# 1NC

## Offs

### 1

#### Interp and Violation: The affirmative must only defend that the appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust and may only garner offense from the hypothetical implementation of the resolution – they don’t

#### Private entity is defined by

Cornell Law n.d. “private entity” <https://www.law.cornell.edu/definitions/uscode.php?width=840&height=800&iframe=true&def_id=6-USC-625312480-168358316&term_occur=999&term_src=title:6:chapter:6:subchapter:I:section:1501> TG

1. In general Except as otherwise provided in this paragraph, the term “private entity” means any person or private group, organization, proprietorship, partnership, trust, cooperative, corporation, or other commercial or nonprofit entity, including an officer, employee, or agent thereof.

#### Article 2 of the Outer Space Treaty defines outer space and appropriation

OST 66 “2222 (XXI). Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.” UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, 1499th plenary meeting, Dec 19, 1966, <https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/outerspacetreaty.html> TG

ARTICLE II. Outer space, including the moon and other celestial bodies, is not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty, by means of use or occupation, or by any other means.

#### Vote neg:

#### 1] Fairness – post facto topic adjustment structurally favors the aff by manipulating the balance of prep. They can specialize in 1 area of literature for 4 years which gives them a huge edge over people switching topics every 2 months and locks us into a predictable null set of monolithic criticisms that are susceptible to the perm. Fairness is an impact - a] it’s an intrinsic good – debate is fundamentally a game and some level of competitive equity is necessary to sustain the activity which they’ve ceded validity to by participating, b] probability – individual ballots can’t alter subjectivity even if long term clash over a season can, but they can rectify skews which means the only immediate impact to a ballot is fairness and deciding who wins, c] it internal link turns every impact – a limited topic promotes in-depth research and engagement which is necessary to access all of their education

#### 2] Clash – argumentative testing along a stable tether and SSD are good – they force debaters to consider a controversial issue from multiple perspectives through nuanced 3rd and 4th level testing that only occurs alongside a stasis point for preparation. Non-T affs allow individuals to establish their own metrics for what they want to debate leading to ideological dogmatism – our argument is that the process of defending and answering proposals against a well-researched opponent is a benefit of engaging the topic regardless of the truth value of those proposals.

#### 3] TVA – read your aff as framing for a topical contention

#### Use competing interps – topicality is question of models of debate which they should have to proactively justify and we’ll win reasonability links to our offense.

#### They can’t weigh the case—lack of preround prep means their truth claims are untested which you should presume false—they’re also only winning case because we couldn’t engage with it

#### No impact turns—exclusions are inevitable because we only have 45 minutes so it’s best to draw those exclusions along reciprocal lines to ensure a role for the negative

### 2

#### The inaccurate patriarchal starting point of their theory and the notion that there is “one blackness” at the expense of theorization of gender means the judge must reject the Aff.

Klarman 16 (Brian – BA candidate at Emory College of Arts and Sciences. “Totalizing Identity: From Afro-Pessimism to Black Lives Matter.” 2016.)-JJN

