# ADA Nations Round 4 v Liberty CE

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Alice Walker 1983

Hope Is a Woman Who Has Lost Her Fear, http://alicewalkersgarden.com/2013/10/hope-of-healing/

In our despair that justice is slow

we sit with heads bowed

 wondering

how

even whether

 we will ever be healed.

Perhaps it is a question

only the ravaged

the violated

seriously ask.

And is that not now

almost all of us?

But hope is on the way.

As usual Hope is a woman

herding her children

around her

all she retains of who

she was; as usual

except for her kids

she has lost almost everything.

Hope is a woman who has lost her fear.

Along with her home, her employment, her parents, her olive trees, her grapes. The peace of independence; the reassuring noises of ordinary

neighbors.

Hope rises, She always does,

did we fail to notice this in all the stories

they’ve tried to suppress?

Hope rises,

and she puts on her same

unfashionable threadbare cloak

and, penniless, she flings herself

against the cold, polished, protective chain mail

of the very powerful

the very rich – chain mail that mimics

suspiciously silver coins

and lizard scales -

and all she has to fight with is the reality of what was done to her;

to her country; her people; her children;

her home.

All she has as armor is what she has learned

must never be done.

Not in the name of War

and especially never in the

name of Peace.

Hope is always the teacher

with the toughest homework.

Our assignment: to grasp

what has never been breathed in our stolen

Empire

on the hill:

Without justice, we will never

be healed.

Moten 13, Fred Moten, professor of modern poetry, creative writing, and African American literature, “Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh),” The South Atlantic Quarterly, 112:4, Fall 2013, Duke University Press, p736-739.

