#### Anti-blackness exists as a totality that explains the world but not the Black world. Black life has always existed both underground and in outer space; always seen as the outsider or proverbial alien. Modes of black resistance have been used time and time again to revel in Blackness in spite of anti-black violence. What comes of the Black debater when they exist outside of the question posed by the resolution?!?!? Davies, 21

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While Afropessimism offers an intellectual path away from this world, it does not fully revel in the pleasurable cultural experiences of being Black. This includes the continuum of common experiences, language, and culture through which Black people are able to recognise, know and acknowledge each other. Thus, the pathway forward after Afropessimism must be sought elsewhere. Sexton argues that “Nothing in afro-pessimism suggests that there is no black (social) life, only that black life is not social life in the universe formed by the codes of state and civil society, of citizen and subject, of nation and culture, of people and place, of history and heritage, of all the things that colonial society has in common with the colonised, of all that capital has in common with labour—the modern world system. Black life is not lived in the world that the world lives in, but it is lived underground, in outer space.”[13] It may be the case that Black social life is lived outside of civil society. But even so, Black social life and culture deserves a central place in the condition of Blackness as it has always been there, moving Black people through and forward. New and old Black feminisms and Black queer politics provide rich, grounding traditions of expansive togetherness, inclusion and safety for all Black people, even as these were and are located outside of mainstream feminist and queer movements. Though the world is predicated on Black death, Black people can be revived through Black collectivity. As Kevin Quashie writes, “Antiblackness is part of blackness but not all of how or what blackness is. Antiblackness is total in the world but not total in the black world.”[14] Black art and literature, Black music, call and response traditions, the Black church: there is so much we give for and to us that gives cause and reason to carry on, to not despair, and to fight at least for the space where we can be us, even if that space is outside of the social world. Traditions seen as errant and often unrecognised for their artistic contributions mean something to Black people and demonstrate that Black existence is more than just a condition of slavery. We should revel in who Black people are in spite of anti-Blackness, not to ignore its persistence but to honour those who came before. While we must take care not to, as Hartman warns, “fill in the void” with political projects that are ultimately integrationist, nor reclaim struggles against anti-Black violence as some demonstration of otherworldly strength or endurance.[15] I think, however, there are ways to revel in Blackness that exists outside of what are typically seen as justice-bent goals or characteristics, like integration or endurance. Black people can, in fact, revel in their outsider status, as Hartman demonstrates in her book Wayward Lives, and build a “transformational politics from below,” as Cohen discusses in her essay, “Deviance as Resistance.”[16]

#### Where have all the Black judges gone? Why aren’t they judging deep outrounds of big tournaments? Why is it SO much harder for Black students to justify why their “style” of argumentation is valid and should be accepted practice in the community? While Black debaters will always be seen as the proverbial “alien” we thrive in spite of. Anti-blackness doesn’t explain the totality of blackness in debate but it does explain why the community fetishizes black thought just NOT from Black people.

#### High school LD uniquely excludes students of color. “Neutrality in arguments” ensures black debaters hate speech similar to what’s spoken at Klan rallies except it’s the halls and zoom rooms of debate tournaments. Smith, 13

[Elijah J Smith is the Director of the Rutgers University-Newark Debate Team. Elijah held debate coaching and programming positions throughout the world, including at Wake Forest University and the University of California, Berkley, and in programs in Shanghai, China. Smith has been one of debate's shining stars as he progressed from high school and collegiate debate competition to coaching. A Newark native, Smith began debating as a student at University High School. In spring 2013, Smith helped make history in the collegiate debate world when he and his debate partner, Ryan Wash, won that year’s national Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) championship title and garnered the championship title for the National Debate Tournament (NDT), a stunning achievement unparalleled by any team in the history of the two tournaments. Moreover, Smith and Wash were the first African-American team to win the NDT and the second African-American team to win the CEDA tournament. “A Conversation in Ruins: Race and Black Participation in Lincoln Douglas Debate,” 4 September 2013, https://www.vbriefly.com/2013/09/06/20139a-conversation-in-ruins-race-and-black-participation-in-lincoln-douglas-debate/] Cgilbert

