## 1

### 1NC

#### Anti-blackness is libidinal—so-called emancipatory movements rely on a position of coherence which desires the absolute dereliction of blackness

**Wilderson 02**

Frank Wilderson- The Prison Slave as Hegemony's (Silent) Scandal-Presented at imprisoned Intellectuals Conference Brown University, April 13th 2002

But this peculiar preoccupation is not Gramsci's bailiwick. His concern is with White folks; or with folks in a White(ned) enough subject position that they are confronted by, or threatened by the removal of, a wage -- be it monetary or social. But Black subjectivity itself disarticulates the Gramscian dream as a ubiquitous emancipatory strategy, because Gramsci, like most White activists, and radical American movements like the prison abolition movement, has no theory of the unwaged, no solidarity with the slave If we are to take Fanon at his word when he writes, Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder (37) then we must accept the fact that no other body functions in the Imaginary, the Symbolic, or the Real so completely as a repository of complete disorder as the Black body. Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction at the level of the Real, for in its magnetizing of bullets the Black body functions as the map of gratuitous violence through which civil society is possible: namely, those other bodies for which violence is, or can be, contingent. Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction at the level of the Symbolic, for Blackness in America generates no categories for the chromosome of History, no data for the categories of Immigration or Sovereignty; it is an experience without analog a past, without a heritage. Blackness is the site of absolute dereliction at the level of the Imaginary for whoever says rape says Black, (Fanon), whoever says prison says Black, and whoever says AIDS says Black (Sexton) the Negro is a phobogenic object (Fanon). Indeed &a phobogenic object &a past without a heritage &the map of gratuitous violence &a program of complete disorder. But whereas this realization is, and should be cause for alarm, it should not be cause for lament, or worse, disavowal not at least, for a true revolutionary, or for a truly revolutionary movement such as prison abolition. 15 If a social movement is to be neither social democratic, nor Marxist, in terms of the structure of its political desire then it should grasp the invitation to assume the positionality of subjects of social death that present themselves; and, if we are to be honest with ourselves we must admit that the Negro has been inviting Whites, and as well as civil society s junior partners, to the dance of social death for hundreds of years, but few have wanted to learn the steps. They have been, and remain today even in the most anti-racist movements, like the prison abolition movement invested elsewhere. This is not to say that all oppositional political desire today is pro-White, but it is to say that it is almost always anti-Black which is to say it will not dance with death. Black liberation, as a prospect, makes radicalism more dangerous to the U.S. Not because it raises the specter of some alternative polity (like socialism, or community control of existing resources) but because its condition of possibility as well as its gesture of resistance functions as a negative dialectic: a politics of refusal and a refusal to affirm, a program of complete disorder. One must embrace its disorder, its incoherence and allow oneself to be elaborated by it, if indeed one s politics are to be underwritten by a desire to take this country down. If this is not the desire which underwrites one s politics then through what strategy of legitimation is the word prison being linked to the word abolition ? What are this movement s lines of political accountability? There s nothing foreign, frightening, or even unpracticed about the embrace of disorder and incoherence. The desire to be embraced, and elaborated, by disorder and incoherence is not anathema in and of itself: no one, for example, has ever been known to say gee-whiz, if only my orgasms would end a little sooner, or maybe not come at all. But few so-called radicals desire to be embraced, and elaborated, by the disorder and incoherence of Blackness and the state of political movements in America today is marked by this very Negrophobogenisis: gee-whiz, if only Black rage could be more coherent, or maybe not come at all. Perhaps there’s something more terrifying about the joy of Black, then there is about the joy of sex (unless one is talking sex with a Negro). Perhaps coalitions today prefer to remain in-orgasmic in the face of civil 16 society with hegemony as a handy prophylactic, just in case. But if, through this stasis, or paralysis, they try to do the work of prison abolition that work will fail; because it is always work from a position of coherence (i.e. the worker) on behalf of a position of incoherence, the Black subject, or prison slave. In this way, social formations on the Left remain blind to the contradictions of coalitions between workers and slaves. They remain coalitions operating within the logic of civil society; and function less as revolutionary promises and more as crowding out scenarios of Black antagonisms they simply feed our frustration. Whereas the positionality of the worker be s/he a factory worker demanding a monetary wage or an immigrant or White woman demanding a social wage gestures toward the reconfiguration of civil society, the positionality of the Black subject be s/he a prison-slave or a prison-slave-in-waiting gestures toward the disconfiguration of civil society: from the coherence of civil society, the Black subject beckons with the incoherence of civil war. A civil war which reclaims Blackness not as a positive value, but as a politically enabling site, to quote Fanon, of absolute dereliction : a scandal which rends civil society asunder. Civil war, then, becomes that unthought, but never forgotten understudy of hegemony. A Black specter waiting in the wings, an endless antagonism that cannot be satisfied (via reform or reparation) but must nonetheless be pursued to the death.

#### The empathetic identification with the struggles of health emergencies assumes a global community hardwired for care that does not apply to blackness. It assumes a relational capacity that reads black subjectivity into the world and the fold of the human.

**Wilderson 13**

Wilderson F.B. (2013) ‘Raw Life’ and the Ruse of Empathy. In: Lichtenfels P., Rouse J. (eds) Performance, Politics and Activism. Studies in International Performance. Palgrave Macmillan, London

