# WARREN AFF

### 2AC––Ruse of Analogy

#### The Settler/Native/Slave triad relegates the position of the slave into an empty signifier to be filled by any track towards liberation–––blackness is resistant to projects of recovery

Garba, T., & **Sorentino**, S. (**2020**).[ Assistant Professor of Gender & Race Studies, University of Alabama, Independent Scholar, “Slavery is a Metaphor: A Critical Commentary on Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang’s “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor.” Antipode. doi:10.1111/anti.12615]//sheima

Slavery The positivist affirmation of land is not methodologically innocent. Its implications can best be understood in how it indents the political ontology of slavery and the methods of Black studies. As we have noted, by framing the “settler-native-slave” triad through the presumptive totality of settler colonialism, Tuck and Yang bring the slave into the fold only to disavow its premises.12 Slavery can be a component of settler colonialism, but when consigned to the “labor theory of slavery”, the constituent elements of the slave position (and the possibility that slavery might be in excess to the demand for labour) can never be broached. Further, the Indigenous quilting point—land—enables a chain of meaningful struggle and recovery unavailable to the enslaved. Indigenous peoples have protection against the threat of their struggle being “turned into an empty signifier to be filled by any track towards liberation” (Tuck and Yang 2012:7) through access to the physical object of land which, even if understood relationally and through remembrance, can only be returned in its total physical presence. Tuck and Yang’s analysis and citational practices demonstrate that while land rescues Indigenous peoples from the condition of interminable metaphoricity (the driving thesis of their essay), Black people are in the singular position of beginning and ending their “track towards Liberation” as empty signifiers. Land is the signifier that secures the impossibility of Indigenous fungibility.¶ Take the telling seventh footnote, in which Tuck and Yang clarify the structural logics of their triad—a footnote worth quoting in full because, if brought into the body of the text, it would wreak havoc on its premises: ... although the setter-native-slave triad structures settler colonialism, this does not mean that settler, native, and slave are analogs that can be used to describe corresponding identities, structural locations, worldviews, and behaviors. Nor do they mutually constitute one another. For example, Indigenous is an identity independent of the triad, and also an ascribed structural location within the triad. Chattel slave is an ascribed structural position, but not an identity. Settler describes a set of behaviors, as well as a structural location, but is eschewed as an identity. (Tuck and Yang 2012:7n7)13¶ Whereas the native, we are told, can claim both “an identity independent of the triad” and “an ascribed structural location within the triad”, the slave is positioned through “an ascribed structural position, but not an identity”. It is the native’s independent identity, always stabilised by the relationship with land, that can stop what would otherwise be a runaway chain of signification. It is clear that by this differentiation Tuck and Yang want to preempt falling prey to Wilderson’s (2010) “ruse of analogy”. 14 As we will see, Tuck and Yang (2012:17) mobilise a similar refrain, “colonial equivocation”, to guard against coalitional appropriations of colonialism. What their metaphysical commitment to positivism misses, however, is the doubled valence of the ruse. Slavery is resistant to the project of recovery—there is no hidden material, neither land nor identity, to be recovered. The slave’s lack of identity, as postulated by Tuck and Yang, also doubles to expose a lack in their theorisation of slavery because of the problem at the constitutive core of slavery: not the presence of land, appropriated identity, or alienated labour, but, as we will argue, the lack of anything to lack. Their method cannot accede this aporetic possibility.¶ “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor” instead intensifies the difference formulated by Wolfe between (1) Blackness as “expansive”, “inherited” through the one-drop rule “by an expanding number of ‘black’ descendants”; and (2) Indigenous peoples “racialized” as “subtractive”: “Native Americans are constructed to become fewer in number and less Native, but never exactly white, over time” (Tuck and Yang 2012:12; see also Wolfe 2006:387).15 This subtractive logic is propelled, not surprisingly, by the priority of land: “Native American is a racialisation that portrays contemporary Indigenous generations to be less authentic, less Indigenous than every prior generation in order to ultimately phase out Indigenous claims to land and usher in settler claims to property” (Tuck and Yang 2012:12). What might animate the anti-Black logics of the one-drop rule dissolves except in a synthetic analysis that would collapse both “the racializations of Indigenous people and Black people in the US settler colonial nation-state” as “geared to ensure the ascendancy of white settlers as the true and rightful owners and occupiers of the land” (Tuck and Yang 2012:12), which is to say both Indigenous and Black peoples are structured by a common settler-colonial project, even as Black people (insofar as “the US government promised 40 acres of Indian land as reparations for plantation slavery” [Tuck and Yang 2012:29]) are also figured as proto-settlers.16 The grounding “settler” concept frays further when considering that (1) the “Indian Removal Act” also rendered native peoples unwilling settlers by relocating them to already Indigenous populated territories (Smithers 2015:117–128); (2) Indigenous peoples remain Indigenous when they move or are forcibly moved, because indigeneity expresses relationality, not possession (Blackwell et al. 2017:127; Radcliffe 2017); (3) in Latin America, creolisation has, complexly, been referred to as an “indigenizing process” (Castellanos 2017:777; Jackson 2012:42–44); and (4) African indigeneity meant a unique intensification of structures of slavery on the African continent through settler colonialism (Kelley 2017).17 The last two points also serve to underscore the Anglo-centrism of Tuck and Yang’s argument, as Canada and the United States remain their point of departure for understanding of the relation between Blackness and Indigeneity, rather than the Western hemisphere as a whole.¶ Consider too how the asymmetry between native and slave operates within Tuck and Yang’s discussion of “playing Indian” (Tuck and Yang 2012:8–9), which in Tuck et al. (2014b:16) means not only tribal garb but also those “alternative” settler cultures of “communalism and counterculturalism, such as in rural communes, permaculture, squatting, hoboing, foraging, and neo-pagan, earth-based, and New Age spirituality ... formed by occupying and traversing stolen Indigenous land and often by practicing cultural and spiritual appropriation”. 18 “Playing Indian” involves putting on the accoutrements of Indianness in much the same way that Blackness is performatively appropriated—the difference is that the decolonization metaphor is never theorised as central to the struggle over land. In “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor”, the impulse to “go native” is instead nonessential to the subject-formation of the native. It is a late, superstructural practice meant to relieve settler anxiety, to provide “some mercy or relief in face of the relentlessness of settler guilt and haunting” (Tuck and Yang 2012:9), but whose embrace of a kumbaya sensibility, while advocating a “reinhabitation” of the environment on ethical grounds, actually tends towards the replacement of Indigeneity.19 “[J]ust as relentless as the desire to disappear the Native”, playing Indian (“the desire to become without becoming [Indian]” [Tuck and Yang 2012:14]) “is a desire to not have to deal with this (Indian) problem anymore” (Tuck and Yang 2012:9). As the performative expression of the metaphorical conceit, playing Indian is a secondary (not constitutive) strategy en route to extermination.20 It drives towards “moves to innocence”, from the invention of long-lost ancestors (Elizabeth Warren comes to mind)21 to settler adoption fantasies (Dances with Wolves and The Last of the Mohicans [Tuck and Yang 2012:13–17]) to the “colonial equivocation” of coalitions that proclaim “We are all colonized” (behind which is the implication “None of us are settlers” [Tuck and Yang 2012:17]).¶ Unlike the late origins of the decolonization metaphor, we argue that the slave metaphor is central to the structuring logics of slavery, not an after-effect. While Tuck and Yang see “colonial equivocation” as an erasure of what is distinct about settler colonialism (land), Wilderson’s “ruse of analogy” registers the distinction of racial slavery as the absence of anything to claim. This means that, as “a crucial and fungible conceptual possession of civil society” (Wilderson 2010:21), slavery is only ever available as semantic displacement. Slavery-as-metaphor is the beingof-slavery, what Wilderson (2010) calls its “political ontology”. Tuck and Yang’s mis-reading of this ruse is replicated in J. Kehaulani Kauanui’s (2017) critique of Afro-pessimism. For Kauanui, the political-ontological approach, which would make Blackness-as-slaveness immanent and essential to a violent political determination of being (rather than exogenous and contingent), is a symptom of what it means to critique: “to assert blackness as ontological is to recapitulate colonising thought, to take colonial ideology as truth” (2017:258).22 In order to extract Blackness from its colonial-ontological confines, Kauanui proposes a turn to the historical and concrete. By identifying the contingency of racial slavery as “rooted in historicizing race” (2017:259), Kauanui searches for a non-ontological Blackness. She finds it in a twist to the (by now much disputed) origin story ascribed to late 17th century Virginia and Bacon’s Rebellion, arguing that slaves and indentured servants were not only equally (and economically) oppressed but also united in “efforts to commit genocide against indigenous peoples” (Kauanui 2017:261).23 This reading renders race an “additional pliant” (Kauanui 2017:260) to the conquest of native lands, which is to say that slavery is internal to settler colonialism. ¶ We offer an alternative structural history, one that neither cedes to the pressures of empiricism as grounds for critique nor falls prey to the obfuscation of metaphor that Tuck and Yang charge non-land-based struggle with. By centralising political ontology precisely as the problem of the relationship between history and contingency, materiality and the symbolic, we attempt to account for the genesis and structure of modernity, and propose slavery as the code that functions as “the a priori or ground of the history to which it gives rise” (Scott and Wynter 2000:197; see also Warren 2018). For Tuck and Yang, the “current colonial era goes back to 1492, when colonial imaginary goes global” (2012:4n2). For Sylvia Wynter (1995, 2003), by contrast, the basis of the triadic political ontology of the post-1492 Americas was well established prior to the Columbian expedition (see also King 2019:15–21).24 Black slaves—as they crossed from the “old world” sugar-complex to the new world—would play a central role in the formulation of what we recognise as the modern world. If slavery is essential to the grounding logics of capitalism, it also needs to be situated in the political-economic geography of the Mediterranean within which the conquest of the New World was conceived. The Columbian expedition would not have been possible without the inauguration of slavery earlier in the 15th century, as “the Portuguese landing on the shores of today’s Senegal and their drawing of areas of West Africa into a mercantile network and trading system” (Wynter 1995:10) challenged the geographical and technological orthodoxy of late medieval scholasticism, and solidified the political-economic relations that would blossom into global civil society. The position of the slave was both materially and symbolically significant, for the reification of Africans as the only “legitimately enslaveable population” enabled the emerging discourses of republicanism and civic humanism, and thereby sutured the “moral and philosophical foundations of post-1492 polities” (Wynter 1995:35; see also Wynter 2003:309). Likewise, McKittrick argues that the “‘naturalization’ of difference” was “bolstered by the ideological weight of transparent space, the idea that space ‘just is’” (McKittrick 2006:xv). The political-symbolic structures of slavery are essential to the production of space and its meanings. By condensing this lattice into “forced labor” in extremis, Tuck and Yang miss how the conceptual density of slavery might always already condition the positivism of land. Slavery cannot be added as an afterthought without diminishing the historical-geographical scope of modernity and leaving the constitution of the material and symbolic conditions of conquest unthought.¶ With the “labor theory of slavery”, slavery has been drawn into the whirlpool of Marxist critique (e.g. Beckert and Rockman 2016; Tomich 2004). And while Marxism certainly has methodological and political purchase, we argue that the now perennial and unsolved problem of how race connects to class (and slavery to capitalism) points to the need to call upon and develop new frameworks of approach (Bledsoe and Wright 2019; Sorentino 2019; Wilderson 2010). Drawing from a tradition of theorising interested in the non-economic utility of the slave (Sexton 2010, 2014; Spillers 2003a; Wilderson 2010; Wynter 1995, 2003), we are interested in what becomes available for critique when identifying the constitution of slavery through its “metaphorical aptitude”, the way the slave operates as “the imaginative surface upon which the master and the nation came to understand themselves” (Hartman 1997:7). Focus on formlessness or, as Hartman calls it, the “figurative capacities of blackness” (1997:7) complicates critiques of colonial sovereignty, property, and land acquisition. The metaphoricity of the slave is a feature of the global fungibility of the slave—its interchangeability and replaceability. Fungibility renders the slave a vessel through which the settler-master regenerates their position: “The dispossessed body of the enslaved is the surrogate for the master’s body since it guarantees his disembodied universality and acts as the sign of his power and dominion” (Hartman 1997:21). Hartman’s reading of fungibility provides a possible reading of the constitution of settler’s capacity to undertake the settler-colonial project in ways that don’t simply take for granted Lockean conceptions of history and property. King does precisely that, identifying how the slave’s role in signifying “expansion and spatial possibility became a feature of the spatial imagination of the conquistador-settler” (2019:120). Taken further, as “an open sign that can be arranged and rearranged for infinite kinds of use” (King 2019:104), the slave enables the very possibility for the settler to accumulate land and wealth. Blackness is rendered “a-spatial” (Bledsoe and Wright 2019:12–13) and “unsovereign” (Sexton 2014:11) such that slavery provides the “enabling postulates” for the “social and discursive practices” of the post-1492 world (Spillers 2003a:18; Walcott 2014). ¶

