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#### The Presidency as such is nothing more than a glorified beauty contest – the historical legacy that defines the presidency is one that privileges that which is thought of as beautiful – elections have been won or lost on something as trivial as a scowl or posture – this desire to be beautiful gets to the heart of topic – why is it that those who have wielded presidential powers are those who fit within a certain narrative of what is considered acceptable? The answer is the aesthetic category of beauty:

#### Presidential elections are therefore a sham – political debates are a useful point of analysis – voters want to look at their authoritative President with admiration – this problem pervades analysis of those debates themselves by subordinating arguments to objective beauty criteria

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What is the point of a presidential debate? In the context of American presidential elections, "debate" is something of a misnomer. When former French President Nicolas Sarkozy faced his Socialist challenger, François Hollande, that was a debate - addressing substantive issues and lasting more than two hours. By contrast, presidential debates in the United States are more like **staged performances**, where the answers to every possible question have been rehearsed endlessly with teams of coaches and advisers. The candidates in U.S. debates address carefully selected journalists who rarely follow up on a question. And the candidates' performances are scrutinized **less on the substance of their arguments** than on their presentation, body language, facial tics, unguarded sighs, smiles, sneers and inadvertent eye rolling. Does the candidate come across as a snob or a friendly guy whom one can trust? Do the smiles look real or fake? These "optics" can be of great importance. After all, Richard Nixon's race against John Kennedy in 1960 is said to have been lost on television: **Kennedy looked** cool and handsome**, while Nixon scowled into the camera**, with sweat trickling down his 5 o'clock shadow. In his debates with Ronald Reagan in 1980, Jimmy Carter came across as smug and humorless and Reagan as a friendly old uncle. Carter lost. In 2000, Al Gore was unable to make up his mind about which role he wished to play in his debates with George W. Bush, **so he looked shifty and inauthentic**, changing from arrogant to patronizing and back again. He had the better arguments, but he lost the "debates" (and the election) nonetheless. We are told that the debates this month between President Barack Obama and the Republican challenger, Mitt Romney, might decide the election. It is, according to the pundits, Romney's last chance. If Obama comes across as an elitist professor, he might lose. If Romney gets angry or makes a bad joke, his chances could be blown. Again, this is not a question of who has the best policies, or the soundest ideas; it is all about presentation. More than 67 million Americans watched the first of this year's three debates. According to public opinion polls, only about 17 percent of eligible voters have not yet made up their minds about which candidate to support. That is surprising, given the widening political gap between America's two main political parties. In private, Obama and Romney may be able to agree on many things. But the Republican Party has moved far to the right of Obama's moderate liberalism, and Romney has been pulled along with it. Then there is the great unspoken factor of racial prejudice, something even hard-core right-wing Republicans try not to express openly. A certain percentage of American voters will not vote for a black man, whatever he says or however good he looks in a debate. If policies or prejudices have not persuaded that undecided 17 percent of voters, they must be looking for something else. They want to see whether they like one man better than the other. To them, one can only assume, the debates are nothing more than a personality contest. In past elections, when there sometimes really was not much political difference between Democrats and Republicans, this made a certain sense. Broadly speaking, on economics and foreign policy, the candidates often would be in accord, with Republicans more inclined to favor the interests of big business and Democrats defending the interests of labor. So voters could not always be blamed for finding it hard to make up their minds. Since they could not make a rational choice, they followed their instincts and voted for the candidate they found most sympathetic. This time, there seems to be much less justification for such arbitrary choices. The political differences are too stark. And yet there is a reason not to dismiss the personality contest entirely. After all, the U.S. presidency is a quasi-monarchical institution, as well as a political one. The president and first lady are the king and queen of the American republic, **the official faces that the U.S. presents to the outside world**. It is not utterly absurd, therefore, that voters want to like the look of their presidents, quite apart from the merit of their policies. Choosing the country's most powerful politician on the basis of his presentability on television might seem arbitrary, even frivolous. But it is no more arbitrary than the accident of birth, which determines the right of kings and queens to reign over their countries. The difference is, of course, that most modern kings and queens are constitutional monarchs with no political power. And the man whom U.S. voters choose to lead their country will affect the lives of everyone, not just Americans. Because non-Americans cannot vote in U.S. elections (a pity for Obama, who would probably win a global vote by a landslide), we have to depend on the judgment of that 17 percent of undecided voters watching television this month. **That is not exactly reassuring.** But the American republic has one merit that monarchies lack. Good or bad, the quasi-king can be booted out every four years. Then the competition - part ideological, part beauty contest - can start all over again.

#### The beauty contest is based on rigid exclusion, it isn’t objective nor neutral – this manifests in ossified party structures

Global Research 12 (10/18/12, The Presidential Debates Are Nothing But Scripted Beauty Contests, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-presidential-debates-are-nothing-but-scripted-beauty-contests/5308726?print=1>, RBatra)

The moderators were selected to ensure that nothing unexpected is asked and that only the most staid and establishment views are heard. As journalism professor Jay Rosen put it when the names of the moderators were unveiled, using terms to describe those views that are acceptable in Washington media circles and those which are “fringe”: “In order to be considered as a candidate for moderator you have to be soaked in the sphere of consensus, likely to stay within the predictable inner rings of the sphere of legitimate controversy, and unlikely in the extreme to select any questions from the sphere of deviance.” Here then, within this one process of structuring the presidential debates, we have every active ingredient that typically **defines, and degrades, US democracy**. The two parties collude in secret. The have the same interests and goals. Everything is done to ensure that the political process is completely scripted and devoid of any spontaneity or reality. **All views that reside outside the narrow confines of the two parties are rigidly excluded. Anyone who might challenge or subvert the two-party duopoly is** rendered invisible**.** Lobbyists who enrich themselves by peddling their influence run everything behind the scenes. Corporations pay for the process, which they exploit and is then run to bolster rather than threaten their interests. The media’s role is to keep the discourse as restrictive and unthreatening as possible while peddling the delusion that it’s all vibrant and free and independent and unrestrained. And it all ends up distorting political realities far more than illuminating them while wildly exaggerating the choices available to citizens and concealing the similarities between the two parties. To understand the US political process, one can just look to how these sham debates are organized and how they function. This is the same process that repeats itself endlessly in virtually every other political realm.

#### This aesthetic tendency mirrors the way that political practices operate – It’s no surprise that the dominant group is the one that gets to define beauty – this has historically been used as a tool to marginalize and otherize

Craig 2k6 (Maxine, “Race, beauty, and the tangled knot of a guilty pleasure” Feminist Theory 2006 7: 159)

Discourses of race and beauty are often intertwined. Racist ideologies commonly promote the appearance of the dominant group against the purported ugliness of a subordinate group. When, in his ‘Notes on the State of Virginia’ Thomas Jefferson sought to defend a continued separation of the races, he pointed to what he considered the self-evident beauty of whites (Jefferson, 1975: 187). Likewise, Nazis used assertions of superior Aryan beauty to build anti-Semitism (Mosse, 1985: 139). Claims of beauty have also been central to anti-racist resistance. When Marcus Garvey built a mass African-American movement in the early 20th century, he implored black people to ‘take down the pictures of white women from your walls. Elevate your own women to that place of honor’ (Garvey, 1968: 29). In Garvey’s nationalist rhetoric, racial pride began with an appreciation of the beauty of black women. Despite the close connections between discourses of beauty and racial politics, race has often been left out of feminist analyses of beauty. If we take the 1968 Miss America pageant protest as a historical beginning point for second wave feminist activist critiques of beauty regimes in the United States, we can see that an analysis of the interpenetration of racism and beauty regimes was present at the beginning. The organizers of the 1968 Miss America contest protest decried the racial exclusivity of the pageant, noting that there had never been a black finalist nor a single Puerto Rican, Alaskan, Hawaiian or Mexican-American winner (Morgan, 1970: 586). Though early activists found and critiqued racism and sexism in institutions of beauty, an analysis of race escaped some of the most widely read academic feminist writing on beauty that followed. This section traces the presence, absence and reappearance of race in feminist theories of beauty. My account cannot be strictly chronological, as in some cases early writers and activists had greater sensitivity to issues of race than writers who followed them. In this narrative, I organize the works considered into those that are foundational, those that engaged in a project of specifying differences in women’s experiences of beauty, and those that complicated existing theory by addressing questions of agency. Given the wealth of feminist writing relating to beauty, **this survey is necessarily incomplete and will inevitably omit important work**. Works are included here because they articulate central tendencies within the literature. Lois Banner’s 1983 American Beauty laid important historical groundwork for subsequent feminist scholarship on beauty. By chronicling the transformation of beauty standards in the United States, Banner demonstrated the constructed and historically specific character of ideals of beauty. As written by Banner, however, beauty’s American history is a white women’s history. Joan Jacobs Brumberg’s study of decades of young women’s diaries documents the way that the expansion of marketing to young women increased women’s self-consciousness regarding their bodies. Given that women who have enjoyed certain privileges are more likely to keep diaries and have them collected by archives, the experience documented in Brumberg’s study was primarily that lived by white middle- and upper-class women. Nonetheless, Brumberg’s 1997 The Body Project importantly challenged the common assumption that young women have always been anxious about the appearance of their bodies. Young women’s diaries written in the 19th century were less focused on outer beauty. As the reach of marketing increased throughout the 20th century, young women were more likely to write about their bodies in their diaries and more frequently expressed dissatisfaction with their shapes and weight. Published in the 1980s, essays by Iris Marion Young and Sandra Lee Bartky were also foundational.1 Young and Bartky articulated feminist analyses of women’s beauty work as a disciplinary practice policed by the force of a coercive and pervasive male gaze. These works were indispensable for later feminist writing and practice relating to beauty, yet the woman who was their subject was a racially unmarked, implicitly heterosexual woman of an unspecified class. In Young’s essay ‘Throwing Like a Girl’, the essence of the female experience is a physical passivity caused by ‘the ever-present possibility that one will be gazed upon as a mere body, as shape and flesh that presents itself as the potential object of another subject’s intentions and manipulations, rather than as a living manifestation of action and intention’ (Young, 1980: 154). Women take up the view of themselves as things ‘looked at and acted upon’, and use cosmetics, diets, and other disciplinary practices in attempts to craft themselves into more beautiful things (Young, 1980: 148). In this argument, a woman sees herself as men see her, and the embodied actions a woman takes are usurped by male intentions. She acts upon herself to realize the will of a generalized male gaze. From the present vantage point, Young’s argument appears not incorrect but incomplete. Young’s essay vividly describes and explains the selfconsciousness regarding appearance that male domination imposes on women. Whether measured by the grossly disproportionate amounts of money spent by women on beauty care or the higher rates of eating disorders and cosmetic surgery use among women, it is clear that women, as a group, work to change their appearance more than men do. The feelings of inadequacy produced by the presence of beauty standards in women’s lives are, arguably, among the most personal manifestations of gender inequality in our lives. That being said, the essential woman she describes is that racially unmarked, implicitly heterosexual woman, of unspecified class. Connected to no community, she stands alone under the male gaze. The gazing male is similarly unspecified. What happens if we rethink the argument, with the understanding that the woman under the gaze has a race, a sexual identity, an age, abilities, and more or less wealth? Does she still stand alone in relation to the gaze? Which techniques of transformation are available to her, which are impossible, and what are the meanings of those techniques within her community? When, and if, she sees herself through the eyes of a male, what is his race and how does his race affect her assumptions about what he sees? Is he **also the target of an objectifying gaze?** Sandra Lee Bartky similarly describes beauty work as a product of the female self-surveillance that arises from the male gaze. Yet she describes the beautifying woman as active rather than passive. According to Bartky, women actively construct feminine selves, the only selves that patriarchal regimes support, or risk the ‘annihilation’ that awaits those who refuse to embrace socially acceptable subjectivities (Bartky, 1988: 78). Bartky’s self-monitoring women, like Young’s, are generalized women who stand alone. Each woman, because she is not envisioned as a member of any social group based on race, class, age, sexuality, or ability, is equally alone, and subject to a generalized male gaze. Beginning in the 1980s, and continuing to the present, a sizeable group of scholars has engaged in a project of specifying, in various ways, women’s experiences of beauty standards. These works document and analyse the racism inherent in dominant beauty standards (Banet-Weiser, 1999; Banks, 2000; Bordo, 1993; Candelario, 2000; Chapkis, 1986; Craig, 2002; DuCille, 1996; Espiritu, 1997; Gilman, 1985; Hobson, 2003; Kaw, 2003; Lakoff and Scherr, 1984; Peiss, 1998; Weitz, 2004). Focusing on the diverse and particular ways that dominant beauty standards positioned white, black, and Asian women, these scholars argue that beauty standards maintained racial inequality as well as gender inequality. Much of this scholarship addressed the polarized positions of black women and white women in dominant beauty regimes. Dominant beauty standards that idealized fair skin, small noses and lips, and long flowing hair defined black women’s dark skin colour, facial features, and tightly curled, short hair as ugly. In many, but not all representations, black women’s bodies were also stigmatized as hypersexual, a characterization that positioned black women as the moral opposites of pure white women. The ordeal of Saartjie Baartman, the black South African woman who was transported to London and Paris in 1810 and exhibited barely clothed as an entertaining spectacle, is emblematic of the abusive representation of black women as the hypersexual other (Gilman, 1985). Saartjie Baartman was dubbed the ‘Hottentot Venus’, a name that identified her as a stigmatizing symbol of beauty for a defamed group within a colonial context (Hobson, 2003). The exclusion of non-white women, or their marginalization within representations of beauty, supported the place of white women within beauty regimes. That is, racists defined white and chaste beauty in opposition to the imputed ugliness and hypersexuality of other, racially marked, groups of women (Collins, 2004; hooks, 1992; Omolade, 1983). Writers who have considered the position of contemporary non-white women in beauty regimes have variously found categorical exclusion of women of colour, appreciation of the beauty of women of colour to the extent that they approached the appearance of whiteness, or the inclusion of a changing spectrum of women of colour in the marginalized and marked position of the exotic beauty. A shifting economic and geopolitical context underlies these alternative and unstable positions of women of colour in beauty regimes. Asian women were portrayed as monstrous in 19th-century caricatures drawn by whites engaged in nativist politics. In later periods, when exclusionary immigration laws removed Asian workers from competition with American workers, Asian women were represented as exotic beauties (Espiritu, 1997). African-American women, who were categorically excluded from representations of beauty prior to the Civil Rights Movement, have, within the past forty years, along with the emergence of a sizeable black middle class, gained inclusion in fashion industry and cinematic representations of beauty, albeit often in ways that continue to mark them as exotic (DuCille, 1996). Among these authors Susan Bordo provides the broadest theoretical basis for understanding how beauty regimes locate women in specific valued or devalued positions. She argues that representations of beauty produce norms for women, ‘against which the self continually measures, judges, “disciplines,” and “corrects” itself’ (Bordo, 1993: 25). Her argument was more than a restatement of that advanced by Bartky and Young, because of Bordo’s sustained consideration of the ways that race matters in women’s experience of dominant beauty standards. Racism and sexism intertwine in the form of a normalizing discourse that marks women of colour as abnormal and thus flawed.

