### 1

#### The starting point of morality is practical reason. 3 warrants:

#### Ethics must begin a priori:

#### [1] Uncertainty – our experiences are inaccessible to others which allows people to say they don’t experience the same, however a priori principles are universally applied to all agents.

#### [2] Bindingness – I can keep asking “why should I follow this” which results in skep since obligations are predicated on ignorantly accepting rules. Only reason solves since asking “why reason?” requires reason which concedes its authority and equally proves agency as constitutive

#### That means we must universally will maxims— any non-universalizable norm justifies someone’s ability to impede on your ends.

#### And, reason must be universal – [A] a reason for one agent is a reason for another agent. I can’t say 2+2=4 is true for me but not for you – that’s incoherent.

#### any non-universalizable norm justifies someone’s ability to impede on your ends.

#### Thus, counter-methodology: Vote negative to engage in a liberation strategy of universal reason. This entails a starting point where we abstract from individual perspectives to understand the universal, and use this starting point to apply it to empirical institutions and agents.

#### Prefer:Performativity: freedom is the key to the process of justification of arguments through talking freely. Willing that we should abide by their ethical theory presupposes that we own ourselves in the first place. Thus, denying self-ownership in the round automatically implies the truth of the aff framework.

#### Negate:

#### [1] Independently, Kant is incompatible with a your method – it requires unconditional respect for humanity as an end in itself.

Korsgaard 83 bracketed for gendered language (Christine M., “Two Distinctions in Goodness,” The Philosophical Review Vol. 92, No. 2 (Apr., 1983), pp. 169-195, JSTOR)

The argument shows how Kant's idea of justification works. It can be read as a kind of regress upon the conditions, starting from an important assumption. The assumption is that when a rational being makes a choice or undertakes an action, [they] he or she supposes the object to be good, and its pursuit to be justified. At least, if there is a categorical imperative there must be objectively good ends, for then there are necessary actions and so necessary ends (G 45-46/427-428 and Doctrine of Virtue 43-44/384-385). In order for there to be any objectively good ends, however, there must be something that is unconditionally good and so can serve as a sufficient condition of their goodness. Kant considers what this might be: it cannot be an object of inclination, for those have only a conditional worth, "for if the inclinations and the needs founded on them did not exist, their object would be without worth" (G 46/428). It cannot be the inclinations themselves because a rational being would rather be free from them. Nor can it be external things, which serve only as means. So, Kant asserts, the unconditionally valuable thing must be "humanity" or "rational nature," which he defines as "the power set to an end" (G 56/437 and DV 51/392). Kant explains that regarding your existence as a rational being as an end in itself is a "subjective principle of human action." By this I understand him to mean that we must regard ourselves as capable of conferring value upon the objects of our choice, the ends that we set, because we must regard our ends as good. But since "every other rational being thinks of his existence by the same rational ground which holds also for myself' (G 47/429), we must regard others as capable of conferring value by reason of their rational choices and so also as ends in themselves. Treating another as an end in itself thus involves making that person's ends as far as possible your own (G 49/430). The ends that are chosen by any rational being, possessed of the humanity or rational nature that is fully realized in a good will, take on the status of objective goods. They are not intrinsically valuable, but they are objectively valuable in the sense that every rational being has a reason to promote or realize them. For this reason it is our duty to promote the happiness of others-the ends that they choose-and, in general, to make the highest good our end.

#### [2] Only univeralizable reason can effectively explain the perspectives of agents – that’s the best method for combatting oppression.

Farr 02 Arnold Farr (prof of phil @ UKentucky, focusing on German idealism, philosophy of race, postmodernism, psychoanalysis, and liberation philosophy). “Can a Philosophy of Race Afford to Abandon the Kantian Categorical Imperative?” JOURNAL of SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY, Vol. 33 No. 1, Spring 2002, 17–32.

**One** of the most popular **criticism**s **of Kant’s moral philosophy is that it is too formalistic.**13 That is, the universal nature of the categorical imperative leaves it devoid of content. Such a principle is useless since moral decisions are made by concrete individuals in a concrete, historical, and social situation. This type of criticism lies behind Lewis Gordon’s rejection of any attempt to ground an antiracist position on Kantian principles. The rejection of universal principles for the sake of emphasizing the historical embeddedness of the human agent is widespread in recent philosophy and social theory. I will argue here on Kantian grounds that **although a distinction between the universal and the concrete is** a **valid** distinction, **the unity of the two is required for** an understanding of human **agency.** The attack on Kantian formalism began with Hegel’s criticism of the Kantian philosophy.14 The list of contemporary theorists who follow Hegel’s line of criticism is far too long to deal with in the scope of this paper. Although these theorists may approach the problem of Kantian formalism from a variety of angles, the spirit of their criticism is basically the same: The universality of the categorical imperative is an abstraction from one’s empirical conditions. **Kant is** often **accused of making the moral agent an abstract, empty**, noumenal **subject. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Kantian subject is** an embodied, empirical, concrete subject. However, this concrete subject has a dual nature. Kant claims in the Critique of Pure Reason as well as in the Grounding that human beings have an intelligible and empirical character.15 It is impossible to understand and do justice to Kant’s moral theory without taking seriously the relation between these two characters. The very concept of morality is impossible without the tension between the two. By “empirical character” Kant simply means that we have a sensual nature. We are physical creatures with physical drives or desires. **The** very **fact that I cannot simply satisfy my desires without considering the rightness** or wrongness **of my actions suggests that my empirical character must be held in check** by something, or else I behave like a Freudian id. My empiri- cal character must be held in check **by my intelligible character**, which is the legislative activity of practical reason. It is through our intelligible character that **we formulate principles that keep our** empirical **impulses in check.** The categorical imperative is the supreme principle of morality that is constructed by the moral agent in his/her moment of self-transcendence. What I have called self-transcendence may be best explained in the following passage by Onora O’Neill: In restricting our maxims to those that meet the test of the categorical imperative we refuse to base our lives on maxims that necessarily make our own case an exception. The reason why a universilizability criterion is morally signiﬁcant is that it makes our own case no special exception (G, IV, 404). In accepting the Categorical Imperative we accept the moral reality of other selves, and hence the possibility (not, note, the reality) of a moral community. **The Formula of Universal Law enjoins no more than that we act only on maxims that are open to others also.**16 O’Neill’s description of the universalizability criterion includes the notion of self-transcendence that I am working to explicate here to the extent that like self-transcendence, universalizable moral principles require that the individ- ual think beyond his or her own particular desires. The individual is not allowed to exclude others **as** rational **moral agents** who have the right to act as he acts in a given situation. For example, if I decide to use another person merely as a means for my own end I must recognize the other person’s right to do the same to me. I cannot consistently will that I use another as a means only and will that I not be used in the same manner by another. **Hence,** the **universalizability** criterion **is a principle of consistency and** a principle of **inclusion.** That is, in choosing my maxims **I** attempt to **include the perspective of other moral agents.**

#### [3] Independently not defending the topic is non-universalizable b/c if nobody defended the topic than a topic wouldn’t have even been created in the first place which is a contradiction in conception.

