# 1nc vs Memorial SC

## 1NC – K

### Unconditional

#### The only ethical demand available to modern politics is that of the Slave, the demand for the end of the world itself. The grammar of the 1AC is inadequate and parasitic on Blackness as a sentient object and distances itself from the articulation of the gratuitous violence that positions blackness as the anti-human and the structural antagonism that undergirds political life.

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In the Introduction and the preceding chapter, we have seen how the aporia between Black *being* and political ontology has existed since Arab and European enslavement of Africans, and how the need to craft an ensemble of questions through which to arrive at an unflinching paradigmatic analysis of political ontology is repeatedly thwarted in its attempts to find a language that can express the violence of *slave-making*, a violence that is both structural and performative. Humanist discourse, the discourse whose epistemological machinations provide our conceptual frameworks for thinking political ontology, is diverse and contrary. But for all its diversity and contrariness it is sutured by an **implicit rhetorical consensus that violence accrues to the Human body as a result of transgressions, whether real or imagined, within the Symbolic Order**. That is to say, **Humanist discourse** can only think a subject’s relation to violence as a contingency and not as a matrix that positions the subject. Put another way, Humanism has no theory of the slave because it imagines a subject who has been either alienated in language (Lacan) and/or alienated from his/her cartographic and temporal capacities (Marx). It **cannot imagine an object who has been positioned by gratuitous violence and who has no cartographic and temporal capacities to lose**—a sentient being for whom recognition and incorporation is impossible. In short, political ontology, as imagined through Humanism, can only produce discourse that has as its foundation alienation and exploitation as a grammar of suffering, when what is needed (for the Black, who is always already a slave) is an ensemble of ontological questions that has as its foundation accumulation and fungibility as a grammar of suffering (Hartman). The violence of the Middle Passage and the slave estate (Spillers), technologies of accumulation and fungibility, recompose and reenact their horrors upon each succeeding generation of Blacks. This violence is both gratuitous, that is, it is not contingent upon transgressions against the hegemony of civil society; and structural, in that it positions Blacks ontologically outside of humanity and civil society. Simultaneously, it renders the ontological status of humanity (life itself) wholly dependent on civil society’s repetition compulsion: the frenzied and fragmented machinations through which civil society reenacts gratuitous violence upon the Black—that civil society might know itself as the domain of humans— generation after generation. Again, we need a new language of abstraction to explain this horror. The explanatory power of Humanist discourse is bankrupt in the face of the Black. It is inadequate and inessential to, as well as parasitic on, the ensemble of questions which the dead but sentient *thing*, the Black, struggles to articulate in a world of living subjects. My work on film, cultural theory, and political ontology marks my attempt to contribute to this often fragmented and constantly assaulted quest to forge a language of abstraction with explanatory powers emphatic enough to embrace the Black, an accumulated and fungible object, in a human world of exploited and alienated subjects. The imposition of Humanism’s assumptive logic has encumbered Black film studies to the extent that it is underwritten by the assumptive logic of White or non-Black film studies. This is a problem of Cultural Studies writ large. In this chapter, I want to offer a brief illustration of how we might attempt to break the theoretical impasse between, on the one hand, the assumptive logic of Cultural Studies and, on the other hand, the theoretical aphasia to which Cultural Studies is reduced when it encounters the (non)ontological status of the Black. I will do so not by launching a frontal attack against White film theory, in particular, or even Cultural Studies broadly speaking, but by interrogating Jacques Lacan— because Lacanian psychoanalysis is one of the twin pillars that shoulders film theory and Cultural Studies.i My problem with Cultural Studies is that when it theorizes the interface between Blacks and Humans it is hobbled in its attempts to (a) expose power relationships and (b) examine how relations of power influence and shape cultural practice. Cultural Studies insists upon a *grammar of suffering* which assumes that we are all positioned essentially by way of the Symbolic Order, what Lacan calls the wall of language—and as such our potential for stasis or change (our capacity for being oppressed or free) **is overdetermined by our “universal” ability or inability to seize and wield discursive weapons.