At every tournament you attend this year look around the cafeteria and take note of which students are not sitting amongst you and your peers. Despite being some of the best and the brightest in the nation, many students are alienated from and choose to not participate in an activity I like to think of as homeplace. In addition to the heavy financial burden associated with national competition, **the exclusionary atmosphere of a debate tournament discourages black students from participating**. Widespread awareness of the same lack of participation in policy debate has led to a growing movement towards alternative styles and methods of engaging the gatekeepers of the policy community, (Reid-Brinkley 08) **while little work has been done to address or even acknowledge the same concern in L**incoln **D**ouglas debate. Unfortunately **students of color are not only forced to cope with a reality of structural violence outside of debate, but within an activity they may have joined to escape it in the first place**. **We are facing more than a simple trend towards marginalization occurring in L**incoln **D**ouglas, **but a culture of exclusion that locks minority participants out of the ranks of competition**. It will be uncomfortable, it will be hard, and it will require continued effort but the necessary step in fixing this problem, like all problems, is the community as a whole admitting that such a problem with many “socially acceptable” choices exists in the first place. Like all systems of social control, the reality of racism in debate is constituted by the singular choices that institutions, coaches, and students make on a weekly basis. I have watched countless rounds where competitors attempt to win by rushing to abstractions to distance the conversation from the **material reality** that black debaters are forced to deal with every day. One of the students I coached, who has since graduated after leaving debate, had an adult judge write out a ballot that concluded by “hypothetically” defending my student being lynched at the tournament. Another debate concluded with a young man defending that we can kill animals humanely, “just like we did that guy Troy Davis”. Community norms would have competitors do intellectual gymnastics or make up rules to accuse black debaters of breaking to escape hard conversations but as someone who understands that experience, the only constructive strategy is to acknowledge the reality of the oppressed, engage the discussion from the perspective of authors who are black and brown, and then find strategies to deal with the issues at hand. It hurts to see competitive seasons come and go and have high school students and judges spew the same hateful things you expect to hear at a Klan rally**. A student should not**, when presenting an advocacy that aligns them with the oppressed, **have to justify why oppression is bad**. Debate is not just a game, but a learning environment with liberatory potential. Even if the form debate gives to a conversation is not the same you would use to discuss race in general conversation with Bayard Rustin or Fannie Lou Hamer, that is not a reason we have to strip that conversation of its connection to a reality that black students cannot escape. Current coaches and competitors alike dismiss concerns of racism and exclusion, won’t teach other students anything about identity in debate other than how to shut down competitors who engage in alternative styles and discourses, and refuse to engage in those discussions even **outside of a tournament** setting. A conversation on privilege and identity was held at a debate institute I worked at this summer and just as any theorist of privilege would predict it was the heterosexual, white, male staff members that either failed to make an appearance or stay for the entire discussion. No matter how talented they are, we have to remember that the students we work with are still just high school aged children. If those **who are responsible for participants and the creation of accessible norms won’t risk a better future for our community, it becomes harder to explain to students who look up to them why risking such an endeavor is necessary**. As a student provided with the opportunity and privilege of participation by the Jersey Urban Debate League, I can remember plenty of tournaments in high school where the only black students at the tournament were individuals from my high school. It was a world shattering experience; no one spoke to us first and those we did approach didn’t have to acknowledge the fact that, every weekend, our failures and successes made us the representatives of black America in the minds of students and judges that never had to freely associate with black people. The irony of participation for black students is that to understand your existence in an academic, usually white, space throws that very space into question. They are both told that joining debate will make you smarter, more personable, and better able to communicate; however those who are already there don’t speak to them, they don’t vote for them, and they don’t associate with them. The unanswered question, then, is “For which bodies does LD exist?” **Continuing to parade LD under the guise of neutrality will reproduce the problem at hand. Hiring practices, Judge Preferences /Strike Sheets, invitations to Round Robins, and who coaches don’t require their students to associate with all contribute to the problem at hand because they “accidentally” forget to include people of color**. When only two major debate workshops bothered to hire anyone black to work with their students this summer it spoke to the reality of which bodies are seen as being competent enough to teach. Their skills as pedagogues weren’t dismissed because they aren’t qualified, but because they are black .**If we are to confront structural discrimination against the black community, we can’t retreat to a defense of neutrality** but have to take strides in addressing and ending the cycle of exclusion. If black students do not feel comfortable participating in LD they will lose out on the ability to judge, coach, or to force debate to deal with the truth of their perspectives.

