## Theory

#### Interpretation: Non-black people shouldn’t read afropess

#### They’re not black, they shouldn’t read this – turns the K

Evans 15

Rashad. Former policy debater, and coach “On White Afropessimism”. July 2015. RP

Such was not the case with Black Nihilism. The debaters actually picked this argument up with some ease. Of course, the argument beneath the Nihilism argument is afro-pessimism. This is a super popular debate argument already so I can see how it might be attractive to young debaters. However, I wonder why there was no similar cognitive dissonance for the debaters before arguing in favor of a radical Black argument which principally focuses on white violence and the necessity of a Black revolution. I listened to the debates just as I have listened to many college debates on the argument and it became clear to me that the kids did not get the argument. The argument had been reduced to: it sucks to be the Black body. I consistently hear debaters saying things like “the Back body can never…” “the Black body always…””…to the Black body.” The is actually a reprieve from those debaters who would sometimes insert slave instead of Black body. In any event, non-Black debaters tend to use the pessimism argument to reduce Black people to a body or slave or simply an object. This is kinda the argument. But, this is the perversity of the argument in the hands of non-black debaters. One important move of afro-pessimism is to focus on anti-blackness as opposed to or in addition to white supremacy. The idea is that the world is anti-black and that anti-blackness is: (1) bigger than individual acts, (2) about more than white people and (3) foundational to humanity and civil society. In other words, all white people are implicated no matter how good or nice they are and so are non-white, non-Black people and no good can come of this world. However, that focus on anti-blackness and what makes the Black experience unique has also become an excuse for non-Black debaters to only focus on how “the Black body” is positioned by violence without theorizing about who is doing the positioning. In addition, if the world is always already anti-black then it can be difficult to see how any individual debater, judge or coach might be actually participating in anti-blackness, particularly as they engage with each other on the everyday. And, that humanity and civil society is fundamentally anti-black is merely an opportunity to explain why it has always sucked to be Black and not an opportunity to explain that the only way to affirm Blackness is to upend the entire world and at least includes a violent war against white people. Afropessimism is nothing if not an affirmation of blackness. It includes a negation of the world, but it is principally an affirming argument. For Black people. A white afropessimist makes no sense. White afropessimism is just anti-blackness. If you are a white afro-pessimist you should understand that your existence is complicit in violence against Black people and/or that your non-existence is a necessity to Black liberation. Under no circumstances should you understand your role to be to spread the gospel of pessimism further. Your engagement with\\ the argument will always be theoretical (you have no relevant experience), redundant (you can never be additive to this conversation) and objectifying (reducing black people to objects of study). Afropessimism is an argument about why Black people should be the the subjects of the the debate. It is about how Black people are always already the subject of all debates but excluded from them as such. It is not about white people. All of this assumes that we are taking the argument seriously and not speaking in metaphorical terms, something Eve Tuck warns against in the context of settler colonialism. Both the Settler Colonialism and Black Nihilism arguments rely significantly on Fanon. And Fanon’s main point is that the native/colonialist and/or black/white cannot coexist. In practical terms, this meant that Black liberation in Africa required a violent war to the end. It’s an either/or life or death choice for both sides. But, understanding that anti-black violence is foundational is to understand that you have to fight back in literal terms. To end the world is to end the world. I am not certain that debaters fully understand the implications of such. If the students in my lab understood this they would have found the Black Nihilism argument as difficult as the Settler Colonialism argument. But they did not, partially because they were introduced to the argument from the perspective of Gramsci and a theory of civil society and not from Fanon and everyday anti-Black violence, but also because I didn’t take the time to explain the argument fully. Under no circumstances should non-Black debaters be taught to advocate for afro-pessimism from a non-Black person. And under no circumstances should two white boys think they have a better shot flipping negative and running afropessimism than reading their own Aff (something I had to explain before a quarters debate at the camp tournament). When that happens something has gone wrong.

#### Standards:

1. **Listen to to black debaters and judges – they have been advocating against non-black afropessimism for years, especially true for afropessimism debaters. Either your theory is true and we should align with black struggles against civil society and drop you, or your theory is false.**
2. **It commodifies suffering for a ballot – you can read narratives of anti-black violence and use them to get wins – that recreates the libidinal economy where black suffering is exchanged for white profit.**

#### 3. Co-option - afropessimism is a survival strategy used by black debaters to resist an activity full of racism – co-opting it into a strategic affirmative as anon-black takes away its radicality and unpredictability.

#### And, reps come first, meaning they should lose

#### Probability: There’s a 50/50 chance the K is true, but theres’ 100% chance that commodifying suffering is bad

#### Reversibility: once oppressive rhetoric is used it cannot be taken back

#### Norm setting: we are part of a larger debate community with extensive norms – letting racism be rampant kills the community

#### Competition: debate is an educational competition with no place for offensive rhetoric – that kills access to the lasting benefit debate provides

## NC

#### Instead of transcending beyond the world to access universal truth, subjects exist in a particular place at a particular time. Because we are limited by our contexts through which we interpret reality, ethics is generated by the intelligibility of our world rather than transcendental truth —This takes out questions of metaethics and transcendental thought since they are irrelevant to our phenomenological experience.

Fagenblat 02

Michael Fagenblat, Senior Lecturer at the Open University of Israel, Il y a du quotidien: Levinas and Heidegger on the self, pub in Philosophy and Social Criticism, 2002, [https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0191453702028005666 //](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0191453702028005666%20//) Park City NL

