## Off

### 1 – 1:16

Truth

#### Our interpretation is the topic should determine the division of aff and neg ground – winning that : The member nations of the World Trade Organization ought to reduce intellectual property protections for medicines should always be sufficient condition for voting negative – hold the line, 1AC prove there’s no I-meet.

#### “Resolved” is a formal decision.

Merriam-Webster

[Unlike Words and Phrases ’64, this card actually exists on the internet! <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resolved>] pat

a: to declare or decide by a formal resolution and vote

b: to change by resolution or formal vote

the house resolved itself into a committee

#### The Role of the Ballot is to vote for whoever does the better debating – any alternative framework must explain why we switch sides, why there has to be a winner and a loser, and why there are structural rules. The frame for evaluating offense is that debate is a game and we’re all here to win – that means procedural questions come first.

#### Vote neg for predictable limits – abdicating government actions sanctions picking any interpretation for debate – that incentivizes retreat from controversy and forces the neg to first characterize the aff and then debate it which eliminates the benefit of preround research – two impacts –

#### 1. Clash – a common point of engagement ensures effective clash, which is a linear impact – negation is the necessary condition for distinguishing debate from discussion, but negation exists on a sliding scale. The topic of discussion is up to the affirmative, but depth and nuanced engagement is determined by negative ground. Any impact intrinsic to debate, not just discussion, comes from negation because it starts the process of critical thinking, reflexivity, and argument refinement.

#### 2. Fairness – prioritize preserving the competitive aspects of debate – games cannot operate unless both sides can be confident in advance they have an equal chance of winning – the fact they’ve asked you to vote for them proves we all agree that debate is a competition.

#### TVA and switch-side solve the 1AC – [soft left aff that specifically invests IP reductions that prioritize medicine equity to black people first] – any 1AR response to the substance of the TVA is offense for us because it proves our model allows for clear contestation and reading the rest of their theory on the negative solves their offense.

## Case

### – Presumption – 0:43

#### Frame the 1AC through solvency – any attempt to filter offense through the RotB is an arbitrary goalpost that insulates it from criticism and nuanced testing – forcing us to negate the efficacy of personal strategies is at best impossible and at worst violent.

#### Their call for the ballot plays into the redemptive narrative of humanism – even if the content of the aff refuses anti-blackness and is pessimistic towards the world, the form of repeatedly researching, arguing, and having judges affirm their method assumes the capacity of communication to return wholeness to the Black body and change grammars of suffering – that means they’re in a double bind – either –

#### a. deliberation over anti-blackness can change its structure which disproves their ontology claims – presume neg because they’re wrong and they reject material change – or –

#### b. it means the ballot does nothing and the 1AC can’t change or disrupt the nature of the world – presume neg because at best there’s no reason to debate or vote for the aff, and at worst it’s a cruelly optimistic investment into the system they criticize.

### 1N – Framing – 1:10

#### Their ROTB is self serving, arbitrarily limits the scope of engagement, and begs the question of the rest of the debate.

#### Reject framing arguments that over-parametricize content – debate should be an open forum to attack ideas from different directions – anything else brackets out certain modes of knowledge production which their ev would obviously disagree w/.

#### The rob –

#### 1. Competition- The competitive nature of debate wrecks the interactive nature of debate – the judge must decide between two competing speech acts and the debaters are trying to beat each other – this is the wrong forum for interaction

#### 2. Spillover- How does educational orientations spill over beyond this space? Empirically denied – judges vote on this shit on this time and nothing ever happens.