### 2

#### anti-blackness is historically shaped but a method of shutting resistance in life decks survival.

Kelley 17 Robin D.G. Kelley, Gary B. Nash Professor of American History at UCLA, “Robin D.G. Kelley & Fred Moten In Conversation”, YouTube, 1:57:36 – 2:02:56, 15 June 2017, accessed: 21 January 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fP-2F9MXjRE>, \*most likely transcribed by Dustin Meyers Levi (dml), R.S.

Kelley: Um, Fred—Fred will take most of these questions. So that's why I'm going to begin first because he's gonna, he's gonna—he's gonna end it because he, he, he has the answer to all these questions ‘cause I turn to him for these questions. On the specific, on the first question, I just want to make sure I understand it because I'm, you know, I don't always recognize, uh, it may be because I'm just old, but I don't always recognize, uh, that black politics, black [unclear—maybe “guys”] work politics have been structured or defined by white supremacy. I mean, white supremacy is there. And I guess maybe because I'm such a student of Cedric Robinson, you know, not everything is about, or in response to, white supremacy.

And in fact, one of the critiques coming out of doing Southern history was this idea that race relations framework, that race relations defines, uh, African-American history or Black history. And it's simply **not true** because much of what people do in terms of, of social formation, community building, um, is, is, is what Raymond Williams might call alternative cultures. In other words, **it may be structured in dominance in some ways, but not defined by it.** And Cedric's Black Marxism, you know, really made this point. He talks about the ontological totality, you know, the, this sense of being and making ourselves whole, in that we come out of an experience, again, structured by white supremacy, structured by violence, structured by enslavement and dispossession, but, but one in which western hegemony didn't work, you know, that modes of thinking wasn't defined by Enlightenment modes of thinking.

In other words, that, that part of the **Black radical tradition is** a **refusal to be property**, to even admit that human beings could be property. You know, so we sometimes give white supremacy **way too much credit**, and maybe I misunderstood the question. And so I think that there's lots of things that happen outside of joy and survival, and survival is important, but survival is not the end all, you know. So I think, and I'll give you one very, very specific example, and now I'm not gonna say anything else after this. The way we have tended to more recently treat slavery, Jim Crow and mass incarceration as a piece, as the reinstantiation of the same thing, the continuation, that denies the fact that these systems are **actually** **distinct**, that they are historically specific, and in fact they’re responses to, in many ways, to the weakness of this as a racial regime.

So if you think of like the whole idea of the new Jim Crow to me is very, very problematic. Um, although that book by Michelle Alexander is very, very powerful and very useful in terms of educating people about prisons. **Jim Crow was not the continuation of slavery.** It was not. Jim Crow was a **response to** the **Black Democratic**, uh, **upsurge** after slavery. It was a revolution of Reconstruction. It was a way to try to suppress that. The fact that, that, you know, there was this incredible response. That's why there's a, there's a huge gap between 1877 at the official end of Reconstruction and the rise of Jim Crow, which is the 1890s, disfranchisement, lynching. That's because you've had 13, 14, 15, 20, 25 years of a democratic possibility and struggle. The same thing with mass incarceration—yes, we've had incarceration, but it's, but that, that, that, that upward swing has a lot to do with, again, **response**s **to** the **struggles in the 1960s**, the assault on the Keynesian welfare-warfare state, the fact that you know the, the war on political, the formation of political prisoners, those struggles in fact was the state's **response to opposition.** And so if we don't acknowledge that, then what we end up doing is thinking that somehow there's a structure of white supremacy that's unchanging, fixed, and so powerful we can't do anything about it when in fact it's the opposite.

White supremacy is fragile. White supremacy is weak. Racial regimes actually are always having to shore themselves up precisely **because they're unstable.** We can see that. We can't see it because **the whole system of hegemony** is to give us the impression that it is so powerful, there's **no space out.** And yet it’s working overtime to, to respond to our opposition. Right. That may not answer your question, but that's sort of a way I think about it. Maybe it’s not satisfactory, but yeah.

#### Humanism that’s oriented “to praxis in this world” is good – it’s not “all lives matter” but necessary to cultivate black endurance.

Pithouse 16 Richard PITHOUSE, senior researcher, programme coordinator and supervisor at the Unit for Humanities at Rhodes University, 16 [“Frantz Fanon: Philosophy, Praxis, and the Occult Zone,” Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy, Vol. XXIV, No 1, 2016, p. 116-138, http://www.jffp.org/ojs/index.php/jffp/article/viewFile/761/723]