#### It’s not just “out of round” it’s also in rounds. Anti-blackness is a lit base that has been in debate for 12-15 years now. People approach us a one homogenous blob but let me attempt to explain why reading Wilderson and Warren in the same 1nc might be kosher and I’m told I’m gatekeeping arguments. Let’s not get on the subject of k affs; after all these years the best that people can come up with is “procedural fairness,” which is a not-so-nice way of saying “don’t vote for the Black alien.”

#### In spite of it all we exist. Debaters like Q Robinson, a Black woman who won the NDT, and the team of Murphy/Nave who united the crown, both NDT and CEDA championships, are the ones who paved the way for the current generation. Now some of the best LD minds in the country exist of Black people like Eli Smith and Chris Randall; both Black men who excel at debate IN SPITE OF the anti-blackness that permeates it.

#### Black death is the premium that ensures white humanity, and debate itself, —putting faith in institutional reformism is a dream narrative that legitimizes broader health crises for black people—state sanctioned violence is a constant threat to the existence of blackness

Sharpe 2016 – Christina Sharpe is Associate Professor of English at Tufts University (*In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* pp 213-218) bhb

Again, when NourbeSe Philip asks in the Notanda to Zong! “What is the word for bringing bodies back from water? From a ‘liquid grave’?” (Philip 2008, 202), the word she arrives at is exaqua. And so we ask yet again: What would it mean to stay safe and to defend the dead—our “impenitential ancestors”; those who are actually dead and those whom the state refuses to grant life; those whom the state persists in choking the life out of? I’ve been thinking a lot about aspiration. Not in the conventional sense. Or at least not in the sense that may most readily come to mind in which aspiration is tied to opportunity—that connection to the door of no return and the ship and the shipping is never far away— and tied to class movement. Tied as well, in the United States to some articulation of that deadly occlusion that is continually reanimated and called the American Dream. (This American Dream stands counterpoised to the dream of and in Brathwaite’s Dream Stories and “Dream Haiti.” To dream Haiti is an entirely different enterprise all together. It is to enter and inhabit the dream and reality of revolution.) I’ve been thinking about what it takes, in the midst of the singularity, the virulent antiblackness everywhere and always remotivated, to keep breath in the Black body. What ruttier, internalized, is necessary now to do what I am calling wake work as aspiration, that keeping breath in the Black body? I’ve been thinking aspiration in the complementary senses of the word: the withdrawal of fluid from the body and the taking in of foreign matter (usually fluid) into the lungs with the respiratory current, and as audible breath that accompanies or comprises a speech sound. Aspiration here, doubles, trebles in the same way that with the addition of an exclamation point, Philip transforms and breaks Zong from a proper name into Zong! That exclamation point breaks the word into song/moan/chant/shout/breath. It is to the breath that I want to turn now. To the necessity of breath, to breathing space, to the breathtaking spaces in the wake in which we live; and to the ways we respond, “with wonder and admiration, you are still alive, like hydrogen, like oxygen” (Brand 2015). As Philip says, the pause in the poem, the breath, “is totally subversive in the face of the kind of broad-brush brutalizing where people just get reduced to Negro man, Negro woman, and ditto, ditto, ditto. You pay attention to one, and it is such an amazing act—and one that spills over to all the other dittos—paying attention and taking care with just the one. Because that’s all we can do is care one by one by one. And that’s why it was so important for me to name these lost souls in the footnotes to the early poems” (Saunders 2008a, 78). Breathlessness and the archive: the archives of breathlessness. The details accumulate in Zong! and for us, what might it mean to attend to these archives? What might we discover in them? In 1982, Los Angeles police chief Daryl Gates “provoked an outcry from civil rights advocates when he said that blacks might be more likely to die from choke holds because their arteries do not open as