings of the world. Building on Barad’s diffractive reading of Foucault’s discursive theory and Butler’s theory of performativity via Bohr’s conception of matter, algo--ritmo engages in morethan--human performative acts, in which materiality is discursive and the discursive is always--already material. It is via the iterable intra--actions with other relational ontologies that materially reconfigures the world. Thus, algoritmos matter through their iterable intra--actions with other ontologies, whereby they enact, form, shape, and produce both human and more--thanhuman bodies. As agencies that inherit sociopolitical relations via data assemblages, the immanent forms of reasoning and more--than--human performative acts of algorithms become racializing assemblages. The theory of racializing assemblages seeks to more adequately account for the processes of power and racializations of the body/flesh. As argued by Weheliye, racialization is not to be reduced to race or racism but is the process of differentiation and hierarchization that produces the assemblages of race, gender, class, sexuality, and dis/ability among other structural relations of “difference”. The sociopolitical relations of racialization are perpetuated via technologies and sciences (among other things) and require “the barring of nonwhite subjects from the category of the human.” Thus, the data and code of algorithms inherit the sociopolitical relations of “difference” becoming a performative force of the relational and connected forces of racializing assemblages. As a way of drawing a distinction between the legal constitution of the body and the social designations of the flesh, Weheliye also calls upon Hortense Spillers’ (2003) theorizing of the flesh. As Spillers nsightfully states “before the ‘body’ there is ‘flesh,’ that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse or the reflexes of iconography…” Prior to the legal constitution of the body is the formation of the flesh, a formation that is bound by the markings or traces of political violence designating a hierarchy of humanity. The traces of political violence of the flesh are what Spillers refers to as “hieroglyphics of the flesh” that are produced from the instruments or acts of violence such as whips, police brutality, mass shootings, or more subtly from the silence in speech acts. The data and code of algorithmic acts inherit the sociopolitical forces and “hieroglyphics of the flesh” of racializing assemblages from the iterability of algorithmic intra--actions. In this article, we examine the ways in which algorithmic legal reasoning, as materialized in practices of predictive policing, becomes racializing assemblages. As will be discussed below, sociopolitical relations of racializations become part of the algorithmic architecture in at least two ways. First is by way of the rationalities behind the metrics that operationalize and constitute the criterion of prediction. The second is more posthumanist via the algorithmic intra--action with data assemblages and through this process (re)configuring the architecture of the algorithm to becoming racializing assemblages. By putting the concept algo--ritmo to work in a close reading of the existing research and policy literature, we illuminate these sociopolitical processes.

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### A2 Cybertech

#### Predictive technological imagination provide data fuel for the anti-black technosphere. Refuse AI’s quantification of human behavior that recreates enlightenment rationality and fungibilizes. blackness.

Zehner 19. (“Machines of subjection” August 2019, Peer-Reviewed Journal About Machine Feeling (<https://doi.org/10.7146/aprja.v8i1.115414>) \**neil*

As humans feed affect, thought, and sociality into algorithms, algorithms feed back into what used to be called subjectivity. This shift is what has given way to a post-representational politics adrift within information space. — Hito Steyerl 1. Machines of subjection For the past two decades, fields of knowledge production that utilize statistics have adopted machine learning as their primary mode of operation (Mackenzie, “Programming Subjects” 434). Due to the advances of computational technology, machines can now be programmed to fnd patterns in large datasets. ‘Machine learners’[1] recursively use patterns to infer correlations, essentially hailing new performative judgments on the world. Adrian Mackenzie goes so far as to claim that we now live within a regime of predictivity characterized by computational practices that rely less on verifcation than inference and abductive reasoning. With the widespread use of machine learning practices, abduction creates an overall “sensibility to change and alter events” (402). By abstracting concrete social practices into data vectors, machine learners measure, forecast and thus modulate human behaviors by essentially scripting performatives. Put simply, machine learners have become some of the most potent social inscription devices today. It is within this context that I ask – how does the recent ubiquity of machine learning affect the production of subjectivity? As the big data revolution ramps up, much attention has been drawn to online platforms that modulate political identities “situated at a distance from traditional liberal politics and removed from civil discourse” (Cheney-Lippold 165). On two ends of the extreme, we have seen the rise of white supremacists propagating through networks that segregate public opinions. Yet, on the ‘back end’ of computational culture, machine learning algorithms de-subjectify human users for proprietary gain. Capitalism doesn’t care if you’re a fascist, a passivist, or even a bot; so long as it can extract behavioral information from your actions to be packaged and resold by its advertisers. As Cheney-Lippold points out, machine learning shifts the site of identifcation into the “measurable, digital sphere” (165). Between the front-end user interface, and the back-end logics of computation — machine learners are embedded within the powerful contradictions of capitalist logics. Amidst this seeming contradiction, the concept of subjectivity may be an unhelpful category. ‘Enlightenment Man,’ the Cartesian subject divided between mind and body, the rationalist ‘view from nowhere’ — these eurocentric notions of subjectivity are founded on the measuring functions of coloniality and the technological organization of capital brought to bear on the individual.[2] Still, technological imaginaries have also been mobilized to trouble hegemonic notions of subjectivity. Donna Haraway’s feminist subjects, for instance, dethrone the “god-tricks” of scientifc rationalism through situated technopolitical practices (Haraway, 1988). The notion of technological subjection, or perhaps more accurately, the notion of de-subjectivization, occupies a set of complex problems that garner closer attention. Now emerging scholarship at the intersection of identity and machine learning has opened new pathways of research in digital cultural studies. Healy and Fourcade observe that the state used to be the only apparatus with the technological power to track its subjects. However, this is no longer the case (Fourcade and Healy). The recent ability for machine learners to track Brett Zehner: MACHINES OF SUBJECTION 50 APRJA Volume 8, Issue 1, 2019 online users’ digital footprints, or their “data exhaust,” marks an important moment for what Shoshona Zuboff calls surveillance capitalism. Every action a user performs on a digital system is considered a signal to be analyzed, packaged, and subsequently fed back into the system. The quantity of user data is much more important than quality. As long as an action online can be converted into data, it can be utilized in predictive behavioral models. Zuboff explains that no online action is too trivial to be aggregated, repackaged, and sold again (79). “Facebook likes, Google searches, emails, texts, photos, songs, geo-location, communication patterns” are all considered lucrative data to marketing frms and myriad other companies (79). Though let’s be clear. Surveillance capital is not merely a social media concern. The algorithmic bias of machine learners stems from a long line of quantitative racism and surveillance (Browne). The targeting of the poorest members of society continues, only now it operates through various forms of data surveillance and predatory credit scoring (Fourcade and Healy 31). Zuboff argues that technique supplants authority, and that “discipline and control produce a certain knowledge of human behavior independent of consent” (81). In this extractive logic, we see an impersonal form of subjection at the heart of surveillance capital. New forms of power emerge alienating persons “from their own behavior while producing new markets of behavioral prediction and modifcation” (75). The liberal idea of the rational decisionmaker then seems to unravel as a locus of power relations. In The Control Revolution, historian of technology James Beniger describes the automation of decision theory in the 1930s. “Any decision tree of fnite length can be duplicated by a fnite automaton, thereby equating the question of decidability with that of computability” (64 ). It was the automation of decision theory that set the stage for the frst machine learning program to be utilized for economic and military planning by the RAND Corporation in 1955. TungHui Hu advances this historical analysis by mapping the topography of power relations within ‘cloud computing’ where decisions are distributed across networked assemblages. He argues that borders seem to be out of date conceptions at the foundation of the sovereign subject (14). The Tiqqun collective in their cybernetic hypothesis posit that traditional class divisions and social confict no longer cut through the middle of society, but through the middle of each of us. What is troubling is that the production of subjectivity seems to be no longer about creating “people of substance” but of turning each person into a “fleshless envelope, the best possible conductor of social communication” (18). And most recently, in the Trump era, Luciana Parisi links the de-personalization of machine learning systems to the rise of post-truth politics. Here indeterminacy and the unknown “push automated cognition beyond knowledge-based systems” (“Reprogramming Decisionism” 10). What we ultimately fnd within the political subjection (and de-subjectivation) of machine learners is a brutal instrumentalism based more on mechanical functions than on ideological content. Now, despite considering machine learning’s effect on social identity,[3] the above scholarship on machine learning has left open an opportunity for rigorous scholarly attention to de-subjectivation. For instance, John Cheney-Lippold asks: “What does the banality of competing for a job interview using machine learning to predict future friendships say about subject formation” (8)? This line of questioning still focuses on subjection at the level of performatives and self-awareness. This limited viewpoint imagines the subject merely as a ‘user’ who 51 is always already ideologically ‘hailed.’ Even though data analysis seems to aggregate our most intimate habits, surveillance remains automated and deeply impersonal as it bypasses individuated modes of subjectivity and signifying semiotics. Both digital media studies, if focusing merely on identifcation through computational performatives, is limited in offering any new insights into the forces at play in our present moment. I argue that the acceleration of predictive techniques and impersonal forms of control require a more robust consideration of de-subjection. Along these lines, tactical machine learning would have two goals. First, the goal would be to update theories of subjection, and de-subjection, for the proliferation of machine learning devices with a keen attention to practices that bypass classical defnitions of the subject. And second, to provide an analysis of social practices externalized into the technologies of machine learning. We must describe and experiment with certain tactical media concepts that undergird machine learning today – scenario planning, training, and prediction. 2. A tactical media approach to machine learners Methodologically, a tactical media approach to machine learning must be situated within the perspectives of media philosophy as well as the practice of media arts. The legacy of tactical media (and its forebears in 1960’s intermedia, conceptual, and performance art practices) informs much of my project combining the felds of digital media with performance studies. For instance, tactical media was outlined in the late 1990s by David Garcia and Geert Lovink as a set of practices engaging technology as always being wrapped up in power relations. The activist ethos of tactical media has been mobilized in various registers by Rita Raley, The Critical Art Ensemble, and Beatriz da Costa. In each case, performance is considered a mediating process that enacts technological apparatuses. Each usage of the term tactical media is dependent upon the specifc set of technopolitical relations that the practitioners hope to intervene within. In the case of Beatriz da Costa and Kavita Philip, their tactical biopolitics replaces the term ‘media’ out of a consideration of specifc technoscientifc forms of knowledge production modulating the possibilities of life (da Costa and Philip). Jussi Parikka, in a similar manner, mobilizes a geological imaginary to intervene within extractive environmental politics and digital culture. In this vein of mapping a specifc set of technopolitical relations, the title of this essay mobilizes tactical media in the service of exploring the temporal regimes of machine learners. The title also borrows directly from Saidiya Hartman’s Scenes of Subjection. I hope to expand on scenographic modes of subjection by drawing on the cybernetic imaginary to elucidate forms of technological de-subjection at the heart of identity politics. My initial hypothesis is that through so-called new media regimes, old forms of subjection mutate through the new technopolitical conditions that arise. I look to unearth the technologies of subjection as they traffc through the digital sphere. To provide insight into the processes of de-subjection I rely on two threads of critical theory. The frst mode of critical theory that I utilize comes from post-autonomist marxism and its theories of signifcation and subjection within the late capitalist technosphere. I fnd it useful to consider the performative statements and decision architectures of machine learners via the philosophy of language found in the work of Michel Foucault, and Brett Zehner: MACHINES OF SUBJECTION 52 APRJA Volume 8, Issue 1, 2019 Félix Guattari. Especially useful is Foucault’s concept of the dispositif — the structural yet mutable union between institutions, subjectivity, and discourse. He defnes the dispositif as an autonomous technique which exists “on the other side of juridical and political structures of representation” (Foucault 40). The dispositif is a mechanism of capture, both material and discursive, which directly manages the experience of everyday life. Guattari further identities two dispositifs of power that operate in a contradictory manner. On the one hand, we face systems of social subjection. Social subjection categorizes us with assigned identities — it gives us a gender, a race, a profession — a position of symbolic representation. However, the production of an individuated subject is also coupled with a different process that proceeds though desubjectivization. Guattari defnes this process as machinic enslavement which dismantles the individuated subject, consciousness, and representations, acting on both pre-personal and supra-individual levels. In machinic enslavement, the individual is no longer instituted as an “economic subject” or a “citizen.” She is instead considered “a gear, a cog, a component in fnancial and various other institutional assemblages” (ctd. in Lazzarato, Signs and Machines 25). For instance – advertising focus groups stopped using questionnaires long ago in favor of measuring biometric response to stimuli such as taste tests or eye tracking. Capitalism is so successful because it operates heterogeneously at the intersection of social subjection and machinic enslavement. We are all caught in a double bind between performative individuation and the dissolution into our dividual parts, unknown to ourselves. Guattari’s critique (which I extend to the analysis of machine learners) is of critical theories that deal only with language and/or recognition while ignoring de-subjectivizing processes and their non-representational semiotics. Although the post-autonomist critique of technology is quite useful in understanding both processes of subjection and desubjection within the logic of computational capital, there is still the problem of the specifc historical and material contexts in which machine learners are situated. One must wonder if Guattari’s exploration of de-subjection can fnd a more radical usage today. In this manner, and concerning de-subjection, the second strain of critical theory we must engage with is queer-of-color-critique. We must turn to the negative identity politics that refuse to validate, affrm, or strengthen forms of subjectivity presently produced under capitalism. Recent antagonistic positions and pessimisms are powerful not because they have to do with identity “but because they have to do with the “mundane radicalism of the desire to de-subjectivize all categories” (Menon). Queer-of-color critique has long grappled with processes of de-subjection as a crucial step in forming minoritarian collectivity. Disidentifcation operates “in and against dominant ideologies” while refusing assimilation. Hortense Spillers’ theorization of the flesh and the body is important to consider in relation to present data practices which quantify human behaviors. Spillers positions the distinction between body and flesh as the central difference “between captive and liberated subject positions”. For Spillers, the body is possessed by an individual who is the sole owner of their selfhood. Yet for a captive, as in the case of chattel slavery, the body is reduced to flesh. This flesh is exposed to violence without protection from legality, equality, or democracy. In fact, Jasbir Puar writes that the violence of capital is legitimated through the right to maim. Outside of representation, vision, or ideology, the flesh records the primary narrative of the horrors of liberal humanism. It is the suffering of the flesh which exceeds white coloniality 53 and acts as transgenerational memory, highlighting the ways black bodies remain as flesh. Spiller’s political antagonism is an attention to the memory of the flesh existing on the side of the de-subjectifed, the already outside, beyond the limits of the subject or the law. Of course, the right to maim emerges in the data practices of predictive policing that quantifes black behaviors which are correlated to racist databases. All of this digital magic is merely a weapon to legitimate police horrors in the streets.