### 2AC—Definition: AFRICOM

#### AFRICOM is a direct product of U.S./NATO cooperation

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AFRICOM is actually a direct product of NATO via EUCOM, the U.S. European command. EUCOM is a central part of NATO and originally also took responsibility for 42 African states. In 2004 NATO ended a five-year period of expansion; in 2007 the EUCOM commander proposed the creation of AFRICOM. James L. Jones Jr. explains how he came to make the proposal for AFRICOM from his position as commander of EUCOM as well as commander of operational forces of NATO. The U.S./NATO role in the destruction of Libya in 2011 is important to highlight because it offers some important lessons. First, U.S. imperialism and its western lackies do not accept any country that decides to be an independent force outside of its sphere of influence. Secondly, it also demonstrates how NATO can work hand in hand with other U.S./western dominated world structures like the UN. In 2011 the UN (resolution 1973) gave political authorization for a “no fly zone” and blockade of Libya purportedly to “protect” its citizens but which ultimately resulted in the destruction of Africa’s most prosperous country with the highest Human Development Index. U.S. led NATO forces launched a bombing campaign that killed thousands of civilians and caused tens of billions of property and infrastructure damage. This shows that although U.S.-led NATO sometimes uses the UN for political cover, it has no problem illegally overstepping its UN mandate to commit its crimes against humanity and achieve its regime change goals. Even a few countries that abstained from the UN vote like China said they did so as not to offend the reactionary Arab League and the African Union which approved of the resolution. In this case indirect and direct cooperation between NATO, the UN, the AU, and the Arab League (which includes the GCC countries) shows the expansive and deeply woven web of U.S. and NATO reach. The book The Illegal War on Libya edited by Cynthia McKinney, includes the chapter titled “NATO’s Libya War, A Nuremberg Level Crime” in which Stephen Ledman writes: “The U.S.-led NATO war on Libya will be remembered as one of history’s greatest crimes, violating the letter and spirit of international law and America’s Constitution. The Nuremberg Tribunal’s Chief Justice Robert Jackson (a Supreme Court justice) called Nazi war crimes ‘the supreme international crime against peace.’ Here are his November 21, 1945 opening remarks: The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating, that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored, because it cannot survive their being repeated. Jackson called aggressive war “the greatest menace of our times.” International law defines crimes against peace as “planning, preparation, initiation, or waging of wars of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances, or participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the foregoing.” All U.S. post-WWII wars fall under this definition. Since then, America [U.S.] has waged direct and proxy premeditated, aggressive wars worldwide. It has killed millions in East and Central Asia, North and other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe, as well as in Central and South America.8 Those mentioned here are but a small sampling of NATO/AFRICOM’s bloody works in Africa’s past. NATO continues to operate under guise the of “training” and “humanitarian” peacekeeping assistance. Jihadist terrorist violence on the continent has increased since the founding of AFRICOM and NATO’s destruction of Libya resulting in civilian casualties and instability which the west has used as pretext and justification for the continued need for AFRICOM. As the Black Alliance for Peace’s AFRICOM watch bulletin reported, since the founding of AFRICOM there has also been an increase in coups by AFRICOM trained soldiers. Consistent with what Nkrumah, Rodney and others warned of in the 1960’s and 1970’s NATO continues today in the form of AFRICOM facilitating wars, instability, and the corporate pillage of Africa. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for example is continuously plundered for its strategic raw materials such as cobalt, tantalum, chromium, coltan, and uranium etc. These minerals are strategically important not only for electronic devices but also for the technologies that drive the military industrial complex. AFRICOM continues to rely on its neocolonial African proxies to fight wars on its behalf in the DRC and throughout Africa to achieve its objectives. With the rise of China, the U.S./NATO now seek to ensure full spectrum dominance that seeks to shut China or any other country out of the competition to control global capital.