Empathy is an anchor-tenant in the edifice of aesthetic theory. Rhetoricians argue unreservedly that rhetoric itself cannot proceed without empathy, and that when it does it fails[[1]](#endnote-1). The OED defines empathy as ‘the ability to understand and share the feelings of another’. Arts and humanities theorists extend the definition, describing what occurs during an empathetic encounter as ‘the bodily effort to enter through ‘speech, gesture, tonality’ into another’s way of being or life-world’[[2]](#endnote-2). Narrowing the field to film and theatre theorists, we find that **an empathetic structure of feeling requires that a drama unfold** over what Mike Wayne, borrowing Mikhail Bakhtin’s idea of the ‘chronotope’[[3]](#endnote-3), refers to as biographical time, ‘the time of the psychological and emotional life of characters,’ a ‘conceptualisation of time [that] directs our attention to the way characters grow and develop as a result of their interaction with adventure time’ (Wayne 164). ‘[A]dventure time refers to the unexpected and unforeseen turning of events; the rupturing of the expected flow of events in the time of chance and fortune’ (162). Without a concept of biographical time, ‘characters’ remain fixed, already-defined ‘physical persons’ (164). **Empathy also tenders the promise of a liberatory relation between ‘human beings’ through catharsis (intense release of emotion) and cathexis (locating of emotion into an object, event or person), by staging an encounter that can renew or reestablish the kinship, or communal, structure of feeling that it presumes to exist *ab initio*, as if in a state of nature. It hails the spectator to a filial, natural essence by privileging ‘biographical time,’ time that ‘locates causal agency (the ‘because’ principle of why things happen) at the level of individual characters’** (164) and their essential being. **It can also hail the spectator to a kinship structure of feeling by emphasizing adventure time, as in Greek tragedy wherein, as Robert Cohen notes, the drama unfolds at the level of characters’ individual struggles with divine phenomena or divine ideals**[[4]](#endnote-4). Divergent as these two chronotopes of empathy might be, they both elaborate ‘our feeling of kinship with certain (or all) of the characters, which encourages us to identify with their aspirations, sympathize with their plights, exult their victories, and care deeply about what happens to them’ (22). Both chronotypes base empathy on ‘relation’ and assume that the relation is natural. In a 1963 article titled, ‘Empathy: Implications for Theatre Research,’ George Gunkle sowed early seeds of discontent, lamenting that empathy had been considerably under theorized by dramatic scholars. He accused his colleagues of having ‘seized upon the concept of empathy with more enthusiasm than accuracy’[[5]](#endnote-5). So much so that the term had been ‘stretched to mean almost anything, [and] has come to mean almost nothing’. Empathy, he noted, is applied ‘with an assurance that conceals confusions of verbal definitions. Here, empathy is at once a panacea for theatrical ills and an expression of all that is valuable to the theatre experience’ (21). He called for a grounding of the claims of empathy-theory through appropriation of empirical methods borrowed from the social sciences. Materialists take an even harsher view of empathy than Gunkle’s reformist desire to shore it up with the ‘rigors’ of social science. They characterize its reliance on self-evident and natural relations not as an ensemble of legitimate theoretical tools but as a faith-based initiative better suited for a house of worship than a community of critical inquiry. For example, as an antidote to what he sees as empathetic mystification, Mike Wayne proposes the subordination of biographical time to the chronotope of historical time – ‘the [dramatic] unfolding of events [staged as] the product of collective humanity’ – a chronotope, he argues, more properly suited to the dramatization of ‘sociohistorical heterogeneity’[[6]](#endnote-6), one which can hasten the subordination of empathy to analysis. For Bill Nichols, pitfalls of an empathetic aesthetics lie in the ‘assumption that transformation comes from persuasive intervention in the values and beliefs of individual subjects [rather than from] debates about the ideology of the subject as such’.[[7]](#endnote-7) Empathetic aesthetics, materialists argue, risks dissipating a drama’s critical force by hailing the spectator to a self-evident and impoverished ensemble of questions, such as Isn’t it sad? Isn’t it tragic? Aren’t they funny? Reductive moral judgments at the expense of institutional analysis. An analytic aesthetics, on the other hand, seeks to deconstruct such mystification by privileging *effect over cause*[[8]](#endnote-8), thereby locating causal agency (the ‘because’ principle of the drama) within paradigmatic power relations and not in interpersonal relations, or, as in Greek tragedy, relations between characters and divine forces. Post-structuralists, post-colonialists, post-modernists, and even a critical mass of rhetoreticians have all but abandoned empathy theory, asserting that as a mode of interpellation, as a conceptual framework of interpretation, and as a strategy for liberation within ideological structures (Lacan’s ‘Symbolic’) it is ‘weak, epistemologically flawed, and politically suspicious’[[9]](#endnote-9). **But in spite of the Left turn from empathy (or perhaps in reaction to it), theatre practitioners, creative writers, journalists, and their respective consumers have kept the faith. They remain steadfast in their belief in a common, global, consciousness predicated on humanity’s being hardwired for mutual understanding, and in a notion of subjects as unitary *selves*, whole and transparent to one another. ‘**This ideal submits to what Derrida calls the metaphysics of presence, which seeks to collapse the temporal difference inherent in language and experience into a totality that can be comprehended in one view’[[10]](#endnote-10). That is to say, though empathy theory is suspect in the academy, it rests in the private and quotidian of civil society with all the security and permanence of a grammar. So much so that it is seldom contemplated in and of itself (like god, who is not deconstructed in prayer). To the extent that it is thought of at all, empathy is considered an innate capacity – unlike electricity, electoral power, or capital, which are thought of as capacities that emerge in the wake of massive structural violence upon the earth or upon people, requiring ongoing force to sustain their capacities. **Empathy, as a constituent element of relationality, is rarely juxtaposed with such structural violence and sustainable force.** Rather it presumes a ‘natural’ state of kinship, the always-already of global filiation. **Except when it comes to Blacks. Here, faith in these natural relations is sorely tested.** As much as I appreciate the materialist critique, I am at pains to distance myself from the Aristotelian promise of empathy without cathedralizing the Marxist or materialist promise of analysis. On both sides of this debate, there is a shared optimism that I wish to interrogate, an optimism that assumes relationality within and between all sentient beings, what both camps would refer to as the Human race. For both camps, relationality itself is never in a state of irreparable rupture – whether filial, for empathy, or affilial, for analysis. Their dispute is not over whether relationality itself is possible, but over the *scale* of frayed relations and how best to mend them. It is an open question, however, as to whether or not historical time is any more available to Black people than biographical time, whether the analytic encounter or the empathetic encounter can bring Black people into relationality. The aesthetic and explanatory powers of empathy and analysis are scandalized when confronted with the Black position, a paradigmatic location synonymous with slavery. My claim that Blackness cannot be disimbricated from slaveness is based on a synchronic critique of power which does not deny important diachronic changes in the lived experience of Black people over the past 1,300 years, but maintains that those changes have not impacted the structural position of Blacks in any way which is essential. My argument subtends Orlando Patterson’s corrective to the definition of slavery in which he dispenses with labor as a constitutive element of slavery. Labor, Patterson argues, is a use to which masters often put slaves, but it is not an element which *defines* slavery as a relation; it merely offers the empirical researcher an example of an experience within slavery. Forced labor, therefore, is not what distinguishes slaves from non-slaves, the ‘slave estate’ from civil society.[[11]](#endnote-11) Social death is the concept that Patterson provides, in lieu of labor, to define the slave relation. The constitutive elements of social death are natal alienation, general dishonor, and openness to naked (or gratuitous) violence--violence for which there need be no rationale or limits and from which there is no sanctuary.[[12]](#endnote-12) These constitutive elements do not dictate the state of mind nor do they presage the performance of the slave; they organize the laws of the slave relation, just as exploitation and alienation organize the laws of the capitalist relation. Aristotelian theorists of empathy would no doubt assert that the Black subject is an individual among Humanity’s multitude of individuals. What they fail to realize is that **Blacks are not individuals because Slaves are natally alienated and thus have no filial status, no form of interpersonal filiation which is recognized by and incorporated into civil society in any essential way. Cultural materialists imagine the Black subject as an exploited and alienated subaltern, whose Other is not the entire Human race – not global civil society – but a social formation within Humanity known as capitalists**. What Marxists advocates of analysis fail to realize is that Blacks are not subalterns, because subalterns’ relation to violence is experiential, not structural. Unlike slaves, subalterns are not considered the antithesis of civil society but merely junior partners (the working class) who need to be disciplined; when hegemony doesn’t discipline them, violence kicks in. Because violence accrues to them contingently (as a result of transgressions whether real or fabricated), rather than gratuitously, the working class is a form(ation) of institutional affiliation which, like the filial individual, is recognized by and incorporated into civil society. Though filiation and affiliation might disarticulate one another at the level of *content*, sparking trenchant debate over how subjects are elaborated, learn to care, and create community, they do not disarticulate one another at the level of *form*. **Regardless of who wins the debate about how relationality accrues to or elaborates the subject, relational capacity itself could not exist without being able to point to the slave as that sentient being or cluster of types who are barred from relational status in both content and form. Put another way, civic life requires social death so as not to implode from the pressure of incoherence.** Blackness is the space and time of social death ‘which makes it possible for White and non-White (i.e. Asians and Latinos) positions to exist and, simultaneously, contest existence; to be actors within civil society who can contest the applicability and explanatory power of empathy and analysis’.[[13]](#endnote-13) **This is why the gratuitous violence which accrues to Black people should not be seen as performances of injustice and discrimination which tarnish the image of civil society; but as the repetition compulsion of a world which requires such violence for its sense of self and peace of mind**.