Heidegger develops his account of the ground of being, Sein, by an analysis of the constitutive role of ‘beings-ready-to-hand’, Zuhandenheit. 6 He argues that the meaning of being in general is given and circulated first and foremost through a pre-theoretical acquaintance with objects of use. The **phenomenology** of ‘useful things’ (Zeug) **shows that** the **meaning** of a thing ‘in itself’ **is derived from our pre-theoretical involvement with things within an interpretative context**. This phenomenological hermeneutic shows that meaning is an external relation between things rather than something inhering in an object or a subject, or an isolatable correspondence between them. This description amounts to a non-cognitivist coherence account of meaning (though not of truth) which is based on ways of being – of comporting, speaking, interpreting, signaling, evaluating, and so forth – rather than states of mind. By reducing the origin of meaning to the phenomenological priority of interpretative activity over intention, **Heidegger grounds meaning in** the coherence of **concrete life rather than** in **the** psychological or **transcendental subject**.7 The interpretative activity that takes place in the everyday world assumes the role that the subject, now externalized as a pragmatic social agent (Dasein), once occupied as ground of meaning. Heidegger’s reliance on Zuhandenheit as a way of disclosing the precognitive understanding of being leads him to the thesis, central to Being and Time, that the world is a place where ‘work emerges’.8 It is this contention that underlies the charge of ‘instrumentalism’ that has been laid against him.9 Levinas was among the first to condemn this ‘world of exploitation’, even as his reading of Heidegger all but introduced fundamental ontology to France.10 Even so, the important philosophical point that Heidegger introduces is not so much his characterization of the world as a workplace but his account of intelligibility as prior to meaning-bestowing intentions, theoretical vantages or supposedly contextless facts.11 This said, it is important to recall that Heidegger never denies the significance of inner life, just as he never denies the validity of **objective knowledge** – rather, he views both ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ as derivative of the ontology of the world, and thus as finite.12 Analyses of private or individualistic psychological regions, just like the stance of the scientist and the logician, inevitably **presuppose** an horizontal background of practices, and this background includes social, historical, linguistic and institutional norms and contents.13 In Being and Time Heidegger calls this background ‘whole’ or ‘totality’, ‘the everyday world’. The everyday world is **the interpretative ground of** meaning that circumscribes the basic horizon of intelligibility to which every local interpretative act ultimately refers.14 In other words, **the everyday historical world**, or everydayness, is the ultimate condition **for the possibility of meaning** in general. Elsewhere Heidegger explicitly calls this everyday condition the ‘original transcendental context’, that enables each and every event of meaning.15

#### By existing in this way, the subject defines the world in relation to it. As the world has no independent meaning beyond our understanding of it, every phenomenon has its independent essence erased to the point that it exists solely as a one-dimensional object that we have mapped meaning upon. For example, a rock on a stick gains meaning as a hammer through our use of it and has no existence outside of our knowledge of it.

#### However, the other interrupts our attempts to impose meaning on the world by being constitutively unknowable. Because they evade any attempt at definition, and instead acts as an infinite force we cannot comprehend, the other is always vulnerable before us and waiting for a response, which creates an infinite moral obligation towards them.

#### Our obligation towards and recognition of the other is a prior question to any other other framework because only seeing the other as such gives them moral value.

Peperzak 1993

Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, Dutch Philosopher, To the Other: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, 1993, // Park City NL

Another comes to **the** fore as **other** if and only if his or her “appearance” breaks, pierces, **destroys the horizon of my egocentric monism**, that is, when the other’s invasion of my world destroys the empire **in which all phenomena are**, from the outset, a priori, condemned to function as **moments of my universe**. The other’s face (i.e., any other’s facing me) or the other’s speech (i.e., any other’s speaking to me) interrupts and disturbs the order of my, ego’s world; it makes a hole in it by disarraying my arrangements without ever permitting me to restore the previous order. For even if I kill the other or chase the other away in order to be safe from the intrusion, nothing will ever be the same as before. When Levinas meditates on the significance of the face, he does not describe the complex figure that could be portrayed by a picture or painting; rather, he tries to make us “experience” or “realize” what we see, feel, “know” when another, by looking at me, “touches” me: autrui me vise; the other’s visage looks at me, “regards” me. Similarly the word “language,” often used in this context, evokes the speech addressed to me by some living man or woman and not the linguistic structures or anonymous meanings that can be studied objectively or practiced by a style-con- scious author. Autrui me parle” primordially, it is not important what is said; even if the words are nonsensical, there is still their being addressed. Neither is it relevant who speaks to me; any other is the revelation of the Other, and peculiar features deserving special attention would only lead me away from the “absolute otherness” that is at stake. IN order to concentrate on the other’s otherness, Levinas often stresses the nakedness of the other’s face: if I am touched, if I am conscious of being concerned, it is not becau se of the other’s beauty, talents, performances, roles, or functions but only by the other’s (human) otherness. As disrupting the horizon of my egological—and thus, ontological—ways of handling and seeing the world, **the others resist a description that would present them as** a particular sort of phenomenon among other **phenomena within a universal order of beings.** **Since they** “show” and “**present**” precisely those **realities that do not fit into the universal openness of consciousness, they cannot be seized by the usual categories and models of phenomenology.** the other transcends the limits of (self-)consciousness and its horizon; the look and the voice that surprise me are “too much” for my capacity of assimilation. In this sense, the other comes toward me as a total stranger and from a dimension that surpasses me. The otherness of the other reveals a dimension of “height” (hauteur): he/she comes “from on high.” Husserl’s theory of intentionality, based on an adequate and symmetric correlation between noésis and noéma, no longer fits. A forgotten element of Descartes’s analysis of consciousness, however, offers a formal structure much closer to the relation meant by Levinas. According to Descartes’ third Metaphysical Meditation, all human consciousness contains not only and not primarily the idea of itself but also and precedingly the irreducible “idea of the infinite,” that is, an immediate and a priori given relation of the conscious subject to a reality that can neither be constituted nor embraced by this subject. This means that the cogito from the outset is structured by a bipolarity other than the bipolarity of the noetico-noematic relation of phenomenology, in which an idea and its ideatum fit one another adequately. Descartes still knew (as all great metaphysicians before him) that consciousness “thinks more than [or beyond] that which it can think.” The infinite is different from any noéma or cogitatum, for it essentially surpasses our capacity for conception and embracing. Although Descartes identifies “the infinite” with “God” (i.e., the God of the traditional, late scholastic philosophy), we can consider the formal structure he discovers to be the structure of my relation to the other in the form of another human being. When I am confronted with another, I experience myself as an instance that tries to appropriate the world by labor, language, and experience, whereas this other instance does not permit me to monopolize the world because the Other’s greatness does not fit into any enclosure—not even that of theoretical comprehension. This resistance to all integration is not founded on the other’s will; before any possibility of choice and before all psychological considerations, the mere fact of another’s existence is a “surplus” that cannot be reduced to becoming a part or moment of the Same. **The Other** cannot be captured or grasped and **is therefore**, in the most literal sense of the word, **incomprehensible**. In all his works, Levinas has endeavored to show that the (human) other radically differs from all other beings in the world. The other’s coming to the fore cannot be seen as a variation of the general way of appearance by which all other beings are phenomenal. This is the reason why Levinas reserves the word “phenomenon” for realities that fit into the totality of beings ruled by egological understanding. Since the other cannot become a moment of such a totality, it is not a phenomenon but rather an “enigma.” However, if an enigma cannot be defined in phenomenological terms, we must ask: can it be defined at all? If “visibility,” in a broad and metaphorical sense, is a feature of every being that can become a phenomenon, one may even call the enigmatic other “invisible.”47 **The other imposes its** exceptional and enigmatic **otherness** on me **by way of a command** and a prohibition: you are not allowed to kill me; **you must accord me** a place under the sun and everything that is necessary to live **a** truly **human life! Your facing me** or your speaking to me—whatever form your addressing me might take—**forbids me to suppress**, enslave, or damage **you**; on the contrary, it obligates me to dedicate myself to your well-being. It is not your will or want or wish that makes me yours truly, but your emerging, your being there, as such. Independently of your or my desires, your presence reveals to me that I am “for you,” responsible for your life. We meet here an exceptional, extraordinary, and absolute fact: a fact that is and exists simultaneously and necessarily as a fact and as a command or norm. By seeing another looking at me, or by hearing someone’s voice, I “know” myself to be obliged. **The scission between** factuality **(is) and** normativity **(ought**)—a scission many philosophers since Hume have believed in—**has not** yet had the **time to emerge** here. **The** immediate **experience of another**’s emergence **contains the root of all possible ethics** as well as the source from which all insights of theoretical philosophy must start. **The other’s existence** as such reveals to me **the basis** and primary sense **of my obligations.**