Frank B. Wilderson III, one of the foremost, founding thinkers of afro-pessimist theory, places one of the most extreme demands on society, making his writing appear ideal for ending injustice. However, even with a call to give the land back to Native Americans and reevaluate the western subject, I can’t help but wonder: is Wilderson asking enough? Is he making the right demand? While it would appear that Wilderson is obviously making the most extreme demand, as he demands “the end of the world,” a counter-intuitive wish for more is the basis for this chapter (Wilderson, 101). The reason, as shown throughout this section, is that his demands are ungendered, unclassed, and overall disembodied. Hence, through an analysis of his work, it is possible to see the issue of abstract racial analysis. In other words, Wilderson needs to rethink the idea that blackness is an identity that is perfectly self-identical for all blacks at all times. In Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms, Wilderson describes the world as being composed of two antagonisms: Savagery and Slavery (Wilderson, 8). For Wilderson, the Savage, whom Americans would commonly refer to as the Native American or Indian American, is a victim of land theft, and the Slave, commonly referred to as the black or African American, has the ontological imprint of slavery on the black body. Slavery, importantly, is not the event of labor. Rather, for Wilderson, slavery is the culmination of social death, as described by Orlando Patterson in Slavery and Social Death: a Comparative Study. What Wilderson, in short, takes from Patterson is that slavery becomes ontological because of a three step process: “natal alienation, general dishonor, and gratuitous violence” (Wilderson, 28). The most prominent author for Wilderson in proving that social death is empirically real, and humanity is ontologically separated from “the Black,” is the famous postcolonial theorist Franz Fanon. As Fanon explains in Black Skin, White Masks, the black is a “slave not of an ‘idea’ that others have of [him] but of [his] own appearance” (Fanon, 87) Fanon also claims that because of his blackness, he is “an object ... [s]ealed into that crushing objecthood” (Fanon, 82). Because he can only be seen as an object and lacks the ability to obtain subjectivity, Fanon claims that “[o]ntology ... does not permit us to understand the being of the black man,” or his being (Fanon, 82). Thus, for Fanon and Wilderson, blackness is the essential feature that creates “a paradigm” beyond “experience,” as one becomes a slave simply by appearing black and the mark of blackness removes the ability to understand existence, or ontology (Wilderson, 36). Hence, Wilderson states that blackness cannot be addressed as “a contingent, rider,” but must be seen as the antagonism of the world; blackness is, for Wilderson, “more essential to our understanding of the truth of institutionality than the positions,” or “identities,” of subjects (Wilderson, 37). In short, Wilderson understands the world as fundamentally opposed to the black. Antiblackness makes up the foundation of the world, structuring society through opposition and subordination. For Wilderson, antiblackness thus forms a hegemonic structure that subordinates and dominates blacks. In Wilderson’s totalizing understanding of blackness, or what he often times refers to as the paradigm of antiblackness, there are a few themes that are necessary to understand. First, the black position that Wilderson speaks of has a singular experience, described as the experience of “the slave” or “the Black.”3 Along these lines, the black is both essential and theoretical; it is void of specific experience. The second theme is that blackness, and only blackness,4 is “ontological, rather than experiential” (Wilderson, 35). A black person is incapable of being considered as a human, left outside of the concept of ontology. Antiblackness is the unique antagonism that excludes its marked population from having experience. As such, according to Wilderson one cannot legitimately consider questions “such as freedom from gender or economic oppression” within the same realm as antiblackness, as these are questions of experience, not paradigm (Wilderson, 35). According to Wilderson, gender is somehow different than race, as gender is a contingency, not an ontology. Thus, a paradigmatic analysis, the type which Wilderson advocates, requires erasing gender and creating what Herman Gray calls “a homogeneous, totalizing blackness, a blackness incapable of addressing the differences, tensions, and diversities” amongst black folks (Gray, 88). That is to say that Wilderson demands a blackness that cannot account for difference. This starting assumption, that gender exists in a different paradigm than race, is challenged throughout feminist theory. If one goes back to Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex, it becomes clear that gender can work on the same level as race. Just as a black body is always marked by blackness, Beauvoir notes that she is always marked by her woman-ness. Hence, she states “[i]f I want to define myself, I first have to say, ‘I am a woman’; all other assertions will arise from this basic truth” (Beauvoir, 25). Furthermore, all things that she thinks are attributed primarily to her womanhood, as when she engages in discussion, she must always answer the attack that she “think[s] such and such a thing because [she is] a woman” (Beauvoir, 25). Furthermore, just as Wilderson and Fanon define the black as being antithetical to humanity, Judith Thurman notes in the introduction to The Second Sex that woman, according to Beauvoir, is antithetical to the human: “humanity is male, and man defines woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself” (Beauvoir, 11). Hence, one could describe woman in Fanonian terms as being overdetermined by her woman-ness, “she is sex, so she is it in the absolute .... She is the Other” (Beauvoir, 26). Beauvoir also defines woman in Spillers’ term, as “she who is the flesh” (Beauvoir, 196). While the accuracy of Beauvoir’s text is not in question here, it demonstrates that there is clearly not a pragmatic, absolute difference between race and gender. After all, Beauvoir makes the argument that “‘[t]he eternal feminine’ corresponds to ‘the black soul’” (Beauvoir, 32).5 However, even if we could agree with Wilderson that gender is a contingent rider – something that I am not willing to accept, but will argue on the grounds of for the purpose of academic work – there would still be a gendered issue in the way that Wiliderson does not conceptualize gender as effecting blackness. The first issue at stake is conceptualizing “the Black” in those terms. Since we are working with a critique of “ethical grammar,” or the ethics of rules that formulate thought, it is important to see what this language means and how it sets up a rule for analysis (Wilderson, 6). “The” preceding black is, in and of itself, a totalizing word, and does the work of erasing specific, contingent riders. According to the Oxford Dictionary, “the” is “[u]sed with a singular noun to indicate that it represents a whole species or class” (Oxford Dictionaries, “the,” n/a). The idea here is that there is a singular black. Wilderson is not describing a possible black experience, but what he perceives as the only possible black experience. He understands the singular experience as one that can speak for all blacks, making it a paradigmatic analysis. This, of course, eliminates the possibility of anyone who is black being anything other than black, making it the type of “cultural identity” critiqued in the first chapter by the work of Stuart Hall. One cannot, in such a paradigm, be a black woman, a gay black man, or anything other than black. Furthermore, even if we could accept those different positions as possible, each one of those identities is assumed to have the same experience, therefore invalidating the need for further specification. As such, Wilderson’s work functions within an “assimilationist paradigm,” where power dynamics such as class, gender, and ability are “obscured” to uphold the analytical tool of antiblackness (Gray, 88). This is, of course, extremely depersonalizing and denies the lived experience of many people. For many people, black “is not a category of essence,” but one of difference (Hall, “What is this ‘black,’” 111). According to Stuart Hall, [I]t is to the diversity, not the homogeneity, of black experience that we must now give our undivided creative attention ... to recognize the other kinds of difference that place, position, and locate black people. The point is not simply that, since our racial differences do not constitute all of us, we are always different, negotiating different kinds of differences — of gender, of sexuality, of class. (Hall, “What is this ‘black,’” 111-112) The foundational downfall of essentialism is that there are an infinite number of “different positionalities” that are constantly being negotiated by each individual (Hall, “What is this ‘black,’” 112). In the face of Wilderson’s singular black experience we might ask what happens to survivors of domestic violence, antisemitism, or ableism who are black. Are all of these experiences, ones that Wilderson excludes from analysis, the same? Furthermore, what position do we assume is “the Black?” As difference disappears within Wilderson’s understanding of the black, a very specific subject is left. In turn, “the hetero-normative black man becomes the universalised subject of blackness” (Lelliott, 16). One thing that might be lost to many readers is that the hetero- normative black man is Wilderson’s black subject. The largest experience that is shared, and the place where an ontological divide comes from, is Franz Fanon. Wilderson universalizes Fanon’s experience and says that if Fanon experiences an ontological divide, this must be the transcendental fact that defines blackness. In fact, Wilderson says that he and others like him “are theorists of Black positionality who share Fanon’s insistence” on antiblackness as a structure that erases the concept of ontology (Wilderson, 79). Because this is true for Fanon, Wilderson says that it is true for all black subjects. Thus, the black subject, for Wilderson, is Fanon and Wilderson’s theory shares his male epistemic location. It is, of course, important to interrogate what it would mean for a theory to be written from the perspective of Fanon. To begin, Gwen Bergner notes that “Fanon, like Freud [and other psycho-analysts of the time], takes the male as the norm. For the exemplary colonized subject, Fanon uses the term le noir 'the black man’” (Berger, 76) Hence, when Fanon states, and Wilderson repeats, the foundational sentence, “the black [man] has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man,” we can read the black as the black man (Fanon 83; Wilderson, 52). In fact, Fanon’s reference to the mutual gaze that is missing “is precisely the mutual patriarchal gazing—the competition for the status of ‘real’ man—that creates the blind spot in the liberatory analysis of those white and black men who cannot see ‘the female’ and thus cannot theorise an inclusive vision of freedom” (hooks, “Feminism as a Persistent Critique,” 84). Fanon is looking to reify the structure of gendered domination and apply it to black men. Hence, it appears that “gender [already] structures how we think about being black,” because being a black man is defined, by Fanon, as missing the power of patriarchy (Stephens, 35). This makes Fanon’s lack of gendered interrogation, and to a further extent Wilderson’s denial of gender, troubling. Even the grammar that Fanon is building on is implicated in power structures, such as patriarchy. Hence, the very thing that Fanon claims he is missing is the power of patriarchy, a power that should be in question to start with. Once Fanon notes that he needs the patriarchal power of male domination, an important shift takes place in Wilderson’s work. If, as I suggest, Fanon is foundational for Wilderson’s text, and Wilderson even quotes this passage, then Wilderson’s universal subject is a man seeking patriarchal power. Bergner insists further “[t]hat Fanon’s ‘universal’ subject describes the colonized male” (Bergner, 76-77). Hence, the lack of ontological resistance that is so foundational for the theory of antiblackness is based on an analysis that only evaluates the unique position of a black man, namely Fanon. From a methodological perspective, this troubles the entire definition of antiblackness, throwing Wilderson’s schema wildly into question. While it may be tempting to say that Fanon’s assumption of masculinity does not affect his work, masculinity is the starting point for his theory of domination and subordination. Fanon asks the psychoanalytic question: what do black men want? This is a flipping of Freud’s question – “what does woman want?” – but with the new object as black men (Bhabha, 134). Hence, “in transposing Freud's question of the other from gender to race, Fanon excludes black women. ... Fanon opposes black men to white men” in order to find what is different (Bergner, 78). Homi Bhabha explains that when Fanon speaks of “man,” he “ignores the question of gender difference” (Bahbha, 147). Fanon assumes that in analyzing the desire of the black man, he can understand the overall psychology of blacks. The same is true when Fanon demands an equal patriarchal gaze or asks for the ontology of the black man. Both are gendered desires, ignoring the gendered differences that exist between black men and women. Therefore, Fanon is only looking from the position of the colonized man and his sexual desires, ignoring the views of black women. For Wilderson, however, the problem is not just the masculine position of Fanon. The other major theoretical work for Wilderson, Slavery and Social Death: a Comparative Study by Orlando Patterson, is also based on a universal masculine subject. Patterson’s book is so important for Wilderson because Patterson’s conception of social death allows the articulation of anti-humanism or, as Wilderson says: “no slave, no world. And, ... no slave is in the world” (Wilderson, 18). In other words, Wilderson uses Patterson’s work to prove that there is a structural antagonism between the human and the slave, meaning the black. Patterson gives Wilderson the ability to say that the slave can never be incorporated into the social world of the colonized. Patterson’s thesis is that slaves are cast radically outside of humanity. Patterson’s argument, however, is based on “the relationship between adult male slaves and adult male masters,” taking each as the norm for their respective groups (Menzel, 52). This, of course, ignores how non-males can function in their respective roles as slaves or masters. In fact, each of the three portions of Patterson’s definition of social death – violent domination, dishonor, and natal alienation – relies on gendered norms. The first thing that Patterson describes is “the total pervasiveness of physical violence in general” (Menzel, 54). The description and totality of this general violence, however, comes at the cost of any particular violence experienced, such as sexual violence or rape. Nowhere in Patterson’s definition of social death does sexual domination come up; it is neither evaluated “as a primary instance [nor] reinforcement of perfect submission” (Menzel, 54). When Patterson does speak of sexual violence, he uses the term “‘sexual exploitation,’ a term specific to the boss/laborer relation” (Menzel, 55). This is, clearly, significant for both Wilderson and Patterson, as they are working in a post-Marxist vocabulary. In fact, Wilderson cites Patterson as “go[ing] to great lengths to delink his three ‘constituent elements of slavery’ [which are violence, general dishonor, and natal alienation] from the labor that one is typically forced to perform when one is enslaved” (Wilderson, 23). Patterson’s understanding of rape, and thus Wilderson’s view of sexual violence, would, then, be read as an issue of capital formations, something that both claim exists entirely outside of the paradigm of slavery and antiblackness. Rape would not be understood as an absolute, immoral form of violence, but would rather be understood as a form of labor. Hence, if one wanted to use Patterson’s work to do a paradigmatic analysis, the thing that Wilderson concludes is necessary, that analysis would have to exclude historical instances of rape and all other sexual violence. This is why Wilderson can call both capital and sexual violence contingent in contrast to the constitutive violence of race. The second part of social death, the thesis of general dishonor, is seen as being demasculinized. For Patterson, the equation is simply power creates honor, and manhood is the defining feature of honor: “The real sweetness of mastery ... [is] one’s power, as a living embodiment of one’s manhood and honor” (Patterson, 78). The goal of obtaining “one’s manhood” places both the master and the slave “as male. In accordance with this gendered vision of honor, internalized dishonor is characterized as a feminine lack of resistance ... while honor is equivalent to manly dignity” (Menzel, 57). Again, the patriarchal gaze that Fanon spoke of is clear, as the slave loses the ability to show resistance and becomes feminine. Hence, the metric for determining general dishonor cannot deal with any female subject, making it a problematic presumption to universalize. Natal alienation, the last part of social death, is also tied to female subordination through praising the paternal order. For Patterson, the most important aspect of this alienation is that since the slave has “no natal claims and power of his own, he had none to pass on to his children” (Patterson, 9). The slave, here, is only alienated for the lack of inheritance, a traditionally masculine metric, as only men could inherit. Furthermore, favoring ancestry over subject position assumes that our parental claim “is sufficient to differentiate between people” (Ang, 5). This, however, is based in the politics of “internal ethnic sameness,” as it would assume that all who were alienated ended up in the same position (Ang, 5). Again, a non- experiential, theoretical subject arises. Hence, the writings of Fanon and Patterson that Wilderson relies on are heavily based in universal male subjects. The creation of a “universal black subject” is, in fact, deeply embedded in the grammar of Wilderson’s writing. Throughout the book, the word “black” is used as if it were “sufficient in itself” to describe this position; it is “as if we don’t have any other politics to argue about except whether something is black or not” (Hall, “What is this ‘black,’” 111). By creating a singular focus, the world can become described by it, often leaving other “unexamined politics” in place (Hall, “What is this ‘black,’” 112). Hence, when claiming antiblackness is the antagonism that describes the world, Wilderson misses the point “that these antagonisms refuse to be neatly aligned; they are simply not reducible to one another; they refuse to coalesce around a single axis of differentiation” (Hall, “What is this ‘black,’” 112). There are too many forms of power working simultaneously to reduce them to a single thing. This should be particularly terrifying for Wilderson, as if the fatal flaw of humanism is the inability to understand the subject position of the black (Wilderson, 6) and thus an insistence upon a universal subject, Wilderson’s insistence on “the Black” creates a “universal black subject;” one that can only understand a single element of any person (Gray, 88). Hence, even in an attempt at resisting power, Wilderson recreates structures of domination. As Kitso Lelliott explains: [The universal black subject] homogenises and subsumes difference within the black community. Thus, as white sovereign subjectivity excludes it’s [sic] ‘other’ from full humanity, defining black people as objects, void of subjectivity, the universal black subject, in turn, excludes women from subjectivity. (Lelliott, 16-17). This exclusive black subject has, historically, been highly problematic. According to bell hooks, the resulting “[s]exism has diminished the power of all black liberation struggles” (hooks, Yearning, 16). Countless black women, such as Ruby Doris Smith Robinson and Kathleen Cleaver, were “subjected to a sexism that was fierce and unrelenting” while in black liberation movements (hooks, Yearning, 16). Hence, movements for equality ended up “abusing” women and forcing them “to cultivate ‘virtues’ that if listed would sound like personality traits of slaves” (hooks, Yearning, 17). This clearly is not a solution that can work, at least not if one wishes to move to a non-dominant form of hegemony. The universal subject is not, however, the only gendered issue of Red, White, & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms. When Wilderson claims that the black is the only ontological divide, he maintains “a discursive space” that is both created by and recreates a “hegemonic order” of normality (Gray, 88). Wilderson creates a hierarchy of importance, where blackness is the most – and often only – important issue. While it is true that Wilderson does, at times, say that there are other struggles that exist, he makes the move of separating issues such as “class struggle, gender conflict, [and] immigrants rights” [sic] into “conflicts” while antiblackness is an “antagonism,” making it the only structure worth evaluating (Wilderson, 8). This is a denial of sexism, classism, or other non-racial politics as structural ontologies. In such a theoretical move, patriarchy cannot be understood as a systematic form of exclusion, and ending it would not be a goal worth achieving, as sexism could not hold any antagonistic categories. In fact, by thinking that matters of sexism are nothing more than “conflicts” that we could “busy ourselves with” after antiblackness is eradicated, Wilderson “enables black males to assume no direct accountability for a politics of sexism” (hooks, Killing Rage, 86). Hence, readers are left again in a position where the lives of actual people who are affected by other issues are ignored, as their issues are seen as small “conflicts.” Thus, we can see that Wilderson’s afro-pessimistic understanding of antiblackness both denies and footnotes the lived experiences of gender and other forms of difference. Wilderson does, however, speak to the ungendering in his book. In fact, he claims that Hortense Spillers’ conception of the slave as flesh justifies the use of slaves without gender. Wilderson, referencing Spillers, says that “Africans went into the hold of ships as bodies and emerged from the holds of those ships as ‘flesh’” (Wilderson, 417). Because the slave is flesh, which comes before the body, the slave cannot be gendered, as gendering happens to bodies (Wilderson, 417). The next chapter will evaluate Spillers understanding of the flesh, the body, and gender in order to respond to Wilderson.