** This idea corrupts the explanatory power of most socially engaged films and even the most radical line of political action because it produces a cinema and a politics that cannot account for the grammar of suffering of the Black—the Slave. To put it bluntly, the *imaginative labor* (Jared Sexton 2003) of cinema, political action, and Cultural Studies are all afflicted with the same theoretical aphasia. They are speechless in the face of gratuitous violence. This theoretical aphasia is symptomatic of a debilitated ensemble of questions regarding political ontology. At its heart are two registers of imaginative labor. The first register is that of description, the rhetorical labor aimed at explaining the way relations of power are named, categorized, and explored. The second register can be characterized as prescription, the rhetorical labor predicated on the notion that everyone can be emancipated through some form of discursive, or symbolic, intervention. But emancipation through some form of discursive or symbolic intervention is wanting in the face of a subject position that is not a subject position—what Marx calls “a speaking implement” or what Ronald Judy calls “an interdiction against subjectivity.” In other words, the Black has *sentient* capacity but no *relational* capacity. As an accumulated and fungible object, rather than an exploited and alienated subject, the Black is openly vulnerable to the whims of the world; and so is his/her cultural “production.” What does it mean— what are the stakes—when the world can whimsically transpose one’s cultural gestures, the stuff of symbolic intervention, onto another worldly good, a commodity of style? Fanon echoes this question when he writes, “I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects” (*BSWM* 109). Fanon clarifies this assertion and alerts us to the stakes which the optimistic assumptions of Film Studies and Cultural Studies, the counter-hegemonic promise of alternative cinema, and the emancipatory project of coalition politics cannot account for, when he writes: “Ontology— once it is finally admitted as leaving existence by the wayside—does not permit us to understand the being of the black...” (110). This presents a challenge to film production and to film studies given their cultivation and elaboration by the imaginative labor of Cultural Studies, underwritten by the assumptive logic of Humanism; because if everyone does *not* possess the DNA of culture, that is, (a) time and space transformative capacity, (b) a relational status with other Humans through which one’s time and space transformative capacity is recognized and incorporated, and (c) a relation to violence that is contingent and not gratuitous, then how do we theorize a sentient being who is positioned not by the DNA culture but by the structure of gratuitous violence? How do we think outside of the conceptual framework of subalternity—that is, outside of the explanatory power of Cultural Studies—and think beyond the pale of emancipatory agency by way of symbolic intervention? I am calling for a different conceptual framework, predicated not on the subject- effect of cultural performance but on the structure of political ontology; one that allows us to substitute *a politics of culture for a culture of politics.* The value in this rests not simply in the way it would help us re-think cinema and performance, but in the way it can help us theorize what is at present only intuitive and anecdotal: the unbridgeable gap between Black being and Human life. To put a finer point on it, such a framework might enhance the explanatory power of theory, art, and politics by destroying and perhaps restructuring, the ethical range of our current ensemble of questions. This has profound implications for non-Black film studies, Black film studies, and African American Studies writ large because they are currently entangled in a multicultural paradigm that takes an interest in an insufficiently critical comparative analysis—that is, a comparative analysis which is in pursuit of a coalition politics (if not in practice then at least as an theorizing metaphor) which, by its very nature, crowds out and forecloses the Slave’s grammar of suffering.