Racism, as ideology, is organised around the assertion that humanity is riven by an ontological split. In the consciousness of the racist, and in the general intellect of racist social formations, this ontological split is taken as part of what Immanuel Kant called the a priori, the categories through which sense is made of experience.61 This deception of reason, this “racist rationality”62 results in racist societies producing forms of knowledge that, while authorised as the most fully formed instances of reason at work, are fundamentally irrational. In The “North African Syndrome”, an essay first published in 1952, Frantz Fanon wrote that in the French medical establishment: (T)he attitude of medical personnel is very often an a priori attitude. The North African does not come with a substratum common to his race, but on a foundation built by the European. In other words, the North Africa, spontaneously, by the very fact of appearing in the scene, enters into a pre-existing framework.63 In other words medical science in colonial France allowed a priori ontological assumptions to prevent it from making rational sense of experience. In Black Skin, White Masks, published in the same year, Fanon also offers a critique of philosophy in colonial France. He insists that the lived experience of the black person is not congruent with any (philosophically orthodox) “ontological explanation” because “The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man.”64 Fanon stresses that racism is not only unreasonable but that it structures the a priori categories through which experience is mediated in a manner that makes it impossible to recognise reason expressed from black embodiment as reason: “[W]hen I was present, it was not; when it was there, I was no longer.”65 The inability to recognise black reason as reason produces an inability to recognise black political agency – a distortion of reality all too evident in both historiography and contemporary attempts to think the political. In his discussion of the evident fact that, in the colonial imagination, the Haitian Revolution “entered history with the peculiar characteristic of being unthinkable as it happened” Michel-Rolph Trouillot writes that: the contention that enslaved Africans and their descendants could not envision freedom – let alone formulate strategies for gaining and securing such freedom – was based not so much on empirical evidence as on an ontology, an implicit organization of the world and its inhabitants.66 He goes on to show that racist ontology continued to structure the historiography of the Haitian Revolution for the next two centuries. Lewis Gordon, riffing off Fanon as well as W.E.B. du Bois, uses the idea of illicit appearance to theorise the absence “of the right of appearance” beyond the right to appear as reasonable resulting in invisibility and hypervisibility – “the effect of which is the erasure of individuating or contextualizing considerations - that is, human invisibility.”67 “When you come down to it” Fanon wrote in The North African Syndrome, “the North African is a simulator, a liar, a malingerer, a sluggard, a thief.”68 Lewis and Jane Anna Gordon, writing together, argue that across space and time elites generally assume that the system in which they have prospered is ultimately good and that the people that disrupt its smooth functioning must be problem people – even monsters. Gordon and Gordon point out that in anti-black societies, black people are rendered monstrous “when they attempt to live and participate in the wider civil society and engage in processes of governing among whites...Their presence in society generally constitutes crime.”69 Fanon begins the pivotal fifth chapter of Black Skin, White Masks with the cauterisation of an affirmation of a desire for sociality: ““I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects.”70 The chapter concludes with the defeat of all attempts to attain recognition in a racist world: “I wanted to rise, but the disemboweled silence fell back upon me, its wings paralyzed. Without responsibility, straddling Nothingness and Infinity, I began to weep.”71 His response to the impossibility of a dialectic of recognition72 is not to give up on the aspiration for a world of mutuality, of universal humanism (predicated on a universal ontology) – he still aspires to a world that will recognise “the open door of every consciousness”73 - but to accept that he has found himself in a world “in which I am summoned into battle”74 and to commit to action: “To educate man to be actional, preserving in all his relations his respect for the basic values that constitute a human world, is the prime task of him who, having taken thought, prepares to act.”75 In Gordon’s estimation the Fanonian position is that “Legitimacy doesn’t emerge from the proof of cultural heritage or racial authenticity, it emerges...[Fanon] argues, from active engagement in struggles for social transformation and building institutions and ideas that nourish and liberate the formerly colonized.”76 This commitment to praxis is a politics that, in Gordon’s formulation, requires a commitment to “meeting people on the terrain where they live”77 with a view to forging what, as noted above, Mbembe calls “a radical future orientated politics in this world and these times.”78 Such a politics, it is asserted here, must be grounded in what S’bu Zikode first called a ‘living politics’79 and what Lewis Gordon calls ‘living thought’ or ‘thinking as a living activity’.80 It requires a decisive break with the idea, all too frequently present in South Africa, that radical politics is fundamentally a matter of rallying ‘the masses’ to the authority of a group of people who, whether situated in a party, a proto-party or an NGO, imagine themselves to be an enlightened vanguard. This is not the apocalyptic politics that, as is sometimes the case in Aimé Césaire’s work, is more concerned with eschatology than praxis. In the Notebook of Return to my Native Land Césaire, in a manner that in some respects anticipates some currents in contemporary Afro-pessimism, affirms that the only thing work starting is “The end of the world!”81 and anticipates the one glorious moment82, the brilliant new dawn in which “the volcanoes will break out and the naked water will sweep away the ripe stains of the sun and nothing will remain but a tepid bubbling pecked at by sea birds – the beach of dreams, and demented awakening”83, a rising of a new sun that would “burst open the life of the shacks like an over-ripe pomegranate.”84 In this vision, in which the political is sublimated into the theological, the authentic radical gesture is, ultimately, to disavow the world as it is and to wait for the birth of a new world. Again unlike Césaire Fanon does not accept the ontological split introduced into the conception of humanity authorised by colonial racism. His evident commitment to the universal85, and action to affirm a universal humanism86, situates him in a line of black radical thought that runs from Toussaint Louverture87 to Biko88, Jean-Bertrand Aristide89 and, arguably for that matter, the constant insistence on the barricades on South African streets of words to the effect of ‘we are human not animal’.90 But like Césaire Fanon’s radical vision is not, at all, a commitment to what Césaire, writing in 1956, termed ‘abstract equality’. Césaire remarks that: To prevent the development of all national consciousness in the colonized, the colonizer pushes the colonized to desire an abstract equality. But equality refuses to remain abstract. And what an affair it is when the colonized takes back the word on his own account to demand that it not remain a mere word!'91 From a South African perspective this condemnation of ‘abstract equality’ sounds almost prophetic but it has always been a colonial response to black insurgency. In in 1801 Napolean wrote, from St Helena, of the French policy, with regard to Haiti, of “disarming the blacks while assuring them of their civil liberty, and restoring property to the [white] colonists.”92 For Fanon emancipation has many aspects. These include a spatial aspect,93 a material aspect,94 the attainment of equality between women and men,95 but, also, and fundamentally, the sovereignty of the human person. Liberation must, he insists, in Sekyi-Otu’s revised translation, "give back their dignity to all citizens, fill their minds and feast their eyes with human things and create a prospect that is human because conscious and sovereign persons dwell therein.”96 In contemporary South Africa this cannot take the form of the sole defence of abstract rights, a politics primarily organised around exploitation via the wage relation or the sort of nationalism that is naïve about the cleavages with the nation. It must to, to return to Mbembe, “take the form of a conscious attempt to retrieve life and ‘the human’ from a history of waste.”97

#### Their politics based in ethnic-racialized identity drawing lines between practices and people results in color-checking and a new standard of “recognizable ethnicity”.

Gaztambide 14 Daniel, doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology, Rutgers University. He currently serves as an adjunct lecturer at Hunter College Silberman School of Social Work, where he teaches courses on race, gender, class, and sexuality and psychoanalytic developmental theory. He is an APA Division 39 (Psychoanalysis) liaison to the APA Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs and a fellow in APA's Minority Fellowship Program. “I’m not black, I’m not white, what am I? The illusion of the color line.” Macmillan Publishers Ltd. 1088-0763 Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society Vol. 19, 1, 89–97 97.

Part of what I am talking about here is what the Lacanian Latino Studies scholar Antonio Viego (2007) refers to as “coercive mimeticism,” an institutional and social practice whereby there are certain ways in which ethnic minorities must act, believe, dress, and be in order to present themselves as “recognizably ethnic,” as Latino-enough, as Black-enough, as Asian-enough, and so forth. It is mimetic insofar as one has to look into the mirror of ethnic identity and adapt oneself to that image, reproducing a very particular ego-identity, one that is often a poor fit to one’s more immediate subjective experience. It is also coercive in that there are institutional, cultural, and societal pressures to conform to that notion of identity in order to find one’s place in the coordinates of race and ethnicity – essentially, to be allotted a place on the color line. We are to take up our respective place on the chessboard as Black or White, pawns in a much bigger and deadlier game. Here we can glean both the imaginary and symbolic functions of racial object maps. These object maps provide coherence and integration in the imaginary to an otherwise chaotic collection of signifiers – the racialized bodies in which we exist. At the same time, racial object maps yield symbolic categories of me and not-me, Black and White, and a language with which to organize and regulate closeness, distance, and racial desire. Conversely, what is contained, or to be more precise, excluded, through the symbolic and imaginary operations of the object map is the Real dimension of race – the ever shifting, anxiety-producing, formless nature of the color line. When ambiguously ethnic subjects fail to see their image in the mirror, when they are unable to play the language games of race and racial signification, there is a noticeable discomfort and anxiety that sets in among those who partake in the production of coercive mimeticism. The illusion of the color line comes into focus, disrupting how we see and define racialized bodies, evoking the fragmented and uncoordinated nature of the child’s body prior to Lacan’s (2005a, b) mirror stage. The illusion of wholeness, of being a whole body-ego – whether White, Black, or Brown – falters, revealing the destitute, undifferentiated, and broken nature of race and racial identity. To survive the encounter with the Real of race, I argue, paves the way for a unique kind of freedom. To give one example, a Puerto Rican-ness is more malleable, flexible, and non-linear than one bound into one static form and yields a fluidity that fosters experimental and novel ways of responding to oppression. This fluidity at the same time can validate the ghosts of one’s ancestors while integrating their wisdom into new, emancipatory potentialities. To be clear, I am not denying the importance of addressing colorism, racism, and the privileging of white skin that exists in the Latino community and other ethnic minorities (not to mention society as a whole). It is important for us to have that conversation, and point out how notions of mestizaje, of hybridity in the Latino experience, may mask underlying tensions around race and skin color, and render the relative privilege of light-skinned Latinos such as myself invisible. At the same time, I am proposing that we also have a conversation that is perpendicular to a critique of racism and colorism, intersecting with it but going towards a different vector. How we exclude one another based on not meeting certain expectations about what it means to be Latino, Asian, Black, etc., threatens to disempower us further, limiting our political power by carving out a “minority of a minority.” as opposed to sustaining often difficult conversations about our sameness and difference. Similarly, as Baratunde Thurston (2011) points out in his recent book, How to be Black, often this kind of black-checking or color-checking narrows our vision of what it means to be Black (or Latino, or Asian, etc.). Reflecting on his own sense of his Blackness, he writes, “One of the most consistent themes in my own experience… is this notion of discovering your own Blackness by embracing the new, the different, the uncommon, and, simply, yourself” (p. 218). Color-checking prevents us from experimenting with different forms of dis-identification which enrich, challenge, and nourish us, and which hold the promise of new forms of resistance, emancipation, and psychosocial revolt. As I argue, these perpendicular conversations push and pull toward different trajectories, but have as their intersection the most crucial nexus of political, cultural, and social justice. So what am I, in the end? I am whatever you want me to be: oppressor, oppressed, cracker, spic, enemy, friend, White, Black, lover, fighter, masculine, effeminate, strong, weak, dead or alive. Just know that with each turn, each attempt to define me, to mark me, to confine and bind me, you free me. Like the hysteric who produces ever shifting configurations of symptoms in order to throw the obsessive physician off guard (see Gherovici, 2003), I will keep producing knowledge of something else, something other, something that is incalculable and undefinable. Something Real. For you I’ll become a Hispanic hysteric, screeching Foucault (1972) with each symptom, with each episode of acting out, “Do not ask me who I am and do not ask me to remain the same” (p. 17). Because in the end this is not really about me, or where I stand on the color line. It is about your illusion about where you stand and where you place yourself in the coordinates of race and ethnicity, of self and other, of Black and White. In that sense I function as your blank screen, receiving your projections and identifications, hopefully returning them to you as knowledge productions that question, destabilize, and decenter your ego, paving the way for the subject that slides in the link between signifier and signified, that does not know if it is caused by the signifier or the signified of race, but is instead, its own cause.