Over the course of this essay, we’ll have occasion to consider what that means, by way of a discussion of my preference for the terms life and optimism over death and pessimism and in the light of Wilderson’s and Sexton’s brilliant insistence not only upon the preferential option for blackness but also upon the requirement of the most painstaking and painful attention to our damnation, a term I prefer to wretchedness, after the example of Miguel Mellino, not simply because it is a more literal translation of Fanon (though often, with regard to Fanon, I prefer the particular kinds of precision that follow from what some might dismiss as mistranslation) but also because wretchedness emerges from a standpoint that is not only not ours, that is not only one we cannot have and ought not want, but that is, in general, held within the logic of im/possibility that delineates what subjects and citizens call the real world (Mellino 2013). But this is to say, from the outset, not that I will advocate the construction of a necessarily fictive standpoint of our own but that I will seek to begin to explore not just the absence but the refusal of standpoint, to actually explore and to inhabit and to think what Bryan Wagner (2009: i) calls “existence without standing” from no standpoint because this is what it would truly mean to remain in the hold of the ship (when the hold is thought with properly critical, and improperly celebratory, clarity). What would it be, deeper still, what is it, to think from no standpoint; to think outside the desire for a standpoint? What emerges in the desire that constitutes a certain proximity to that thought is not (just) that blackness is ontologically prior to the logistic and regulative power that is supposed to have brought it into existence but that blackness is prior to ontology; or, in a slight variation of what Chandler would say, blackness is the an original displacement of ontology, that it is ontology’s anti- and ante-foundation, ontology’s underground, the irreparable disturbance of ontology’s time and space. This is to say that what I do assert, not against, I think, but certainly in apposition to Afro-pessimism, as it is, at least at one point, distilled in Sexton’s work, is not what he calls one of that project’s most polemical dimensions, “namely, that black life is not social, or rather that black life is lived in social death” (Sexton 2ollb: 28). What I assert is this: that black life—which is as surely to say lf as black thought is to say thought—is irreducibly social; that, moreover, black life is lived in political death or that it is lived, if you will, in the burial ground of the subject by those who, insofar as they are not subjects, are also not, in the interminable (as opposed to the last) analysis, “death-bound,” as Abdul Jan Mohamed (2005) would say. In this, however, I also agree with Sexton insofar as I am inclined to call this burial ground “the world” and to conceive of it and the desire for it as pathogenic. At stake, now, will be what the difference is between the pathogenic and the pathological, a difference that will have been instantiated by what we might think of as the view, as well as the point of view, of the pathologist. I don’t think I ever claimed, or meant to claim, that Afro-pessimism sees blackness as a kind of pathogen. I think I probably do, or at least hope that it is, insofar as I bear the hope that blackness bears or is the potential to end the world.The question concerning the point of view, or standpoint, of the pathologist is crucial but so is the question of what it is that the pathologist examines. What, precisely, is the morbid body upon which Fanon, the pathologist, trains his eye? What is the object of his “complete lysis” (Fanon 2008: xiv)? And if it is more proper, because more literal, to speak of a lysis of universe, rather than body, how do we think the relation between transcendental frame and the body, or nobody, that occupies, or is banished from, its confines and powers of orientation? What I offer here as a clarification of Sexton’s understanding of my relation to Afro-pessimism emerges from my sense of a kind of terminological dehiscence in Orlando Patterson’s (1982) work that emerges in what I take to be his deep but unacknowledged affinity with and indebtedness to the work of Hannah Arendt, namely, with a distinction crucial to her work between the social and the political. The “secular excommunication” that describes slavery for Patterson (1982: 5) is more precisely understood as the radical exclusion from apolitical order, which is tantamount, in Arendt’s formulation, with something on the order of a radical relegation to the social. The problem with slavery, for Patterson, is that it is political death, not social death; the problem is that slavery confers the paradoxically stateless status of the merely, barely living; it delineates the inhuman as unaccommodated bios. At stake is the transvaluation or, better yet, the invaluation or antivaluation, the extraction from the sciences of value (and from the very possibility of that necessarily fictional, but materially brutal, standpoint that Wagner [2009:1] calls “being a party to exchange”). Such extraction will, in turn, be the very mark and inscription (rather than absence or eradication) of the sociality of a life, given in common, instantiated in exchange. What I am trying to get to, by way of this terminological slide in Patterson, is the consideration of a radical disjunction between sociality and the state-sanctioned, state-sponsored terror of power-laden intersubjectivity, which is, or would be, the structural foundation of Patterson’s epiphenomenology of spirit. To have honor, which is, of necessity, to be a man of honor, for Patterson, is to become a combatant in transcendental subjectivity’s perpetual civil war. To refuse the induction that Patterson desires is to enact or perform the recognition of the constitution of civil society as enmity, hostility, and civil butchery. It is, moreover, to consider that the unspoken violence of political friendship constitutes a capacity for alignment and coalition that is enhanced by the unspeakable violence that is done to what and whom the political excludes. This is to say that, yes, I am in total agreement with the Afro-pessimistic understanding of blackness as exterior to civil society and, moreover, as unmappable within the cosmological grid of the transcendental subject. However, I understand civil society and the coordinates of the transcendental aesthetic—cognate as they are not with the failed but rather with the successful state and its abstract, equivalent citizens—to be the fundamentally and essentially antisocial nursery for a necessarily necropolitical imitation of life. So that if Afro-pessimists say that social life is not the condition of black life but is, rather, the political field that would surround it, then that’s a formulation with which I would agree. Social death is not imposed upon blackness by or from the standpoint or positionality of the political; rather, it is the field of the political, from which blackness is relegated to the supposedly undifferentiated mass or blob of the social, which is, in any case, where and what blackness chooses to stay.This question of the location and position of social death is, as Sexton has shown no more rigorously than I could ever hope to do, crucial. It raises again that massive problematic of inside and outside that animates thought since before its beginning as the endless end to which thought always seeks to return. Such mappability of the space-time or state of social death would, in turn, help us better understand the positionalities that could be said, figuratively, to inhabit it. This mass is understood to be undifferentiated precisely because from the imaginary perspective of the political subject—who is also the transcendental subject of knowledge, grasp, ownership, and self- possession—difference can only be manifest as the discrete individuality that holds or occupies a standpoint. From that standpoint, from the artificial, officially assumed position, blackness is nothing, that is, the relative nothingness of the impossible, pathological subject and his fellows. I believe it is from that standpoint that Afro-pessimism identifies and articulates the imperative to embrace that nothingness which is, of necessity, relative. It is from this standpoint, which Wilderson defines precisely by his inability to occupy it, that he, in a painfully and painstakingly lyrical tour de force of autobiographical writing, declares himself to be nothing and proclaims his decision, which in any case he cannot make, to remain as nothing, in genealogical and sociological isolation even from every other nothing.