### 2AC––KvK Toolbox

**Violence against Otherized bodies positions them as a “degraded human” which is distinct from violence against Black folk who are always positioned as antagonistic to the Human.**

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The difference between Afropessimism and the major revolutionary theories of modernity are as glaring as the similarities. True Afropessimism is not animated by reformist desire to end discriminatory practices in the world; it is animated by an understanding that world itself is unethical and needs be undone. Also, it is a theory, like Marxism, radical feminism, postcolonial studies, and radical lgbt theory, which argues that violence is necessary to form an unethical paradigm (to create world) and, ultimately, violence is necessary to undo an unethical paradigm (to bring about the end of the world). Again, Afropessimism parts company with these theories, however, in that it does not offer an alternative worldview. The reasons for this refusal of the prescriptive gesture are complex, but, to state it simply, Afropessimists argue that whereas the paradigmatic antagonism that the aforementioned theories posit as being central to the formation of world are all subject positions of one kind or another, in other words, all various categories within the same species, that species being the Human (woman/man, worker/boss, native/settler, queer/straight are, in various paradigms, antagonists, to be sure, but they are also all Human beings), the Black or Slave is not a category of Human. We have here a critique that is far more comprehensive and whose implications are more far reaching than the implications of its theoretical counterparts. The antagonist of the woman is the man; the antagonist of the worker is the boss; the antagonist of the queer is the straight—but the antagonist of the Black is the Human. If revolutionary feminism is an immanent critique of the family or the paradigm of kinship, if Marxism is an immanent critique of capitalism or the paradigm of political economy as a structure, then Afropessimism is an immanent critique of the Human or the paradigm of Humanity.1 This is why Afropessimists are loath to offer what in revolutionary circles are called “alternative visions.” Whereas it is possible to imagine an alternative filial world (a kinship void of patriarchy) and it is possible to imagine an alternative economic world (an economy void of capitalism), it is epistemologically impossible to imagine an alternative Human world (a world void of relationality). Heretofore, revolutionary theory has concerned itself with unethical modes of relation: gender and economic, for example. These theories have performed immanent critiques in order to show how and why the way relations are organized and empowered (or disempowered) within a (filial or economic) paradigm are unethical. By contrast, Afropessimists argue that these immanent critiques do not go far enough; that if one were to deploy Blackness (or Slaveness) as one’s lens of interpretation, one would be able to critique not just the way relations are organized and empowered and find those modes of organization and empowerment to be unethical; but one would be armed with a theoretical apparatus that would allow one to perform an immanent critique of relationality itself. Looked at through the lens of Blackness, one would be able to see how relationality itself (all relations of any kind) is unethical because relationality, the capacity to be, is predicated on antiblackness. To be is to be other than Black. “Simple enough one has only not to be a nigger” (Fanon 1967a, 115). What Fanon alerts us to is another key Afropessimist tenet: that there is no analogy between the suffering of Black people and those others who find themselves subjugated by unethical paradigms (such as patriarchy and capitalism). Analogy is a ruse, in part because, once the subjects of unethical paradigms are liberated from their chains, they will still stand in contradistinction to the Slave. They will still be Human. Ergo, they will still be the Black’s antagonists. Afropessimism connects the work of scholars such as Saidiya Hartman, Jared Sexton, Hortense Spillers, David Marriott, Frank B. Wilderson III, and others, and builds on its own unique reading of the seminal works of Frantz Fanon, Orlando Patterson, and Sylvia Wynter. The vital and decisive move made by these writers is one that takes the Black out of the Human; or, more accurately, Afropessimism demonstrates how a Human is always already not a Black. Blackness, Afropessimists argue, is what makes the Human conceptually coherent because, if the positive attributes of what it means to be Human are ever in doubt, the meaning can be secured by a reflection upon what it is not: to be Human, one has simply not to be Black (just as capitalist stands in ontological contradistinction to worker and as man stands in ontological distinction to woman). In other words, Afropessimism argues that we cannot take the word “Human” at face value. Like any other word or concept, “Human” does not come with its meaning neatly tied in a bow. The Human is a construct. To know the Human is to know, first and foremost, what it is not. Humans are sentient beings who are not Black. Blacks are sentient beings who are not Human. There is a structural (which is to say, necessary) antagonism between Blacks and Humans; and this antagonism hinges on violence. The paradigm of violence that positions and oppresses degraded forms of Humanity, such as colored immigrants, women (who are not Black), lgbt people, Indigenous people, and working-class folks (who are not Black), cannot be analogized with the paradigm of violence that positions and oppresses Blackness. Any analogy between the grammar of suffering of degraded Humans and the grammar of suffering of Blacks is hobbled by the ruse of analogy. Degraded forms of Humans are positioned and oppressed by a grammar of suffering known as exploitation and alienation. But Black people are positioned and oppressed by a grammar of suffering known as “fungibility and accumulation” (Hartman 1997). Blacks are objects and implements to be possessed (accumulated) and exchanged (made fungible) in the material and psychic life of Human subjects. Black people are the things that belong to Humans. In this way, all Humans are Masters in their relation to Blacks; and all Blacks are Slaves in their relation to Humans—and this paradigmatic arrangement holds true, Afropessimists argue, whether we are speaking about exalted Human formations, such as heterosexual White males, or degraded Human formations, such as the lgbt community or Brown immigrants or the working class. Afropessimists interrogate the historic development of the Human, and what that development has meant for the creation of the Black as nonHuman. Blackness is an ontological position; that is, as a grammar of suffering, the Slave is not a laborer but an anti-Human, a positionality against which Humanity establishes, maintains, and renews its coherence, its corporeal integrity. In this way, the socially dead or fungible Slave is a necessary foil for the construction of the socially alive Human. This relationship is both fundamentally destructive and necessary for the construction of liberated Human subjects. For example, the circulation of Blackness as metaphor and image within progressive multiracial (meaning, decidedly nonblack) movements produces dreams of liberation which are, as we will see, parasitic on the suffering of Blacks without, in any essential way, contributing to the liberation of Black suffering. As Black people, we often mistake this as being the highest form of empathy and recognition. In point of fact, to paraphrase Hartman, it’s just an extension of the master’s prerogative. We facilitate the imagination of people and worlds in which we play no part. Afropessimism is not a politics, but it does point to the need for a new kind of politics that resonates with Fanon’s call for the “end of the world”: a complete revolution of what currently exists. And this undoing is aimed at exalted Humanity (White men), as well as degraded Humanity (oppressed people of color). Afropessimism is not a politics, in part, because the politics that arise from modernity’s treatises of Human liberation (e.g., Marxism, feminism, postcolonialism, Indigenism) are all constructed by two scaffolds—one of which is conspicuously absent from Afropessimism. Those two scaffolds are description and prescription. Marx, for example, describes the world as being out of joint, as being unethical in its essential arrangements because of the distribution of capacities in political economy: capitalists are the only ones with the capacity to accumulate surplus value. This mode of accumulation is parasitic on the labor power of the working class. Therein lies the descriptive scaffold, and it is thoroughly explicated in over three thousand pages in Marx’s (1976) Das Kapital. To put it simply, the world is unethical and out of joint due to a structural antagonism between the haves and the have-nots. The prescriptive scaffold is Marx’s answer to the question, What is to be done? Here Marxism is unwavering in its answer: destroy capitalist capacity, bring about the end of the capitalist political economy, and usher in a communist political economy, by any means necessary. The prescriptive scaffold can be summed up in a word—communism; or in a phrase—the dictatorship of the proletariat. His prescription offers not just the promise of redress and renewal in some abstract, ideal, or spiritual sense, but a concrete proposal as to how the working class will be liberated and what liberation will look like on the other side of capitalism. No such concept or proposal is offered by Afropessimism, for who can say what liberation looks like on the other side of Humanity? Instead of interrogating the capitalist and the capacity of her or his position, Afropessimism interrogates the Human and its capacity as being parasitic on the absence of the Slave’s, or Black’s, capacity (the absence of agency). Therein lies the descriptive scaffold of Afropessimism, and it is explicated by the scholars cited above, as well as in countless articles and an archive of monographs that are being written and published. The Human has three constituent elements: natality, honor, and contingent violence. These constituent elements of Human subjectivity are not embodied by the Slave or Black, and their conceptual coherence is vouchsafed in contradistinction to the Slave’s or Black’s lack of them. (Just as the cap- A fropessimism and the R use of Analogy 43 italist has the capacity to accumulate surplus value, and this capacity is necessarily lacking in the worker; but the absence of this capacity in the worker is required to give its presence coherence in the capitalist.) The social death of the Slave, or Black, has three constituent elements: natal alienation, general dishonor, and naked or gratuitous violence (Patterson 1982). Gratuitous violence secures natal alienation and general dishonor. The Black body, or Black “flesh,” as Spillers (2003) would say, is a sentient being for which no form of violence is psychically beyond the limit. In other words, there is nothing one can do to this body, in the collective unconscious or the libidinal economy, that would be deemed “violence beyond the limit” (Eltis 1993).