#### Both black studies and debate as a research activity participate in the professionalized academic protocols that serve to assimilate black women like Spillers, Hartman, and Sharpe into the canonical archive of afropessimism, expropriating their labor as black feminist scholars and writing them out of the black feminist archive.

Nash 19, African American Studies and Gender & Sexuality Studies @ Northwestern, 19 [Dr. Jennifer C., PhD Harvard: “Black feminism reimagined: after intersectionality.” Duke University Press, 2019, https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-1-4780-0059-4\_601.pdf]//AD

While Black Feminism Reimagined focuses on the entanglements between intersectionality and women’s studies, the analytic has also had a complex intellectual and institutional life in black studies, one that I take up briefly here because intersectionality’s roots in black feminism place it at the tender (and sometimes contentious) places where women’s studies and black studies touch. In other words, intersectionality is often imagined as something that emerges in the spaces where women’s studies and black studies meet, as a critique of both the “race men” logic of black studies and the “white women” logic of women’s studies. Ultimately, this project argues that intersectionality has animated a kind of anxiety in women’s studies that it has not in black studies, and my endeavor here is to speculate about how and why that is. While it is beyond the scope of this project to engage in a history of black studies’ treatment of black feminism, I do want to trace a few distinctions between women’s studies’ and black studies’ respective relationships with both black feminism and the specific analytic of intersectionality. As I have already argued, women’s studies has long imagined intersectionality not only as field-defining but also as transformative, as precisely the kind of disciplining feminism requires to remake itself in ways that transcend the racist exclusions that have marked both academic and political feminism. Black studies has historically staked out a very different kind of relationship with intersectionality, one rooted in an investment in theorizing black women’s intellectual and political labor, and interrogating the politics of citationality. This is unsurprising in a field that has labored to carve out an autonomous institutional space for black intellectual production. Indeed, unlike women’s studies, which has largely figured black feminism’s remedial work as a way of remaking feminism itself, and as a tool for creating more ethical (white) feminist political subjects, black studies has engaged more deeply with scholarship invested in theorizing the invisibility of black women’s intellectual labor and describing the host of ways that the academy quite literally cannibalizes black women. As Grace Hong notes, black feminist theorists have captured a “bleak and ironic future, one in which the university’s fetishization of black feminism as intellectual inquiry does not render impossible, and indeed in some ways facilitates, its systemic violence against black women.”55 For Hong, this “systemic violence” is deeply material as she ruminates on the black feminists who have worked in the academy and died—June Jordan, Audre Lorde, Barbara Christian, Claudia Tate, and I would add, Stephanie Camp. These deaths, Hong suggests, are part of the academy’s systemic extraction of knowledge and service from black women, alongside the university’s continued inattention to the structures of violence that mark black female faculty’s day-to-day experiences. Arguably, women’s studies’ engagement with intersectionality is part of—rather than a departure from—the “fetishization” that Hong describes. This “fetishization” is one that Ann duCille diagnosed in her consideration of how black women are both desired and disavowed in the academy, and of how the field that black women produced—black feminist theory—has become imagined as a field without a history, without scholars, as an “anybody-can-play pick-up game performed on a wide-open, untrammeled field.”56 In other words, the labor—of love, of flesh, of spirit— engaged in by black female scholars has been replaced by the fetishization of the field of black feminist theory made visible in the one-off “women of color” courses that Lee describes, with no recognition of the work required to produce the field. In response to this simultaneous disavowal and fetishization, Barbara Christian called on black feminists to “be clear about the dire situation that African-American women academics face” and to “ask questions that at first glance may seem to have nothing to do with scholarship but are central to our survival.”57 It is not surprising that in an intellectual moment where black studies is preoccupied with death—social and material—and with the ways that the state functions on black disposability, that questions of survival are at the heart of how the field interacts with black feminist theory, imagining the university as a place that quite literally kills black female flesh. For black studies, then, an account of intersectionality’s rootedness in black feminism, and its intimate connection to black women, is part of a long tradition of attempting to do justice to black women’s intellectual and political labor. Paradoxically, a field invested in black women’s intellectual production has moved intersectionality to the discipline’s past tense by insisting that only certain black feminist texts constitute the field’s present moment. Indeed, the field’s current orientation toward afropessimism engages black feminist theory largely through the work of Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Christina Sharpe, and Sylvia Wynter, often at the expense of a robust engagement with other black feminist debates, dialogue, and disagreement. (The institutional projects of women’s studies and black studies, then, share a practice of elevating certain black feminist theorists to canonical—and even sacred—status by insisting on the inclusion of only one iteration of the black feminist tradition in the canon in any given historical and political moment.) Drawing on this particular body of black feminist theory, afropessimist scholarship often unsettles the category of “black woman” entirely by foregrounding Spillers’s concept of ungendering, a term that describes how the Middle Passage transformed gendered black bodies into ungendered black flesh. As Samantha Pinto notes, “The enthusiastic reexercise of Spillers’s vocabularies signals a critical desire to reanimate and realign Black feminist critical thought in a moment of political intensities that careen across ‘the living and the dying,’ between suffering and the capacity for pleasure, sometimes pitching one against another.”58 This “enthusiastic” investment in ungendering unfolds in a moment when black feminism urgently theorizes the “dead and the dying,” and when ungendering is mobilized to imagine how black life is lived alongside—or even within—spaces of death.59 Drawing on Spillers’s conceptions of ungendering and flesh, Patrice D. Douglass deploys the term “black gender” to capture how gender itself is “a category for Humans. The violence of ungendering is a domain for the captive, those who died in the hold of the ship and continue dying by the wayside of gender.”60 Put differently, “black gender” reveals that gender—as a category of analysis—fails to describe both black bodies’ location as outside of the Human, and the violent force of antiblackness. “Black gender,” then, aspires to put analytic pressure on the utility of “gender” as a category for black subjects, and thus to problematize intersectionality’s thought project of thinking race and gender (and other categories) simultaneously in an attempt to do justice to black women. Calvin Warren’s work furthers an afropessimist critique of intersectionality, arguing that an intersectional approach “seeks to understand blackness through forms of equivalence with human identity. In this instance, queerness and blackness are structurally aligned such that they become somewhat interchangeable forms of abstraction or are intelligible through each other. . . . We know queerness more accurately because we know blackness, and we know blackness more intimately because we know queerness, according to this approach. Put differently, the intersectional approach makes epistemological claims by presenting blackness and queerness (and other forms of difference) as ontologically equivalent.”61 For Warren, intersectionality operates through strategies of “equivalence,” through presuming that blackness and “other forms of difference” are similarly constructed and produced. In a moment in which death has become a key term for black studies, intersectionality is often policed outside the parameters of black studies proper because of its imagined desire to treat identity categories and structures of domination as “ontologically equivalent,” and because of its imagined refusal to recognize antiblackness as the “metalanguage.” Moreover, for afropessimist scholars, intersectionality is imagined to presume that gender is a shared or collective category. Douglass asserts, “The archive of gender is structurally anti-black. Its assumptive logic, whether explicit in its presentation or not, maintains that all women have the same gender. This orientation of thought does more than render Black gender invisible or silent. It makes it conceptually impossible to think of gender violence as orienting more than the realm of gender.”62 Thus, Douglass advocates a divestment from “black woman” as a category and, implicitly, a divestment from intersectionality as a political and theoretical project. Of course, inherent to intersectionality’s analytic power has been a critique of the notion of gender as something that “all women” share in the same way. The very call to think intersectionally, to consider how gender is made through race (and vice versa), has always been a plea to imagine gender’s racialized contours, and to theorize how gender is inhabited, lived, and negotiated in particular, distinctive, and varied ways. Thus, while this book’s focus is on women’s studies’ engagement with intersectionality, I remain fascinated by an intellectual moment in which both women’s studies and black studies, animated by distinct political desires and critical aspirations, have made intersectionality passé even as they deploy black feminist theory as a necessary investment. It might seem that my account of black studies has painted the field in a favorable light that I deny women’s studies. This is not at all my endeavor. Indeed, I find it curious and troubling that black feminism and black queer studies remain marginal in most black studies’ programs and departments. Moreover, as black studies moves more squarely toward an investment in theorizing death as central to black subjectivity, and in considering perishment as constitutive of black experience, I remain concerned at the host of ways that the dead are always figured as black men, and black women are those who mourn, who grieve, and who make visible black male suffering.63 There remains a gender problem in black studies, one related to the “sexual and epistemological conservatism” that continues to mark many black studies departments and programs, and that continues to relegate work on black erotics, black queers, black women, black trans folk, black “funky” desires, and black sexual freedoms to the intellectual periphery.64 My impulse here, then, is merely to suggest that the way these “problems” manifest themselves in women’s studies and black studies is distinct.