#### Attempts to produce a whole or healthy body is a move to escape blackness

Jared Sexton 11 [University of California, Irvine (School of Humanities)], “The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism,” InTensions Journal Copyright ©2011 by York University (Toronto, Canada), Issue 5 (Fall/Winter 2011), ISSN# 1913-5874, ghs//BZ

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 antiblack 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. [24] To speak of black social life and black social death, black social life against black social death, black social life as black social death, black social life in black social death—all of this is to find oneself in the midst of an argument that is also a profound agreement, an agreement that takes shape in (between) meconnaissance and (dis)belief. Black optimism is not the negation of the negation that is afro-pessimism, just as black social life does not negate black social death by inhabiting it and vitalizing it. A living death is as much a death as it is a living. Nothing in afro-pessimism suggests that there is no black (social) life, only that black life is not social life in the universe formed by the codes of state and civil society, of citizen and subject, of nation and culture, of people and place, of history and heritage, of all the things that colonial society has in common with the colonized, of all that capital has in common with labor—the modern world system. Black life is not lived in the world that the world lives in, but it is lived underground, in outer space. This is agreed. That is to say, what Moten asserts against afro- pessimism is a point already affirmed by afro-pessimism, is, in fact, one of the most polemical dimensions of afro-pessimism as a project: namely, that black life is not social, or rather that black life is lived in social death. Double emphasis, on lived and on death. That’s the whole point of the enterprise at some level. It is all about the implications of this agreed- upon point where arguments (should) begin, but they cannot (yet) proceed. III. Those of us writing in a critical vein in the human sciences often use the phrase “relations of power” and yet we just as often gloss over the complexity of the idea of relation itself, and especially so regarding the relation that relation has with power, or, rather, regarding the way in which power obtains in and as relation. We are not afraid to say, for instance, that relations of power are complex, but we have less to offer when faced with the stubborn fact that relation itself is complex, that is, does not simply suggest a linkage or interaction between one thing and another, between subjects, say, or between objects, or between subjects and objects, or persons and things. The attention to relation that Christina Sharpe (2010), for instance, sustains across her intellectual enterprise puts pressure on any static notion of each term. This is an interrogation of power in its most intimate dimension. We learn not just that power operates intimately (which it does) or that intimacy is inextricable from the question of power (which it is), but that the relation between the two—when it is brought into view, within earshot, when it enters language—deranges what we mean, or what we thought we understood, by the former and the latter. What is power? What is intimacy? How do we know this at all? How to communicate it? And where or when are these questions, and their relation, posed with greater force—political force, psychic force, historical force—than within the precincts of the New World slave estate, and within the time of New World slavery? We still must ask at this late stage, “What is slavery?” The answer, or the address, to this battery of questions, involves a strange and maddening itinerary that would circumnavigate the entire coastline or maritime borders of the Atlantic world, enabling the fabrication and conquest of every interior—bodily, territorial, and conceptual. To address all of this is to speak the name of race in the first place, to speak its first word. What is slavery? And what does it mean to us, and for us? What does slavery mean for the very conception of the objective pronoun “us”? [26] If the intimacy of power suggests the sheer difficulty of difference, the trouble endemic to determining where the white imagination ends and the black imagination begins, then the power of intimacy suggests, with no less tenacity and no less significance, that our grand involvement across the color line is structured like the figure of an envelope, folds folded within folds: a black letter law whose message is obscured, enveloped, turned about, reversed. Here a structure of violence is inscribed problematically in narrative, an inscription that can only struggle and fail to be something other than a writing-off, or a writing-over. The massive violence that founds and opens a structure of vulnerability, a world-making enjoyment of that violence of enjoyment disappears into the telos of resolution, the closure of family romance, the drive for kinship, where insistence replaces imposition. Black rage converts magically to black therapeutics, a white mythology that disavows its points of origin in the theft that creates the crime and its alibi at once. This illegible word, where affect drops away only to remain, is what Sharpe terms “monstrous intimacy,” “a memory for forgetting.”xv And what would we do without it? Indeed, what might we do? [27] What kind of politics might be possible across this gap, as wide as a river, as thin as a veil? It is a powerful misrecognition that enables an understanding of afro-pessimism as moving against black life, in other words, of pathologizing blackness. Blackness is not the pathogen in the afro- pessimist imagination and it is a wonder how one could read it so even as it is no wonder at all. No, blackness is not the pathogen in afro-pessimism, the world is. Not the earth, but the world, and maybe even the whole possibility of and desire for a world. This is not to say that blackness is the cure, either. It is and it isn’t. If, as Moten suggests, radicalism is the general critique of the proper and blackness is radicalism in the split difference between experience and fact; then afro-pessimism, in its general critique of the myriad recuperations of the proper at the singular expense of blackness (blackness in some ways as that expense of the proper) is, in fact, the celebration (of the experience) of blackness as (the) performance (of) study.

