# 1NC v. Saratoga AG

#### The axiology of antiblackness denies ontological presence to blackness. Blackness is denied being so that black flesh becomes utility value for white humanity. The role of the ballot is to vote for the debater who provides the best liberation strategy for Blackness through the metaphysical re-configuration of value.

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In figure 4.3, Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper presents a vicious fantasy concerning the disposability of black being as a scene of war. “Contrabands” fled Confederate states and sought refuge from union soldiers during the Civil War. According to Barbara Tomblin, General Benjamin F. Butler declared blacks fleeing from Southern plantations and seeking protection “property of the enemy and subject to confiscation.”30 Giving safe haven to blacks served a strategic purpose: to drain the Confederacy of valuable wealth. Once confiscated, Union armies pressed blacks into various forms of work. Thus, even in union camps, blacks were still considered equipment and property **—** value was not grounded in the invaluable for blacks (i.e., **Being exceeding metaphysical value schemes**), but freedom was codified in use value for the Union. **Antiblackness, then**, is not confined to the antebellum South but **is the condition of possibility for the world**, including the valiant North. But the question before the Union, and still before us, is this: what type of work will help configure the value of black waste, the fleeing black body? What type of use does confiscation justify? What value would such creatures have during a war — uneducated and unwanted? If one could not rely on natural law alone to ascertain value (i.e., the inalienable rights of man), **then value must be found elsewhere**. Hortense Spillers remarks, “The captive body, then, brings into focus a gathering of social realities as well as a metaphor for value so thoroughly interwoven in their literal and figurative emphases that distinctions between them are virtually useless.”31 Whether we call this being a “captive,” “emancipated,” “contraband,” or “free,” **the distinctions are utterly useless when the question of value is foregrounded**. These distinctions, which orient much of historiography and legal studies, are differences without a difference, ontologically. **The question of value, then, reconfigures our proper metaphysical question.** **In essence, it inquires about how to ground value of a being lacking place in the world**.32 The illustrators provide an answer to this inquiry: since black being exists for destruction, why not make this being an extension of war machines? In this fantasy, black being is a sentient weapon, blurring the distinction between machine and flesh, weapon and body. Warfare provides value for sentient refuse. Black bodies are literal artilleries of destruction — there is no self to protect, just an open vulnerability to deadly violence. We might also suggest that the black weapon prefigures the suicide bomber, which preoccupies contemporary analysis of necropolitics. But martyrdom is absent from such an analysis because **the black** weapon **is pure use value**. The weapon does not sacrifice itself; destruction is its reason for existence. Black weapons also lack any relationality between humans and a political community from which to ground such self- sacrifice. Black death, vulnerability, injury, and destruction are mere comedic by- products of a war between humans. In the image, soldiers easily affix cannons to black bodies and position these weapons in the line of fire. The battlefield is precisely the space of emancipation — a death- scape. And the being emancipation creates in this space is the black weapon. War allegorizes the metaphysical holocaust, which places black being in extraordinary harm without regard to any ontological ground of resistance. This war, unlike the Civil War, is without end. The black weapon is being for another within an economy of brutality, strategy, and calculation. This catachrestic fantasy realizes the terror Heidegger envisioned with his critique of technological reasoning. The complete collapse between technology and flesh could only be realized with black being, and the image articulates this understanding.33 It is unthinkable that the union soldiers would become weapons because they are human beings. Thus, it is not just that the image is viciously satirical, but also that the image exposes a kernel of truth: it is indeed plausible that black being could be used in such a way in an antiblack world. Humor encases a metaphysical truth. **Black being lacks ontological security and is malleable in the hands of humans. This is ontological terror.**

#### Their calls of innovation are antiblack- Big pharma continues to use Black incarcerated people for profit and experimentation by overmedicating them under the guise of care.