#### The alternative is to let go – rather than trying to fit black feminist scholarship into the afropessimist paradigm, we embrace black feminism as an affective project centered around axis of racialized sexisms and homophobia.

Nash 19, African American Studies and Gender & Sexuality Studies @ Northwestern, [Dr. Jennifer C., PhD Harvard: “Black feminism reimagined: after intersectionality.” Duke University Press, 2019, https://www.dukeupress.edu/Assets/PubMaterials/978-1-4780-0059-4\_601.pdf]//AD

Black Feminism Reimagined explores what it has meant for black feminism —and black feminists—to have intersectionality come to occupy the center of women’s studies and to migrate across disciplinary boundaries, to be both filled with promise and emptied of specific meaning. I ask how black feminists have made visible their collective feelings about intersectionality’s “citational ubiquity” in and beyond women’s studies, and about the black feminist affects that attend to the variety of hopes and perils that have been imaginatively tethered to the analytic.8 Thus, I imagine black feminism as an affective project—a felt experience—as much as it is an intellectual, theoretical, creative, political, and spiritual tradition. Black Feminism Reimagined argues that there is a single affect that has come to mark contemporary academic black feminist practice: defensiveness. I treat black feminist defensiveness as manifested most explicitly through black feminism’s proprietary attachments to intersectionality. These attachments conscript black feminism into a largely protective posture, leaving black feminists mired in policing intersectionality’s usages, demanding that intersectionality remain located within black feminism, and reasserting intersectionality’s “true” origins in black feminist texts. This book traces how defensiveness is largely articulated by rendering intersectionality black feminist property, as terrain that has been gentrified, colonized, and appropriated, and as territory that must be guarded and protected through the requisite black feminist vigilance, care, and “stewardship.”9 The project develops the term “holding on” to flag—and to unsettle—the set of practices that defensiveness unleashes, particularly the proprietary claim to intersectionality that continues to animate so much of black feminist engagement with intersectionality. In treating defensiveness as a defining black feminist affect, my intention is not to diagnose individual black feminists as defensive or to pathologize black feminist feelings. Nor is my impulse to ignore histories of antiblackness and misogyny—including the invisible labor of black women inside the academy that, quite literally, kills black female academics—that render black feminist defensiveness a political response to ongoing violence. I seek to ethically attend to that history even as I critique the proprietary impulses of black feminism in an effort to reveal how the defensive affect traps black feminism, hindering its visionary world-making capacities. If “holding on” describes the set of black feminist practices this project seeks to disrupt, “letting go” represents the political and theoretical worldview this project advances, a vision of black feminist theory that is not invested in making property of knowledge. This book also argues that it is impossible to theorize black feminist defensiveness without a rigorous consideration of the place of black feminist theory generally, and intersectionality specifically, in women’s studies. Black Feminism Reimagined situates black feminist defensiveness in the context of US women’s studies, an interdiscipline that is organized around the symbol of black woman even as the field retains little interest in the materiality of black women’s bodies, the complexity of black women’s experiences, or the heterogeneity of black women’s intellectual and creative production. Defensiveness emerges precisely because the symbol of black woman is incessantly called upon to perform intellectual, political, and affective service work for women’s studies, much as black female faculty are called upon to perform diversity service work in women’s studies and across the university.10 This particular form of feminist service work is evident in the general sentiment that women’s studies can be remedied—or already has been remedied—through the incorporation of black feminist theory into the field’s canon, through the hailing of black feminist theory as the remedy to (white) feminism’s ills, or through the ways that black female faculty are called upon to embody and perform the field’s transformation. Rachel Lee captures how women of color are rhetorically summoned as proof of the field’s evolution, noting “women of color remain eminently useful to the progress narrative Women’s Studies wishes to create for itself, where the fullness of women of color’s arrival within Women’s Studies is always ‘about to be.’”11 Thus, black woman serves the discipline’s “progress narrative,” acting as a sign of how much the discipline has overcome its past exclusions and how deeply the discipline refuses so-called white feminism, and intersectionality’s ubiquity in women’s studies is often taken as evidence of how black feminism has transformed the discipline.12 While this book remains deeply invested in a consideration of black feminism’s relationship to the university generally, and to women’s studies specifically, it is crucial to note that black feminism—and black feminists—have long been attached, optimistically or self-destructively (or maybe both)—to the university. Indeed, black feminist theory has a long history of both tracking the violence the university has inflicted on black female academics (often by demanding black women’s labor—intellectual, political, and embodied labor) and advocating for institutional visibility and legibility. While black feminists have long traced the violence of the university, few have advocated for abandoning the institutional project of black feminism, despite longstanding and widely circulating texts theorizing how the academy quite literally cannibalizes black women, extracts their labor, and renders invisible the work they perform to establish fields. Thus, when I consider the violence the university has inflicted on black women’s bodies, I want to underscore that black feminism has remained oriented toward the university despite this violence, and has largely retained a faith in the institution’s capacity to be remade, reimagined, or reinvented in ways that will do less violence to black feminist theory and black feminists’ bodies. In naming defensiveness as a defining black feminist affect, Black Feminism Reimagined necessarily makes a claim about what constitutes black feminism. I treat black feminism as a varied project with theoretical, political, activist, intellectual, erotic, ethical, and creative dimensions; black feminism is multiple, myriad, shifting, and unfolding. To speak of it in the singular is always to reduce its complexity, to neglect its internal debates and its rich and varied approaches to questions of black women’s personhood. I treat the word “black” in front of “feminism” not as a marker of identity but as a political category, and I understand a “black feminist” approach to be one that centers analyses of racialized sexisms and homophobia, and that foregrounds black women as intellectual producers, as creative agents, as political subjects, and as “freedom dreamers” even as the content and contours of those dreams vary.13 I advance a conception of black feminism that is expansive, welcoming anyone with an investment in black women’s humanity, intellectual labor, and political visionary work, anyone with an investment in theorizing black genders and sexualities in complex and nuanced ways. My archive of black feminist theorists includes black, white, and nonblack scholars of color who labor in and adjacent to black feminist theory. My contention is that these varied black feminist scholars can all speak on and for black feminist theory, and as black feminist theorists, even as they make their claims from different identity locations. To be clear, my capacious conception of black feminism is a political decision, one that is staged mindful of black feminists’ long-standing critique of how the university “disappears” black women.14 Shifting the content of black feminism from a description of bodies to modes of intellectual production might generate precisely the anxious defensiveness this book describes and aspires to unsettle. Nonetheless, I invest in a broad conception of black feminism—and black feminists—precisely because of my commitment to tracing black feminist theory’s expansive intellectual, political, ethical, and creative reach, one that I see as always transcending attempts to limit the tradition by rooting it in embodied performances. Moreover, it is the ongoing conception that black feminism is the exclusive territory of black women that traps and limits black feminists and black women academics who continue to be conscripted into performing and embodying their intellectual investments.

### 3

#### We advocate the 1AC without their call for the ballot. To clarify, this is a PIC out of their demand to “take this round hostage” and “blacken the debate space”.

#### Calls to “blacken debate” creates a parasitic and de-radicalized relationship to white recognition that turns case.

Curry 13 Tommy Curry 2013, Professor of Philosophy at Texas A&M University, “Dr. Tommy Curry on the importance of debate for blacks,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMmkPhvDK2E#t=174> //Re-cut by Elmer

However, with the lure of progress, more black people are participating in debate, more black judges, more conceptual debates about blackness. There comes a deradicalization of what black theory and what black people are supposed to do and represent. Despite our pretense, debate is still a very privileged world. It’s a pretend world where black people can have their queerness, their feebleness, their faux radicality recognized. For actual oppressed people, people who can’t afford debate, who have no knowledge of debate, who fight against actual mechanisms of state, who are not recognized, these very same qualities mean death. So in debate rounds we get to act, we’re the conduits of this black suffering. The demographic increase in the black population in debate, however, it’s kind of brought about a new morality that’s committed to fighting for inclusion, intellectual space, our expanded ideas of home. But in this I think we miss the extent of our dependency on white recognition. That white judge in the back of the room that’s comprehending and assimilating our goals with their own liberal and progressive existence. In other words, it’s through our appeal to white men and women, our need for their recognition, for their ballot, that frames the ultimate message of our pessimism, our gender critiques, our colonial analysis. We’re fundamentally dependent on how the white mind situates itself conceptually to the project of diversification. We appeal to their sympathy, or worse yet, to the intersectional empathies of whites as the gauge of the transformative potentialities of black theory and historic black thought. So in these spaces real radicality does not come from an appeal to white recognition, but the rejection of it. In the declaration that black knowledge or black theory or black accounts of existence in all of the economic and sexual plurality of our thought is the radicality comes from the idea that we think that those questions can be answered in the annals of how black people have historically thought about themselves. It need not depend on our alliances or allegiances with white liberals rationalizing their own existence as justifiable through their endorsement or alliances with what we think about ourselves or black people’s situation in the world. Black debate should ultimately move to the rejection of white education – adjudication if black theory is about the liberation of black people and a move to definitions of knowledge or cells or concepts that don’t currently exist then how can we expect the dilapidated ideas of white sentimentality projected from an archaic and racialized whiteness to understand or even comprehend the interrelatedness of propositions that are beyond their present being. How they understand something that is beyond their very own existence the true radicality of black people debating points to the negation of white comprehension of black ideas of liberation not their assimilation or recognition of them. So these ideas of us saying we have progressed fundamentally rooted in how white people see us is a problem.