**The alternative is an unflinching paradigmatic analysis that poses the question of whether civil society is ethical or not**

**Wilderson 10** (Frank B. III, “Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms, pg. ix-x) \*\*we reject author’s use of ableist language

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 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.

#### The 1AC and any perm forecloses the possibility of radical questioning about the ethicality of civil society by structurally adjusting the black body through the “political action” that ceases to be “inclusive” – the aff’s starting point places the black body upon a psychologically traumatic, dielectric state of abandonment that forecloses black liberation – if we win that their scholarship produces this structural violence that is an independent reason to vote negative

**Wilderson ‘10** (Frank B Wilderson III- Professor at UC irvine- Red, White and Black- p.  **8-10)**

I have little interest in assailing political conservatives. Nor is my ar- gument wedded to the disciplinary needs of political science, or even sociology, where injury must be established, first, as White supremacist event, from which one then embarks on a demonstration of intent, or racism; and, if one is lucky, or foolish, enough, a solution is proposed. If the position of the Black is, as I argue, a paradigmatic impossibility in the Western Hemisphere, indeed, in the world, in other words, if a Black is the very antithesis of a Human subject, as imagined by Marxism and psy- choanalysis, then his or her paradigmatic exile is not simply a function of repressive practices on the part of institutions (as political science and sociology would have it). This banishment from the Human fold is to be found most profoundly in the emancipatory meditations of Black people's staunchest "allies," and in some of the most "radical" films. Here—not in restrictive policy, unjust legislation, police brutality, or conservative scholarship—is where the Settler/Master's sinews are most resilient. The polemic animating this research stems from (1) my reading of Native and Black American meta-commentaries on Indian and Black subject positions written over the past twenty-three years and ( 2 ) a sense of how much that work appears out of joint with intellectual protocols and political ethics which underwrite political praxis and socially engaged popular cinema in this epoch of multiculturalism and globalization. The sense of abandonment I experience when I read the meta-commentaries on Red positionality (by theorists such as Leslie Silko, Ward Churchill, Taiaiake Alfred, Vine Deloria Jr., and Haunani-Kay Trask) and the meta-commentaries on Black positionality (by theorists such as David Marriott, Saidiya Hartman, Ronald Judy, Hortense Spillers, Orlando Patterson, and Achille Mbembe) against the deluge of multicultural positivity is overwhelming. One suddenly realizes that, though the semantic field on which subjec- tivity is imagined has expanded phenomenally through the protocols of multiculturalism and globalization theory, Blackness and an unflinching articulation of Redness are more unimaginable and illegible within this expanded semantic field than they were during the height of the F B I ' S repressive Counterintelligence Program ( C O I N T E L P R O ) . On the seman- tic field on which the new protocols are possible, Indigenism can indeed lO become partially legible through a programmatics of structural adjust- ment (as fits our globalized era). In other words, for the Indians' subject position to be legible, their positive registers of lost or threatened cultural identity must be foregrounded, when in point of fact the antagonistic register of dispossession that Indians "possess" is a position in relation to a socius structured by genocide. As Churchill points out, everyone from Armenians to Jews have been subjected to genocide, but the Indigenous position is one for which genocide is a constitutive element, not merely an historical event, without which Indians would not, paradoxically, "exist." 9 Regarding the Black position, some might ask why, after claims suc- cessfully made on the state by the Civil Rights Movement, do I insist on positing an operational analytic for cinema, film studies, and political theory that appears to be a dichotomous and essentialist pairing of Masters and Slaves? In other words, why should we think of today's Blacks in the United States as Slaves and everyone else (with the exception of Indians) as Masters? One could answer these questions by demonstrat- ing how nothing remotely approaching claims successfully made on the state has come to pass. In other words, the election of a Black president aside, police brutality, mass incarceration, segregated and substandard schools and housing, astronomical rates of H I V infection, and the threat of being turned away en masse at the polls still constitute the lived expe- rience of Black life. But such empirically based rejoinders would lead us in the wrong direction; we would find ourselves on "solid" ground, which would only mystify, rather than clarify, the question. We would be forced to appeal to "facts," the "historical record," and empirical markers of stasis and change, all of which could be turned on their head with more of the same. Underlying such a downward spiral into sociology, political sci- ence, history, and public policy debates would be the very rubric that I am calling into question: the grammar of suffering known as exploitation and alienation, the assumptive logic whereby subjective dispossession is arrived at in the calculations between those who sell labor power and those who acquire it. The Black qua the worker. Orlando Patterson has already dispelled this faulty ontological grammar in Slavery and Social Death, where he demonstrates how and why work, or forced labor, is not a constituent element of slavery. Once the "solid" plank of "work" is removed from slavery, then the conceptually coherent notion of "claims against the state"—the proposition that the state and civil society are elastic enough to even contemplate the possibility of an emancipatory project for the Black position—disintegrates into thin air. The imaginary of the state and civil society is parasitic on the Middle Passage. Put an- other way, No slave, no world. And, in addition, as Patterson argues, no slave is in the world. If, as an ontological position, that is, as a grammar of suffering, the Slave is not a laborer but an anti-Human, a position against which Hu- manity establishes, maintains, and renews its coherence, its corporeal in- tegrity; if the Slave is, to borrow from Patterson, generally dishonored, perpetually open to gratuitous violence, and void of kinship structure, that is, having no relations that need be recognized, a being outside of re- lationality, then our analysis cannot be approached through the rubric of gains or reversals in struggles with the state and civil society, not unless and until the interlocutor first explains how the Slave is of the world. The onus is not on one who posits the Master/Slave dichotomy but on the one who argues there is a distinction between Slaveness and Blackness. How, when, and where did such a split occur? The woman at the gates of Columbia University awaits an answer.