### 2AC––SAMEER FOR THE LOVE OF GOD PLEASE STOP

**Wolves lead to far-right populism.**

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Wolves hold a special place in the human imagination that dates into prehistory, and has surfaced countless times in folklore and culture. Now, scientists have presented a modern iteration of this ancient obsession in a new study that links the reintroduction of wolves into Germany with a rise in electoral support for far-right politicians. Wolves once occupied an enormous range across much of North America and Eurasia, but human activities such as over-hunting and habitat destruction caused their numbers to crash in recent centuries. Numerous nations, including the United States and Germany, have spent years reintroducing wolves to regions where they previously were exterminated, which has positive ripple effects on ecosystems but has also resulted in wolves preying on livestock. Now, research led by Bernhard Clemm von Hohenberg, a computational social scientist at the University of Amsterdam, combines a range of different data about public opinion on wolves that includes fine-grained spatial maps of wolf attacks in German municipalities, local surveys, Twitter posts, election manifestos, and Facebook ads. Together, the results provide “evidence that the reemergence of the wolf has been accompanied by electoral gains for far-right parties” and show that “far-right politicians frame the wolf as a threat to economic livelihoods,” according to a study published on Monday in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences that focused, in particular, on the German far-right party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD). “To fight global warming and biodiversity loss, governments around the globe are implementing far-reaching conservation programs including the restoration of habitats and large-scale reforestation,” said von Hohenberg and co-author Anselm Hager, an assistant professor of international politics at Humboldt University of Berlin, in the study, adding that the effects of these actions can “generate political backlash.” “Although the complexities of human–wildlife conflicts are increasingly recognized, evidence on the political repercussions is still scarce,” the pair continued. “The growing success of radical far-right parties across Europe, which have an ambivalent or outright negative stance toward conservation, makes this a particularly pressing issue.” To tease out the potential connection between wolves and far-right electoral fortunes, von Hohenberg and Hager analyzed voting behavior in communities with and without wolf attacks across time. The researchers introduced controls for “a host of variables that may confound the relationship between wolf attacks,” including attitudes toward immigration and employment, but they still cautioned against “interpreting the findings in a causal manner,” according to the study. Social scientists, political scientists, social media companies, academics, and Twitter knowers have all tried to come up with explanations for a terrifyingly resurgent far right; “wolves” are surely not to blame for what is ultimately a highly complex failing of modern society. The correlation, however, is notable and interesting considering the controls implemented by Hochenberg and Hager. The results revealed that the AfD gained between 1 and 2 percentage points in federal elections, and as much as 5 percentage points in state elections, after a wolf attack in a given municipality. These point fluctuations correspond to absolute vote shares of 9.2 percent on average federally and 11.6 percent on average on the state level since 2013. In addition, the team pulled data from more than 3.5 million tweets made by German members of parliaments since 2008 and what they call “the entire universe” of AfD Facebook ads posted over the past four years, totalling 10,475 unique ads. The ads corroborated links between antiwolf sentiment and far right politics; one message read, “The wolf is a predator, which leads to livestock loss among farmers,” according to the team’s translation. Livestock predation by wolves is a very real problem for farmers that can involve economical losses and psychological distress, among other negative consequences. However, von Hohenberg and Hager note that this specific issue could imperil broader attempts to mitigate climate change and recover biodiversity in wolf territories. It’s a problem that needs to be wrestled with because this link between right wing politics and antiwolf positions has shown up in other nations, including the United States. “Experiencing wolves killing livestock in one’s vicinity increases the likelihood of voting for far-right, conservation-skeptical parties,” the team said in the study. “Since these parties often oppose measures against climate change, this may lead to a perplexing backlash effect of policies intended to help the environment.” “Given that many more wolf packs are expected to find territories in Europe—models estimate an increase to up to 1,400 packs in Germany from 150 today—mitigating wolf predation on livestock as effectively as possible and generally finding balanced coexistence policies are key to future conservation and climate protection efforts,” the researchers concluded.

### Limits Bad

#### Their LIMITS are constrained within an anti-black logic that makes their model of education unethical – vote aff as a form of meaning-making that exceeds their grammars of suffering

Warren, Assistant Professor of American Studies, 2015 (Calvin, research fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Africology, "Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope", CR: The New Centennial Review, 15.1)

Within critical discourses, black nihilism is saturated with negative semantics. Theorists consider it the bane of black existence and appropriate language and metaphors of the pathological to situate black nihilism outside of Ethics and moral law. Many describe it as a “disease of the soul” that produces callousness, meaninglessness, and masochism. Thus, the rhetorical maneuvers performed in this work attempt to foreclose a critical engagement with the term itself—to deprive the term of intellectual nourishment and precipitate its demise. I want to rescue the term from this discursive annihilation and offer it up as the most significant philosophical perspective in the twenty-first century. This is certainly an audacious claim, but any critical analysis of black existence in the twenty-first century will have to contend with black nihilism—either reluctantly or otherwise. It is the inescapable interlocutor in every utterance about blackness; it demands an address. One cannot simply disregard the black nihilistic position as insane, naive, or irrational anymore—although these rhetorical maneuvers were successful in previous generations. The surd of anti-blackness requires a position outside the liberal grammar of bio-politics, futurity, and “hope” to limn the depth of black suffering. Black nihilism expresses discursively what black bodies endure existentially in an anti-black world (the “bio-political grotesque”). The project of rescuing (or resuscitating) this term, which is the objective of this essay, is absolutely essential to understanding the “lived experience of the black,” as Fanon would have it. Frederick Nietzsche is credited with the term “Nihilism” and describes it as a particular crisis of modernity. The universal narratives and grounds of legitimation that once secured meaning for the modern world had lost integrity. In the absence of a metaphysical grounding of social existence, we were left with a void—a void that dispenses with metaphysical substance, even as this substance unsuccessfully attempts to refill this void. Nihilism, then, presents itself as the philosophical reflection of social decay; it offers politico-philosophical death (the death of ground) as the only “hope” for the world. Theorists often strip black nihilism of this philosophical significance and this, in my view, is a fatal error. When denuded of philosophical functionality, black nihilism becomes nothing more than a catalog of “dysfunctional” behaviors. Behavior and philosophy are unmoored in this understanding of black nihilism, as if one is not the articulation of the other—they, indeed, “inter-articulate” each other. We might even suggest that the purported, dysfunctional behavior of the black nihilist is discourse by other means, when traditional avenues of articulation and redress are inadequate and inaccessible. Cornel West introduces black nihilism as a term to describe a crisis in black communities in Race Matters (1994). For him, nihilism is to be understood here not as a philosophic doctrine that there are no rational grounds for legitimate standards or authority; it is, far more, the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaningless, hopelessness, and (most important) lovelessness. The frightening result is a numbing detachment from others and a self-destructive disposition toward the world. Life without meaning, hope, and love breeds a coldhearted, mean-spirited outlook that destroys both the individual and others. (23) It is an existential angst that resembles “a kind of collective clinical depression” and a disease that resembles alcoholism and drug addiction (29). It “can never be completely cured, and there is always the possibility of relapse” (29). According to West, lovelessness, hopelessness, and meaninglessness are results of market forces and market moralities attenuating black institutions, weakening the armor that once provided protection against the pulverizing force of anti-blackness. Black nihilism indexes a devastating exposure to institutional, spiritual, and psychic violence against blacks. Within this description of nihilism, however, there is a certain tension between grounding and ungrounding. Black institutions assert themselves as necessary ground but are unable to secure this position, which leaves a void that capitalistic market forces are filling. This shifting of ground is a symptom of the metaphysical organization of life. The problem, then, is grounding itself. How do black institutions establish themselves as ground and by what process does this ground shift? It is precisely the establishment and shifting of ground that is the “meaninglessness” of which black nihilism rejects—it has no legitimacy other than its “own will to power.” If existential wholeness is predicated on the security of this ground, then black existence itself is always fractured and fragile. The shift of ground from black institutions to market forces indicates that social existence will also shift and bend with the various transitions. We have at the heart of West’s analysis an “ontology of coherence” that undermines itself; it assumes a coherent self that never existed but is, instead, the fantasy construction of political hope and its grounding logic. In other words, West can only restore hope and meaning if he re-establishes a grounding for black existence, but as this crisis indicates, any such grounding is subject to shift, transform, or decay.3 Meaning itself is an aspect of anti-blackness, such that meaning is lost for the black; blacks live in a world of absurdity, and this existential absurdity is meaning for the world. Meaninglessness is really all there is (or we could say that “real” meaning for the world is utter meaninglessness). In an interview with Mark Sinker, Greg Tate provided a reconceptualization of meaning when he stated, “the bar between the signifier and the signified could be understood as standing for the Middle passage that separated signification from sign” (Sinker 1991). The very structure of meaning in the modern world—signifier, signified, signification, and sign—depends on anti-black violence for its constitution. Not only does the trauma of the Middle passage rupture the signifying process, but it also instantiates a “meaningless” sign as the foundation of language, meaning, and social existence itself. Following the work of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok (1986), we could suggest that the meaninglessness of anti-black violence is the “crypt-signifier” that organizes the modern world and its institutions. Any “meaning” that is articulated possesses a kernel of absurdity that blacks embody as “fleshy signs.” The “meaninglessness” that Cornel West bemoans is nothing more than the kernel of nonsense that an anti-black world attempts to conceal with its discourses of hope and futurity. What the black nihilist does is bring this meaninglessness to the fore and disclose it in all of its terroristic historicity.

