# 1nc vs memorial

## 1NC

### Unconditional K

#### Welcome to a world where critical race theory is banned. Welcome to a world where white supremacy cannot be condemned. Welcome to a world where the realities of race and racism are denied. Welcome to a world where Black philosophers are threatened for writing about racism. Welcome to a world where Black bodies live in a constant fear of being killed. Welcome to a world where Black death is ignored and written over – welcome to a world of *academic philosophy* that only serves to perpetuate anti-Blackness.

#### 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.

**Wilderson 10** (Frank B. Wilderson III is American writer, dramatist, filmmaker and critic. He is a full professor of Drama and African American studies at the University of California, Irvine. He received his BA in government and philosophy from Dartmouth College, his MA in fine arts from Columbia University and his PhD in Rhetoric and Film Studies from the University of California, Berkeley), *Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*, Duke University Press, Pg. 74-78. KD

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.

#### Beginning from the fissures within Americanized Grammars of study and genres of the human is critical to a cognitive intervention within modes of institutional liquidation that render black death and racialized violence as a paradigmatic necessity – this beyond a simple commodification claim but a challenge to the accursed share around blackness that facilitates quotidian violence not as mere process of exchange but a politic of death which operates at multiple levels including speech acts – the Foots evidence proves the link – their assumptions that the function of determine the ethicality of a body is problematic.

Stein’16 (Sharon. "Universities, slavery, and the unthought of anti-Blackness." Cultural Dynamics 28.2 (2016): 169-187.) ipartman

Black Studies interrogates the position of Black persons during slavery as well as during what Hartman (2007) has **called the “afterlife of slavery**” wherein “**black lives are still imperilled and devalued by a racist calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago,”** affecting “skewed life chances, limited access to healthcare and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment” (p. 6). At the same time as many Black Studies scholars emphasize that the position of Black enslaved per- sons in modernity is without analogy, they also emphasize that modernity itself would not have been possible without Black slavery (Sexton, 2015). As Wilderson (2010) put it succinctly, “No slave, no world” (p. 11). **Hence, the project of Black Studies has a much broader relevance than to Black people alone** (James, [1969] 1993; Silva, 2014). *The anti-Blackness of Man* **The role of slavery and its afterlife in the ordering of modern social life operates at many levels, but perhaps most notably in the notion of humanity itself**. In her work, Sylvia Wynter offers an important distinction between “Man” and other **“genres of the human**.” As modern Man (Euro-descended, middle-class, college educated) claims to be the apex of humanity, he deems all other humans—not only racialized peoples, but also the unemployed, the incarcerated, the homeless—to be sub- or non-human (Wynter, 1994, 2003). This hierarchy of humanity has been used to justify the over- representation of Man’s interests and the subordination of others to his will. Wynter traces how the foundations of European modernity entailed a transformation, starting in the 15th century, from a worldview that transcendentalized the Church and the desire for salvation, to a worldview that transcendentalized the State and secularized knowledge (Wynter, 2003). However, the transformations that took place were not internally produced within Europe, but rather were enabled through Indigenous colo- nization and Black enslavement. These provided both **the material and conceptual conditions for the emergence of the West, including the architectures of the nation- state, capital, and the modern university.** In order to invent himself, Man had to forcibly incorporate his Others into a European (conception of the) world and deny their distinct modes of thinking and being the status of “alternative modes of being human” (Wynter, 2003: 282). According to Wynter, it was to be the figure of the Negro (i.e., the category comprised by all peoples of Black African hereditary descent) that [the West] was to place at the nadir of its Chain of Being; that is, on a rung of the ladder lower than that of all humans. (p. 301) Categorization of Black people as non-human and evolutionarily inferior justified their relegation to what Fanon (2008) famously described as “the zone of nonbeing” (p. xii). In the era of chattel slavery, this translated into a logic according to which Black flesh was inscribed and treated as fungible—that is, interchangeable, accumulable, and objec- tified as property (Hartman, 1997; King, 2014; Spillers, 1987). In addition to studies of slavery, many **Black Studies** scholars address post-emancipation Black subjugation, carefully cataloguing the ongoing “material, rhetorical, state, **discursive, intimate, violences** to which black bodies and psyches are subjected” (Sharpe, 2014b: 206). **Particularly in the context of this study**, it is imperative to note that Black people’s hard-won increased presence in higher education institutions does not forestall this subjugation. **Many universities continue to employ Black people in poorly compen- sated and often-precarious staff positions (**Pettit, 2008) and contribute to the gentrifica- tion of neighborhoods surrounding their campuses, often with significant Black populations (Baldwin, 2015; Bose, 2014). Black faculty, students, and staff regularly experience anti-Black racism from their peers and professors (e.g. Griffin et al., 2014; Gusa, 2010; Harper et al., 2011; Johnson-Ahorlu, 2012; Patitu and Hinton, 2003; Patton and Catching, 2009; Solórzano et al., 2000) and are interrogated and abused by campus and local police (e.g. McMillan Cottom, 2014; Vest, 2013). **Anti-Blackness also inheres in the production of knowledge itself. In spite of the many powerful disruptions enacted through Black Studies and associated fields**, Sharpe (2014a) argues that **an anti-Black “death-dealing episteme continue[s] to be produced in ‘think tanks’ and in the university,** by teachers, lecturers, researchers, and scholars, and then reproduced by the students who have been educated in the classrooms and institu- tions where [Black people] labor” (p. 61). **This enduring “death-dealing episteme” is not merely contained within explicitly white supremacist knowledge**, like the now thor- oughly discredited field of phrenology or even today’s more blatantly pathologizing strains of mainstream social science. **Instead**, according to Wynter (1994), “both **the issue of ‘race’ and its classificatory logic” are built into the** basic **logic of the modern order of knowledge** (p. 47). **Spillers** (1987) called this order **an “American grammar,”**