Moten continues, Fred Moten, professor of modern poetry, creative writing, and African American literature, “Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh),” The South Atlantic Quarterly, 112:4, Fall 2013, Duke University Press, p749-751.

Within this framework blackness and antiblackness remain in brutally antisocial structural support of one another like the stanchions of an absent bridge of lost desire over which flows the commerce and under which flows the current, the logistics and energy of exclusion and incorporation, that characterizes the political world. Though it might seem paradoxical, the bridge between blackness and antiblackness is ‘the unbridgeable gap between Black being and Human life (Wilderson 2010:57). What remains is the necessity of an attempt to index black existence by way of what Chandler (2007:41) would call paraontological, rather than politico-ontological, means. The relative nothingness of black life, which shows up for political ontology as a relation of nonrelation or counterrelation precisely in the impossibility of political intersubjectivity, can be said both to obscure and to indicate the social animation of the bridge’s underside, where the im/possibilities of political intersubjectivity are exhausted. Political ontology backs away from the experimental declivity that Fanon and Du Bois were at least able to blaze, each in his own way forging a sociological path that would move against the limiting force, held in the ontological traces, of positivism, on the one hand, and phenomenology, on the other, as each would serve as the foundation of a theory of relations posing the nothingness of blackness in its (negative) relation to the substance of subjectivity-as-nonblackness (enacted in antiblackness). On the one hand, blackness and ontology are unavailable for one another; on the other hand, blackness must free itself from ontological expectation, must refuse subjection to ontology’s sanction against the very idea of black subjectivity. This imperative is not something up ahead, to which blackness aspires; it is the labor, which must not be mistaken for Sisyphean, that blackness serially commits. The paraontological distinction between blackness and blacks allows us no longer to be enthralled by the notion that black ness is a property that belongs to blacks (thereby placing certain formulations regarding non/relationality and non/communicability on a different footing and under a certain pressure) but also because ultimately it allows us to detach blackness from the question of (the meaning of) being. The infinitesimal difference between pessimism and optimism lies not in the belief or disbelief in descriptions of power relations or emancipatory projects; the difference is given in the space between an assertion of the relative nothing ness of blackness and black people in the face, literally, of substantive (antiblack) subjectivity and an inhabitation of appositionality, its internal social relations, which remain unstructured by the protocols of subjectivity insofar as mu—which has been variously translated from the Japanese translation of the Chinese wu as no, not, nought, nonbeing, emptiness, nothingness, nothing, no thing but which also bears the semantic trace of dance, therefore of measure given in walking/faffing, that sustenance of asymmetry, difference’s appositional mobility—also signifies an absolute nothingness whose anti- relative and antithetical philosophical content is approached by way of Nishida Kitarõ’s enactment of the affinities between structures and affects of mysticism that undergird and trouble metaphysics in the “East” and the “West.” Indeed, the content that is approached is approach, itself; and for the absolute beginner, who is at once pilgrim and penitent, mu signals that which is most emphatically and lyrically marked in Edouard Glissant’s phrase “consent not to be a single being” and indicated in Wilderson’s and Mackey’s gestures toward “fantasy in the hold,” the radical unsettlement that is where and what we are. Unsettlement is the displacement of sovereignty by initiation, so that what’s at stake—here, in displacement—is a certain black incapacity to desire sovereignty and ontological relationality whether they are recast in the terms and forms of a Levinasian ethics or an Arendtian politics, a Fanonian resistance or a Pattersonian test of honor. Unenabled by or in this incapacity, Nishida’s philosophy folds sovereignty in the delay that has always given it significance, putting it on hold, but not in the hold, where to be on hold is to have been committed to a kind of staging, a gathering of and for the self in which negation is supposed to foster true emergence in “a self-determination of that concrete place of the contradictory identity of objectivity and subjectivity” (Nishida 1987: 96). What I term, here, a delay is understood by Nishida as “the moment [that] can be said to be eternal. . . [wherein] consciously active individuals, encounter the absolute as its inverse polarity, its mirror opposite, at each and every step of our lives” (96). It is in echoing a traditional Buddhist teaching, which asserts the nonself even against what are considered foolish declarations of the nonexistence of self, that Nishida restages a standard ontotheological skit in which sovereignty—whether in the form of the consciously active individual or in that individual’s abstract and equivalent dispersion in the nation, “the mirror image of the Pure Land in this world” (123)—takes and holds the space-time, the paradoxically transcendental ground, of the everyday unreality of “the real world,” where the sovereign’s endless show carries a brutally material imposition. What remains to be seen is what (the thinking and the study of) blackness can bring to bear on the relation between the un/real world and its other(s). What if blackness is the refusal to defer to, given in the withdrawal from the eternal delay of, sovereignty? What if Nishida’s preparatory vestibule for a general and infinite self-determination is pierced, rather than structurally supported, by (the very intimation of) the no-place to which it is opposed in his own work? When Nishida argues that “the human, consciously active volitional world makes its appearance from the standpoint of the paradoxical logic of the Prajnaparamita Sutra literature,” which offers us the phrase “Having No Place wherein it abides, this Mind arises,” he means to assert the legitimacy of an idea or image of the whole that takes “the form of the contradictory identity of the consciously active self and the world, of the volitional individual and the absolute” (95—96). What if (the thinking and the study of) blackness is an inhabitation of the hold that disrupts the whole in which the absolute, or absolute nothingness, is structured by its relation to its relative other? What if the nothing that is in question here moves through to the other side of negation, in “the real presence” of blackness, in and as another idea of nothingness altogether that is given in and as and to things?

