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#### Afropessimism misreads history and prescribes a counter-productive political agenda. The language of social death” erases a rich heritage of anti-racist resistance and demobilizes coalitional mass movements that are necessary for actualizing a productive struggle against racism. The empirical result is a strange nexus between separatism and reformism that strengthens neoliberalism and occludes a genuinely emancipatory project.

Haider, PhD Candidate, 18

(Asad, History of Consciousness@SantaCruz, Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump)

The assumption that only black-led organizations could organize around “their” issues, despite the deep political divergences among these organizations—some of which represented the elite interests of a black bourgeoisie and explicitly sought to suppress grassroots militancy—would come to have a deeply damaging effect. Among intellectuals, the most reactionary separatist tendencies were granted the status of a pseudo-philosophy with the ascendance of Frank Wilderson’s so-called Afro-pessimism. A fundamental symptom of this trend was the proliferation of the term antiblackness in the place of racism. The latter, more quotidian term implies an antiracist struggle that unites oppressed groups. The “antiblackness” problematic radicalizes and ontologizes a separatist, black-exceptionalist perspective, rejecting even the minimal gesture toward coalitions implied by the term people of color. It claims, on the basis of dubious interpretations of Gramsci and the historiography of slavery, that “blackness” is founded on “social death,” the loss of identity and total domination imposed upon slaves at birth—despite the fact that the source of this term, sociologist Orlando Patterson, used it to define all forms of slavery, including nonracialized ones.7 It follows from Wilderson’s reasoning that the whole of “white” civil society is founded on this absolute violence, the entire history of which is reduced to an effect of a purported white enjoyment of black suffering—“as though the chief business of slavery,” in the inimitable words of historian Barbara Fields, “were the production of white supremacy rather than the production of cotton, sugar, rice and tobacco.”8 With ideologies of racial unity functioning as a clear block to the development of mass antagonistic politics, it is no wonder that the seemingly extremist languages of blackness and antiblackness seduced intellectuals into reconciliation with the status quo. Of course, when Afro-pessimist discourse course occasionally did discuss the black political class, its tone was one of severe criticism. But this criticism reproduced the political dynamics that led to its rise in the first place: black leaders were castigated for their coalitionism, thus reinforcing the ideology of racial unity that obscured their class positions; their reformist program of bringing black people greater citizenship rights was rejected in language reminiscent of earlier critiques of integration, obscuring the political incorporation of the black elite that has been taking place since the end of segregation.9 The ideology of blackness in Wilderson’s Afro-pessimism functions as a disavowal of the real integration of black elites into “civil society,” now hardly a “white” thing. When the lethal effects of white supremacy are exerted by a racially integrated ruling class, blackness as an antipolitical void becomes a convenient subject position for the performance of marginality. Separatist ideology prevents the construction of unity among the marginalized, the kind of unity that could actually overcome their marginalization. In a 2014 radio interview, Wilderson attacked the view that the experience of black people in Ferguson was in any way comparable to that of Palestinians. Attributing this view to “right reactionary white civil society and so-called progressive colored civil society,” he proclaimed: “That’s just bullshit. First, there’s no time period in which black policing and slave domination have ever ended. Second, the Arabs and the Jews are as much a part of the black slave trade—the creation of blackness as social death—as anyone else … Antiblackness is as important and necessary to the formation of Arab psychic life as it is to the formation of Jewish psychic life.”10 Listening to Wilderson’s bewildering repetitions of neoconservative Orientalist tropes, you wouldn’t know that activists in Ferguson had been in close contact with Palestinians, who pointed out that the same tear-gas canisters were being fired at them and shared street-fighting tactics learned from bitter experience. A solidarity statement signed by a range of Palestinian activists and organizations declared: “With a Black Power fist in the air, we salute the people of Ferguson and join in your demands for justice.” This solidarity was returned in January when a group of movement activists visited Palestine. During the peak of the Black Lives Matter movement, Afro-pessimist language spread rapidly on Twitter and Tumblr, encouraging a wide range of activists to describe police violence in terms of the suffering imposed upon “black bodies” and to try to monopolize the very category of death. It was a somewhat stupefying choice of words at a time when black people in Ferguson were constituting part of a global struggle to refuse to accept suffering, to refuse to die. As Robin D. G. Kelley has pointed out, reading black experience through trauma can easily slip into thinking of ourselves as victims and objects rather than agents, subjected to centuries of gratuitous violence that have structured and overdetermined our very being. In the argot of our day, “bodies”—vulnerable and threatening bodies—increasingly stand in for actual people with names, experiences, dreams, and desires. But in fact, Kelley points out, “what sustained enslaved African people was a memory of freedom, dreams of seizing it, and conspiracies to enact it”—a heritage of resistance that is erased by the rhetoric of “black bodies.” Furthermore, Kelley argues, if we argue that state violence is merely a manifestation of antiblackness because that is what we see and feel, we are left with no theory of the state and have no way of understanding racialized police violence in places such as Atlanta and Detroit, where most cops are black, unless we turn to some metaphysical explanation.11 Here we get to the crux of the problem. The “metaphysical explanation”—the classic mode of ideological superstition—obscures not only the social relations of the state, but also the contradiction between mass insurgency and the rising black elite that claimed to represent it. Wilderson claims that Afro-pessimism seeks to “destroy the world” rather than build a better one, since the world is irredeemably founded on “antiblackness.” In reality, Afro-pessimism has served as an ideological ballast for the emergent bureaucracies in Ferguson and beyond, since the supposedly radical rhetoric of separatism and the reformism of the elite leadership have converged to foreclose the possibilities of building a mass movement. The “representatives” of the Black Lives Matter movement who got the most media play included the executive director of Saint Louis Teach for America, an organization that has played a driving role in the privatization of education and the assault on teachers’ unions. In fact, a group of these “representatives” enthusiastically met with the aggressively pro-charter and pro-testing secretary of education Arne Duncan during his visit to Ferguson—white civil society or not. If such tendencies continue unchecked, the only world that will be destroyed is the one in which poor black students can attend public school or expect to get a job with benefits. (from a weird epub, but I believe p. 37-39)

#### Pessimism eliminates the animating life force of the black radical tradition.

Smith, PhD, 16

(Derek, English @Albany, Ceding the Future African American Review, Volume 49, Number 3, Fall 2016, pp. 183-191 (Article))