### No forefront afro-femme

#### Refusal to forefront African femme thinkers is anti-black erasure. Whiteness lacks the enunciative grammar to express the conditions of black experience.

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This is a very controversial point and I would not like to be misunderstood, so let me be clear. Firstly, it is obvious that part of thinking about African subjects’ historical presence is to think in pan-Africanist terms, not just from the continent but also from the whole of the diaspora, constructed out of specific experiences of slavery and abduction so ingrained for the political thought of anti-colonial thinkers worldwide. African thought makes no sense without taking account of these broader diasporic and panafricanist connections. Secondly, as Meera says, Fanon, Césaire, Du Bois and Cabral were all part and parcel of an anti-colonial movement that spurred independence across the African continent. Contemporary African thought cannot be understood without this legacy, Fanon’s in particular. Thirdly, Fanon and Du Bois even went and lived in Africa, and Fanon participated directly in the Algerian revolution. Finally, they do provide good guidance for analysing the political significance of interventions in how they theorised the experience of colonisation and racism. Yet none of these rationales on its own makes a strong enough justification for **diminishing African thinkers’ presence**. **For instance,** [**Césaire’s work**](http://www.bacfrancais.com/bac_francais/645-cesaire-cahier-retour-pays-natal-poudre-boussole.php) **is tied to** [**that of**](http://data.bnf.fr/12429906/leopold_sedar_senghor_hosties_noires/)[**Leopold Senghor**](http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb34640871h)**.** The Négritude movement that they co-founded was crucial for developing Fanon’s work. The movement was given much echo thanks to the founding of the journal [Presence Africaine](https://www.jstor.org/journal/presafri) by Senegalese Alioune Diop. Their thought reflects the ideas that made the intellectual basis of the anti-colonial movement and as such, can also be found in the work of many African intellectuals and activists at the time, not least the so-called founding fathers of independence like Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and Ahmed Sékou Touré. Cheik Anta Diop, one of the most acclaimed African historians, [placed](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=kcG5vJhnBVwC&pg=PT16&dq=restoration+of+African+Historical+Consciousness&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjS5s7Ip9DYAhVUFMAKHQFEBnYQuwUILDAA#v=onepage&q=restoration%20of%20African%20Historical%20Consciousness&f=false) “[t]he restoration of African Historical Consciousness” as the number one priority to develop Black Africa’s economic basis. This was for him both a historical and a political argument. He not only wanted to demonstrate the historical basis for the need to unite as African peoples but also to [claim](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=kcG5vJhnBVwC&pg=PT16&dq=restoration+of+African+Historical+Consciousness&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjS5s7Ip9DYAhVUFMAKHQFEBnYQuwUILDAA#v=onepage&q=historical%20consciousness%20is%20one%20of%20man%E2%80%99s%20chief%20means%20of%20survival&f=false) that “[c]ollective historical consciousness is one of man’s chief means of survival and a source of creation” and necessary to achieve political, economic and psychic autonomy. Fast-forwarding a bit, V.Y. Mudimbe has [made](https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/The_invention_of_Africa.html?id=-jwNAQAAMAAJ&redir_esc=y) almost exact claims to those made in the book about the relationship between forms of knowledge, material distribution and power production. There is also an **absence of African voices in the umbrella theoretical framework the book proposes to understand the broader structure of power in world politics.** In the book, what Cabral, Césaire, Du Bois and Fanon propose is ultimately “read through the concept of coloniality” (p. 47). The relation between the two is at first sight enlightening but it raises a number of questions: How do these form a whole from which “to affirm a collective subject that has been previously negated, denied or ignored but which can share truths about the nature of oppression?” (p. 53). **If decolonising strategies are an appropriate response to the problems of Eurocentrism in research and provide a more philosophically robust platform for thinking about global order, what is the “coloniality of power” adding to this already robust framework**? **Why do we need such a concept to “think differently about intervention”?** Alternatively, is the coloniality of power, as exposed by Quijano, Mignolo and Grosfoguel, the ultimate framework that elucidates that “[w]hen we think about statebuilding interventions as structured by and through a contemporary global colonial matrix of power […] it becomes relatively obvious why, as a project, it would not work in producing or contributing to the production of autonomous and coherent self-governing political entities” (p. 137)? If so, what are Cabral et al. adding to the concept of coloniality? Or, put otherwise, what are these anti-colonial thinkers offering that the concept of coloniality is not? Ultimately, Quijano, Mignolo and Grosfoguel very much premise their work on the need to recover such historical presence, political consciousness and material conditions in their work. So, while it is argued in the conclusion that the book has contributed to expand the coloniality of power in methodological, historiographical and epistemological ways, how is this so, specifically**? Finally, to come back to the initial point, if, again, the coloniality of power is the ultimate umbrella framework, isn’t this creating a hierarchy of voices in which some give us the big picture, others do the methodological work, while yet others can speak but only to tell us their experience of oppression? Does this not clash with the claim about the privileged insight of thinking with subjects from their histories, consciousness and experiences?** This last point becomes even more puzzling when in the section about standpoint feminism we find **no African women. If Third-World/Southern women provide the most distinctive viewpoint on systemic violence, and we need to be wary of essentialising women’s and, in general, all experiences** (p. 28, 52), **then why not draw from those writers directly**? Why are most of the **scholars this section draws on white Northerners (e.g. Dorothy Smith, Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding, Nancy Hartsock)?** Meera is trying to construct, almost chronologically, the main tenets of standpoint theory. **However, in so doing, she is missing important insights from African feminists and in fact, disregarding the reasons** Meera **herself is arguing for turning to standpoint feminism to think “with” rather than “for” “targets.”** People like [Amina Mama](https://www.jstor.org/stable/4066405?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents), [Pinkie Mekgwe](http://africaworldpressbooks.com/african-women-and-feminism-reflecting-on-the-politics-of-sisterhood-edited-by-oyeronke-oyewumi) and [Oyeronke Oyewumi](http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/9789401205641_011), for instance, argue that **African women experience distinctive circumstances and violence and that the ways of knowing and overturning such experience requires knowledge of African languages and cultur**e. We can take up Molara Ogundipe-Leslie’s [own question](https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=SfzFMvqCJ3IC&lpg=PP1&pg=PA27#v=onepage&q&f=false): “**what is the specific condition of the women in Africa?**” She argues that African women’s condition (which is to be studied with account of the particularities of women’s own class and origin in historical perspective) is defined by the endurance of colonial realities and the global socio-economic structures of oppression represented in what she calls “the six mountains on her back”: colonialism, tradition, poverty and ignorance, man, race and herself (due to her negative self-image). For Ogundipe-Leslie, the African feminist approach brings theory and action together to claim not just this distinctive experience and its understanding but also women as necessary subjects in society’s reconstruction. This can be seen as a blow to interventions in that the problems that they address require challenging the fundamental structures of society, from tradition and custom to scientific knowledge and capitalism.

## 2AC A2 Baudrillard

### Affect link

#### Impact turn the affect link- antiblack sentiment requires black joy and practices of living in the wake of racial violence.

**Brown 21** (: Keffrelyn D. Brown & Anthony L. Brown (2021) Antiblackness, Black Joy, and Embracing a Humanizing Critical Sociocultural Knowledge (HCSK) for Teaching: Lessons From Schooling in the Time of COVID-19, Multicultural Perspectives, 23:3, 155-160, DOI: 10.1080/15210960.2021.1982359 Keffrelyn D. Brown (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Madison) is the Suzanne B. and John L. Adams Endowed Professor of Education and Distinguished University Teaching Professor of Cultural Studies in Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Anthony Brown is a Professor of Curriculum & Instruction in Social Studies Education. He also is an affiliated faculty in the areas of cultural studies in education, the John Warfield Center of African and African American studies and the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies. He received his B.A and M.A. in political science from California State University-Long Beach and received his PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.)//GUCCISUSHI

If we consider schooling before the global pandemic the challenges that have plagued Black students particularly since the desegregation of public schooling in the 1970s remain (Love, 2019; Sizemore, 1978). They impact the everyday, material realities of being (Black) in a society historically stained and sustained by racism and white supremacy. And at the heart of these practices, one finds a b(l)inding antiblack sentiment. Antiblackness is an ethos and repertoire of recurring practices that negate Blackness and inflict both emotional, psychic, and physical violence on Black people as they move in spaces dominated by normative whiteness, especially schools (Grant et al., 2020). Given its pervasive legacy and unrelenting presence, antiblackness looms as a cloud, hovering over the everyday realities of being Black in the U.S. (Sharpe, 2016). This reality, however, is buffered by the recognition that in the long duree toward an existential Black emancipation and freedom (K. D. Brown, 2021b; Walcott, 2021), Black people have always, even under the harshest of societal conditions lived, loved, and experienced joy (Quashie, 2021). The task, for Black people and in this case, all of those, including non-Black people committed to Black education, is to imagine and enact a more expansive notion of Black humanity (J. Brown, 2021; Warren, 2021) that embraces Black joy, while disrupting and enlarging normative practices of living and schooling. Black joy is an affective feeling of pleasure and elation. It does not rely on what is happening in the world, but springs forth from an internal state less dependent on external conditions and is more an inheritance of living a deep, collective, soulful humanity. Yet to arrive at this place, we must first begin by acknowledging the antiblackness of traditional schooling and its tethering to matters of Black existence—how Black students exist in, relate to, and encounter varying qualities of normative schooling. In the section that follows, we present these as problems with: (1) being seen; When we speak of being seen we refer to the act of looking and recognition. To be seen means that one gives attention to another by looking at them. At a deeper level it also means that when looking at someone that person is recognized for who they are. Someone can look at something, see that thing, but not really comprehend or know what they see. The same is true for seeing people, a condition that Black Americans experience when moving through social spaces defined and framed by normative whiteness. In the book, Invisible Man, writer Ralph Ellison (2016) narrates the story of a Black man that slowly realizes he is moving through a White dominated world that fails to really see or recognize him. Black women in the U.S. have a long history of experiencing invisibility and nonrecognition (HarrisPerry, 2011). Whether their contributions, experiences, knowledges, or personhood, Black women struggle to be seen, heard, and taken seriously across all societal arenas. Mainstream K–12 curriculum historically facilitated Black invisibility and misrecognition. Historian Carter G. Woodson (2000 [1933]), the intellectual progenitor of Black History Month, centered his work on highlighting the missing and inaccurate histories of Black people in the U.S. and making this knowledge visible to Black people and the larger society. Black students, from preschool to advanced graduate studies, navigate the paradox of hyper/invisibility by both standing out and being ignored. This coterminous relationship is marked by a condition of not seeing that fails to recognize the full humanity and individual distinctiveness of Black people.

### Perm

#### Perm do both- Afrocentrism is key to rupturing the principles undergirding western simulacra.

**Stoller 02** (Paul Stoller, “Marketing afrocentricity: West African trade networks in North America ”, Etnográfica [Online], vol. 6 (1) | 2002, Online since 17 August 2016, connection on 02 April 2022. URL: http:// journals.openedition.org/etnografica/2857 ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/etnografica.2857> Paul Stoller is a professor of anthropology at West Chester University of Pennsylvania.)