#### The alternative is to un-enlist – true undercommon communication requires absolute vulnerability and unconditionality as opposed to the aff’s line-drawing and embrace of antagonism via black terrorism

Moten and Harney, 13 (Fred and Stefano, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*, p.38 TAT)

The critical academic questions the university, questions the state, questions art, politics, culture. But in the undercommons it is “no questions asked.” It is unconditional – the door swings open for refuge even though it may let in police agents and destruction. The questions are superfluous in the undercommons. If you don’t know, why ask? The only question left on the surface is what can it mean to be critical when the professional defines himself or herself as one who is critical of negligence, while negligence defines professionalization? Would it not mean that to be critical of the university would make one the professional par excellence, more negligent than any other? To distance oneself professionally through critique, is this not the most active consent to privatize the social individual? The undercommons might by contrast be understood as wary of critique, weary of it, and at the same time dedicated to the collectivity of its future, the collectivity that may come to be its future. The undercommons in some ways tries to escape from critique and its degradation as university-consciousness and self-consciousness about university-consciousness, retreating, as Adrian Piper says, into the external world.

This maroon community, if it exists, therefore also seeks to escape the fiat of the ends of man. The sovereign’s army of academic antihumanism will pursue this negative community into the Undercommons, seeking to conscript it, needing to conscript it. But as seductive as this critique may be, as provoked as it may be, in the Undercommons they know it is not love. Between the fiat of the ends and the ethics of new beginnings, the Undercommons abides, and some find comfort in this. Comfort for the emigrants from conscription, not to be ready for humanity and who must endure the return of humanity nonetheless, as it may be endured by those who will or must endure it, as certainly those of the Undercommons endure it, always in the break, always the supplement of the General Intellect and its source. When the critical academic who lives by fiat (of others) gets no answer, no commitment, from the Undercommons, well then certainly the conclusion will come: they are not practical, not serious about change, not rigorous, not productive.

Meanwhile, that critical academic in the university, in the circle of the American state, questions the university. He claims to be critical of the negligence of the university. But is he not the most accomplished professional in his studied negligence? If the labor upon labor, the labor among labor of the unprofessionals in the university sparks revolt, retreat, release, does the labor of the critical academic not involve a mockery of this first labor, a performance that is finally in its lack of concern for what it parodies, negligent? Does the questioning of the critical academic not become a pacification? Or, to put it plainly, does the critical academic not teach how to deny precisely what one produces with others, and is this not the lesson the professions return to the university to learn again and again? Is the critical academic then not dedicated to what Michael E. Brown phrased the impoverishment, the immiseration, of society’s cooperative prospects? This is the professional course of action. This enlightenment-type charade is utterly negligent in its critique, a negligence that disavows the possibility of a thought of outside, a nonplace called the Undercommons—the nonplace that must be thought outside to be sensed inside, from whom the enlightenment-type charade has stolen everything for its game.

### 3

#### Interpretation: Debaters cannot impose race specific burdens. To clarify, they can’t set certain conditions that are contingent based on the racial identity of the debater.

#### Violation – [ black indexicals, be skeptical of non black arguments, reperations etc. are violations]

#### Prefer

#### [1] Blood Quantum DA: Drawing racial lines for arguments sanctions the same genetic purity tests used during american indigenous genocides, jim crow laws, and nazi concentration camp policy – turns and ow case since it supercharges your ontology warrants by increasing skepticism of racial biases

#### [2] Dolezal DA: Race specific burdens incentivize racial role playing for ballots. We aren’t saying you are, but its about norm setting.

#### [3] Legitimacy DA: Racial differentiation delegitimizes the success of all black debaters. Outweighs skews in this one round on community wide impacts

#### [4] Racism DA - Normatively Justifies being racist against minorities because it prioritizes one group over another. They will say nonunique but that begs the question of how their arguments have an impact. Oppression Olympics turns and outweighs case since comparing suffering delegitimizes one.

#### Voters –

#### 1. Accessibility – judge has a prima facie obligation to ensure access to th debate space. All their arguments presuppose access and turns their method since otherwise they reinforce exclusion.

#### 2. Deterrence – Prevents reading the abusive practice in the future since it’s not worth risking which is k2 norm setting indefensible practices die out.

## Case

### Overview

### Method

#### Vote neg on presumption:

#### 1] Systems- the 1AC says institutions create social realities that replicate violence but in-round discourse does nothing to alter conditions. All you do is encourage teams to write better framework blocks.