Carolyn Baker, Ph.D., October 2006

[http://www.fromthewilderness.com/members/100306\_war\_their1.shtml](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/members/100306_war_you1.shtml) “THe War on Their: the US Government targeting of American dissidents”

In 1956 a special program was designed by the FBI—the Counter Intelligence Program or COINTELPRO, which lasted “officially”, until 1971. In the words of Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, authors of [THE COINTELPRO PAPERS](http://www.southendpress.org/2004/items/COINTELPRO), “it involved a unique experiment. Though covert operations have been employed throughout FBI history, the COINTELPRO’s were the first to be both broadly targeted and centrally directed.” [Churchill and Vander Wall’s book is strongly recommended and contains a treasure-trove of copies of original FBI documents.] While overall operations were centrally directed from Washington, day-to-day operations involved local field offices and required a great deal of communication back and forth from Washington to those offices. COINTELPRO generated an enormous paper trail which was largely kept hidden until the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) brought the paper trail to light, at which time, the FBI discontinued all of its formal domestic counter-intelligence programs, but did not cease its covert activities against U.S. dissidents. In fact, when J. Edgar Hoover died in 1972, the FBI “re-packaged” itself as a “new FBI”, but its COINTELPRO operations continued covertly. In the mid-1970s, the Church Committee, named after its founding Chair, Idaho Senator Frank Church, released volumes of documentation of FBI and CIA abuses. Church and his successor were driven from office, and then-National Security Advisor to Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, was instrumental in blocking the flow of information from the Church Committee to the public.[4](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/members/100306_war_you1.shtml%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn4#_ftn4" \o ") Although the original objective of COINTELPRO in 1956 was to “increase factionalism, cause disruption and win defections” inside the Communist Party, USA, it soon expanded to include disruption of the Socialist Workers Party, the Ku Klux Klan, African American nationalist groups, the Black Panther Party (BPP), the New Left, and the American Indian Movement (AIM). While many arrests of members of these groups were made over the decades, it is important to understand that even in cases where crimes had actually been committed, and those cases are few, the FBI policy of neutralizing these groups was in place prior to the arrests. For example, in 1919, J. Edgar Hoover wrote a letter proposing a strategy to neutralize African American nationalist leader, Marcus Garvey. In the proposal, Hoover recommends that the federal government invest vast legal resources to contrive a case against Garvey in order to make him appear guilty of a crime. As Churchill and Vander Hall note, “The key to understanding what really happened in the Garvey case lies squarely in appreciation of the fact that the decision to bring about his elimination had been made at the highest level of the Bureau long before any hint of criminal conduct could be attached to him.”[5](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/members/100306_war_you1.shtml%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn5#_ftn5" \o ") On August 25, 1967, J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI, wrote a top-priority memo to all field offices clearly defining the purpose of COINTELPRO: The purpose of this new counterintelligence endeavor is to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder…No opportunity should be missed to exploit through counterintelligence techniques the organizational and personal conflicts of the leadership of the groups and where possible an effort should be made to capitalize upon existing conflicts between competing black nationalist organizations.[6](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/members/100306_war_you1.shtml%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn6#_ftn6" \o ") Included in “black nationalist hate-type organizations” were the National Association For the Advancement Of Colored People (NAACP) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) under the direction of Martin Luther King, Jr. Increasingly, attention was focused on King of whom Charles Brennan, FBI counter-intelligence specialist, stated: “We must mark [King] now, if we have not before, as the most dangerous Negro in the future of this Nation from the standpoint of communism, the Negro, and national security…it may be unrealistic to limit [our actions against King] to legalistic proofs that would stand up in court or before Congressional Committees.”[7](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/members/100306_war_you1.shtml%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn7#_ftn7" \o ") As we know Martin Luther King was assassinated in April, 1968 with very few answers regarding his murder and multitudinous questions left behind. The best analysis of King’s murder, in my opinion, is [William Pepper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_F._Pepper)’s Orders To Kill and his later analysis, An Act Of State. The racist J. Edgar Hoover, whose own closeted, bizarre sexuality leaves many unanswered questions about his prurient curiosities regarding King’s personal life, ordered surveillance of King’s social activities and friendships, whispering incessantly of King’s purported infidelity to his wife. In a 1968 memo to field offices, Hoover details the strategy for neutralizing black liberation activists. Among them: “Prevent militant black nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability by discrediting