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Large corporations that own brands such as Victoria’s Secret, Revlon, Old Navy and McDonald’s have come under public scrutiny for using Black and racialized prison labour to manufacture their commodities. Little attention, however, has been paid to Big Pharma’s predatory profiteering from prison labour and the practice of incarceration itself. The Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) is a structure that monetizes the warehousing of Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC). Big Pharma facilitates the caging of BIPOC, largely through psychotropic/ psychiatric medication. Incarceration, a practice that produces and exacerbates mental unwellness, is the ideal market for selling psychiatric meds. Given the history of medical experimentation on incarcerated people in general, and the testing of psychiatric medication in particular, it’s clear that Big Pharma continues to rely on the anti-Black practices central to incarceration. Social scientific research maintains that upwards of 73 percent of people incarcerated in women’s prisons are “mentally ill” and are therefore prescribed psychotropic drugs as a form of mental health “care.” The problem with these research findings is that they reproduce ideals of biological determinism–that disregard the social and environmental factors that produce distress in the first place. When we complicate the insistence that mental unwellness is simply “in the brain” and can be “fixed” by medication, mental health “care” in prisons starts to look a lot like the hyper-consumption of psychiatric pharmaceuticals. Mad activist frameworks insist that this complication is made abundantly clear. Psychiatric medications sold by Big Pharma to prisons can rightfully be used to aid in alleviating moments of distress. However, if deemed a necessity for the “maintenance of order in the prison environment,” psychotropics are also easily dispensed in an attempt to control the behavior of inmates. Overmedication of psychotropics is a well documented practice in prisons, with prison employees regularly “prescribing” medications themselves, instead of medical doctors. The increased vulnerability in women’s prisons is particularly problematic as it inherently produces gender, sexual, and physical violence. People in women’s prisons are already pathologized and punished for exhibiting behaviours not ascribed to femininity (i.e. docility, heterosexuality). The history of gendered pathologization in psychiatric practice builds on this pathologization. All the volumes of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM)–a primary text in psychiatry and psychology– are full of examples that mark behaviours and expressions that do not align with heteropatriarchy as ‘disorders’ to be ‘treated’ with medication. These many diagnoses were created at a historical moment that simultaneously saw the rise of the mainstream use of psychiatric medications and the emergence of mass incarceration. That relationship is far from coincidental. The majority of early testing of psychiatric medications in the 1930s and 1940s were done on incarcerated people. Between 1962-1980 at least 90 per cent psychiatric testing was done on incarcerated people–or in other words Black people. Medical experimentation on Black people has a long sordid history, from the Tuskegee Experiments to dermatological testing coming out of the University of Pennsylvania. Psychiatric medication testing has been a staple for the consolidation of wealth for pharmaceutical corporations for a century. A 2007 quarterly report published by the California Department of Corrections (CDCR) about juvenile justice indicates the creation of a psychotropic study to be conducted on incarcerated children. Children in migrant detention prisons are currently being given psychiatric medications, prescribed by doctors receiving kickbacks from Big Pharma. The makers of Seroquel, Latuda, and Zoloft–Astrazeteca, Sunovion, and Pfizer, respectively–are a small number of corporations that profit from the overmedication of incarcerated persons and presumably drug related testing. This medication–under the auspices of psychiatric “expertise,” is fallaciously framed as mental health care. Since incarceration produces and exacerbates mental unwellness, releasing incarcerated people would seem like a clear way to prevent– as opposed to “treat”–mental distress, but that would cut into the profit margins of pharmaceutical tycoons. Examining the relationship between Big Pharma, institutionalized psychiatry, and the prison industry is a necessary component in education, community organizing and political engagement. In order to disrupt and encourage divestment from prisons, we first have to know what these industries are complicit in. The abolishment of prisons requires a critique of institutionalized psychiatry. Given the fact that incarcerated persons are especially exposed to pharmaceutical and state sanctioned violence, it is the duty of pharmaceutical industries to transparently pinpoint their collusion with the police and prison state. The stories of incarcerated peoples’ experiences of being medicated–as scholar and abolitionist Angela Davis has highlighted in her own experiences of incarceration–are central to challenging those making big money off of the lives of BIPOC held in cages. An abolitionist praxis that centers disrupting the myriad violences produced by incarceration must now also include the violences manufactured by Big Pharma, as well as the institutions that produce and encourage profit from it. We can no longer leave these realities out of our focus on prison abolition.

#### The aff ‘s analysis of present pandemics to predict future ones is complicit in the attempt to perfect an antiblack world and traps blackness into cruel optimism. This is the genocide of blackness that focuses on the future but leaves the slave unprotected against capture, mutilation, and torture.