fast as arteries do on ‘normal people.’”5 Nine years later, but only seven months after the March 3, 1991, beating-almost-to-death of Rodney King in which we marveled that he was still alive (“like hydrogen, like oxygen”), “some Police Department tactical experts now see the videotape of officers striking Mr. King 56 times as an opportunity to convince the public the choke hold is actually safer and a more humane way to subdue suspects.”6 In New York City, though police chokeholds were banned for over two decades, “the Civilian Complaint Review Board has seen 1,128 chokehold cases over the last five-and-a-half years, and complaints about the practice ‘persist and appear to be increasing.’”7 I can’t breathe.” On July 17, 2014, Eric Garner was on the street in Staten Island when he was approached and stopped by an NYPD officer “on suspicion of selling loose, untaxed cigarettes.” Mr. Garner is (and I am reading/hearing echoes of Margaret Garner in all of this) approached by the NYPD, and he responds to the stop by saying, “For what? Every time you see me you want to mess with me. I’m tired of it. This stops today. What are you bothering me for. . . . I didn’t do nothing. . . . I’m just standing here. I did not sell nothing. Because every time you see me, you want to stop me, you harass me. . . . I’m minding my business, officer. I’m minding my business; please just leave me alone. I told you the last time, please just leave me alone.”8 Then two other officers approach Mr. Garner and he repeats his pleas not to be touched: “Don’t touch me, don’t touch me, please.” And then the first officer, Pantaleo, puts Mr. Garner in a chokehold and takes him down to the ground. Eleven times during this assault Mr. Garner says, “I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe” until he stops breathing. And though paramedics have arrived on the scene, they give him no assistance. No aspiration. The city medical examiner ruled Mr. Garner’s death a homicide, and despite audio and visual evidence, the NYPD maintains its claim that the cause of this murder (for which they will find no one, save Mr. Garner, responsible) was not a chokehold, and once again, Mr. Garner’s murderer was not indicted. The list of nonindictments in the wake of state murders of Black people continues to grow: Michael Brown, John Crawford, Aiyana Stanley-Jones, Sandra Bland, Jonathan Ferrell, Miriam Carey, Tamir Rice, Rekia Boyd, \*. Again, Black being appears in the space of the asterisked human as the insurance for, as that which underwrites, white circulation as the human. Always, Black being seems lodged between cargo and being. Wake: in the line of recoil of (a gun). Wake: the track left on the water’s surface by a ship. Wake: the watching of relatives and friends beside the body of the dead person. It was soon after Eric Garner’s murder on July 17, 2014, that the jury in the trial of Ted Wafer returned a verdict of guilty in the case of his murder of nineteen-year-old Renisha McBride.9 The previous July had seen the all-(non Black)woman jury return a verdict of not guilty for George Zimmerman, the murderer of seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin.10 The verdict in the Wafer trial brought, perhaps, a little breathing room before the next onslaught, the next intake of air, the held breath. In the weather of the wake, one cannot trust, support, or condone the state’s application of something they call justice, but one can only hold one’s breath for so long. “ ‘We revolt simply because, for a variety of reasons, we can no longer breathe’” (Fanon [1970] 1994, 50). Day after day the stories arrive. Fifty people suffocated in the hold of a ship;11 three people suffocated in prison over the course of a weekend in the United States. To explicate Fanon, it is not the specifics of any one event or set of events that are endlessly repeatable and repeated, but the totality of the environments in which we struggle; the machines in which we live; what I am calling the weather. In an interview in the Atlantic about Breathing Race into the Machine, her book on racial science and the invention and use of the spirometer, the instrument that measures lung capacity, Lundy Braun says, In 1864, the year before the Civil War ended, a massive study was launched to quantify the bodies of Union soldiers. One key finding in what would become a 613-page report was that soldiers classified as “White” had a higher lung capacity than those labeled “Full Blacks” or “Mulattoes.” The study relied on the spirometer—a medical instrument that measures lung capacity. This device was previously used by plantation physicians to show that black slaves had weaker lungs than white citizens. The Civil War study seemed to validate this view. As early as Thomas Jefferson’s Notes on the State of Virginia, in which he remarked on the dysfunction of the “pulmonary apparatus” of blacks, lungs were used as a marker of difference, a sign that black bodies were fit for the field and little else. (Forced labor was seen as a way to “vitalize the blood” of flawed black physiology. By this logic, **slavery is what kept black bodies alive**.) (Braun and Shaban 2014) Daryl Gates and contemporary policing practices are the inheritors of the history of the spirometer that produced Black bodies as defective and monstrous. There is, too, a connection between the lungs and the weather: the supposedly transformative properties of breathing free air—that which throws off the mantle of slavery—and the transformative properties of being “free” to breathe fresh air. These discourses run through freedom narratives habitually. But who has access to freedom? Who can breathe free? Those narratives do not ameliorate this lack; this lack is the atmosphere of antiblackness. Recall, too, that captive Africans were brought out of the hold, weather permitting, to put fresh air in their lungs and to be exercised. (Of course, this was about their value as cargo and not about the health of the captive Africans for themselves. This is being, property, for the other.) Weather monitoring was a major part of plantation management. Awareness of the ecological systems was necessary for the growth and cultivation of certain crops (growing seasons, yield, etc.) and for the life expectancy (or lack of) of the captive laboring population. We read, “Planters consistently recorded the weather in their work logs as part of the revolution in plantation accounting techniques” (Roberts 2013, 195). Weather determined local practices of working enslaved people, and those practices differed from plantation to plantation and from region to region. Some slave owners believed in working enslaved people harder in the rain, while under the same conditions other slave owners assigned the enslaved “lighter” tasks. Overall, though, enslaved people had very little respite from work even when plantation managers believed that work in the rain produced a miasma or “bad air.” One Jamaican planter reports “not a single day of work lost to weather over the course of two years” (Roberts 2013, 196). Regardless of the particular practices, relentless hard labor in the rain, in the sun, in damp and in dry, cutting cane, laying dung, hoeing, and weeding, all had deleterious and often deadly effects on the lungs and bodies of the enslaved. Slavery, then, simultaneously exhausted the lungs and bodies of the enslaved even as it was imagined and operationalized as that which kept breath in and vitalized the Black body. We, now, are living in the wake of such pseudoscience, living the time when our labor is no longer necessary but our flesh, our bodies, are still the stuff out of which “democracy” is produced. Back to Fanon ([1970]1994, 50), who wrote in Toward the African Revolution, “There is not occupation of territory, on the one hand, and independence of persons on the other. It is the country as a whole, its history, its daily pulsation that are contested, disfigured . . . under these conditions; the individual’s breathing is an observed breathing. It is a combat breathing.” What is the word for keeping and putting breath back in the body? What is the word for how we must approach the archives of slavery (to “tell the story that cannot be told”) and the histories and presents of violent extraction in slavery and incarceration; the calamities and catastrophes that sometimes answer to the names of occupation, colonialism, imperialism, tourism, militarism, or humanitarian aid and intervention? What are the words and forms for the ways we must continue to think and imagine laterally, across a series of relations in the hold, in multiple Black everydays of the wake? The word that I arrived at for such imagining and for keeping and putting breath back in the Black body in hostile weather is aspiration (and aspiration is violent and life-saving). Two additional forms of wake work as a praxis for imagining, arrive in the registers of Black annotation and Black redaction.