Between the World is fashioned from well-known elements—it is an African American form of what Henry Louis Gates and Michael Awkward have called “autocritography” (7); it is the self-declared progeny of literary forefathers like James Baldwin and Richard Wright; and it summons the black nationalist spirit of Malcolm X. But from these recognizable materials Coates assembles a text that makes a series of unusual interventions in the black intellectual tradition: Seeming to obey a hard-nosed reality principle, it quashes the salvific narratives of history and freedom dreams that have long animated black religious, secular, and civic thought; it recommends “struggle over hope” (71), but is most interested in the struggle of individual vocation and personal “study” (115-16); and in declaring that “the birth of a better world is not ultimately up to you” (71), its narrator appears to steer the individual reader away from politics of social transformation. If black autobiographers from Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells to W E. B. Du Bois and Malcolm X have framed learning as an instrumentality, Coates’s narrator seems to make learning an end in itself. And if black nationalism was a component of political strategy for public intellectuals from Martin Delany to Marcus Garvey to Amiri Baraka, for the speaker in the Coates text it is primarily a source of personal solace. Troubled by Coates’s departures from established modes of black public intellec- tualism, Alexander in her review makes a charitable gesture by looking beyond the book itself, asserting that “[e]verything he has ever written leads me to believe that he has more to say.” Coates may in fact have more to say; nevertheless, it behooves us to consider how the book—and its apparently off-key lower frequency messages— function within the neoliberal marketplace of ideas in which it has been richly rewarded. This marketplace attends the contemporary, neoliberal phase of capitalism that is often described as a form of advanced class warfare in which deregulated markets, curtailed social welfare programs, and the privatization of public goods, services, and spaces are primary dynamos in a process that transfers capital from the nether regions of the class structure to its uppermost penthouses. Lubricating this transfer of capital is an array of socio-ethical ideas, some of which are disrupted in Coates’s book. For example, by accentuating the vulnerable beauty of black people and culture, the book attacks a well-traveled chimera of the capitalist system, which is also an important feature of neoliberalism—that of the dark, ugly “underclass,” deserving of destitution and punishment. However, with its throwback nationalism, unattached to any political program or organizational structure and its abdication of faith in collective struggle and the possibility of a better future, Coates’s text also offers surreptitious support to a number of subtle but key ideas in the socio-ethical array of them that girds neoliberal order.

Although swathed in important and lyrically rendered truths about the unending “plunder” of the black body in America, the book’s resistance to class-conscious and historically nuanced narratives about the evolution and gradations of that plunder leads into paralyzing pessimism about the possibility of change, and toward a concomitant emphasis on self-preservation that significantly withers the radical imagination, which is itself the womb of emancipatory transformation. When Coates’s narrator declares that the “plunder of black life was drilled into this country in its infancy and reinforced across its history” (111), he does the customary and exigent work of the black intellectual. But when he insists without qualification that such plunder is a “default setting to which, likely to the end of our days, we must invariably return” (111),he is not simply working in the tradition of the bluesman; he is speaking in the high-culture voice of the knowing black intellectual, intensifying a “neoliberalpalsy” that paralyzes publics, leaving them incapable of envisioning and organizing alternatives to the existing, plundering order. Of course, Coates is entitled to his melancholy. The point is not to condemn the author himself, an incisive and searching prose artist, and a social observer of refreshing integrity, whose text demonstrates a strong blues “impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one’s aching consciousness” (Ellison 129). But recent mainstream celebration of this blues that appears to foreclose any possibility of collective transcendence is ironic for a variety of reasons— particularly because it coincides with the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, which is charged by a pragmatic utopian belief that racial plunder might be successfully opposed by organized collective action. It ought to be noted that the despondency of Between the World stands in sharp contrast to the unabashed hope expressed in a text like Kendrick Lamar’s “Alright,” a song that has become one of the rallying anthems of the contemporary wave of youthful black grassroots political agitation, and which features the chorus refrain, “Nigga, We gon’ be alright / Do you hear me? Do you feel me? / We gon’ be alright.” (184-5)

#### Capital insurance is the root cause of antiblackness – blackness is subsumed in the form of human capital, which explains expropriation better than the aff.

Amaro 18 (Ramon Amaro, Lecturer in the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London; Research Fellow in Digital Culture at Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam; worked as Assistant Editor for the SAGE open access journal Big Data & Society; 2018, PhD, Philosophy, Centre for Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths; 2013, MA, Sociological Research, University of Essex; 1999, BSe, Mechanical Engineering, University of Michigan; “Machine Learning, Black Labour and Bio-epistemic Resistance,” presented as part of *After Work: Life, Labour and Automation*, a symposium exploring work and resistance through and against technology. Transcription from cvs, finders credit and cutting goes to tris)

Okay, hi. My name is Ramon Amaro. Thank you to the organizers for having me here today. I’m actually going to diverge a second and take the conversation to an ontological and theoretical point that can hopefully emerge to different conversations as we go on later. Namely, what I want to begin with is the idea of bare life of the black female body, an idea that Alessandra Raengo argues must be understood if we are even to critique modern forms of capital, as what we know as the black form is already subsumed in the monetary form of capital and the fictive substance of race. What I mean, and what I would like to propose here in following Raengo, is what she calls “the ontological scandal” perpetuated by slavery. This scandal, according to Raengo, is repeated “with each instance of alienated black labor, each time blackness functions as the commodity form, and with each repetition they continue to be reified.” But what’s important is Raengo’s gesture presupposes that the production and subsequent domination of colonial nations today are predicated on the abstract reification of the black female body as a mode of currency. To even begin to address this ontological scandal, we must first think through how the black body is individuated as a currency of exchange within modern financial systems. For instance, extensive work has been done by Spillers, Hartman, and others to illuminate the important role of the cargo ship on the Middle Passage as a scene of capital exchange and racial subjection. However, I want to build on this work to think through the genesis of the black self as already informed by the logics of innumeration and speculative risk, where the pre-individuated state of black being is always already contaminated by the conditions of labor-based capital accumulation. But this accumulation also informs a dissonance between the real black sense of self and any social agreement that may abstract the black self into, as Denise DeSilva argues, a formative system of monetary value. In other words, as Ian BacComb describes, the growth of Anglo-European financial domination was not merely a cycle of labor and exchange, but a scaled transaction of quantifiable insurance risk associated with the contingency of death and illness aboard slave cargo ships. BacComb points to the British economy in particular to discuss the granting of a real existence of enslaved bodies inasmuch as the survival and the successful delivery of these bodies can be bought virtually as the hidden substance of insurance contracts and bills of credit. Or in the case of the British slave ship Zong, the enslaved body is underwritten as the speculative risk of capital, and public outrage. In this way, the importance of the enslaved body to modes of capital is not predicated to actual material flesh, or even the potential for that body to labor, but was instead articulated as an abstract flow of enumeration and probability. If, under this premise, we are to take W.B. DuBois at face value and consider the double consciousness of the racialized individual, then we are immediately confronted with the fragmentation of black genesis as a tension between what is made visible as blackness or black non-being, which Sylvia Wynters argues is already owned by ontology as a problem of bio-epistemic compliance and the regime of prototypical capital existence, which I argue is symptomatic of a larger logic of social quantification. So I just wanna diverge for a second and return to the issue of the Zong for those who aren’t familiar, the issue of the slave body on the British slaver was the start and emergence of the British insurance industry. If anyone knows, there was an illness that broke out on the slave ship, in the middle of the Atlantic, seven crew members died, and I think it was in term of like twenty slaves, and the captain of that ship decided that, actually, it was cheaper to throw all the slaves overboard and claim the insurance than it was to continue the passage. And when he returned back to England, he sued the insurance company, and that was the start of litigation -- of the body itself as being a virtual point of risk. And what I’m arguing is that, since that development, obviously we know how pervasive the insurance industry is, how pervasive capital mechanisms are at identifying risk and probability, and what I’m arguing here is, following Raengo, is that what we know today as modern capitalism in the UK is already predicated on the violence of the black female body. So, to continue, as the terms of contemporary capital depart from the derivation of value as the direct engagement with the body to the technics of labor practice, so in other words, it no longer became about the actual slave being delivered to do manual labor – the financial gain was greater from actually deriving insurance risk on the body itself. So the body only became a black body once it was subsumed into capital types of risk. These engagements emerged as adaptive forms of information exchange that, unlike popular believe, are indifferent to the specificity of the body. However, it is specific only as much as the racialized body can be extracted into quantifiable forms of data and pre-emption, which continues today to be defined as social value in contemporary techno-capital institutions. What I’m attempting to highlight is that while the technology of shipping and insurance risk, predicated on violence and the abstraction of the black body, were once the lens through which blackness was made visible, the emergence of new generative types of technology, like machine learning, enact an accelerated form of targeting and visibility that no longer require physicality, but depend on the meta-abstraction of all social phenomenon to locate the body as a measure of correlation and probability. So, in other words, after the Zong, following Raengo here, after the Zong, the idea of abstracting the body into actual risk, of course, further objectified the black body, but it also set a precedent of actual citizenship being viewed as potential financial gain or potential investment.