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In one of the ﬁrst lines of the ﬁlm, a state newscaster covering the celebration of the revolution’s tenth anniversary says that the news program will look “at the progress of the last ten years, and will look forward to the future.” Progress is central to the discourses produced by the revolutionary state and is the liberal conception of time that the Women’s Army attempts to undo. Progress is named as a time that is cyclical and forcefully forgetful (Söderbäck 2012, 303). Indeed, progress, patience, and reform are the temporalities used by the state to justify and erase the violence that continues under the names of justice, equality, and democracy. The state describes the future as a space of safety and security in order to maintain the violence of the present, and to temper the rage of those who refuse to wait for the future’s warm embrace to arrive. According to the state media, the Women’s Army is not “interested in the progress of all of us” because their actions and demands contradict the teleology of state development and reform. The state declares change will come, to be patient, to trust in the progress of time. Critically, this narrative is not just produced by the state, but also by the white feminist editors of the Socialist Youth Review. When asked about the actions of the Women’s Army, and more speciﬁcally about the continuation of sexual violence in the revolution, they respond: Well, I think statistics will show you that the percentage of rape and prostitution at this point is lower than it was in pre-revolutionary society and that obviously it’s an advancement, it’s a step forward. It’s impossible to talk about the complete, you know, abolition [of sexual violence], because this is not the nature of this government, they don’t abolish … it’s a question of a gradual move toward something, and I think everything is leading up to the point where those things will no longer exist. Here, white feminism aligns itself with the state through its adherence to liberal Western notions of time and history. This is a notion of history where the passage of time washes away the violence of then and now so that the future is free from the horrors of the past. In this way, the past is constructed as a space of radical alterity, an aberration to the progress of the future. Sexual violence will be left behind by the progress of the revolution. Time will temper terror. Yet, the very ability of the editors to believe in the progress of time is tied to the immunity of whiteness from structural forms of racial violence, regulation, and social death. For instance, when Adelaide Norris, the black lesbian leader of the Women’s Army, goes to the editors of the Socialist Youth Review to ask for their support, their conversation highlights the divergent temporalities of black feminism and white feminism. When Norris tells the editors, “You’re oppressed too and it’s pathetic that you can’t even see it!” they respond, “There are problems, we know. But things are so much better than they were before. Things are not going to happen overnight. It’s important that the party remains strong so progress can be made. ” 7 Norris’s response sutures gender and race to a different theorization of time: You know the way my mom brought us up; there were eight of us and she took care of the domestic work all by herself. And abortions; she couldn’t even think of abortions. And daycare – hmph – we took care of ourselves, no one took care of us. And there are plenty of women who are living now in the same manner: Black women, Latin women, young women living in that same lifestyle. 8 For the editors, the future of the revolution will be free from state and non-state forms of racialized and gendered violence because the reforms sutured to time’s progression will undo the horrors of the present. But for Norris, gendered racism built into the banality of everyday life undoes the imagined progress of time, so that time’s passage is merely the modiﬁcation and intensiﬁcation of older modes of subjection and subjugation. For those bearing the brunt of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy, the past, present, and future are not distinct temporal spaces. In other words, Born in Flames documents the ampliﬁcation, modiﬁcation, and protraction of the past in the present, where the past is not an isolated aberration of what is here, but, rather, is an anticipation of the present and future. The past is an image of the future because the future will be a repetition of the past. In this way, the ﬁlm critiques normative notions of time and a liberal conception of history. In Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History, Ian Baucom argues for a conception of history that undoes liberal notions of progress, change, and time. Baucom’s theory of history centers on the massacre of 132 slaves aboard the slave ship The Zong in 1781. Over three days, the slaves were handcuffed and thrown overboard in order to collect the insurance money that sealed their value even in death. For Baucom, the massacre is the paradigmatic event of modernity. It encompasses the racial, ﬁnancial, and epistemological regimes that have not only failed to dissolve with the passage of time, but instead, have intensiﬁed so that our current moment ﬁnds itself anticipated and enveloped by this event. As Baucom argues: “Time does not pass, it accumulates” (Baucom 2005, 24). Time does not erase what has happened, dissolving terror and violence into the progress of the future, nor is the past passively sedimented in the present. Rather, the past returns to the present in expanded form so that the present “ﬁnds stored and accumulated within itself a nonsynchronous array of past times” (29). The present is possessed by the logics and protocols of racial capitalism’ s past – by a perfectly routine massacre that was and is repeated endlessly across space and time in the (post)colony, prison, frontier, torture room, plantation, reservation, riot zone, and on and on. Racial terror returns from a past that is not an end to take hold (of bodies, institutions, infrastructure, discourse, and libidinal life) and does not let go. In this way, the past and present are not ontologically discrete categories, but are, rather, complex human constructs. The present is not a quarantined, autonomous thing. What was begun does not end but instead intensiﬁes so that the past and present become indistinguishable. Hortense Spillers provides a powerful theorization of time as accumulation in her classic essay, “ Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book: ” Even though the captive ﬂesh/body has been “ liberated,” and no one need pretend that even the quotation marks do not matter , dominant symbolic activity, the ruling episteme that releases the dynamics of naming and valuation, remains grounded in originating metaphors of captivity and mutilation so that it is as if neither time nor history, nor historiography or its topics, show movement, as the human subject is “ murdered ” over and over again by the passions of a blood-less and anonymous archaism, showing itself in endless disguise.