//GUCCISUSHI

In this light the search for cultural meaning and personal meaningfulness in Afrocentrism is centered on, in Baudrillard’s language, the reduplication of a monolithic Africa that, in turn, reinforces communal principles in Africa America. The ideal Africa articulated in Afrocentric signs is one in which, to paraphrase Baudrillard, nostalgia is energized, in which ... “there is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality...” (Baudrillard 1983: 14). In Afrocentrism, African values, mores, and ideas, do not come from an Africa of the recent past, but have their origin in distant times. Molefi Asante proclaims that African-Americans are people of Ma’at (Asante 1990: 93-94). In the information age, these complex Afrocentric principles are transformed into signs – an ‘X’ on a baseball cap, a kente cloth shawl, a greeting card with “African” designs, linens with “African” motifs. From an Afrocentric vantage, these signs embody the communal principles of a proud Africa America; they lend a strong hand to African-Americans as they confront the profound difficulty of being a black person in a fundamentally racist society. By the same token, as these signs are commodified in a simulated system of signs, the reduplicatory power of the Afrocentric image overwhelms the referential power of the Afrocentric philosophical principle. “X” may become simply an “in” fashion rather than a symbol for slavery’s annihilation of Africa America’s connection to Africa. Kente may stand for a casual African-American take on Africanity rather than a symbol of Asante nobility. The ecstasy of the sign, to borrow again from Baudrillard, not only obscures the real and unreal, the simulated and the dissimulated, but also sparks economic engines which today run on the high octane fuel of simulation. Through the circulation of reduplicated signs in the media marketing Afrocentricity creates in North America a simulated Africa. There are “watered down” African designs that appeal – quite profitably – to increasingly widespread North American constituencies. There are festivals like Atlanta’s Marché Africain/African Market that attempt to recreate African markets in North American urban spaces. There are crews of Hausa, Malinke and Wolof traders, constructing their economic selves as “real” Africans. They follow the circuit of these festivals lending to them an “authentic” African presence. And then there are the African markets in Harlem. The 125th Street market, called the African market, was until October 1994 a simulation of an African market. The spatial organization and informal dynamics of the market replicated spatial organization and informal dynamics of markets in West Africa. On 125th street, the cultural crossroads of Africa America, Hausa, Songhay, Fulan, Malinke, and Wolof merchants, self-constructed as monolithic Africans, sold Africana of no distinct ethnic origin to appeal to the ideological popularity of a monolithic Afrocentric Africa. They sold “trademarked” goods to appeal to the more localized tastes. They burned African incense to evoke the Motherland. They addressed shoppers as “brother” or “sister” to appeal to a simulated African/African-American solidarity. They have continued these simulated practices at the Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Market at 116th and Lenox Avenue. Indeed, the Harlem markets direct a circulation of ecstatic signs in which difference is diluted to promote economic activity and profits. By marketing Afrocentricity at outdoor markets, at trade expositions, in mainstream retail stores, on catalogue pages or in the virtual markets found on the Internet a simulated Africa has emerged in North America. By understanding the importance of the simulation in modern times, West African merchants, who like their forebears, are known for their economic adaptability, have marketed Afrocentricity and enhanced profoundly the profitability of their enterprises in North America. They are, in fact, dynamic local-level contributors to the global economy, who implicitly understand the power and ecstasy of the sign. Sitting in his booth at the Malcolm Shabazz Harlem Market, Issifi Mayaki often burns Meccan incense. One day I asked him why he burned it. “I like it,” he said. “It is also good for business. It reminds my clients that I’m an African. I think they like that. And things that remind the African-Americans about Africa is good for business.”9 Issifi’s practice of contexualizing himself – in economic settings like the market or trade shows – is a central adaptive theme in his capacity to market Afrocentricity. Capitalizing upon his Africanity and the fact that he lives in Harlem, the cultural epicenter of Africa America, he and his compatriots have constructed long -distance trade networks throughout North America to facilitate the sale of their goods at African-American festivals. Like the Harlem markets on 125th Street and 116th street and Lenox Avenue, these festivals are, in fact, simulations of West African markets. Like all simulations in the age of commodified signs, these African examples in the New World have made America a sweet land of opportunity that each year attracts thousands of new West African immigrants to its shores.

### Link turn

#### L/T- the aff operates as a decolonization of normative semiotics, that ruptures the western social coding of language, ethically transforming symbols.

**Mclean 21** ( Joshua Mclean “Investigating Transformation and Decolonization at an institutional galley in the western cape”. <http://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/123979>. Joshua Mclean received his master degrees in visual arts from Stellenbosch University)//GUCCISUSHI

As many social geographers have noted in the redefinition of the term landscape, we influence our environment to reflect our cultural practices. Tom Hall cited in (Stroud & Jegels,) posits that space, no longer simply an area to be travelled across, “is that through which, and with which, lives take shape, and that biographies of place and life are intimately interwoven. (Hall in Stroud and Jegels: 2). Berger and Luckman state that “cultural groups transform the natural environment into landscapes using different symbols that bestow different meanings on the same physical objects or conditions. These symbols and meanings are sociocultural phenomena; they are social constructions (Berger & Luckmann cited in Greider & Garkovich 1994) Ferdinand de Saussure proclaimed, “A science that studies the life of signs within society is possible…. I shall call it semiology (from Greek semeion, ’sign’)” (de Saussure cited in Van Leeuwen 2004). Van Leeuwen goes on to note that, “Social semiotics is not ‘pure’ theory, not a self-contained field. It only comes into its own when it is applied to specific instances and specific problems, and it always requires immersing oneself not just in semiotic concepts and methods as such but also in some other field” (Van Leeuwen 2004). Abrahamson cites Hopkins, providing a further definition of semiotics; “Semiotics, the study of sign and sign systems is an analytical tool of critical theory used to interpret cultural creations” (Hopkins in Abrahamson 1999: 2). Socio-semiotics becomes effective when applied to a specific location or space, or context. Without said context, the study of the symbol is reduced to fixed meaning, an objective discourse that should be readily avoided as previously noted (Van Leeuwen, 2004). The context is what provides each symbol with its meaning. “Whenever discourses travel across the globe, what is carried with them is their shape, but their value, meaning, or function do not travel along. Value, meaning, and function are a matter of uptake, they have to be granted by others based on the prevailing orders of indexicality, and increasingly also because of their potential ‘market value’ as a cultural commodity” (Blommaert cited Jaworksi and Thurlow 2010: 17)// The schools of humanist Geography, semiotics and the work of Henri Lefebvre describe space outside of its common association towards theoretical mathematics and commodification. The humanistic turnaround of the theory of space provides a critical framework to research questions concerning the ideological orientation of space. Henri Lefebvre’s theory of space provides a unified theory towards decoding the phenomenon of meaning-making through space and its effect on producing the social agents in spaces themselves. Lefebvre, Harvey and Sorlin all emphasize the social construction of space. These “markers of territory” (Sorlin in Jaworksi and Thurlow 2010) represent contestation between spatial actors in the social production of space. Lefebvre takes this one step further however and posits that space is hegemonically controlled by a globalised order of capitalism. Lefebvre relies on Marx’s theory of space and posits that we turn from product to production within space we will be in the process of freeing ourselves from a hegemonic control over space. He goes on to posit how the control over spaces are maintained by the illusion of transparency and opacity. He also posits how the space is socially produced and reproduced through the spatial triad. A hegemonic globalised space concludes that within it, there exists no room for other ideas of space. Space is constructed socially now more than ever, with the advent of technological utopias and our drifting relationship with physical space; most notably characterized by an increasing global disregard for the physical presence and the effects our actions have on our natural space. Lefebvre posits that when we reconnect and produce new spatial coding in physical we subvert the global hegemonic order which functions largely through the coding of global capitalism. While the philosophical consideration of Lefebvres’ theory of space can be far-reaching, and beyond the scope of this paper, his description of hegemonic control of spaces is a useful insight into the production of space.

### Defense

#### Uniqueness that meaning is dissuasive is our solvency mech – we accelerate black submarine syntaxes to disrupt white hyperreality

Gillespie 17 (John Gillespie, Occupy Towson leader & Co-Founder of the Organized Network of Student Resistence, “On the Prospect of Weaponized Death,” *Propter Nos*, Volume 2: Issue 1, Insurgency / Exhaustion, Fall 2017)

**Black life is lived in a white hyper-reality**. By this I mean, black life is lived inside a constituted white fiction which concretizes itself as fact. Black life is a life lived in non-existence; blackness “exists” as a symbol of death that is, but is not. Blackness “exists” only insofar as White Being structures it onto a map of anti-black violence.4 Achille Mbembe corroborates this in his Critique of Black Reason, stating: Racism consists, most of all, in substituting what is with something else, with another reality. It has the power to **distort the real** and to **fix affect**, but it is also a form of psychic derangement, the mechanism through which the repressed suddenly surfaces. When the racist sees the Black person, he does not see that the Black person is not there, does not exist, and is just a sign of a pathological fixation on the absence of a relationship. We must therefore consider race as being both beside and beyond being.5 The reality that replaces that which *is* is a **white hyper-reality**. This white hyperrealism **fixes blackness** as “a sign of a pathological fixation.” White hyper-realism is the paradigm whereby consciousness is unable to distinguish between the fictions created by White Being and the Real. It is this fact that permits black death to be subsumed in simulations by each and every (analytic) encounter with Whiteness and the World. Questions like, “Can the Black suffer?” and “Is it capable for the Black to be wronged?” arise due to the inability to access a grammar of suffering to communicate a harm that has never ended, a harm that can never end without ending the World itself. It is for this reason that viral videos of black death, more than opening the possibility for liberal notions of justice, seem to suture the relationship between the mythical and the real that perpetuates itself through the reification of black trauma. Black death, more than deconstructing the ontics of the Human, seems to extend its hyper-reality. Black death makes it harder to distinguish white fictions from any sense of real harm being done to human flesh. The Black is meant to experience its death over and over and over again; and the World itself recycles all its fictions-as-the-Real. Put differently, the White World subjects the Black to perpetual, gratuitous violence, and then uses that violence as evidence to further suggest that the Black is not Human. For how can a Human endure such a thing? The experience of gratuitous violence secures the semiotics of the white hyper-reality. White Disneyland stays intact. Blackness exists at the nexus of fact and fiction, possibility and (non)value, inclusion and exclusion. Blackness is trapped even in saying it’s trapped because the “trapped-ness” of the Black extends to locations where the diction and syntax of White “words don’t go.”6 The Black does not have the grammar to speak against where and how it is trapped since Blackness can only articulate itself through the semiotics of Whiteness. That White Being continues to center black death as the matrix of possibility for its hyper-realist structure indexes the promise of death insofar that White Being is promised futurity. The Black was rendered fungible through the conjunction of the political and the libidinal economy of the anti-Black world. Blackness gave birth to the commodity and the economy of signification that structures the cartography of the Human’s coordinates. This could be said to be a still birth, insofar as the nature of Black life in a white hyper-reality is conducted on a plane that guarantees natal alienation, social, and ontological death. The Black body lives to die; the specter of death shadows it everywhere. What matters crucially here, in our invocation of the hyper-real, is the importance of the Symbolic. The Symbolic is what “structures the libidinal economy of civil society.”7 The Symbolic here is understood as “the representational process” that structures “the **curriculum and order of knowledge**” and/or “the descriptive statement of the human” in our contemporary World.8 And in this World, white symbolism is everywhere. In fact, in an **anti-Black paradigm**, white symbolism is everything. White symbolism **over-determines** itself as the Symbolic itself, and denounces anything that challenges its **genre-specific mode of knowing**, seeing and understanding the World. In other words, white symbolism holds a **monopoly on the Symbolic** in ways that operate “lawlikely so within the terms of their/our order-specific modes of adaptive cognition-for, truth-for.”9 There is no outside to whiteness, to white semiotics, to white constructs of value and reality, to white structuring of libidinal value. And for this reason, like Wilderson, “[I] am more interested in the symbolic value of Whiteness (and the absence of Blackness's value)…”10 in a world of white hyper-reality. If Blackness is lived in the hyper-real, then there is a hyper-intensification—an overrepresentation—of semiology that dictates the coercive violence of the Black’s (non)existence. **The semiotics of White Being** is the factitious fiction that **simulates the entire World**. White Being and black death are part of a globally blood-soaked symbolic exchange that has extended itself over the terrain of the World to such an extent that there can be **no distinguishing** between the **Real and the Non-Real**. White Being is that Being for whom ontological capacity exists, whereas the Black is the antithesis to Being, that fleshly matter whose essence is incapacity. 11 If “language is the house of being,”12 as Heidegger puts it, then Blackness is trapped at the very center of White Being. Dionne Brand puts it concisely when she writes, “We are people without a translator. The language we use already contains our demise and any response contains that demise as each response emboldens and strengthens the language it hopes to undermine.”13 This abject positionality was codified through a violence so epochal that Modernity itself can be said to have been inaugurated through it. However, at the same time, “the center is, paradoxically, within the structure and outside it.”14 That black death and anti-blackness exist in this liminal positionality posits the impossible possibility of a rupture in the moment. For that which is inside the structure, only through being outside the structure, enables the possibility of both sedimentation and disorientation. Jacques Derrida writes, “The function of this center was not only to orient; balance, and organize the structure— one cannot in fact conceive of an unorganized structure—but above all to make sure that the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the freeplay of the structure.”15 If black death centers the structure, then it is somewhere in the perfection and expansion of this antagonism (the inside-outside antagonism) that the cartography of gratuitous anti-Black violence is laid out. What might happen when what **orients the structure** becomes **insurgent**, **attacking the structure** through that **which centers its very Being**? What might happen if black death became weaponized in order to further limit the freeplay of the structure—the expansion of White Being? Afro-Pessimist thinkers, in favor of a diagnostic analysis, tend to veer away from the tradition of critical social theory that prescribes solutions to the analysis in the conclusion of their work. However, one finds throughout Afro-Pessimist literature a battle cry, a prophetic vision, a pulsing pessimist hope for the “end of the World.” For if Whiteness **ended Worlds** through its **colonial simulations** and violent transmutations of Africans into Blacks, then **the only way out is an end to the White World**. White Being is irredeemable, and so is the World it fosters. Sexton says, “In a world structured by the twin axioms of white superiority and black inferiority, of white existence and black non-existence, a world structured by a negative categorical imperative—‘above all, don’t be black’—in this world, the zero degree of transformation is the turn toward blackness, a turn toward the shame, as it were, that ‘resides in the idea that 'I am thought of as less than human.’”16 It’s only through black vigilance that the simulacra of White Being is made clear and the spectacle ofgratuitous freedom is made visible. It is somewhere in this structural antagonism, that on the one hand conditions the possibility of the World, and on the other hand conditions the possibility of its end, its limitations, its disorientation, that we found the language to say the unsayable and do the undoable. As Frank Wilderson reminds us: Black Studies in general and Afro-Pessimism in particular present non-Black academics with more than an intellectual problem. It presents them with an existential problem. The reason is because there’s an aspect of Afro-Pessimism that we don’t talk about…which is that were you to follow it to its logical conclusion, it’s calling for the end of the world…it wants the death of everyone else in the same way that we experience our death , so that one could not liberate Blacks through AfroPessimism and be who one was on the other side of that. That’s the unspoken dynamic of Afro-Pessimism.17 If we are engaging in a war in which the symbolic value, the semiotics of this World itself, positions “the Black as death personified, the White as personification of diversity, of life itself,”18 then resistance needs an “unspoken dynamic.” It needs a space where “words don’t go”—a form of guerrilla linguistics, a submarined syntax, an undercommon communication. Perhaps, here, where the conversation is blackened, and the theory is phobogenic, and the journal is Propter Nos, we can allow ourselves to excavate insurgent dictions still lost in the lingua franca of White Being, but full of the specter of black terror, black disorientation.