#### Neoliberalism threatens survival- only coalitional politics can challenge its dominance

Dean, PhD, 15

(Jodi, Rethinking Marxism, 2015 Vol. 27, No. 3, 396–404, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08935696.2015.1042694)

Two ideas voiced in the present discussion impress the urgency of the need for a left party oriented toward communism: racism (Buck 2015) and the Anthropocene (Healy 2015). Given anthropogenic climate change, the stakes of contemporary politics are almost unimaginably high. They range from the continued investment in extractive industries and fossil fuels constitutive of the carbon-combustion complex (see Oreskes and Conway 2014), to the dislocations accompanying mass migration in the wake of floods and droughts to the racist response of states outside what Christian Parenti (2011, 9) calls the “Tropic of Chaos” (the band around the “belt of economically and politically battered post-colonial states girding the planet’s mid-latitudes,” where climate change is “beginning to hit hard”), all the way to human extinction. That one city, state, or country brings carbon emissions under control—while certainly a step in the right direction—may be irrelevant from the standpoint of overall warming. Perhaps its carbon-emitting industries were shipped elsewhere. Perhaps another country chose to expand its own drilling operations. Climate change forces us to acknowledge that we can’t build new worlds (Helepololei). We live in one world, the heating up of which threatens humans and other species. Not all communities, economies, or ways of life are compatible. Those premised on industries and practices that continue to contribute to planetary warming have to change significantly, and soon. Forcing that change is the political challenge of our time. Given the persistence of racialized violence and the operation of the state as an instrument for the maintenance not only of capitalist modes of production but also and concomitantly of racialized hierarchy, the challenges of organizing politically across issues and identities are almost insurmountably daunting. No wonder the Left resorts to moralism and self-care instead. It’s easier to catalog difference than it is to build up a Left strong enough to exercise power, especially given the traversal of state power by transnational corporations, trade, and treaties. It’s also easier to go along with the dominant ideology of individualism, which enjoins us first and foremost to look after ourselves, than it is to put ourselves aside and focus on formulating a strategy for using collective power to occupy, reconfigure, and redirect institutions at multiple levels. Here again, not every vision of community is compatible with every other. Those premised on fantasies of racial, religious, ethnic, or linguistic purity directly oppose those premised on diversity. Those premised on reproducing structures of class hierarchy directly oppose those insisting on equality. If something like a party of the radical Left can stretch beyond Greece and Spain, if it can be imagined in North America, it will only be possible as a combination of communism, antiracism, and climate activism. I use “red, black, and green” as a heuristic for the coalition of concerns necessary for such a party. I invoke the heuristic here to double down against critics who prefer a thousand alternatives to the party form. A thousand alternatives (see Healy 2015) is no alternative. It leaves the political system we have—the one that puts all its force behind the preservation of capitalist class interests—intact. Some ideas need to be chosen, systematized into a program, and defended. Consciously reiterating the colors of the Black Liberation Flag, the red, black, and green heuristic positions itself within the histories of communist, people’s, and anticolonial struggles. Left Unity in the UK uses red, black, and green in their logo to suggest a similar constellation. The colors don’t have a fixed meaning; they have appeared differently in the histories of emancipatory egalitarian struggle. In recent struggles, red suggests a politics against debt, austerity, and corporate personhood and allies with anticapitalism and communism as well. Black pays tribute to the IWW, anarchists, black power, and movements against aggressive policing, incarceration, and the murder of African Americans. Green points to climate justice, an approach to climate change that exceeds capitalist emphases on carbon markets and green commodities to encompass the dismantling of the carbon-based economy and the global redistribution of wealth. The three colors should not be read as three separate issues or groups. They should rather be understood as a kind of mutually supporting and inflecting scaffold. An equitable response to the changing climate, for example, is incompatible with the continuation of capitalism. A communism anchored in extractive industry is incompatible with the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. Antiracism directs our attention to those most likely to be exploited and sacrificed in market-driven schemes to address climate change. It also marks the fact of the history of divisions within the Left that have stood in the way of our forging collective counterpower. Here and now, movements are pushing the organizational convergence of communist, climate, and race politics. Moral Mondays, the ongoing protests in North Carolina, bring together an array of political concerns around racial justice, cuts to public services, and the environment. These protests include marches and acts of civil disobedience. The heartbreaking reminder that “Black lives matter” calls for the abolition of structures of institutionalized power that continue to impoverish, imprison, and kill black people everywhere. Protests in Ferguson, Missouri, in the wake of the murder of Michael Brown, have turned the spotlight on the militarization of the police and the buildup of state forces for the defense of the wealthy and white against the proletarianized—poor, brown, and black. Similar buildups of police borders in the United States and abroad attempt to push back the many on the move in response to the “catastrophic convergence” of decades of violent expropriation and climate change (Parenti 2011). The demand for climate justice places the economic inequalities accompanying and constitutive of capitalist “development” at the center of global discussions of climate change. Images from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and terms like “sacrifice zones” help articulate the two. Every time an activist reminds us that issues can’t be considered in isolation or every time a student repeats the mantra of intersectionality, the Left is instructing itself to make connections and formulate a politics capable of grasping complexity and of changing the world. The party is a form for that connecting. It provides a location where we see and relate to ourselves as comrades, as solidary members of a fighting collective. (399-401)

#### Our alternative creates a new standpoint on analysis of inequalities.  Rather than beginning with the framework of race and racism to orient our political struggle, politics should begin with a critique of capitalism – only understanding the way in which capitalism produces race in the first place can create a truly effective politics

**Darder**, **and Torress**, **04** (Antonia, Prof of education policy studies at U of Illinois, and Rodolfo, Associate prof of latino studies at UC Irvine, After Race:  Racism after multiculturalism, p. 98-101//liam)

