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#### 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.

#### Counterhegemonic struggles signify work, progress, production and control which the black subject position scandalizes beyond coherence.

**Wilderson 10**

Frank Wilderson III (2010- republished online, 2003-original release) Gramsci's Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society?, Social Identities, 9:2, 225-240, DOI: [10.1080/1350463032000101579](https://doi.org/10.1080/1350463032000101579)

A Decisive Antagonism Any serious consideration of the question of antagonistic identity formation — a formation, the mass mobilisation of which can precipitate a crisis in the institutions and assumptive logic which undergird the United States of America — must come to grips with the limitations of marxist discourse in the face of the black subject. This is because the United States is constructed at the intersection of both a capitalist and white supremacist matrix. And the privileged subject of marxist discourse is a subaltern who is approached by variable capital—awage. In other words, marxism assumes a subaltern structured by capital, not by white supremacy. In this scenario, racism is read off the base, as it were, as being derivative of political economy. This is not an adequate subalternity from which to think the elaboration of antagonistic identity formation; not if we are truly committed to elaborating a theory of crisis — crisis at the crux of America’s institutional and discursive strategies. **The scandal with which the black subject position threatens Gramscian discourse is manifest in the subject’s ontological disarticulation of Gramscian categories: work, progress, production, exploitation, hegemony, and historical self-awareness.** By examining the strategy and structure of the black subject’s absence in Antonio Gramsci’s Prison Notebooks and by contemplating the black subject’s incommensurability with the key categories of Gramscian theory, we come face to face with three unsettling consequences. Firstly, the black American subject imposes a radical incoherence upon the assumptive logic of Gramscian discourse. In other words, s/he implies a scandal. Secondly, the black subject reveals marxism’s inability to think white supremacy as the base and, in so doing, calls into question marxism’s claim to elaborate a comprehensive, or in the words of Antonio Gramsci, ‘decisive’ antagonism. Stated another way: **Gramscian marxism is able to imagine the subject which transforms her/himself into a mass of antagonistic identity formations, formations which can precipitate a crisis in wage slavery, exploitation, and/or hegemony, but it is asleep at the wheel when asked to provide enabling antagonisms toward unwaged slavery, despotism, and/or terror**. 1350-4630 Print/1363-0296 On-line/03/020225-16  2003 Taylor & Francis Ltd DOI: 10.1080/1350463032000101579 226 Frank Wilderson, III Finally, we begin to see how marxism suffers from a kind of conceptual anxiety: a desire for socialism on the other side of crisis—asociety which does away not with the category of worker, but with the imposition workers suffer under the approach of variable capital: in other words, the mark of its conceptual anxiety is in its desire to democratise work and thus help keep in place, ensure the coherence of, the Reformation and Enlightenment ‘foundational’ values of productivity and progress. This is a crowding-out scenario for other post-revolutionary possibilities, i.e. idleness. Why interrogate Gramsci with the political predicament and desire of the black(ened) subject position in the Western Hemisphere? Because the Prison Notebooks’ intentionality, and general reception, lay claim to universal applicability. **Neither Gramsci nor his spiritual progenitors in the form of scholars or activists say that the Gramscian project sows the seeds of freedom for whites only. Instead, they claim that deep within the organicity of the organic intellectual is the organic black intellectual, the organic Chinese intellectual, the organic South American intellectual and so on; that though there are historical and cultural variances, there is a structural consistency which elaborates all organic intellectuals and undergirds all resistance.** Through what strategies does the black subject destabilise — emerge as the unthought, and thus the scandal of — historical materialism? How does the black subject distort and expand marxist categories in ways that create, in the words of Hortense Spillers, ‘a distended organisational calculus’? (Spillers 1996, p.82). **We could put the question another way: How does the black subject function within the American desiring machine differently than the quintessential Gramscian subaltern, the worker?** Before going more deeply into how the black subject position destabilises or disarticulates the categories foundational to the assumptive logic of marixsm, it’s important to allow ourselves a digression that attempts to schematise the Gramscian project on its own terms. The Gramscian Dream Students of struggle return, doggedly, to the Prison Notebooks for insights regarding how to bring about a revolution in a society in which state/capital formations are in some way protected by the ‘trenches’ of civil society. It is this outer perimeter, this discursive ‘trench’, constructed by an ensemble of private initiatives, activities, and an ensemble of pose-able questions (hegemony), which must be reconﬁgured before a revolution can take the form of a frontal assault. But this trench called civil society is not, for Gramsci, in and of itself the bane of the working class. Instead it represents a terrain to be occupied, assumed, and appropriated in a pedagogic project of transforming ‘common sense’ into ‘good sense’. This notion of ‘destruction-construction’ is a War of Position which involves agitating within civil society in a ‘revolutionary movement’ that builds ‘qualitatively new social relationships’ (Sassoon, 1987, p.15): [A War of Position] is a struggle that engages on a wide range of fronts in which the state as normally deﬁned…is only one aspect. [For Gramsci’s Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society? 