#### 3. Prescription- certain interactions are prescripted – eg subjectivity– can’t be reformulated so easily

#### 4. Competition takes out the aff – the ballot becomes a securitizing object that prevents engagement with death

Ritter 13. JD from U Texas Law (Michael J., “Overcoming The Fiction of “Social Change Through Debate”: What’s To Learn from 2pac’s Changes?,” National Journal of Speech and Debate, Vol. 2, Issue 1

The structure of competitive interscholastic debate renders any message communicated in a debate round virtually incapable of creating any social change, either in the debate community or in general society. And to the extent that the fiction of social change through debate can be proven or disproven through empirical studies or surveys, academics instead have analyzed debate with nonapplicable rhetorical theory that fails to account for the unique aspects of competitive interscholastic debate. Rather, the current debate relating to activism and competitive interscholastic debate concerns the following: “What is the best model to promote social change?” But a more fundamental question that must be addressed first is: “Can debate cause social change?” Despite over two decades of opportunity to conduct and publish empirical studies or surveys, academic proponents of the fiction that debate can create social change have chosen not to prove this fundamental assumption, which—as this article argues—is merely a fiction that is harmful in most, if not all, respects. The position that competitive interscholastic debate can create social change is more properly characterize5d as a fiction than an argument. A fiction is an invented or fabricated idea purporting to be factual but is not provable by any human senses or rational thinking capability or is unproven by valid statistical studies. An argument, most basically, consists of a claim and some support for why the claim is true. If the support for the claim is false or its relation to the claim is illogical, then we can deduce that the particular argument does not help in ascertaining whether the claim is true. Interscholastic competitive debate is premised upon the assumption that debate is argumentation. Because fictions are necessarily not true or cannot be proven true by any means of argumentation, the competitive interscholastic debate community should be incredibly critical of those fictions and adopt them only if they promote the activity and its purposes

#### 5. No evidence for the power of the ballot – debate specific – negate on presumption.

Ritter 13 [Michael, JD UTexas Law, B.A. cum laude Trinity University. September 2013. “Overcoming the Fiction of ‘Social Change Through Debate’: What’s to Learn From 2Pac’s Changes?” https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/9896ec\_8b2b993ec42440ecaab1b07645385db5.pdf]

Up to this point, this article has shown how each of the essential components of “competitive interscholastic debate” makes it very different from any other kind of debate. But one thing that is persuasive in any kind of debate is some sort of properly conducted study (or even a mere survey) that provides empirical proof or even substantial anecdotal support. To date, none of the many academics who coach or participate in the debate community have published a study or survey to support the social change fiction. (Perhaps they have tried, and discovered they were just wrong.) But until such an empirical study of competitive interscholastic debate is conducted, students, judges, and coaches should not take it for granted.

### **AT – Brady 12**

#### Communication – our ability to do so proves antagonisms are movable – fatalism is net worse.

King-Watts ‘15

[Eric, Media and Technology Studies @ UNC Chapel Hill. 2015. “Critical Cosmopolitanism, Antagonism, and Social Suffering.” https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00335630.2015.995433] Pat