#### The alternative is to commit ontological terror to free blackness – releasing the nothingness of black (non)being into the realm of humanism. The free black is a signifier of ontological terror, a weapon tormenting the shallow integrity of being.

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Nahum Chandler, in his beautiful philosophical meditation X: The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought, would describe antebellum politics, law, and culture as resting on a certain “metaphysical infrastructural organization” that is often “not so recognized and is far less often thought.”44 Any discussion of a historical subject, white subject, and especially the Negro is enabled by this infrastructure, which bears the weight of the culture in question and its devastating violence. In other words, **this metaphysical infrastructure already presumes certain pure ontological positions, and these positions enable the unjust and inhumane**. Chandler would argue that the Negro brings into relief the problem of purity — since its ontological constitution presents a problem for thought. Purity, then, constitutes a metaphysical fiction (and a racial privilege), and we could argue that ontological terror is precisely the threat the Negro poses, as always undoing ontological purity with contamination. But the project of purity, I would argue, is a response to the problem of black as nothing — where purity becomes a discourse of this nothing, its symptom or materialization. Antebellum culture deploys the discourse of purity (and its anxiety concerning amalgamation and integration) as a cover for the ontological terror at the heart of the metaphysical infrastructure. Put differently, this infrastructure is precarious and always at risk by its own invention, black being, stripped of its primary narrative (the flesh). This, then, is the double bind of the metaphysical infrastructure (or the “whole of metaphysics,” as Heidegger would call it): **black being** is a necessary invention because it **bears the nothing**, which is uncontrollable **with metaphysical instruments, but** black being **is also hated because its presence is a reminder that the human being itself is a metaphysical fiction** — the very ground of humanity is precarious and unreliable (or, as Fanon avers, “Man is nothing, absolutely nothing”). It is at this tension (between necessity and hatred) that ontological terror turns into forms of physical, emotional, and psychic devastation. But we must also take very seriously Chandler’s statement that this metaphysical structure is “not so recognized and is far less often thought.” This structure is often not recognized and unthought because we think politics, law, and culture on its surface and not its depth (its essence), the structure upon which it rests — thus, **we rarely understand that politics is the symptom of this tense metaphysical structure. Ontological Terror is an attempt to expose this infrastructure and its presumptions.** But to do this, we must think otherwise, or, as Miguel de Beistegui argues, we must look elsewhere for the essence of politics, law, and culture.45 It is with this strategy of thinking otherwise, of being mindful of the metaphysical structure that goes undetected, that I understand the antebellum free black as a paradigm of ontological terror. For at least syntactically, **the term free black holds the tension of this metaphysical infrastructure: to be free is** much more than a legal status (although it is often reduced to this); it is **an onto-existential condition** in which the human can engage in its primordial relation (between self, Being, and its unique project of care). Freedom, then, is the condition of the free, and it indicates a certain ontological orientation in an antiblack world. “**Black**,” however, **is the being stripped of this primary narrative**, a being that is the target of antiblack violence, since black and nothing become synonymous. In an antiblack world, black being can never be free but can be emancipated — but emancipation fails to resolve the metaphysical problem of black as nothing, which is necessary for anything like black freedom to exist. As long as a metaphysical world exists, a world that obliterates nothing, blacks will never be free. **The free black presents** syntactical devastation in that it knots human being with black being and freedom with unfreedom. If we read this syntactical chaos as a symptom of the tension at the heart of the metaphysical infrastructure (necessity and hatred), then we understand that **the concept of the free black is a problem for thought**. One cannot think the free black within an antiblack world without resorting to the fantastical and the absurd. **The free black threatens** **metaphysical purity by releasing this nothing into the realm of the human** — which, of course, is exactly what an antiblack world is designed to prevent. This **signifier terrorizes**, and the beings inhabiting the position “free black” also terrorize, as they **become the materialization of this threat to human bein**g**.** When I suggest that the free black is a paradigm of ontological terror, **I do this as an attempt to think** otherwise, to think **the metaphysical infrastructure that often goes undetected. Thinking through paradigms provides a strategy for this type of thinking**. The strategy of the paradigm, according to Agamben, is to juxtapose two entities until at a point of concentration, or intensity, so that they reveal aspects of each other. Entities within a paradigmatic analysis become allegories of each other. One example, or instance, is used to provide insight into another.46 I think about the free black as an allegory of the problem of metaphysics and the problem of metaphysics as an allegory of the free black. Thus, although the free black marks a particular phenomenological and historical instance (as distinct from other forms of black existence), we can read the **free black** allegorically to **provide insight into the metaphysical infrastructure that goes unnoticed.