#### Dissuasion is not absolute – discursive politics are possible despite lack of one-to-one correspondence between signifier and signified

Mattson 12, professor of German politics and culture, Rhodes College, (Michelle, “Rebels Without Causes: Contemporary German Authors Not in Search of Meaning,” Monatshefte Volume 104, Number 2, Summer 2012)

While I find Liesegang’s argument plausible, **there are** other explanations **for this apparent disinterest and disengagement outside of Baudrillard’s theory of the postmodern condition** or a desire to neutralize the German past, although it does have to do with socio-economic status. One of the things that many of us familiar with German culture admire about it is the state’s commitment to creating livable conditions for virtually all of its citizens. The social welfare network in Germany (indeed in Western Europe more broadly) may be under siege in the current economic climate, but from health care to housing the state has managed to offer its citizens a level of basic support that Americans cannot really fathom and—as the most recent health care debate demonstrated—in large numbers appear not to condone. Thus, the glaring need for individual citizens to offer their services to their fellow human beings has remained somewhat underdeveloped in Germany (Wiedermann and Held) and has led to a set of expectations that the government will address the society’s most basic needs. Recent studies of volunteerism in Germany **indicate that this is changing and that a substantive portion of the population** **now gives of its time to myriad social organizations** in ways that would seem entirely futile to the characters in the texts analyzed here.13 Furthermore, sociological and social psychological studies indicate that people who volunteer do feel a greater connection to other people and a greater level of personal satisfaction than those who do not.14 The findings of this research, as mentioned above, [End Page 258] have led me to question whether the literature analyzed in this article reflects the perspective of a highly specific section of German society far more than it offers a broader portrait of central European society today, namely that of a disaffected, disengaged intellectual class that no longer sees itself as called upon to participate in the improvement of society now that the great German political problem of the 20th century appears to have been “solved.” This may have something to do with the specific situation of Germany in the first decades after the fall of the Wall but it may also be a result of the socio-economic structures of the Federal Republic. I do not wish to present here an overly simplified and naïve argument that Hermann’s characters should go out and get involved in volunteer organizations and that doing so would make the pervasive sense of sadness and ennui vanish. Nor would it necessarily reorient the consumerist attitudes or patterns of consumption of Naters’ group of friends or Regener’s Herr Lehmann into more socially productive outlets. **However, I do question the individual, social, and even aesthetic value of** wallowing in indecision **and isolation and presenting them as representative of a crisis in human subjectivity**. Steven Best describes the world according to Baudrillard **as “an abstract non-society devoid of cohesive relations**, social meaning, and collective representation” (Best 51). The characters of Mau Mau, Herr Lehmann, and the stories of Sommerhaus, später and Nichts als Gespenster inhabit the same or at least a similar world to Baudrillard’s. Thus Baudrillard’s work offers an effective tool in understanding the implications of the world these literary characters inhabit and their creators’ perspective on contemporary German society. Their world, however**, is itself a human projection**, a choice**. It is an** interpretation of reality **that allows individuals to become resigned and passive.** Furthermore, it is a perspective possible only from a position of relative affluence. I shall not venture to judge whether Baudrillard’s diagnosis of postmodern society is accurate, although it appears that many of Germany’s current writers agree with him or were influenced by postmodern theories of late 20th-century consumerist societies. I can, however**, say in conclusion that it** is not helpful **or productive on either an individual or social level in imagining ways of living in today’s world**. As Steven Best points out: Baudrillard’s radical rejection **of referentiality is premised upon a one-dimensional,** No-Exit world of self-referring simulacra. But, however, reified and self-referential postmodern semiotics is, signs do not simply move in their own signifying orbit. **They are** historically produced **and circulated and while they may not translucently refer to some originating world, they none the less can** be socio-historically contextualized, **interpreted, and critiqued.**(57) In other words, **human beings generate the simulacra in specific historical contexts that are** subject to interpretation and challenge. **Regardless of** how pervasively the media spin our reality**,** real people suffer **and**—occasionally [End Page 259] prosper—**because of political decisions made at the local, national, and international level**. **Media images may overpower us, but they** shouldn’t make us lose sight of the real ramifications of political and economic development. Many critics have suggested that Baudrillard’s chief accomplishment was to serve as an agent provocateur. In an interview with Mike Gane, Baudrillard himself saw his method of reflection as “provocative, reversible, [ . . . ] a way of raising things to the ‘N’th power [ . . . ] It’s a bit like a theory-fiction” (Poster 331). One could argue that this is precisely the function of such novels and short stories as the ones examined here: to provoke us. But to what end? Naters, Regener, and Hermann all write very readable literature, and they challenge us to understand the world of the insipid, self-centered, and myopic characters that they have created. It would indeed be a disservice to the authors to imply that they do not view their own characters with critical distance. Thus, I am not suggesting that they believe their readers should emulate the characters they have created. They have not, however, successfully demonstrated either why we should care about them or—more importantly—what we can learn from them.

#### 11. Double Turn – rooting out residual links is a will to transparency, holding subjects responsible – aff on presumption

Baudrillard 93 (Jean, Prof of Phil at EGS, The Transparency of Evil, p 165//shree)

We live in a culture which strives to return to each of us full responsibility for his own life. The moral responsibility inherited from the Christian tradition has thus been augmented, with the help of the whole modern apparatus of information and communication, by the requirement that everyone should be answerable for every aspect of their lives. What this amounts to is an expulsion of the other, who has indeed become perfectly useless in the context of a programmed management of life, a regimen where everything conspires to buttress the autarky of the individual cell. This, however is an absurdity: no one can be expected to be entirely responsible for his own life. This Christian-cum-modern idea is futile and arrogant. It is also a utopian notion with no justification whatsoever. It requires that the individual should transform himself into a slave to his identity, his will, his responsibilities, his desire; and that he should start exercising control of all his own circuitry, as well as all the worldwide circuits that happen to cross paths within his genes, nerves or thought: a truly unheard of servitude.

#### 12. White Transparency Good – blacks should dip in and out io visibility to remain indecipherable – but white populists must remain mappable – counter-gazing slavemasters key to anticipate them – total relativism obscures accountability

Grande 4 (Sandy, Associate Professor of Education at Connecticut College, *Red Pedagogy*, p 114//shree)

In a postmodern world where "everything is everything: critical scholars critique the practice of framing questions or "difference” exclusively in terms of the cultural and discursive (e.g. language, signs, tropes), cutting them off from the structural causes and material relations that create “difference.” They argue that reducing political struggles to discursive arguments not only displaces explanation—knowledge for social change—with resignification but also authorizes a retreat from social and political transformation. According to McLaren (1998. 242) such postmodern tactics promote "an ontological agnosticism" that not only relinquishes the primacy of social transformation but also encourages a kind of "epistemological relativism" that calls for the tolerance of a wide range of meanings without advocating any single one of them. Therefore, critical scholars contest the overblurring of boundaries, the reduction of difference to matters of discourse, and the emphasis on local over grand narratives, contending that such "tactics" serve to obfuscate and. in effect, deny the existing hierarchies of power.

### Fungibility

#### The impact is data fungibility – technocratically securitizing into oblivion

Morrison 19. Romi Ron Morrison is an interdisciplinary designer, artist, and researcher working across the fields of critical data studies, black feminist praxis, and cultural geography. Focusing on boundaries, social infrastructure, and community technology, their practice investigates cartographies of ancestral intelligence, unassimilable data, algorithmic violence, and blackness. They have had work exhibited at the American Institute of Architects New York, UN World Urban Forum, Tribeca Film Festival, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Joan Mitchell Center, Recess Assembly Gallery, and Project Row Houses. They are currently an Annenberg PhD Fellow in the School of Cinematic Arts at USC in Los Angeles (“Gaps between the digits On the fleshy unknowns of the HUMAN” ,John Benjamins Publishing (<https://benjamins.com/catalog/idj.25.1.05mor/fulltext/idj.25.1.05mor.pdf>) neil