227 Gramsci a War of Position is the most ‘decisive’ form of engagement] because it is the form in which bourgeois power is exercised [and victory on] these fronts makes possible or conclusive a frontal attack or War of Movement. (Sassoon, 1987, pp.15–17) In other words, for revolution to be feasible the proletariat must be ‘hailed’, in the Althusserian sense of the word, to a revolutionary position. And, for Gramsci, it is within this ‘trench’ between the economic structure and the state (with its legislation and its coercion), within civil society, that this hailing must take place. Again, for that to happen the trench, civil society, must be transformed. A War of Position can be summed up as a process by which workers struggling against capital and the state forge organs of working class civil society which in turn elaborate organic intellectuals capable of assimilating certain traditional intellectuals, and throughout the whole process all the struggle’s personnel, if you will, fashion a discourse on all of civil society’s fronts through which they eventually become hegemonic. In this way the ‘common sense’, the ‘spontaneous’ consent of the ruled toward the ideology of the rulers, ﬁnds its ‘good sense’, fragments of antagonistic sentiment transformed into an ensemble of questions which, prior to this process, could not be posed (i.e., What is to be done?). Common sense, by way of contrast, is an effect of ‘the prevailing forma mentis’. It involves the notion that the social order can be perfected through ‘fair and open’ competition…[and it] seeks to remedy problems and injustices through reforms fought for and negotiated among competing groups within the existing overall structure…thus leaving the juridical-administrative apparatus of the state more or less intact…It…makes the revolutionary idea of eliminating competitiveness (i.e., greed) as the primary motivating force in society seem unreasonable, unrealistic, or even dangerous. (Buttigieg. 1995, p.13) The pedagogical implications are self-evident. For Gramsci this is a process through which various strata of the class struggling for dominance achieve ‘historical self-awareness’ (Gramsci, 1971, pp.333–35). And for this reason civil society itself is not the bane of workers because its constituent elements (as opposed to the way those elements are combined) are not anti-worker.1 Therefore: [Gramsci’s] purpose is not to repress civil society or to restrict its space but rather to develop a revolutionary strategy (a ‘war of position’) that would be employed precisely in the arena of civil society, with the aim of disabling the coercive apparatus of the state, gaining access to political power, and creating the conditions that could give rise to a consensual society wherein no individual or group is reduced to a subaltern. (Buttigieg, 1995, p.7) At this moment (the end of subalternity by way of the destruction of the ruling class) the State becomes ‘ethical’. Gramsci writes: Every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions 228 Frank Wilderson, III is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. (1971, p.258) He suggests that schools and courts perform this function for the State, before describing the ‘so-called private initiatives and activities’ which form the hegemonic apparatuses of the ruling class. But these private initiatives (i.e., newspapers, cinema, guild associations) are not ‘ethical’ precisely because of their ability to exist in tandem with the State and/or due to their function as its outright handmaidens (i.e., lobbyists, PACs). [Therefore] only the social group [his code word for ‘class’, in an attempt to secure the Notebooks’ safe passage past Mussolini’s prison censors] that poses the end of the State and its own end as the target to be achieved can create an ethical State — i.e. one which tends to put an end to the internal divisions of the ruled…and to create a technically and morally unitary social organism. (p.259) In other words, ‘civil society can only be the site of universal freedom when it extends to the point of becoming the state, that is, when the need for political society is obviated’ (Buttigieg, 1995, p.30). ‘[T]he phenomenon of ‘subordination’…occurs without coercion; it is an instance of power that is exercised and extended in civil society, resulting in the hegemony of one class over others who, for their part, acquiesce to it willingly or, as Gramsci puts it, ‘spontaneously’. (Buttigieg, 1995, p.22) What appears to be spontaneous is a product of consent manufactured by intellectuals of the ruling class. Again, not only is consent manufactured but it is backed up by coercion-in-reserve, what Gramsci calls political society: the courts, the army, the police, and, for the past 57 years, the atomic bomb. It is true that Gramsci acknowledges no organic division between political society and civil society. He makes the division for methodological purposes. There is one organism, ‘the modern bourgeois-liberal state’ (Buttigieg, 1995, p.28), but there are two qualitatively different kinds of apparatuses: on the one hand, the ensemble of so-called private associations and ideological invitations to participate in a wide and varied play of consensus-making strategies (civil society), and on the other hand, a set of enforcement structures which kick in when that ensemble is regressive or can no longer lead (political society). But Gramsci would have us believe not that white positionality emerges and is elaborated on the terrain of civil society and encounters coercion when civil society is not expansive enough to embrace the idea of freedom for all, but that all positionalities emerge and are elaborated on the terrain of civil society. Gramsci does not racialise this birth, elaboration, and stunting, or re-emergence, of human subjectivity — because civil society, supposedly, elaborates all subjectivity and so there is no need for such speciﬁcity. **Anglo-American Gramscians, like Buttigieg and Sassoon, and US activists in** Gramsci’s Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society? 