I have been asked by more than one graduate student at more than one university how I hope to reconcile the claims of Afro-Pessimism with my insistence that voice is a fundamental human capacity. I maintain, more or less consistently, that voice is a public occurrence animated by the acknowledgment of the ethical and affective dimensions of speech. The repetition of the inquiry is energized by the fact and mode of Afro-Pessimism being taken up in debate and argument organizations, programs, and competitions. I am not going to attempt to complete this reconciliation in this space, in part because I have not quite accomplished it. But I do have to briefly sketch out the terms of the challenge in order to try to evaluate the strengths and limits of critical cosmopolitanism as an academic practice that would ask “why and how” Communication Studies might interact with the Afro-Pessimistic enclave in Black Studies. While criticizing the work of Black film theory, Frank Wilderson embarks upon an ambitious and provocative campaign meant to foster an understanding of the conditions of impossibility for Black subjectivity within the contemporary ontological paradigm. The term “Afro-Pessimism” signals the work of scholars who are “theorists of structural positionality.” As such, Blackness and Whiteness are interrogated as emerging through a conjuncture with brutal modern technologies of organization and domination, and the birth of the very idea of race. Put simply, it took the modern invention of slavery and colonialism to bring about the racial ideologies that make Blackness and Whiteness intelligible. The Slave/Black, then, should not be considered exploited labor or simply oppressed. “Rather, the gratuitous violence of the Black’s first ontological instance, the Middle Passage, ‘wiped out [his or her] metaphysics … his or her customs and sources on which they are based.’” The Black occupies a coordinate that marks a fundamental structural antagonism with the West, with Whiteness and, indeed, with the Human. It is quite easy to see why the term “Pessimism” is apt. The Black names the condition of state violence, a flesh-object brought into the world for “accumulation and fungibility.” The Black is essential to the production of Western subjectivity and to notions of what it means to be human. “In short, White (Human) capacity, in advance of the event of discrimination or oppression, is parasitic on Black incapacity: Without the Negro, capacity itself is incoherent, uncertain at best.” Not only is the Black incapacitated as a structural determinate, the Black is “a structural position of noncommunicability.” But there is a form of communication here nevertheless because the Black paradoxically signifies the “outside” that allows for the articulation of “anti-Black solidarity.” There is theoretical and historical support for such an analysis. For example, the early twentieth-century Americanization projects used Blackness as an exclusionary trope meant to help spur non-White immigrants from Europe and Asia toward Whiteness. And here is where the term “Pessimism” seems inadequate. As a structurally overdetermined body-image in the Western imaginary and symbolic field, Blackness registers near-nothingness: “In perceiving Black folk as being alive, or at least having the potential to live in the world, the same potential that any subaltern might have, the politics of Black film theorists’ aesthetic methodology and desire disavowed the fact that ‘[Black folk] are always already dead wherever you find them.’” Given this dire diagnosis, why and how might we interact with Afro-Pessimism? Speaking from the point of view of a Black rhetorical scholar (and a scholar of Blackness), the answer to why is virtually self-evident: thinking through Blackness as a condition of possibility for rhetorical action and social justice is a life-long pursuit that, given the tragic killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in August 2014, feels especially burning. Given the affective intensity of the charge of Black noncommunicability, a failure to meaningfully interact would engender a different kind of “violence”; in this case a structural injunction sponsored by a lingering and recurring anxiety regarding the authority of Communication Studies. And so how might we interact? If I take up the orientation of critical cosmopolitanism, I need to recognize immediately that my efforts can be dismissed by the Afro-Pessimist as colonial; that is, as a reiteration of the