arguing, “the ruling episteme that releases the dynamics of naming and valuation, remains grounded in the originating metaphors of captivity and mutilation” (p. 68). Yet, not only does this grammar extend beyond the United States, it also extends beyond an enduring order of knowing to encompass an enduring order of being as well. Silva (2013) **captures both in her notion of** “**the ontoepistemological grammar that governs post- Enlightenment accounts of existence”** (p. 50) and that structures Man’s claims to autonomy, self-determination, and mastery of universal reason. These claims are then **used to justify the imposition of Man’s will on the world** and on (and in contrast to) those whom he deems his irrational and outer-determined racial Others. **To consider that this modern/colonial grammar** has endured for over five centuries does not minimize its internal variation, the importance of its ongoing contestation, nor the possibility of its further rearticulation. **However, it does raise questions about the available possibilities for justice within it.** *Black life* According to Moten (2003), There are those who act as if the only way to speak or fathom or measure the unspeakable, unfathomable, immeasurable venality of the slavers is by way of the absolute degradation of the enslaved**. But such calculation is faulty from the start insofar as we are irreducible to what is done to us**... (p. 56) Indeed, although **the modern global order situates Blackness as “always already a referent of commodity**, an object, and the other, as fact beyond evidence” (Silva, 2014: 81), this in no way delimits what Black life was, is, and can be. Wilderson clarifies the differ- ence thusly: “I’m not saying that in this space of negation, which is blackness, there is no life. We have tremendous life. But this life is not analogous to those touchstones of cohe- sion that hold civil society together” (Hartman and Wilderson, 2003: 187). Many have noted that in excess of both the position of non-being ascribed to Black persons by modernity’s grammar and of Man’s narrowly imagined possibilities for existence, Blackness has always offered ways of knowing and being otherwise (Moten, 2003, 2008, 2013; Scott and Wynter, 2010; Sexton, 2011; Silva, 2013, 2014). **According to Silva** (2014), because Man’s claims to sovereign subjecthood are dependent upon Black affectability and objecthood, the stability of this relation is constantly under- mined by “the radical potential Blackness hosts” (p. 84). **This radical potential contains “another text ... a grammar that exceeds existing articulations of the human as a thing of self-determination”** (Silva, 2013: 57). If Man’s conceptual coherence and material continuation are premised on Blackness as a threatening but necessary lack and nega- tion, **then Black life cannot be adequately recognized or represented by or through his grammar without repeating this violence.**