Artificially intelligent systems (AI) are increasingly becoming the ubiquitous, unseen arbiters of our social, civic and familial lives. Ever increasing computational power, combined with almost limitless data, has led to a turning point in the way artificial intelligence assists, judges, and cares for humans. In the wake of such power we must ask ourselves what it is that we are making inherently unknowable as the world becomes more predictable, managed, and discrete. Building on the work of black feminists Sylvia Wynter and Hortense Spillers, I perform a reading of the “flesh”. I aim to hint towards a different field of relations and a knowledge politic premised on unknowability and the radical potential of the subjugated to foster new imaginaries of the human fluid enough to weather instability. This piece troubles the boundaries inscribed between things. Settled in the flesh of blackness, we are reminded of the ways that blackness floods the landscape of productive reason while holding outlier ways of being beyond Western Man. This paper seeks to return to the pulse found within the flesh as a critical site for thinking through alternate ways of being, within the messiness, the unstable, the precarious; finding life born of transition, the pulse within discord. I am wondering what queering the relation between the human and other forms of life, queering the relation between life and non-life, or undoing the sovereignty of relation altogether, will mean for the Black body. My inclination is to ask not what form can do to enable or open itself to queerness, but to ask whether form will let Blackness live. —Andre Carrington, “Mike Brown’s Body: New Materialism and Black Form” The history of blackness is a testament that objects can and do resist. —Fred Moten, “In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition” 1. Introduction Consider two very different and divergent representations of an iconic feature of the American landscape, the Mississippi River. The first representation was created by J.T. Lloyd in 1862 and maps the contours of the Mississippi River as it stretches from St. Louis until it spills out into the Gulf of Mexico. Created with painstaking acuity, Lloyd claims to detail each “sugar plantation, cotton plantation, city, town, landing, sand bar, island, bluff, bayou, cut-off, steamboat channel, mileage, fortification 56 This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 license. Information Design Journal 25(1), 56–70 © 2019 John Benjamins Publishing Company doi: 10.1075/idj.25.1.05mor and railroad line” along the river (see Figure 1). Llyod was so confident in his ability to accurately render each figure, that he includes a guarantee to any potential customer, printed in all caps and italicized stating “WARRANTED CORRECT, OR THE MONEY REFUNDED” (see Figure 1). Lloyd’s map is one that is meant to convey trust to its viewer. He promises a way to literally navigate that which is immense, powerful, and overwhelming. Herein lies the power of the map as a representational image. By rendering the Mississippi River as a winding blue line, it becomes knowable. This blue line has become a commonplace icon for waterways. It assumes a sense of linearity, directionality, and discretion assuaging the anxiety of a wild raging river, a force to contend with. Containing the river in this way inherently shifts what we understand the river to be. No longer a subject that exerts effect; flooding, spreading sediment, changing direction, the river is rendered as an object upon which people extract and enact force, leveeing its edges, expanding and condensing its channels, once bespoke with reverence now succumb to the folly of control. This representation of knowability aestheticized through the form of the single linear line is a necessary precursor for the coming management and taming of the river. Geographer Clyde Woods draws our attention to the political economy of the river and the parallels between its taming and the taming of surplus labor. He writes: Yet the promise of swift destruction posed by annual flooding required an extremely high level of coordination, study, experimentation, and infrastructure development … The desire of planters to control both the African American majorities and the annual ravages of the region’s rivers led to the creation of extremely high levels of class and ethnic solidarity between the planters and working-class Whites. The intersection of these trends marked the birth of the Delta as the superplantation region of the South (Woods 2017: 28). In this reading, the map is never simply an aesthetic abstraction of the world into two dimensional form. Instead it is always imbricated in politics, power, differentiation, industry, and territoriality. The second representation is one of unbridled tangles, and recursively looped waterways that flow, spread, and interrupt each other, a cacophony of effusion, a watery din. It was created in 1944 by Harold Fisk who was employed by the Army Corp of Engineers. This map charts all of the variant alluvial paths that the Mississippi River has taken over time. Rather than treating the Mississippi as a body that can be managed and relegated to a transit corridor, this map seeks to understand the evolution of the river and its many iterations over time (see Figure 2). Sourced primarily from aerial photography, Fisk’s map is robust, spilling cascading colors over a muted background; it demands attention drawing the eye to the circuitous routes of flow. The river transgresses its present path of flow signified by negative space, and works as an agential body replenishing the land with silt and sediment. Fisk’s map is not one of delimiting a living body as knowable. Instead, it presents the frictions inherent within the logics of the map, highlighting the spatial temporal problem of fixing. It is imbued with a liveliness that undermines the hubris of management and requires reverence. By visualizing the river in this way Fisk creates a sense of tension between that which we have come to know as discrete and linear, the blue line, and the unleveed bends of alluvial shift that exist in the excesses of interdiction. His interpretation of the data into a visual form, while accurate, deemphasizes the linearity of the river, literally showing the present path as negative space. These decisions regarding the aesthetics of representation open up the map as a meaningful form to contend with change and flux, rather than inhering within fixed relationships of time and space. It is also an invitation to linger in the space between positivist notions of empiricism and interpretive visualization. 57 Romi Ron Morrison • Gaps between the digits idj 25(1), 2019, 56–70 Figure 1. Lloyd's map of the Lower Mississippi River from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico. Lloyd, J.T.,1862. 58 Romi Ron Morrison • Gaps between the digits idj 25(1), 2019, 56–70 Figure 2. The Alluvial Valley of the Lower Mississippi River, Harold Fisk, 1944. 59 Romi Ron Morrison • Gaps between the digits idj 25(1), 2019, 56–70 Cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove would say that these maps are simultaneously “true representations and virtual spaces.”1 This is not meant to deny the truth of data but to situate that truth as particular, subjective, and limited, rather than reproducible, universal, and omnipotent. Such discussions regarding truth and techniques of representation, however, are not new but perennial with each emerging technology. The map as a visual representation of truth through data streams is no different, limited in its ability to capture reality, in turn producing that which it seeks to describe. On this point, artist and cartographer Laura Kurgan reminds us: their basis in remotely sensed data helps us understand what has become of truth in the era of the digital data stream: it is intimately related to resolution, to measurability, to the construction of a reliable algorithm for translating between representation and reality. The fact that they are virtual images does not make them any less true, but it should make us pause and consider what we mean today by truth” (Kurgan 2013: 12–13). This paper begins in that pause. This work contributes to scholarship that theorizes the mutual constitution of race, gender, and sexual difference by examining the ways that quantitative methods of analysis, undergirded by large scale data collection, codify difference as singular, comparative, and managed. Such approaches can only profess relevance in the subsequent effects of single issue oppression, bearing little promise for those lives not lived singularly.2 In particular, I analyze The HUMAN Project, a big data research project run by NYU’s Institute for the Interdisciplinary Study of Decision Making and the Kavli Foundation and which aims to “map the human condition”. I place this project within a larger critical conversation highlighting the ways that empirical methods claim universality while reifying the differentiation upon which heteropatriarchal white supremacy depends. With a strong emphasis on approaching questions of information design through critical humanities scholarship, I hope to make a tear in the axiomatic power that empirical data purports and to trouble the ways in which design upholds such power through representational aesthetics of cleanliness, modernity, and knowability. I chart the ways that data constructs and fixes blackness to the body, and how such representations typify particular social imaginaries that justify and perpetuate violence on those same bodies. Moreover, I question the dependency of using tools of analysis, metrics, and quantification to redress such violence, asking what the limits to the visions of justice that they suggest are. Towards that end, I offer a reading of the flesh as a critical site that troubles actuarial instruments by engaging with the violence of racialization and the excesses of knowability. Or put far more eloquently by warrior-poet theorist Audre Lorde, “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (Lorde 2015: 2). This requires speculation to operate in the excesses of our current tools, past their delimiting logics. Differentiated from the body (as individual and agential), I argue for the flesh as an alluvium site of relationships that refuse to be parsed, neither self-contained or singular, but intertwined, affective, irresolute, and extimate in their connections.3 2. As HUMAN as an acronym 10,000 New Yorkers, 4,000 households, 20 years, 1 research platform; solving the puzzle to a better, longer life. These are the claims that sit at the center of The HUMAN Project (Figure 3). Buttressed between the promise of big data and large scale beneficence, The Human Project is described by its team of creators as “a pioneering research platform that aims to solve the toughest 60 Romi Ron Morrison • Gaps between the digits idj 25(1), 2019, 56–70 problems we face today.” The description continues, “The breakthroughs will come from seeing how the millions of invisible connections between our bodies, behavior, and the environment shape us and determine our future. Together, we can reveal the big picture to creating a better world.” (“The Human Project”, 2017). In this paper, I query whose bodies count and whose behaviors matter. In short, how can we come to shape a future that does not merely replicate the attendant violence of the past? The contours of The HUMAN Project resemble a growing body of research by which big data is crucial for shaping human behavior, making sense of complexity, and making a better (read as more technocratically controlled, predictable, and managed) world. Yet, it is the critical site of the human subject and its accordant representations within which I intervene. In this context human becomes “HUMAN”, an acronym for the project meaning, Human Understanding through Measurement and Analytics. You are no longer a body. Instead “you” is simply the moving amalgam of discrete legible indicators counted and used to trade in authority, claiming the ability to “quantify the human condition”. With an overemphasis on “everything” being the scope and scale of data collection, the HUMAN project is opaque in its detailing of the data types it seeks to retain, though it hints at a few possibilities. When asked about the types of data collected, The Human Project states: This includes financial, educational, criminal justice and health records as well as information about their daily habits such as what they eat, where they go, when they sleep, how they exercise, and their patterns of communication and interaction (Frequently Asked Questions 2017). Missing from this response is any clear indication into the sources or metrics for such data. The use of vague phrases such as “patterns of communication” obscures vital questions as to what is being collected. Are participants meant to divulge the content of personal Figure 3. The HUMAN Project Homepage, https://www. thehumanproject.org/. 61 Romi Ron Morrison • Gaps between the digits idj 25(1), 2019, 56–70 conversations between family members and loved ones, or just the frequency and locations of communications exchanged? While the HUMAN project may be the most ambitious of its kind, it is certainly not alone in its desire to organize the body into taxonomies of social definition and behavioral understanding. In their anthology “Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture”, Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla detail the ways the body is discursively formed through technique and method. They state: Bodies do not exist in terms of an a priori essence, anterior to techniques and practices that are imposed upon them … In short, bodies are points on which and from which the disciplinary power of scientific investigations and their popular appropriations is exercised. Knowable only though culture and history, they are not in any simple way natural or ever free from relations of power (Terry & Urla 1999: 3). Echoing Bazin’s attention to the eye of the photographer in framing the “objectivity” of the camera, Terry and Urla remind us that the body itself is not a universally self-evident figure, but it is rather always discursively framed through the eye of particular investigatory techniques and culturally lodged research questions. Their work helps to situate the body of the HUMAN project as a compilation of particular choices, assumptions, and protocols inherent in both the researchers, their instruments of measure, and the institutions sponsoring the project. Through the machinations of the HUMAN project, the body becomes known through the data streams that it generates, limited by what can be counted and collected. By reading Bazin, Terry, and Urla, together the body of the HUMAN project is defined by the quantitative techniques and modes of analysis that the project’s researchers undertake, and implicates them in the constructive process of giving that body form. I situate the HUMAN project as a provocation to consider the limits of what can be made knowable through dependencies on quantifiable data. Entering through the project’s namesake, I strip away attenuated layers searching for the body of a human situated in the elsewhere of another time. Centering the flesh of blackness, I outline the ways that black construction is always positioned as the outlier upon which significations of the human are dependent. This ontological paradox opens the possibilities for the flesh to meaningfully engage with unknowability. Contrasted with uncertainty, the following sections trace the contradictions, productive tensions, and connections between blackness, flesh, and data sets needed to emerge differently situated upon fertile soil. 3. Fixing logics: Building the set How might we go about thinking and living enfleshment otherwise so as to usher in different genres of the human and how might we accomplish this task through the critical project of black studies? (Weheliye 2014: 3). This is the question that sits at the core of Weheliye’s work, “Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biolpolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human”, and drives the depth and nuance of his engagements with theorizing the human. Weheliye points to the critical ways in which the human of modern western nations (read classically as Man) has always been imbued in the ongoing violence of individuation yielding a highly particularized and operationalized human. Pointing to the central role of racialization in shaping such particularities, Weheliye writes: Overall I construe race, racialization, and racial identities as ongoing sets of political relations that 62 Romi Ron Morrison • Gaps between the digits idj 25(1), 2019, 56–70 require, through constant perpetuation via institutions, discourses, practices, desires, infrastructures, languages, technologies, sciences, economics, dreams, and cultural artifacts, the baring of nonwhite subjects from the category of the human as it is performed in the modern west” (Weheliye 2014: 3). In this quote Weheliye complements Terry and Urla’s work on the body by arguing that “human” has never been a neutral or axiomatic category, but instead it has always been ensnared by, and articulated through the powers of discourse. Building on the work of black feminists Sylvia Wynter and Hortense Spillers, Weheliye is deliberate in his use of racialization noting that the racializing and fixing of blackness as aberrant and non-normative is never free from its correlative gender and sexual constitutions. Put simply, it is through the process of racialization that blackness, gender, and sexuality are contained within a field of relational deviance, not able to be parsed or neatly separated, i.e. racialized gender. Racialization and its corresponding depravation of gender and sexuality discipline humanity into categories of full humans, not-quite-humans, and non-humans. Understanding the central necessity of racialization to birth the containment of the human as cis white straight able bodied and male, black feminist studies become uniquely positioned as a “substantial critique of western modernity and a sizeable archive of social, political, and cultural alternatives” (Weheliye 2014: 3). For Weheliye, black studies operate as a particular mode of knowledge production, carefully distinguishing between what Spillers calls “real objects” and “objects of knowledge” (Spillers 1994: 65). According to Spillers, the crisis within black studies lies in its misreading as theorizing from the radical particularity of blackness. Spillers works to disambiguate the real object, that which is naturalized, from objects of knowledge, those which are formed through the complex interplay among institutions, politics, violence, discourses, practices, and economics. In this postulation, black people are not the real objects of black studies, rather blackness as the outcome of racialization becomes an object of knowledge. To misread black people as the real objects of black studies naturalizes race as a modality of either biology or culture, and elides the false universalism of Man by which black people become nonhuman. If the human becomes an object of knowledge within black studies, it can no longer be relegated to the particularism of black bodies. Instead, this positions race as a general theory and critique of western modernity and its divisive enshrining of humanity, by which to discipline others is seen as unfit. Put simply by Weheliye when evoking Wynter, “Our issue is not the issue of race, our issue is the issue of the genre of Man. It is the issue of Man that causes all the -isms.” (Wynter 1999). Consistent with the larger work of black feminist epistemology, Wynter and Spillers understand that the foundation for the critique of Man cannot be isolated into a single form of subjection (black or female), but must point to complex interlocking oppressions that uphold the problematic equating of Man to humanity. Making clear the centrality of their arguments to his insistence on black studies, Weheliye writes: For Wynter, a feminism that does not aspire to create a different code for what it means to be human merely sketches a different map of Man’s territorializing assemblages; however in order to abolish these assemblages feminism’s insurrection must sabotage its own prescribed role in the empirical articulation of its representations in effect by coming out of the closet, moving out of our assigned categories (Weheliye 2014: 27). This passage calls for a reformulation of the category of human. For Wynter, however, it is not enough to carve out a new space within the category of Man, and 63 Romi Ron Morrison • Gaps between the digits idj 25(1), 2019, 56–70 h digital rights, legal recourse, and regulation. Yet, despite such concerns and gaps in governing protocol, the deployment of such technical applications are growing in both their ubiquity and authority as adjudicating bodies over the quality of lives lived and the authoring of space (AI Now Institute 2018). Understandably so, this asymmetry has sparked outcry and coordinated pushes for legal protection and regulation. These responses are essential first steps in curtailing the power of algorithms and the increasingly concentrated corporate entities that own their intellectual property. However, I want to turn my attention to the longue durée of considering how such applications embodied by the HUMAN project work to actively define and enclose particular understandings of the human entrenched in social antagonisms of race, gender, and sexuality. To give credence to the magnitude of its claims to quantify the human condition as a whole, measurability becomes the single most important factor of being human according to The HUMAN Project. Because quantifiable data collection is the primary methodology used by the project, it is dependent on creating indicators and proxies that are numerical. Therefore researchers are concerned only with the aspects of human nature that they can count and process. Within the processing of information extracted from the point of the body, there is an eerily reminiscent parallel with the ways that Spillers theorizes the making of the flesh. In the essentializing of blackness to the slave subject, stripped of any agency even over one’s body, the flesh must be extracted from the body as a continuous raw material to be mined and made fungible. While it is crucial to note that the body becomes somewhat immaterial in this context, the violence that gives shape to the flesh are wholly material and unrelenting in their exactness. However, in the articulations of the human crystalized but certainly not originated by the HUMAN project, the materiality of the body as a contained vessel of self-determination under Western liberal subjectivity is challenged. Increasingly, the body (assumed as human) becomes a fungible site for the enclosing and extracting of information, paramount as a chief commodity within late global capitalism. The promotional materials of the HUMAN project consistently use collective pronouns such as “us” and “we”, often to describe the vision of the project as one that is communal, and an affront to more corporatized forms of data extraction and brokering. Project Director, Paul Glimcher says: The Kavli HUMAN project offers each of us this challenge, take your data back. Instead of giving our data to corporations let’s bring our data together as a community. Let’s use that data not to sell things but to make a better world (The Human Project 2017). Glimcher mildly attempts to distinguish the intentions of the project as being different from those of corporate interest in reductively stating that the data is to be used to make a better world, not sell things. However, the qualifying and grounding of such a world rarely materializes. Instead, such opacity masks a utilitarian belief that if enough data is collected and correlated the need for analysis becomes defunct (Mattern 2018). It is this intended opacity of a better benign world that constantly drives the extractive ethos of capitalism, collection at all costs, at the promise of large scale solutionism from ending poverty to combating climate change. This belief in the techno utopian extends a docile participation of willing subjects by dislocating the purported benefits into an uncharted time and place of the future, looming on the horizon but always conveniently out of reach. **Weheliye’s** recalling of the assemblage via Deleuze and Guattari serves as a helpful framework for untangling some of the transversal nature of agency, bodies, and extraction mentioned previously. In the tradition of Deleuze and Guattari, assemblage has come to denote, 65 Romi Ron Morrison • Gaps between the digits idj 25(1), 2019, 56–70 “continuously shifting relational totalities comprised of spasmodic networks between different entities (content) and their articulation within “acts and statement” (expression)” (Weheliye 2014: 46). Following Weheliye’s emphasis on racialization as a primary assemblage through which the modern western human is crafted, I want to stretch Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the assemblage to better understand how the atomizing of the body into data is indeed a process of racialization. In parallel to early forms of scientific racism and the markings of race on the body, the quantified self takes what is assumably stable, discrete, and apparent, and crafts qualifications that are fixed to such markers. From this position the logic is to assume what is, rather than ask how things come to be or are in a state of becoming. Following the investigative reporting of ProPublic in their series “Machine Bias”, researchers found grave racial imbalances in the algorithms used to predict future criminality and allocate criminal sentences. According to researchers, on average scores of risk were skewed higher for black defendants than for white defendants. The reason they give is that other indicators such as credit score, income, residential zip code, level of education, and other factors can yield compounded risk and longer sentences for black defendants regardless of whether or not they are first time or repeat offenders (Angwin et al. 2016). The logic of the algorithm assumes these indicators as real objects rather than objects of knowledge and is then incapable of understanding how systemic racism can itself color the data. The work of numerous critical race theorists, sociologists, and historians have been crucial in showing the ways that laws, urban policies, social attitudes, media, values, and institutions have shaped uneven life chances for racialized people made legible in the same indicators of credit score, income, zip code, and level of education (Oliver & Shapiro 1995; Rothstein 2017). While it is the history of systemic racism operationalized largely through institutions and law that yields such unfavorable conditions, these disparities are affixed to the individual as indicative of that individual’s future criminality. Through this assemblage of representing the self by its direct and relative coding in data, such algorithmic processing is essentialist in its racializing of the data generated from the body that then directs outcomes and possibilities for the body it has virtually come to represent. Here, Denis Cosgrove’s words regarding truth, representation, and virtuality become hauntingly clear. This process of generating racially marked data from the body to determine future outcomes aligns with what Spillers calls the “hieroglyphics of the flesh” (Spillers 1987). The hieroglyphics of the flesh represent the continuing ways in which the flesh becomes affixed to various semiotics of deviance, threat, risk, and aberration. In short, it is the making of blackness as the slave. Spillers is careful to note that the enslaved black, captive flesh, is never freed from these markings but that they continue as a constantly emergent semiotic both consciously and unconsciously recognized. Similarly, data, representative of the racial fixing of risk and abjection, are affixed to and simultaneously become representative of the body under the provocation of the HUMAN project. What parity then can be found in the decision making of the machine when dependent on privileging data as self-evident, eliding how it comes to be?