### AT: TVA

#### Aff embraces system hospice, starting from the assumption that modernity is irredeemable and reform thru the system is impossible

De Andreotti, 15 (Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti, Professor of Education at University of British Columbia, “Mapping interpretations of decolonization in the context of higher education”, accessed: 9-11-15, <http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/view/22168/18470>, tab)

Analyses within the soft-reform space call for a form of inclusion or access that does not require major shifts, whereas systemic analyses within the radical-reform space demand a more drastic interruption of business-as-usual. This interruption entails transforming the way power and resources are accumulated by current beneficiaries, in order to make space for difference and for the redistribution of resources, opportunities, and symbolic value. Thus, radical-reform critiques are often characterized by a fragmentation in the analyses of oppression (single-issue politics) and a strong normative stance focused on ‘fixing’ an aspect of the system (to make it work for marginalised subjects), which ultimately leads to an expansion of the existing, modern system, rather than enabling alternatives to it. What distinguishes beyond-reform spaces from radical-reform spaces is the recognition of ontological dominance (largely absent in the radical-reform space). Analyses in this space connect different dimensions of oppression and reject the idea that the mere addition of other ways of knowing (through a critique of epistemological dominance) will ultimately change the system, as dominance is exercised primarily through the conditioning of particular ways of being that, in turn, prescribe particular ways of knowing. In other words, the incorporation of multiple ways of knowing (grafted onto the same hegemonic ontological foundation that is left unexamined) through strategies of equity, access, voice, recognition, representation, or redistribution, does not change ontological dominance (see also Coulthard, 2014). Within the ‘beyond-reform’ space, the modern system itself is perceived as inherently violent, exploitative, and unsustainable. Modernity’s myriad oppressions are understood to be interlinked. Critiques made from within this space recognize modernity as irrecoverable; that is, they recognize the limits of even the most radical transformations that do not disrupt the underlying modern system and its grammars and logics. This does not preclude ‘beyond-reform’ advocates from valuing the importance of non-ontological transformations as necessary and important in the short-term, but merely advocating for expansion or radical transformation of the system (e.g. through equity, access, voice, recognition, representation, or redistribution) is insufficient. This form of critique tends to lead to one of three primary responses: system walk out, hacking, or ‘hospicing’. System walk out (alternatives ‘with guarantees’) enunciates a commitment to develop alternatives to modernity that will not reproduce its violences. Alternative communities and epistemologies are developed or reclaimed in spaces that may be external or marginal to mainstream institutions, either as supplementary, transitional, or wholesale alternatives. While ‘walking out’ often leads to remarkably creative and generative spaces, these spaces may nonetheless reproduce at least some of the same problems as modernity, as they are still broadly situated within its teleological grammar, particularly in its dialectically structured desire for an uncontaminated ‘outside’. This focus on alternatives ‘with guarantees’ tends to support the same affective investments (e.g. in fixed teleologies, normativity, consensus, and innocence) and can lead to the foreclosure of the complexities and complicities that arise in the making of alternatives. System hacking involves creating spaces within the system, using its resources, where people can be educated about the violences of the system and have their desires re-oriented away from it. This requires ‘playing the game’ of institutions at the same time that rules are bent to generate alternative outcomes. This strategy can also be remarkably creative and generative; however, it can be difficult to recognize when one is ‘hacking’ the system or ‘being hacked’ by it. In addition, like system walk outs, the risk of reproducing modernity’s violence precisely when one is trying to move beyond it remains high as the success of initiatives is measured in 28 V. de Oliveira Andreotti et al identifiable outcomes, and identities may become scripted around vanguardist heroism that inadvertently recentres individuals. In contrast to system walk out, system ‘hospicing’ recognizes that although ultimately new systems are necessary, alternatives articulated from within modernity’s frames will tend to reproduce it. In identifying modernity’s metaphysical enclosures, hospicing problematizes the desire to embrace or reject modernity as a form of desire where modern subjects demand the world conform to our will (Silva, 2014). Instead, hospicing would entail sitting with a system in decline, learning from its history, offering palliative care, seeing oneself in that which is dying, attending to the integrity of the process, dealing with tantrums, incontinence, anger and hopelessness, ‘cleaning up’, and clearing the space for something new. This is unlikely to be a glamorous process; it will entail many frustrations, an uncertain timeline, and unforeseeable outcomes without guarantees. Our definition of hospicing entails three different insights. One, that the modern global capitalist system is unsustainable, and that it is already collapsing. Two, that our current languages, identities and sense-making are inescapably historically connected to it. Three, that we need to be properly taught by the system’s successes and failures by facing its death and attending to its affliction rather than turning our back or attempting to murder it before it is ready to go. Hospicing enacts a willingness to learn enough from the (re)current mistakes of the current system in order to make different mistakes in caring for the arrival of something new. Going through the pains of this death, and recognizing we have been both bewildered and enchanted by the mythology of the Enlightenment, may be the only way we c an really understand the depth of modernity’s limits (within us) and recognize its real gifts. Hospicing demands a critique that is self-implicated rather than heroic, vanguardist or ‘innocent’. It demands a kind of courage that is un-neurotic (not invested in self-affirmation): a kind of courage that helps us to look the bull in the eye, to recognize ourselves in the bull, and to see the bull as a teacher, precisely when it is trying to kill us. In practice, this means that experimenting with alternatives is perceived as important not for generating predetermined solutions, but rather as a means to be taught by the successes and failures of the experimentation process. These teachings are indispensible for exploring the depths of the existing system, and for learning to discern between its poisons and its medicines. In this space, the effects of violence and pain are attended to; at the same time that there is also an acute attention to the roots and mechanisms of the disease so that its death leaves a legacy of prudence that grounds the emergence of something radically new and potentially wiser. We represent this possibility as a question mark in our fourth space where other modes of existence grounded on different cosmologies operate. The question mark indicates that these are unintelligible to those entrapped in the metaphysics of modernity (which does not mean they are separate from our experience, or beyond meaning and understanding).

#### Paradigmatic analysis is dedicated to the complete overthrow of the existing order – pragmatic compromise trades off with the alternative

**Wilderson 10**

(Frank “Unspeakable Ethics”, Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms, ix-x, [GLOB])

Strange as it may seem, this book project began in South Africa. During the last years of apartheid I worked for revolutionary change in both an underground and above-ground capacity, for the Charterist Movement in general and the ANC in particular. During this period, I began to see how essential an unflinching paradigmatic analysis is to a movement dedicated to the complete overthrow of an existing order. The neoliberal compromises that the radical elements of the Chartist movement made with the moderate elements were due, in large part, to our inability or unwillingness to hold the moderates' feet to the fire of a political agenda predicated on an unflinching paradigmatic analysis. Instead, we allowed our energies and points of attention to be displaced onto pragmatic considerations. Simply put, we abdicated the power to pose the question - and the power to pose the question is the greatest power of all. Elsewhere, I have written about this unfortunate turn of events (Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile of Apartheid), so I'll not rehearse the details here. Suffice it to say, this book germinated in the many political academic discussions and debates that I was fortunate enough to be a part of at a historic moment and in a place where the word revolution was spoken in earnest, free of qualifiers and irony. For their past and ongoing ideas and interventions, I extend solidarity and appreciation to comrades Amanda Alexander, Franco Barchiesi, Teresa Barnes, Patrick Bond, Ashwin Desai, Nigel Gibson, Steven Greenberg, Allan Horowitz, Bushy Kelebonye (deceased), Tefu Kelebonye, Ulrike Kistner, Kamogelo Lekubu, Andile Mngxitama, Prishani Naidoo, John Shai, and S'bu Zulu.

### AT: Reform TVAs

**The only ethical demand calls for the end of the world itself—their “competing models” are utopian fantasies that are weaponized against native and black people**

**Wilderson, ’10** [2010, Frank B. Wilderson is an Associate Professor of African-American Studies at UC Irvine and has a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley, “Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms,”]