#### We repudiate the application of objective beauty standards to political or social contexts, as it applies to the presidency, as it applies to war powers, as it applies to politics, and as it applies to socialization itself.

#### Vote aff to affirm the politics of ugliness.

#### Beauty as a concept allows for violence. Our advocacy functions to reclaim and transform aesthetics to affirm the perspectives of the ugly

Mingus 2011 (Mia, Full text of a keynote address for the Femmes of Colour symposium, queer physically disabled woman of color, korean transracial and transnational adoptee writer and organizer “moving towards the ugly” <http://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/08/22/moving-toward-the-ugly-a-politic-beyond-desirability/>)

As femmes of color—**however we identify**—we have to push ourselves to go deeper than consumerism, ableism, transphobia and building a politic of desirability. Especially as femmes of color. We cannot leave our folks behind, just to join the femmes of color contingent in the giant white femme parade. As the (generational) effects of global capitalism, genocide, violence, oppression and trauma settle into our bodies, we must build new understandings of bodies and gender that can reflect our **histories and our resiliency, not our oppressor or our self-shame and loathing.** We must shift from a politic of desirability and beauty to a politic of ugly and magnificence. That moves us closer to bodies and movements that disrupt, dismantle, disturb. Bodies and movements ready to throw down and create a different way for all of us, not just some of us. [\*share North Carolina story] The magnificence of a body that shakes, spills out, takes up space, needs help, moseys, slinks, limps, drools, rocks, curls over on itself. The magnificence of a body that doesn’t get to choose when to go to the bathroom, let alone which bathroom to use. A body that doesn’t get to choose what to wear in the morning, what hairstyle to sport, how they’re going to move or stand, or what time they’re going to bed. The magnificence of bodies that have been coded, not just undesirable and ugly, but un-human. The magnificence of bodies that are understanding gender in far more complex ways than I could explain in an hour. Moving beyond a politic of desirability to loving the ugly. Respecting Ugly for how it has shaped us and been exiled. Seeing its power and magic, seeing the reasons it has been feared. Seeing it for what it is: some of our greatest strength. Because we all do it. We all run from the ugly. And the farther we run from it, the more we stigmatize it and the more power we give beauty. Our communities are obsessed with being beautiful and gorgeous and hot. What would it mean if we were ugly? What would it mean if we didn’t run from our own ugliness or each other’s? How do we take the sting out of “ugly?” What would it mean to acknowledge our ugliness for all it has given us, how it has shaped our brilliance and taught us about how we never want to make anyone else feel? What would it take for us to be able to risk being ugly, in whatever that means for us. What would happen if we stopped apologizing for our ugly, stopped being ashamed of it? What if we let go of being beautiful, stopped chasing “pretty,” stopped sucking in and shrinking and spending enormous amounts of money and time on things that don’t make us magnificent? Where is the Ugly in you? What is it trying to teach you? And I am not saying it is easy to be ugly without apology. It is hard as fuck. It threatens our survival. I recognize the brilliance in our instinct to move toward beauty and desirability. And it takes time and for some of us it may be impossible. I know it is complicated. …And I also know that though it may be a way to survive, it will not be a way to thrive, to grow the kind of genders and world we need. And it is not attainable to everyone, even those who want it to be. What do we do with bodies that can’t change no matter how much we dress them up or down; no matter how much we want them to? What about those of us who are freaks, in the most powerful sense of the word? Freakery is that piece of disability and ableism where bodies that are deformed, disfigured, scarred and non-normatively physically disabled live. Its roots come out of monsters and goblins and beasts; from the freak shows of the 1800’s where physically disabled folks, trans and gender non-conforming folks, indigenous folks and people of color were displayed side-by-side. It is where “beauty” and “freak” got constructed day in and day out, where “whiteness” and “other” got burned into our brains. It is part of the legacy of Ugly and it is part of my legacy as a queer disabled woman of color. It is a part of all of our history as queer people of color. It is how I know we must never let ourselves be on the side of the gawking crowd ever again in any way. It is the part of me that doesn’t show my leg. It is the part of me that knows that building my gender—my anything—around desirability or beauty is not just an ableist notion of what’s important, but will always keep me chasing what doesn’t want me. Will always keep me hurling swords at the very core of me. There is only the illusion of solace in beauty. If age and disability teach us anything, it is that investing in beauty will never set us free. Beauty has always been hurled as a weapon. It has always taken the form of an exclusive club; and supposed protection against violence, isolation and pain, but this is a myth. It is not true, even for those accepted in to the club. I don’t think we can reclaim beauty. Magnificence has always been with us. Always been there in the freak shows—staring back at the gawking crowd, in the back rooms of the brothels, in the fields fresh with cotton, on the street corners in the middle of the night, as the bombs drop, in our breaths after surviving the doctor’s office, crossing the border, in the first quiet moments of a bloody face after the attack is done. Magnificence was there. Magnificence was with me in the car rides home after long days being dehumanized, abused and steeled in the medical industrial complex. It was there with me when I took my first breaths in my mother’s arms in Korea, and a week later those first days alone without her realizing I wasn’t going home. Magnificence has always been with us. If we are ever unsure about what femme should be or how to be femme, we must move toward the ugly. Not just the ugly in ourselves, but the people and communities that are ugly, undesirable, unwanted, disposable, hidden, displaced. This is the only way that we will ever create a femme-ness that can hold physically disabled folks, dark skinned people, trans and gender non-conforming folks, poor and working class folks, HIV positive folks, people living in the global south and so many more of us who are the freaks, monsters, criminals, villains of our fairytales, movies, news stories, neighborhoods and world. This is our work as femmes of color: to take the notion of beauty (and most importantly the value placed upon it) **and dismantle it (challenge it), not just in gender, but** wherever it is being used to harm people, to exclude people, to shame people; as a justification for violence, colonization and genocide. If you leave with anything today, leave with this: you are magnificent. There is magnificence in our ugliness. There is power in it, far greater than beauty can ever wield. Work to not be afraid of the Ugly—in each other or ourselves. Work to learn from it, to value it. Know that every time we turn away from ugliness, we turn away from ourselves. And always remember this: I would rather you be magnificent, than beautiful, any day of the week. I would rather you be ugly—magnificently ugly.