#### And when we limit the other to a set of understandable categories, the subject relates to them as just another object, denying our infinite obligation towards them.

#### Thus the Standard is preventing the totalization of the other.

**Prefer:**

1. **Performativity – recognizing the other as incomprehensible is a prerequisite to debate because in order to communicate, we must have a respectful relationship with the other. We can’t communicate if we don’t recognize each other as different subjects who must use language to connect with one another.**

#### Oppression is rooted in the denial of the other’s value, so recognizing their value is key to combatting oppression.

Burggraeve 1999

Burggraeve, R. Belgian professor of moral theology (1999). Violence and the Vulnerable Face of the Other: The Vision of Emmanuel Levinas on Moral Evil and Our Responsibility. Journal of Social Philosophy, 30(1), 29–45. doi:10.1111/0047-2786.t01-1-00003 // Park City NL

In a wider sense, one also speaks of racism when one recognizes and relates to others on the basis of their belonging to another culture, language group, or religion. As contemporary examples of this, we can point to the manner in which people today reject immigrants from the Arab world and wish to expel them because of their origin in another religion, specifically Islam and its related traditions. Or think of [is] the long-standing suppression and discrimination against African Americans in the United States, many of whose ancestors were brought over from Africa as slaves. According to Levinas, the core of **racism consists** not in the denial of, or failure to appreciate, similarities between people, but **in the denial of**, or better said, failure to appreciate and value, people's differences, or better still, **the** fundamental and **irreducible otherness** by which they fall outside of every genre and are thus "unique":" Alterity flows in no sense out of difference, to the contrary difference goes back to alterity" (VA 92). **A racist** relation **wants to recognize** and value **only the same**," or one's "own" (het eigene), **and** therefore **excludes the "foreign."** Out of self-defense, we are easily inclined to accept and consider positively only that which agrees with, or is "similar" to, ourselves. One finds the other embarrassing, threatening, and frightening. One therefore [and] tries to expel him from oneself, to place him outside so that he can be considered as the "enemy" from whom one "may" defend oneself, and whom one may even "destroy" as what brings life and well-being under pressure, unless one can reduce him to oneself or make him a part of oneself. One wants to accept "others" (or "strangers," or "foreigners") only to the extent that they belong to one's own "genre" or "kind," which is to say to one's own blood and soil, to the same family, tribe, sex, clan, nation, church, club, or community, do the same work, have the same birthplace and date. One's "own" is praised and even divinized at the price of the "other," which is vilified. The "stranger" becomes the scapegoat on whom we blame all of our problems and worries. One accepts differences only insofar as they are a matter of accidental particularities or specificities within a same genre or basic design, in which individuals differ from one another within a same "sort" only very relatively (for example, character, taste, intellectual level), and in which their deeper affinity is not at all tested (VA 97). Against this background, it is clear that for Levinas anti-Semitism, as a specific and advanced form of racism, takes aim at the Jew as the intolerable other. For anti-Semitic thinking and sentiment, the Jew is simply the enemy, just as for every racism the other is the enemy as such, that is to say not on the basis of personality, one or another character trait, or a specific act considered morally troublesome or objectionable, but due only to his very otherness. In anti-Semitism, the Jew, as "other," is always the guilty one. It is never "oneself," the embodiment of the "same" that not only arranges everything around itself but also profiles itself as principle of meaning and value (CAJ 77-79). From this perspective on racism as rejection of the other, it appears, according to Levinas, that racism is not a rare and improbable phenomenon existing in the heart and thought of only some "perverse" people that has nothing to do with us. Insofar as one is, according to the spontaneous dynamic of existing, or conatus essendi, directed toward the "same," toward maintaining and fortifying one's "own"-all such as I have just sketched it one must be considered "by nature" potentially racist, though of course without being "predestined" for it. In itself, this admits no question of psychological or pathological deviation. According to Levinas, this implies that one cannot simply dispense with the racism of Hitler and the Nazis, in contrast to something instead occurring only once, as a wholly distinct and incomparable phenomenon, at least if one views it not quantitatively but qualitatively, which is to say in terms of its roots and basic inspiration. In an attempt to hold open a pure-in fact, Manichean distinction between "good" (us) and "bad" (the "others"), thus keeping oneself out of range of the difficulties in question, it happens all too often that Hitlerism is described as something completely unique that has nothing in common with the aims and affairs of the common mortal. The perspective of Levinas shows that Hitlerism, with its genocide and other programs of eradication, is [are] only a quantitative extension, that is to say a consistent, qualitative extension, that is to say a consistent, systematic, and inexorably refined outgrowth of racism in its pure form, one that, in its turn, represents a concretization of the effort of existing, which, as the reduction of the other to the same, is the nature of our existence (without, on the other hand, our being abandoned to this nature as a fatality, since as ethical beings we can overcome it). No one is invulnerable; any of us is a potential racist, and at least sometimes a real racist. Racism, like Hitlerism, does not occur by chance, or by an accidental turn. Nor is it an exceptional perversion occurring in a group of psychologically disturbed people. It is a permanent possibility woven into the dynamic of our very being, so that whoever accedes to and lives out the dynamic of his own being inevitably extends racism in one or another form (AS 60-61). We can no longer blame racism and anti-Semitism on "others," for both their possibility and the temptation to them are borne in the dynamic of our own being, as "nonreciprocal determination of the other" (TI 99), which is precisely the kernel of our freedom (TI 97). It is specifically **to unmask** this **racist violence, and all forms of violence as modalities of denial of the other as other,** that **Levinas discerns the basic ethical norm** in the commandment mentioned and explicated above, "Thou shall not kill," which is to say in the commandment **to respect the otherness of the other**. In committing to the possible overcoming of evil, and of racism in particular, through the ethical choice for the good, Levinas certainly realizes how vulnerable this "overcoming" of evil is. By rejecting the idea that every objective system, through its ironclad, mechanistic laws and coerciveness, might be able to render evil impossible forever, and instead basing everything on the ethical call to the good, he makes clear that abuse, violence, and the racist exclusion and elimination of the other are con stantly possible and can never be definitively overcome. In ethics, there is no eschatology, in the sense of a guaranteed "better world" or "world without evil." There is only the "good will" that must always prove itself in a choice against evil that is neither evident nor easy. Only in this way can there be a good future and justice for the other: **only** through **ethical vigilance with respect to all forms of violence**, tyranny, hate, **and racism**, **and a society that nurtures** in both our upbringing and education **a "sensibility" for the other** as "stranger." Such a sensitivity takes in full seriousness the ethical essence of the human person, and serves always to **put us** back **on the path to a culture "where the other counts more than I do,"** and where the most foreign enjoys our complete hospitality.