There is no question but that the issues raised by critical race theorists in education, policy studies and the social sciences are significant to our un derstanding of the conditions that plague racialized student populations in U.S. schools today. However, one of our major concerns with the use of critical race theory to buttress educational-political debates of racial ized oppression or racism is directly linked to the use of “race” as the central unit of analysis. Coupled with an uncompromising emphasis on “race” is the conspicuous absence of a systematic discussion of class and, more importantly, a substantive critique of capitalism. Let us be more specific here. In contending with questions of “race” and institutional power, references are indeed made to “capitalism” or “2class” in some works by critical race theorists and, in particular, Latino critical race theorists, who acknowledge that “attention to class issues has a pending, but as yet underdeveloped, trajectory in the future evolution of LatCrit theory and the consolidation of LatCrit social justice agendas” (Iglesias 1999, 64). However, these efforts to explore the ways in which socioeconomic interests are expressed in the law or education are generally vague and undertheorized. Because of this lack of a theo retically informed account of racism and capitalist social relations, critical race theory has done little to further our understanding of the politi cal economy of racism and racialization. In addition, much of critical race theory’s approach is informed by ambiguous ideas of “institutional racism” or “structural racism,” which, as Miles (1989) points Out, are problematic due to the danger of conceptual inflation. Our aim here is not to dismiss this important body of work but to point out an important analytical distinction we make in our intellectual and political project. Our analysis of racism in contemporary society begins with the capitalist mode of production, classes, and class struggle. The mode of production, which is the site of class relations, is the point of departure in our interrogation of racism as an ideology of social ex clusion. In contrast, critical race scholars attribute constitutive power to the American legal system itself. Hence, the “relative autonomy” of legal institutions is invoked to stress the power of “race” and to set their work apart from critical legal scholars, who “could not come to grips with the continuing problems of deeply embedded racism” (Guinier and Torres 2002, 34). We maintain that the legal system (the state) is located in a given economic context and is shaped by the imperatives of capital. Our critique, then, is tied to the continued use of the traditional language of social theory, which has always been inadequate in problematizing notions of “race” in both research and popular discourse. In essence, we argue that the use of “race” has been elevated to a theoretical construct, despite the fact that the concept of “race” itself has remained under theorized Hence to employ alternative constructs derived from legal theory to shape arguments related to educational policy and in stitutional practices, although well meaning and eloquent, is like beating a dead horse. No matter how much is said, it is impossible to enliven or extend the debate on educational policy with its inherent inequalities by using the language of “race.” Even a brief overview of the most prominent writings in critical race theory shows how little movement there has been in furthering our understanding of the concept or redirecting the debate. Overall, most of the work is anchored in the popular intersectionality argument of the postructuralist and postmodernist era, which maintains that “race,” gender, and class should all receive equal attention in our understanding of soci. ety and our development of institutional policies and practices. More re. cently, Guinier and Tortes (2002), in an apparent effort to push through the limits of the intersectionality argument, proposed to advocate for what they term “racial literacy” from which “to identify patterns of in. justice that link race to class, gender, and other forms of power.” (29) Despite their innovative use of “race,” its traditional analytical use remains intact. Our concerns with critical race theory go beyond the desire to construct intellectual abstractions. Rather, our concerns are grounded in political questions such as: Where exactly does an antirace theory of society lead us in real political struggles for social justice, human rights, and eco. nomic democracy? How do we launch a truly universal emancipatory po. lineal project anchored primarily upon a theory of “race”? Where is a cri tique of capitalism or an explicit anticapitalist vision in a critical theory of “race”? Can we afford to overlook the inherent existence of a politics of identity in the foundational views that led to the construction of critical race theory? We are also troubled by the confusion with respect to the, terms critical race theorists use to frame their analysis. In this context, it is important to distinguish between how we under stand the construct of “race” and its genesis. In our analysis, “race,” simply put, is the child of racism. That into say, racism does not exist because there is such a thing as “race.” Rather notions of “race” are a fundamental ideological construction of racism or a racialized interpretation of phenotypically and, may we add, regionally different human beings. The process of racialization, then, is at work in all relations in a capitalist so ciety. Alternatively, we might say that the empire is not built on “race’ but on an ideology of racism—this being one of the primary categories by which human beings are sorted, controlled, and made disposable at the point of production.

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#### Class is a key starting point—not to obscure intersecting inequalities, but to historicize them and address the engines of mass immiseration

**Taylor 11** [Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, on the editorial board of the International Socialist Review and a doctoral student in African American Studies at Northwestern University; “Race, class and Marxism,” SocialistWorker.org, http://socialistworker.org/2011/01/04/race-class-and-marxism]