sort of practices that presume that one’s epistemologies can translate other’s bodies of knowledge into comprehensible and useful concepts and constructs. And yet, we must begin where we are, not where we hope to be. Hence, I want to make two modest and one not-so-modest suggestions for how Communication Studies in general and Rhetorical Studies in particular might interact: first, Wilderson calls for “a new language of abstraction” to elaborate “Blackness’s grammar of suffering.” But in my reading, Afro-Pessimism is already too reliant on a language of abstraction. Lois McNay, in The Misguided Search for the Political, recently contends that theories of political power are overwrought owing to a social weightlessness brought about through high abstraction. She recommends the reinvigoration of the concept of “social suffering”—not as an entrenched category of victimage but, rather, as the habitus of lived experience that must be articulated to analyses of structural positionality. Second, I agree with McNay (who says nothing about Afro-Pessimism, by the way) that structural antagonisms are not static, but are movable and moving configurations. The Afro-Pessimist in Wilderson’s account must agree that when a non-Black person is thrust toward the horrible condition approximating (but not identical to) the Black’s structural position, that adjustment can rightfully be called a “Blackening.” As a happening—and not an event that has simply always already happened—this racialized procedure makes itself felt and knowable in the dense social fabric of the everyday. If the Black is in a structural position that delimits the impossibility of capacity, might we enjoin an analysis of the vocabulary of that impossibility itself? And since a “Blackening” receives intelligibility from the structural position of the Black, might we gain some productive understanding from a scrutiny of key discursive and material forms of “Blackening”? Was not Michael Brown “Blackened” in and through (and not only a priori to) his bodily encounter with state violence? Given my ongoing scholarly interest in the Zombie, I am willing to concede that an Afro-Pessimist might claim that Brown was, at the moment he was shot to death, “the dead but sentient thing, the Black” struggling “to articulate in a world of living subjects.” This concession functions as an assertion: the Zombie is not wholly outside Western intelligibility; it haunts the nether regions between Human and Black. Its undead existence is material and social, and supplies some vital resources for inventing a new language—a grammar of (Black) suffering. Perhaps “there is no way to Africa through the Black,” but maybe there is a route through the Zombie. I have argued for such a project using the terminology of reanimating Zombie voices. Lastly, we might think of this gloomy predicament as a tenuous point of contact with Afro-Pessimism. Wilson’s intellectual history provides the basis for such a conception. Communication Studies has been (and continues to anguish over the extent that it still is) in the structural position of inferior and alienated. There should be no shame in admitting that the discipline, in relation to both the Social Sciences and the Humanities, has been and is subject to being “Blackened.” Indeed, its originary moment, as I alluded to above, meant the rejection of a set of nationalistic proprietary politics that treated Speech teachers like disposable labor. By any reasonable measure, that structural positioning—despite the fact that the people involved were White—was a racialization, a “Blackening.” Let’s be perfectly clear: there is no identification being made here with the fundamental antagonism associated with the Black. However, this racialized politics (among other political registers) might provide a new critical vocabulary for Communication scholars if we do the painful work of coming to grips with the discursive and material practices of “Blackening.” There are structures of different scales. Academic structural dynamics are not dissociated from the identity ideologies implicated in nationalism and cosmopolitanism, citizenship and exile, privilege and destitution, Whiteness and Blackness. Indeed, Wilderson’s critique is launched from and resides within those very same structural dynamics. It seems to me then that, at the very least, our shared social suffering with Afro-Pessimism—although of vastly different magnitudes and qualities—should be asserted as a mode of transnational fidelity.