them to three separate segments of the community. The goal of discrediting black nationalists must be handled tactically in three ways. Their must discredit these groups and individuals to, first, the responsible Negro community. Second, they must be discredited to the white community, both the responsible community and to ‘liberals’ who have vestiges of sympathy for militant black nationalists simply because they are Negroes. Third, these groups must be discredited in the eyes of Negro radicals, the followers of the movement….” Before King’s death the Black Panther Party was organizing in major cities across America, and in late 1967 the Panthers initiated a free breakfast program for black children and offered free health care to many ghetto residents. By mid-1968 these measures had been augmented by a community education project and an anti-heroin campaign. The party was offering a viable strategy to improve the overall spiritual and material well being of ghetto life. Black community perceptions of the BPP were extremely positive and vastly different from the perceptions of the white police establishment. In a September, 1968 memo to COINTELPRO Director, William Sullivan, the FBI office in Washington ordered that, “…the counter-intelligence program against this organization [Black Panther Party] be accelerated and that each office submit concrete suggestions as to future action to be taken against the BPP.”[8](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/members/100306_war_you1.shtml%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn8#_ftn8" \o ") The memo continues: These suggestions are to create factionalism between not only the national leaders but also local leaders, steps to neutralize all organizational efforts of the BPP as well as create suspicion amongst the leaders as to each others’ spouses and suspicion as to who may be cooperating with law enforcement. In addition, suspicion should be developed as to who may be attempting to gain control of the organization for their own private betterment, as well as suggestions as to the best method of exploiting the foreign visits made by BPP members. We are also soliciting recommendations as to the best method of creating opposition to the BPP on the part of the majority of the residents of the ghetto area.[9](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/members/100306_war_you1.shtml%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn9#_ftn9" \o ") The ultimate tactic of “neutralization” was outright assassination. In late 1968, William O’Neal, working with COINTELPRO had infiltrated the BPP and become the bodyguard of a key member of the Chicago Black Panthers, Fred Hampton. O’Neal supplied the Chicago police and the FBI with the floor plan of Hampton’s apartment, and on the evening of December 3, slipped a dose of secobarbital into a glass of Kool-Aid consumed by Hampton who was comatose in his bed when a fourteen-man police team slammed into his home at 4 AM on the morning of December 4. Hampton was shot three times in the chest and twice more in the head at point-blank range. One year later, December 8, 1969 in Los Angeles, the target was Geronimo Pratt who unbeknownst to police decided to sleep on the floor that night rather than in his bed. A barrage of gunfire burst into Pratt’s apartment but missed him entirely. This time, the Panthers decided to defend themselves, and for four hours fought off police refusing to surrender until the press and the public were on the scene. A U.S. Attorney in San Francisco concluded that, “Whatever they are doing, they are out to get the Panthers.”[10](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/members/100306_war_you1.shtml%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn10#_ftn10" \o ") In 1971, George Jackson, celebrated prison author and honorary BPP Field Marshall, was assassinated in San Quentin Prison, an event which not only eliminated Jackson but neutralized attorney Angela Davis, head of Jackson’s defense organization and a leading spokesperson for the Panthers. In Sacramento the FBI used an infiltrator to have the Sacramento chapter of the BPP print a racist and violence-oriented coloring book for children. When it was brought to the attention of Bobby Seale and other Panther members, it was immediately ordered destroyed, but the Bureau mailed copies to companies such as Safeway, Mayfair Markets, and the Jack-In-The-Box Corporation which had been contributing food to the Breakfast for Children Program in order to cause the withdrawal of support for that program. The FBI has admitted that during the COINTELLPRO era it ran some 295 distinct COINTELPRO operations against individuals and organizations which were broadly or narrowly considered parts of the black liberation movement.[11](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/members/100306_war_you1.shtml%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ftn11#_ftn11" \o ") It is important to understand that during the so-called COINTELPRO era--and as we shall learn in subsequent segments of this series, that era never really ended, one strategy used then and now is that of plausible deniability. That is, in case assassinations or other illegal or disrespectable and unpopular activities committed by high-ranking officials become public, those officials may deny connection to or awareness of those acts or the agents used to carry out such acts. As noted by Mike Ruppert in [“By The Light Of A Burning Bridge”](http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/081606_burning_bridge.shtml) FTW over the years has frequently been victimized by attacks that appeared to have the fingerprints of COINTELPRO all over them, down to the use of convicted felons to commit those acts, in which case, the FBI or whatever agency(ies) are involved can plausibly deny connection with such individuals.