Marxists believe that the potential for that kind of unity is dependant on battles and struggles against racism today. Without a commitment by revolutionary organizations in the here and now to the fight against racism, working-class unity will never be achieved and the revolutionary potential of the working class will never be realized. Yet despite all the evidence of this commitment to fighting racism over many decades, Marxism has been maligned as, at best, "blind" to combating racism and, at worst, "incapable" of it. For example, in an article published last summer, popular commentator and self-described "anti-racist" Tim Wise summarized the critique of "left activists" that he later defines as Marxists. He writes: [L]eft activists often marginalize people of color by operating from a framework of extreme class reductionism, which holds that the "real" issue is class, not race, that "the only color that matters is green," and that issues like racism are mere "identity politics," which should take a backseat to promoting class-based universalism and programs to help working people. This reductionism, by ignoring the way that even middle class and affluent people of color face racism and color-based discrimination (and by presuming that low-income folks of color and low-income whites are equally oppressed, despite a wealth of evidence to the contrary) reinforces white denial, privileges white perspectivism and dismisses the lived reality of people of color. Even more, as we'll see, it ignores perhaps the most important political lesson regarding the interplay of race and class: namely, that the biggest reason why there is so little working-class consciousness and unity in the Untied States (and thus, why class-based programs to uplift all in need are so much weaker here than in the rest of the industrialized world), is precisely because of racism and the way that white racism has been deliberately inculcated among white working folks. Only by confronting that directly (rather than sidestepping it as class reductionists seek to do) can we ever hope to build cross-racial, class based coalitions. In other words, for the policies favored by the class reductionist to work--be they social democrats or Marxists--or even to come into being, racism and white supremacy must be challenged directly. Here, Wise accuses Marxism of: "extreme class reductionism," meaning that Marxists allegedly think that class is more important than race; reducing struggles against racism to "mere identity politics"; and requiring that struggles against racism should "take a back seat" to struggles over economic issues. Wise also accuses so-called "left activists" of reinforcing "white denial" and "dismiss[ing] the lived reality of people of color"--which, of course, presumes Left activists and Marxists to all be white. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - What do Marxists actually say? Marxists argue that capitalism is a system that is based on the exploitation of the many by the few. Because it is a system based on gross inequality, it requires various tools to divide the majority--racism and all oppressions under capitalism serve this purpose. Moreover, oppression is used to justify and "explain" unequal relationships in society that enrich the minority that live off the majority's labor. Thus, racism developed initially to explain and justify the enslavement of Africans--because they were less than human and undeserving of liberty and freedom. Everyone accepts the idea that the oppression of slaves was rooted in the class relations of exploitation under that system. Fewer recognize that **under capitalism, wage slavery is the pivot around which all other inequalities and oppressions turn**. Capitalism used racism to justify plunder, conquest and slavery, but as Karl Marx pointed out, it also used racism to divide and rule--to pit one section of the working class against another and thereby blunt class consciousness. **To claim**, as Marxists do, **that racism is a product of capitalism is not to deny** or diminish **its importance** or impact in American society. It is simply to explain its origins and the reasons for its perpetuation. Many on the left today talk about class as if it is one of many oppressions, often describing it as "classism." What people are really referring to as "classism" is elitism or snobbery, and not the fundamental organization of society under capitalism. Moreover, it is popular today to talk about various oppressions, including class, as intersecting. While it is true that oppressions can reinforce and compound each other, they are **born out of the material relations shaped by capitalism** and the economic exploitation that is at the heart of capitalist society. In other words, it is the material and economic structure of society that gave rise to a range of ideas and ideologies to justify, explain and help perpetuate that order. In the United States, racism is the most important of those ideologies. Despite the widespread beliefs to the contrary of his critics, Karl Marx himself was well aware of the centrality of race under capitalism. While Marx did not write extensively on the question of slavery and its racial impact in societies specifically, he did write about the way in which European capitalism emerged because of its pilfering, rape and destruction, famously writing: The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of Black skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. He also recognized the extent to which slavery was central to the world economy. He wrote: Direct slavery is just as much the pivot of bourgeois industry as machinery, credits, etc. Without slavery you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that has given the colonies their value; it is the colonies that have created world trade, and it is world trade that is the pre-condition of large-scale industry. Thus slavery is an economic category of the greatest importance. Without slavery North America, the most progressive of countries, would be transformed into a patriarchal country. Wipe out North America from the map of the world, and you will have anarchy--the complete decay of modern commerce and civilization. Cause slavery to disappear and you will have wiped America off the map of nations. Thus slavery, because it is an economic category, has always existed among the institutions of the peoples. Modern nations have been able only to disguise slavery in their own countries, but they have imposed it without disguise upon the New World. Thus, there is a fundamental understanding of the centrality of slave labor in the national and international economy. But what about race? Despite the dearth of Marx's own writing on race in particular, one might look at Marx's correspondence and deliberations on the American Civil War to draw conclusions as to whether Marx was as dogmatically focused on purely economic issues as his critics make him out be. One must raise the question: If Marx was reductionist, how is his unabashed support and involvement in abolitionist struggles in England explained? If Marx was truly an economic reductionist, he might have surmised that slavery and capitalism were incompatible, and simply waited for slavery to whither away. W.E.B. Du Bois in his Marxist tome Black Reconstruction, quotes at length a letter penned by Marx as the head of the International Workingmen's Association, written to Abraham Lincoln in 1864 in the midst of the Civil War: The contest for the territories which opened the epoch, was it not to decide whether the virgin soil of immense tracts should be wedded to the labor of the immigrant or be prostituted by the tramp of the slaver driver? When an oligarchy of 300,000 slave holders dared to inscribe for the first time in the annals of the world "Slavery" on the banner of armed revolt, when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great Democratic Republic had first sprung up, whence the first declaration of the rights of man was issued...when on the very spots counter-revolution...maintained "slavery to be a beneficial institution"...and cynically proclaimed property in man 'the cornerstone of the new edifice'...then the working classes of Europe understood at once...that the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy war of property against labor... They consider it an earnest sign of the epoch to come that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded son of the working class, to lead his country through the matchless struggles for the rescue of the enchained race and the Reconstruction of a social order. Not only was Marx personally opposed to slavery and actively organized against it, but he theorized that slavery and the resultant race discrimination that flowed from it were not just problems for the slaves themselves, but for white workers who were constantly under the threat of losing work to slave labor. This did not mean white workers were necessarily sympathetic to the cause of the slaves--most of them were not. But Marx was not addressing the issue of consciousness, but objective factors when he wrote in Capital, "In the United States of America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed as long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the Black it is branded." Moreover, Marx understood the dynamics of racism in a modern sense as well--as a means by which workers who had common, objective interests with each other could also become mortal enemies because of subjective, but nevertheless real, racist and nationalist ideas. Looking at the tensions between Irish and English workers, with a nod toward the American situation between Black and white workers, Marx wrote: Every industrial and commercial center in England possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the USA. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and stupid tool of the English rule in Ireland. This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it. Out of this quote, one can see a Marxist theory of how racism operated in contemporary society, after slavery was ended. Marx was highlighting three things: first, that capitalism promotes economic competition between workers; second, that the ruling class uses racist ideology to divide workers against each other; and finally, that when one group of workers suffer oppression, it negatively impacts the entire class.

#### Conceptual Afropessimism is philosophical idealism and can’t be translated to the material realm, which is contingent and explained by dialectical materialism.

Cruz, PhDc, ‘17

(Victor Manuel, Jr., Philosophy/EnglishLit@KingsCollegeLondon, “Metaphysics in the Dark Music, Mimesis and the Making of Utopia,” King’s College London) BW

First, it means wrestling with the abstractions taken for granted in such discussions, which often betray a latent philosophical idealism, which asserts the ‘identity of identity and non-identity’ (the ultimate sameness of what appear to be opposites). Marx argued that political economists routinely performed this conceptual sleight-of-hand, positing ‘immediate identities’ between production and consumption, such that each moment is figured as the equivalent of the other: production entails consuming raw materials, just as consumption has material consequences for production— thus both can be said to be ‘the same’. P = C (immediate identity) This formula rather conveniently imputes a kind of natural symmetry to the market and the system as a whole. And while it may be ‘true’ at the level of concepts, material realities paint a different picture. This is akin with those projects that subsume the variety of art forms produced by non-white peoples under the head of ‘blackness’, as well as those that render black music as a sort of practical equivalent of Saussurean linguistics (signifying) or Derridean deconstruction (play, deferral). It also characterizes attempts to equate musicians their and audiences. In practice, these moments are structurally differentiated by all manner of spatial, temporal, ideological and cultural factors. We must recognize these differences without falling back on reductive binaries like ‘active’ and ‘passive’. Second, it means going beyond functionalism, whereby relations of mutual dependence link production and consumption. In other words, the moments are related, and thus understood, through their differences. Levi-Strauss’s structural anthropology and Saussure’s linguistics exemplified this approach: the meaning of a practice or a word is precisely its difference from every other word, and thus depends on its location within the synchronic totality of the cultural-linguistic field. P ↔ C (mediated identity, mutual dependence) This is also the logic of afro-pessimism, which asserts that ‘whites gain their coherence by knowing what they are not’. It may seem like a more dialectical option than the first, but it brackets the contingencies of history, and the multifarious ways that material conditions shape social meanings and identities in the present. If relations of immediate identity naturalize historically produced circumstances, relations of dependence, while registering domination and subordination, tend to be figured as fixed- within a scheme that rewards those doing the fixing.