### **AT – Blackness not ontological – Brain Studies**

#### Brain studies prove that racial bias is malleable – examining and creating common goals helps to focus energy towards collective empathy and action to reduce antiblack violence

-           Brain study – people form strong group associations on things like political affiliation, hobby, occupation, etc. that are more salient than race – proves racism not neurologically hardwired

-           Measured by amygdala activity

-           Study methods

o    An intergroup interaction was induced, and then the effects were evaluated – total 64 individuals in 8 groups

o    A neurological examination of individuals’ amygdala during visual stimuli

o    A study of fear response before and after various positive contact

Cikara and Van Bavel 15 (Mina Cikara and Jay Van Bavel; 6/2/15; Scientific American; *“The Flexibility of Racial Bias: Research suggests that racism is not hard wired, offering hope on one of America’s enduring problems.”*; accessed 8/15/21; <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-flexibility-of-racial-bias/>; Mina Cikara is an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Director of the Intergroup Neuroscience Lab at Harvard University. Her research examines the conditions under which groups and individuals are denied social value, agency, and empathy.; Jay Van Bavel is an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Director of the Social Perception and Evaluation Laboratory at New York University) RC/HB

The city of Baltimore was rocked by protests and riots over the death of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old African American man who died in police custody. Tragically, Gray’s death was only one of a recent in a series of racially-charged, often violent, incidents. On April 4th, Walter Scott was fatally shot by a police officer after fleeing from a routine traffic stop. On March 8th, Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity members were caught on camera gleefully chanting, “There Will Never Be A N\*\*\*\*\* In SAE.” On March 1st, a homeless Black man was shot in broad daylight by a Los Angeles police officer. And these are not isolated incidents, of course. Institutional and systemic racism reinforce discrimination in countless situations, including hiring, sentencing, housing, and even mortgage lending. It would be easy to see in all this powerful evidence that racism is a permanent fixture in America’s social fabric and even, perhaps, an inevitable aspect of human nature. Indeed, the mere act of labeling others according to their age, gender, or race is a reflexive habit of the human mind. Social categories, like race, impact our thinking quickly, often outside of our awareness. Extensive research has found that these implicit racial biases—negative thoughts and feelings about people from other races—are automatic, pervasive, and difficult to suppress. Neuroscientists have also explored racial prejudice by exposing people to images of faces while scanning their research has shown that how people categorize themselves may be just as fundamental to understanding prejudice as how they categorize others. When people categorize themselves as part of a group, their self-concept shifts from the individual (“I”) to the collective level (“us”). People form groups rapidly and favor members of their own group even when groups are formed on arbitrary grounds, such as the simple flip of a coin. These findings highlight the remarkable ease with which humans form coalitions. Recent research confirms that coalition-based preferences trump race-based preferences. For example, both Democrats and Republicans favor the resumes of those affiliated with their political party much more than they favor those who share their race. These coalition-based preferences remain powerful even in the absence of the animosity present in electoral politics. Our research has shown that the simple act of placing people on a mixed-race team can diminish their automatic racial bias. In a series of experiments, White participants who were randomly placed on a mixed-race team—the Tigers or Lions—showed little evidence of implicit racial bias. Merely belonging to a mixed-race team trigged positive automatic associations with all of the members of their own group, irrespective of race. Being a part of one of these seemingly trivial mixed-race groups produced similar effects on brain activity—the amygdala responded to team membership rather than race. Taken together, these studies indicate that momentary changes in group membership can override the influence of race on the way we see, think about, and feel toward people who are different from ourselves. Although these coalition-based distinctions might be the most basic building block of bias, they say little about the other factors that cause group conflict. Why do some groups get ignored while others get attacked? Whenever we encounter a new person or group we are motivated to answer two questions as quickly as possible: “is this person a friend or foe?” and “are they capable of enacting their intentions toward me?” In other words, once we have determined that someone is a member of an out-group, we need to determine what kind? The nature of the relations between groups—are we cooperative, competitive, or neither?—and their relative status—do you have access to resources?