#### Thus, the role of the ballot is to vote for the best theoretical lexicon for understanding Black suffering – if we demonstrate that the 1AC’s conceptualization of power generates a series of contradictions when it approaches blackness, that is a sufficient reason to vote negative.

#### Starting from the laceration of the Middle Passage, Black bodies have been used for medical experimentation – 1821 when a white physician Charlestonian Bennett used a 6-year-old female slave, 1845 when the so-called Father of Genecology used 7 female slaves as experimental animals, 1932 when the infamous Tuskegee Syphilis study started, 1951 with the robbing of Henrietta Lacks and her immortal cell-line.

#### This racialized history of Black medical experimentation and exploitation elucidates the inability of Black people to “own” their bodies, their work, or property. Civil society operates by positing the Black as the Other, which enables fabrications of Intellectual Property [IP] to arise – the plan's call for a reduction on "intellectual property protections for medicines" is unable to grapple with the ways by which anti-Blackness historically has and always will instantiate this regime into political-order. This also directly turns the Matthew 18 evidence and is more tailored to the plan.

de jesus ’14 – digital projects librarian @ York University [nina de jesus, 24 September 2014, *LOCATING THE LIBRARY IN INSTITUTIONAL OPPRESSION*, accessed from: http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2014/locating-the-library-in-institutional-oppression/] | saurish

In locating the library in institutional oppression I’ll be focusing on only one line of criticism — white supremacy and decolonization — because of how focused my earlier sections are on the role that public libraries play (or ought to play) in maintaining a democratic (settler) state. I’m also largely depending on Andrea Smith’s understanding of how white supremacy is constituted: We may wish to rearticulate our understanding of white supremacy by not assuming that it is enacted in a single fashion; rather, white supremacy is constituted by separate and distinct, but still interrelated, logics. I would argue that the three primary logics of white supremacy in the US context include: **(1) slaveability/anti-black racism, which anchors capitalism**; (2) **genocide, which anchors colonialism**; and (3) **orientalism, which anchors war**.22 Her analytic **framework provides a three lens way to view how the library, as institution, embodies and enforces one type of oppression, white supremacy.** Namely, that libraries, being liberal institutions, are not ‘neutral’ in the ways that many of the sources cited in this paper either want them to be or believe they are. Rather, the explicit and expressed function of libraries, from their inception in the US and Canadian political structures to their existence today, is to create an informed citizenry for the sake of democracy. This allows us to finally locate the library in institutional oppression. 3.1 The Logic of Slavery Andrea Smith writes: **One pillar of white supremacy is the logic of slavery.** This logic **renders black people as inherently enslaveable—as nothing more than property**…This logic is **the anchor of capitalism**. That is, the capitalist system ultimately commodifies all workers: one’s own person becomes a commodity that one must sell in the labour market while the profits of one’s work are taken by somebody else. To keep this capitalist system in place—which ultimately commodifies most people—the logic of slavery applies a racial hierarchy to this system.23 Note one of the key claims in Smith’s discussion of the logic of slavery, that it ‘anchors capitalism’. Another way of understanding this is that **the enslavability of Black people is a necessary and foundational part of capitalism, such that slavery is not the result of capitalism, but rather that capitalism itself is structured around this logic**: [**T]he market did more than surround and detain black bodies — it also possessed them with logics of fungibility and accumulation.** Under the logic of the Atlantic slave trade, the market’s arithmetic of accumulation was sutured to the flesh, inhabiting the bodies and lives it stripped down to the sum of their biological parts for sale within the freedom of the market. For the slave, economic rationality possessed every moment of life’s terror and death’s release. Liberal distinctions between the public and private, and the economic, political, and social were fabrications for the slave, **illusions that depended on their erasure from the realm of the human.** This erasure made possible the alchemy of the market so that with its social, economic, and discursive racial mechanisms, the market could transform a human being into an object and test the limits of that object’s biological life. The fungibility of blackness meant that slaves were money, were animals, were gold, were cotton, were rum, and on and on.24 This fungibility of Blackness also, for Black people, **makes notions of intellectual property a fabrication when it comes to Black creative and intellectual work.** A reality evidenced by the history of modern/contemporary music whereby every major movement in music over the past 100+ years has happened via a process of the exploitation of Black creative labour with little benefit to their creators.25 However, because the logic of slavery structures the process of commodification within capitalism we also see that “the overall trend in intellectual property protection is broadly correlated with the rise of capitalism. In fact, some institutional features associated with capitalism had to exist prior to the full development of intellectual property rights.”26 While it is possible for intellectual property rights to exist outside of a capitalist framework, the system we currently have exists within this framework. This means that **our system of intellectual property, having arisen (at least in part) from capitalism, is necessarily structured by the logic of slavery.** All of this creates a framework through which we can begin to understand how libraries institutionalize white supremacy. Principle IV in the ALA’s Code of Ethics states “we respect intellectual property rights.”27 Of course, many people would counter this claim by saying that the manner by which libraries operate fundamentally contradicts this capitalist impulse by making ‘intellectual property’ freely accessible to the public. Except this isn’t entirely true or, rather, it doesn’t represent the entire picture. When we look at the work of libraries, we begin to see that they actually **play a significant role in not just ‘respecting intellectual property’ but in ensuring the stability of intellectual property itself.** One mechanism through which libraries do this is through the creation of ‘authority records’: “An authority record is a tool used by librarians to establish forms of names (for persons, places, meetings, and organizations), titles, and subjects used on bibliographic records.”28 While the Library of Congress (LOC) makes it clear that authority records are created with the intent to improve accessibility, the mechanism they use for this ensures that every creative work necessarily has an identifiable owner. This is necessary in a system of capital wherein everything and everyone can (and likely will be) reduced to a commodity. This is only one way that libraries come to be implicated via active participation in the logic of slavery, of capitalism, and of white supremacy. We can also see that **libraries, regardless of their making ‘knowledge’ or ‘information’ accessible for free, do not actually challenge or resist this logic.** Rather, **libraries are another institution necessary for maintaining a system of intellectual property within a larger context of white supremacy that depends on the inherent enslaveability of Black people.**