#### Systems of “ontological” oppression only come to be when societies totalize the other on the basis of social categories and deny the self’s capacity to relate with the other trans-ontologically. The only solution to this is reemphasize a radical system of infinite responsibility to those considered subhuman. And, a focus on “ontological” oppression denies the possibility of a self-other relationship, foreclosing the possibility of liberation.

Maldonado-Torres 07

Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Professor LCS and Comparative Literature at Rutgers University, ON THE COLONIALITY OF BEING, published 2007, // Park City NL

What is the meaning of damne´? The damne´ is **the subject that** emerges in a world marked by the coloniality of Being. The damne´, as Fanon put it, has nonontological resistance in the eyes of the dominant group. The damne´ is either invisible or excessively visible. The damne´ **exists in the mode of not-being** there, which hints at the nearness of death, at the company of death. The damne´ is a concrete being but it is also a transcendental concept. Emile Benveniste has shown that the term damne´ is etymologically related to the concept of donner, which means, to give. The damne´ is literally the subject who cannot give because what he or she has has been taken from him or her.63 This means that the damne´ **is** a subject **from whom the capacity to have and to give have been taken away** from her and him. The coloniality of Being is thus fundamentally an ontological dynamic that aims to obliterate in its literal sense of doing away completely so as to leave no trace gift-giving and generous reception as a fundamental character of being-in-the-world. Emmanuel Levinas argues that gift-**giving and reception are fundamental traits of the self**. Giving is first and foremost for Le´vinas a metaphysical act **that make**s **possible the communication between a self and an Other** as transontological as well as the sharing of a common world. Without giving to an Other there would be no self just as without receiving from the Other there would be no reason. In short, **without a trans-ontological** **moment there would be no** self, no reason, and no **Being.** The trans-ontological is the foundation of the ontological. For Le´vinas, the ontological, the realm of being, comes to exist out of the introduction of justice into the trans-ontological relation, which introduces measure and synchronicity in the order of the fundamentally diachronic.64 The ontological comes to be at the expense of the transontological. The ontological thus carries with it the marks of both positive achievement and betrayal of the trans-ontological relation, a relation of radical givenness and reception. According to Le´vinas, ontology is a philosophy of power. It is a discourse that, when taken as foundation or ultimate end, it gives priority to an anonymous Being over and beyond the self-Other relation it gives priority to the ontological rather than to the trans-ontological, and to authenticity rather than to radical responsibility. **When ontology is conceived as fundamental, the self-Other relation becomes a secondary dimension of the subject**. It is also seen as a source of the potential forgetfulness of Being and thus as a departure from authenticity. Le´vinas argues precisely the contrary: it is the forgetting of the self-Other relation that characterizes the return of ontology as fundamental, which can lead, not to lacking authenticity, but to a renunciation of responsibility and justice. That is so because being is always already a betrayal of sorts of the trans-ontological relation (of gift and reception between self and Other), and it tends to forgetting. That is, being presents itself as the foundation of reality when it is not. This happens because once being is born, it tends to preserve itself and to present itself as autonomous foundation. But, preservation and autonomy can be achieved at the expense of the transontological. Being thus aims to eliminate the traces of the trans-ontological. This is done, both, by philosophical accounts that attempt to reduce the self-Other relation to knowledge or being, and by ways of thinking, concrete policies, and historical projects that reduce the significance of givenness, generosity, hospitality, and justice. Clearly enough, Le´vinas saw Nazism and the Jewish Holocaust as radical betrayals of the trans-ontological dimension of human reality, and thus, of the very meaning of the human as such. Thus, Nazism represented not only a threat to European nations and many minorities within Europe, but also a crucial moment in the history of being. The presence of anti-Semitism, Aryanism, and other forms of racial prejudices in Nazism, make clear that race and racism occupy an special place in that history. **Race and caste**, along with gender and sexuality, are perhaps the four forms of human differentiation that **have served** most frequently as means **to transgress** the primacy of **the self-Other relation** and to obliterate the traces of the trans-ontological in the concrete world. In modernity, racial differentiation alters the way in which the other forms of human differentiation work in modernity, as the entire globe is divided according to races, which alter the existing caste, gender, and sexual relations. To be sure, race is not totally independent of gender or sexuality, as feminization and eroticism are always part of it. I have argued that the emergence of race and its entanglement with gender and sexuality can be explained in part by their relation to war ethics and their naturalization in the colonial world. Le´vinas did not go into these matters. He focused on the analysis of the trans-ontological dimension of human reality and in the rescue and philosophical reconstruction of the Jewish conceptual and ethical legacy, which for him provided an alternative to the Euro-Greek tendency to privilege knowledge and being. He nonetheless provided important considerations for understanding the meaning and significance of the damne´ and the coloniality of being. The appearance of the damne´ is not only of social significance but of ontological significance as well. It indicates the emergence of a world structured on the basis of the lack of recognition of the greater part of humanity as givers, which legitimizes dynamics of possession, rather than generous exchange. This is in great part achieved through the idea of race, which suggests not only inferiority but also dispensability. From here that not only poverty, but also the nearness of death in misery, lack of recognition, lynching, and imprisonment among so many other ways characterize the situation of the