#### Outweighs under the Refusal RoTB – we’re a refusal of white recognition that separates resistance from liberal allyship.

#### This proves the Aff is a double-turn – their claims of “inclusion” are a double-turn w/ the totalizing refusal of problematic spaces such as Debate.

## Case

### Case

#### Rob better debater

#### Your authors citing Hartman is commodification, not intersectionality

Wekker 20 Wekker, Gloria, Utrecht University, The Netherlands (2020). Afropessimism. European Journal of Women’s Studies, 28(1), 86–97. doi:10.1177/1350506820971224 mvp

The insight Wilderson offers us into a contemporary Black boy’s and man’s life from a male perspective is rare these days and he paints his life, recent American political and social history, and his relationships with women with verve, sometimes conjuring up beautiful, vivid images. The book may, according to Vinson Cunningham (2020), be seen as a genre, termed ‘auto-theory’, an attempt to arrive at a philosophy by way of the self. Several African American academics, especially women, have taken up this exciting genre in recent years. A personal narrative is linked to a theoretical deepening of the important themes in a text, which, often have to do with Black death, with fungibility, the absolute substitutability and interchangeability of Black people. Christina Sharpe (2016) does this with In the Wake: On Blackness and Being and Saidiya Hartman (2007) had previously used the genre with Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route. Yet, Hartman (1997), like other authors, will have an axe to grind with Wilderson, because he derives all kinds of important insights and concepts from her work, especially from Scenes of Subjection; Terror, Slavery and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America, which although he references her, also incorporates her into the current of Afropessimism, while she herself emphatically rejects that positioning (Royal Tropical Institute, personal communication, Amsterdam, October 2018).

### Ontology

#### Framing issues for the ontology debate

#### 1] All of the theories they cite are substantially interconnected and rely on thesis level claims from each other, i.e. their Gillespie cards cite Wildersonian ontology several times to justify claims about communication and semiotics sof we win ontology wrong, vote neg

#### 2] They’ll say no alt to ontology to explain antiblack violence – our alternative theory is CONTINGENCY. When we claim ontology is wrong, our alternative theory of the world is that political commitment is good, that material conditions can improve for black and non-black people, that there are alternative explanations for their inevitable push on gratuitous violence even if you don’t understand them. Even if you don’t necessarily think contingency is true, winning ontology wrong doesn’t mean you default to ontology absent an alternative theory – it means you vote neg on an impact turn, or on presumption because we’ve won the affs thesis is totalizing and wrong.

#### Ontology proper – it’s wrong:

#### 1] Ahistorical and misunderstands the middle passage

AsadHaider 18 [new goat founding Editor of Viewpoint Magazine, an investigative journal of contemporary politics. He is a PhD candidate in the History of Consciousness at UC Santa Cruz and a member of UAW-2865, the Student-Workers Union at the University of California.] “Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump” Verso, 2018 RE