#### The alternative is our refusal to create a distance from the pathology of blackness, to work inside of it – only this affirmation of pathological being can produce the end of the world by disrupting the fundamental directive of the libidinal economy.

Sexton ’11– Associate Prof of African American Studies @ UC Irvine (Jared, “The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism,” Accessed From: <http://www.yorku.ca/intent/issue5/articles/pdfs/jaredsextonarticle.pdf>,  page 22-29) | Saurish

[19] In recent years, social death has emerged from a period of latency as a notion useful for the critical theory of racial slavery as a matrix of social, political, and economic relations surviving the era of abolition in the nineteenth century, “a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago” (Hartman 2007: 6). This “afterlife of slavery,” as Saidiya Hartman terms it, challenges practitioners in the field to question the prevailing understanding of a post-emancipation society and to revisit the most basic questions about the structural conditions of antiblackness in the modern world. To ask, in other words, what it means to speak of “the tragic continuity between slavery and freedom” or “the incomplete nature of emancipation”, indeed to speak of about a type of living on that survives after a type of death. For Wilderson, the principal implication of slavery’s afterlife is to **warrant an intellectual disposition of “afro-pessimism,”** a qualification and a complication of the assumptive logic of black cultural studies in general and black performance studies in particular, a disposition that posits a political ontology **dividing the Slave from the world of the Human** in a constitutive way. This critical move has been **misconstrued** as a negation of the agency of black performance, or even a denial of black social life, and a number of scholars have reasserted the earlier assumptive logic in a gesture that hypostatisizes afro-pessimism to that end.ix [20] What I find most intriguing about the timbre of the argument of “The Case of Blackness,” and the black optimism it articulates against a certain construal of afro-pessimism, is the way that it works away from a discourse of black pathology only to swerve right back into it as an ascription to those found to be taking up and holding themselves in “the stance of the pathologist” in relation to black folks. I say this not only because there is, in this version of events, a recourse to psychoanalytic terminology (“fetishization,” “obsession,” “repetition,”), but also because there is at the heart of the matter a rhetorical question that establishes both the bad advice of a wild analysis and a tacit diagnosis affording a certain speaker’s benen nmfit: “So why is it repressed?” The “it” that has been afflicted by the psychopathology of obsessional neurosis is the understanding, which is also to say the celebration, of the ontological priority or previousness of blackness relative to the antiblackness that establishes itself against it, a priority or previousness that is also termed “knowledge of freedom” or, pace Chandler, comprehension of “the constitutive force of the African American subject(s)” (Chandler 2000: 261). [21] What does not occur here is a consideration of the possibility that something might be unfolding in the project or projections of afro-pessimism “knowing full well the danger of a kind of negative reification” associated with its analytical claims to the paradigmatic (Moten 2004: 279). That is to say, it might just be the case that an object lesson in the phenomenology of the thing is a gratuity that folds a new encounter into older habits of thought through a reinscription of (black) pathology that reassigns its cause and relocates its source without ever really getting inside it. In a way, what we’re talking about relates not to a disagreement about “unthought positions” (and their de-formation) but to a disagreement, or discrepancy, about “unthought dispositions” (and their in-formation). I would maintain this insofar as the misrecognition at work in the reading of that motley crew listed in the ninth footnote regards, perhaps ironically, the performative dimension or signifying