Leaving aside for the moment their state of mind, it would seem that the structure, that is to say the rebar, or better still the grammar of their demands—and, by extension, the grammar of their suffering—was indeed an ethical grammar. Perhaps their grammars are the only ethical grammars available to modern politics and modernity writ large, for they draw our attention not to the way in which space and time are used and abused by enfranchised and violently powerful interests, but to the violence that underwrites the modern world’s capacity to think, act, and exist spatially and temporally. The violence that robbed her of her body and him of his land provided the stage upon which other violent and consensual dramas could be enacted. Thus, they would have to be crazy, crazy enough to call not merely the actions of the world to account but to call the world itself to account, and to account for them no less! The woman at Columbia was not demanding to be a participant in an unethical network of distribution: she was not demanding a place within capital, a piece of the pie (the demand for her sofa notwithstanding). Rather, she was articulating a triangulation between, on the one hand, the loss of her body, the very dereliction of her corporeal integrity, what Hortense Spillers charts as the transition from being a being to becoming a “being for the captor” (206), the drama of value (the stage upon which surplus value is extracted from labor power through commodity production and sale); and on the other, the corporeal integrity that, once ripped from her body, fortified and extended the corporeal integrity of everyone else on the street. She gave birth to the commodity and to the Human, yet she had neither subjectivity nor a sofa to show for it. In her eyes, the world—and not its myriad discriminatory practices, but the world itself—was unethical. And yet, the world passes by her without the slightest inclination to stop and disabuse her of her claim. Instead, it calls her “crazy.” And to what does the world attribute the Native American man’s insanity? “He’s crazy if he thinks he’s getting any money out of us”? Surely, that doesn’t make him crazy. Rather it is simply an indication that he does not have a big enough gun. What are we to make of a world that responds to the most lucid enunciation of ethics with violence? What are the foundational questions of the ethico-political? Why are these questions so scandalous that they are rarely posed politically, intellectually, and cinematically—unless they are posed obliquely and unconsciously, as if by accident? Return Turtle Island to the “Savage.” Repair the demolished subjectivity of the Slave. Two simple sentences, thirteen simple words, and the structure of U.S. (and perhaps global) antagonisms would be dismantled. An “ethical modernity” would no longer sound like an oxymoron. From there we could busy ourselves with important conflicts that have been promoted to the level of antagonisms: class struggle, gender conflict, immigrants rights. When pared down to thirteen words and two sentences, one cannot but wonder why questions that go to the heart of the ethico-political, questions of political ontology, are so unspeakable in intellectual meditations, political broadsides, and even socially and politically engaged feature films. Clearly they can be spoken, even a child could speak those lines, so they would pose no problem for a scholar, an activist, or a filmmaker. And yet, what is also clear—if the filmographies of socially and politically engaged directors, the archive of progressive scholars, and the plethora of Left-wing broadsides are anything to go by—is that what can so easily be spoken is now (five hundred years and two hundred fifty million Settlers/Masters on) so ubiquitously unspoken that these two simple sentences, these thirteen words not only render their speaker “crazy” but become themselves impossible to imagine. Soon it will be forty years since radical politics, Left-leaning scholarship, and socially engaged feature films began to speak the unspeakable. In the 1960s and early 1970s the questions asked by radical politics and scholarship were not “Should the U.S. be overthrown?” or even “Would it be overthrown?” but rather when and how—and, for some, what—would come in its wake. Those steadfast in their conviction that there remained a discernable quantum of ethics in the U.S. writ large (and here I am speaking of everyone from Martin Luther King, Jr., prior to his 1968 shift, to the Tom Hayden wing of SDS, to the Julian Bond and Marion Barry faction of SNCC, to Bobbie Kennedy Democrats) were accountable, in their rhetorical machinations, to the paradigmatic zeitgeist of the Black Panthers, the American Indian Movement, and the Weather Underground. Radicals and progressives could deride, reject, or chastise armed struggle mercilessly and cavalierly with respect to tactics and the possibility of “success,” but they could not dismiss revolution-as-ethic because they could not make a convincing case—by way of a paradigmatic analysis—that the U.S. was an ethical formation and still hope to maintain credibility as radicals and progressives. Even Bobby Kennedy (a U.S. attorney general and presidential candidate) mused that the law and its enforcers had no ethical standing in the presence of Blacks. One could (and many did) acknowledge America’s strength and power. This seldom, however, rose to the level of an ethical assessment, but rather remained an assessment of the so-called “balance of forces.” The political discourse of Blacks, and to a lesser extent Indians, circulated too widely to credibly wed the U.S. and ethics. The raw force of COINTELPRO put an end to this trajectory toward a possible hegemony of ethical accountability. Consequently, the power of Blackness and Redness to pose the question—and the power to pose the question is the greatest power of all—retreated as did White radicals and progressives who “retired” from struggle. The question’s echo lies buried in the graves of young Black Panthers, AIM Warriors, and Black Liberation Army soldiers, or in prison cells where so many of them have been rotting (some in solitary confinement) for ten, twenty, thirty years, and at the gates of the academy where the “crazies” shout at passers-by. Gone are not only the young and vibrant voices that affected a seismic shift on the political landscape, but also the intellectual protocols of inquiry, and with them a spate of feature films that became authorized, if not by an unabashed revolutionary polemic, then certainly by a revolutionary zeitgeist. Is it still possible for a dream of unfettered ethics, a dream of the Settlement and the Slave estate’s destruction, to manifest itself at the ethical core of cinematic discourse, when this dream is no longer a constituent element of political discourse in the streets nor of intellectual discourse in the academy? The answer is “no” in the sense that, as history has shown, what cannot be articulated as political discourse in the streets is doubly foreclosed upon in screenplays and in scholarly prose; but “yes” in the sense that in even the most taciturn historical moments such as ours, the grammar of Black and Red suffering breaks in on this foreclosure, albeit like the somatic compliance of hysterical symptoms—it registers in both cinema and scholarship as symptoms of awareness of the structural antagonisms. Between 1967 and 1980, we could think cinematically and intellectually of Blackness and Redness as having the coherence of full-blown discourses. But from 1980 to the present, Blackness and Redness manifests only in the rebar of cinematic and intellectual (political) discourse, that is, as unspoken grammars. This grammar can be discerned in the cinematic strategies (lighting, camera angles, image composition, and acoustic strategies/design), even when the script labors for the spectator to imagine social turmoil through the rubric of conflict (that is, a rubric of problems that can be posed and conceptually solved) as opposed to the rubric of antagonism (an irreconcilable struggle between entities, or positionalities, the resolution of which is not dialectical but entails the obliteration of one of the positions). In other words, even when films narrate a story in which Blacks or Indians are beleaguered with problems that the script insists are conceptually coherent (usually having to do with poverty or the absence of “family values”), the non-narrative, or cinematic, strategies of the film often disrupt this coherence by posing the irreconcilable questions of Red and Black political ontology—or non-ontology. The grammar of antagonism breaks in on the mendacity of conflict. Semiotics and linguistics teach us that when we speak, our grammar goes unspoken. Our grammar is assumed. It is the structure through which the labor of speech is possible. Likewise, the grammar of political ethics—the grammar of assumptions regarding the ontology of suffering—which underwrite Film Theory and political discourse (in this book, discourse elaborated in direct relation to radical action), and which underwrite cinematic speech (in this book, Red, White, and Black films from the mid-1960s to the present) is also unspoken. This notwithstanding, film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume an ontological grammar, a structure of suffering. And the structure of suffering which film theory, political discourse, and cinema assume crowds out other structures of suffering, regardless of the sentiment of the film or the spirit of unity mobilized by the political discourse in question. To put a finer point on it, structures of ontological suffering stand in antagonistic, rather then conflictual, relation to one another (despite the fact that antagonists themselves may not be aware of the ontological positionality from which they speak). Though this is perhaps the most controversial and out-of-step claim of this book, it is, nonetheless, the foundation of the close reading of feature films and political theory that follows.

### AT: Reform Good

#### The affirmative project of self-care fails to address the nature of an anti-black world – their project creates a condition of self-injury that ultimately get mapped over in discussions of humanist redress

Warren, Assistant Professor of American Studies, 2015 (Calvin, research fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Africology, "Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope", CR: The New Centennial Review, 15.1, accessed on 9/26/15, BEN)