## A2 afropess

### Intra-ontology/perm crd

#### All or nothing gains frame anti-blackness through a lens of whiteness, only the perm solves

**BARLOW 16** - Michael Barlow, 2016, graduated in 2016 with a Bachelors degree in Sociology from United States Military Academy at West Point in West Point, NY. “Addressing Shortcomings in Afro-Pessimism” http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1435/2/addressing-shortcomings-in-afro-pessimism//vi

While the ontological state of Black social death is an important concept for resistance scholars to understand, the typical advocacy of complete societal pessimism in response to that ontological arrangement is incomplete at best. Many in Afro-Pessimism use the basis of social death to determine the question of Black political orientation in a way that is problematic. This is not to say that social death theorization is not important, but that there is a vital distinction that needs to be made both in terms of its application toward traditional political processes and ensembles of Blackness. Frank Wilderson, Associated Professor of African-American Studies and Drama at the University of California-Irvine, is quite possibly the leading Afro-Pessimist scholar. He concludes his discussion of social death by advocating for one to “embrace its disorder, its incoherence, and allow oneself to be elabo­rated by it if, indeed, ones politics are to be underwritten by a desire to take down this country” (2007). In summary, his application of social death is used as a reason why Black life cannot be oriented at any level of meaningful production within society. While Wilderson is correct that the material labor and symbolic currency born out of Blackness will always be consumed by whiteness, his conclusion is paradoxical at some level. If humanism is the grammar by which civil society determines the register of subjectivity, why then is that matrix appropriate in determining the state of Black life, if Black life is inherently the position of what is incommunicable? If social death theory’s application is one that concludes an impossibility of meaningful Black productivity, then Afro-Pessimism becomes nothing but a body of literature that echoes the same sentiments as those who would understand Black life as a state of nothingness in plain racist terms. Understanding Black ontology should definitely involve an understanding of the social deadness of the Black subject in relation to society, but it should not be used as the standard to measure internal liberation. The distinction here is important because too often Afro-Pessimists scholars like Wilderson conceptualize Black resistance as a singular orientation toward society. Indeed their work is important to understand the manner in which society operates upon Black subjects, but it is insufficient to describe an ethic that allows for the pursuit of meaning within Blackness itself. In this regard, scholars should understand Black resistance as occurring on two different levels: the ontological and the intra-ontological. The distinction being made is between the ontological state of Blackness as determined outside of humanity proper versus the life within the ontological state of Blackness as understood through social death. If social death is the state of the Black, what then speaks to the state of the Black amongst Blacks? It would be a mistake on the part of any scholar to concern themselves with one and not the other. This paper uses the term intra-ontology in reference to the varying ontologies within social death. This is the Black among Blacks. These are those spaces within Blackness that only the Black can ever understand or occupy. Though they exist outside of the production of the human (within the category of social death), there are Black affektual politics that have been with the slave since the ship. These are the emotional and spiritual ontologies within Blackness that connected slaves of different lands, languages, and religions into one community. Black intra-ontology can never achieve the plane of recognition because it can only be understood within Blackness, which by definition is the position of social death, but those affektual spirits and emotions ought not be neglected. Social death should guide Black resistance strategy in understanding the position of the Black within civil society, but it speaks not to the arrangement of Black intra-ontological questions. If this is measured by social death it only produces a cycle of endless internal psychic violence because the Black would only be met with the discovery of a violent reality of its existence through affirmations of social death. Intra-ontological resistance must not be a question of how the world understands Blackness, because the position of the slave is one that cannot be articulated in terms of hegemony. If it is so that the Black inherently experiences the world through a different ontological register, then measures of Black liberation cannot be articulated through the lens of humanist grammars. Jared Sexton, the Director of the African-American Studies School of Humanities at the University of California-Irvine, is another leading scholar in Afro-pessimism. He explains that there is indeed social life that exists within social death. There are many that condemn the invocation of social death as overly pessimistic, but “this acceptance or affirmation is active; it is a willing or willingness, in other words, to pay whatever social costs accrue to being black, to inhabiting blackness, to living a black social life under the shadow of social death. This is not an accommodation to the dictates of the antiblack world” (Sexton 2010). This is to say that it is indeed possible to both affirm the state of social death and actively pursue the social life that exists within Blackness. This is not the typical critique of social death, but rather it is a necessary specification of the social life within social death that Sexton speaks. Social death is adequate in terms of measuring the ontological state of the human versus the Black, but a different rubric is required in mapping social life within social death. One such rubric is fleshly politics. This concepts derives from the plantation in regards to the manner in which slaves would temporarily reclaim and weaponize their bodies as a site of political protest against their state of enslavement. Fleshy politics is an example of an appropriate rubric for measuring liberation within intra-ontological politics because these bodily resistances surely did not change the physical state of enslavement, but it did immeasurable good for the mental and psychological state of those in the master’s cage. Alternate orientations to the flesh “excavates the social (after)life of these categories: it represents racializing assemblages of subjection that can never annihilate the lines of flight, freedom dreams, practices of liberation, and possibilities of other worlds” (Weheliye 2014). In contrast to Wilderson’s line of flight away from bodily coding, it is important to reclaim the atrocity of the flesh as a means of agency within capture through the remapping of whiteness. The enslaved female flesh was the site of great violence, but there is a false “dichotomy between the material/political and the personal, in large measure [because even though the] body, so deeply personal, is also a political arena. Their work has demonstrated the extent to which women's bodies were unique sites of domination under slavery” (Camp 2002). Though the body was in the possession of the slave master, the enslaved found personal meaning in its temporary recapture in fleshliness which satisfied an innate desire for selfhood. The illegality of using the flesh as a site of pleasure became a political counter-investment. While conventional Afro-Pessimist would argue that this personal orientation does nothing in terms of the ontological position within Blackness, the personal victory the enslaved experiences as a result of that temporary reclamation is meaningful in both psychological and emotional terms. This is important because if there is never room for personal liberation, and Black resistance is only understood in terms of material questions within civil society, it reproduces the same sacrificial logic that social death explains. Resistance strategies that only take meaning in notions of full agency are recipes for failure because these only measure Black liberation on the register of civil society which can never grapple with the inherent confine in which Black life exists. Balancing Ontological versus Intra-Ontological To take the conclusion of the previous section and use the call from intra-ontological liberation as a justification for the ontological state of Blackness would be a violent imposition of whiteness. The arrangement of Blackness as an ontological question versus Blackness as an intra-ontological question is a criminalization of Black thought. The two are not mutually exclusive, nor should one be viewed as a sufficient substitute for the other. Instead, they are complimentary; they are necessary components to the assemblage of Black resistance strategy. for free political autonomy absent British restrictions, there is also a less told narrative. Early desires for Manifest Destiny began not with the Constitution of the United States but with the pressures of the early American state to explore Native lands out West in order to take those lands as their own. They felt as though limiting themselves to the eastern shores deprived them of a natural right to own territory occupied by the Natives, and when the British government denied these desires for further colonial expansionism, it fuelled war tensions (James 2007). This trend is also true for slavery, and the American Civil War is an example. The maintenance of Slavery played a pivotal role in fuelling the American Civil War. Southern States wanted to continue the institution of slavery in new states admitted into the Union, and when this was denied, it fuelled the outbreak of the Civil War. These desires for empire not only created America, but they also sustained it through more war. This is why there exists an antagonistic relationship between the slave and civil society. The Black relationship to the United States, and really western civil society writ large, has always been one defined through violent terms. The very being of the Black comes to be in the world through the active colonial murder of the African. Often it is forgotten that Black itself is not an identity that it denoted by a specific topography or practice, but rather it is known through constructionist conceptions that are projected upon, and not by it. The case is a simple one; “Give Turtle Island back to the "Savage.” Give life itself back to the Slave. Two simple sentences, fourteen simple words, and the structure of U.S. (and perhaps global) antagonisms would be dismantled” (Wilderson 2010). Slavery provided not only the economic means for which the United States to produce itself, but it provided the map by which it could exist culturally and socially as well. If the United States was founded upon the genocide of the indigenous and the death of the African, then how can it ever be an ethical entity? It is not, and it should not be the end-point of Black political emancipation. Black movements in particular should abandon the United States as a source of hope because of the antagonistic relationship that it has with civil society. In terms ontological positioning, the ultimate point of freedom for the Black subject is the disorganization of society’s operation upon Black flesh because “for Black people, civil society itself- rather than its abuses or shortcomings - is a state of emergency” (Wilderson 2003). The power dynamic in the status quo exists as such through the continuous destructive consumption of the Black. Obviously, chattel slavery has ended but the slave relationship the Black has with the United States, and the world as a whole, is unchanged. In every major institution, Black bodies experience oppression and inequality at a systemic level. From ailing educational structures in overly impoverished neighborhoods, to the state of mass incarceration, Black subjects in America are targeted and subjected to overwhelming discrimination and abuse in every field. This is no coincidence. Recent theorizations have even gone as far as to identify the state of mass incarceration as the newest era of Black enslavement. Though not on the plantation, there is a case to be made that the slavery now exists in “the mass incarceration of people of color. Although African American men comprise less than seven percent of the population, they comprise half of the prison and jail population. Today, one out of three African American men is either in prison, on probation, or on parole” (Alexander 2006). This pattern of surveillance, restriction, and destruction of Black bodies is the very same process of enslavement from the plantation. This has been and continues to be the truth of Black life in western civilization since the dawning of the Middle Passage. Now, there are a myriad of liberal scholars who will point to sentimental hollow policies such as the Civil Rights Act to make the case for why the state of Black oppression is getting better. While the form of Black slavery has definitely changed and become more nuanced in its application, the foundational truth of said slavery remains unchanged. The question remains of how to create consistency in ontological and intra-ontological resistance. Is it materially possible to both call for a disruption of civil society while finding points of productivity in society? The answer is yes, at the margins. It is here that this paper makes another substantive departure from conventional pessimistic theorization, and again, it is useful to refer to Wilderson’s work. His theorization of the Black’s antagonistic relationship with the world concludes that the world is parasitic on Black life. Thus, he forwards the end of the world as the only ethical alternative. Afro-Pessimists are often criticized for their highly theoretical abstraction with this concept. Though there are no explicit specifications of what the end of the world is or how Black resistance movements are to specifically get there, it is widely accepted that the position is more of an epistemic orientation rather than one that forwards literal destruction. In addition, Wilderson calls for Black refusal to engage in civil society in an unflinching paradigmatic analysis meaning that any form of engagement with civil society would require Black abjection. This is the point of friction that this paper seeks to address. Even though Black bodies stand in an antagonistic relationship to the world, there needs to be a distinction made. The notion that any level of stability within civil society affirms Black Death has two major problems. First, it produces the exact same pattern of ressentiment which reproduces the internalization of self-hate which only sets the stage for communal violence in an attempt to cleanse. If the standard for measuring the effectiveness of Black movements is the destruction of every part of society, then failure is the only appropriate descriptor for every Black resistance strategy in history. If this is the case, the internalization of Black slaveness becomes all but inevitable by reinforcing psychological, mental, and emotional chains of depression on all those who seek to resistance. The second problem is that Black bodies have no means of creating instability at the state or societal level. Society is a manifestation of hundreds of years of economic and political accumulation that has yielded countless weapons against the oppressed. Simply expecting the dominant order to forgo the use of those weapons is a fantasy. The scope of orienting towards the end of the world in terms of instability is far too large. The end of the world is not possible. Afro-Pessimism is far too separated from the material practice of resistance in this regard. If the justification for detaching from state involvement is that it requires a sacrificing of Black flesh, then resistance strategies must consider the effect of a complete embrace of political refusal. Calls for absolute Black pessimism is also an abjection of Black flesh in the same manner Wilderson bases the need for the end of the world because an open refusal and rejection to at least seemingly conform to degrees of social norms will have deadly consequences for Black bodies. For pessimists to call for Blacks to openly embrace physical death in pursuit of theory is irresponsible and unethical. Wilderson uses the question of flinching as a misnomer. The term seems to suggest that any participation in or any implicit affirmation of society is an insufficient Black politic. The problem is that at its core the very nature of Black life is one that requires a series of strategic and tactical flinches. This means that in different situations and settings, Black bodies take different forms. If confronted on the street by a racist police officer, asking for one to unconditionally refuse to recognize the position of the officer is in turn asking for Black suicidal politics. As posited above, there is something inherently valuable within Black intra-ontological arrangements, and as such, suicide is a non-starter. Not only is this a strategy for sustaining intra-ontological freedom, but it is also a strategy for pursuing the disorganization of civil society. It problematizes society’s ability to easily script the nature of Black life and Black resistance. Tactical flinches allow Blackness to become a thousand different villains disguised as citizens. It is a protective mechanism for those who seek to fight against tyranny without inciting the wrath of the tyrannical. This is not to say that Black resistance should ever flinch in its orientation to civil society at a fundamental level. It is to say that in order for Black life to exist in a world that wishes its death, it is necessary to disguise that orientation and strategically present it in certain settings. Some will be highly critical of this notion because it will be perceived as a call to sacrifice expressions of authentic self in an appeasement of the dominant order. Instead, this is a call to reassess the very understanding of political orientation. Black resistance should embody refusal at the core level; that should be internalized, and it is the very process of mystifying that core refusal in acts of fugitive transgressions against civil society that renders its violence inoperable. This is not a sacrifice of the authentic self, but the mystification and protection of authentic Blackness in an act of rebellion against societal production of anti-Black violence. This is an effective means of navigating Black ontological questions. Again, Black liberation cannot be measured in terms of the absence of white violence, but it must be measured using different rubrics. In terms of Black ontological resistance as an ensemble, this resistance is a question is the maintenance of Black communities through the inoperability of violence by complicating perceptions of Black criminality. Since the slave has no capacity to orchestrate the manifestation of the end of the world, then Black orientation to the end of the world must begin with one of constructing the illegality of the body. This is the means in which Black movements must employ fleshly politics in modern resistance strategies. The end of the world should not be understood through the instability of civil society or the state, but rather, it should be understood through the ability of Black communities to render themselves self-sufficient which should very well include a strategic and criminal relationship with civil society.