229 **the anti-globalisation movement whose unspoken grammar is predicated on Gramsci’s assumptive logic, continue this tradition of unraced positionality which allows them to posit the valency of Wars of Position for blacks and whites alike. They assume that all subjects are positioned in such a way as to have their consent solicited and to be able to extend their consent ‘spontaneously’.** This is profoundly problematic if only — leaving revolution aside for the moment — at the level of analysis; for it assumes that hegemony with its three constituent elements (inﬂuence, leadership, consent) is the modality which must be either inculcated or breached, if one is to either avoid or incur, respectively, the violence of the state. However, one of the primary claims of this essay is that, whereas the consent of black people may seem to be called upon, its withdrawal does not precipitate a ‘crisis in authority’. Put another way, the transformation of black people’s acquiescent ‘common sense’ into revolutionary ‘good sense’ is an extenuating circumstance, but not the catalyst, of State violence against black people. State violence against the black body, as Martinot and Sexton suggest in their introduction, is not contingent, it is structural and, above all, gratuitous. Therefore, Gramscian wisdom cannot imagine the emergence, elaboration, and stunting of a subject by way, not of the contingency of violence resulting in a ‘crisis of authority’, but by way of direct relations of force. This is remarkable, and unfortunate, given the fact that the emergence of the slave, the subjecteffect of an ensemble of direct relations of force, marks the emergence of capitalism itself. Let us put a ﬁner point on it: violence towards the black body is the precondition for the existence of Gramsci’s single entity ‘the modern bourgeois-state’ with its divided apparatus, political society and civil society. This is to say violence against black people is ontological and gratuitous as opposed to merely ideological and contingent.2 Furthermore, no magical moment (i.e., 1865) transformed paradigmatically the black body’s relation to this entity.3 In this regard, the hegemonic advances within civil society by the Left hold out no more possibility for black life than the coercive backlash of political society. What many political theorists have either missed or ignored is that a crisis of authority that might take place by way of a Left expansion of civil society, further instantiates, rather than dismantles, the authority of whiteness. Black death is the modern bourgeois-state’s recreational pastime, but the hunting season is not conﬁned to the time (and place) of political society; blacks are fair game as a result of a progressively expanding civil society as well. Civil Death in Civil Society Capital was kick-started by the rape of the African continent. This phenomenon is central to neither Gramsci nor Marx. The theoretical importance of emphasising this in the early twenty-ﬁrst century is two-fold: ﬁrst, ‘the socio-political order of the New World’ (Spillers, 1987, p.67) was kick-started by approaching a particular body (a black body) with direct relations of force, not by approaching a white body with variable capital. Thus, one could say that slavery — the ‘accumulation’ of black bodies regardless of their utility as labourers (Hartman; 230 Frank Wilderson, III Johnson) through an idiom of despotic power (Patterson) — is closer to capital’s primal desire than is waged oppression — the ‘exploitation’ of unraced bodies (Marx, Lenin, Gramsci) that labour through an idiom of rational/symbolic (the wage) power: A relation of terror as opposed to a relation of hegemony.4 Secondly, today, late capital is imposing a renaissance of this original desire, direct relations of force (the prison industrial complex), the despotism of the unwaged relation: and this Renaissance of slavery has, once again, as its structuring image in libidinal economy, and its primary target in political economy, the black body. The value of reintroducing the unthought category of the slave, by way of noting the absence of the black subject, lies in the black subject’s potential for extending the demand placed on state/capital formations because its re-introduction into the discourse expands the intensity of the antagonism. In other words, the slave makes a demand, which is in excess of the demand made by the worker. The worker demands that productivity be fair and democratic (Gramsci’s new hegemony, Lenin’s dictatorship of the proletariat), the slave, on the other hand, demands that production stop; stop without recourse to its ultimate democratisation. Work is not an organic principle for the slave. The absence of black subjectivity from the crux of marxist discourse is symptomatic of the discourse’s inability to cope with the possibility that the generative subject of capitalism, the black body of the ﬁfteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the generative subject that resolves late-capital’s over-accumulation crisis, the black (incarcerated) body of the twentieth and twenty-ﬁrst centuries, do not reify the basic categories which structure marxist conﬂict: the categories of work, production, exploitation, historical self-awareness and, above all, hegemony. If, by way of the black subject, we consider the underlying grammar of the question ‘What does it mean to be free?’ that grammar being the question ‘What does it mean to suffer?’ then we come up against a grammar of suffering not only in excess of any semiotics of exploitation, but a grammar of suffering beyond signiﬁcation itself, a suffering that cannot be spoken because the gratuitous terror of white supremacy is as much contingent upon the irrationality of white fantasies and shared pleasures as it is upon a logic — the logic of capital. It extends beyond texualisation. When talking about this terror, Cornel West uses the term ‘black invisibility and namelessness’ to designate, at the level of ontology, what we are calling a scandal at the level of discourse. He writes: [America’s] unrelenting assault on black humanity produced the fundamental condition of black culture — that of black invisibility and namelessness. On the crucial existential level relating to black invisibility and namelessness, the ﬁrst difﬁcult challenge and demanding discipline is to ward off madness and discredit suicide as a desirable option. A central preoccupation of black culture is that of confronting candidly the ontological wounds, psychic scars, and existential bruises of black people while fending off insanity and self-annihilation. This is why the ‘ur-text’ of black culture is neither a word nor a book, not an architec Gramsci’s Black Marx: Whither the Slave in Civil Society? 231 tural monument or a legal brief. Instead, it is a guttural cry and a wrenching moan—acry not so much for help as for home, a moan less out of complaint than for recognition. (1996, pp.80–81). Thus, the black subject position in America is an antagonism, a demand that can not be satisﬁed through a transfer of ownership/organisation of existing rubrics; whereas the Gramscian subject, the worker, represents a demand that can indeed be satisﬁed by way of a successful War of Position, which brings about the end of exploitation. The worker calls into question the legitimacy of productive practices, the slave calls into question the legitimacy of productivity itself. From the positionality of the worker the question, ‘What does it mean to be free?’ is raised. But the question hides the process by which the discourse assumes a hidden grammar which has already posed and answered the question, ‘What does it mean to suffer?’ And that grammar is organised around the categories of exploitation (unfair labour relations or wage slavery). Thus, exploitation (wage slavery) is the only category of oppression which concerns Gramsci: society, Western society, thrives on the exploitation of the Gramscian subject. Full stop. Again, this is inadequate, because it would call white supremacy ‘racism’ and articulate it as a derivative phenomenon of the capitalist matrix, rather than incorporating white supremacy as a matrix constituent to the base, if not the base itself. What I am saying is that the insatiability of the slave demand upon existing structures means that it cannot ﬁnd its articulation within the modality of hegemony (inﬂuence, leadership, consent) — the black body cannot give its consent because ‘generalised trust’, the precondition for the solicitation of consent, ‘equals racialised whiteness’ (Barrett). **Furthermore, as Patterson points out, slavery is natal alienation by way of social death, which is to say that a slave has no symbolic currency or material labour power to exchange: a slave does not enter into a transaction of value (however asymmetrical) but is subsumed by direct relations of force, which is to say that a slave is an articulation of a despotic irrationality whereas the worker is an articulation of a symbolic rationality. White supremacy’s despotic irrationality is as foundational to American institutionality as capitalism’s symbolic rationality because, as West writes, it dictates the limits of the operation of American democracy — with black folk the indispensable sacriﬁcial lamb vital to its sustenance.** Hence black subordination constitutes the necessary condition for the ﬂourishing of American democracy, the tragic prerequisite for America itself. This is, in part, what Richard Wright meant when he noted, ‘The Negro is America’s metaphor’. (1996, p.72) And it is well known that a metaphor comes into being through a violence that kills, rather than merely exploits, the object so that the concept might live. **West’s interventions help us see how marxism can only come to grips with America’s structuring rationality — what it calls capitalism, or political economy; but cannot come to grips with America’s structuring irrationality: the libidinal economy of white supremacy, and its hyper-discursive violence that** 232 Frank Wilderson, III **kills the black subject so that the concept, civil society, may live. In other words, from the incoherence of black death, America generates the coherence of white life. This is important when considering the Gramscian paradigm (and its progenitors in the world of US social movements today) which is so dependent on the empirical status of hegemony and civil society: struggles over hegemony are seldom, if ever, as signifying — at some point they require coherence, they require categories for the record — which means they contain the seeds of anti-blackness.**