#### Dialectical theories are not reducible to Hegel’s Eurocentric theorization.

Cruz, PhDc, ‘17

(Victor Manuel, Jr., Philosophy/EnglishLit@KingsCollegeLondon, “Metaphysics in the Dark Music, Mimesis and the Making of Utopia,” King’s College London) BW

My aim, then, is to conceive of the circuit of socio-cultural production dialectically: as a ‘richly differentiated totality’ of distinct processes related in historical time, whose shape at any given moment must be understood as the outcome of social struggles on numerous fronts, which themselves depend on a multiplicity of structural causes and social mediations. Thinking dialectically does not necessarily entail accepting Hegel’s Eurocentric philosophy of history. Nor does it give us permission to kick back while the ‘logic’ of capital unfolds and the system implodes under the weight of its own contradictions. On the contrary, it means recognizing how each stage in the process is riddled with contradiction and instability, and that these are precisely what keeps the circuit in motion:

## Case

#### Voting for them for representation is bad and turns the rest of the K:

1. **Double-turns pessimism. Their authors say we must focus on structures, not representation. If the world can’t get better, then symbolically voting for them literally does nothing.**
2. **Leads to passivity for nonblack judges. Voting for them** doesn’t **solve** racism **in debate, but make**s **you feel super woke by THINKING that you've done something progressive – your ballot isn’t reparations, it’s one letter W added to a list of hundreds.**

#### This is liberal tokenism— where people vote for Black candidates just because they’re Black, despite passing policies that criminalize Black people. This means the “skills” they inspire cause MORE violence.

Myerson 18

(Jesse A., Activist, <https://www.thenation.com/article/white-anti-racism-must-be-based-in-solidarity-not-altruism/>, 2-5)

The dominant liberal conception of white anti-racism emphasizes altruism. In this mode, white people must set aside our own self-interest in order to extend kindness to those less fortunate. Humanitarian assistance is rewarded, and those who practice it are hailed for their self-sacrifice and generosity. White people are encouraged to defer, shrink, and assist. It is not our fight, the white-altruism mode says, so we must strive to decenter ourselves and support black people’s “advancement” as peripheral allies, doing what kindnesses we can to compensate them for the privileges we enjoy. We must reliably articulate non-racist positions using suitably non-racist terminology, correct white people who fail to do these, and under no circumstances use racist language out in the open. Not that people shouldn’t interrupt racist personal acts or respect the expertise of people of color regarding how racism plays out in their lives and communities, but that alone does not constitute a strategy. At best, these interruptions and this deference are a woefully inadequate response to systemic racism. At worst, white altruism is a recipe for disaster. Not only does it treat racism as personal flaw rather than a system of power; it also insists that white people have an obligation to help black communities “advance,” a construction that is vulnerable to white people’s misconceptions of what constitutes “advancement.” Without being anchored to a goal of redistributing power, altruism is often carried along by the prevailing currents of racist capitalism.

### AT: Surrender

#### Surrendering is liberal tokenism- reinforces antiblackness

Myerson 18

(Jesse A., Activist, <https://www.thenation.com/article/white-anti-racism-must-be-based-in-solidarity-not-altruism/>, 2-5)

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### **ontology**

#### **Your ontology warrants are wrong –**

#### A. Gratuitous violence was also done to queer people like Matthew Shepard.

#### B. Fanonian analysis fails – it assumes white minds haven’t changed since the 1960s and whites in America are the same as those in Africa. No Afropess scholar they cite has practiced ACTUAL psychoanalysis which takes years. Neolib, globalization, etc. proves things have changed.

#### **C. Psychoanalysis doesn’t prove ontology.**

Hudis, PhD, 15

(Peter, English/History@Queens, Frantz Fanon: Philosopher of the Barricades)

**Fanon**’s vantage point upon the world is his situated experience. He **is trying to understand the inner psychic life of racism**, **not provide an account of the structure of** human existence as a whole. **Racism is not**, of course, an integral part of the human psyche; **it is a** social construct that has a psychic impact. **Any effort to comprehend the social distress that accompanies racism by reference to some** a priori structure—be it the Oedipal Complex or the Collective Unconscious—is doomed to failure. Carl **Jung sought to deepen** and go beyond **Freud**’s approach **by arguing that the subconscious is** grounded in a **universal** layer of the psyche—which he called “the collective unconscious.” This refers to inherited patterns of thought that exist in all human minds, regardless of specific culture or upbringing, and which manifest themselves in dreams, fairy tales, and myths. Jung referred to these universal patterns as “archetypes.” It may seem, on a superficial reading, that Fanon is drawing from Jung, since he discusses how white people tend to unconsciously assimilate views of blacks that are based on negative stereotypes. Even the most “progressive” white tends to think of blacks a certain way (such as “emotional,” “physical,” or “aggressive”), even as they disavow any racist animus on their part. However, **Fanon denies that such collective delusions are part of a psychic structure**; they are not permanent features of the mind. **They are habits picked up and acquired from a series of social and cultural impositions**. While they constitute a kind a collective unconscious on the part of many white people, they are not grounded in any universal “archetype.” The unconscious prejudices of whites do not derive from genes or nature, nor do they derive from some form independent of culture or upbringing. **Fanon contends that Jung “confuses habit with instinct.**”21 **Fanon objects to Jung’s “collective unconscious” for the same reason that he rejects the notion of a** black ontology. **His** phenomenological **approach brackets out ontological claims on both a social and psychological level** insofar as the examination of race and racism is concerned. He writes, “Neither Freud nor Adler nor even the cosmic Jung took the black man into consideration in the course of his research.”22 This does not mean that Fanon rejects their contributions tout court. He does not deny the existence of the unconscious. He only denies that the inferiority complex of blacks operates on an unconscious level. He does not reject the Oedipal Complex. He only denies that it explains (especially in the West Indies) the proclivity of the black “slave” to mimic the values of the white “master.” And as seen from his positive remarks on Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage, **he does not reject the idea of psychic structure. He only denies that it can** substitute for an historical understanding **of the origin of neuroses**.23 Fanon adopts a socio-genetic approach to a study of the psyche because that is what is adequate for the object of his analysis. For Fanon**, it is the** relationship between **the socio-economic and psychological that is of critical import**. **He makes it clear**, insofar as the subject matter of his study is concerned, that **the socio-economic is first of all responsible for affective disorders:** “First, economic. Then, internalization or rather epidermalization of this inferiority.”24 Fanon never misses an opportunity to remind us that racism owes its origin to specific economic relations of domination—such as slavery, colonialism, and the effort to coopt sections of the working class into serving the needs of capital. It is hard to mistake the Marxist influence here. It does not follow, however, that what comes first in the order of time has conceptual or strategic priority. The inferiority complex is originally born from economic subjugation, but it takes on a life of its own and expresses itself in terms that surpass the economic. Both sides of the problem—the socio-economic and psychological—must be combatted in tandem: “The black man must wage the struggle on two levels; whereas historically these levels are mutually dependent, any unilateral liberation is flawed, and the worst mistake would be to believe their mutual dependence automatic.”25 On these grounds **he argues that the problem of racism cannot be solved on a psychological level**. It is not an “individual” problem; it is a social one. But neither can it be solved on a social level that ignores the psychological. It is small wonder that although his name never appears in the book, Fanon was enamored of the work of Wilhelm Reich.26 This important Freudian-Marxist would no doubt feel affinity with Fanon’s comment, “Genuine disalienation will have been achieved only when things, in the most materialist sense, have resumed their rightful place.”27 (35-7)