damne´. It is this situation that we refer to here as coloniality. And the ways by virtue of which the world comes to be shaped by the excess of being and its obliteration of the trans-ontological we call the coloniality of being. Coloniality of being refers to a process whereby the forgetfulness of ethics as a transcendental moment that founds subjectivity turns into the production of a world in which exceptions to ethical relationships become the norm. That being has a colonial aspect means that in addition to posit itself as autonomous and be driven by preservation, it tries to obliterate the traces of the trans-ontological by actually giving birth to a world in which lordship and supremacy rather than generous interaction define social dynamics in society. The damne´ is the product of these tendencies. Colonization and racialization are the concrete and conceptual ways by virtue of which the damne´ emerges as an idea and mode of being. Colonization and racialization are expressions of the dark side of being, that is, they represent radical betrayals of the trans-ontological. Colonization and racialization are not only political and social events or structures. They also have metaphysical and ontological significance. War is the opposite of the an-archical relation of absolute responsbility for the Other that gives birth to human subjectivity. The obliteration of the transontological takes the tendency of producing a world in which war becomes the norm, rather than the exception. **That is the** basic **meaning of** the **coloniality** of being: **the** radical **betrayal of the trans-ontological by the** formation of a world in which the **non-ethics of war** become naturalized **through** the idea of **race**. The damne´ is the outcome of this process. Her agency needs to be defined by a consistent opposition to the paradigm of war and the promotion of a world oriented by the ideals of human generosity and receptivity. This is the precise meaning of decolonization: restoration of the logic of the gift. Fanon suggests as much in the conclusion of Black Skin, White Masks: Superiority? Inferiority? Why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself? Was my freedom not given to me then in order to build the world of the You? 65 Fanon’s message is clear: **decolonization should aspire** at the very minimum **to** restore or **create a reality where racialized subjects could give and receive freely** in societies founded on the principle of receptive generosity.66 **Receptive generosity involves a break away from racial dynamics** as well as from conceptions of gender and sexuality **that inhibit generous interaction** among subjects. In this sense, a consistent response to coloniality involves both decolonization and ‘des-gener-accio´n’ as projects, both of which are necessary for the YOU to emerge. Only in this way the trans-ontological can shine through the ontological, and love, ethics, and justice can take the role that the non-ethics of war have occupied in modern life. Decolonization and ‘des-gener-accio´n’, different from authenticity, are not based on the anticipation of death, but on the aperture of one’s self to the racialized other to the point of substitution. 67 Substitution occurs when one’s identity is teleologically suspended and when one offers one’s life to the task of achieving decolonial justice: that is, a justice oriented by the trans-ontological dimension of the human. Decolonial justice opposes the preferential option for imperial Man by the preferential option for the damne´ or condemned of the earth. Such justice is inspired by a form of love which is also decolonial. ‘Decolonial love’ a concept coined and developed by the Chicana theorist Chela Sandoval gives priority to the trans-ontological over the claims of ontology.68 Decolonization and ‘des-gener-accio´n’ are the active products of decolonial love and justice. They aim to restore the logics of the gift through a decolonial politics of receptive generosity.69 In order to be consistent, the discourse of decolonization and ‘des-generaccio´n’ would have to be understood according to the very logics that they open. They cannot take the form of a new imperial universal. Decolonization itself, the whole discourse around it, is a gift itself, an invitation to engage in dialogue. For decolonization, concepts need to be conceived as invitations to dialogue and not as impositions. They are expressions of the availability of the subject to engage in dialogue and the desire for exchange. Decolonization in this respect aspires to break with monologic modernity. It aims to foment transmodernity, a concept which also becomes an invitation that has to be understood in relation to the decolonial paradox of giving and receiving.70 Transmodernity is an invitation to think modernity/coloniality critically from different epistemic positions and according to the manifold experiences of subjects who suffer different dimensions of the coloniality of Being. Transmodernity involves radical dialogical ethics to initiate a dialogue between humans and those considered subhumans and the formulation of a decolonial and critical cosmopolitanism.71 Decolonization is an idea that is probably as old as colonization itself. But it only becomes a project in the twentieth century. That is what Du Bois suggested when he stated that the problem of the twentieth-century is the problem of the color-line. The idea was not that the color-line was unique to the twentieth century, but that critical and violent confrontations with it were unavoidable then. With decolonization I do not have in mind simply the end of formal colonial relations, as it happened throughout the Americas in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. I am instead referring to a confrontation with the racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies that were put in place or strengthened by European modernity as it colonized and enslaved populations through the planet. In short, with decolonization I am thinking of oppositions to the coloniality of power, knowledge, and being it may be more consistent to refer to it as ‘decoloniality’, as Chela Sandoval and Catherine Walsh suggest.72 Such opposition existed before the twentieth century, but only reached interconnected global articulations then. If Du Bois announced the project of systematic opposition to the color-line, it was perhaps intellectuals after the Second World War who most consistently expressed the ambitions of decolonization as project. We owe some of the most important early formulations to authors such as Aime´ Ce´saire and Frantz Fanon. They are key thinkers of what could very well be considered a decolonial turn in theory and critique.