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Moten 13, Fred Moten, professor of modern poetry, creative writing, and African American literature, “Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh),” The South Atlantic Quarterly, 112:4, Fall 2013, Duke University Press p744-745

It’s terrible to have come from nothing but the sea, which is nowhere, navigable only in its constant autodislocation. The absence of solidity seems to demand some other ceremony of hailing that will have been carried out on some more exalted frequency. This is exacerbated by the venal refusal of a general acknowledgment of the crime, which is, in any case, impossible, raising the question of whether the only way adequately to account for the horror of slavery and the brutality of the slaver, the only way to be (in Sexton’s words) a witness rather than a spectator, is to begin by positing the absolute degradation of the enslaved. This is not a trick question; it’s not merely rhetorical. If the slave is, in the end and in essence, nothing, what remains is the necessity of an investigation of that nothingness. What is the nothingness, which is to say the blackness, of the slave that it is not reducible to what they did, though what they did is irreducible in it? This is a question concerning the undercommon inheritance of another world, which is given in and given as fantasy in the hold. Those who are called into being by the desire for another call relinquish the fantastic when they make the choice to leave the hold behind. In resistance to such departure we linger in the advent, in the brutal interplay of advent and enclosure. Marcus Rediker offers us a scene of the interplay: They resumed paddling and soon began to sing. After a while she could hear, at first faintly, then with increasing clarity, other sounds—the waves slapping the hull of the big ship, its timbers creaking. Then came muffled screaming in a strange language. The ship grew larger and more terrifying with every vigorous stroke of the paddles. The smells grew stronger and the sounds louder—crying and wailing from one quarter and low, plaintive singing from another; the anarchic noise of children given an underbeat by hands drumming on wood; the odd comprehensible word or two wafting through: someone asking for menney, water, another laying a curse, appealing to myabeca, spirits. As the canoe- men maneuvered their vessel up alongside, she saw dark faces, framed by small holes in the side of the ship above the waterline, staring intently. Above her, dozens of black women and children and a few red-faced men peered over the rail. They had seen the attempted escape on the sandbar. The men had cutlasses and barked orders in harsh, raspy voices. She had arrived at the slave ship. (Rediker 2007:2) Her name is Hortense. Her name is NourbeSe. Her name is B. The black chant she hears is old and new to her. She is unmoored. She is ungendered. Her mother is lost. Exhausted, exhaustive maternity is her pedagogical imperative: “consent not to be a single being” (Glissant 2o11: 5). What’s required is some attempt to think the relation between fantasy and nothingness: emptiness, dispossession in the hold; consent (not to be a single being) in the; an intimacy given most emphatically, and erotically, in a moment of something that, for lack of a better word, we call “silence,” a suboceanic feeling of preterition—borne by a common particle in the double expanse—that makes vessels run over or overturn. The temporal coordinates 2’29” and 2’30” mark the in-betweenness and mobile location of the span, so we can consider that what is mistaken for silence can also be given in and as nothingness in its full transubstantiality, but also the compression and dispersion, the condensation and displacement, of caged duration, the marking more emphatically of its beginning and end, and, especially, the concentrated air of its propulsion that shows up as waiting, Erwartung, embarrassment in our expectation, Blackwell’s antic, anticipatory pulse. This moment of nothingness. “Unhoused vacuity” (Mackey 2ool: ii8), metoikic vernacular, the rich materiality of the hold’s, the jug’s, emptiness, its contents having fled in their remaining, fled as the remainder, the danger, the supplement, votive and unelect. Blackwell offers what is held in mu as the impossible to understand black thing, the Cherry thing as a seriality of openings, a vestibular chain, a kind of spillway, as Hortense Spillers might say.