—largely determine the course of intergroup interactions. Groups that are seen as competitive with one’s interests, and capable of enacting their nasty intentions, are much more likely to be targets of hostility than more benevolent (e.g., elderly) or powerless (e.g., homeless) groups. This is one reason why sports rivalries have such psychological potency. For instance, fans of the Boston Red Sox are more likely to feel pleasure, and exhibit reward-related neural responses, at the misfortunes of the archrival New York Yankees than other baseball teams (and vice versa)—especially in the midst of a tight playoff race. (How much fans take pleasure in the misfortunes of their rivals is also linked to how likely they would be to harm fans from the other team.) Just as a particular person’s group membership can be flexible, so too are the relations between groups. Groups that have previously had cordial relations may become rivals (and vice versa). Indeed, psychological and biological responses to out-group members can change, depending on whether or not that out-group is perceived as threatening. For example, people exhibit greater pleasure—they smile—in response to the misfortunes of stereotypically competitive groups (e.g., investment bankers); however, this malicious pleasure is reduced when you provide participants with counter-stereotypic information (e.g., “investment bankers are working with small companies to help them weather the economic downturn). Competition between “us” and “them” can even distort our judgments of distance, making threatening out-groups seem much closer than they really are. These distorted perceptions can serve to amplify intergroup discrimination: the more different and distant “they” are, the easier it is to disrespect and harm them. Thus, not all out-groups are treated the same: some elicit indifference whereas others become targets of antipathy. Stereotypically threatening groups are especially likely to be targeted with violence, but those stereotypes can be tempered with other information. If perceptions of intergroup relations can be changed, individuals may overcome hostility toward perceived foes and become more responsive to one another’s grievances. The flexible nature of both group membership and intergroup relations offers reason to be cautiously optimistic about the potential for greater cooperation among groups in conflict (be they black versus white or citizens versus police). One strategy is to bring multiple groups together around a common goal. For example, during the fiercely contested 2008 Democratic presidential primary process, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama supporters gave more money to strangers who supported the same primary candidate (compared to the rival candidate). Two months later, after the Democratic National Convention, the supporters of both candidates coalesced around the party nominee—Barack Obama—and this bias disappeared. In fact, merely creating a sense of cohesion between two competitive groups can increase empathy for the suffering of our rivals. These sorts of strategies can help reduce aggression toward hostile out-groups, which is critical for creating more opportunities for constructive dialogue addressing greater social injustices. Of course, instilling a sense of common identity and cooperation is extremely difficult in entrenched intergroup conflicts, but when it happens, the benefits are obvious. Consider how the community leaders in New York City and Ferguson responded differently to protests against police brutality—in NYC political leaders expressed grief and concern over police brutality and moved quickly to make policy changes in policing, whereas the leaders and police in Ferguson responded with high-tech military vehicles and riot gear. In the first case, multiple groups came together with a common goal—to increase the safety of everyone in the community; in the latter case, the actions of the police likely reinforced the “us” and “them” distinctions. Tragically, these types of conflicts continue to roil the country. Understanding the psychology and neuroscience of social identity and intergroup relations cannot undo the effects of systemic racism and discriminatory practices; however, it can offer insights into the psychological processes responsible for escalating the tension between, for example, civilians and police officers. Even in cases where it isn’t possible to create a common identity among groups in conflict, it may be possible to blur the boundaries between groups. In one recent experiment, we sorted participants into groups—red versus blue team—competing for a cash prize. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to see a picture of a segregated social network of all the players, in which red dots clustered together, blue dots clustered together, and the two clusters were separated by white space. The other half of the participants saw an integrated social network in which the red and blue dots were mixed together in one large cluster. Participants who thought the two teams were interconnected with one another reported greater empathy for the out-group players compared to those who had seen the segregated network. Thus, reminding people that individuals could be connected to one another despite being from different groups may be another way to build trust and understanding among them. A mere month before Freddie Gray died in police custody, President Obama addressed the nation on the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Selma: “We do a disservice to the cause of justice by intimating that bias and discrimination are immutable, or that racial division is inherent to America. To deny…progress – our progress – would be to rob us of our own agency; our responsibility to do what we can to make America better." The president was saying that we, as a society, have a responsibility to reduce prejudice and discrimination. These recent findings from psychology and neuroscience indicate that we, as individuals, possess this capacity. Of course this capacity is not sufficient to usher in racial equality or peace. Even when the level of prejudice against particular out-groups decreases, it does not imply that the level of institutional discrimination against these or other groups will necessarily improve. Ultimately, only collective action and institutional evolution can address systemic racism. The science is clear on one thing, though: individual bias and discrimination are changeable. Race-based prejudice and discrimination, in particular, are created and reinforced by many social factors, but they are not inevitable consequences of our biology. Perhaps understanding how coalitional thinking impacts intergroup relations will make it easier for us to affect real social change going forward.