## A2 Diaspora Turn

#### Afropess is too totalizing theory of power -- it doesn’t account for individual experiences

**DAWSON 21** - Michael C. Dawson is the John D. MacArthur Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, and founding director of its Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture, 5-17-2021, "Against Afropessimism," IDEOLOGY THEORY PRACTICE, https://www.ideology-theory-practice.org/blog/against-afropessimism//vi

Afropessimists argue that we can only understand the global system of racial domination if we acknowledge that it is, first and foremost, a system defined in toto by anti-blackness. Moreover, Afropessimism rejects a central role for political economy and politics for understanding the essence of black oppression. For the past few years, this branch of critical race theory has gained a number of supporters in and out of the academy. For example, Frank Wilderson’s highly influential 2020 book Afropessimism was long-listed for the National Book Award and was praised by several outstanding black intellectuals. This essay centres the work of Frank Wilderson and Jared Sexton as they are widely recognised leaders of the Afropessimism school of thought.[1] Wilderson and Sexton claim that the enslavement of Africans constituted a rupture; a rupture that was essential for the development of capitalism but also a rupture that put black bodies and black people outside of the logics of capitalism and colonialism. For Sexton and Wilderson, anti-blackness is both a unique system of structural dominance as well as an ideology. Anti-blackness, they claim, is defined by racial slavery and impervious to change. Sexton argues for example, “the application of the law of racial slavery is pervasive, regardless of variance or permutation in its operation across the better part of a millennium”.[2] In this essay, I offer a critique of Afropessimism, both as a theory of black oppression and as a political project. I make the following claims. First, Afropessimism incorrectly centres the experiences of people of African descent that were enslaved within the U.S. This results in the homogenisation of the experiences of peoples of African descent, and, equally importantly, mischaracterises and belittles the oppression of non-African colonised subjects. While I agree that anti-blackness is a central structural feature of global white supremacy that emerged with the mid-15th-century Iberian slave trade, I argue that it is not the only critical structural feature that historically defined white supremacy. Further, the ontological centring of the experiences of people of African descent in the U.S. radically and incorrectly homogenises the history and conditions of the peoples of Africa and those in the African Diaspora. Secondly, I argue that Afropessimists overemphasise the continuities in the black experience in the U.S. While Afropessimists are correct that there are structural continuities across time that continue to contribute to black oppression—not the least of which is a continuing vitriolic and violent global anti-blackness—they underemphasise the achievements of black freedom struggles. Even Wilderson’s own biography is a testimony to critical changes in the black experience in the U.S. The positive changes that are elided in the work of many Afropessimists—such as the formation of modern black civil society and a great expansion of a robust and often revolutionary black politics— serves to erase the often heroic struggles of black activists; struggles that often tragically failed to bring substantial progress, but that also sometimes achieved victories in the struggle for black liberation. Finally, and critically, Wilderson and Sexton present a fatally flawed account of the relationship between black oppression, white supremacy and the capitalist social order. I will demonstrate that this is a flaw that not only makes impossible any accurate account of black oppression, but also prevents us from understanding the contradictions and cleavages that exist within black communities and black politics. Afropessimism Incorrectly Centres the Experiences of People of African Descent Enslaved within the U.S. Afro-Pessimists homogenise the black experience. I agree with Wilderson when he argues that the enslavement of blacks, and specifically the slave trade, was a condition for the development of global capitalism, particularly as the Atlantic became more economically important than the Mediterranean.[3] The large-scale sale of Africans in 1444 by the Portuguese marked Africans as the Other, justifying in the minds of royal, religious, and secular Portuguese elites the brutal and exceptional enslavement of Africans. Previously, only prisoners of war were subject to enslavement. This marked the moment when Africans were marked as the exception to natural law in service of accumulation; in service of profits.[4] I also agree with Wilderson that this marks the inception of a set of anti-black logics that have taken a life of their own and have rendered black lives less valuable, subject to excessive and often arbitrary violence, and ultimately disposable during the entire history of capitalist development. I disagree, however, when Sexton and Wilderson privilege the role of enslaved Africans and their descendants in the “New World” and homogenise the black experience. They fail to understand that black people have played a number of roles viz colonialism and have been valued differently by capitalist states and managers depending on those roles.[5] Sexton’s claim “[t]he United States provides the point of focus here, but the dynamics under examination are not restricted to its bounds” glosses over the differences in black experience at the time of slavery and the present day, and between “New World slavery” and old-world colonialism.[6] It assumes that the figure of the enslaved African in the “New World” can represent the entirety of black experience. This is untenable: After all, one might well argue that the experience of colonised Africans was more akin to that of the other colonised populations of Asia and the “New World” than that of their enslaved cousins. The work of scholars such as Michael Ralph and Andrew Zimmerman, among many others, demonstrate that those enslaved in the so- called “New World” was not the same, for example, as the experience of Africans in Senegambia who worked as agents on behalf of European colonial powers.[7] Further, these Afropessimists incorrectly belittle the oppression of non-white peoples who are not of African descent. If the threat and shadow of slavery followed those of African descent across generations, the very real threat of dispossession, massacre and even genocide at the hands of Euro-American imperialists and their clients similarly hung over entire indigenous populations across multiple continents and islands. But Afropessimists deny this. Sexton, for example, argues that with respect to black folks, indigenous populations had the same relationship to people of African descent as the Europeans that colonised the western hemisphere, Asia, and Africa. Sexton argues, “freedom from the rule of slave law requires only that one be considered nonblack, whether that nonblack racial designation be “white” or “Indian” or, in the rare case, “Oriental”—this despite the fact that each of these groups has at one point or another laboured in conditions similar to or contiguous with enslaved African-derived groups.”[8] In other words, Sexton here argues that modern racial slavery was so momentous than even the indigenous victims of genocide, or the conquered colonised peoples throughout the world, had more in common with whites than they had in common with enslaved African populations and their descendants—even though arguably colonised Africans had more in common with other colonised peoples than with their enslaved cousins in the Western Hemisphere. Sexton declares, “we note the fact that ‘the absolute submission mandated by law was not simply that of slave to his or her owner- but the submission of all the enslaved before all whites. The latter group is better termed all non blacks (or, less economically, the unequally arrayed category of non-blackness), because it is racial blackness as a necessary condition for enslavement that matters most, rather than whiteness as a condition for freedom.”[9] Even bracketing the historical inaccuracies, the logical and temporal slippage in the above passages that lead to the transformation from “enslaved before all whites” to “better termed non blacks” is stunning. The genocide of indigenous peoples in the New World preceded black slavery and was in many ways as or more brutal even if the dehumanisation processes markedly differed. Nine out of ten indigenous people died due to European diseases in the New World—yet that category was a condition for freedom? The American empire as well as that of its European counterparts required periodic massacres of racialised “natives” at places such as Sand Creek and Wounded Knee, or in the early 20th century, the Philippines where an extraordinary percentage of the population was killed during the American military intervention before World War I. In his work on racialised U.S. imperialism in the Philippines, Kramer calls estimates of 250,00 Filipinos dying as a result of U.S. military intervention during the late 19th early 20th century “conservative”.[10] Massacres such as these were conducted by from Southern to Northern African by brutal imperialists such as the Germans and British. To sum up: White supremacy was and is a global imperial project that divided the world into civilised, human, citizen-subjects, and non-civilised, sub-human colonised subjects. The enslavement of Africans and the centrality of the slave trade for the early development of capitalism and empire for Atlantic sector European states ensured that anti-blackness would be an enduring structural feature of white supremacy. But the processes of racialisation, domination, dispossession and exploitation associated with white supremacy differed within and across regions. Only by not homogenising the experiences of the various racially subordinated populations—including the experiences of people of African descent—will we be able to analytically forge theories and practices needed for black liberation. Afropessimism is Anti-Political and Erases the History and Achievements of Black Liberation Movements. Wilderson argues that blacks are not of the world, they are also not part of the “narrative,” not part of history. Wilderson states: “As provocative as it may sound history and redemption (and therefore narrative itself) are inherently anti-Black.”[11] For Wilderson, blacks are outside of history; “space and time” are absent: “just as there is no time for the Slave, there is also no place for the Slave.”[12] In asserting that black people are outside of history, Wilderson is making the claim that Blackness is irrevocably marked as slaveness—there is no historical change in the meaning of blackness and position of black people. In Afropessimism, for example, Wilderson claims that “Afropessimism is premised on an iconoclastic claim: that Blackness is coterminous with Slaveness.”[13] “Blackness,” Wilderson emphasises, “cannot exist other than Slaveness”.[14] This is not so much an iconoclastic claim as a false one. It is true, of course, that Black lives after slavery continued to be marked by domination and violence. The spectre of extreme violence aimed at individuals and black communities, the expropriation that marked share cropping in the rural south, the super-exploitation of black industrial workers, the precarious position of black women performing paid and unpaid domestic labour, and the continued vulnerability of black women to all of the above as well as gender-based domination, all serve to emphasise the continuities of domination. But while there were important continuities between in the condition of black people during and after slavery, the rupture caused by the end of slavery nonetheless represented a massive change in how black life was organised—a reorganisation that transformed the articulation between white supremacy and the capitalist social order. The end of slavery presented new and important opportunities for black agency even if full “freedom” was not achieved. It was marked by the formation of black civil society, the emergence of new possibilities as well as new challenges for black politics. It was during this period that the institutional backbone of black civil society was developed—including the black church (which was as much a political institution as a sacred one); black institutions of higher learning; cooperative and mutual aid societies; and. a myriad of other organisational initiatives. All were launched and/or consolidated during this period. The ability to form families, expand black politics, and build black civil society represented a type of real if limited progress. Further, Wilderson’s claim that the black condition is defined by “slaveness,” that blacks are not of the world, they are also not part of the “narrative,” not part of history is also profoundly anti-political. For Wilderson, blacks exist outside of the domain of politics: “The violence of the slave estate cannot be thought of the way one thinks of the violence of capitalist oppression. It takes an ocean of violence to produce a slave, singular or plural, but that violence never goes into remission. Again, the prehistory of violence that establishes slavery is also the concurrent history of slavery. This is a difficult cognitive map for most activists to adjust to because it actually takes the problem outside of politics.”[15] Wrong. What progress has been made has been the result of fighting through social movements that, as Malcolm X urged, used any means necessary. Fighting oppression is inherently political. The anti-political nature of Wilderson’s central claim casts aside the momentous struggles of black people for liberation in the U.S., massive struggles for freedom throughout the African Diaspora, the 20th-century African national liberation struggles, as well as contemporary African struggles against neocolonialism, neoliberal regimes, and against the new imperial project of redividing Africa. Perhaps the most immoral implication of Wilderson’s claim that slaveness defines blackness is that the human is defined against blackness. If blacks are not human then it is easier to claim that black people are outside of history, and blacks are outside the realm of politics. For Wilderson, all human life is defined in opposition blackness, in opposition to the condition of being a slave. Wilderson explains, “Human Life is dependent on Black death for its existence and for its conceptual coherence. There is no world without Blacks, yet there are no Blacks who are in the World.”[16] This claim places Wilderson outside of both the black radical and black nationalist traditions. Black movements whether black liberal, black Marxist, or black nationalist fought and died insisting on Africans’ humanity—although some, particularly but not exclusively many black nationalists, questioned the humanity of those that enslaved others. Black movements have historically, and correctly, demanded a place in a world the recognition of one’s own humanity regardless of one’s status as enslaved, expropriated, and oppressed. Afropessimism Distorts the Relationship Between Anti-Blackness, White Supremacy, Patriarchy, and Capitalism Finally and critically, this version of Afropessimism severely mischaracterises the relationship between anti-blackness, white supremacy, and capitalism.[17] Wilderson asserts that political economy is of little use for analysing the black condition as the condition of the slave, the condition of blacks, is subject to violence that cannot be explained by political economy. Further, the status of the slave is invariant to “historical shifts.” I assert that only by understanding the interaction between the multiple systems of domination blacks are subject to—white supremacy (of which anti-blackness is a central structural feature), patriarchy and capitalism—will we be able to understand for any given era the status of blacks; the massive and multiple forms of violence that blacks experience, and the way forward toward full black liberation. In Afropessimism, Wilderson only briefly considers the role of political economy in black subjugation. He argues that the use/study of political economy cannot explain the violence committed against blacks. This violence, Wilderson argues, is invariant across time. Specifically: “Black people exist in the throes of what historian David Eltis calls ‘violence beyond the limit,’ by which he means: (a) in the libidinal economy there are no forms of violence so excessive that they would be considered too cruel to inflict upon Blacks; and (b) in political economy there are no rational explanations for this limitless theatre of cruelty, no explanations that would make political or economic sense of the violence that positions and punishes Blackness….the Slave’s relationship to violence is open-ended…unaccountable to historical shifts.”[18] What Wilderson misses is that blacks are subject to multiple sources of violence—the cumulative nature of which is monstrous. Simultaneously analysing the articulation of white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism leads one to the realisation that blacks depending on context in various combinations experience violence as workers, women, and/or as black people. Each system of domination routinely inflicts violence for those at the bottom of each hierarchy. I would add that an aspect of white supremacy and anti-blackness is that for blacks even the forms of violence that derive from patriarchy and capitalism are intensified due to white supremacy. This violence is also rational to the degree that each form of violence is ultimately aimed at reinforcing the rule of those at the top of each system of domination. In a much earlier essay, Wilderson more directly addresses the relationship between capitalism and black subjugation. Wilderson asserts that “…the United States is constructed at the intersection of both a capitalist and white supremacist matrix.”[19] This statement is promising in that it hints at the simultaneous analysis of the interaction between capitalism and white supremacy. Yet, he does not sufficiently explore the consequences of this statement and does not analyse the actual dynamics created by the articulation of capitalism and white supremacy. For example, in Afropessimism Wilderson correctly asserts that “….the emergence of the slave, the subject-effect of an ensemble of direct relations of force marks the emergence of the capitalism itself.”[20] The “primitive” accumulation necessary for the establishment of the capitalist social order does have at its centre the brutal and hideous social relations of slavery and the slave trade, but not only slavery.[21] But unlike what Wilderson argues, the historical record shows that under white supremacy and colonialism blacks are not the only racially subordinate group to be subject to “direct relations of force.” As Ince argues, “direct relations of force” do not only mark the subject of the slave, but of the colonised more generally such as the genocide of the indigenous peoples of particularly the “New” World (itself a precondition of capitalism).[22] Establishing and maintaining capitalism has required the expropriation of resources and labour—simultaneously wedded to the violation of black, brown, and yellow bodies throughout the world. In the end, non-white bodies are disposable in the global North and South; in the ghettoes, barrios, reservations, prisons, refugee camps and immigration detention centres that can be grimly found throughout the world. The particularities are important—and anti-blackness is a key particularity that shapes capitalism and white supremacy, but as argued earlier, it still a part a global system of white supremacy marked by direct relations of force, and which non-whites are racialised differently by that force. Within the context of the U.S., only a type of stubborn blindness, a refusal to acknowledge the historical record, and refusal to see the interrelationship between capitalism and racial domination can lead those such as Wilderson to argue that “we were never meant to be workers…..From the very beginning, we were meant to be accumulated and die.”[23] This assertion flies against the historical evidence. No, blacks were meant to work, die, and be accumulated as need be. White supremacy often demands that blacks die. Capitalism demands that blacks must also, when necessary work and/or be accumulated. Each, and patriarchy as well, continually make their bloody demands. Through politics and other means of struggle blacks continually resist. This resistance can only be successful by understanding the mutual articulation between each system of domination. Conclusion: What is at Stake? What is at stake is far more critical than an abstract academic debate between theorists. These debates speak directly to how we understand Trump’s victory in the 2016 presidential elections and the racist, authoritarian and potentially fascist phenomenon of “Trumpism” and the rise of neo-fascist movements in the global north and south. It speaks to how we best understand the accelerating rates of inequality in both the global north and south popularly described by Thomas Piketty.[24] It speaks to how we understand the rising wave of violence that black folks face here, throughout the Diaspora, and within Africa itself. Afropessimists have an ahistorical narrative that distorts the relationship of white supremacy to capitalism—insisting despite all historical and contemporary empirical evidence to the contrary that the core logics of slave-based anti-blackness exists outside of, and ultimately invariant to, the dynamics of the capitalist political economy. This strand of theorising has taken root in real-world activism—in this case among young black activists struggling once again for black liberation. Afropessimism, however, presents real political dangers for those organising for black liberation. I will mention three such dangers here. By arguing that black subjugation lies outside the realm of the political, Afropessimism serves as a basis for political demobilisation rather than mobilisation. Indeed, Wilderson is correct when he states, “This is a difficult cognitive map for most activists to adjust to because it actually takes the problem outside of politics.”[25] Second, Afropessimism severely undermines those attempting to build solidarity with other racially subordinate groups. Do we still need to be building independent radical black movements and organisations? Yes. Is building solidarity hard. Yes. Is one likely to experience anti-black racism from some other peoples of colour? Yes. Is it still a necessary task if meaningful political victories are to be achieved? Yes. Third, by ignoring the class and gender dynamics within black communities, Afropessimism makes it far more difficult to understand the dynamics of intra-black politics. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for fighting all forms of oppression and domination that are experienced within black communities. Afropessimists are correct to insist that the logics of racial domination are autonomous and not fully determined by a capitalist social order. Afropessimists fail to understand, however, the effects of the interaction of multiple systems of domination have on black life and politics. It is our task to forge better theoretical weapons to not only illuminate the nature of oppressive systems of domination, but also to provide effective tools to combat oppression.