#### Revolutions against capitalism are inherently anti-black and systematically exclude the slave by re-entrenching current dichotomies of the slave and proletariat

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Toward the end of Capital, Vol. 1—after informing us "that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, in short, force, play the greatest part in the methods of primitive accumulation" (874) (e.g., methods which produce the Slave)—Marx makes a humorous but revealing observation about the psychic disposition of the proletariat. In drawing a distinction between the worker and the Slave, Marx points out that the Slave has no wage, no symbolic stand-in for an exchange of labor power. The worker, on the other hand, has cash though not much of it. Here, Marx does not comment so much on the not-much-of-it-ness of the worker’s chump change, but on the enormous ensemble of cathected investments that such a little bit of chump change provides: [It] remains in his mind as something more than a particular use-value… [For] it is the worker himself who converts the money into whatever usevalues he desires; it is he who buys commodities as he wishes and, as the owner of money, as the buyer of goods, he stands in precisely the same relationship to the sellers of goods as any other buyer…(1033, emphasis mine) Marx goes on to tell us that whether the worker saves, hoards, or squanders his/her money on drink, s/he “acts as a free agent” and so “he learns to control himself, in contrast to the slave, who needs a master” (1033). It is sad, in a funny sort of way, to think of a worker standing in the same relationship to the sellers of goods as any other buyer, simply because his use-values can buy a loaf of bread just like the capitalist’s capital can buy a loaf of bread. But it is frightening to take this “same relationship” in a direction that Marx does not take it: if the worker can buy a loaf of bread, s/he can also buy a slave. It seems to me that the psychic dimension of a proletariat who “stands inprecisely the same relationship” to other members of civil society due to their intramural exchange in mutual, possessive possibilities, the ability to own either a piece of Black flesh or a loaf of white bread or both, is where we must begin to understand the founding antagonism between the something Mailer has to save and the nothing Baldwin has to lose.