#### Debates about space appropriation have NO explanatory power for Black people. We love debate, the research, the skills, but we hate how it treats us. We come here for refuge from our daily lives for a moment of escape. We love the activity; instead of leaving we offer another method. WE control the uniqueness question so it’s only a question of what do we do in the face of anti-blackness?

#### Vote aff to endorse a method of epistemic disobedience; this requires unlearning preconceived notions of space appropriation but also normative interps of debate. Habits of interpretation lock out liberatory alternatives. **Amsler & Facer, 17**

[Sarah Amsler Associate Professor in Education, University of Nottingham,, Keri Facer Graduate School of Education, Futures UniversityContesting anticipatory regimes in education: exploring alternative educational orientations to the futureVolume 94, November 2017, Pages 6-14] Kansas KR

In the theories and practices made public by these projects, we find neither a desire to colonize the future through its algorithmic induction nor a resignation to abandoning it to power or chance, but pedagogies, curricula and modes of governance which are designed to enlarge spaces of possibility to participate in autonomous and common forms of life. Here there is a refusal to play the game of the anticipatory regime − no individualised target-setting, strategic planning or algorithmic risk assessments − and a commitment to ‘delink’ from such regimes of epistemic and social control in order to enlarge the space of emergence for liberatory alternatives. While each of these un/learning projects is singular to its own social and historical context, educational researchers who traverse between them suggest that all are distinguished by how they engage with learning and the future in ways that are ‘not tamed, reduced, abstracted or detached’ but rather through methods that start ‘from our whole being and within our network of relationships with others, humans, non-human beings and things’, and how they articulate an ‘existential, embodied and non-future-oriented understanding and experience of hope’ (Mandell, 2014). This mode of critical anticipation is positioned geopolitically in the margins and exteriorities of a world system that is otherwise represented as the only possible horizon of global knowledge politics. Here, abstract concepts of time and ‘universal’ criteria of value co-exist with many others, including those which are invisible and unrealized (Grosfoguel, 2012). This perspective discloses the historical and geopolitical specificity − and interrupts the normalisation − of the repressive anticipatory regimes which are active in British education today. As Raymundo Sánchez Barraza, General Co-ordinator of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Comprehensive Indigenous Training Center (CIDECI Las Casas) in Mexico, explained: ‘we positioned ourselves from the beginning on the margins of prophetic critique, vis-à-vis history, vis-à-vis the world, vis-à-vis the demands of the minorities, the despised, conquered peoples…’. It is a ‘shoeless university just from below’ (2005). The starting point for this critical anticipation emerges from the experience of violence. It starts from the impossibility of rational ‘anticipation’, as experienced by those who have historically been denied possibilities for self-determination through the interweaving of epistemic technologies with colonial oppression (Grosfoguel, 2013; Mignolo, 2000). The ambition of learners here is not to optimize their capacities to fulfil a predetermined future, particularly that of colonizing ‘progress’ which has annihilated indigenous people, lands, languages, knowledges and ways of life. Rather, it demands a kind of radical critique that the Argentine decolonial semiotician Walter Mignolo calls ‘epistemic disobedience’. This is not a skill that can be learned through demonstrating ‘progress’ in learning against nationally standardized learning targets and outcomes; it requires the unlearning of what is presently required for inclusion and success in this system. Epistemic disobedience is not a method for more of the recognition or competitive advantage that promises fleeting future securities in a marketized anticipatory regime, but a ‘definitive rejection of “being told” from the epistemic privileges of the zero point what “we” are, what our ranking is in relation to the ideal of humanitas and what we have to do to be recognized as such’ (Mignolo, 2009). The epistemologies and technologies of the neoliberal anticipatory regime described earlier in this paper are excellent examples of the violence of a ‘naturalized grammar of colonial modernity’ which promotes certainty and linear causality, universal reason, teleology and linear time, the coherence of the Cartesian subject, the historical progression of a single humanity which can be reduced to standardized measures of evaluation, and the salvation of ontological, economic and political security within a framework of domination (Andreotti, 2015). The pressing question for educators working against the colonization of the future by dominating social systems, however, is not how to minimize future risks to the advancement of these logics, but ‘whether the world is going to survive’ despite them and how to resist and survive the destruction of worlds in the present. From this point of departure, Barraza (2005) remarked, ‘we’re going by another path, not by this world’s path with its model of profits, marketing, exploitation, greed, control, contempt for the different’. It is a path of learning and organizing autonomy and democracy, and creating conditions for new possibilities even − or especially − when these remain unknown and as yet unhoped for. Co-founder of the associated University of the Earth, Gustavo Esteva, elaborates this anti-instrumental relationship between learning and the future through the words of the dissident novelist and former Czech president Vaclav Havel, not as ‘joy when things are going well or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but rather an ability to work for something to succeed’ and to value this process ‘regardless of how it turns out’, because it is this process, less so than the outcome, which ‘gives us strength to live and to continually try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now’ (Havel, cited by Esteva, in Mandell, 2014). This form of relating to the future allows for us to not predict or know the world in advance, but rather to be ‘shocked' by it in the present, so that educational opportunity means making sense and embracing radically new perspectives, ideas and challenges without “falling back into habits” of interpretation or domesticating them with scientifically rationalities (Mandell, 2014).

#### Debate has become too insular and full of itself; only concerned with white sensibilities while protecting power and privilege in the community. Judges, and debaters alike, must change their relationship to arguments and their opponents; focusing on normative interps crowds out discussions about privilege and power. Students should be allowed to kritik debate because the things we discuss inherently AFFECT debate; disregard “dropped arguments” if we win our top-level framing. Smith, 14

[Elijah J Smith is the Director of the Rutgers University-Newark Debate Team. Elijah held debate coaching and programming positions throughout the world, including at Wake Forest University and the University of California, Berkley, and in programs in Shanghai, China. Smith has been one of debate's shining stars as he progressed from high school and collegiate debate competition to coaching. A Newark native, Smith began debating as a student at University High School. In spring 2013, Smith helped make history in the collegiate debate world when he and his debate partner, Ryan Wash, won that year’s national Cross Examination Debate Association (CEDA) championship title and garnered the championship title for the National Debate Tournament (NDT), a stunning achievement unparalleled by any team in the history of the two tournaments. Moreover, Smith and Wash were the first African-American team to win the NDT and the second African-American team to win the CEDA tournament. “DEVELOPING OUR ENVIRONMENT: PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR THE ACTIVIST MODEL,” 30 January 2014, http://victory-briefs.squarespace.com/vbd/2014/1/developing-our-environment-planting-the-seeds-for-the-activist-model] Cgilbert