#### Beauty is defined by difference—it requires ugly as a condition of existence—this value structure manifests in intersecting forms of oppression

Kuhne 2010 (Thomas “Struggling for Beauty: Body Aesthetics and Social Conflict in Modern History”

<http://www.humiliationstudies.org/documents/KuehneStrugglingforBeauty.pdf>)

Beauty matters. That it matters can be easily measured by the amount of money and the time people spend on making their bodies beautiful. Since the 1990s, beauty, understood as body aesthetics, has drawn scholarly attention in various disciplines, but has escaped closer examination in social and cultural history. Sociology, psychology, literature, and visual arts have focused on hegemonic discourses; black studies and gender studies have investigated in nonhegemonic body aesthetics. Inspired by these works, Struggling for Beauty provides what is missing in current academic and popular discussions: an inquiry in the historical fluidity of rivaling body aesthetics. Which notions of beauty have been constructed by different societies? In a book-length essay focusing on the period from the eighteenth century to the present, I will link issues of self and society, body culture and visual culture, regional particularities and globalization to show how and why modern societies struggle for beauty. Beauty defines difference on its own—beautiful versus ugly—and has been seen as a marker of virtue, strength, and wealth. In modern societies, it has often been linked to other categories of social difference such as race and gender. I shall examine such linkages as well as how beauty has emerged as a special category of difference. Though racist and gendered notions of beauty always have been powerful, in the late nineteenth century a new conception of beauty emerged—beauty as the visual expression of physical health, to be achieved individually by regular exercise, healthy nutrition and appropriate lifestyle. Since that time, the idea that beauty is available to everyone has been popularized by mass media, consumer goods, mass sports, star cults, beauty pageants, and cosmetic surgery. The message is clear: You can do it! Everyone can get it! Body aesthetics have grown into a defining feature of the self, of individual identity. In praising the young, slim, athletic, and ‘Aryan’ body, the modern beauty cult has commodified racist ideas of the Enlightenment philosophers. Yet the beauty cult has operated paradoxically to make race, gender, and class invisible. East Asians seeking plastic surgery to ‘westernize’ their eyelids and to lengthen their children’s leg bones indicate the globalization of the western beauty cult. Western fashion and cosmetics seduce consumers all over the world by merging social, sexual and racial diversity into a vision of cosmopolitan harmony. When did this development start and who supported it? In fact, the praise of the blond, slim, fit and ‘sexy’ body has been opposed by ethnic, religious, youth and regional cultures, by feminist movements, scientific institutions, and different lifestyles. Regional beauty pageants sometimes require that contestants adopt an “authentically” local appearance: their antagonism toward national or global beauty queens is not subtle. Afros, dreadlocks, and “natural” hairstyles may (though they need not) signal a visual protest against whatever is considered oppressive or “unmodern” in dominant culture. What counts in many religious cultures is “inner” beauty or, rather, how close one comes to an idealized image of “goodness” (indicated for example by the earlocks of orthodox Jews). Economic considerations are seldom irrelevant. Peasant societies appreciated corpulence in either sex as beautiful rather than as ugly. Why? In subsistence societies corpulence indicates wealth, health, and, in females, fertility and motherhood.

#### Our engagement with ugliness should be understood within the context of unease with non-normative aesthetics – recognition of the POWER of ugliness pushes back against cultural norms of shunning – the 1ac isn’t a reclaiming of beauty but rather an affirmation of ugly

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Ugliness is a topic largely neglected by aestheticians. This neglect no doubt has many roots. Here I’d like to explore just one, namely our uneasiness with saying that people are ugly. We speak readily enough about the moral failings of our fellows, e.g., the duplicity of political leaders or the psychological shortcomings of neighbors, relatives and co-workers. Why then does calling someone ugly make us so uneasy? We shun mention of the ugly, it seems to me, for a number of reasons. First, we naturally enough do not want to think of ourselves as ugly – especially not in the present tense. The thought that others might find us ugly is unsettling and embarrassing, particularly in a culture such as ours, where, rightly or wrongly, success, esteem and love rest so heavily upon physical appearance. So, too we generally try to avoid attributing ugliness to others. Calling the ugly ‘ugly’ – recognizing someone as ugly – is thought to be undemocratic and cruel. Undemocratic because even with a pluralistic conception of beauty, some people are going to lose. It’s bad luck, but a fact. Recognizing the ugly is cruel because, whether the judgment is mistaken (as in the case of Pecola’s self-hatred in Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye) or correct (as with Frankenstein’s monster), calling someone ugly may do as much or more damage as calling them a liar or a cheat. Unlike lying or cheating, ugliness seems to have few excuses, a situation worsened, ironically, by the readily availability of the cosmetic fix and the raising of the bar of “standard” good looks. Hence many of us are rightly reluctant to apply the predicate ‘ugly’ to human beings. The discomfort I am describing is intensified by a long intellectual tradition associating beauty with goodness and ugliness with evil. While a extensive line of physically attractive villains from Vronsky to Rhett Butler attests to the falseness of this connection, an equally entrenched narrative tradition insists upon its truth, using ugliness as a mark of bad character if not downright wickedness (e.g., the ugly stepmothers and stepsisters of Grimm’s fairytales). Alternatively, ugliness and the social ostracism it (unfairly) provokes may turn the good man bad, as the tale of Frankenstein’s creature and a range of others illustrate. The point is that one way or another, an ugly face is frequently associated with a form of moral badness. Medical and scientific traditions take a different slant, linking ugliness with physical rather than moral flaws, specifically with forms of ill-health. Thus the ugly comes to be taken as a reminder of our own aging, vulnerability to illness, disability, and death. Lastly, there’s the connection between beauty and happiness (or success). Aristotle’s answer to the question of whether an ugly man can be truly happy was “No,” although for reasons too complicated to pursue here. We needn’t agree of course. (Literature holds out the promise that Beauty will fall in love with the Beast – although notice, in story after story, the ‘Beast’ turns out to be a handsome prince in disguise). Recent empirical investigations of the strong correlation between felicitous looks and success in the workplace or marriage market auger even less well for the uncomely. Now in all three of these accounts, ugliness is identified with a form of badness, but the negativity in question is extrinsic. In the first case, the real object of our negative judgment is not ugliness itself but the bad moral character with which it is (wrongly) associated. In the second case, the real object of our negative judgment is again not ugliness itself, but its purported relationship with poor health and human vulnerability. So, too, in the third case where the real object of our negative judgment is the ill-fortune presumed to follow from poor looks. In each of these instances we have good reason to be suspicious of the judgments in question because of the unsavory political and social agendas with which they are associated. **The more closely we look, the more evident the inappropriateness or unfairness of the negative value attached to ugliness and the more obvious the reasons why it is not discussed**. The topic is largely avoided. But should it be? Is the role of the ugly fully accounted for by reference to fashion and prejudice? Or is there something bad about ugliness itself? Once we separate the ugly from its connection with views about morality, health and happiness, does any of its badness remain? Or is it the aim of an analysis of the ugly that no one turns out to be ugly? Is the idea to embrace a kind of eliminitivism about the ugly? **The eliminativist analysis of the ugly parallels eliminitivism about race**. On this account, no one turns out to be ugly because there is no such thing as ugliness (only, for example, veiled misogyny, racism, ageism and intolerance of difference) just as we’re to suppose, there is no such thing as a genuine, i.e., intersubjectively valid, standard of beauty. Clearly there is a tension between not wanting to embrace the eliminativist position – one that denies the proposition that we do find some people ugly – and not wanting to endorse the proposition that some people are just ugly. Perhaps judgments of the ugly would cause less trouble if we could avoid predicating ugliness of people. But a culture enthralled with the possibilities of cosmetic transformation makes it difficult to avoid the conclusion not that a few of us are ugly, but that most of us are. And while we may accept that we should not say that people are ugly, it is another thing altogether to insist that we should not find them so. In short, what I am raising in these remarks is possibility that the idea of the ugly – and in particular aesthetic judgments of the ugly – bears further investigation. With this proposal, I suspect, no one will disagree. Moving in this direction builds directly on the revival of interest in the concept of beauty and work at the intersection of aesthetics with race studies, disabilities studies, feminist theory and the history of cosmetic surgery. More controversial perhaps is the idea that the ugly bears examination in its own right. What I have been pointing to is that there seem to be (some) judgments of ugliness, period. What I have in mind here is a category of judgment that attributes intrinsic ugliness to its object, characteristics that are visibly unpleasant in their own right, independent of assumptions about bad health, bad character or ill-fortune. What leads me to this claim is this. Many feminists and other cultural critics assume that certain features or looks (small breasts, a wrinkled brow, the so-called Jewish nose) are falsely presented as ugly. The idea is that such negative judgments are or may be mistaken. If this is right, then in order to tell that such judgments are wrong, we have to have some idea of what it would be to make a correct judgment of ugliness. We need, in other words, some standard by which to separate intrinsic from extrinsic attributions of ugliness and for this we need a philosophical analysis of the ugly. We need in other words to answer the question of how ugliness in its own right is to be understood. And that, of course, is a question for aesthetics. Undertaking such an analysis may of course open aestheticians to certain political or social objections. Many of the same reasons that make talk of ugliness objectionable on racialist or gendered grounds may lead aestheticians to want to deny any possibility of intrinsic ugliness. This reluctance, particularly where human beings are concerned, is natural and proper. But it should, I suggest, be tempered by a willingness to acknowledge that social anxieties about personal misfortune, unfairness and the intractability of our attraction to beauty constitute a meaningful component of life as well as art. Perhaps it is time for the ugly to garner some of the attention routinely bestowed on its more comely cousin, beauty.

#### Even if beauty is good, we should reject its objective imposition – even if we can't change the way society has been structured, we can only weaken those dichotomies by rupturing their conceptual integrity

Craig 2k6 (Maxine, “Race, beauty, and the tangled knot of a guilty pleasure” Feminist Theory 2006 7: 159)

In 1968 inside the convention centre in Atlantic City, fifty women competed to be crowned Miss America. On the boardwalk outside of the hall, another group of women dumped bras, girdles, and false eyelashes into a trash bin to protest ‘the degrading mindless-boob-girlie symbol’ (Morgan, 1970: 585–6). The Women’s Liberation protest at the Miss America pageant attracted extensive news coverage and brought the second wave of the feminist movement into the awareness of a broader public. Many women appreciated the demonstration, which, regardless of its use of theatrical techniques, took seriously the ways in which beauty standards were oppressive to women. For others, the demonstration suggested that the women’s movement was out of touch with women’s ambivalence regarding beauty. The protesters did not seem to see that, despite the coercive pressures of beauty standards, women derive pleasure from beauty. The meaning of beauty in women’s lives continues to be a problem for feminist theory. Feminist scholarship remains caught between two competing analyses of beauty. One frames beauty as part of a structure of oppression. The other describes beauty as a potentially pleasurable instrument of female agency. Perhaps feminist theory remains stalled in this dichotomy because it has been asking the wrong questions about beauty. Michel Foucault raised new questions about the guilty pleasures of sex when he theorized sex as a product of disciplinary institutions and knowledge regimes. He encouraged his readers to ask of any ‘specific discourse on sex . . . appearing historically and in specific places . . . what were the most immediate, the most local power relations at work’ (Foucault, 1990: 97). This paper examines several specific instances of the deployment of beauty. It asks which women claimed beauty for themselves, who proclaimed the beauty of others, and what was at stake when beauty was claimed. As I explore the deployment of beauty, I will put race at the centre of my analysis. I do this with the understanding that race is co-constructed with gender and class. Thus, to write accurately about race, I also write about gender and class. The difficulty of theorizing beauty is that any body which might possibly be characterized as beautiful exists at a congested crossroads of forces. Bodies provide us with a principal means of expression, yet our bodies are read in ways that defy our intentions. We act on others through our bodies, but nonetheless our bodies are the sites of the embodiment of social controls. The body is the locus of our pleasures and it is the vehicle through which we consume. Our bodies are the targets and the subjects of advertisements.