#### The alternative is to reject the 1AC’s ethical distancing from the terror of anti-blackness and actively embrace the pathologized being of blackness – vote neg to *choose* blackness as *the* vessel for destroying civil society, rather than *a* problem framed by civil society

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 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.

#### Thus, the role of the ballot is to vote for the person who best diagnoses the reality that produces the phenomenon of anti-blackness – if I win their starting point is flawed, they don’t get to weigh their affirmative.

## Case

#### No 1AC Solvency – The Affirmative’s legal approach to reformism is part of the political imaginary that works to regulate and control gendered and racialized bodies for the production of more sovereign will.

**Kandaswamy 12** (Priya Kandaswamy is the associate professor of Women’s Gender & Sexuality Studies, Race Gender & Sexuality Studies Department Head . Edward Hohfeld Professor of Social Sciences “The Obligations of Freedom and The Limits of Legal Equality,” Southwestern Law Review, Vol.41)//JP

Despite a vast array of critiques that have elucidated the ways in which the U.S. state is deeply invested in maintaining social relations of racism, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy, it is still quite commonplace to assume that to remedy social injustices one must turn first to the law. The pursuit of legal equality is frequently understood as the most pragmatic approach and a necessary first step to any kind of broad scale social change. In practice, however, legal equality struggles have failed to deliver substantive social justice for many groups. Frequently written off as a sign of the incompleteness of legal change, these failures are often invoked as evidence of the need for further legal reform rather than prompting the serious consideration of the law’s actual capacity to effect change that perhaps they should. Even those critical of legal strategies frequently fall back on them, citing legal reform as a necessary evil, the best that can be achieved in the current political context, or the first step toward broader changes. In this way, the law maintains a fierce hold on the political imagination. In this essay, I argue for the importance of severing that hold. The assumptions that legal reform is a pragmatic and necessary first step to social justice is a reflection of the boundaries that circumscribe what is imagined as politically possible within dominant discourse rather than the essential truths they are often taken to be. To the extent that legal interventions will always simultaneously reinforce the legal authority of the U.S. state, legal reform is bound to reiterate rather than transform unequal distributions of power. Pinning political possibilities to the law circumscribes the boundaries of change in very narrow ways. Instead, movements for social justice must seek to open up possibilities for transformation and evaluate their engagements with the law in terms of the future possibilities those engagements might open or foreclose. In other words, rather than presume legal equality is the answer, it is necessary to engage with the more complex questions about what freedom should and could look like and locate legal interventions in relation to this broader vision. In order to illustrate these points, I turn first to the historical example of emancipation and the consequent conferral of citizenship to formerly enslaved people, a quintessential moment in the expansion of legal rights in U.S. history. I look to Reconstruction Era struggles over the meaning of citizenship specifically because they mark a particularly defining moment in the reconfiguration of racial violence through the construct of the liberal subject. Given the ways that U.S. citizenship had been defined against blackness, the Fourteenth Amendment’s extension of citizenship rights to freed people forced the nation to grapple with what racially inclusive citizenship in a nation forged through racial violence would look like. Therefore, considering the legacies of this historical period raises crucial issues for contemporary struggles for inclusion, equality and the extension of legal rights, particularly given the role emancipation has played as an important historical reference point for these struggles. Emancipation marked a moment of great possibility, and freed people held broad and diverse visions of freedom that included reparations, land ownership, freedom of mobility, and other self-defined mechanisms of individual and collective self-determination.1 However, as Saidiya Hartman shows, legal recognition as citizens worked to constrain and curtail these more expansive possibilities of freedom by locking freedom for black people into an idiom defined by obligation, indebtedness, and responsibility.2 Rather than mitigate the significance of racial difference in the national imagination, the conferral of citizenship rights collaborated in “the persistent production of blackness as abject, threatening, servile, dangerous, dependent, irrational, and infectious”3 and obliged freed people to shoulder the responsibilities and burdens of perpetually having to demonstrate their preparedness for and deservingness of citizenship in a context where their blackness marked them as otherwise.4 This was evident in the ways that state institutions prioritized enforcing labor and sexual discipline amongst freed people.5 As the Virginia Freedmen’s Bureau’s Assistant Commissioner Orlando Brown wrote, if freed people were to be citizens, it was necessary “to make the Freedmen into a self-supporting class of free laborers, who shall understand the necessity of steady employment and the responsibility of providing for themselves and [their] families.”6 As Hartman shows, anti-black racism fundamentally shaped recognition as a liberal subject.7 While for white male citizens liberal individualism had afforded a kind of entitlement and self-determination, for freed people, recognition as a liberal subject rendered one responsible and therefore blameworthy.8 This was particularly evident in the workings of contract. A key distinction between the free person and the slave was selfownership signified primarily through the capacity to enter into contract.9 The understanding of legal freedom as self-possession meant that there was no inherent contradiction between subordination and freedom as long as subordination was secured through a freely entered into contract, a phenomenon most clearly illustrated by the labor and marriage contracts.10 For freed people who had both been structurally denied access to other material resources through slavery and who were subject to vagrancy laws that criminalized the refusal to enter into long-term labor contracts, contracts were very much coerced.11 However, despite the fact that they functioned to limit black people’s mobility, secure the hyper-exploitation of black labor, and provided the ground