## 2

### 1NC

#### Interp – Reduce means permanent reduction – it’s distinct from temporary suspensions.

**Reynolds, 59** – Judge (In the Matter of Doris A. Montesani, Petitioner, v. Arthur Levitt, as Comptroller of the State of New York, et al., Respondents [NO NUMBER IN ORIGINAL] Supreme Court of New York, Appellate Division, Third Department 9 A.D.2d 51; 189 N.Y.S.2d 695; 1959 N.Y. App. Div. LEXIS 7391 August 13, 1959)

Section 83's counterpart with regard to nondisability pensioners, section 84, prescribes a reduction only if the pensioner should again take a public job. The disability pensioner is penalized if he takes any type of employment. The reason for the difference, of course, is that in one case the only reason pension benefits are available is because the pensioner is considered incapable of gainful employment, while in the other he has fully completed his "tour" and is considered as having earned his reward with almost no strings attached. It would be manifestly unfair to the ordinary retiree to accord the disability retiree the benefits of the System to which they both belong when the latter is otherwise capable of earning a living and had not fulfilled his service obligation. If it were to be held that withholdings under section 83 were payable whenever the pensioner died or stopped his other employment the whole purpose of the provision would be defeated, i.e., the System might just as well have continued payments during the other employment since it must later pay it anyway.  [\*\*\*13]  The section says "reduced", does not say that monthly payments shall be temporarily suspended; it says that the pension itself shall be reduced. The plain dictionary meaning of the word is to diminish, lower or degrade. The word "reduce" seems adequately to indicate permanency.

#### Violation – the plan waives intellectual property protections temporarily, which is an indefinite suspension. 1AC plan text says that it only waives ip protections during public health emergencies and that they only apply during those times

#### Net Benefits –

#### [1] Limits – Their interpretation turns negative CPs into affs and explodes the quantity of affs to include different types of use restrictions for infinitely different time frames – expands already massive aff ground to include short-term insurance blocks, executive orders, patent waivers, data exclusivity waivers, trade secret waivers, emergency-listings, and other temporary policies

means there are no unified neg generics because you can’t read a regulations counterplan against a temporary reduction aff, and temporary reductions solve the internal link to every disad since they bring back the protections later. They turn every generic counterplan into an aff, which makes effective neg prep on a big topic completely impossible.

#### That massively expands aff ground and makes it impossible for the neg to predict and prep for every aff – means no unified neg generics since the debate to the margins of the topic and make the debate about whether regulation is good—completely changes the division of ground and kills in-depth topic education.

#### Limits is a VI—they let the neg generate good prep, and forces in-depth debates

#### DTD on T – the debate shouldn’t have happened if they were abusive

#### Competing Interps on T since its binary and a question of models – Good enough isn’t good—there can be no reasonable interp of what the topic actually means

#### No RVIs on T – 1] Illogical—T is a gateway issue, winning T is meeting a baseline to have the debate to begin with 2] T is reactionary, they shouldn’t win for meeting their preround burden 3] Forcing the 1NC to go all in on theory kills substance education and neg flex—o/w on real world

## Case

#### Extinction-based scenario-planning and apocalyptic narratives drive us to protect a white and European dominated future- it’s corrupted by white influence and masks other non-Western perspectives.

**Mitchell and Chaudhury 20.** Mitchell, A., & Chaudhury, A. (2020). Worlding beyond “the” “end” of “the world”: white apocalyptic visions and BIPOC futurisms. International Relations, 004711782094893. doi:10.1177/0047117820948936//vg