Our bodies mark us in ways that place us in social categories and these categories may form the bases of political solidarities. Each of these uses and meanings of the body can involve beauty. The meeting of these diverse forces in our bodies confounds broad generalizations we might make about the meaning of beauty in women’s lives. I suggest that we look at beauty as a gendered, racialized, and contested symbolic resource. Since beauty is contested, at any given moment there will be multiple standards of beauty in circulation. By thinking about competing beauty standards and their uses by men and women in particular social locations, we can ask about the local power relations at work in discourses and practices of beauty and examine the penalties or pleasures they produce. If we take this approach, oppression and the production of pleasure, domination and resistance no longer exclude each other. Our dichotomies will collapse.

#### All politics is aesthetic—subordinating our 1ac to the goals of a prior political commitment is a depoliticizing move to void the interruptive potential of that aesthetic

**Schlag, '2** [Pierre, Dheidt’s Real Father/BFF and Byron White Professor of Law, University of Colorado School of Law, “Commentary: The Aesthetics of American Law” 115 Harv. L. Rev. 1047]

The various aesthetics, as suggested, are more or less conducive to various political or ethical tendencies. Perhaps a more helpful way of putting it is that political or ethical tendencies are themselves expressed in terms of the various aesthetics. It would be difficult, for instance, to articulate what we call "progressive legal thought" without the energy aesthetic and its images of energy, motion, and change. Similarly, it would be difficult to articulate multiculturalism or identity-politics without perspectivism. And similarly, it would be difficult to articulate conservatism without at some point relying on the notion of status quo and some notion of the grid. Not only do political tendencies depend upon aesthetic commitments, but arguably, it is also an intrinsic aspect of a political tendency (progressive change, multiculturalism, conservatism, etc.) to assert and affirm its own aesthetic. To put it yet another way, none of the political tendencies mentioned above are indifferent to aesthetics. **To be a conservative or a progressive is not just to take certain "substantive" positions, but to be committed to a particular aesthetic of social and political life.** At the same time, a political tendency is often obliged to play on someone else's aesthetic turf. Sometimes, even the insistent assertion of one's own aesthetic will encounter resistance, perhaps fatal resistance. Recall the failed attempts of the Supreme Court at the turn of the twentieth century to limit Congress's commerce power by drawing a grid-like distinction between commerce, on the one hand, and manufacturing, mining, and agriculture, on the other. [n222](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n222) Or recall the "all deliberate speed" and "prompt start" formulae of Brown II, [n223](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n223) which despite the invocation of an energy aesthetic, failed to summon the energy [\*1111] necessary to overcome the inertia of well-entrenched, architecturally inscribed dual school systems. [n224](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n224) Another reason that a political tendency cannot simply be yoked to a particular aesthetic is that there are political objectives that each political tendency will strive to reach (the energy aesthetic), certain positions it cannot surrender (the grid aesthetic), contextual considerations that must be accommodated (the perspectivist aesthetic), and things that must be fudged because they cannot be stabilized (the dissociative aesthetic). [n225](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n225) All of this is to say that despite its own irreducible aesthetic, each political tendency is also driven by its "substantive commitments." And in service of those commitments, any political tendency will at times opportunistically compromise or even jettison its own aesthetic. Arguably, **within any political tendency there are trade-offs, conscious or not, between form and substance, aesthetics and politics**. Viewed from the dissociative aesthetic, this very point is suspect. Indeed, it is not clear at all that politics and aesthetics are sufficiently well differentiated either conceptually or as social formations to allow us to speak cogently of a "trade-off." The relation of form and substance only arises as a political problem once form has been somehow differentiated from substance. [n226](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n226) The felt need as well as the attempt to link form to substance and law to politics depends upon a prior separation of the two. Simply to presume an unproblematic separation is to eclipse an important point about politics and power: if law is an aesthetic construct, then **the moment at which an aesthetic is** asserted or **deployed is a** **moment of power**. [n227](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n227) This is the point at which someone affirms a certain distinction - the grid - or asserts a normative goal - energy. The dissociative aesthetic enables us to step back and look askance: Why picture [\*1112] the situation in terms of a distinction, or a goal, at all? Why are these positions helpful or even possible? B. On Being Taken in There are, of course, **rhetorical uses of the aesthetics**. To the extent that these aesthetics are recognizable forms in law or legal thought, it becomes possible to characterize positions, arguments, and views as instances of this or that aesthetic. In other words, **a "substantive position**" **can be characterized/distorted**, for instance, **as** energy-like and then be criticized in terms of the vices characteristic of the energy **aesthetic**. Such rhetorical efforts can work precisely because we are accustomed to seeing law, legal arguments, theories, and the like in terms of these aesthetics. **Consciously or not, we will read "substantive positions" in terms of these aesthetics**. To the extent that **legal professionals** are unaware of the aesthetics of law, they **can be induced or seduced into accepting political or moral conclusions that they would not otherwise accept**. A wonderful example is provided by a typical reaction to the opinions in Griswold v. Connecticut.[n228](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n228) Typically, law students want to find the "uncommonly silly law" [n229](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n229) banning the sale of contraceptives unconstitutional. They also wish to recognize a constitutional right of privacy. Nonetheless, they experience Justice Stewart's dissent, which denies the existence of a constitutional right of privacy, as a solid and compelling argument. Justice Stewart writes: As to the First, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Amendments, I can find nothing in any of them to invalidate this Connecticut law ... . ... . What provision ... then, does make this state law invalid? The Court says it is the right of privacy "created by several fundamental constitutional guarantees." With all deference, I can find no such general right of privacy in the Bill of Rights, in any other part of the Constitution, or in any case ever before decided by this Court. [n230](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n230) Why is this argument compelling? In particular, why does it seem compelling to legal professionals, including possibly Justice Stewart himself, who wanted to find this "uncommonly silly law" unconstitutional? By way of answer, notice the aesthetic representation of the Constitution in Justice Stewart's dissent. Justice Stewart repeatedly divides "The Constitution" into discrete parts: discrete provisions, distinct constitutional amendments, separate cases. He invokes and evokes the [\*1113] grid. If Justice Stewart's argument seems compelling, it is because he has pictured the Constitution as an inert thing subdivided into "parts" and "provisions," none of which contain the words "right of privacy." Correspondingly, Justice Stewart exemplifies the image of the ideal grid judge. The boundaries of the law have already been set. The grid is in place, and the question is: can a judge find a right of privacy anywhere within the boundaries of any part of the Constitution? No. Look in any part of the Constitution. It's just not there. So if Justice Stewart's ultimate conclusion seems convincing, it is largely because his grid-like depiction of the Constitution is compelling. Justice Stewart's Constitution and his argument are clear, fixed, static, and solid. His opinion has the sobriety of law. By contrast, Justice Douglas's opinion for the Court reads more like an amateur exercise in metaphysical poetry than law. Justice Douglas's Constitution is in motion. Indeed, it is so much in motion that its trajectories can seem somewhat confusing. According to Justice Douglas, the specific guarantees of the Bill of Rights yield certain "emanations"; these in turn form "penumbras." [n231](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n231) In this case, those penumbras "create" (a word used repeatedly by Justice Douglas) a "zone of privacy." [n232](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n232) His opinion evokes motion, expansion, sweep, light, and shadow. One will recognize the energy aesthetic at work. Justice Douglas's Constitution is energized: it moves; it does actual work. Strikingly though, his argument seems unpersuasive. The reason is simple: it looks like all the reasoning is being done by a patchwork of images and metaphors. The reader almost cannot fail to recognize that Justice Douglas's images are doing all the work (and that these images seem contrived). This contrasts sharply with Justice Stewart's opinion, in which the aesthetic remains hidden. It is hard to be taken in by an aesthetic when someone throws it in your face, which is precisely what Justice Douglas does. Notice, however, that once the aesthetics are revealed, Justice Stewart's image of the Constitution as a collection of parts organized in an inert grid is no more obviously compelling than Justice Douglas's view of the Constitution as extending the protection of rights. In fact, once we cast Justice Douglas's hyperboles aside, what he does for constitutional rights in Griswold is not very different from what Chief Justice Marshall did somewhat more elegantly for the powers of Congress in M'Culloch v. Maryland. [n233](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n233) [\*1114] The point is that one can be taken in by the aesthetics of law. A position that may seem inexorable, or compelling, may upon reflection turn out to be an effect of operating or thinking within a particular aesthetic - **one that is itself neither necessary nor particularly appealing**. In Griswold, for instance, once one recognizes Justice Stewart's deployment of a grid-like aesthetic, his opinion loses much of its rhetorical power. [n234](http://www.lexisnexis.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lnacui2api/frame.do?reloadEntirePage=true&rand=1285963865432&returnToKey=20_T10249922497&parent=docview&target=results_DocumentContent&tokenKey=rsh-20.350160.1565320562#n234)Legal professionals can be taken in by aesthetic images for the simple reason that the aesthetics are taken to be the articulation of law itself. And one ends up, as often as not, working within an aesthetic that is not at all hospitable to one's own political or ethical views. The reverse, of course, is also true: one is sometimes taken in by a political or ethical view that is not at all conducive to one's own aesthetics.