for the development of carceral institutions directed at the punishment of black people,12 entering into the labor contract became discursively understood as the quintessential sign of freedom.13 In fact, freed people were called upon to demonstrate their independence and deservingness of freedom by fulfilling the terms of the labor contract.14 In this way, contract provided a rubric for reinventing relations of subordination by obscuring national responsibility for the injustices of slavery and instead displacing this responsibility onto the shoulders of the formerly enslaved.15 Freedom was rewritten as obligation and independence manifested as a burden.16 Liberal concepts of freedom also functioned as a mechanism of regulating gender and sexuality through the marriage contract. While marriages and other kinship ties were not legally recognized under slavery, one of the first rights freed people gained was marriage recognition.17 However, as Katherine Franke points out, the extension of marriage rights was grounded in the belief that marriage as an institution would help civilize freed people by instilling heteropatriarchal gender norms.18 A key element of the rationalization of slavery was the construction of black inferiority as marked by a lack of the gender differentiation that was seen as characteristic of civilization.19 As Matt Richardson describes, “early attempts to congeal racist taxonomies of difference through anatomical investigation and ethnographic observation produced the Black body as always already variant and Black people as the essence of gender aberrance, thereby defining the norm by making the Black its opposite.”20 While marriage recognition did provide some tangible protections to married freed people, the belief in marriage as a civilizing institution simultaneously reiterated and valorized white supremacist beliefs that black people’s inferiority was evidenced in their lack of appropriate gender and sexuality.21 Additionally, the extension of marriage rights provided the ground upon which alternative sexual arrangements were criminalized and rationalized state austerity toward black people by constructing the self-sufficient household as the means to economic security.22 As a result of the legal recognition of black marriages, many freed people faced convictions for adultery, fornication, cohabitation, and the failure to provide for their legal dependents. 23 In this way, much like the labor contract, the extension of rights in fact created new obligations and new grounds upon which black people might be punished. Michel Foucault argues that one of the distinguishing features of the modern state is the emergence of biopower.24 Unlike sovereign power that is expressed in the capacity to take life, biopower is invested in the production of knowledge about and regulation of populations, processes of normalization and regularization, and ultimately the capacity to “make live” in particular ways.25 However, Foucault also notes that sovereign power does not simply disappear but rather that the state continues to exercise sovereign power alongside biopower.26 This process is delimited by state racism, which “introduc[es] a break into the domain of life that is under power’s control: the break between what must live and what must die.”27 As biopower becomes concerned with regulating the life of the population, racism marks the bodies upon which sovereign power must still be exercised. 28 Killing the internal or external racial threat becomes understood as a necessary element to making the population stronger.29 Scholars such as Ann Stoler and Scott Morgensen have elaborated on Foucault’s rather scant discussion of racism showing the ways in which biopower in fact emerges in relation to and as a function of colonial violence.30 Hartman’s analysis of anti-black racism and the constitution of the liberal subject complicates Foucault’s analysis and adds to scholarship that highlights the central role of racial violence in the elaboration of state power.31 As Hartman shows, during Reconstruction, black people were simultaneously subject to the normalizing and violent powers of the state, or perhaps more accurately normalizing processes became yet another vehicle for state violence.32 On the one hand, freed people were subject to constant surveillance as their moral capacity for citizenship was always in question, and any failure to comply with labor or marriage contracts was read as evidence of this incapacity.33 On the other hand, contractual freedom provided a basis for the state’s total disinvestment in black life, thereby making it more or less impossible to live up to the ideals of citizenship.34 In this way, the seeming contradictions between racial inclusion and racial violence were effectively displaced by locating responsibility for state violence in those who suffered from its effects. The black subject was thus brought into the fold of citizenship but as a subject always in need of reform or punishment. This historical example powerfully illustrates the ways in which inclusion into citizenship rights can operate as a technique of domination and the role the construct of the liberal subject plays in maintaining state racism.35 Certainly, laws have changed a great deal since Reconstruction. However, the differentiated structure of citizenship grounded in anti-black racism that Hartman describes still operates.36 For example, contemporary political struggles over marriage reflect the processes by which marriage can secure entitlements for one social group while exacting social obligations from another. On the one hand, a mainstream, predominantly white gay and lesbian movement seeks access to a wide array of property and social rights through same-sex marriage recognition.37 On the other hand, marriage incentive programs and increasingly punitive welfare regulations cast marriage and the economic self-sufficiency that supposedly comes with it as an obligation for welfare recipients who are most frequently represented as black women.38 Another terrain upon which racially stratified constructions of citizenship are evident is in struggles for state protection from violence. Legislation that has increasingly criminalized violence against women and hate crimes against LGBT people holds out the promise of greater equality and freedom for some by expanding a system of mass incarceration that targets women of color and queer and transgender people of color.39 In fact, the increasingly punitive and austere orientation of the U.S. welfare state and the expansion of the prison industrial complex can be understood as the logical extension of the processes of liberal subjection that Hartman outlines.40 On the one hand, the state disinvests in black life.41 On the other hand, processes of criminalization hold individuals responsible for the effects of that disinvestment, displacing responsibility for state violence onto those who feel its effects most and punishing those bodies for their structural location.42