### Ontology

#### [2] Their frame of gratuitous violence overdetermines human actions within a changeable system

Gordon 20 - Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Connecticut at Storrs; Honorary President of the Global Center for Advanced Studies; Honorary Professor in the Unit for the Humanities at Rhodes University, South Africa; Chairperson of the American Philosophical Association Committee on Public Philosophy; and Chairperson of the Awards Committee and Global Collaborations for the Caribbean Philosophical Association, Lewis Gordon, “Freedom, Justice, and Decolonization,” Routledge, December 31, 2020, <https://www.routledge.com/Freedom-Justice-and-Decolonization/Gordon/p/book/9780367632465>

* Gordon: debate about proof of pessimism is red herring b/c no way to know, even based on history, to project 10 years in the future what social systems will look like, no metaphysical basis to say that things will never change, functions as a tiebreaker
* Impact turn: no inherent trajectory or arc to how things happen, fact this debate is messy and examples on both sides proves shouldn’t invest mental energy in debating these theoretical endpoints, sort out contingent applications
* Answers ontology: ontological structures themselves are inherently paradoxes, to say that anti blackness is ontological imposes the condition itself, persons marked by political systems, justifications they’ve made for ontology rely on a flawed premise that ignores that systems of power can only be relational and contingently imposed

Afropessimism grew into an influential area of black thought by the second decade of the new millennium. The term “Afropessimism,” as I am using it here, came out of “Afro-pessimism.” The elimination of the hyphen is an important development since it dispels ambiguity and in effect announces a specific mode of thought. Should the hyphen remain, the ambiguity would be between pessimistic people of African descent and philosophical or theoretical pessimism.1 The conjoined, theoretical term is what proponents of that intellectual movement often have in mind in their diagnosis of what I shall call “the black condition.” The appeal to a black condition is peculiarly existential, though it is done in this context in ironic ways. Existentialists, after all, as is well known, reject notions of human “nature,” on the grounds that human beings live in a world of possibility, which makes an essentialist notion such as “nature” a matter, at least for such realities, always in the making.2 In the classic formulation, human reality exists prior to its essence. For each human being, essence is, as it were, an appointment whose actuality is not always fulfilled. Such a task does not mean that human beings lack anchorage. Everyone has to start from somewhere and that or those are conditions of possibility for a human world. Existentialists, thus, often prefer to speak or write of “human condition” or conditions for these reasons. What human beings produce is manifold, but key in every instance is a mode of life, a world, so to speak, in and through which human beings could emerge as human. Human beings thus, for the most part, produce human realities and worlds (whether good or bad). Such realities and worlds offer a network of relations and relationships through which many other things are produced, all of which are constellations of meaning. Again, what comes about could be appreciated or rejected, but either is valuable or not in terms of how meaningful it is for ongoing human projects. There is, thus, also a very pragmatic dimension to this existential portrait of what is also called “human reality.” Critics of existentialism often reject its human formulation. Heidegger, for instance, in his “Letter on Humanism,” lambasted Sartre for supposedly in effect subordinating Being to a philosophical anthropology with dangers of anthropocentrism.3 Yet, as I have argued in a variety of writings, a philosophical understanding of culture raises the problem of the conditions through which philosophical reflections become meaningful.4 Though a human activity, a more radical understanding of culture raises the question of the human being as the producer of an open reality. If the human being is in the making, then “human reality” is never complete and is more the relations in which such thought takes place than a claim about the thought. Additionally, what Heidegger fails to understand is, as Keiji Nishitani reminds us, Being is not all it is cracked up to be, as it also covers over instead of reveal reality.5 That includes human reality. The etymology of existence already points to these elements. From the Latin ex sistere, “to stand out,” it also means to appear; against invisibility in the stream of effects through which the human world appears, much follows through the creative and at times alchemic force of human thought and deed. Quarrels with and against existential thought are many. In more recent times, they have surfaced primarily from Marxists, structuralists, and poststructuralists, even though there were, and continue to be, many existential Marxists and even existentialists with structuralist and poststructuralist leanings and tendencies.6 I begin with this tale of philosophical abstraction to contextualize, at least in philosophical terms, Afropessimism. Its main exemplars, such as Jared Sexton and Frank Wilderson III, began their careers with training in academic literary theory, an area dominated by poststructualism since the 1970s through recent times in the Northern academies, even in many cases that avow “Marxism.” Sexton and Wilderson divert from a reductive poststructuralism, or at least attempt to do so, through examining important existential moves inaugurated, as Daniel McNeil observed, by Frantz Fanon and his intellectual heirs.7 The critical question that Afropessimism addresses in this fusion is the viability of posed strategies of Black liberation. (I am using the capital “B” here to point not only to the racial designation “black” but also to the emancipatory one “Black.” Afropessimists often mean both, since blacks and Blacks have a central and centered role in their thought.) The world that produced blacks and in consequence Blacks is, for Afropessimists, a crushing historical one whose Manichaean divide is sustained contraries best kept segregated. There is not only epistemic apartheid, as Reiland Rabaka would formulate it, but also ontological apartheid.8 Worse, any effort of mediation leads, in their view, to confirmed Black subordination and, worse, erasure. Overcoming this requires purging the world of antiblackness, although achieving such would be futile where the black remains since, for them, the black would by definition not “be” there, or, for that matter, anywhere.9 Where cleansing the world is unachievable, an alternative is to disarm the force of antiblack racism. Where whites lack power over Blacks, they lose relevance—at least politically and at levels of cultural and racial capital or hegemony. This is a position I have argued since my first book Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism.10 Wilderson joins me in that critique through exploring my concept of “an antiblack world” to build similar arguments. Sexton makes similar moves, although with a focus on the thought of the sociologist Orlando Patterson, in his discussions of “social death.”11 The rest of this chapter is an exploration of some nonexhaustive criticisms I have of the Afropessimist versions of these arguments, which may be of some use for readers interested in this area of thought. The first is that “an antiblack world” is not identical with “the world is antiblack.” The latter is an antiblack racist project. It is not the historical achievement of such. Its limitations emerge from a basic fact. Black people and other opponents of such an enterprise fought, and continue to fight, against it. The same argument applies to the argument about social death. Such an achievement would have rendered even those authors' and the reflections I am offering here stillborn. The basic premises of the antiblack world and social death arguments are, then, locked in performative contradictions. They fail at the moment they are articulated. Yet, they have rhetorical force. This is evident through the continued growth of its proponents, literature, and forums devoted to it, in which all lay claim to stillborn status. In Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism, I argued that there are forms of antiblack racism that are also offered under the guise of love. I was writing about whites who exoticize blacks while offering themselves as white sources of black salvation. It was a response to those who regard racism exclusively as acts of demonization. There are also racist forms of valorization. Analyzed in terms of bad faith, where one lies to oneself in an attempt to flee displeasing truths for pleasing falsehoods, exoticists romanticize blacks while affirming white normativity and themselves as principals of reality. These ironic, performative contradictions are features of all forms of racism, where one group is elevated to a godlike status and another is pushed below or outside that of human despite both claiming to be human. Antiblack racism offers whites self–other relations (necessary for ethics) with each other but not so for groups forced in a “zone of nonbeing” below or outside them. Although to be outside is not necessarily to be below, it is so in a system of hierarchy in which above is also interpreted as being within. There is asymmetry where whites and any designated racially superior groups stand as others who look downward to those who are not their others or their analogs. Antiblack racism is, thus, not a problem of blacks being “others.” It is a problem of their not-being-analogical-selves-and-not-even-being-others. Fanon, in Black Skin, White Masks, reminds us that Blacks among each other live in a world of selves and others. It is in attempted relations with whites under circumstances where whites control the conditions that these problems of dehumanization and subordination occur. Reason in such contexts, as he observes, has a bad habit of walking out when Blacks enter. What are Blacks to do? As reason cannot be forced to recognize Blacks because that would be “violence,” they must ironically reason reasonably with such forms of unreasonable reason. Contradictions