## 2ac/1ar

### Public spaces key (pryzbylo)

#### Vote aff to affirm the imperfections of the 1AC against a cult of beauty

Przybyło 2010 (Ela, currently completing a PhD in Women's Studies at York University, “The Politics of Ugliness” <http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_180322_en.pdf>)

 Second, ugliness may be deployed strategically, through an active and exaggerated performance of ugliness in public spaces. Since the production of beauty requires not only a specific appearance but also a certain code of behaviours, feminists may strategically enact „ugly‟ behaviours as a means of deconstructing binaries such as beauty/ugliness, clean/dirty, public/private, and man/woman. Bartky refers to „disciplinary practices that produce a body which in gesture and appearance is recognizably feminine‟ (1990, p.65, emphasis added). These disciplinary practices function to prescribe the body’s sizes and contours, its appetite, posture, gestures and general comportment in space and the appearance of each of its visible parts. (p.80) An excessive performance, performative confusion, or complete disregard of these normative behaviours and practices thus allows for a disruption of the conventions of beauty. Karina Eileraas, in „Witches, Bitches, and Fluids‟, explores the performed ugliness of punk and rock girl bands such as Hole. They deploy ugliness through ugly shrieks and wails (1997, p.127), ripped stockings and smudged make-up (p.129), ugly stage aggression (p.129), and the presence of ugly, dirty bodily fluids (p.132). In such ways, Eileraas argues, some girl bands perform ugliness, dismember femininity and normative feminine behaviours, and actively deconstruct spaces of beauty/ugliness and masculinity/femininity through „parad[ing], parrot[ing], and parody[ing]‟ (1997, p.135). It is exactly such multidimensional and excessive performances of ugliness, which create spaces of binary ambiguity and flux. Through acting ugly, and „doing‟ ugly, ugliness is privileged as a site of expression and as an effective feminist tool for unsettling prescriptive norms of behaviour. Finally, ugliness can be deployed strategically through the very act of performative self-naming. At the beginning of this essay, I discussed Kincaid‟s strategy of deploying ugliness against neocolonizers. Edwidge Danticat, on the other hand, provides an instance of the reappropriation or „embrace‟ of the category of ugliness through a deployment of it onto herself. Speaking of the multiple oppressions that Haitian women face, she rallies around a Haitian idiom: we must scream this as far as the wind can carry our voices. “Nou lèd, nou la!” We are ugly, but we are here! (2003, p.27, emphasis added) Through applying the label of ugliness onto herself (and „her people‟), Danticat immobilizes anyone who might want to hurt her by way of using the term „ugly‟ against her. She performs ugliness strategically, through „embracing‟ the category, deploying it in her own name, and reassembling it as something to be proud of. Acknowledging the political implications behind „ugliness‟ – such as racism, colonialism, sexism, and poverty – Danticat refuses to be immobilized by ugliness or by people who may use the term against her. Instead, she exploits it to her own uses, performs it, and deconstructs its meaning through reconfiguring it as a site of pride: as a site of presence, struggle, and endurance.

### AT: Ontology (shirky)

#### Their focus on ontology is the attempt to maximize beauty – it provides a system for organization that is the antithesis of accepting contingency and imperfection – it is an attempt to ascribe a norm of what is beautiful

Shirky 5 [Clay Shirky, teacher of NYU's graduate Interactive Telecommunications Program, 03/15/05 <http://www.itconversations.com/shows/detail470.html> I hold a joint appointment at NYU, as an Associate Arts Professor at the Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP) and as a Distinguished Writer in Residence in the Journalism Department. I am also a Fellow at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, and was the Edward R. Murrow Visiting Lecturer at Harvard's Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics, and Public Policy in 2010. ]

There are many ways to organize data: labels, lists, categories, taxonomies, **ontologies.** Of these, ontology -- assertions about essence and relations among a group of items -- seems to be the highest-order method of organization. Indeed, the predicted value of the Semantic Web assumes that ontological successes such as the Library of Congress's classification scheme are easily replicable. Those successes are not easily replicable. Ontology, far from being an ideal high-order tool, is a **300-year-old hack**, now nearing the end of its useful life. **The problem ontology solves is not how to organize ideas but how to organize things** -- the Library of Congress's classification scheme exists not because concepts require consistent hierarchical placement, **but because books do**. The LC scheme, when examined closely, is riddled with inconsistencies, bias, and gaps. Top level geographic categories, for example, include "The Balkan Penninsula" and "Asia." The primary medical categories don't include oncology, defaulting to the older and now discredited notion that cancers were more related to specific organs than to common processes. And the list of such oddities goes on. The reason the LC scheme is accumulating these errors faster than they can correct them is the physical fact of the book, which makes a card catalog scheme necessary, and constant re-shelving impossible. Likewise, it enforces **cookie-cutter categorization** that doesn't reflect the polyphony of its contents--there is a literature of creativity, for example, made up of books about art, science, engineering, and so on, and yet those books are not categorized (which is to say shelved) together, because the LC scheme doesn't recognize creativity as an organizing principle. For a reader interested in creativity, the LC **ontology destroys value rather than creating it.** As we have learned from the Web, when data is decoupled from physical presence, it is fluid enough to be grouped differently by different readers, and on different days. The Web's main virtue, in handling data, is to transmute organization from an a priori, content-based judgment to one that can be ad hoc, context-based, socially embedded, and constantly altered. The Web frees us from needing to argue about whether The Book of 5 Rings "is" a business book or a primer on war -- it is plainly both, and not only are we freed from making that judgment firmly or in advance, we are freed from needing to make it explicit at all. This talk begins by exploring the rise of ontological classification. In the period after the invention of the printing press but before the invention of the search engine, intellectual production was vested in books, objects that were numerous but opaque. When you have more than a few hundred books, categorization becomes a forced move, even if the categories are somewhat arbitrary, because without categories, you can no longer locate individual books.

### Moten

#### The 1ac isn't pretending to eradicate racism or perfect the system—it’s an expression of fundamental ambivalence about ossified identity—their recourse to war is an expression of anxiety about the fact that change is difficult—but that doesn’t mean their nihilism is life affirming in any way

**Harney and Moten 13.** Stefano Harney, Professor of Strategic Management Education at the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, Singapore Management University and a co-founder of the School for Study and Fred Moten, Helen L. Bevington Professor of Moden Poetry, “Politics Surrounded,” The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study, pg. 139

That double-edged logisticality, where the one who is shipped is also a smuggler, carrying something – and what he carries is, first and foremost, a kind of radical, non-locatability. The point is, there’s a certain way of thinking about that impossibility of being located, of that exhaustion of location, that only can be understood as depriva- tion. So, like, by way of Frank Wilderson, who, when he elaborates his theory of the special antagonism that structures black life in the administered world also offers this brilliant articulation of this desire for home – “I don’t want to be a cosmic hobo” – which is necessary to any possible embrace of homelessness. Woody Guthrie was a cosmic hobo, Coltrane was a cosmic hobo, so even if I could be something other than a cosmic hobo, I think what I’m gonna do is embrace homelessness for the possibilities that it bears, hard as that is, hard as they are. Homelessness is hard, no doubt about it. But, home is harder. And it’s harder on you, and it’s harder on every-god-damn- body else too. I ain’t so concerned, necessarily, about the travails of the settler. The horrible difficulties that the settler imposes upon himself are not my first concern, though in the end they are a real thing. It’s the general “imposition of severalty,” to use Theodore Roosevelt’s evil terms, that I’m trying to think about and undermine. He knew that possessive individualism – that the self-possessed individual, was as dangerous to Native Americans as a pox-infested blanket. Civilisa- tion, or more precisely civil society, with all its transformative hostil- ity, was mobilized in the service of extinction, of disappearance. The shit is genocidal. Fuck a home in this world, if you think you have one. sTefanO: Just like the people we went to school with or maybe some of your Duke students or indeed settlers of the globe generally. fRed: Yeah, well, the ones who happily claim and embrace their own sense of themselves as privileged ain’t my primary concern. I don’t worry about them first. But, I would love it if they got to the point where they had the capacity to worry about themselves. Because then maybe we could talk. That’s like that Fred Hampton shit: he’d be like, “white power to white people. Black power to black people.” What I think he meant is, “look: the problematic of coalition is that coa- lition isn’t something that emerges so that you can come help me, a maneuver that always gets traced back to your own interests. The coalition emerges out of your recognition that it’s fucked up for you, in the same way that we’ve already recognized that it’s fucked up for us. I don’t need your help. I just need you to recognize that this shit is killing you, too, however much more softly, you stupid motherfucker, you know?” But, that position in which you have no place, no home, that you’re literally off center, off the track, unlocatable, I think it’s important. Again, I think that there’s something to be gained from that part of Fanon’s double alignment of the demand with neurosis. It’s sort of saying, basically, it’s like Malcolm X, when he’d be talking about the distinction between the house negro and the field negro. And the primary distinction that he’d make was that the field negro would be saying, “where can I get a better job than this? Where can I get a better house than this?” He was claiming the location that re- ally wasn’t his, but what he was really claiming was the possibility of location. And Malcolm’s like, “No! I’ll be out in the field. Not only in the hope of something more, something other, than what you think you have but also because there’s something in the field; that even in deprivation, there’s an opening.” sTefanO: Yeah, I think that’s also something I felt again in these London riots. It’s always that stuff about, “why are they fucking up their own neighborhood?” Of course part of it is they don’t own those neighborhoods. But part of it is also, like, “cuz there’s gotta be some- thing better than home.” fRed: It’s like that, what did that Home Secretary say? What are the causes of the riots? She was like, ‘shared criminality.’ sTefanO: She doesn’t know how close she was to the truth. fRed: She’s ridiculous, and yet there’s something deep and kind of true about that. I think you can make a good case that human being in the world is, and should be, sheer criminality. Which also, first and foremost, implies that making laws is a criminal activity. sTefanO: The jurisgenerative stuff...  fRed: Those kids were, basically, like, “fuck this.” And you’re right, if you’re implying that Occupy never got to that. sTefanO: Yeah, it didn’t get there. fRed: A few people started talking about, “let’s occupy everything. Let’s occupy everywhere” – and that’s more in line. But, “we won’t come to your house and bother you.” If that’s the best you can do, then that’s cool too. It’s better to bother someone to death than to die. But we can move past that too.

### Niemonen

#### Mono-causal theories shut down communication by making our self-defense automatically biased—this reifies of race and leads to endless squabbling about authenticity. This card independently loses them the round

Niemonen 10 [Jack Niemonen, American Sociologist, 41(1), 48-81, “Public Sociology or Partisan Sociology? The Curious Case of Whiteness Studies” //liam]