Allen and Ignatiev turned to this question in their further research, inspired by the insights of Du Bois. In the process they presented an exemplary model of a materialist investigation into the ideology of race, one that went from the abstract to the concrete. This work emerged alongside that of Barbara Fields and Karen Fields, David Roediger, and many others as a body of thought devoted to exposing race as a social construct. All of this research, in varying ways, has examined the history of the “white race” in its specificity. The guiding insight that must be drawn from it is that this racial phenomenon is not simply a biological or even cultural attribute of certain “white people”: it was produced by white supremacy in a concrete and objective historical process. As Allen put it on the back cover of his extraordinary vernacular history The Invention of the White Race: “When the first Africans arrived in Virginia in 1619, there were no white people there.” At the most immediate level, Allen was pointing to the fact that the word white didn’t appear in Virginia colonial law until 1691. Of course, this doesn’t mean that there was no racism before 1691. Allen’s argument was to show that racism was not attached to a concept of the white race. There were ideas of the superiority of European civilization, but this did not correspond to differences in skin color. The clearest example is that of the Irish, whose racial oppression by the English precedes their racial oppression of Africans by several centuries. Today white nationalists distort this history, attempting to use the racial oppression of the Irish to try to dismiss the history of white supremacy. Yet this example actually demolishes their entire framework. What the example of the Irish illustrates is a form of racial oppression that is not based on skin color and that in fact precedes the very category of whiteness. Indeed, the early forms of English racial ideology represented the Irish as inferior and subhuman, and this ideology was later repeated word for word to justify both the genocide of Indigenous people in the Americas and the enslavement of Africans. Nor was it only a matter of words: the very practices of settler colonialism, land seizures, and plantation production were established in Ireland. Allen demonstrates this with reference to specific laws: If under Anglo-American slavery, “the rape of a female slave was not a crime, but a mere trespass on the master’s property,” so, in 1278, two Anglo-Normans, brought into court and charged with raping Margaret O’Rorke were found not guilty because “the said Margaret is an Irishwoman.” If a law enacted in Virginia in 1723, provided that, “manslaughter of a slave is not punishable,” so under Anglo-Norman law it sufficed for acquittal to show that the victim in a slaying was Irish. Anglo-Norman priests granted absolution on the grounds that it was “no more sin to kill an Irishman than a dog or any other brute.”9 So racial oppression arises in the Irish case without skin color as its basis. We are forced to ask how we end up with a racial ideology revolving around skin color that represents African people as subhuman and that considers both Irish and English to be part of a unitary “white race.” The historical record quite clearly demonstrates that white supremacy and thus the white race are formed within the American transition to capitalism, specifically because of the centrality of racial slavery. However, we have to resist the temptation, imposed on us by racial ideology, to explain slavery through race. Slavery is not always racial. It existed in ancient Greece and Rome and also in Africa, and was not attached specifically to a racial ideology. Slavery is a form of forced labor characterized by the market exchange of the laborer. But there are various forms of forced labor, and its first form in Virginia was indentured labor, in which a laborer is forced to work for a limited period of time to work off a debt, often with some incentive like land ownership after the end of the term. The first Africans to arrive in Virginia 1619 were put to work as indentured servants, within the same legal category as European indentured servants. In fact, until 1660 all African American laborers, like their European American counterparts, were indentured servants who had limited terms of servitude. There was no legal differentiation based on racial ideology: free African Americans owned property, land, and sometimes indentured servants of their own. There were examples of intermarriage between Europeans and Africans. It was only in the late seventeenth century that the labor force of the American colonies shifted decisively to African slaves who did not have limits on their terms of servitude. As Painter points out in The History of White People, these forms of labor and their transformations are fundamental in understanding how racial ideology comes about: Work plays a central part in race talk, because the people who do the work are likely to be figured as inherently deserving the toil and poverty of laboring status. It is still assumed, wrongly, that slavery anywhere in the world must rest on a foundation of racial difference. Time and again, the better classes have concluded that those people deserve their lot; it must be something within them that puts them at the bottom. In modern times, we recognize this kind of reasoning as it relates to black race, but in other times the same logic was applied to people who were white, especially when they were impoverished immigrants seeking work.10 “In sum,” Painter writes, “before an eighteenth-century boom in the African slave trade, between one-half and two-thirds of all early white immigrants to the British colonies in the Western Hemisphere came as unfree laborers, some 300,000 to 400,000 people.”11 The definitions of whiteness as freedom and blackness as slavery did not yet exist. It turns out that defining race involves answering some unexpected historical questions: How did some indentured servants come to be forced into bondage for their entire lives rather than a limited term? How did this category of forced labor come to be represented in terms of race? Why did the colonial ruling class come to rely on racial slavery when various other regimes of labor were available? The first economic boom of the American colonies was in Virginia tobacco production in the 1620s, and it was based on the labor of primarily European indentured servants. African Americans were only about a fifth of the labor force: most forced labor was initially European, and the colonial planter class relied on this forced labor for its economic growth. But they couldn’t just rely on European indentured labor because it was based on voluntary migration, and the incentive to participate in a life of brutal labor and die early was not sufficient to generate a consistently growing workforce. As Barbara Fields puts it, “Neither white skin nor English nationality protected servants from the grossest forms of brutality and exploitation. The only degradation they were spared was perpetual enslavement along with their issue in perpetuity, the fate that eventually befell the descendants of Africans.”12 African Americans, on the other hand, had been forcibly removed from their homelands. So the ruling class began to alter its laws to be able to deny some laborers an end to their terms of servitude, which they were only able to accomplish in the case of African laborers. What really changed everything was Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676. This began as a conflict within the elite planter class, directed toward a brutal attack on the Indigenous population. But it also gave rise to a rebellious mob of European and African laborers, who burned down the capital city of Jamestown and forced the governor to flee. The insurrectionary alliance of European and African laborers was a fundamental existential threat to the colonial ruling class, and the possibility of such an alliance among exploited peoples had to be prevented forever. Here we see a watershed moment in the long and complex process of the invention of the white race as a form of social control. The ruling class shifted its labor force decisively toward African slaves, and thus avoided dealing with the demand of indentured servants for eventual freedom and landownership. It fortified whiteness as a legal category, the basis for denying an end to the term of servitude for African forced labor. By the eighteenth century the Euro-American planter class had entered into a bargain with the Euro-American laboring classes, who were mostly independent subsistence farmers: it exchanged certain social privileges for a cross-class alliance of Euro-Americans to preserve a superexploited African labor force. This Euro-American racial alliance was the best defense of the ruling class against the possibility of a Euro-American and African American working-class alliance. It is at this point, Nell Painter concludes, that we see the “now familiar equation that converts race to black and black to slave.”13 The invention of the white race further accelerated when the Euro-American ruling class encountered a new problem in the eighteenth century. As the colonial ruling class began to demand its independence from the divinely ordained executives and landed wealth of the English nobility, they made claims for the intrinsic equality of all people and the idea of natural rights. As Barbara Fields puts it: Racial ideology supplied the means of explaining slavery to people whose terrain was a republic founded on radical doctrines of liberty and natural rights, and, more important, a republic in which those doctrines seemed to represent accurately the world in which all but a minority lived. Only when the denial of liberty became an anomaly apparent even to the least observant and reflective members of Euro-American society did ideology systematically explain the anomaly.14 In other words, the Euro-American ruling class had to advance an ideology of the inferiority of Africans in order to rationalize forced labor, and they had to incorporate European populations into the category of the white race, despite the fact that many of these populations had previously been considered inferior. This racial ideology developed further as the new American nation encountered the phenomenon of the voluntary migration of free laborers from Europe, many of whom came from populations that were viewed as distinct European races: the Italians, Eastern Europeans, and Jews, but especially the exemplary case of the Irish, whose emigration to the US spiked with the famines of the mid-nineteenth century produced by English colonialism. The Irish, among the most oppressed and rebellious groups in Europe, were offered the bargain that had protected the American ruling class. Frederick Douglass pointed this out very clearly in 1853, at the anniversary meeting of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in New York: The Irish, who, at home, readily sympathize with the oppressed everywhere, are instantly taught when they step upon our soil to hate and despise the Negro. They are taught to believe that he eats the bread that belongs to them. The cruel lie is told them, that we deprive them of labor and receive the money which would otherwise make its way into their pockets. Sir, the Irish-American will find out his mistake one day.15 Douglass had gone to Ireland to avoid being returned to slavery and said he was for the first time in his life treated as an ordinary person, exclaiming in a letter to the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, “I breathe, and lo! the chattel becomes a man … I meet nothing to remind me of my complexion.”16 Of course, this was not because of some intrinsic kindness of the Irish. It was rather because, at this stage in history, there were no white people there. This was clear to Douglass because he arrived during the Great Famine. Writing in his memoirs of the songs sung by slaves on the American plantations, he added: “Nowhere outside of dear old Ireland, in the days of want and famine, have I heard sounds so mournful.”17 But what Irish immigrants realized after immigrating to the United States is that they could ameliorate their subjugation by joining the club of the white race, as Ignatiev has recounted.18 They could become members of a “white race” with higher status if they actively supported the continuing enslavement and oppression of African Americans. So the process of becoming white meant that these previous racial categories were abolished and racialized groups like the Irish were progressively incorporated into the white race as a means of fortifying and intensifying the exploitation of black laborers. It was the great insight of Frederick Douglass to describe this as the Irish-American’s mistake. Douglass clearly emphasized the novelty of the very description of people as white: “The word white is a modern term in the legislation of this country. It was never used in the better days of the Republic, but has sprung up within the period of our national degeneracy.”19 Let us be clear on what the invention of the white race meant. It meant that Euro-American laborers were prevented from joining with African American laborers in rebellion, through the form of social control imposed by the Euro-American ruling class. In exchange for white-skin privilege, the Euro-American workers accepted white identity and became active agents in the brutal oppression of African American laborers. But they also fundamentally degraded their own conditions of existence. As a consequence of this bargain with their exploiters, they allowed the conditions of the Southern white laborer to become the most impoverished in the nation, and they generated conditions that blocked the development of a viable mass workers’ movement. This is why the struggle against white supremacy has in fact been a struggle for universal emancipation—something that was apparent to African American insurgents. As Barbara Fields points out, these insurgents did not use a notion of race as an explanation for their oppression or their struggles for liberation: It was not Afro-Americans … who needed a racial explanation; it was not they who invented themselves as a race. Euro-Americans resolved the contradiction between slavery and liberty by defining Afro-Americans as a race; Afro-Americans resolved the contradiction more straightforwardly by calling for the abolition of slavery. From the era of the American, French and Haitian revolutions on, they claimed liberty as theirs by natural right.20 However, this was not always recognized by socialist movements. Early American socialists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sometimes failed to recognize that the division between white and black workers prevented all workers from successfully emancipating themselves. We should not oversimplify this point or use it to discredit the whole history of the labor movement. The early socialist parties were largely composed of immigrants who were often not yet fully incorporated into the white race, and there were very significant black socialists—including, for example, Hubert Harrison, who played an important role in connecting black nationalism to socialism at the beginning of the twentieth century. The majority of the early American socialists were not racists, and in fact openly and vigorously opposed racism. However, most of these early socialist organizations failed to recognize that there was anything unique about the demands of black workers. They were also willing to work with craft unions that discriminated against black workers, and they did not attempt to recruit black members. Without an analysis of white supremacy, these socialist organizations did not address the fact that black workers were often excluded from jobs available to whites, that they were subjected to racist violence beyond the workplace, and that they could not expect racist employers to extend increasing wages to them. The cost of this indifference to race was that socialism was always competing for recruitment with whiteness. New European immigrants were often very radical and prepared to join militant labor struggles. But they were also being invited to join the white race. Once again, in the case of the Irish, this meant finally leaving behind the racial oppression that had become familiar to them in Europe. This began to change with the reconfiguration of American socialists into the Communist Party in 1919. By the 1920s the CP had incorporated not only many immigrant socialists but also the clandestine organization called the African Blood Brotherhood, which included many important black Communists, such as Cyril Briggs, Claude McKay, and Harry Haywood. These black Communists were absolutely central to Communist organizing, because they argued that the party would have to directly attack whiteness if it wanted to build a labor movement. As a result of their work, the CP threw itself into antiracist organizing in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This meant, first of all, placing a heavy emphasis on educating white members to reject white chauvinism, and organizing some of the only interracial social events that were held in the segregated US. The party worked to eliminate the influence of whiteness from the ranks of the party itself. But it also sent its organizers down South and into the black neighborhoods of Northern cities to work on political projects. These included unions for sharecroppers, tenant farmers, miners, and steelworkers; armed defense against lynching; legal defense for black victims of the racist justice system; and movements against unemployment, evictions, and utility shut-offs. Robin D.G. Kelley describes some of these initiatives in Hammer and Hoe: Representatives of the unemployed councils often dissuaded landlords from evicting their tenants by describing the potential devastation that could occur once an abandoned house became a free-for-all for firewood. When a family’s electricity was shut off for nonpayment, activists from the unemployed council frequently used heavy-gauge copper wires as “jumpers” to appropriate electricity from public outlets or other homes. Council members also found ways to reactivate water mains after they had been turned off, though the process was more complicated than pilfering electricity. And in at least one instance, a group of black women used verbal threats to stop a city employee from turning off one family’s water supply.21 Unfortunately, the complicated history of political disputes within the CP, along with the state repression of the Communist movement, led to this work being cut short. As an increasingly conservative party leadership distanced itself from the project of black liberation, white chauvinism was on the rise in the CP. It had previously been most effectively combated through mass antiracist organizing: by joining different people and disparate demands in a common struggle. But now that this practice had been abandoned, the party launched what Harry Haywood called a “phony war against white chauvinism.” In Haywood’s analysis, this phony war only ended up strengthening the material foundations of white chauvinism, now uprooted from its structural foundations and seen as a free-floating set of ideas. Instead of mass organizing, opposing white chauvinism was now seen as a matter of policing the language of those who were ostensibly comrades, thus strengthening the party bureaucracy and introducing a climate of paranoia and distrust among members. As Haywood wrote: It was an atmosphere which was conducive to the development of a particularly paternalistic and patronizing form of white chauvinism, as well as to a rise in petty-bourgeois narrow nationalism among blacks. The growth of the nationalist side of this distortion was directly linked to the breakdown of the basic division of labor among communists in relation to the national question. This division of labor, long ago established in our party and the international communist movement, places main responsibility for combating white chauvinism on the white comrades, with Blacks having main responsibility for combating narrow nationalist deviations.22 In other words, in the absence of mass organizing, racial ideology rushes to the fill the vacuum. And without the political division of labor that Haywood describes, the struggle against racism is reduced to the redress of individual injuries.

#### 2] Nothing about the psyche hardwires antiblackness which disproves libidinal economy – prefer neuroscience to misreading of history

Sapolsky 19

Robert Sapolsky, American neuroendocrinologist and author, currently a professor of biology, and professor of neurology and neurological sciences and, by courtesy, neurosurgery, at Stanford University, “This Is Your Brain on Nationalism,” Foreign Affairs. March/April 2019.