loom. Racism is, given these arguments, a project of imposing nonrelations as the model of dealing with people designated “black.”12 In The Damned of the Earth, Fanon goes further and argues that colonialism is an attempt to impose a Manichean structure of contraries instead of a dialectical one of ongoing, human negotiations of contradictions. The former segregates the groups; the latter is produced from interaction. The police, he observes, is the primary mediator between the two models, as their role is the use of force/violence to maintain the contraries instead of the human, discursive one of politics and civility requiring the elimination of separation through the interactive, and ultimately intimate, dynamics of communication. Such societies draw legitimacy from Black nonexistence or invisibility. Black appearance, in other words, would be a violation of those systems. Think of the continued blight of police, extra-judicial killings of blacks and Blacks in those countries.13 The ongoing model of fascist white rule as the daily condition of blacks is to prevent the emergence of Blacks. An immediate observation of many postcolonies is that antiblack attitudes, practices, and institutions are not exclusively white. Black antiblack dispositions make this clear. In addition to black antiblackness taking the form of white hatred of black people, there is also the adoption of black exoticism. Where this exists, blacks simultaneously receive avowed black love alongside black rejection of agency. Many problems follow. The absence of agency bars maturation, which would reinforce the racial logic of blacks as in effect wards of whites. Without agency, ethics, liberation, maturation, politics, and responsibility could not be possible. This is because blacks would not actually be able to do anything outside of the sphere of white approbation and commands. Afropessimism endorses the previous set of observations, but this agreement is supported by a hidden premise of white agency versus black and Black incapacity. They make much of Fanon's remark that “the Black has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white.”14 Fanon's rhetorical flare led many unfortunate souls to misread this remark. As he had already argued that racism is a socially produced phenomenon, his point was that those who produced it take it to be ontological. In other words, such people—in this case whites—do not take seriously that blacks have any ontological resistance to white points of view. Fanon was not arguing that blacks are ontologically beings, or even nonbeings, of that kind. If this were so, he would not have pointed out, in numerous sections of that book, black and Black experiences with each other. The whole point of the chapter in which that remark is made, “The Lived-Experience of the Black,” is to explore blacks' and Blacks' points of view. This is a patent rejection of an ontological status while pointing to the presumed ontological status of a skewed perspective. Proponents of Afropessimism might respond that their position on white agency and black incapacity comes from Fanon's famous remark that though whites created le Nègre—the French term for, depending on the context, “negro,” “nigger,” and “black”—it was les Nègres who created Négritude.15 Whites clearly did not create Afropessimism, which Black liberationists should, in agreement, celebrate. We should avoid the fallacy of confusing the source with the outcome. History is not short of bad ideas from good or well-intentioned people. If intrinsically good, each person of African descent would become ethically and epistemologically a switching of the Manichean contraries, which means in effect only changing the players instead of the racist game. We come, then, to the crux of the matter. If the goal of Afropessimism is Afropessimism, its achievement would be attitudinal and, in the language of old, stoic—in short, a symptom of antiblack society. At this point, there are several observations that follow. The first is a diagnosis of the implications of Afropessimism as a symptom. The second pertains to the epistemological implications of Afropessimism. The third is whether a disposition counts as a political act and, if so, is it sufficient for its avowed aims. There are more, but for the sake of brevity, I will simply focus on these.16 An ironic dimension of pessimism is that it is the other side of optimism. Oddly enough, both are connected to nihilism, which is, as Nietzsche showed, a decline of values during periods of social decay.17 It emerges when people no longer want to be responsible for their actions. The same problem surfaces in movements. When one such as the Black Liberation movement is suffering from decay, nihilism is symptomatic. Familiar tropes follow. Optimists expect intervention from beyond. Pessimists declare that relief is not forthcoming. Neither takes responsibility for what is valued. The valuing is what leads to the second, epistemic point. The presumption that what is at stake is what can be known to determine what can be done is the problem. If such knowledge were possible, the debate would be about who is reading the evidence correctly. Such judgment would be a priori—that is, prior to events actually occurring. The future, unlike transcendental conditions such as language, signs, and reality, is ex post facto; it is yet to come. Facing the future, the question is not what will be or how do we know what will be but instead the realization that whatever is done will be that on which the future will depend. Rejecting optimism and pessimism, there is a supervening alternative, as we have seen throughout the reflections offered throughout this book—namely, political commitment. The appeal to political commitment is not only in stream with what French existentialists call l'intellectuel engagé (the committed intellectual) but also in what reaches back through the history and existential situation of enslaved, racialized ancestors. Many were, in truth, an existential paradox of commitment to action without guarantees. The slave revolts, micro and macro acts of resistance, escapes, and returns to help others do the same, the cultivated instability of plantations and other forms of enslavement, and countless other actions, were waged against a gauntlet of forces designed to eliminate any hope of success. The claim of colonialists and enslavers was that the future belonged to them, not to the enslaved and the indigenous. Such people were, in colonial eyes, incapable of ontological resistance. A result of more than 500 years of “conquest” and 300 years of enslavement was also a (white) rewriting of history in which African and First Nations' agency was, at least at the level of scholarship, practically erased. Yet there was resistance even in that realm, as Africana and First Nation intellectual history and scholarship attest; what, after all, are Africana, Black, and Indigenous Studies? What, after all, are those many sites of intellectual production and activism outside of hegemonic academies? Such actions set the course for different kinds of struggle today. Such reflections occasion meditations on the concept of failure. Afropessimism, the existential critique suggests, suffers from a failure in their analysis of failure. Consider Fanon's notion of constructive failure, where what does not initially work transforms conditions for something new to emerge. To understand this argument, one must rethink the philosophical anthropology at the heart of a specific line of Euromodern thought on what it means to be human. Atomistic and individual-substance-based, this model, articulated by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and many others, is of a nonrelational being that thinks, acts, and moves along a course in which continued movement depends on not colliding with others. Under that model, the human being is a thing that enters into a system that facilitates or obstructs its movement. Under this model, the human being is actually a being. An alternative model, shared by many groups across southern Africa, Asia, South America, and even parts of Continental Europe, is a relational version of the human being as part of a larger system of meaning. Actions, from that perspective, are not about whether “I” succeed but instead about “our” unending story across time. Under this model, no human being is a being simpliciter or being-in-her-or-himself-or-themselves. As relational, it means that each human being is a constant negotiation of ongoing efforts to build relationships with others, which means no one actually enters a situation without establishing new situations of action and meaning. Instead of entering a game, their participation requires a different kind of project—especially where the “game” was premised on their exclusion. Thus, where the system or game repels initial participation, such repulsion is a shift in the grammar of how the system functions, especially its dependence on obsequious subjects. Shifted and shifting energy afford alternatives. Kinds cannot be known before the actions that birthed them. Participation, understood in these terms, is never in games but acts of changing them. Abstract as this sounds, it has much historical support. For example, Evelyn Simien, in her insightful political study Historic Firsts, examines the new set of relations established in the United States by Shirley Chisholm's and Jesse Jackson's U.S. presidential campaigns.18 There would have been no President Barack Obama without such important predecessors affecting the demographics of voter participation. Simien intentionally focused on the most mainstream example of political life to illustrate this point. Though no exemplar of radicalism or revolution, Obama's “success” came from Chisholm and Jackson's (and many others') so-called “failure.” Despite the appalling reactionary response of a right-wing majority in the 114th Congress during the second term of Obama's presidency and the election of Donald Trump, whose obsession with erasing Obama's legacy exemplified a form of psychoanalytical little man's trauma, the historic fact remains that Obama took the helm of a mismanaged executive branch and gave it a level of dignity and intelligence matched by few of its white exemplars. His successors claim for a restored greatness only reveals the joke that is, in fact, any project on which the term “supremacy” is built: the naked racism and mediocrity that followed—there is an amusing photograph of a Klansman holding up a sign declaring his race's “superior jeans!”