It is often said that the ‘end of the world’ is approaching – but whose world, exactly, is expected to end? Over the last several decades, a popular and increasingly influential literature on ‘human extinction’, ‘global catastrophic risks’, and eco-apocalypse has emerged in the social sciences and popular culture. This rapidly growing body of knowledge is produced by scientists, science journalists, policy-analysts, and scholars of global affairs, all seeking to reach broad audiences and influence international policy-making. Their central aim is to diagnose the gravest global threats and to offer strategies to protect the future of what they regard as ‘humanity’. Yet, despite their claims to universality, we argue that these ‘end of the world’ discourses are more specifically concerned about protecting the future of whiteness. Although our primary aim in this article is to diagnose these potentially destructive narratives, we also engage with the rich and varied sphere of BIPOC2 (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) futurisms. These contributions challenge the perception that there is no alternative to the apocalyptic futures imagined by white scholars. They work to create plural worlds that vastly exceed white visions of ‘the’ end of ‘the world’, embodying much wider, diverse, and transformative concepts of, and beyond, ‘humanity’, ‘nature’, and ‘the planet’. We view this article as a call for IR scholars to recognize and engage these plural imaginaries, which contest and perforate the boundaries of mainstream IR concepts such as ‘humanity’, ‘agency’, ‘governance’, ‘threat’, and ‘harm’. As Amy Niang’s contribution to this special issue shows,3 those concepts are too often constructed through forms of power that negate, oppress, and super-exploit particular human bodies, societies, and ways of being. Our analysis takes seriously this special issue’s efforts toward ‘thinking IR into the future’, but with several important caveats. First, we reject the Euro-centric notion that there is ‘a’ or ‘the’ single future – just as we reject the notion of a single world, now or ever. Such assumptions are at the core of the mainstream apocalyptic visions (and their linear temporalities) that are increasing integral to IR imaginaries at the ‘turn’ of the discipline’s ‘first century’. We contend that the foundational and generative role of such imaginaries in global power structures does not receive adequate attention in the field of IR or in the broader social and natural sciences. As a result, their tendency to narrow and homogenize the futures of worlds, plural, goes largely unchecked within the discipline and its discourses. Yet the white futurist discourses we discuss are influential: they aim to bring about major shifts in global public consciousness and policy-making and strategy. They are often accorded validation by the scientific credentials of their authors and their embeddedness in large-scale data and modeling processes. Through these means of public persuasion, such discourses have the potential to shape concepts that are, and will likely continue to be, foundational to IR: how threats are understood; the boundaries of ‘humanity’ and ‘nonhumanity’, and the distributions of harm across and beyond these structures; and the forms of agency and governance demanded by, and deemed acceptable within, a context of global crises. An interdisciplinary IR concerned with interconnected global challenges – the aspiration of this special issue – needs to attend to how dominant narratives and futural imaginaries cut off and sideline the concrete presents and possible futures of plural Others. Second, where this special issue asks ‘how we should hold things together, conceptually, empirically and disciplinarily’ (see introduction, italics ours), Mitchell and Chaudhury 3 we ask what possibilities arise when current structures fall apart – or, indeed, are actively dismantled by the resurgence of worlds they seek to oppress or erase. Far from seeing this scenario solely in terms of catastrophe, as many of the narratives discussed in this article do, we want to open up more conversation in IR about its emancipatory, creative potential for the global connection between and amongst plural worlds. With these aims in mind, we start by examining a number of salient and influential works in the field addressing global crises, including ‘global catastrophic risks’ and ‘human extinction’, demonstrating how they express anxiety for, and seek to protect whiteness. The second section points to BIPOC futurisms that directly challenge the futures circumscribed by whiteness and offer distinct forms of subjectivity, temporality, and mobilities for responding to ongoing disaster. Throughout, we focus on how futures are imagined, who imagines them and with whose flourishing in mind in competing struggles for survival and thriving in (post-) catastrophic worlds. White subjectivities Discourses that predict the imminent ‘end of the world’ are not as universal as they often claim to be. The futures they fear for, seek to protect and work to construct are rooted in a particular set of global social structures and subjectivities: whiteness. Whiteness is not reducible to skin pigmentation, genetics or genealogy. It is a set of cultural, political, economic, normative, and subjective structures derived from Eurocentric societies and propagated through global formations such as colonization and capitalism. These multi-scalar structures work by segregating bodies through the inscription of racial difference, privileging those they recognize or construct as ‘white’4 and unequally distributing harms to those that they do not.5 Whiteness is also a form of property6 that accrues benefits – including material, physical, and other forms of security – and pervasive forms of power, across space, time, and social structures. Due in part to its trans-formation through long-duration, global patterns of violence and conquest, whiteness takes unique forms wherever and whenever it coalesces, so it should not be treated as universal – despite its own internal claims to this status. Most of the leading contributors to mainstream ‘end of the world’ discourses discussed in this article are rooted in Euro-American cultural contexts, and in particular in settler colonial and/or imperial states such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. As such, the forms of whiteness they embody are linked to particular histories of settlement, frontier cultures, resource-based imperialisms, genocides of Indigenous communities, histories of slavery, and modes of anti-Blackness. Whiteness is remarkable in its ability to render itself invisible to those who possess and benefit from it. Many, if not most, of the (often liberal humanitarian) authors of ‘end of the world’ discourses seem unaware of its integral influence on their thinking, and would almost certainly be horrified at the thought of their work entrenching racialized injustices. We are not suggesting that these authors espouse explicit, intentional and/or extreme racist ideals, on which much public discussion by white people of racism tends to focus.7 Nor do we wish to homogenize or present as equivalent all of the viewpoints discussed in this paper, which display a range of expressions of whiteness and levels of awareness thereof.8 On the contrary, we work to center broad, everyday, structural ways in which underlying logics of whiteness and white supremacy frame and permeate mainstream paradigms and discourses, including those identified as liberal, humanitarian, or progressive. Even amongst white people who consciously and explicitly disavow racism, unconscious, habitual, normalized, structurally-embedded assumptions circulate, and are reproduced in ways that perpetuate race9 as a global power structure. This includes one of the authors of this paper (Mitchell), who, as a white settler,10 continues to benefit from and participate – and thus ‘invest’11 – in structures of whiteness, and therefore has a continual responsibility to confront them (although total divestment is not possible).12 The ‘habits’ of racism13 are reflected strongly in the way that contemporary ‘end of the world’ narratives frame their protagonists: those attributed with meaningful agency and ethical status in the face of global threats; those whose survival or flourishing is prioritized or treated as a bottom line when tradeoffs are imagined and planned; and, crucially, those deemed capable of and entitled to ‘save the world’ and determine its future. This is expressed in several key features of the genre, including its domination by white thinkers; the forms of subjectivity and agency it embraces; and the ways it contrasts its subjects against BIPOC communities. First, contributors to fast-growing fields like the study of ‘existential risk’ or ‘global catastrophic risk’ are overwhelmingly white. As we will see, almost all of the authors identified by the literature review on which this paper is based, and certainly the most influential thinkers in the field, are white. For example, the seminal collection Global Existential Risk, 14 which claims to offer a comprehensive snapshot of this field, is edited by two white male Europeans (Nick Bostrom and Milan Circovic) and authored by an almost entirely white (and all-male) group of scholars. Likewise, the most senior positions within influential think tanks promoting the study of ‘existential risk’, such as the Future of Humanity Institute, the Cambridge Center for the Study of Existential Risk and Humanprogress.org, are dominated by white men, with few exceptions.15 Another expression of this tendency toward epistemic whiteness is found in the habit, prominent amongst white academics, of citing all or mostly-white scholars, which entrenches a politics of citation16 that privileges whiteness and acknowledges only some intersectionalities as relevant.17 As mentioned above, Mitchell’s (2017)18 work offers an example of this tendency: while it engages critical, feminist, and queer postapocalyptic visions written by white authors, it does not center BIPOC perspectives or knowledge systems. These examples do not simply raise issues of numerical representation, nor can whiteness necessarily be dismantled simply by altering these ratios. More importantly, all-white or majority white spaces create epistemes in which most contributors share cultural backgrounds, assumptions, and biases that are rarely