#### D. Identity isn’t singular, and neither is the world. Their impact framing is “immature politics”

Gordon 15 --- Lewis, Afro-Jewish philosopher, political thinker, educator, and musician, Professor at the University of Connecticut in Philosophy and Africana Studies, European Union Visiting Chair in Philosophy; Nelson Mandela Visiting Professor of Politics and International Studies at Rhodes University, South Africa; and Chairman of the Frantz Fanon awards committees of the Caribbean Philosophical Association, transcribed from <https://youtu.be/UABksVE5BTQ>, presenting and discussing his book “What Fanon Said”

\*\*\*Theonaturalism – religion based difference

The first thing to bear in mind you may wonder why in the beginning of the talk I talked about philosophical anthropology. And many people when they are trying to talk about social change they never think about *what a human being is* and this is something Fanon pays attention to. **Many people want to have closed conceptions of human beings because then human beings can be predicable**. In fact, in fanons writing he gave an example. One of the problems is that when he would walk in reason seems to walk out. One problem we have to bear in mind when we try to look at the question of human beings **in terms of rigid closed systems** is that we often are trying to get as a model of how we work as theorists on issues of social change that are actually based on what we can call **law like generalizations**. Now what is a law like generalization? It is when you make sure that whatever you say has no contradiction down the line. So if you are to say this much [gestures with hand] the next stage must be consistent with that, and the next stage until you are maximally consistent. Do you get that? But here is the problem – and I can just put it in a nut shell- nobody, nobody in this room would like to date, be married to, or be a best friend with a maximally consistent person. You know what that is. Its hell. And this tells you something, because if somebody where maximally consistent, you know what you would say that person is not reasonable. And we have a person here who does work on Hegel that can point out this insight, that a human being has the ability to evaluate rationality. Now why is that important? Because you see the mistake many of us make is **many of us want to push the human being into that maximized law like generalization model**. So when we think about our philosophical anthropology, some people, our question about intersectionality for instance, what some people don’t understand is nowhere is there ever a human being who is one identity. People talk about race – do you ever really see a race walking? You see a racialized man or woman, or transman or transwoman. Do you ever see a class walking? Class is embodied in flesh and blood people. And we can go on and on. So if we enrich our philosophical anthropology we begin to notice certain other things. And one of the other things we begin to realize is that **we commit a serious problem when we do political work.** And the problem is this. The question about **Wilderson** for instance. There is this discussion going on (and allot of people build it out of my earlier books). I have a category I call, as a metaphor, an antiblack world. You notice **an indefinite article** – **an anti-black world**. The reason I say that is because **the world is different from an anti-black world**. The project of racism is to create a world that would be **completely anti-black or anti-woman.** **Although that is a project, it is not a fait accompli**. People don’t seem to understand how recent this phenomenon we are talking about is. A lot of people talk about race they don’t even know the history of how race is connected into theonaturalism. How, for instance, Andalucia and the pushing out of the Moors. The history of how race connected to Christianity was formed. A lot of people don’t understand – from the standpoint of a species whose history is 220,000 years old, what the hell is 500 years? **But the one thing that we don’t understand to is we create a false model for how we study those last 500 years**. We study the 500 years as if the people who have been dominated **have not been fighting and resisting.** Had they not been fighting and resisting we wouldn’t be here. And then we come into this next point because you see the problem in the formulation of **pessimism** and **optimism** is they are both based on forecasted knowledge, a prior knowledge. **But human beings don’t have prior knowledge.** And in fact – what in the world are we if we need to have guarantees for us to act. You know what you call such people? Cowards. The fact of the matter is our ancestors – let’s start with enslaved ancestors. The enslaved ancestors who were burning down those plantations, who were finding clever ways to poison their masters, who were organizing meetings for rebellions, none of them had any clue what the future would be 100 years later. Some had good reason to believe that it may take 1000 years. But you know why they fought? Because they knew it wasn’t for them.One of the problems we have in the way we think about political issues is we commit what Fanon and others in the existential tradition would call a form of political immaturity. Political immaturity is saying it is not worth it unless I, me, individually get the payoff. When you are thinking what it is to relate to other generations – remember Fanon said the problem with people in the transition, the pseudo postcolonial bourgeois – is that they miss the point, you fight for liberation for other generations. And that is why Fanon said other generations they must have their mission. But you see some people fought and said no I want my piece of the pie. And that means the biggest enemy becomes the other generations. And that is why the postcolonial pseudo-bourgeoisie they are not a bourgeoisie proper because they do not link to the infrastructural development of the future, it is about themselves. And that’s why, for instance, as they live higher up the hog, as they get their mediating, service oriented, racial mediated wealth, the rest of the populations are in misery. The very fact that in many African countries there are people whose futures have been mortgaged, the fact that in this country the very example of mortgaging the future of all of you is there. What happens to people when they have no future? It now collapses the concept of maturation and places people into perpetual childhood. So one of the political things – and this is where a psychiatrist philosopher is crucial – is to ask ourselves what does it mean to take on adult responsibility. And that means to understand that **in all political action it’s not about you**. **It is what you are doing for a world you may not even be able to understand**. Now that becomes tricky, because how do we know this? **People have done it before**. There were people, for instance, who fought anti-colonial struggles, there are people (and now I am not talking about like thirty or forty years ago, I am talking about the people from day one 17th 18th century all the way through) and we have no idea what we are doing for the 22nd century. And **this is where developing political insight comes in.** Because **we commit the error of forgetting the systems we are talking about are human systems**. They are not systems in the way we talk about the laws of physics. A human system can only exist by human actions maintaining them. **Which means every human system is incomplete.** **Every human being is by definition incomplete**. Which means you can go this way or you can go another way. The system isn’t actually closed.

#### E. Their Azarian neuroscience of racism evidence is entirely based upon an ineffective implicit bias test that doesn’t even claim to measure racial animosity

#### Lopez 17

(German Lopez, senior policy correspondant. “For years, this popular test measured anyone’s racial bias. But it might not work after all.” March 7, 2017. https://www.vox.com/identities/2017/3/7/14637626/implicit-association-test-racism)//HW-CC