—reveal the folly and terror of white megalomania. Beyond presidential electoral politics, there are numerous examples of how prior, radical so-called “failures” transformed relationships that facilitated other kinds of outcome. The trail goes back to the Haitian Revolution, which offered a vision of Black sovereignty that garnered the full force of Euromodern colonial and racist alliances to stall, and back to every act of resistance from Nat Turner's Rebellion in the USA, Sharpe's in Jamaica, or Tula's in Curaçao, and so many other efforts for social transformation to come.19 In existential terms, then, many ancestors of the African diaspora embodied what Kierkegaard calls an existential paradox. All the evidence around them suggested failure and the futility of hope. They first had to make a movement of infinite resignation—that is, resigning themselves to their situation. Yet they must simultaneously act against that resignation. Kierkegaard, as we have seen, called this seemingly contradictory phenomenon “faith,” but that concept relates more to a relationship with a transcendent, absolute being, which could only be established by a “leap,” as there are no mediations or bridge to the Absolute whose distant is, as Kierkegaard put it, absolutely absolute. Ironically, if Afropessimism appeals to transcendent intervention, it would collapse into faith. If the Afropessimist's argument rejects transcendent intervention and focuses on committed political action, of taking responsibility for a future that offers no guarantees, then the movement from infinite resignation becomes existential political action. At this point, the crucial meditation would be on politics and political action. An attitude of infinite resignation to the world without the leap of committed action would simply be pessimistic or nihilistic. Similarly, an attitude of hope or optimism about the future would lack infinite resignation. We see here the underlying failure of the two approaches. Yet ironically, there is a form of failure at failing in the pessimistic turn versus the optimistic one, since if focused exclusively on resignation as the goal, then the “act” of resignation would have been achieved, which, paradoxically, would be a success; it would be a successful failing of failure. For politics to emerge, there are two missing elements in inward pessimistic resignation to consider. The first is that politics is a social phenomenon, which means it requires the expanding options of a social world. It must transcend the self. Turning away from the social world, though a statement about politics, is not in and of itself political. As we have seen, the ancients from whom much Western political theory or philosophy claimed affinity had a disparaging term for an individual resigned from political life—namely, idiōtēs, a private person, one not concerned with public affairs, in English: an idiot. I mention “Western political theory” because that is the hegemonic intellectual context of Afropessimism; I have not come across Afropessimistic writings on thought outside of that framework. We do not have to end our etymological journey in ancient Greek. Recall that extending our linguistic archaeology back a few thousand years we could examine the Middle Kingdom (2000 BCE–1700 BCE) of Kmt's Mdw Ntr word idi (deaf). The presumption, later taken on by the ancient Athenians and other Greek-speaking peoples, was that a lack of hearing entailed isolation, at least in terms of audio speech. The contemporary inward resignation of seeking a form of purity from the loathsome historical reality of racial oppression, in this reading, retreats ultimately into a form of moralism (private, normative satisfaction) instead of public responsibility born of and borne by action. The nonbeing to which Afropessimists refer is also a form of inaudibility. The second is the importance of power. Politics makes no sense without it. As we have seen throughout our earlier reflections on power, Eurocentric etymology points to the Latin word potis as its source, from which came the word “potent” as in an omnipotent god. If we again look back farther, we will notice the Middle Kingdom Mdw Ntr word pHty, which refers to godlike strength. Yet for those ancient Northeast Africans, even the gods' abilities came from a source. In the Coffin Texts, HqAw or heka activates the ka (sometimes, as we have seen, translated as soul, spirit, womb, or “magic”), which makes reality.20 All this amounts to a straightforward thesis on power as the ability with the means to make things happen. There is an alchemical quality of power. The human world, premised on symbolic communication, brings many forms of meaning into being, and those new meanings afford relationships that build institutions through a world of culture, a phenomenon that Freud, we should recall, rightly described as “a prosthetic god.” It is godlike because it addresses what humanity historically sought from the gods—protection from the elements, physical maledictions, and social forms of misery. Such power clearly can be abused. It is where those enabling capacities (empowerment) are pushed to the wayside in the hording of social resources into propping up some people as gods that the legitimating practices of cultural cum political institutions decline and stimulate pessimism and nihilism. The institutions in Abya Yala and in Northern countries, such as the United States and Canada, very rarely  attempt to establish positive relations to blacks, and Blacks the subtext of Afropessimism and this entire meditation. The discussion points to a demand for political commitment. Politics is manifested under different names throughout the history of our species, but the one occasioning the word “politics” is, as we have seen, from the Greek pólis, which refers to ancient Hellenic city-states. It identifies specific kinds of  activities conducted inside the city-state, where order necessitated the resolution of conflicts through rules of discourse the violation of which could lead to (civil) war, a breaking down of relations into those appropriate for  “outsiders.” Returning to the Fanonian observation of selves and others, it is clear that imposed limitations on certain groups amount to impeding or blocking the option and activities of politics. Yet, as a problem occurring within the polity, the problem short of war becomes a political one. Returning to Afropessimistic challenges, the question becomes this. If the problem of antiblack racism is conceded as political—where antiblack institutions of power have, as their project, the impeding of Black power, which in effect requires barring Black access to political institutions—then antiblack societies are ultimately threats also to politics defined as the human negotiation of the expansion of human capabilities or, more to the point, appearance, speech, and freedom. Antipolitics is one of the reasons why societies in which antiblack racism is hegemonic are also those in which racial moralizing dominates; moralizing stops at individuals at the expense of addressing institutions the transformation of which would make immoral individuals irrelevant. As a political problem, it demands a political solution. It is not accidental that blacks continue to be the continued exemplars of unrealized freedom and against whom violence is waged against appearance and speech. As so many from Ida B. Wells-Barnett to Angela Y. Davis, Michelle Alexander, Angela J. Davis, Noël Cazenave have shown the expansion of privatization and incarceration is squarely placed in a structure of states and civil societies premised on the limitations of freedom (Blacks)—ironically, as seen in countries such as South Africa and the United States, in the name of freedom.21 That power is a facilitating or enabling phenomenon, a functional element of the human world, a viable response must be the establishment of relations that reach beyond the singularity of the body. I bring this up because proponents of Afropessimism might object to this analysis because of its appeal to a human world. If that world is abrogated, the site of struggle becomes that which is patently not human. It is not accidental that popular race discourse refers today to “black bodies” instead of “black people,” for instance. As the human world is discursive, social, and relational, this abandonment amounts to an appeal to the nonrelational, the incommunicability of radicalized singularity, and appeals to the body and its very limited reach, if not isolation. At that point, it is perhaps the psychologist, psychiatrist, or psychoanalyst who would be helpful, as turning radically inward offers the promise of despair, narcissistic delusions of divine power, and, as Fanon also observed, madness.22 Even if that slippery slope were rejected, the performative contradiction of attempting to communicate such singularity or absence thereof requires, at least for consistency, the appropriate course of action: silence. The remaining question for Afropessimism, especially those who are primarily academics, becomes this: Why write? It is a question for which, in both existential and political terms, I do not see how an answer could be given from an Afropessimistic perspective without the unfortunate revelation of cynicism. The marketability of Afropessimists in predominantly white institutions—perhaps as an exotic phenomenon that affirms white standpoints as ontological sites of legitimacy—is no doubt in the immediate and paradoxical satisfaction in dissatisfaction it offers. Indeed, if Afropessimists were correct, their only solace would be in black institutions, but that, too, would pose a problem since the argument is that such institutions lack agency because, as black, they are absent. This is not to say that critical black and Black thinkers should not do their work in predominantly white spaces. It is simply that the argument of the impossibility of their doing so makes their location in such places patently contradictory. We are at this point on familiar terrain. As with ancient logical paradoxes denying the viability of time and motion, the best option, after a moment of immobilized reflection, is, eventually, to move on, even where the pause is itself significant as an encomium of thought.