Despite popular opinion, I think you should be rooted in the topic no matter what your politics, performance, or method of engagement is. Having a conversation about military force, animal rights, or economic sanctions provides unique moments for conversation that leads us to unearth scholarship buried in libraries and catalogues that inspire us each and every year. A lot of arguments on the January/February topic seem to be about avoiding or being able to initiate topicality debates to preserve the value in these conversations. What is seldom done in this search for the perfectly balanced conversation at the Tournament of Champions, unfortunately, is to question what do T debates mean outside of wins and losses? Even if a given topic is great, what does it mean for the individual competitors that might not share your subject position? What does a conversation mean and who is it for if it’s not accessible for the most disadvantaged students who find the time to compete? The conversations I’ve heard include people making bold statements about not footnoting structural violence who then destroy the names of non-Western countries and authors and amalgamate “Africa” as a country instead of a continent full of unique and diverse nations and identities. A development topic should be one of the best opportunities to learn about difference, but if debaters are going to continue to reduce both the topic and the debate space to a comfortable Western discussion of people who don’t have our geographic or national privilege, without including their voices or concerns on both sides of the topic, that should be up for discussion as well. No matter how wonderful your team’s interpretation of the topic is it doesn’t preclude linking that to the currents state of debate to shed light on the issues of power, privilege, and identity. They are already part of the conversation so we should both allow and encourage students to confront the apparatuses of power as they reveal themselves by engaging in radical speech acts that can expand our conception of what an argument even is. It is easy to get caught in the mold of debate, to be seduced by the wins, and to aim to reproduce arguments that are in “vogue”, however that isn’t a model of engagement that has changed anyone’s heart or mind. Debate has become so insular that when we say advocacy skills and education we forget that those are just buzz words absent a willingness to turn politics into action. Proponents of accessible debate invested in critical education should start to think of their politics as a question of praxis. Debate’s static notions of what it means to be topical (or even political for that matter) will fail students unless they can be allowed to grapple with those issues that are literally right in front of them. When I say “Activist model” I really mean that we should make room for students to practice the skills needed to activate their politics in the real world. Assumptions, performances, and discourses should be voting issue whether they indict the topic, an opponent, or even the debate community itself. Advocates who practice by allowing their contemporaries to garble the names of African nations, trade their stories and bodies like poker chips, and marginalize their voices in the process aren’t individuals I ever want advocating on my behalf. Portable skills start with how the activist chooses to engage in topical discussion or discussions of the topic, but their vision of a more accessible debate space itself. When competitors get settled into a room and ask me what I want to see for the next 45 minutes I tell them that it’s not my job to tell them. I don’t really care if they sit, stand, backflip, recite poems, or spread cards in and between every speech because LD isn’t my activity anymore, it’s theirs. My only job is to render a decision and remain invested and responsible for what norms I endorse for debate. A major requirement for making room for the activist model in LD is changing the way judges situate themselves. First and foremost, realize high school debate isn’t about you. Sucks to grow up, huh? As an adult you aren’t just some cool “first year out” or a point fairy but an adult and role model that coaches have left responsible for the care of their students until they can get back to their chaperone. That puts you in a unique position to support or break down someone in the middle of a tournament they hope to do well at or the end of their career. This is especially important in a world where students are trying to broaden the scope of the conversation and bring marginalized students into the space. If you are about to give an RFD to one of the few black or Latino students in the activity, think about what your words sound like in the context of a student who probably thought you were going to vote against them because of the subject matter of their arguments regardless of the substance of the debate. Additionally, we’ve got to continue to ease off the gas on the blip-spread debate. I think that there has been overall improvement but we can do better in the case of students who are advocating positions because of the value of that advocacy in and of itself. Sometimes truth outweighs tech, a dropped argument just isn’t true, and big framing moments should be used to determine if the line by line is even relevant. Finally, if you are part of a dominant group (white/male/ heterosexual/cisgender/abled/ etc.) students shouldn’t care that your sensibilities are offended-- that’s kind of the point. Since oppression exists, and I assure you it does, they might have something to say that you have never had to even think about because of what your subject position spares you from confronting. Unless their argument is “X group’s oppression good” then you have to embrace your discomfort and listen as the responsible adult in the back of the room. Calling out White Supremacy, Capitalism, or Patriarchy isn’t a call for you to die during the back of a debate round. At best, 17 year old students are doing analysis that theorists spend their life on. Getting the argument right is hard enough without having to worry about your feelings during a 3 minute speech e.g. talking about black oppression does not mean Jews never were/ aren’t in conflict with larger society . If someone defends a theoretical framework that says that the Holocaust was good or even ok deserves to be ejected from the tournament and their team, however you will be hard pressed to point to a mass of students who that defend identity based politics in this way. As a minority educator, my job isn’t to be nice or smile in your face; it’s to keep my foot in the door long enough to let more students who were never supposed to even know what debate was in the cracks. Debates may get heated, they get personal, and they can make us think about things we wished we could lock away (i.e., the domestic violence fiasco of Jan/ Feb’12) but we have a pedagogical obligation to make sure these very same conversations have a point beyond talking fast and winning shiny trophies students won’t care about after the first party during move-in week their Freshman year of college. Maintaining this environment, developing a space that prioritizes disadvantaged students, and sowing the seeds for activism, are comparatively more important. Supplementing the current model will have a lasting impact on not only LD debate for future generations but the students better prepared to advocate on behalf of those who cannot advocate for themselves.