--Tendency towards in group bias exists but is value neutral – outsider status is not fixed

--Researchers used fMRIs to analyze brains – found people put in teams based on uniform were sorted more saliently than based on race or that people felt more kinship towards those on arbitrary teams

--Arbitrary markers are more salient than phenotypical onnes

--Proves that drives are malleable and were constructed, and can also be deconstructed

TURBANS TO HIPSTER BEARDS

For all this pessimism, there is a crucial difference between humans and those warring chimps. The human tendency toward in-group bias runs deep, but it is relatively value-neutral. Although human biology makes the rapid, implicit formation of us-them dichotomies virtually inevitable, who counts as an outsider is not fixed. In fact, it can change in an instant.

For one, humans belong to multiple, overlapping in-groups at once, each with its own catalog of outsiders—those of a different religion, ethnicity, or race; those who root for a different sports team; those who work for a rival company; or simply those have a different preference for, say, Coke or Pepsi. Crucially, the salience of these various group identities changes all the time. Walk down a dark street at night, see one of “them” approaching, and your amygdala screams its head off. But sit next to that person in a sports stadium, chanting in unison in support of the same team, and your amygdala stays asleep. Similarly, researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara, have shown that subjects tend to quickly and automatically categorize pictures of people by race. Yet if the researchers showed their subjects photos of both black and white people wearing two different colored uniforms, the subjects automatically began to categorize the people by their uniforms instead, paying far less attention to race. Much of humans’ tendency toward in-group out-group thinking, in other words, is not permanently tied to specific human attributes, such as race. Instead, this cognitive architecture evolved to detect any potential cues about social coalitions and alliances—to increase one’s chance of survival by telling friend from foe. The specific features that humans focus on to make this determination vary depending on the social context and can be easily manipulated.

Even when group boundaries remain fixed, the traits people implicitly associate with “them” can change—think, for instance, about how U.S. perceptions of different immigrant groups have shifted over time. Whether a dividing line is even drawn at all varies from place to place. I grew up in a neighborhood in New York with deep ethnic tensions, only to discover later that Middle America barely distinguishes between my old neighborhood’s “us” and “them.” In fact, some actors spend their entire careers alternating between portraying characters of one group and then the other.

This fluidity and situational dependence is uniquely human. In other species, in-group/out-group distinctions reflect degrees of biological relatedness, or what evolutionary biologists call “kin selection.” Rodents distinguish between a sibling, a cousin, and a stranger by smell—fixed, genetically determined pheromonal signatures—and adapt their cooperation accordingly. Those murderous groups of chimps are largely made up of brothers or cousins who grew up together and predominantly harm outsiders.

Humans are plenty capable of kinselective violence themselves, yet human group mentality is often utterly independent of such instinctual familial bonds. Most modern human societies rely instead on cultural kin selection, a process allowing people to feel closely related to what are, in a biological sense, total strangers. Often, this requires a highly active process of inculcation, with its attendant rituals and vocabularies. Consider military drills producing “bands of brothers,” unrelated college freshmen becoming sorority “sisters,” or the bygone value of welcoming immigrants into “the American family.” This malleable, rather than genetically fixed, path of identity formation also drives people to adopt arbitrary markers that enable them to spot their cultural kin in an ocean of strangers—hence the importance various communities attach to flags, dress, or facial hair. The hipster beard, the turban, and the “Make America Great Again” hat all fulfill this role by sending strong signals of tribal belonging.

Moreover, these cultural communities are arbitrary when compared to the relatively fixed logic of biological kin selection. Few things show this arbitrariness better than the experience of immigrant families, where the randomness of a visa lottery can radically reshuffle a child’s education, career opportunities, and cultural predilections. Had my grandparents and father missed the train out of Moscow that they instead barely made, maybe I’d be a chain-smoking Russian academic rather than a Birkenstockwearing American one, moved to tears by the heroism during the Battle of Stalingrad rather than that at Pearl Harbor. Scaled up from the level of individual family histories, our bigpicture group identities—the national identities and cultural principles that structure our lives—are just as arbitrary and subject to the vagaries of history.

#### 3] It’s a misapplication of semiotics – concepts can be understood absent negation which answers their argument for the black/human dichotomy

Bright 1/30 [(Liam Kofi, assistant professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science, specializes in the philosophy of science, social epistemology and Africana philosophy, PhD in Logic, Computation, and Methodology from Carnegie Mellon University, MSc in the Philosophy of Science at the London School of Economics in the Department of Philosophy, Logic, and Scientific Method) “Afro-Pessimism and the Instantiation Thesis,” The Sooty Empiric, 1/30/2021]

Afro-pessimists are, if I have understood the claim correctly, committed to rejecting the coherence of any reform or revolutionary effort which takes this form. The category of the human cannot be extended to encompass (all? maybe any of?) those we now call black. Why? Well, here's where The Instantiation Thesis comes in. On a number of occasions in the introductory text somebody asserts something like this:

*``*As a result, it is Blackness, and more specifically anti-Blackness, that gives coherence to categories of non-Black—white, worker, gay, i.e., “human*.” Categories of non-Black must establish their boundaries for inclusion in a group (humanity) by having a recognizable self within. There must also, consequently, be an outside to each group, and, as with the concept of humanity, it is Blackness that is without*; it is Blackness that is the dark matter surrounding and holding together the categories of non-Black*. ''*  
That's from the introductory essay. But in the linked text Wilderson makes a similar sort of remark on page 20, and Hartman (I think but am less sure) is committed to various versions of this claim throughout her first essay. The key idea here is a claim about conceptual necessity, that I think stated fully generally (and we shall come back to that) would be as follows: if X is a coherent belief/claim/concept/idea, then the antithesis of X must be instantiated. For X to make sense, there have to be some not-Xs. This, then, grounds the pessimism about the above reform, hinted at in the quoted passage, and which informal conversation suggests to me is one of the defining features of Afro-Pessimism -- you cannot make everyone human, that is simply impossible; if there were no non-humans there could be no humans, so you cannot extend the rights and normative status of the human to everyone.  
The Instantiation Thesis, I take it, blocks the reformists' move by showing it to be an incoherent suggestion. Concepts don't work like that; you can reform who counts as human, but if you want some people to enjoy the rights and privileges of status as full human persons you can't make it such that nobody isn't human. We define black people as analytically those who are without (we mumble a bit and miss some subtleties about modal quantification in assuming that this means that roughly all the people or kind of people who actually are black now must forever remain inhuman -- I can forgive this!) and we say that there must always, as a matter of conceptual necessity, be black people, and the benevolent reformist project can't work.

Here's the problem with the instantiation thesis. It's not true, and nothing like it is true. We have lots of concepts which we can make sense of even though their negations are not instantiated. I'm a non-unicorn and I am guessing so are you - this no wise proves there are unicorns. I'm a mortal Irishman, this does not mean that there is some immortal Irishman running around there. Even if I widened the catchment and said I am a mortal human, this would not in and of itself be proof of Christ's divinity. The table in front of me is (in the logician's sense) self-identical - this is not a proof that there are non-self-identical objects out there, nor does the fact that it is either red or not red prove that somethings are neither red nor not red... etc etc. This doesn't strike me as a problem with any particular way of spelling out the instantiation thesis, which perhaps some refinement could fix. It is just entirely false - we really don't need to instantiate the negation of a concept in order to make the concept itself intelligible.

#### 4] We’ll impact turn their theory – pessimism devalues intra-racial relationality and matrices of violence which devolves to a nihilistic politics of negation that can’t solve any of their harms

gamEdze and gamedZe 19 - gamEdze and gamedZe, Anxiety, Afropessimism, and the University Shutdown, The South Atlantic Quarterly 118:1, January 2019, https://watermark.silverchair.com/1180215.pdf WJ

gamEdze: I want to get a bit deeper into what you’re saying here, because I think it’s really important to consider the complex and somewhat contradictory role of Afropessimism in student movements. I’m interested in how these politics have been instrumentalized in the service of “shutdown” protests, as well as the ways that the ideology which informs political strategy plays into and is given life in the internal world of the movement. Before I get into the Afropessimism thing, though, let me set it up with an initial statement or belief that I hold. We are all externally vulnerable to the violence of capital-driven timespace, and so it is the politics through which we live that can potentially offer us healing or, on the other hand, can exacerbate the problem. A therapist once explained to me that anxiety and anger are placeholder emotions, and what she meant is that in order to explore the causes of our anxiety and anger and potentially soothe them, we must seek a place that is more internal, and perhaps less easy to understand and manage. This internal place is often one of deep sadness, and fear can render us reluctant to explore it. Thus anxiety and anger function to express our incapacity to manage the depth of ourselves in a given situation—they are ways the body defends and manages circumstances that hurt and can possibly damage us. Sadness, on the other hand, is a kind of giving up of the body to its own incapability to be okay—an abandonment of reactive behaviors to violent parameters, and an acceptance of a boundless present of despair. It is raw and difficult, but the experience of pain or sadness is often what allows us to come to terms with pervasive dissonances between our own spirit and the ways we are vulnerable to, and complicit in, the mismanagement of people in the world. My interest is in how our politics can contribute to, hinder, or interact with our emotional life, and how this has played out in the bits and pieces of the shutdown processes we know about.

gamedZe: That’s really interesting, thinking about the notion of a “placeholder politics” and their emotional corollaries. I wonder if it’s useful here to get into Afropessimism, or at least how we saw, understood, and experienced it within student movement spaces?

gamEdze: For sure, go ahead.

gamedZe: As I see it, briefly, Afropessimism is one political lens, set of ideas, or a vocabulary that has found significant traction in certain student movement spaces. This traction has brought with it a particularly nihilistic approach to protest. It could be interesting to think through this tendency toward protest along with some of the ideas you have set up.

gamEdze: Yes, so Afropessimism defines itself through understanding the world’s fundamental structure as “antiblack,” and thus sees black people as perpetually negated or “socially dead” and so absent from any conception of humanity.