#### Class-analysis that attempts to eschew identity politics is just a ruse for white middle class males to paternalistically lead non-white people in the glory of the revolution. It is an invisible form of white messianism that slips identity through the back door or anti-capitalist movements. Ross 2k

**Ross 2000 [Marlon B., Professor, Department of English and Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies, “Commentary: Pleasuring Identity, or the Delicious Politics of Belonging,” New Literary History, Vol. 31, No. 4, pages 840-841]**

Although in his contribution Eric Lott targets Professor Michaels's comments and his own recent feud with Timothy Brennan (who unfortunately is not included in this volume) rather than Ken's argument, what Eric says about “left and liberal fundamentalists” who “simply and somewhat penitently” urge us to “‘go back to class’” could also be directed at Ken's conclusion. Ken writes, “Crafting a political left that does not merely reflect existing racial divisions starts with the relatively mundane proposition that it is possible to make a persuasive appeal to the given interests of working and unemployed women and men, regardless of race, in support of a program for economic justice.” On this one, I side with Eric, rather than Tim and Ken. Standing on the left depends on whose left side we're talking about. My left might be your right and vice versa, because it depends on what direction we're facing, and what direction depends on which identities we're assuming and affirming. Eric adds, "Even in less dismissive [than Tim's] accounts of new social movements based not on class but on identities formed by histories of injustice, there is a striking a priori sense of voluntarism about the investment in this cause or that movement or the other issue—as though determining the most fundamental issue were a matter of the writer's strength of feeling rather than a studied or analytical sense of the ever-unstable balance of forces in a hegemonic bloc at a given moment." I agree, but I'll risk mangling what Eric says by putting it more crassly. **Touting class or "economic justice" as the fundamental stance for left identity is just another way of telling everybody else to shut up so I can be heard above the fray. Because of the force of "identity politics," a leftist white person would be leery of claiming to lead Blacks toward the promised land,** a leftist straight man leery **of claiming to lead women or queers, but**, for a number of complex rationalizations, **we in the middle class** (where all of us writing here currently reside) **still have** few **qualms about volunteering to lead**, at least theoretically, the working class toward "economic justice." What Eric calls here "left fundamentalism," I'd call, at the risk of sounding harsh, left paternalism. **Of the big identity groups articulated through "identity politics," economic class remains the only identity where a straight white middle-class man can still feel comfortable claiming himself a leading political voice, and thus he may sometimes overcompensate by screaming that this is the only identity that really matters—which is the same as claiming that class is beyond identity.** Partly **this is because Marxist theory and Marx himself** (a bourgeois intellectual creating the theoretical practice for the workers' revolution) **stage the model for working-class identity as a sort of trans-identification, a magical identity that is transferable to those outside the group who commit themselves to it wholeheartedly enough**. If we look back, we realize even this magical quality is not special to a history of class struggle, as whites during the New Negro movements of the early twentieth century felt that they were vanguard race leaders because they had putatively imbibed some essential qualities of Negroness by cross-identifying with the folk and their culture.