#### [3] Humanity is never closed and a priori orientations towards pessimism ignore lived experience.

Gordon 15 [Lewis, Afro-Jewish philosopher, political thinker, educator, and musician, Professor at the University of Connecticut in Philosophy and Africana Studies, European Union Visiting Chair in Philosophy; Nelson Mandela Visiting Professor of Politics and International Studies at Rhodes University, South Africa; and Chairman of the Frantz Fanon awards committees of the Caribbean Philosophical Association, transcribed from <https://youtu.be/UABksVE5BTQ>, presenting and discussing his book “What Fanon Said”]

* \*\*\*Theonaturalism – religion-based difference
* Gordon: debate about proof of pessimism is red herring b/c no way to know, even based on history, to project 10 years in the future what social systems will look like, no metaphysical basis to say that things will never change, functions as a tiebreaker
* Impact turn: no inherent trajectory or arc to how things happen, fact this debate is messy and examples on both sides proves shouldn’t invest mental energy in debating these theoretical endpoints, sort out contingent applications
* Answers ontology: ontological structures themselves are inherently paradoxes, to say that anti blackness is ontological imposes the condition itself, persons marked by political systems, justifications they’ve made for ontology rely on a flawed premise that ignores that systems of power can only be relational and contingently imposed

The first thing to bear in mind you may wonder why in the beginning of the talk I talked about philosophical anthropology. And many people when they are trying to talk about social change they never think about *what a human being is* and this is something Fanon pays attention to. Many people want to have closed conceptions of human beings because then human beings can be predicable. In fact, in fanons writing he gave an example. One of the problems is that when he would walk in reason seems to walk out. One problem we have to bear in mind when we try to look at the question of human beings in terms of rigid closed systems is that we often are trying to get as a model of how we work as theorists on issues of social change that are actually based on what we can call law like generalizations. Now what is a law like generalization? It is when you make sure that whatever you say has no contradiction down the line. So if you are to say this much [gestures with hand] the next stage must be consistent with that, and the next stage until you are maximally consistent. Do you get that? But here is the problem – and I can just put it in a nut shell- nobody, nobody in this room would like to date, be married to, or be a best friend with a maximally consistent person. You know what that is. Its hell. And this tells you something, because if somebody where maximally consistent, you know what you would say that person is not reasonable. And we have a person here who does work on Hegel that can point out this insight, that a human being has the ability to evaluate rationality. Now why is that important? Because you see the mistake many of us make is many of us want to push the human being into that maximized law like generalization model. So when we think about our philosophical anthropology, some people, our question about intersectionality for instance, what some people don’t understand is nowhere is there ever a human being who is one identity. People talk about race – do you ever really see a race walking? You see a racialized man or woman, or transman or transwoman. Do you ever see a class walking? Class is embodied in flesh and blood people. And we can go on and on. So if we enrich our philosophical anthropology we begin to notice certain other things. And one of the other things we begin to realize is that we commit a serious problem when we do political work. And the problem is this. The question about Wilderson for instance. There is this discussion going on (and allot of people build it out of my earlier books). I have a category I call, as a metaphor, an antiblack world. You notice an indefinite article – an anti-black world. The reason I say that is because the world is different from an anti-black world. The project of racism is to create a world that would be completely anti-black or anti-woman. Although that is a project, it is not a fait accompli. People don’t seem to understand how recent this phenomenon we are talking about is. A lot of people talk about race they don’t even know the history of how race is connected into theonaturalism. How, for instance, Andalucia and the pushing out of the Moors. The history of how race connected to Christianity was formed. A lot of people don’t understand – from the standpoint of a species whose history is 220,000 years old, what the hell is 500 years? But the one thing that we don’t understand to is we create a false model for how we study those last 500 years. We study the 500 years as if the people who have been dominated have not been fighting and resisting. Had they not been fighting and resisting we wouldn’t be here. And then we come into this next point because you see the problem in the formulation of pessimism and optimism is they are both based on forecasted knowledge, a prior knowledge. But human beings don’t have prior knowledge. And in fact – what in the world are we if we need to have guarantees for us to act. You know what you call such people? Cowards. The fact of the matter is our ancestors – let’s start with enslaved ancestors. The enslaved ancestors who were burning down those plantations, who were finding clever ways to poison their masters, who were organizing meetings for rebellions, none of them had any clue what the future would be 100 years later. Some had good reason to believe that it may take 1000 years. But you know why they fought? Because they knew it wasn’t for them. One of the problems we have in the way we think about political issues is we commit what Fanon and others in the existential tradition would call a form of political immaturity. Political immaturity is saying it is not worth it unless I, me, individually get the payoff. When you are thinking what it is to relate to other generations – remember Fanon said the problem with people in the transition, the pseudo postcolonial bourgeois – is that they miss the point, you fight for liberation for other generations. And that is why Fanon said other generations they must have their mission. But you see some people fought and said no I want my piece of the pie. And that means the biggest enemy becomes the other generations. And that is why the postcolonial pseudo-bourgeoisie they are not a bourgeoisie proper because they do not link to the infrastructural development of the future, it is about themselves. And that’s why, for instance, as they live higher up the hog, as they get their mediating, service oriented, racial mediated wealth, the rest of the populations are in misery. The very fact that in many African countries there are people whose futures have been mortgaged, the fact that in this country the very example of mortgaging the future of all of you is there. What happens to people when they have no future? It now collapses the concept of maturation and places people into perpetual childhood. So one of the political things – and this is where a psychiatrist philosopher is crucial – is to ask ourselves what does it mean to take on adult responsibility. And that means to understand that in all political action it’s not about you. It is what you are doing for a world you may not even be able to understand. Now that becomes tricky, because how do we know this? People have done it before. There were people, for instance, who fought anti-colonial struggles, there are people (and now I am not talking about like thirty or forty years ago, I am talking about the people from day one 17th 18th century all the way through) and we have no idea what we are doing for the 22nd century. And this is where developing political insight comes in. Because we commit the error of forgetting the systems we are talking about are human systems. They are not systems in the way we talk about the laws of physics. A human system can only exist by human actions maintaining them. Which means every human system is incomplete. Every human being is by definition incomplete. Which means you can go this way or you can go another way. The system isn’t actually closed.