aspect of a “generalized impropriety” so improper as to appear as the same old propriety returning through the back door. Without sufficient consideration of the gap between statement and enunciation here, to say nothing of quaint notions like context or audience or historical conjuncture, the discourse of afro-pessimism, even as it approaches otherwise important questions, can only seem like a “tragically neurotic” instance of “certain discourse on the relation between blackness and death” (Moten 2007: 9).xiii Fanon and his interlocutors, or what appear rather as his fateful adherents, would seem to have a problem embracing black social life because they never really come to believe in it, because they cannot acknowledge the social life from which they speak and of which they speak—as negation and impossibility—as their own (Moten 2008: 192). Another way of putting this might be to say that they are caught in a performative contradiction enabled by disavowal. I wonder, however, whether things are even this clear in Fanon and the readings his writing might facilitate. Lewis Gordon’s sustained engagement finds Fanon situated in an ethical stance grounded in the affirmation of blackness in the historic antiblack world. In a response to the discourse of multiracialism emergent in the late twentieth-century United States, for instance, Gordon writes, following Fanon, that “there is no way to reject the thesis that there is something wrong with being black beyond the willingness to ‘be’ black – in terms of convenient fads of playing blackness, but in paying the costs of antiblackness on a global scale. Against the raceless credo, then, racism **cannot** be rejected without a dialectic in **which humanity experiences a blackened world**” (Gordon 1997: 67). What is this willingness to ‘be’ black, of choosing to be black affirmatively rather than reluctantly, that Gordon finds as the key ethical moment in Fanon? [23] Elsewhere, in a discussion of Du Bois on the study of black folk, Gordon restates an existential phenomenological conception of the antiblack world developed across his first several books: “Blacks here **suffer the phobogenic reality posed by** the spirit of **racial seriousness**. In effect, they more than symbolize or signify various social pathologies—they become them. In our antiblack world, blacks are pathology”(Gordon 2000: 87). This conception would seem to support Moten’s contention that even much radical black studies scholarship sustains the association of blackness with a certain sense of decay and thereby fortifies and extends the interlocutory life of widely accepted political common sense. In fact, it would seem that Gordon deepens the already problematic association to the level of identity. And yet, this is precisely what Gordon argues is the value and insight of Fanon: **he fully accepts** the definition of **himself as pathological as it is imposed by a world that knows itself through that imposition**, rather than remaining in a reactive stance that insists on the (temporal, moral, etc.) heterogeneity between a self and an imago originating in culture. Though it may appear counterintuitive, or rather because it is counterintuitive, 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 anti-Black world. The affirmation of blackness, which is to say an affirmation of pathological being, **is a refusal to distance oneself from blackness in a valorization of minor differences that bring one closer** to health, to **life, or** to **sociality**. Fanon writes in the first chapter of Black Skin, White Masks, “The Black Man and Language”: “A Senegalese who learns Creole to pass for Antillean is a case of alienation. The Antilleans who make a mockery out of him are lacking in judgment” (Fanon 2008: 21). In a world structured by the twin axioms of white superiority and black inferiority, of white existence and black nonexistence, a world structured by a negative categorical imperative—“above all, don’t be black” (Gordon 1997: 63)—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’” (Nyong’o 2002: 389).xiv In this we might create a transvaluation of pathology itself, something like an embrace of pathology without pathos.

## Case

Dm me if u need