For West, this crisis of meaning and hope can be rectified through the “politics of conversion” (we can read in this Kierkegaard’s idea of a “conversion experience”). This is deliverance from the bondage of market moralism, which results in the “politicization of love”—conceptualizing love as an organizing political principle (another spiritual principle appropriated by the Political). West identifies Toni Morrison’s masterpiece Beloved as an example of this ethic of love that converts the self-destructive nihilist. Beloved teaches us how to “generate a sense of agency among a downtrodden people” (29). But West neglects the trauma that organizes this text and the nihilistic response to this trauma as the only form of “agency” in an absurd anti-black world. Racial terror compels Sethe to leave the plantation with her children, and the threat her children could be recaptured and subjected to the horrors of the plantation motivates her to make a very heavy decision: the choice between prolonged social death or physical death. These are really the only choices that she has, and her ethic of love is to choose the latter—it is an act of mercy. We could say that Sethe becomes a nihilist in that moment of decision, and infanticide is not an irrational, pathological, or loveless act, but the ultimate testament of agency and love. This is what Paul D could not understand because it contravened the narratives of political hope and futurity; her act was read as cruel by those who attempted to translate the absurd “false choice” that structured her existence into a bio-political grammar of meaning. It is certainly “inappropriate” to disregard this weighty decision as “loveless” or “hopeless,” for in doing so, we fail to understand the philosophical statement her action is articulating. This is a philosophical statement that understands the inadequacy of political hope in conditions of anti-black violence. It is easy to disparage behavior that runs contrary to the dictates of a bio-political order. Black nihilism invites us to consider this behavior as a form of philosophical discourse that must be addressed. In separating the behavior from its philosophical statement, we not only run the risk of pathologizing forms of blackness but also of foreclosing a particular critique of political hope that is absolutely necessary to understand black existential angst in the twenty-first century. In “Cornel West and Afro-Nihilism: A Reconsideration,” Floyd W. Hayes (2001) offers an alternative reading of black nihilism that considers it a “reaction to the dominant culture’s nihilism” and a critique of anti-blackness. In Hayes’s masterful critique of West, he interprets this behavior as a form of ressentiment. Following Nietzsche and Scheler, Hayes argues that horri is a critique of metaphysical thinking, anti-black absurdity, and inequitable distribution of resources. It is a “historical and contemporary phenomenon” (251) that emerges during the trans-Atlantic slave trade and calcifies over time. These sentiments of anger, revenge, and rage engender rebellion, and what is often misinterpreted as black pathology. Ressentiment, then, is the meeting ground for an array of responses to antiblackness, and it challenges the erroneous separation of behavior and philosophy. Black nihilism, in my analysis, acknowledges the persistence of ressentiment, but, unlike Hayes, posits no escape from it. The inability to ameliorate ressentiment is the essence of black suffering. Ressentiment constitutes torment without relief, and the desperation for relief results in forms of self-injury, in which the body must speak the existential crisis that gets muted within humanist grammars. In Hope on the Brink: Understanding the Emergence of Nihilism in Black America, theologian Lewis Brogdon (2013) would describe this theory of unresolvable torment as the “death of hope.” For Brogdon, this death is even more severe than West’s nihilism. This death is something that Brogdon mourns throughout the text with the assurance that it can be resurrected. The hope that he pines for is really political hope, for the hope that is lost is a hope in the efficacy of the Political to redress the injuries of anti-black violence. Brogdon believes that the withdrawal of political hope leads to despair. Reflecting on this lost hope, Brogdon suggests: And today, the black community is increasingly populated by people whose hope in a just and equitable society either died a long time ago or continues to die as they face stifling social inequities and disappointing economic disparities. I heard a similar comment while teaching a study on why the church struggles with the issue of racism. One older congregant from the Civil Rights generation said, “We already heard that and tried that. Nothing has changed.” Instead of working for change, some blacks, like this congregant, choose to respond to the permanence of racial inequality by retreating from the struggle altogether, accepting the inequitable nature of society as permanent, after having one’s hope die a slow, painful death. (42) The challenge that the “older congregant” put to Brogdon was a serious one. If Brogdon admonishes her to keep political hope alive, then he must answer the question “why?” For this congregant, we have exhausted the discourses of humanism and the strategies of equality—nothing has worked. Brogdon sidesteps this challenge by presenting “working for change” as a viable option, which is really a non-answer. What type of “work” will bring about the promises of the Political? Is there a type of work that will, once and for all, alleviate black suffering? Why would someone continue to do the same thing repeatedly without any substantial change (some would say this is the definition of insanity)? Brodgon leaves these nihilistic questions unanswered, precisely because they are unanswerable, and, instead, continues to exhort blacks to struggle for the fantasy object. This struggle is presented as a spiritual virtue, and the spiritual concept of hope is contaminated with the prerogatives of a political order. This problematic conflation is never adequately explained. Why is continued hope in an anti-black political order a sign of spiritual maturity? And if this order is redeemable, then it is the obligation of the advocate to explain how this redemption will occur. This merging of the spiritual and the political creates a flawed theology that either endangers people or necessitates living in what Lewis Gordon would call “bad faith” in Bad Faith and Anti-black Racism (1995). Perhaps it is the retreat from the Political that is the ultimate sign of spiritual maturity.

### Political Hope Bad

#### In the face of anti-black violence, you must abandon political hope and ethically refuse to enter the political arena

Warren, Assistant Professor of American Studies, 2015 (Calvin, research fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Africology, "Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope", CR: The New Centennial Review, 15.1, accessed on 9/26/15, BEN)

For West and Brogdon, nihilism is a spiritual-psychic disorder that requires a spiritual antidote. In this configuration of the spiritual, the nihilist is in need of deliverance—deliverance from the bondage of “hope-death.” We might, however, think of the nihilists not as the fleshly embodiment of “hope-death” but as spiritualists invested in the deliverance of the spiritual from the clutches of the Political. The black nihilist, in this regard, is profoundly spiritual and addresses the contamination of the spiritual by its political sequelae. Unlike the political-theologian, the nihilist does not promise redress within the structure of the political, for this is impossible, but offers, instead, rejection of the political as a spiritual practice itself.4 In a very thought-provoking discussion published in Religious Dispatches about the murder of Trayvon Martin and George Zimmerman’s acquittal, J. Kameron Carter, Anthea Butler, and Willie James Jennings conceptualize anti-blackness as a form of spiritual idolatry (Carter 2013). Evoking the seminal text Is God a White Racist? (1973), written by Dr. William R. Jones, these scholars suggest that anti-black political organization is often anchored in a racist theology—one that considers anti-blackness God’s will. Jones put the theodicy question to Black Liberation theologians and questioned this undying fealty to a liberation grounded in political reconfiguration and emancipatory rhetoric. Is God a White Racist? not only articulates the disjuncture between emancipatory “hope” and the devastating reality of black suffering but also questions the place of the Political within this liberation theology. This theology, indeed, presupposes certain metaphysical assumptions about the Political—progress, linear time, and agency—and Jones reveals a certain paradox within liberation theology: it is grounded in the Political but lacks a strong political philosophy to justify this grounding (i.e., a philosophy that connects the theological to the Political). This becomes even more problematic because these metaphysical presumptions are themselves instruments of anti-blackness. Anti-blackness, ironically, becomes the very foundation for the purported liberation from anti-blackness in this theology. This is precisely the contradiction that Jones intimates throughout the text, and it is this entanglement that renders political liberation somewhat of a ruse. In the article “Christian Atheism: The Only Response Worth Its Salt to the Zimmerman Verdict” (2013), J. Kameron Carter perspicuously foregrounds the problem of the Zimmerman verdict as a perverse deification of anti-blackness. If the shooting of Trayvon Martin was “god’s will,” as Zimmerman expressed to Sean Hannity in an interview, then this god considered black death a moral imperative, or an act of righteousness, and Zimmerman, in shooting Trayvon Martin, assumed the role of the obedient disciple. For Carter, this god is nothing more than an idol, a spiritual imposture created by modernity and its institutions: The white, western god-man is an idol that seeks to determine what is normal. It is a norm by which society governs the body politic or regulates, measures, evaluates, and indeed judges what is proper or improper, what is acceptable citizenship. It is this idol, the idol of “the American god,” that is the symbolic figure Zimmerman identified himself with and in relationship to which he judges Trayvon Martin as, in effect, religiously wanting—wanting in proper citizenship, and ultimately wanting in humanity. (3) The “white, western-god-man” (or the “American god”) that Carter describes bears resemblance to what Sylvia Wynter would call “Man” (2003, 322)—both are philosophical-theological apparatuses of anti-blackness, and they function to colonize essential spheres of existence (“Man” colonizes human and the “white, western-god-man” colonizes God). The “white, western-god-man” and “Man” index a process of extreme epistemological and metaphysical violence, and this violence serves as the foundation of Western society and its politics. The only response to this epistemological and metaphysical violence, according to Carter, is atheism. It is here that we hear an uncanny resonance with Ernest Bloch’s Atheism in Christianity (1971), in which “a good Christian must necessarily be a good atheist.” True Christianity necessitates a certain atheism—in fact it depends on it—to fortify the boundaries between the just/ unjust and the righteous/unrighteous. In other words, when a Christian encounters the idol of anti-blackness, she must assume an atheistic posture toward this idol to remain faithful (or as Carter would describe it to be “worth your salt”). The atheism that Carter proffers, however, is entangled in the metaphysical bind that sustains the very violence his atheism is designed to dismantle. For him, this atheism entails “social, political, and intellectual struggle... struggle in solidarity with others, the struggle to be for and with others, the struggle of the multitude, the struggle that is blackness [as] the new ecclesiology” (2013, 4). The term “struggle” here presents political metaphysics as a solution to the problem of anti-blackness—through labor, travail, and commitment one embraces progress and linearity as social goods. With this metaphysics, according to Carter, we can “struggle to get rid of these ‘Stand Your Ground’ Laws that are in place in many states besides Florida, struggle against state legislatures (such as North Carolina’s) that are enacting draconian laws of various sorts, struggle in the name of the protection of women’s agency about their own bodies—in short, struggle to imagine a new politics of belonging” (4). This struggle contains the promise of overcoming anti-blackness to usher in a “not-yet-social-order.” Again, the trick of time is deployed to protect “struggle” from the rigorous historical analysis that would demand evidence of its efficacy. The “not-yet-social-order,” situated in an irreproachable future (a political prolepsis), can only promise this overcoming against a history and historicity of brutal anti-black social organization. Carter is looking for a political theology—although we’ve always had one under the guise of democratic liberalism—that will provide conditions of life by mobilizing the discourses of hope and future temporality. The problem that this theology encircles, and evades, is the failure of “social justice” and “liberation theology” to dismantle the structure of anti-black violence; this brings us full circle to the problem that Dr. William R. Jones brilliantly articulated. Are we hoping for a new strategy, something completely novel and unique, that will resolve all the problems of the Political once and for all? If the Political itself is the “temple” of the idolatrous god—the sphere within which it is worshipped and preserved—can we discard the idol and purify the temple? Does this theology offer a political philosophy of purification that will sustain the “progress” that struggle is purported to achieve? In short, how does one translate the spiritual principle of hope into a political program—apolitical theology? The problem of translation haunts this theology and the looking-forward stance of the political theologian cannot avoid the rupture between the spiritual and the Political. Can we reject this racist god and, at the same time, support the political structure that affirms this idol? Can we be “partial” atheists? This becomes a problem for Carter when he suggests that we abandon this idol but fails to critique the structure of political existence, which sustains the power of this idol. Atheism as imagined here would entail rejecting the racist-white-god, or a racist political theology, and replacing it with a just God, or an equitable political theology. Will replacing the idol with a more just God transform the Political into a life-affirming structure for blackness? Unless we advocate for a theocracy, which is not what I believe Carter would propose, we need an answer to this question of translation. The answer to this question is glaringly absent in the text, but I read this absence as an attempt to avoid the nihilistic conclusion that his argument would naturally reach. We might even suggest that one must assume a nihilistic disposition toward the Political if justice, redress, and righteousness are the aims. The problem with atheism, then, is that it relies on the Political as the sphere of redemption and hope, when the Political is part of the idolatrous structure that it seeks to dismantle. In this sense, Dr. William R. Jones becomes an aporia for Dr. Kameron Carter’s text, if we read Jones as suggesting that black theology offers no cogent political philosophy, or political program, that would successfully rid the Political of its anti-black foundation. The Political and anti-blackness are inseparable and mutually constitutive. The utopian vision of a “not-yet-social order” that purges anti-blackness from its core provides a promise without relief—its only answer to the immediacy of black suffering is to keep struggling. The logic of struggle, then, perpetuates black suffering by placing relief in an unattainable future, a future that offers nothing more than an exploitative reproduction of its own means of existence. Struggle, action, work, and labor are caught in a political metaphysics that depends on black-death. The black nihilist recognizes that relying on the Political and its grammar offers nothing more than a ruse of transformation and an exploited hope. Instead of atheism, the black nihilist would embrace political apostasy: it is the act of abandoning or renouncing a situation of unethicality and immorality— in this sense, the Political itself. The apostate is a figure that “self-excommunicates” him-/herself from a body that is contrary to its fundamental belief system. As political apostate, the black nihilist renounces the idol of anti-blackness but refuses to participate in the ruse of replacing one idol with another. The Political and God—the just and true God in Carter’s analysis— are incommensurate and inimical. This is not to suggest that we can exclude God, but that any recourse to the Political results in an immorality not in alignment with Godly principles (a performative contradiction). The project to align God with the Political (political theology) will inevitably fail. If anti-blackness is contrary to our beliefs, self-excommunication, in other words “black nihilism,” is the only position that seems consistent. We can think of political apostasy, then, as an active nihilism when an “alternative” political arrangement is impossible. When faced with the impossibility of realizing the “not-yet-social order,” political apostasy becomes an empowered hermeneutical practice; it interprets the anti-black Political symbolic as inherently wicked and rejects it both as critique and spiritual practice.