**The aff’s prescription of a pluralist politics organized through pluralism is will always reproduce anti-blackness – their attempt at pragmatics and the aspiration of Truth is always grounded in anti-Black desires.**

**Sexton 16** (Jared Sexton, associate professor of African American Studies at UC Irvine, associate professor of Film and Media Studies at UC Irvine, PhD in ethnic studies from UC Berkeley, 2016, “Afropessimism: The Unclear Word,” *Rhizomes* Issue 29, footnotes 2 and 3 included in curly braces) gz

[6] Astonishingly, all of this refuses to countenance the rhetorical dimensions of the discourse of Afro-Pessimism (despite the minor detail that its principal author is a noted creative writer and its first major statement is found in an award-winning literary work of memoir) and the **productive theoretical effects** of the fiction it creates, namely, a meditation on a poetics and politics of abjection wherein racial blackness operates as an **asymptotic approximation** of that which **disturbs every claim or formation of identity and difference as such**.[2] {2. See Millay's (2013) related discussion of Jameson's "theoretical pragmatics." He argues: "Jameson's particular understanding of theory can thus be helpfully labeled *theory as pragmatics*. And let me be clear right away: this practice of **theoretical pragmatics** has nothing to do with the philosophical school of pragma*tism*; rather, the practice of **theory as pragmatics** is made up of theoretical interpretations of philosophy, economics, political theory, culture, and art that do not aspire to Truth but rather to **change the world in this moment**. This is **theory as pragmatics**, not the philosophical school of pragmatism, but the practice of **using theory to change the present world**" (48).} Afro-Pessimism is thus not against the politics of coalition simply because coalitions tend systematically to render supposed common interests as the **concealed particular interests of the most powerful and privileged elements of the alliance**. Foremost, Afro-Pessimism it seeks, in Wilderson's parlance, "to **shit on the inspiration of the personal pronoun *we***" (143) because coalitions require a **logic of identity and difference**, of **collective selves modeled on the construct of the modern individual**, **an entity whose coherence is purchased at the expense of whatever is cast off by definition**. The subject of politics is **essentially dividual** and there is in effect always another intervention to be made on behalf of some aspect of the group excluded in the name of the proper.[3] {3. Wilderson (2010) glosses this process as follows: "At every scale of nearly every genre of social meditation on value and its drama, **the personal pronoun *we* assumes a fetishized and hypothesized value-form**. Simply put, **Humankind is taken as a given**. Its **reification as a rhetorical commodity** goes something like this: Through symbolic interventions **all people are capable**, have the capacity, of transformation and recomposition. This change-power, this subjective transformation and recomposition, happens over time and across space. *We*, then, registers in cultural discourse, albeit superficially, as in ***we* all have a language**, ***we* all have customs**, ***we* all can dream of home**, ***we* all have families**, ***we* all have a heritage**, ***we* all have a place of origin**. The inspiration of *we* is a **Humanizing inspiration**. It welcomes all to the family of (wo)man **except the Family Thanatos**" (262).} The **ever-expansive inclusionary gesture** must thus be **displaced** by another more **radical approach**: an **ethics of the real**, a **politics of the imperative**, engaged in its **interminably downward movement**. This daunting task entails making necessity out of virtue, as it were, willing the *need* for the black radical imagination and **not just its revisable demand**. If certain scholars whose work has been instructive or inspirational for Afro-Pessimism miss this point too, it may have something to do with the **search for a method of gaining agency** that, while rightly suspending the assumption of an *a priori* agent, nonetheless **rushes past the hidden structure of violence that underwrites so many violent acts**, whether spectacular or mundane.

#### The alternative is an unflinching paradigmatic analysis that demands for an end to the world – we must call into question the ethicality of modernity itself by entering into a constant interrogation with black positionality and the 1AC.

**Wilderson ’10** -- Prof of Drama and African American Studies @ UC Irvine (Frank B. III, Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms, pages ix-x)

STRANGE AS it might 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 by and 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 and Apartheid), so I'll not rehearse the details here. Suffice it to say, this book germinated in the many political and 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.

## CASE

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