### AT – Blackness not ontological – History

#### History disproves that blackness is paradigmatic but rather constructed pragmatically through legislative action – their abstraction rather solidifies the fatalists structures they criticize

Olaloku-Teriba 18 (Annie Olaloku-Teriba; March 2018; Historical Materialism, Issue 26, No. 2; *“Afro-Pessimism and the (Un)Logic of Anti-Blackness.”*; <http://www.historicalmaterialism.org/articles/afro-pessimism-and-unlogic-anti-blackness>) RC/HB

Fanon’s elucidation exposes the slave as contingently black, not ‘paradigmatically black’. What is the difference? The Afro-pessimist sees the world as structured by a non-black solidarity in preventing the ontological possibility of black life. Were ‘black’ meant as a metaphor for the condition of total alienation from self, this might make sense. However, because the Afro-pessimist imaginary ties itself to a morphological account of blackness, this leads us to a theoretical dead end. In this world-view, it therefore becomes necessary to begin by treating ‘race’ as a problem fundamentally rooted in the formation of sociality – in which the Black precedes the historical order and the processes, both violent and mundane, which create her. By contrast, to think through the implications of contingency is to confront the reality that these racial categories – categories that Wilderson and Sexton treat as absolute – are actually unstable as evidence that something else is afoot. It is to see ‘race’ not as an anchor, but as a mystification conjured to weather crises of legitimacy. For example, we can examine how Sexton links the condition of the Afro-American slave, the free black and the African thus: ‘because blackness serves as the basis of enslavement in the logic of a transnational political and legal culture, it permanently destabilises the position of any nominally free black population’.[46] The presumption of a shared (presumably global) legal and political culture within which the assertion that blackness was a basis of enslavement might be made is quite mistaken. Even in the US, the centralisation of the legal and political status of blacks only emerged at the moment of formal abolition following the American Civil War. Prior to this, the internal border system of the US produced divergent rationales and attendant juridical technology for enslavement. The South might be considered to fit the relationship that Sexton suggests. For example, Supreme Court judges in Georgia argued that the free black was ‘associated still with the slave in this State’. However, the North tells a different story, wherein free blacks were likened to ‘white women and children… denied many political rights but did not therefore forfeit their basic status as citizens’. In any case, the debates within slave states in the late antebellum period included the proposition of ‘forcing their free black populations to elect between re-enslavement and leaving the state’. The concerns of legislators and judges in the South, that free black populations might inspire slave revolts and undermine the racial order, indicate that their motivations were not paradigmatic but pragmatic. This is to say that these political and legal elites were well aware of the fragility of the racial order that they had created. Indeed, on the relationship between the free black and the slave, a sketch of the thinking of legislators in the Northern and Southern states offers a radically different picture to Sexton’s. Rather than being a given, the position of the free black was both contested and geographically dependent. Interestingly, during an 1820 Congressional debate regarding a clause in Missouri’s proposed constitution which would bar free blacks from entering the state, it was the condition of Native Americans which structured the logic regarding the position of free blacks: ‘the Indians born in the states continue to be aliens and so, I contend, do the free negroes’.[50] Contrary to Sexton’s assertion of the exceptional nature of the Afro-American experience in this regard, legislators consciously rooted their position in a nexus of other ‘undesirables’ which included both Native Americans and white ‘paupers’. The preoccupation with the condition of ‘poor whites’ is certainly not a new phenomenon. Legislators in the antebellum South were consumed with the implications of (white) pauperism which meant that, ‘the adjudged pauper is subordinated to the will of others, and reduced to a condition but little removed from that of chattel slavery, and until recently, by statute of 1847, c. 12, like the slave, was liable to be sold upon the block of the auctioneer, for service or support.’[51] Moreover, it is important to note that the Northern and Southern states proffered different rationales for the contested status of free blacks, and that, at this time, the federal government’s role in determining the parameters of the claimable rights of individuals ‘was largely restricted to establishing the requirements for naturalization and the requirements for alien ownership of federal lands’. The fragility of hierarchies of race is inherent to the project of racialism. Rather than emanating from some assuredness regarding the morphological provenance of racialised ‘personhood’ and ‘unpersonhood’, what we see here is the adoption of specific policy-practices in order to construct a world in which the insurrection against domination that the American Revolution represented could co-exist with the continued brutal exploitation that slavery represented. And so, the slave was not created so that the American might exist; instead, the black was created so that slavery might survive republican fervour. Indeed, we must be careful about operating at a level of abstraction which would enable the post hoc justifications of enslavement concocted by Southern slave owners embattled by a crisis of legitimacy to shape the historiography of chattel slavery. Wilderson and Sexton want us to believe both that the myriad forms of exploitation – indentured servitude, ghettoisation, mass incarceration, police brutality et cetera – which followed the formal abolition of slavery constitute a continuation of enslavement (or its ‘afterlife’), and that the position of the slave is fundamentally different from the position of the ‘white’ or ‘Indian’ indentured servant who often performed similar labour and whose resistance incurred violent repression. Such a framework mystifies three crucial facts: first, that the ‘blackness’ of the category of slave was both contingent and unstable; second, that to exceptionalise African enslavement obscures the many categories of ‘alien’ which were comparable to the negro in the US context; third, that natal alienation was not from some African collectivity but from specific and diverse social formations in Western Africa.