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**Dr. Shanara Reid-Brinkley ’12** [June 23rd, 2012. University of Pittsburgh Department of Communications, Assistant Professor and Director of Debate. “Privilege, Personal Experience and the Research Burden: Avoiding the Race Debate”, <http://resistanceanddebate.wordpress.com/2012/06/>]

#### More broadly, I think we as debate educators have a responsibility to teach our students to engage these issues. Yes, yes, **I know not every college policy debater becomes a policymaker, but the students that we produce often find themselves in significant positions of power**. When your students must advocate to a diverse audience or produce the research or speech text for someone who will, will their strategy be to ignore issues of difference when they present themselves? Or will they respond and wonder why their normal talking points seem to fall flat in front of minority audiences? Current debate practices teaches debaters to only speak to those in power, those privileged by subject positions that ensure their issues and concerns are represented in the space of public deliberation. And, before anyone jumps on me, **I do think that discussing engagement with the state is important** (its not the only important focal point for debate, but **it is a useful part of our conversations**). However, knowing how to speak to the government or the political elites is not the only audience that policymakers must speak to. **Public support is a critical part of our public policy analysis. Americans are a diverse audience**, what you say to Northern Protestants may be very different from what you say to Southern Baptists, for example. **Identity, character, and public perception of candidates and officials are a critical part of the process of making argument in our current deliberative sphere. Debate has excised this critical part of rhetorical practice in an attempt to create a neutral, experimental deliberative space**. But, **some people’s social location offers a visual difference that belies the assumption of the debate space as identity neutral**. We can not escape our identities or social location. They critically impact our perspective of engaging in the production of knowledge. What topics we choose, how we choose to debate them, and how we choose to judge them are necessarily tied to our personal experiences, perspectives, and our position within the social structure. Then why are we pretending that there is some neutral or objective space from which we engage in academic deliberation and public speaking? In the “real world” students like yours will be unprepared to speak to diverse audiences, they will make communicative mistakes that can have dire implications for their goals. **This** isn’t just about **getting privileged students to care about the disenfranchised as much as it is a stance that requires them to engage people who lack their privilege in an honest and direct fashion. A manner that demonstrates that even if they don’t know everything, they are trying and have done some prior work to gain understanding. The worst is for some white person to approach people of color expecting for them to teach them everything about racism in American and how they can fix it. That gets you nowhere, you are just looking for an easy answer and there is no easy answer. So your unwillingness to struggle and educate yourself about these issues before asking for help is just another instantiation of your privilege.** But**, the subjugated are often willing to reach halfway if you (the privileged person) are willing to reach out for honest and open conversation.** We can often since your sincerity. And before you say that I don’t get to determine if you are sincere, you’re right. I can’t determine if you are sincere in your own soul, but I can trust my instincts that say you are not ready to engage honestly and sincerely and choose to bypass that conversation. **You can’t fight the good fight all the time, that only results in revolutionary suicide as you give so much of yourself that you begin to lose yourself. Interracial dialogue is hard, and its really hard when you are being verbally attacked rather than rhetorically embraced. Confronting privilege is hard, but it is a choice. Whatever that choice, you should be able to defend it in the 2NR/2AR.** This movement/these alternative styles of debate centered around difference aren’t going anywhere, in fact they have proliferated well beyond the Louisville Project. So, people can stick their heads in the mud if they want to, but the movement will continue to see you in the outrounds at national high school and college tournaments.