challenged by alternative worldviews, knowledge systems or registers of experience. In such epistemes the perceived boundaries of ‘human thought’ are often elided with those of Euro-centric knowledge. For example, influential American settler journalist David Wallace-Wells19 contends that there exists no framework for grasping climate change besides ‘mythology and theology’. In so doing, he ignores centuries of ongoing, systematic observation and explicit articulations of concern by BIPOC knowledge keepers about climactic change. The bracketing of BIPOC knowledges not only severely limits the rigor of discourses on global crises, but also, as bi-racial organizer and thinker adrienne maree brown20 argues, it produces distorted outcomes. Mitchell and Chaudhury 5 For instance, it smuggles normative judgments that ‘turn Brown bombers into terrorists and white bombers into mentally ill victims’ into apparently ‘objective’ claims. Similarly, the influential work of Black American criminologist Ruth Wilson Gilmore21 demonstrates how white imaginaries of the threat posed by BIPOC bodies has produced the massive global penal complex and the radically unequal distribution of life chances. In short, imaginaries create worlds, so it matters greatly whose are privileged, and whose are excluded. Further, emerging narratives of the ‘end of the world’ explicitly center figures of whiteness as their protagonists – as the survivors of apocalypse, the subjects capable of saving the world from it, and as those most threatened. In these discourses, ‘survivors’ are framed as saviors able to protect and/or regenerate and even improve Western forms of governance and social order by leveraging resilience, scientific prowess, and technological genius. For example, the cover of American settler scientists Tony Barnosky and Elizabeth Hadley’s book Tipping Points for Planet Earth features a stylized male ‘human’ whom they identify as former California governor Jerry Brown (a powerful white settler politician) holding the earth back from rolling over a cliff.22 Similarly, presenting a thought experiment about the planet’s future, Homer-Dixon23 asks his readers to imagine ‘an average male – call him John’ (in fact, the most popular male name globally at the time of writing was Mohammed). This is followed by images of a Caucasian male dressed in safari or hiking gear – both emblematic of symbols colonial conquest24 – tasked with choosing from two forks on a path, as imagined by white American poet Robert Frost. This image of rugged masculine whiteness, embodied in physical strength, colonial prowess, and the ability to dominate difficult landscapes is mirrored in his framing of his former co-workers on oil rigs in the Canadian prairies25 as models of resilience. Similarly, American settler science writer Annalee Newitz26 proposes the Canadian province of Saskatchewan as a ‘model for human survival’, based on her perceptions of the resilience, persistence and collaborative frontier attitudes of its people. Saskatchewan is a notoriously racist part of Canada, in which violence against Indigenous people continues to be integral to its white-dominated culture27 – yet this polity and its culture are held up by Newitz as a model of ‘human’ resilience. By imagining subjects in whom whiteness is elided with resilience and survival, these discourses not only normalize and obscure the modes of violence and oppression through which perceived ‘resilience’ – or, in blunt terms, preferential access to survival – is achieved. They also work to displace the threat of total destruction ‘onto others who are seen as lacking the resourcefulness of the survivor’.28 In addition, many ‘end of the world’ narratives interpellate subjects of white privilege by assuming that readers are not (currently) affected by the harms distributed unequally by global structures of environmental racism. For instance, Barnosky and Hadley29 (italics ours) state, ‘if you are anything like we are, you probably think of pollution as somebody else’s problem. . . you probably don’t live near a tannery, mine dump or any other source of pollution’. For many people of color, living near a source of pollution may be nearly inescapable as a result of structural-material discrimination, including zoning practices and the accessibility of housing.30 Viewing ecological harms as ‘someone else’s problem’ is a privilege afforded to those who have never been forced contemplate the destruction of their communities or worlds.31 At the same time, these authors – along with many others working in the genre – invoke narratives akin to ‘all lives matter’ or 6 International Relations 00(0) ‘colour-blindness’32 that erase unequal distributions of harm and threat. For instance, during their international travels for scientific research and leisure, Barnosky and Hadley (italics ours) describe a dawning awareness that ‘the problems we were writing about. . . were everybody’s problems. . .no one was escaping the impacts. . . including us’. They go on to frame as equivalent flooding in Pakistan that displaced 20million people and killed 2000 with the inconveniences caused by the temporary flooding of the New York subway system in 2012. In addition, they cite evidence of endocrine disruption in American girls caused by pollution, stating that the youngest of the cohort are African American and Latina but that ‘the most dramatic increase is in Caucasian girls’33 (italics ours). In this framing, even though BIPOC children remain most adversely affected, white children are pushed to the foreground and framed as more urgently threatened in relative terms. These comparisons background the disproportionate burden of ecological harm born by BIPOC, and reflect a stark calculus of the relative value of white and BIPOC lives. The ‘all lives matter’ logic employed here constructs ‘a universal human frailty’34 in which responsibility for ecological threats is attributed to ‘humans’ in general, and the assignment of specific culpability is avoided. While Newitz avers that ‘assigning blame [for ecological harm] is less important than figuring out how to. . . survive’,35 we argue that accurately attributing responsibility is crucial to opening up futures in which it is possible to dismantle the structural oppressions that unequally distribute harms and chances for collective survival. Preoccupation with the subjects of whiteness in ‘end of the world’ discourses is also reflected in the framing of BIPOC communities as threats to the survival of ‘humanity’. These fears are perhaps most simply and starkly expressed in anxieties over population decline within predominantly white countries, paired with palpable fear of rising birth rates amongst BIPOC communities. Chillingly, such fears are often connected to the mere biological survival of BIPOC, and the reproductive capacities of Black and Brown bodies – especially those coded as ‘female’, and therefore ‘fertile’ within colonial gender binaries.36 For instance, in his treatise on ‘over’-population, American settler science writer Alan Weisman addresses the ‘problem’ raised by the likely significant increase of survival rates (especially amongst children) as a result of widely-available cures for illnesses such as malaria or HIV. Since, he avers, it would be ‘unconscionable’ to withhold these vaccines, Weisman suggests that malaria and HIV research funding should also promote family planning – that is, control of BIPOC fertility – since ‘there’s no vaccine against extinction’.37 Here, BIPOC survival and reproductivity is literally – even if not strictly intentionally – framed as an incurable disease that could culminate in ‘extinction’. Although some of these discussions examine total growth in human populations globally,38 much of this research focuses on relative population sizes, usually of BIPOCmajority places to those inscribed as white. For instance, British doctor John Guillebaud predicts a ‘birth dearth’ in Europe while likening ‘unremitting population growth’ in other parts of the world to ‘the doctrine of the cancer cell’.39 Although these regions are described in various ways throughout the genre – for instance, as ‘poor’ or ‘developing’, the areas slated for growth are almost always BIPOC-majority. For example, Hungarian demographer Paul Demeny (italics ours) argues that Europe’s population is steadily shrinking ‘while nearby populations explode’.40 Drawing on Demeny’s work, HomerDixon warns of a future 3:1 demographic ratio between North Africa/West Asia and Mitchell and Chaudhury 7 Europe, along with 70% growth in Bangladesh, 140% growth in Kenya, and a doubling of the populations of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Nigeria. Directly after sharing these statistics, he appends a list of international news reports referring to, for example, clashes between Indigenous communities in Kenya, riots in Shanghai, and murder rates in Mexico.41 In so doing, he directly juxtaposes BIPOC population growth with stereotypes of violence and ‘incivility’. BIPOC are often represented in these narratives as embodiments of ecological collapse and threat, embedding the assumption that ‘black people don’t care about the environment’,42 and that the global ‘poor’ will always prioritize short-term economic needs above ecological concerns. This belief is reflected in travelogue-style descriptions of ecological devastation, including Barnosky and Hadley’s musings, while on holiday in Utah, that the ancient Puebloan society collapsed because they had run out of water – a situation which they project onto future Sudan, Somalia, and Gaza. In addition, they diagnose the fall of what they call the ‘extinct’ Mayan community to overpopulation and over-exploitation of resources – despite the survivance43 of over 6million Mayan people in their Ancestral lands and other places at the time of writing.44 These descriptions chime with the common refrain on the part of settler states that BIPOC are unable to care properly for their land, even in the absence of conflicting data. This constructed ignorance allows those states to frame BIPOC territories as ‘wasteland’ awaiting annexation or improvement, or as dumping grounds for the externalities of capitalism.45 What’s more, the use of BIPOC communities as cautionary tales for planetary destruction strongly suggests that the redistribution of global power, land ownership, and other forms of agency toward BIPOC structures would result in ecological disaster.