#### Totalizing analysis of power structures fail to account for complex identities

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We live in a time grappling with anti-black racism, in which the term “anti-blackness” has become part of the public lexicon. Descriptively, anti-blackness seems self-evident; however, the term’s relationship to race and racism is undertheorized. We argue here that the recent discourse of anti-blackness needs to be situated not as more than, or beyond, race but in and as a racial discourse. The emergence of “anti-blackness” as a concept is recent, dating back a little more than a quarter of a century. The first substantive use of the concept appears in Joseph R. Washington’s (1984) Anti-Blackness in English Religion to argue that anti-blackness (a negative attitude towards all things black, dark, etc.) provided the basis for anti-Blackness (anti-black racism). His account is largely impressionistic and it does not systematically explain the transformation of attitudes into racial/racist theories. Amiri Baraka, in a 1987 article published in The Black Scholar, used the term to denounce how White art reproduces racism in the process of incorporating “Black images.” Yet, the use of “anti-blackness” in Baraka is understated, and the conceptual apparatus pivots on other analytics such as racism, imperialism, socialism, and self-determination. By the 1990s, there emerged a clear conceptual discussion of anti-blackness in Lewis Gordon’s works within an existentialist and phenomenological framework. For Gordon, the problematic was the possibility of Black existence in a world predicated on denying the validity of blackness. Yet, the operative term remains “antiblack racism,” i.e. the set of conditions and practices that seek to create “an antiblack world.” By the 2000s, the use of anti-blackness increases exponentially with the appearance of self-styled “Afropessimist” literature in the academy. Here, a discourse of anti-blackness begins to emerge, with the term anti-blackness operating largely in rhetorical mode (see for example Frank Wilderson’s Bildungsroman narratives about his emergence as the last political radical in a world of neoliberal sell-outs). More recently, as Afropessimism has reached a broader audience via social media and other online channels, anti-blackness has assumed widespread currency in both the academic and popular presses. Recent years have witnessed calls in the mainstream media for greater attention to “anti-blackness” as opposed to “racism.” Proponents of anti-blackness have sought to distinguish the two concepts and have made claims in the name of anti-racism that nevertheless critique its very grounds. For example, in a widely circulated New York Times piece, kihana miraya ross argues that, while “the word ‘racism’ is everywhere,” it fails to capture just “what black people in this country are facing.” Rather than “racism,” ross argues, “the right term is ‘anti-blackness.’” Anti-blackness, according to ross, describes “the kind of violence that saturates black life” – a violence that is “gratuitous and unrelenting.” According to ross, the term “racism” is not only too broad (a “catch-all,” as she calls it), it also fails to capture the complexity of anti-blackness. Similarly, Ahmed Olayinka Sule’s 2019 piece in The Guardian, argued that “it is an appropriate time for anti-blackness to be classified separately from racism and given its own prominence.” His argument against a “one-size-fits-all” approach to anti-racist scholarship and organizing, like ross’s piece, validates and extends a discourse of anti-blackness that purports to be more specific and more trenchant than other (though unnamed) critical theories of race and racism. “In setting anti-blackness apart from and against theories of race and racism, its proponents not only refuse to historicize their concept, they also refuse to contextualize it in relation to and as a racial discourse.” It would be wrong to understand arguments like ross’s and Sule’s solely, or even primarily, as clamorings for greater recognition of, and attention to, the particularity and immediacy of anti-black racism. Rather, the authors build on a subtle but troubling argument that positions anti-blackness against racism and which has implications for evaluating each piece (ross’s and Sule’s) as an anti-racist work. According to its proponents, the durability of anti-blackness—its “relentlessness” to use ross’s term—is its defining characteristic and what distinguishes it as more than another type of racism among racisms. Rather than contingent and contestable, as critical theories of race and racism have emphasized, anti-blackness endures. To again quote ross, anti-blackness is a “structural reality” and is nothing if not deeply embedded. Anti-blackness, then, significantly shifts the terms of racial discourse. In contrast to critical theories of race and racism that have emphasized contingency and historicity, anti-blackness asserts a permanence that is theoretically explicated in Afropessimist literature. Afropessimism locates the origins of anti-blackness in slavery and then asserts its “relentlessness” and durability over time. As ross’s article from above states, Afropessimism “argues that anti-blackness indexes the structural reality so that in the larger society, blackness is inextricably tied to ‘slaveness.’ While the system of U.S. chattel slavery technically ended 150 years ago, it continues to mark the ontological position of black people.” In Afropessimist theorizations, slavery serves more as origin story than historical contextualization. The connections between anti-blackness and slavery are crystallized in Afropessimist writing and erected as a foundational truth rather than emerging as an unstable, historical articulation. The shift that anti-blackness presents for thinking about race and racism is made obscure precisely because it is the field of racial discourse that new theorizations of anti-blackness disavow. Normatively, critical theories of race and racism involve a certain epistemological and political reflexivity towards racial discourse. This is because theorists understand that their statements on race participate in reproducing and potentially deepening racial conditions. By contrast, proponents of anti-blackness have abjured this reflexivity. They paradoxically deny the applicability of anti-blackness to the discursive field it participates in. As ross writes, anti-blackness is “more than just ‘racism against black people.’” Instead, she asserts that it is “a theoretical framework,” or as Wilderson has claimed of Afropessimism, it is a “metatheory.” In setting anti-blackness apart from and against theories of race and racism, its proponents not only refuse to historicize their concept, they also refuse to contextualize it in relation to and as a racial discourse. This double elision explains why the shift in racial discourse that anti-blackness presents has yet to register with many theorists of race, even as the term has proliferated in and outside the academy. It is important to recognize this shift and to note its implications for racial theory and the praxis of antiracism. To conclude, we want to clarify the implications of the argument at hand and ask what it would mean to situate anti-blackness not as more than, or beyond, race but in and as racial discourse. In spite of claims to the contrary, what does a reading of anti-blackness as racial discourse reveal? As a racial discourse, anti-blackness becomes clearer when understood in the postracial moment. The postracial constitutes raciality anew by paradoxically denying the salience of race and racism. Anti-blackness, correspondingly, fixes racial meaning in the very moment it purports to move beyond race. By refusing discursive and historical analysis in favor of a theory of permanence or relentlessness, anti-blackness obscures the instability of racial power and the ways racial meaning is made and unmade in the postracial moment. What we have outlined here suggests that the discourse of anti-blackness risks camouflaging postraciality as anti-racist work. To the extent that proponents of anti-blackness refuse to theorize the historical particularity and relationality of race and racism, they reject the very tools necessary to explain or combat the operation of the racial power they diagnose.