gamedZe: Uh huh. And it seems to flatten out and homogenize Black people, reducing and owning the interpretation of Black peoples’ experiences by subordinating them to one supposedly absolute and totalizing logic.

gamEdze: It goes further by articulating that the maintenance of antiblackness is crucial in sustaining the psychic health of white people. In other words, the binary created through the construction of blackness versus whiteness is the logic through which white people are able to recognize themselves as human, and through which black people, too, see white people as human, and negate themselves. While Afropessimism can be useful in identifying systems of power—for instance, the mutual relationship of the racist construct of “black people as criminals” with the legal system and the capitalist prison-industrial complex—it falls short itself by asserting that there exists no other state for the black body except perpetual death, so consistently caving in on itself.

gamedZe: So, in that, it fails on many levels to make sense of the nuanced ways in which people, despite their supposed nonexistence, exist in and navigate through the world. How does Afropessimism understand its social death in relation to queerness or disability—forms of otherness that also generate gratuitous violence, exclusion, and oppression? But also, this particular transplantation of the American thing (the origin of the school of thought) to the continent is pretty wack. Even as the Black radical tradition has largely been formulated and theorized in and from America, and even as it often falls prey to American exceptionalisms in its quest for forms of Black universalism, I think it holds radical potential for us on the continent. As many theorists and thinkers of the Black radical tradition have shown, African cultural practices have formed the basis of Black revolt across time and space. I see Afropessimism as a departure from that tradition’s dynamic foundations in African culture. Afropessimism, through its fixation on natal alienation, tends to ignore the living connections to the continent, seeming to take the severance of African people from the continent through the middle passage as utter and complete. It therefore seems to understand Black people not as cultural subjects who brought entire cosmological worlds and practices with them but as hopeless, utterly dislocated beings only existing as the sum total of their position in white supremacy. While I think that this can be challenged even in a diasporic context, this contradiction is even more pronounced here on the continent, because although many of us are alienated from African cultural practices and contexts, those traditions persist and are more or less proximate whether or not one is immersed in them.

gamEdze: In this way, it can be difficult to move with the Afropessimist, whose American-specific engagement with a particular history defines the functioning of antiblackness, seen as a mechanism that forms the foundational reality of every scenario of oppression. Afropessimism’s refusal to engage its own internal world, to abandon its reactive and defensive nature, leads me to imagine it as a “placeholder politics,” similar to the ways that anxiety and anger hold and protect us from entering the place existing beyond them. This is not to offer a clean critique on Afropessimism but to situate it as a politics that perhaps exists as external to something more effective in exploring and acknowledging the internal— the power and the pain. Afropessimism finds no way to its own sadness.

gamedZe: The idea of “holding” the “place” is quite a nice one. And interesting to think about how, in relation to the continent, it is perhaps the anxiety or the anger of Afropessimism that holds the place that prevents or protects the descent into the deep sadness. Perhaps this is what Fred Moten (2003: 94), through Amiri Baraka, might refer to as “the tragic,” which “is always in relation to a quite particular and material loss,” in this case being “the impossibility of a return to an African, the impossibility of an arrival at an American, home.” The sadness of the tragic is too great.

gamEdze: Heavy . . . Let’s move back, or forward to the student movement, where we have seen Afropessimism function in a number of different ways. Because of the diverse and chaotic mixture of political ideologies under the “mustfall” umbrella, Afropessimism, like other politics, has been a collaborator, mixing sometimes productively, but often aggressively, with other political schools in the space, such as Black feminism, Marxism, and Charterism. No one ever decided that “mustfall” would adhere to a single way of navigating, and thus we could find ourselves having to hold a number of contradictions, jumping between politics as we navigated the trauma of the external, and the ways we chose to deal with emotions of the internal. In this way, sometimes the reactive nature, the anxiety and anger of the placeholder politic of Afropessimism, functioned to hold the outsides, as different political ideas played out on the inside of the shutdown. I know that this thought experiment seems far neater than the muddiness of any reality of shutdown and occupation could possibly be. But we are using it because as far as we both critique Afropessimism, the way it has catalyzed in the mix of mustfall politics seems to have opened it up to something beyond its own imagination. On the outside, Afropessimism leads to a style of protest, to a style of retaliation, to a mode of policing, to a steering away of movements from initial strategy, to individualized acts of embodied resistance to the law.

gamedZe: On the barricades, forced into the form of protest that the state and security is prepared and equipped for—violent confrontation—there is no possibility of Afropessimism evolving into anything else because we run into the militarized trap set for us, with no possible escape.

gamEdze: On the inside, in the temporary “safety” offered by a successful shutdown, is the place where we can create.

gamedZe: That kinda comes back to what I think of as a classic revolutionary dialectic, of reaction and creation. It raises the question: was it necessary to react in that way in order to create? Did we have to adopt this nihilistic politics and dangerous bodily mode of protest to shut down the space such that we can then explore other possibilities?

gamEdze: This is such a fundamental question, and I personally don’t necessarily think so. Afropessimism to a large extent really upset the growth of Black feminist thought, at least in the shutdowns I have been involved in. Instead of providing an entry point into various political schools, black feminism—particularly intersectionality—seemed optional, forming just one of several political collaborators within the shutdown space. This approach was often read by Afropessimism and even black consciousness as an aggressor, or a “distracting” force within the movement. But intersectionality makes collective work possible. Audre Lorde, much in keeping with intersectionality, is insistent on conscientizing difference, so that it escapes its usual trap of exploitation by the status quo. This approach to making activism is a depthy internal process of instrumentalizing and weaponizing one’s pain and power toward collective struggle (Audre Lorde 2012). It is in direct conflict with Afropessimism, which begins and ends through the arrest of blackness in singular form: a circular anxious reasoning that cannot explore its particularities and intersections, and so finds its imagination short-circuited by the binary understanding of power only through white supremacy. If Afropessimism went to therapy, it might find, beneath its repeated anxious mantra of social death, a network of connected histories that have created layers and layers of power and oppression. This painful conscientization is the beginning of a process of shaping tools that can be used to transcend the defensive limitations of placeholder politics and can, rather, soothe the internal while launching a fiery attack on the oppressor. Lorde’s tool was poetry. And ours right now is this.

gamedZe: I’m thinking now of some of Toni Morrison’s work and how one gets a real sense from her stories, that, despite the horror, violence, and the trauma of racism, Black people have, and have always had, stories outside white terrorism. Not that the terror is ever fully absent, but she makes a political decision in her writing to center Black people rather than white supremacy, opening up different creative and political potentialities. Although one of her starting points might be a critique of racism, it is not her endpoint. And I think what we are interested in thinking about in relation to shutdown is the possibilities that open up when the campus is claimed and the spaces, under new management, have not yet been purposed. When you occupy a house successfully, what do you do in the house? If we are able to arrest the university, what kinds of potentialities emerge?

gamEdze: And further, to extend your question, if a particular mode of protest that is exclusionary is used in “shutting down” or securing the space, does this mean that the inevitable political landscape within that space is limited to this political tendency? Considering that the act of barricading requires a certain kind of bodily intervention which is often masculinist and exclusionary, can an Afropessimistic-led shutdown secure and open the space for an intersectional collectivity and loving place of study?

gamEdze: The connection is that a masculinist, exclusionary, body-based rupturing of space will easily lead to an exclusionary group consciousness that occupies spaces using the same guiding principles it did to secure that space, unless tasks are explicitly divided using an intersectional approach to plan for the people involved. It is well documented, although poorly publicized, that “mustfall” in most instances failed to challenge institutionalized ableism and built-in inaccessibility at South African universities, as much as it did racism, classism, and patriarchy.

gamedZe: Where the work happened well, it seemed to temporarily allow for a reconfiguring of relationships and roles insisted on by the university. For instance, the mobilization, organizing, and study that happened around the “OutsourcingMustFall” opened up new ways of relating between “workers” and “students.” These relationships were shifted, through organizing together and resisting white institutional order, from the rigid and distinct categories of the university, to being resituated within the framework of the Black family. In certain instances Black students spoke about workers as “our mothers and fathers” and workers related to students as “our children.” This was a radical departure from the way that the institution was intentionally curated, where to be a student means to have gained access to a world of more privilege than that rewarded for physical labor (for a further discussion, see Motimele, in this issue). Following on from the Black family, what I think shutdown allowed for in its most generative expression was the possibility of a different way of being together. And interestingly, it was the possibility of a different way of being together and being at the university. The university was what was being shut down. Its normative mode of functioning was arrested. So in certain senses it was about not being at the university, because the university represents a space of not-being-together, or at least only being together in particular ways that are shaped and governed by notions of difference and hierarchy—ways that operate to preclude or prohibit collectivity.2 In that sense shutdown ruptured the university, using it as a site for anticapitalist experiments with/in time and space. Some might say that that rupture forms a prefigurative moment—a prophetic enactment of a utopian future that is still, yet, or perhaps to come. Perhaps shutdown forms opposition to the obstacles blocking us from our true social nature? Shutdown and the space of occupation didn’t, in any definitive or overbearing way, stop the university being what it is. Even when these spaces were alive, while they might have been able to arrest and repurpose certain functions or buildings, they were only pockets or time-space capsules casting fleeting shadows on the hegemon’s place in the sun. But what we know to be true is that spaces of study and planning have always, at every historical moment, been casting shadow.

#### Gamedze and Gamedze roasts Brady—if you accept the white racial project that blackness is abjection, that is what creates the anti-black world. When you paper over the world’s complexity with a definitive ontological claim, that creates exclusion from civil society because it accepts blackness as absolute negativity. They’re a form of bad faith that is the foundation of racism, i.e. taking a group who is human but treating them as if they are non-human.