Despite recognition that racial classification systems are not constant, proponents of whiteness studies treat whites as if they were an immutable, bounded, and cohesive category (Bonnett 2003; Eichstedt 2001; Gabriel 2000; Giroux 1997; Hartigan 1997; Keating 1995; Kincheloe 1999; Kolchin 2002; Levine-Rasky 2000; McCarthy 2003; Pugliese 2002; Sidorkin 1999; Yans 2006). They posit a generic white subject, both privileged and unaware of the extent of that privilege. However, even if whites coalesce at certain historical junctures, we cannot conclude that the category “white” is an entity that will continue indefinitely in the absence of antiracist initiatives (McDermott and Sampson 2005; Yans 2006; cf. Niemonen 2007). Reification has the unintended consequence of neglecting how the construction of racial identities is a negotiated, indeed manipulative, process (Bonnett 1998; Rockquemore 2002). In doing so, proponents of whiteness studies understate the contradictions, inconsistencies, and ambivalences within white and nonwhite identities. They assume before the fact that whites regard whiteness rather than nationality, ethnicity, religion, or class as the main factor that separates the civilized from the uncivilized. And, they oversimplify the challenges that nonwhites face by implying that their problems are largely race-related and hence attributable to racism (Croteau et al. 2002; Hartigan 2002; Kolchin 2002; Mansfield and Kehoe 1994; Warren and Twine 1997). Emphasizing the unifying interest in, and reproduction of, dominance minimizes how the boundaries of racial categories are negotiated, reinforced, or challenged in daily life (Alcoff 1998; Bash 2006; Perera 1999). Largely ignored are the complicated interactions between race, class, and sex, and the struggles of many whites to acquire privileges in a class-stratified society, especially economic security and some degree of self-autonomy (Bonnett 1997; Eichstedt 2001; Hartigan 1997, 2000b; Hubbard 2005; Kolchin 2002; Lee 1999; Winders 2003). Reifying the concept of race fails to capture the processes through which it acquires meaning, confers status, or exerts a “structuring effect” (Bash 2006; Lewis 2004). By suppressing intra-group divisions and contradictions, whiteness studies ignore how multiple statuses work together in people’s lives (cf. Brekhus 1998; Merton 1972) and perpetuate an “us-them” view of difference—the binary perspective that is at the core of racist discourses. The reification of racial categories endows them with causal potential and predictive ability, implying that all persons classified as white will exhibit the undesirable traits associated with whiteness, since being white is a condition with distinct, identifiable, but largely negative attributes that are in need of corrective attention (Alcoff 1998; Bash 2006; Hartigan 2000b; Keating 1995; Santas 2000; Scott 2000). In a reversal of the historical equation, “white” has become reprehensible whereas “nonwhite” has become virtuous (Gillborn 1996; Keating 1995). Whiteness studies posit racism as a mono-causal explanation for almost everything. All other forces, including the class struggle, are relegated to the margins. William Julius Wilson’s work is dismissed out-of-hand as a defense of the culture of poverty thesis (e.g., Harrison 1998; Ladson-Billings 1996; Welcome 2004). Racism is the problem. Therefore, whites either actively resist its reproduction or they perpetuate existing inequalities (Hartigan 2000b; Kolchin 2002; Moon and Flores 2000; Troyna 1994). This premise allows for the subsequent argument that whiteness is the source of oppression. If it is eradicated, then social justice will emerge (Moon and Flores 2000; Trainor 2002). Once whiteness is demonized, whites have no choice but to view their selves—ironically—in the context of a deficit model that identifies their failings, after which they may redeem themselves by becoming race traitors. Whites are required to renounce their whiteness but at the same time celebrate the alternatives. Such arguments inevitably result in anger and bafflement (Gillborn 1996; Kolchin 2002). The concept of racism suffers from conceptual inflation; it is used to mark any racially suspect attitude, behavior, policy, or practice (Blum 2002). It is defined as a property of whites who act against nonwhites (Gabriel 2000; Mansfield and Kehoe 1994; Pearce 2003). Whiteness studies proponents dodge the questions of whether or not whites can be victims of racism, and whether or not nonwhites’ atrocities against other nonwhites should be regarded as racist. They generally conclude that nonwhites cannot be racist, for the latter are not beneficiaries of a white-privileged world. Nonwhites lack the power to institutionalize the means that would disadvantage whites and advantage themselves (Eichstedt 2001; Gillborn 1996; Johnson et al. 2000; Ladson-Billings 1996; Tehranian 2000). Being cast as nonwhite means that one cannot escape thinking about race; it means being wounded, hurt, and hampered (Johnson et al. 2000; Leonardo 2004). Thus, in serving as a term of moral reproach, racism has joined vices such as dishonesty, cruelty, cowardice, and hypocrisy (Blum 2002). As opposed to recognizing that rationality, objectivity, and truth are themselves contested concepts that have been the subject of centuries of philosophical debate, whiteness studies conflate this history into a reductive, indeed monolithic, Eurocentrism. Painting Eurocentrism as the enemy creates the impression that it is static over time. It is caricatured as the claim thatWestern epistemology is omnipresent and wielded as a weapon of indoctrination against nonwhites. The struggle against Eurocentrism is transformed into an epistemological project in which the necessary, if not sufficient, condition for overcoming privilege is to disclose the truth about it (Kruks 2005). However, standpoint epistemologies may not constitute a satisfactory alternative (Aya 2004; Hammersley 1993). For example, on what grounds can the claim be made that one or more groups have privileged insight into reality? It cannot be declared before the fact; otherwise, all groups may make the same claim with no possibility of adjudication (Hammersley 1993). Although distinctive insights are possible—for example, as demonstrated in the work of Patricia Hill Collins—the claim that nonwhites have privileged access to the world whereas whites do not is Am Soc (2010) 41:48–81 65 implausible at best (Hammersley 1993; Srivastava 1996). Such an argument begs the question of how a correct perception of the world is achieved. In other words, the argument that personal experience occupies the same epistemological ground as social science is rife with logical and empirical problems. By grounding their framework on the epistemology of provenance (that only the oppressed can claim epistemic authority by virtue of their experiences), proponents of whiteness studies have blurred the distinction between scientific justification and folk beliefs. Personal experiences may be atypical or distorted by self-interest. Yet, to suggest so devolves into debates about the speaker’s authenticity and his or her right to speak. If an objective understanding of the world is impossible, then sociological concepts such as “concentration effects” may be more sophisticated, but no more valid, than the accounts offered by anybody else. If so-called higher values are little more than the hegemonic tactics of whites, and if the epistemology of provenance decides truth and falsehood, or right and wrong, then knowledge is local convention, and any outsider who disputes that claim is a racist (Aya 2004). Sociological research may not escape from normative concerns. However, this body of work is much more sophisticated than the proponents of witnesses studies claim (cf. Alba 1999; Bash 1979; Lee 1999; Lubienski 2003; Mckee 1993; Niemonen 2002). Even if the worth of this work should be evaluated by its public relevance, the claim on the part of whiteness studies proponents that its validity should be evaluated in the same way is questionable. Proponents of whiteness studies imply that true understanding is impossible across bounded groups because the latter construct discourses that—by virtue of the postulates of standpoint epistemology—cannot be communicated across boundaries without violating their authenticity (Sidorkin 1999). This premise creates a dilemma: How is it possible to appeal to social justice, while at the same time disavowing the possibility of authentic communication (Sidorkin 1999)? In fact, the boundaries between discourses are drawn too rigidly as a result of a conception of the social that is fixed, static, and homogenous (Merton 1972). In this context, whiteness is an arbitrary designation that underpins a political project that could not succeed in the absence of reification.

### **Robinson**

#### **A**gency is inevitable – asserting that systems are terminally screwed diminishes the value of resistance to oppression - even if Slavery, resistance was possible

Robinson 2k4 (Reginald Leamon, prof law @ Howard U, researcher on the relation between race and academic thought “Human Agency, Negated Subjectivity, and White Structural Oppression: An Analysis of Critical Race Practive/Praxis” American University Law Review 53, no.6 (August 2004): 1361-1419)

During slavery, when whites ruled blacks by law, vigilance, and violence, blacks fought and died, all in the name of their natural, normal claim to freedom. In addition to fighting and dying, they ran away so often that southern planters called it a “disease.”4 Using guile and wit, slaves escaped, hiding within earshot of their masters. Having escaped, Harriet Jacobs lived for seven years in an attic space over her master’s head.5 Working slowly, slaves frustrated the master’s desired yield. Using sabotage, slaves destroyed tools, making their exploitation inefficient. Feigning sickness, they resisted. Denmark Vesey, future revolt leader, pretended to suffer from epilepsy.6 When not running, slaves used sheer intelligence, patience, and planning. In 1848, Ellen Craft, a white mulatto, dressed like a man, hid her visage behind bandages of a false injury, and refused to talk.7 By her side, ever attentive and properly cowered, the faithful slave was her husband. Believing in their right to be free, Craft and her husband walked and rode their way to freedom.8 Choosing to fight and die, slaves showed us their power to act purposefully. The power to act is human agency, and these actions can support or transform society. Through social and cultural influences, society can constrain or empower ordinary people9 to act by giving them relatively equal access to the rules, resources, and language. By supporting or transforming a society, we express a latent, inexorable power that rejects the thought that white structural oppression negates ordinary people’s subjectivity, thus making them subtextual victims.10 Within a broad structuralist framework, white structural oppression refers to practices like racism that constitute an objective, external power that robs people of their natural right to be free human beings. Subtextual victims refer to ordinary people like blacks who believe that America will always treat them badly, preventing them from attaining social and economic success. For these ordinary people, experiences like subtextual victimization and practices like white structural oppression belie human agency (e.g., right action).11 Although ordinary people like blacks exercised human agency within the crucible of slavery, Critical Race Theory (“CRT”) builds its methodology on the idea that law, race, and power oppress ordinary people, denying them the right to live free and to act purposefully.12 Race Crits have developed deconstructive approaches to unearth how law and race form powerful, objective relations of whites over blacks, men over women, natives over foreigners. Relying on this methodology and these approaches, Race Crits, especially in early writings, analyzed unconscious white racism.13 Given CRT’s early development, these writings were perforce theoretical. Recently, some Race Crits have sought practical, serviceable tools to assist lawyers and activists.14 Practical writings cope better with struggles against white racism. Practical writings talk to community activists.15 They enable political lawyers to examine and transform legal conflicts into practical solutions or legal remedies. These writings encourage left scholars to leave the ivory tower, so that they can work with the ordinary people for whom Race Crits purport to write and on whom their scholarly existence depends.16 Under this view, Race Crits can redress white structural oppression and engage in antisubordination struggles, so that ordinary people can use their human agency.

#### Their alt is entirely useless for real people

Robinson 2k4 (Reginald Leamon, prof law @ Howard U, researcher on the relation between race and academic thought “Human Agency, Negated Subjectivity, and White Structural Oppression: An Analysis of Critical Race Practive/Praxis” American University Law Review 53, no.6 (August 2004): 1361-1419)

Within these antisubordination practices, structural forces dominate, prevailing over ordinary people.183 By Williams and Yamamoto applying the mindset doctrine uncritically, they suggest that ordinary people cannot engage in this assessment and reassessment.184 As the founders had conceived, they use the mindset doctrine to rebuke elite whites’ use of white structural oppression. Yet even if they do not think alike, ordinary people have a “common culture of shared understandings” within their various communities. In the mid to late 1800s in California, Asians had human agency. In the early 1900s, elite whites attempted to subvert this agency through laws like the Alien Land Act. After the California legislature enacted this clearly racist law, Asians found creative ways to hold real property. Although living in hostile climates, Asians forged ahead to the dismay of many whites.185 During slavery, blacks used money to buy their freedom. They worked within the slavery system, reinforcing it indirectly, so that they could be “free.” The irony notwithstanding, blacks had human agency. An antisubordination practice that negates the subject and her agency cannot help ordinary people. Williams and Yamamoto keep ordinary people in the blame game, encouraging them to become self-reflective only so that they can identify the structural forces that affect their lives. Unintentionally, ordinary people become not personally responsible but more efficient at proclaiming their innocence and their victim status, and in so doing, they only marginally inspect their mindsets (or core beliefs). By proclaiming their innocence, ordinary people never know that they, too, co-create racism. In relying on the mindset doctrine, Race Crits like Williams and Yamamoto have little interest in core beliefs, except if they belong to white elites and a system called white structural oppression. Further, while it is clear that Race Crits like Richard Delgado have influenced a new generation of left scholars, none of them has unpacked the disturbing implications for ordinary people. Even under a so-called radical theory like CRT, ordinary people can vitiate personal responsibility, proclaim their innocence, and blame the structural forces that lie solely in white elite hands. In effect, CRT keeps ordinary people like blacks in a victim’s conscience. I apply this point with equal vigor in the following section.