#### The politics of hope is dependent on the myth of meritocracy –but incremental change never disrupts structural anti-blackness

Warren, Assistant Professor of American Studies, 2015 (Calvin, research fellow at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Africology, "Black Nihilism and the Politics of Hope", CR: The New Centennial Review, 15.1)

Throughout this essay, I have argued that the Politics of hope preserve metaphysical structures that sustain black suffering. This preservation amounts to an exploitation of hope—when the Political colonizes the spiritual principle of hope and puts it in the service of extending the “will to power” of an anti-black organization of existence. The Politics of hope, then, is bound up with metaphysical violence, and this violence masquerades as a “solution” to the problem of anti-blackness. Temporal linearity, perfection, betterment, struggle, work, and utopian futurity are conceptual instruments of the Political that will never obviate black suffering or anti-black violence; these concepts only serve to reproduce the conditions that render existence unbearablefor blacks. Political theologians and black optimists avoid the immediacy of black suffering, the horror of anti-black pulverization, and place relief in a “not-yet-but-is (maybe)-to-come-social order” that, itself, can do little more but admonish blacks to survive to keep struggling. Political hope becomes a vicious and abusive cycle of struggle—it mirrors the Lacanian drive, and we encircle an object (black freedom, justice, relief, redress, equality, etc.) that is inaccessible because it doesn’t really exist. The political theologian and black optimist, then, propose a collective Jouissance as an answer to black suffering—finding the joy in struggle, the victory in toil, and the satisfaction in inefficacious action. We continue to “struggle” and “work” as black youth are slaughtered daily, black bodies are incarcerated as forms of capital, black infant mortality rates are soaring, and hunger is disabling the bodies, minds, and spirits of desperate black youth. In short, these conditions are deep metaphysical problems—the sadistic pleasure of metaphysical domination— and “work” and “struggle” avoid the terrifying fact that the world depends on Black Death to sustain itself. Black nihilism attempts to break this “drive”—to stop it in its tracks, as it were—and to end the cycle of insanity that political hope perpetuates. The question that remains is a question often put to the black nihilist: what is the point? This compulsory geometrical structuring of thought—all knowledge must submit to, and is reducible to, a point—it is an epistemic flicker of certainty, determination, and, to put it bluntly, life. “The point” exists for life; it enlivens, enables, and sustains knowledge. Thought outside of this mandatory point is illegible and useless. To write outside of the “episteme of life” and its grammar will require a position outside of this point, a position somewhere in the infinite horizon of thought (perhaps this is what Heidegger wanted to do with his reconfiguration of thought). Writing in this way is inherently subversive and refuses the geometry of thought. Nevertheless, the nihilist is forced to enunciate his/her [their] refusal through a “point,” a point that is contradictory and paradoxical all at once. To say that the point of this essay is that “the point” is fraudulent—its promise of clarity and life are inadequate— will not satisfy the hunger of disciplining the nihilist and insisting that one undermine the very ground upon which one stands. Black nihilistic hermeneutics resists “the point” but is subjected to it to have one’s voice heard within the marketplace of ideas. The “point” of this essay is that political hope is pointless. Black suffering is an essential part of the world, and placing hope in the very structure that sustains metaphysical violence, the Political, will never resolve anything. This is why the black nihilist speaks of “exploited hope,” and the black nihilist attempts to wrest hope from the clutches of the Political. Can we think of hope outside the Political? Must “salvation” translate into a political grammar or a political program? The nihilist, then, hopes for the end of political hope and its metaphysical violence. Nihilism is not antithetical to hope; it does not extinguish hope but reconfigures it. Hope is the foundation of the black nihilistic hermeneutic. In “Blackness and Nothingness,” Fred Moten (2013) conceptualizes blackness as a “pathogen” to metaphysics, something that has the ability to unravel, to disable, and to destroy anti-blackness. If we read Vattimo through Moten’s brilliant analysis, we can suggest that blackness is the limit that Heidegger and Nietzsche were really after. It is a “blackened” world that will ultimately end metaphysics, but putting an end to metaphysics will also put an end to the world itself—this is the nihilism that the black nihilist must theorize through. This is a far cry from what we call “anarchy,” however. The black nihilist has as little faith in the metaphysical reorganization of society through anarchy than he/she does [they do] in traditional forms of political existence. The black nihilist offers political apostasy as the spiritual practice of denouncing metaphysical violence, black suffering, and the idol of antiblackness. The act of renouncing will not change political structures or offer a political program; instead, it is the act of retrieving the spiritual concept of hope from the captivity of the Political. Ultimately, it is impossible to end metaphysics without ending blackness, and the black nihilist will never be able to withdraw from the Political completely without a certain death-drive or being-toward-death. This is the essence of black suffering: the lack of reprieve from metaphysics, the tormenting complicity in the reproduction of violence, and the lack of a coherent grammar to articulate these dilemmas. After contemplating these issues for some time in my office, I decided to take a train home. As I awaited my train in the station, an older black woman asked me about the train schedule and when I would expect the next train headed toward Dupont Circle. When I told her the trains were running slowly, she began to talk about the government shutdown. “They don’t care anything about us, you know,” she said. “We elect these people into office, we vote for them, and they watch black people suffer and have no intentions of doing anything about it.” I shook my head in agreement and listened intently. “I’m going to stop voting, and supporting this process; why should I keep doing this and our people continue to suffer,” she said. I looked at her and said, “I don’t know ma’am; I just don’t understand it myself.” She then laughed and thanked me for listening to her—as if our conversation were somewhat cathartic. “You know, people think you’re crazy when you say things like this,” she said giving me a wink. “Yes they do,” I said. “But I am a free woman,” she emphasized “and I won’t go back.” Shocked, I smiled at her, and she winked at me; at that moment I realized that her wisdom and courage penetrated my mind and demanded answers. I’ve thought about this conversation for some time, and it is for this reason I had to write this essay. To the brave woman at the train station, I must say you are not crazy at all but thinking outside of metaphysical time, space, and violence. Ultimately, we must hope for the end of political hope.