### AT -- Ontology

#### Err negative given the scope of their claims---any risk they’re wrong about ontology is a reason to vote neg.

O’Donnell ‘20

[Patrick O'Donnell, B.A. Columbia University; M.A. Katholieke Universiteit Leuven; M.A. Johns Hopkins University; Ph.D. Johns Hopkins University, “Ontology, Experience, and Social Death: On Frank Wilderson’s Afropessimism,” 2020, https://philpapers.org/archive/ODOOEA.pdf, EA]

Wilderson’s political vision is a “grenade without a pin,” or a “looter’s creed” which strives to bring about the Fanonian “end of the world” (174). Yet if your politics requires you to “burn the ship or the plantation…. from the inside out” with yourself inside, you should be extremely sure that this politics is rooted in a true and comprehensive vision of Black people’s situation in the world. Pinless grenades and looter’s creeds can fall into anyone’s hands. They can harm countless bystanders. Their volatility makes them unpredictable. What if the theoretical conceits of Afropessimism not only fail to bring about the end of the world, but give succor to projects dedicated to making an already awful anti-Black world worse? Ironically, those with reactionary anti-Black politics, or those in thrall to the magic of Whiteness and convinced of the subhumanity of Blackness, should appreciate the work that Wilderson accomplishes here. In fascist hands, a claim like “it is absolutely necessary for Blacks to be ~~castrated, raped, genitally mutilated and violated, beaten, shot~~, and maimed” in order for non-Blacks to achieve “confirmation of Human existence” is just the sort of work a society running on the myth of Black inhumanity and subpersonhood requires.

More predictably, Afropessimism takes aim at leftist coalitional, solidarity-based, and intersectional politics. It is not just that historically existing forms of socialism, feminism, and multiculturalism have left Black people out (which they often have). Rather, in Wilderson’s mind, these forms of politics terrorize Black people simply by positing analogies and similarities among diverse forms of Black and non-Black oppression (220). The monolithic view of Blackness Afropessimism presents seems to have little room for the idea that Black people are lots of things besides Black, and that their interests and concerns are often formed in ways similar to non-Blacks’ interests. To be sure, we should mark a distinction between Wilderson’s politics and misappropriations of his vision. Yet if Black people are literally terrorized by working-class struggle, multicultural coalitions, immigration rights, feminism, and other forms of counter-hegemonic politics, one might wonder why Black liberation strategies should bother accommodate the stated interests of people who are, in addition to Black, queer, religious, anti-capitalist, female, poor, immigrant, working class, indigenous, and/or incarcerated.

Those sympathetic to Wilderson might suggest that Black people have little to lose by abandoning solidarity-based politics. Yet not-so-ancient history suggests that there may be higher stakes here. As Paul Ortiz (2018) has recently demonstrated, many of the material, political, social, and symbolic gains for Black and Latinx people throughout the 18th and 19th centuries were generated by an emancipatory internationalism that drew explicit analogies between Black and non-Black freedom struggles. The United States’ interest in slavery of course first and foremost oppressed Black people. Yet because slavery was so deeply interwoven with the oppression of non-Black people as well (in the form of Indian removal and extermination, violent expropriation of Mexican land in a war to expand slavery, etc.), Black and non-Black abolitionists were able to engage the problem of Black oppression not in isolation, but with a view to how it undergirded a more generally unacceptable social order. Of course, just because solidarity was a useful tool for achieving those political goals doesn’t mean it will work now. Yet in a time when Black oppression has once again become one of the clearest symptoms of a more broadly unacceptable social order, perhaps it is wise to remember this emancipatory spirit.