### Brown

#### And, the concept of Social death is a theoretical abstraction that denies agency, is overly reductionist and based on an incomplete historical understanding – makes their epistemology suspect

Brown 09 [Vincent Brown is Professor of History and of African and African-American Studies at Harvard University. AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW, DECEMBER 2009 <http://history.fas.harvard.edu/people/faculty/documents/brown-socialdeath.pdf>]

Slavery and Social Death was widely reviewed and lavishly praised for its erudition and conceptual rigor. As a result of its success, social death has become a handy general deﬁnition of slavery, for many historians and non-historians alike. But it is often forgotten that the concept of social death is a distillation from Patterson’s breathtaking survey—a theoretical abstraction that is meant not to describe the lived experiences of the enslaved so much as to reduce them to a least common denominator that could reveal the essence of slavery in an ideal-type slave, shorn of meaningful heritage. As a concept, it is what Frederick Cooper has called an “agentless abstraction” that provides a neat cultural logic but ultimately does little to illuminate the social and political experience of enslavement and the struggles that produce historic transformations. Indeed, it is difﬁcult to use such a distillation to explain the actual behavior of slaves, and yet in much of the scholarship that followed in the wake of Slavery and Social Death, Patterson’s abstract distillates have been used to explain the existential condition of the enslaved. Having emerged from the discipline of sociology, “social death” ﬁt comfortably within a scholarly tradition that had generally been more alert to deviations in patterns of black life from prevailing social norms than to the worldviews, strategies, and social tactics of people in black communities. Together with Patterson’s work on the distortions wrought by slavery on black families, “social death” reﬂected sociology’s abiding concern with “social pathology”; the “pathological condition” of twentieth-century black life could be seen as an outcome of the damage that black people had suffered during slavery.University of Chicago professor Robert Park, the grand-pe`re of the social pathologists, set the terms in 1919: “the Negro, when he landed in the United States, left behind almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament.” 8 Patterson’s distillation also conformed to the nomothetic imperative of social science, which has traditionally aimed to discover universal laws of operation that would be true regardless of time and place, making the synchronic study of social phenomena more tempting than more descriptive studies of historical transformation. Slavery and Social Death took shape during a period when largely synchronic studies of antebellum slavery in the United States dominated the scholarship on human bondage, and Patterson’s expansive view was meant to situate U.S. slavery in a broad context rather than to discuss changes as the institution developed through time. Thus one might see “social death” as an obsolete product of its time and tradition, an academic artifact with limited purchase for contemporary scholarship, were it not for the concept’s reemergence in some important new studies of slavery. 9 WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED AS AMONG the most onerous of social institutions, slavery has much to tell us about the way human beings react to oppression. At the same time, the extreme nature of the institution naturally encourages a pessimistic view of the capacity for collective agency among subjugated people. As a result, trends in the study of slavery, as with the study of dominance more generally, often divide between works that emphasize the overwhelming power of the institution and scholarship that focuses on the resistant efforts of the enslaved. In turn, this division frames a problem in the general understanding of political life, especially for the descendants of the powerless. It might even be said that these kinds of studies form different and opposing genres—hopeful stories of heroic subalterns versus anatomies of doom—that compete for ascendance. In recent years, if the invocation of Patterson’s “social death” is any indication, the pendulum seems to have swung decidedly toward despair.

### Aesthetics First

#### We control uniqueness --- our aesthetic explanations are valid

**Kateb 2000** [George, Aestheticism and Morality: Their Cooperation and Source: Political Theory, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Feb., 2000), pp. 5-37Published by: Sage Publications, Inc.Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/192282Accessed>]

I have tried, then, to indicate what aesthetic cravings are and how these cravings can never find their gratifications in artworks (and only rarely in nature as given) **but inevitably will seek satisfaction in** nearly all social phenomena**-human relations, conditions, transactions, situations, and for-mations**. The cravings are so intense and aesthetically un-self-aware that, with an apparent innocence, they regularly produce immorality in human life. In turn,the immorality is not perceived, is repressed or attributed to some other cause, or is justified but not on aesthetic grounds. The ideals uncon-sciously preferred to doing the right thing and avoiding wrong are, at least in part, forms of aesthetic craving, whether for the beautiful or for the sublime (in any of their elements). The ideal may be religious or be invested in the preservation of a way of life or a distinctive group identity, the ideal may locate in politics or in masculinity an end in itself or the highest end or may sanctify the aspiration of a rare individual to eminence and greatness, or the natural environment may be cherished at the expense of human life and inter-ests. **In every case, something aesthetic is at work**, and passionately so, but **is not recognized** and hence often morally ruinous in an apparently innocent manner.Gratifications are sought beyond the repertory of artworks or the dis-plays and effects of nature. And perhaps the most blatant case of all is group identity. **How could we make sense more fully of phenomena such as xeno-phobia and racism and of much caste and class felling-notjust in high castes and upper classes-except by reference to aesthetic cravings?** I had better make a distinction at this point. I have two things in mind when I speak of an unconscious or unrecognized aestheticism. First, people and

theorists refuse to see that when they crave and know they crave, say, form, coherence, or dualism, or the indeterminate or the transgressive, they are actually craving something essentially aesthetic (rather than something nec-essary or expedient). This is my lesser point. The second and larger point is that when people and theorists crave, say, form, coherence, or dualism, or the indeterminate or the transgressive, they often represent the craving as if it were for something else (and would also tend to shun the very word craving). They say that they seek truth about God, are trying to follow the mandates of nature( metaphysicallyi nterpreted), or are deferring to the mandates of tradi-tion, authority,or an immemorial code. These are the reasons they give them-selves when they religiously violate morality, ruthlessly defend a way of life, carry on the project of masculinity rigidly, and so on. They do not want to see that some part of the energy of commitment to their projects comes from aes-thetic cravings, cravings **for form, coherence, or dualism, or for the indeterminate or the transgressive or some other aspect of beauty** or sublimity.Great sincerity may lie behind pursuit of these projects as such for themselves, but the sincerity often is accompanied by aestheticism. Yet, I do not mean to reduce human conduct or supra-moral th eorization to aestheticism. I just wish to highlight one significant component, although I believe that, **of all explanatory reductions, the aesthetic one is the least mis-leading-certainly less misleading than the reduction to economic self-interest or to an aggressive will to power**. The human record is not under-standable unless we take into account the force of unconscious or indeliber-ate aestheticism, while the theoretical promotion of supra-morality ideals also sometimes must be seen as (if only driven partly by) unrecognized aesthetic demands. The innocent assault on morality is enormous.

### taylor (finished in the 1ar)

#### This embrace of imperfection is the most decisive move for breaking the status quo aesthetic contract—it exposes fully the arbitrary ironies of status quo aesthetic domination, this act can reshape consciousness and create a dialogue that denies the universality of the dominant Aesthetic.

Taylor, 1998 [Clyde R. Taylor, film scholar and literary/cultural essayist, is Professor at the Gallatin School and in Africana Studies, New York University. His publications include Vietnam and Black America and the script for Midnight Ramble, a documentary about early Black independent cinema, “The Mask of Art—breaking the aesthetic contract” ]

Espinosa's argument furthers the critique of aestheticism and the art-culzture system. To accept the ironic imperfection of resistance **may be the most decisive mental act for breaking the aesthetic contract**. The differ­ence between "perfect" and "imperfect" cinema fully dramatizes the iro­nies of discourse. Espinosa's trope engages an irony where the value-meaning of an imperfect work is always located outside the zone where the judgments of quality are made. If cultural production outside the capitalized zone is categorically "im­perfect," then resistant works from this area are imperfect on two grounds. First, by their origination in an unapproved cultural context, and second by their direct opposition to the values of "quality," through various re-framing techniques. The burden of two codes of representation, one sup­ported, the other opposed, must be carried by practitioners of imperfect culture. More important, the frame of knowledge emerging from resis­tance is inescapably incomplete, a work-in-progress, unavoidably "ex­perimental," unsanctioned, lacking the grounding in approved tradition. **The dialogue of "imperfection" underscores the ironies of domination** as well as subordination. The description of the "perfect" embodies the process I have been calling "entelechy," through which an object may be known by its highest, most ideal development as opposed to its prema­ture or incomplete manifestation, as "man" is the entelechial fulfillment of "boy" in Aristotle's reasoning, or as, in the calculus of domination, "majority" is superior to "minority," Self to Other, Subject to Object, de­veloped to underdeveloped, literate to vernacular, capitalized phenomena over lower-case experience, literature to writing, art to folk art or crafts. The point where the, ironies raised by "perfect/imperfect" resonate most widely is **in the framework of the narrative of mastery against the narra­tive of liberation.** Recall the double-image illustration of the simultaneous pretty woman and the unattractive old woman, "My Wife and My Mother-in-Law." The pretty young woman is favored by the master narrative. She only needs to be male to qualify as its norm-hero, but lacking that, her prettiness makes her a fit object of that hero's desire and quest. The old lady is the young belle's alter ego, her co-defining Other. The perfections of the mas­ter narrative rely on the contrasting presence of imperfections, projected, as noted before, onto the maiden, the servant, the slave. In the schema of mastery, the presence of these incomplete types is necessary for the com­pletion of the perfect story. Even more necessary, of course is the essence of corruption and imperfection, the villain who, were the narrative to be recoded, might also be viewed as a tempter of the maiden, servant and slave to rebel, and in some revisions, might even be understood to be the hero to these Others and their interests. (I hope it is clear by now that I am improvising on the foundation of Espinosa's germinal ideas.) To develop "imperfect cinema" or narration as a concept means simply to work this irony into full consciousness. It is to recognize how imper­fection has been essentialized as a characteristic of any undertaking not authorized by the social structure. Once again we must recall that the master narrative is deployed to control the interpretation of meaning in historical experience as well as in cultural works. With its reiterated theme of the inevitable progress and dominance of the Western bourgeoi­sie, its goal is always to locate perfection in the technical slickness of its self-image on the screen as an index of its relative perfection in the world. Espinosa's figure of speech **brings into daylight the hidden history whereby aestheticism has "imperfected" almost everything** not favorably contributing to its self-image. We should understand that **all cultural pro­duction outside of Occidental culture and mainstream Western popular culture is "imperfect."** All popular culture, all cultural expression pro­duced anywhere, as folklore or whatever, exists in the zone of imperfection. An occasional election occurs of an expressive form perceived as achiev­ing classical status in another culture, say, Noh plays in Japan, Chinese opera, traditional African sculptures, conferring honorary perfectibility on these forms (much as respected persons of color visiting apartheid South Africa were conferred "honorary White" status). But otherwise, imperfection is ordained merely by these expressions being Other, by not being in a European language, or by not having Western stars, or using a different musical scale, the characters in their narratives not rounded to the requirements of Euro-bourgeois individualism, or presenting dances that elude description according to the movement vocabulary of ballet, or celebrating a different history than that shaped around the triumph of the West, **thereby producing only an inept caricature of modernity**, if at all, or honoring different gods. It is also clear that the construction of the **perfect** in aesthetic humanism was partner to the fabrication of White­ness out of whiteness.