#### The medical industrial complex and biomedicine are built on colonialism and the exploitation of black bodies for experimentation

Wallace 20 (Gwendolyn Wallace (she/her) is a senior at Yale University pursuing a BA in the History of Science and Medicine, concentrating in Gender, Reproduction, and the Body. Her research interests include histories of community health activism, reproductive justice, and the intersections between race-making, science, and medicine. Gwendolyn enjoys working with young children, gardening, and searching for used bookstores to explore.), “To Abolish the Medical industrial Complex”, Black Agenda Report, 7-8-20, <https://www.blackagendareport.com/abolish-medical-industrial-complex> NT

“Our systems of medical “care” have been built on carceral logics.” Black health disparities are not an incidental feature of the healthcare system. The coronavirus pandemic has further demonstrated that the medical industrial complex is so deeply deleterious to Black people that reforms like increasing the number of Black doctors or unconscious bias training for healthcare professionals are not enough to ensure Black people’s live. The values of the medical industrial complex run in contradiction to the well-being of all Black people. In her essay The Death Toll , Saidiya Hartman writes, “the health-care system is routinely indifferent to black suffering, doubting the shared sentence of bodies in pain, uncertain if the human is an expansive category or an exclusive one, if indeed a human is perceived at all.” The pledge to “do no harm” has little meaning when Black people are still excluded from the human. **Ultimately, Black “health” is an impossibility in a system built and sustained by anti-black violence and logics.** From its inception, the medical industrial complex has been in service of white supremacy and capitalism. In Frantz Fanon’s essay “Medicine and Colonialism,” he writes, “The colonial situation does not only vitiate the relations between doctor and patient. We have shown that the doctor always appears as a link in the colonialist network, as a spokesman for the occupying power.” **The ruling class continues to claim that biomedicine is simply abused occasionally for evil purposes, which purposefully detracts from addressing that it has always been a child of slavery and European colonialism**. “Black ‘health’ is an impossibility in a system built and sustained by anti-black violence and logics.” It is no coincidence that today, many health studies continue to act as though race is a biological category that exists without racism. Race-making has always been a crucial mission of the medical industrial complex. In his 1851 “Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro,” Samuel Cartwright, a prominent physician, writes about a mental illness called drapetomania which compels slaves to run away. Twenty-four years after Cartwright’s report, Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., dean of Harvard Medical School and an avid eugenicist, wrote an 1875 essay about mechanisms of crime. He writes, “If genius and talent are inherited...why should not deep-rooted moral defects and obliquities show themselves, as well as other qualities, in the descendants of moral monsters?” Theories of genetic inferiority created by physicians were the same that Prudential, one of the largest insurers of Black people at the time, used to justify their announcement in 1881 that insurance policies held by Black adults would be worth only one third those of white people’s. Their weekly premiums, however, would be the same. It should come as no surprise then, that a 2020 paper published in the Journal of Internal Medicine was entitled, “Obesity in African-Americans: is physiology to blame?” before public outcry forced a change in title. Experimentation on Black people has also created the foundation for medical knowledge. People often reference the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, but there are also a plethora of other studies that were conducted on Black people, like the “Acres of Skin” experiments done by dermatologist Albert M. Kligman on incarcerated Black men in Philadelphia from 1951 to 1974. “Race-making has always been a crucial mission of the medical industrial complex.” **White doctors even abused Black people after their deaths**. In her book Medical Apartheid, scholar Harriet Washington explores the histories of medical schools stealing the bodies of Black people for dissection practice into the 20th century, even going do far as to rob Black cemeteries. Of course, medical history is also rife with examples of doctors abusing Black people’s reproductive freedoms. From J Marion Sims’ experimental surgeries on enslaved Black women in 1845, to George Gey’s 1951 theft of Henrietta Lacks cells which still power the medical industrial complex, biomedical encounters have always been a threat to Black women’s health. The Eugenics Board of North Carolina didn’t cease operations until 1977, and of the almost 8,000 people sterilized in the state, about 5,000 were black. While medical and research institutions make sure to target Black people for experimentation and abuse, they also systematically deny Black people healthcare resources. Chicago’s Southside neighborhood lacked an adult trauma center until 2018, despite its high rates of gun violence. This is just a part of a long history of medical facilities being intentionally built far away from predominantly Black neighborhoods. Framing any of the cases above as an exceptional misuse of science is a dangerous way of avoiding the conversation that they are all expected outcomes of a system that was never made to ensure the health of Black people. **Science and medicine have not simply absorbed the racism of other institutions, they are institutional violence themselves.** The state continues to discredit Black peoples’ legacies of healing through granny midwives, root workers, and conjurers because they are a threat to white supremacist capitalist medicine. **Black people have been, and continue to be, the enemies of medicine. In the end, white people are only able to secure their own health when they can place it next to the unwavering illness of black people that they create and re-create.**

of life. Childhoods are free from watching siblings and friends die from outbreaks of typhoid, scarlet fever, smallpox, measles, and the like.

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
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