#### The 1AC’s positioning of blackness as a static ontological state over time and space is not only incorrect, but totalizes black subjects into one narrow category. The other is infinitely unknowable so to relate ethically to black people we must not assign them a total status. Blackness is not a static ontological state of oppression – violence is contingent and social life is possible – Afropessimists are wrong.

Kauanui 17 [J. Kēhaulani, Professor of American Studies and Anthropology at Wesleyan University, “Tracing Historical Specificity: Race and the Colonial Politics of (In)Capacity”, American Quarterly, Volume 69, Number 2, June 2017, pp. 257-265, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/663323>, July 10, 2017] KLu

In October 2016 I attended a lecture by Frank B. Wilderson III sponsored by Wesleyan’s Center for the Humanities. I had read his book Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms, along with select articles and interviews—but had yet to hear him present his work. The talk was titled “Afro-Pessimism and the Ruse of Analogy.” I went in already critical given my familiarity with Afro-Pessimist thought—not only through his work, but that of Jared Sexton and other scholars.1 As Wilderson himself explains, Afro-Pessimism is an “unflinching paradigmatic analysis on the structures of modernity produced by slavery and genocide.” Drawing on the works of Orlando Patterson, Saidiya Hartman, and Hortense Spillers (among others), Afro-Pessimists theorize blackness as a position of accumulation and fungibility, that is, as a condition—or relation—of ontological death.2 In Red, White & Black, Wilderson theorizes the structural relation between Blacks and Humanity as an antagonism (an irreconcilable encounter) as opposed to a (reconcilable) conflict. He, along with other Afro-Pessimists, theorizes the workings of civil society as contiguous with slavery and claims the “inability of the slave to translate space into place and time into event.”3 Wilderson’s insistence of absolute negativity destroys the possibility for coalitional politics because it frames the Black Body as something that will always stand in an antagonistic position to the world.4 At Wilderson’s talk I took careful notes, and by the end of the lecture I was so perturbed, I figured I had better attend the faculty seminar the next morning to further engage. There, I mustered up the wherewithal to ask Wilderson about his argument the night before—and in his work at large—that there is no institutional capacity in which Blacks can assert leverage over anyone; that they are only instruments, not agents. I cited the case of Bacon’s Rebellion—an armed revolt in 1676 led by Nathaniel Bacon against the rule of the Virginia colonial governor William Berkeley—and asked Wilderson how he could reconcile his position in light of a tough example of black agency in uniting with indentured and other poor Europeans in committing genocidal violence against Indian tribes. He responded by asking me why I would “privilege Blacks participating in genocide over the role of whites.” I did not (and do not)—so I simply reiterated that I wanted to understand how he reconciled his argument with that particular history. He replied by asking me why I didn’t instead look to the horses they rode and the bullets they used, provided by the whites that made the Blacks mere “instruments” of their project. I noted that this was during the period prior to the hardening categories that created racially based chattel slavery in the region and that there was variation among African individuals there at that time in terms of their social and legal status. I also added that the question seemed especially pertinent given his assertions in Red, Black & White, in which much of the argument depends on his reading of Indian genocide, since he critiques “the Red Ontologist” for privileging indigenous sovereignty when genocide is essential to the ontology of the Indian.5 But this didn’t get us any farther. He pointedly told me, “We are not going to agree on this.” Given this AQ forum on Patrick Wolfe’s Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race (2016), I want to take up his work to examine Afro-Pessimism in relation to issues raised by the exchange recounted above. I take up the question of Afro-Pessimism in this context, since Wolfe repeatedly states (and deftly demonstrates), “**race is not a static ontology**.”6 He notes, “As its name suggests, **[race] is an ongoing, ever-shifting contest**.”7 Among many other interventions, Traces of History challenges the understanding that blackness was or is transcendent. To assert blackness as ontological is to recapitulate colonizing thought, to take colonial ideology as truth. However, Wolfe went beyond merely stating that race is a social construct. As Ben Silverstein put it in his memorial essay, “Patrick insisted instead on thinking about race as one element of the Althusserian totality, an overdetermining level of the social formation.”8 Wolfe therefore brings “poststructuralist rigor to bear on materialist approaches to ideology.”9 Through his careful historical work, **Wolfe theorized race as a process, examining racialization as practice alongside race as doctrine**. He argued, “race is colonialism speaking.”10 In other words, European **colonizers racialized the colonized in specific ways that mark and reproduce** (in ways that can change across time) **the unequal relationships into which colonial actors initially co-opted these populations.** Wolfe’s theory enables a critique of racialization as an effect of colonialism, the working out in practice of colonial ideology. This is why he called for a shift “from the register of race to that of colonialism,” identifying dimensions of the colonial dispensation that “cannot be expressed in the language of phe- notypes.” The difference here, then, between Wolfe and Wilderson (as well as other Afro-Pessimists), is that they register not from race to colonialism, or even from race to slavery, but slavery to race. **Wilderson universalizes a particular rendition of black experience to claim that the Black Body is in a perpetual state of ontological death because of the violence of the Middle Passage**. He traces to when Arabs inaugurated this thirteen hundred years ago with the opening of the African slave trade.11 His main argument for the ontological death (cast in singular terms) of the Black Body is because of Blacks’ incapacity to develop their own subjectivity. As he puts it, “Blackness is incapacity in its pure and unadulterated form.”12 To get at this problematic, I offer a brief account of Bacon’s Rebellion as an example of a case in which the Black Body is not socially dead—not incapacitated. Thus I challenge the ontological absolutism that is endemic to Afro-Pessimist thought at large. Several black radical scholars have challenged this “ontological absolutism.” For example, David Marriott notes, “Wilderson is prepared to say that black suffering is not only beyond analogy, it also refigures the whole of being. It is not hard when reading such sentences to suspect a kind of absolutism at work here, and one that manages to be peculiarly and dispiritingly dogmatic.”13 Moreover, Marriott argues that the claim that “Blackness is incapacity in its most pure and unadulterated form means merely that the black has to embody this abjection without reserve. . . . This logic—and the denial of any kind of ‘ontological integrity’ to the Black/Slave due to its endless traversal by force does seem to reduce ontology to logic, namely, a logic of non-recuperability.”14 My critique here is rooted in historicizing race—that active element of racialization—races as “traces” of history. Hence, looking at the case study of Bacon’s Rebellion, I challenge Wilderson’s advancement of a purity argument that also happens to be ahistorical. I come at this debate as a scholar of sovereignty, race, and indigeneity trying to reckon with these troubling formulations.15 **Bacon’s Rebellion shows that** **racialized chattel slavery was a deliberate choice the English elites came to over time**. And here I draw on Wolfe’s Traces of History, along with the work of the historian Edmund Morgan, to offer a rudimentary overview.16 In 1619 Virginia, West Africans arrived after the Dutch sold them as slaves to the English settlers. However**, the English did not immediately devise this status for them; they were not slaves in the sense of persons reduced as property and required to work for life without wages**.17 In 1619 Virginia had no law legalizing slavery, and many Africans were sold as bonded laborers or indentured servants who lived and labored alongside poor Europeans—bound by contract to serve a master in order to repay the expense of their passage and other debts.18 Some worked in the fields side by side, lived together, ate together, shared housing, and more. Yet, as early as 1630, the English started singling out Africans for differential treatment, such as meting out worse punishments for running away and refusing to allow them