When I first took the implicit association test a few years ago, I was happy with my results: The test found that I had no automatic preference against white or black people. According to this test, I was a person free of racism, even at the subconscious level. I took the IAT again a few days later. This time, I wasn’t so happy with my results: It turns out I had a slight automatic preference for white people. According to this, I was a little racist at the subconscious level — against black people. Then I took the test again later on. This time, my results genuinely surprised me: It found once again that I had a slight automatic preference — only now it was in favor of black people. I was racist, but against white people, according to the test. At this point, I was at a loss as to what this test was telling me. Should I consider the average of my three results, essentially showing I had no bias at all? Or should I have used the latest result? Was this test even worth taking seriously, or was it bullshit? I felt like I had gotten no real answers about my bias from this test. (I recently retook the test a few times — and, again, it was all over the place.) It occurred to me, what would have happened if I took the test just once and walked away from it? Would I smugly conclude I wasn’t racist at all? What if I had gotten one of my other results that first time — potentially leading me to conclude that I am racist against either white or black people? What would I think of myself if I had just taken this test at face value? After all, it was managed by a group of respected researchers at Harvard University. But here’s the thing: It turns out the IAT might not tell individuals much about their individual bias. According to a growing body of research and the researchers who created the test and maintain it at the Project Implicit website, the IAT is not good for predicting individual biases based on just one test. It requires a collection — an aggregate — of tests before it can really make any sort of conclusions. “It can predict things in the aggregate, but it cannot predict behavior at the level of an individual” who took the test once, Calvin Lai, a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University and director of research at Project Implicit, told me. For individuals, this means they would have to take the test many times — maybe dozens of times — and average out the results to get a clear indication of their bias and potentially how that bias guides behavior. For a broader population, it’s similar: You’d have to collect the results of individuals in the population and average those out to get an idea of the overall population’s bias and potential behavior. This isn’t how the test was sold in books like Malcolm Gladwell’s Blink or the pages of news organizations like the New York Times. The assumption seemed to be that you could take the test once and come away with a clear picture of your bias. And that served a real-world purpose: In a society that no longer tolerates explicit racism nearly as much as it used to, uncovering people’s subconscious implicit biases seemed like the way to show people that they really can be and are still racist. Yet no researcher — not even the test’s creators — defends the one-off use. Tony Greenwald, a University of Washington researcher who co-created the test with Mahzarin Banaji at Harvard, conceded this point, telling me that the IAT is only “good for predicting individual behavior in the aggregate, and the correlations are small.” So the test, particularly when it came to individual results, really may not have told me anything valuable. The psychological tool that so many have trumpeted for measuring racism may not work as well as originally thought. The problem the IAT sought to fix The IAT tries to solve a very tricky problem we’ve seen in social science over the past few years: Measures of explicit racism (for example, directly asking whether a person thinks white people are superior to black people) have appeared to show a decline. But how much of that actually shows that racism is diminishing? Is it possible that people are lying when they answer those questions, fearing that telling the truth would make them look racist? And even if people don’t report explicit biases, is it possible they have implicit — meaning subconscious — ones? Researchers created a test that they hoped would work around these questions. Then they made it public — through Project Implicit — in hopes that they could draw on a massive pool of test takers to flesh out their research, while raising awareness about implicit biases and how racism and other kinds of prejudice still exist within American society today. The IAT tries to get at this by digging into people’s initial reflexes — and, hopefully, their subconscious mind — to gauge their real views. The race-based IAT works by asking you to first use two buttons (“E” or “I”) on your keyboard to identify a series of faces that flash on your screen as black or white and a series of words that flash on your screen as good or bad. Where the test gets trickier is when it mixes up these categories. In the following rounds, both faces and words will flash on your screen, but you’ll still be limited to “E” or “I” — only “E” could now mean “black or good” while “I” will mean “white or bad” in one round and later be reversed so “E” means “black or bad” and “I” means “white or good” in the next round. The idea is that if you have a slower reaction to selecting “good” when “black” is linked to it or “bad” when “white” is linked to it, you probably have a bias against black people or bias in favor of white people. (You can take the test to better understand how it works.) After several rounds of this, the test tells you if you have an “automatic preference” toward black or white people. (Greenwald emphasized to me that although a lot of people interpret this “automatic preference” as evidence of racism, his team doesn’t describe the results in that way. “I and my colleagues and collaborators do not call the IAT results a measure of implicit prejudice [or] implicit racism,” he said. “Racism and prejudice are explicit attitudes with components of hostility or negative animus toward a group. The IAT doesn’t even begin to measure something like that.”) For the individual, the motivation to take the test is obvious: People would like to know if they have some deep, underlying bias against others of certain races. And the IAT, based on how it presents the results, at least appears to give some answers. The IAT can’t really do what it’s supposed to: predict your bias Only the IAT doesn’t predict subconscious racial biases, at least based on one test. So one time with the IAT might not tell you much, if anything, about your actual individual views and behavior. As Lai told me, it’s not clear if the test even predicts biased behavior better than explicit measures: “What we don’t know is … whether or not the IAT and measures like the IAT can predict behavior over and above corresponding questionnaires of what we would call explicit measures or explicit attitudes.” The big problem with the test is it doesn’t only pick up subconscious biases. “The IAT is impacted by explicit attitudes, not just implicit attitudes,” James Jaccard, a New York University researcher who’s criticized the IAT, told me. “It is impacted by people’s ability to process information quickly on a general level. It is impacted by desires to want to create a good impression. It is impacted by the mood people are in. If the measure is an amalgamation of many things (one of which is purportedly implicit bias), how can we know which of those things is responsible for a (weak) correlation with behavior?” I felt one of those variables when I took the test: I often pressed the wrong button or took a little longer pressing a button because I genuinely blanked out on what the buttons were for. This happened fewer times as I took the test more often, but it still happened. And this is coming from someone who plays a lot of video games in his free time, so I’m probably making fewer mistakes to begin with than most people are.

#### Reject ontological claims- “ought” claims have radical power to reshape the world, their K essentializes black scholarship

Yancy, PhD, 13

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Although above I point to the middle passage as the matrix in terms of which black identity is shaped, we must be cognizant of how black identity and black subjectivity can be erroneously tethered to that moment in time and physical space, which then raises the issue of how a specific black historical narrative can function monolithically and thus exclude those black bodies that don't narrativize the middle passage in the same way or even at all. While I will not pursue this issue here, I want to be clear that there is a diverse "terrain of blackness" in terms of the changing landscape and meaning of blackness and that this change impacts differential experiences for those who consider themselves black people. Indeed, such differential experiences have an impact on how we think about the dynamics of black identity and black philosophizing, and the latter's key normative assumptions, modalities, and different morphologies of questions and responses that emerge. My point is to remain critically cognizant of the ways in which I privilege the middle passage and how that privileging might function as a historical gap for black people who nevertheless see themselves as black and yet whose experiences are shaped differently, though not incommensurably vis-à-vis other black people who contend with anti-black racism. Black philosophy and its role are fundamentally linked with existential struggle. The lived experiences of struggle and resistance (etymologically, "to take a stand") speak to the fact that the social ontological structure of the world is not a metaphysical fait accompli. Black philosophy acknowledges its historical conditionality and emergence against the backdrop of white racism, violence, colonialism, dehumanization, enslavement, oppression, and objectification. It recognizes this backdrop as constituted through lived embodiment and configurations of thought and action that were not necessary, but that are predicated upon contingent sites of power and hegemony that are linked to oppressive ideologies and the possession of material power to superimpose such oppressive ideologies. Hence, relevant to black philosophy is its clarion call: ''The world is not as it ought to be!" It is the power of "ought" that points to the openness of human history, agency, and counter-hegemonic praxis. The "ought" implies slippage, excess, lacunae, and the capacity to create. The subtext here is that one can reconfigure the world, reshape its direction, undo its normative repetitions, and create new and ever freeing forms of political formation, relationality, and performance. The role of black philosophy, then, having its point of origin within a matrix of oppression, even as this oppression was/is diasporic, is antagonistic and iconoclastic; indeed, resistant to claims of philosophical universality that are actually forms of discourse that are predicated upon a philosophical anthropology that is, in this case, underwritten by whiteness as the transcendental norm and that valorizes its vision of the world and the meaning of humanity at the exclusion of others. Hence, to engage in black philosophy on conceptual terms set forth here is to affirm one's humanity in the face of those who deem you a sub-person, ersatz, ontologically nugatory.