** Free blacks were situated in diverse geographical locations — the upper South, the deep South, the North, the Midwest; despite these diverse geographical locations and the different forms of antiblack violence each location deployed, the problem of antiblackness and the problem of black being remained a constant.47 The discourse and debates concerning antebellum free blacks orbit around a tension, an unanswered question, that irrupts in forms of paradox and impasse. The Negro Question, then, pre sents itself as a political discourse, one obsessed with black citizenship, political inclusion, and rights. But the Negro Question is rooted in a metaphysical infrastructure that attempts to police the boundaries between the white human and its black equipment. This infrastructure is threatened, however, with the presence of the free black, and it is the free black that becomes the obsession of this question. Since the **free black knots freedom with unfreedom and human with nonhuman, the boundary between the ontological entities (white human and black slave) unravels.** What I am suggesting is that the political discourse about free black citizenship is the articulation of a metaphysical anxiety, one that threatens antebellum culture. Moreover, the Negro Question is, as I have suggested, a proper metaphysical question, since at its core it inquires whether black being can transform into human being. The free black brings this question to the fore in a way that the slave does not. The condition of the slave is one of property, the condition of invention and perverse utility. This, of course, is what modernity intended for black being — that it would serve the world as pure function, property, and use. **But the word free in the term free black is more than a legal designation; it is an inquiry into the metaphysical structure itself**. For if black being is brought into the world as utility (as Justice Roger Taney would argue in the Dred Scott decision), then a free black would index a different mode of black being. Is such a different mode of being possible in an antiblack world? The word free absorbs all these metaphysical inquiries and anxieties. This is precisely why the free black is such an important paradigm of ontological terror: because the free black resituates politics and exposes the metaphysical infrastructure. Thus, when Humen Humphrey, the second president of Amherst College, writes in The African Repository that free blacks “are not looked upon as men, in the true and proper sense of the term,” he is responding to the proper metaphysical question: can black being transform into human being?48 Following Humphrey, freedom indexes the “true and proper” sense of man; the truth of man can be located in his primordial relation to Being. But black being lacks this properness, as it marks the execration of Being, and the metaphysical transformation that the word free is designed to indicate utterly fails. The free black is a problem for an antiblack world in that his challenge to the metaphysical structure leaves him without a proper place or any metaphysical position that is intelligible. This lack of properness and metaphysical truth is a symptom of the nothing, for nothing lacks any proper place in metaphysics and cannot be understood through its episteme. Black being as nothing, then, will always be out of place and improper in an antiblack world. It is the terror of the metaphysical infrastructure, and one can never be a true or proper man when one bears the weight of nothing. Through this analysis, we can understand the anxiety concerning black being, placement, and nothing in antebellum culture. In August 1842, for example, the free black population of Philadelphia held a parade commemorating the abolition of slavery in the West Indies. An angry mob of white citizens disrupted the parade, attacked participants, and commenced to destroy black homes and property. Seeking redress through the courts for loss of property and injury, the free black population realized that justice within such a context was impossible, as the grand jury acquitted the rioters and blamed free blacks for inciting this violence. Robert Purvis, a leader in the free black population of Philadelphia, responded to the grand jury’s decision with dismay:49 “The measure of our suffering is full. . . . From the most painful and minute investigation, in the feelings, views and acts of this community — in regard to us — I am convinced of our utter and complete nothingness in public estimation [emphasis mine].”50 What sparked the riot, this devastating expression of antiblackness? We can locate this eruption of violence at the metaphysical fault line between necessity and hatred. **Black being is both a necessary instrument for the human’s self-constitution and an object of ferocious hatred, since it bears the nothing of a metaphysical order**. In other words, the riot is the symptom of a metaphysical problem: the public celebration of **black freedom sparks a terror in that ontological boundaries are challenged** and the transformation from black being, as invention/instrument, to human being, as free, is not only considered but celebrated. It is also no surprise that the grand jury blamed the victims for the riot, since black freedom is a form of violence for the human, a violence that must be met with extreme force. The riot is a response to ontological terror. “**Free,” when paired with “black,” is recast as a weapon against the human and the metaphysical structure that sustains the human. We are dealing with two registers of violence — one is an ontological violence and another is a physical form of antiblack destruction.**