to carry arms. Still, during this period, there were property-owning free Africans in the Chesapeake (e.g., Anthony Johnson, who arrived in 1621).19 This history shows that the course of race in seventeenth-century Virginia was not predetermined, a point more than a few historians have made.20 The plantation system and the expansion of settler capitalism that furthered English settler control over and conquest of native lands demanded additional pliant, captive labor. However, a racially based system of chattel slavery was not a foregone conclusion. As Wolfe put it: “It was not until the juridical opposition of slave versus free became mapped onto the hereditary opposition of Black versus White that being born a Black person meant being born a slave.”21 Thus, as Wolfe insists, “in addition to its circumstantial trajectory, the developing equation of Blackness with slavery needs to be understood in relation to its historicity: to the particular conditions whereby this formula rather than any other—convict labour, fixed-term slavery, a contract system—came to be selected as the optimal arrangement.”22 In 1661 the Virginia Assembly began to legally institutionalize slavery, and by 1662 came codes that determined the status of a child by the status of the mother. In 1669 the law defined enslaved Africans as property. However, planters still preferred white indentured labor. But 1670 saw a decrease in the number of European indentured servants migrating to Virginia, since Governor Berkeley had restricted suffrage to landowners. These are the conditions that contributed to Bacon’s Rebellion, as six out of seven men were “poor, discontented, and armed.”23 The insurrection emerged from the outgrowth of the push for profit from the production of tobacco, and its attendant demand for both land and labor. The complaint of freed indentured servants was they faced barriers to getting Indian land because of the emergent elite planter class. Hence it should be no surprise that Bacon’s Rebellion began with conflict over how to deal with Indian tribes viewed as violent obstructionists to settler colonial expansion. Bacon saw the colony’s policy on tribes as dismissive, especially after two Indian raids (the 1622 massacre by the Powhatans and a 1675 attack by the Doeg). His demands to preemptively massacre all Indians were not accepted by the governor, and so in response Bacon rallied his own troops against Berkeley for his refusal to retaliate for Native attacks on frontier settlements. Bacon orga- nized thousands of indentured servants, bond laborers, and slaves—English, Irish, Scottish, and African—who joined the frontier mutiny. In 1675, when Berkeley denied Bacon a commission (the authority to lead soldiers), Bacon took it upon himself to lead his followers in a crusade against the “enemy.” In a classic divide and conquer move, they marched to a fort held by a “friendly” tribe, the Occaneechees, and convinced them to capture warriors from an “unfriendly” tribe, the Susquehannock. The Occaneechees returned with captives, but Bacon’s men turned to the allied tribe and opened fire, killing them. After months of conflict, Bacon’s forces burned Jamestown to the ground on September 19, 1676. They drove Berkeley back to England and effectively shut down all tobacco production for over a year. Scholars and activists alike have perpetuated some romanticized accounts of the rebellion as a historical moment when poor Africans and Europeans united to fight their common exploiters (the English elite). Other accounts narrate it as a missed opportunity, given that poor Europeans eventually went the “white way,” joining elites against those increasingly racialized as “black.” Thus the Rebellion is also told as a genealogy of “whiteness” as a racial category and the “hidden origins” of race-based chattel slavery. As the story usually goes, the English elites, fearing class unity across racial lines, began to impose different standards when punishing the rebels—with harsher sentences against Africans. And since they were more easily identifiable than Europeans, a preference toward the importation of enslaved African slaves grew. Today, Bacon’s Rebellion is often evoked among the white Left as a reminder that elites will divide and conquer, keeping whites and Blacks from unifying. But what drops out in this lamenting account is that they were allied in challenging the English elites through their united efforts to commit genocide against indigenous peoples. This settler colonial context—imbricated with the North American institution of slavery—is often erased.24 Also, to return to Wolfe, although he links racial slavery to Indian dispossession, he does not discuss what poor Europeans and Africans were unified for besides challenging the English elite. In other words, he does not mention Bacon’s fixation on eliminating Indians through genocide and contesting Berkeley’s policy regarding the tribes. Still, Wolfe and other historians have noted that the rebellion hastened the hardening of racial lines associated with slavery, as a way for planters and the colony to control some of the poor, which led to the passage of the Virginia Slave Codes of 1705.25 After Bacon’s Rebellion, planters turned to Africa as their primary source of labor and to slavery as their main system of labor, rather than European indentured labor. The landed gentry systematically developed a workforce based on racial caste, and the 1680 Virginia legislature enacted laws that denied slaves freedom of mobility and assembly. New legislation sharpened the color line, and by 1710 a racially based system of chattel slavery was fixed in Virginia (and Maryland).26 Wolfe’s treatment of racial formation on black slavery and racial caste in Traces of History is key to understanding the aftermath of the revolt. He shows how race is constructed to challenge the ahistorical and universal claim that Afro-Pessimists hold. Returning to Wilderson, then, Bacon’s Rebellion offers just one example in which Blacks (in Wilderson’s terms)—or, rather, Africans not yet “Black”—exercised some capacity over another group. But, while they asserted leverage over tribes, as agents in unity with poor Europeans, the terms of agency were set by and defined within the settler racial capitalist system that was also oppressing them.27 And unlike European workers, who were exploited, the Dutch enslaved the Africans before selling them as “cargo” in North America. This is a crucial difference demarcating the vast structural differences impinging on them. Still, this historical episode challenges the timeline Wilderson claims regarding the ontological imprint and its inauguration. The specificity of racially based chattel slavery in the context of English settlement in North America—and the institutional incapacity it wrought for enslaved Africans—differs from the Middle Ages in the Arab world. It is as if Wilderson were drawing on the particularity of the experiences of African peoples in North America to make a universal argument. Furthermore, **he reads “Black” outside the history of the making of race that this historical period shows was a process.** This **totalizing interpretation of black experience** in claiming that “the Black Body” is in a perpetual state of ontological death, then, **seems bound to this historically specific context, all the while disavowing that specificity**. Tamar Blickstein, a mutual friend of Wolfe’s and mine, recently reminded me that Patrick said that he hoped Traces of History would be something people “could run with.” I hope that taking his work and running with it— to critically examine the argument that “Blackness is incapacity in its pure and unadulterated form”—elucidates the colonial and racial politics of what constitutes capacity in terms of agency. Attention to the rebellion, then, also illustrates the problems with ahistorical projections of blackness across space and time, showing that we must attend to how this category gets constructed in place and time—and in relation to colonial and capitalist systems. Instead of seeing Bacon’s rebellion as a missed opportunity for poor European and poor Africans, the historical event reveals a lost chance for alliance politics between African and indigenous peoples.28 Wolfe insisted that addressing questions of solidarity must include a consideration of the legacies (the functions and outcomes) of racialization. He made it clear in Traces of History that it is necessary to interrogate racial categories and complementarities, refusing simple solidarities and examining the material structures—and consequences—of colonial rule. Seeing how colonial elites pitted one against the other, in the aftermath of Bacon’s Rebellion, in a crosscutting system of oppression, offers a counterpoint and alternative framework to the nihilism of Afro-Pessimism, one that challenges ontological absolutism. Resisting the insistence of absolute negativity that destroys the possibility for coalitional politics, we can and must open up space for interconnected radical intellectual and political projects.