#### You should be skeptical of arguments rooted in “procedural fairness.” These are dog whistles to call styles of debate cheating or, in the context of this topic, telling the alien they are unwelcomed while simultaneously colonizing “outer space.” That “outer space” to white people is Black thought; debate loves hearing about afropess, afrofuturism, ontology and para-ontology, just not from Black people. A place to get lost, learn, and colonize; no different than the status quo. So, every time you hear fairness ask yourself, “fairness for whom?”

#### Disclosure practices and disclosure theory are transphobic tools that recreate gender-based oppression in LD. Preferring procedural fairness over structural fairness creates a chilling effect that negatively impacts the community writ large. Blake, 19

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Conventional debate is fundamentally hierarchical, there is an economy of ballots, you require a certain number of ballots to get to outrounds. You pay to go to tournaments to get more ballots. Debaters and their arguments earn prestige based on how far they get in tournaments and how many bids they collect. Coaches advertise their career bids, and the number of bids they’ve coached debaters to receive, in order to get hired. This falls under the label “Competitive Activity.” However, people use this label to justify several things that actively harm debate being a competitive activity. If debate being a good competitive activity was the goal, structural fairness would become incredibly important to avoid certain teams dominating that competitive activity and crowding out talented debaters from new schools or deviant identity groups. However, what instead follows is debaters separating fairness into procedural and structural and prioritizing the former to win theory debates. While Resource Disparities is an issue, it isn’t the focus. This is just an example of how ballots explicitly and implicitly endorse certain norms. Whenever you vote for a theory shell that frames the round as only caring about procedural fairness, even if you intentionally only desire to endorse Conditionality bad, you implicitly endorse framing fairness without accounting for structural fairness. A more egregious example I’ve come across is when someone wins a debate on the flow despite saying problematic slurs and misgendering their opponent. Sure, the judge votes them up because they won the disadvantage, but that judge is also allowing that behavior, making the activity less accessible. This over time results in a buildup of implicitly and explicitly endorsed norms that make trans debaters invisible. We trans people aren’t even considered as existing in the debate space, because we don’t have enough representation generally or with ballots. This materializes in community norms and even tournament rules being exclusionary to trans people. For example, disclosure theory has become almost an undisputed rule, and open source disclosure seems to be on its way to becoming the same. This is because of judges who vote for these theory arguments, while ignoring the consequences of dueer[3] outing through open source disclosure, even when it’s brought up in round. Even worse is tournament organizers, who sometimes even frame their tournament’s as progressive and pro-LGBTQ+, are making open source of narratives and performances a rule. I have contacted several of these tournaments asking about their disclosure policies to avoid critical information being posted online, but never received a response. This forces pers to publicly out perselves in order to compete at these tournaments, and not doing so denies them more already limited opportunities to achieve success in this “Competitive Activity” in the form of a bid. Also, this results in a chilling effect on performances that call out problematic actions or actors within the community.