#### Identifying with the 1AC as a symbolic action to promote humane social orders is a reason to vote aff that should frame your ballot

**Taylor, '98** [Clyde R. Taylor, film scholar and literary/cultural essayist, is Professor at the Gallatin School and in Africana Studies, New York University. His publications include Vietnam and Black America and the script for Midnight Ramble, a documentary about early Black independent cinema.“The Mask of Art—breaking the aesthetic contract”]

No form of discursive irony is more important to this analytical frame­work than radical resistance. Without radical resistance, there would be no return of the repressed, no challenge to the canon, or the curriculum, no serious interruption to the monologue of European narcissism—no crisis of knowledge. For all the value of the Aesopian voice, its subtleties, complexities, and relative openness to multiple points of view, that voice might ring with an unsettling hollowness, suggestive of abnegation, lack­ing the presence of another voice and perspective in the neighborhood, less tentative, more promising of a full and complete humanity existing apart from the authorized possibilities and determined to fight for its pre­rogatives. Without doubt, the insinuations of resistance form part of the ex­change among the rivals and competitors for Power, and between Power and its victims, even when those insinuations go unvoiced. Power, para­doxically, longs to hear its rebuttal from its victims, and spends idle mo­ments of reverie elaborately imagining them. **But it is the terrible genius of radical resistance, when it finally breaks into speech, that it is full of unwanted surprises, carrying a menace not really anticipated in the day­dreams of confrontation and debate entertained by the powerful.** Far from what is often imagined, **radical resistance is much more com­plicated than just saying "no" to repression**. Radical resistance comprises the highest consciousness of the politics of representation standing out­side the privileged circle of expression. **The goal of radical resistance must be to find effective forms of symbolic action promoting a more hu­mane social order**. **This may be very different from hurling inflammatory language** at the Palace walls. **The rhetoric or resentment sometimes in­cludes the simplistic reversal of the law of the authorities**, **or worse, the mere exchange of identities between oppressor and oppressed, without any reduction in the universe of abuse**. "To turn their evil backwards isto live," was one anagramatic formulation of this impulse.' But of course such a "radical" strategy ends by replicating the influence of the center, co-signing its alienations. Radical resistance carries its own internal contradictions—confusing gestures reaching toward liberation but hampered by the fears and psy­chic burdens that distort the movement toward a more positive social or­der. Gross hyperbole often arises out of a fear of reproducing in oneself the blindness of Cyclopism or the moral ambiguities of Weak Aesopian-ism. That same fear may also lead to muzzling the name of the colonizer, as though that name, like a ghost, will haunt and control one's own thinking. **Equally limiting is the politics of** *ressentirnent,* of spite, the dim politics of emotional venting, blind **rage**, or fantasies of extravagant, hos­tile conspiracies, **or competitions in excess verbiage rampant among the alienated.** **Beyond these simplistic reflex gestures and their momentary narcissis­tic satisfactions**, radical resistance includes the understanding that what must be resisted, as well as offensive portrayals, is a regime of represen­tation that has been centuries in the making. The logic of the present cri­sis demands a particular self-consciousness about its immanence, an awareness of its particular secret, which the dominant order wishes to keep hidden—that the future of that order is not guaranteed. That logic also insists on a double vision regarding representations, viewing them in terms of their specific historical moment, but at the same time as they function within a large-scale historical framework. Within this logic, **the alerted reader will** **never allow herself to accept the idea that a discussion about racial representation** in the Uncle Remus tales, for instance, or Charlie Chan, the Richard Pryor movie *The Toy,* or *The Emperor Jones, Imi­tation of Life, The Birth of a Nation, Amos 'n Andy, The Adventures of Huckle­berry Finn,* a racialized item on the eleven o'clock news, racist Disney films like *Jungle Book* or *Aladdin,* or the liberal lesbian movie, *Fried Green Tomatoes****,* is an isolated moment and not a fragment of a discursive se­quence intimately related to the foundation of modern slavery and high colonialism** **as they flourished in the nineteenth century** and the ration­ales for these systems laid down in the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. The ironies of discourse set up a situation where knowledge is being continually recoded—where one narrative is continually challenged by a counternarrative. But this inescapable fact of language is given a new ur­gency in our present historical period. Received wisdom has come under assault since the 195os on a scale unlike anything since the Euro-enlight‑enment. The present crisis of knowledge has sharpened these ironies into the needling debates of countless culture wars. Broadly speaking, the battle rages between dominant, old knowledge and resistant, new perspectives. (The usual provisos need be entered here: dominant knowl­edge is not monolithic; it is always contested from within as well as from without; and despite labels such as PC, new perspectives are also not monolithic.) At the heart of our contemporary search for reliable ways of knowing lies the fact that the systems of knowledge sponsored by the l'alace have been used in monumental lies about those outside its con­fines, and those who have been lied to and lied about have abruptly made themselves heard through withering critiques. Since World War II a bat­tery of contradictions loom before monological Euro-centered knowl­edge, accelerating toward a showdown. Indeed, the Japanese nationalism of World War II was as much a violent resistance to Western domination as was the non-violent anti-colonial movement of Ghandianism that be­gan long before that Great War. The history of global cultural resistance has yet to be written. But that resistance has grown in form and substance to give Monopolated Light and Power an unwanted, shadowy double; **wherever we encounter domi­nant, centered Western ideology, we are now aware that there is**, some­where in the immediate environment, **another story waiting to be told**. One sure sign of this doubling of discourse is the proliferation of brilliant cultural alternatives, flaunting their pagan difference from authorized "civilized" mores: the spirituals, the blues, the calinda, rumba, folktales, ragtime, *cinema nuovo,* jazz, rhythm and blues, bossa nova, Soul, reggae, highlife, zouk, hip hop. **The intent of the many alternative narratives that now contest the au­thorized version is to revise or recode its interpretations of reality**. Our father, who art in heaven The white man owe me eleven and give me seven; Thy kingdom come, they will be done, If I hadn't took that I wouldn't got none.' This ditty from enslaved Africans in the United States parodies the bib­lical "Lord's Prayer" not merely to interrogate Christianity and the West­ern claim to authority over Christian knowledge, but also as rebuttal to Christian apologies for slavery. It insinuates a hidden knowledge, based in material, economic experience as opposed to the idealistic rationales of "civilized" discourse. If the delicate, modest poems of Phillis Wheatley, the African-born slave girl who became a gifted protegee of a New En‑gland family and author of chiseled neo-classical verse, give us an early example of Weak Aesopianism, this slave song exemplifies an early in­stance of radical resistance to authorized truth.

### Reparations

#### Reparations are impossible because there is no ethical relation to the past—Wilderson basically agrees with this—but using it as the focal point of politics ONLY results in despair

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(Stephen, “On Failing to Make the Past Present”, Modern Language Quarterly 2012 Volume 73, Number 3: 453-474, dml)

In fact, why has the slave past had such enormous weight for an entire generation of thinkers? Why must we predicate having an ethical relation to the past on an assumed continuity between that past and our present and on the implicit consequence that to study that past is somehow to intervene in it? Through what process has it become possible to claim the lives and efforts of history’s defeated as ours either to redeem or to redress? And if we take slavery’s dispossessions to live on into the twenty-­first century, divesting history of movement and change, then what form can effective political agency take? Why must our relation to the past be ethical in the ­first place — and is it possible to have a relation to the past that is not predicated on ethics? It is time to ask these questions again, though I am far from having answers to them. The idea of continuity between the slave past and our present provides a framework for conceptions of black collectivity and community across time. And this idea, a proxy for race, nests within it a signi­cant thesis: the present that most African Americans experience was forged at some historical nexus when slavery and race conjoined, and in the coupling of European colonial slavery and racial blackness a history both inevitable and determined proved the result.2 Nonetheless, with terms of coalition and political solidarity increasingly dif­ficult to articulate, a sense of racial belonging rooted in the historical dispossession of slavery seems unstable ground on which to base a politics. My goal is merely to clear some space for a black politics not animated by a sense of collective condition or solidarity.3 The project of rethinking racial belonging might well begin with forms of unbelonging, negative sociability, abandonment, and other disruptions that thwart historical recovery.These premise a kind of social connectedness on what anthropologists term “social abandonment,” the idea that the social destinies of the unwanted “are ordered.”4 The traces of abandonment frustrate historical recovery (or the attempt to solicit the past for present purposes) to the extent that they signal “an insistent previousness evading each and every natal occasion,” especially when the names proposed for that natality are either “race” or “blackness.”5 One critical origin for these ideas comes from queer theory, specifi­cally the historiographical ethics of what Leo Bersani calls an “anticommunal model of connectedness,” or in Daniel Tiffany’s phrase “a sociological sublime magnetized by abjection.”6 These strains of thought not only acknowledge the radical alterity of the past but announce that “it may be necessary to check the impulse to turn . . . representations [of the past] to good use in order to see them at all.”7 This essay invites contemplation of the gains to be derived from extending the queer acknowledgment of nonrelationality between the past and the present to the racial case. An understanding of slavery in relation to the politics of abandonment (as articulated especially in queer critique) responds to the calls of David Scott and David Lloyd to invigorate discussions of the usable past with the idea of failed futures. Extending the insights of Reinhart Koselleck’s Futures Past, Scott argues that the political projects begun by earlier revolutionaries and historical predecessors can be neither continued nor completed. It is futile to attempt to redeem the past, as for merly dominant cognitive and political categories can no longer “have the same usefulness, the same salience, the same critical purchase, when the historical conjuncture that originally gave [them] point and purchase has passed.” Any revisionary practice of historical criticism in the present must unfold against the backdrop of “the dead end of the hopes that de­fined the futures of the anticolonial and . . . postcolonial projects.”8 Faced with such foreclosed possibilities, we have only our present conjuncture, only our current predicament. Writing in much the same spirit, Lloyd argues that the ­figures in the past with whom we crave a connection possess their own “specifi­c and unreproducible orientation to the future,” and our present, rather than represent the ful­llment of that projection, is more likely “the future imposed on the dead by past violence.” The restlessness of the dead, Lloyd proposes, “stems from the lack of a future fi­t for them.”9 To be historical in our work, we might thus have to resist the impulse to redeem the past and instead rest content with the fact that our orientation toward it remains forever perverse, queer, askew. With its goal of replacing holding with letting go, clutching with disavowal, this essay runs against the grain of work advanced under the banners of “recovery” and “melancholy.” The goal is to specify some of the limits to these modes of critique and to propose other ways of thinking about loss than have been offered by the melancholic turn in recent African Americanist and African-diasporic cultural criticism.