## Case

Turn: Afropessimism hurts people by internalizing violence and the idea that change can never occur is wrong. This is an independent voter because the 1AC tells black people to sacrifice themselves in pointless riots, which is violent coming from a non-black person. The judge has an obligation to reject representations that promote racist violence.

Barlow 16(Michael A. Barlow Jr., xx-xx-2016, "Addressing Shortcomings in Afro-Pessimism,"Inquiries Journal, http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1435/addressing-shortcomings-in-afro-pessimism)

Even though Black bodies stand in an antagonistic relationship to the world, there needs to be a distinction made. The notion that any level of stability within civil society affirms Black Death has two major problems. First, it produces the exact same pattern of ressentiment which reproduces the internalization of self-hate which only sets the stage for communal violence in an attempt to cleanse. If the standard for measuring the effectiveness of Black movements is the destruction of every part of society, then failure is the only appropriate descriptor for every Black resistance strategy in history. If this is the case, the internalization of Black slaveness becomes all but inevitable by reinforcing psychological, mental, and emotional chains of depression on all those who seek to resistance. The second problem is that Black bodies have no means of creating instability at the state or societal level. Society is a manifestation of hundreds of years of economic and political accumulation that has yielded countless weapons against the oppressed. Simply expecting the dominant order to forgo the use of those weapons is a fantasy. The scope of orienting towards the end of the world in terms of instability is far too large. The end of the world is not possible. Afro-Pessimism is far too separated from the material practice of resistance in this regard. If the justification for detaching from state involvement is that it requires a sacrificing of Black flesh, then resistance strategies must consider the effect of a complete embrace of political refusal. Calls for absolute Black pessimism is also an abjection of Black flesh in the same manner Wilderson bases the need for the end of the world because an open refusal and rejection to at least seemingly conform to degrees of social norms will have deadly consequences for Black bodies. For pessimists to call for Blacks to openly embrace physical death in pursuit of theory is irresponsible and unethical. Wilderson uses the question of flinching as a misnomer. The term seems to suggest that any participation in or any implicit affirmation of society is an insufficient Black politic. The problem is that at its core the very nature of Black life is one that requires a series of strategic and tactical flinches. This means that in different situations and settings, Black bodies take different forms. If confronted on the street by a racist police officer, asking for one to unconditionally refuse to recognize the position of the officer is in turn asking for Black suicidal politics. As posited above, there is something inherently valuable within Black intra-ontological arrangements, and as such, suicide is a non-starter. Not only is this a strategy for sustaining intra-ontological freedom, but it is also a strategy for pursuing the disorganization of civil society. It problematizes society’s ability to easily script the nature of Black life and Black resistance. Tactical flinches allow Blackness to become a thousand different villains disguised as citizens. It is a protective mechanism for those who seek to fight against tyranny without inciting the wrath of the tyrannical. This is not to say that Black resistance should ever flinch in its orientation to civil society at a fundamental level. It is to say that in order for Black life to exist in a world that wishes its death, it is necessary to disguise that orientation and strategically present it in certain settings. Some will be highly critical of this notion because it will be perceived as a call to sacrifice expressions of authentic self in an appeasement of the dominant order. Instead, this is a call to reassess the very understanding of political orientation. Black resistance should embody refusal at the core level; that should be internalized, and it is the very process of mystifying that core refusal in acts of fugitive transgressions against civil society that renders its violence inoperable. This is not a sacrifice of the authentic self, but the mystification and protection of authentic Blackness in an act of rebellion against societal production of anti-Black violence. This is an effective means of navigating Black ontological questions.