# Round 4---Lakeland

# 2AC

## Case

### AT: Baudrillard

#### Only the ballot forces teams to confront the racial privilege that is upheld now – Louisville movement proves

Dr. Shanara Reid Brinkley, 2008, “THE HARSH REALITIES OF ‘ACTING BLACK’: HOW AFRICAN-AMERICAN POLICY DEBATERS NEGOTIATE REPRESENTATION THROUGH RACIAL PERFORMANCE AND STYLE,”

Zompetti’s fears are fairly reasonable. The Louisville Project has not convinced the debate community to change its normative practice. Given the adversarial nature of tournament competition, opposing teams seem most concerned with developing viable strategies to beat Louisville inside the tournament round. Such a competitive atmosphere may not allow a resolution of conflict between the Louisville team and other community members. Yet, it seems that attempts to engage the structural barriers that maintain the lack of community diversity seems to not have substantially increased racial and ethnic inclusion. That the Louisville team shifts the discussion on racial inclusion into actual debate competition forces the broader debate community to significantly increase its discussion of the problem. In other words, the Project may not directly result in sweeping changes in the policy debate community, it did create a rhetorical controversy that forced the issue of racial exclusion and privilege onto the community’s agenda. Thus, I argue that the tournament round is a critical plateau from which to force a reflexive conversation about the normative practices of debate that might operate to maintain racial exclusion and privilege.

#### Not doing so reflects blame and maintains the oppression of others – aff solves

Laura Sells, Instructor of Speech Communication at Louisiana State University, 1997, “On Feminist Civility: Retrieving the Political in the Feminist Public Forum”

In her recent article, "The Problems of Speaking For Others," Linda Alcoff points out the ways in which this retreat rhetoric has actually become an evasion of political responsibility. Alcoff's arguments are rich and their implications are many, but one implication is relevant to a vital feminist public forum. The retreat from speaking for others politically dangerous because it erodes public discourse. First, the retreat response presumes that we can, indeed, "retreat to a discrete location and make singular claims that are disentangled from other's locations." Alcoff calls this a "false ontological configuration" in which we ignore how our social locations are always already implicated in the locations of others. The position of "not speaking for others" thus becomes an alibi that allows individuals to avoid responsibility and accountability for their effects on others. The retreat, then, is actually a withdrawal to an individualist realm, a move that reproduces an individualist ideology and privatizes the politics of experience. As she points out, this move creates a protected form of speech in which the individual is above critique because she is not making claims about others. This protection also gives the speaker immunity from having to be "true" to the experiences and needs of others. As a form of protected speech, then, "not speaking for others" short-circuits public debate by disallowing critique and avoiding responsibility to the other. Second, the retreat response undercuts the possibility of political efficacy. Alcoff illustrates this point with a list of people--Steven Biko, Edward Said, Rigoberta Menchu--who have indeed spoken for others with significant political impact. As she bluntly puts it, both collective action and coalition necessitate speaking for others.

### AT: Nietzsche

#### Cause for Joy. You can’t just order someone to be happy – it requires a reason.

Victor Frankl, Holocaust survivor; M.D., PH.D.; Visiting Professor, Harvard University; received over 29 honorary doctorate degrees, 2K, “Man’s Search for Meaning.”

Let us first ask ourselves what should be understood by "a tragic optimism." In brief it means that one is, and remains, optimistic in spite of the "tragic triad," as it is called in logotherapy, a triad which consists of those aspects of human existence which may be circumscribed by: (1) pain; (2) guilt; and (3) death. This chapter, in fact, raises the question. How is it possible to say yes to life in spite of all that? How, to pose the question differently, can life retain its potential meaning in spite of its tragic aspects? After all, "saying yes to life in spite of everything," to use the phrase in which the title of a German book of mine is couched, presupposes that life is potentially meaningful under any conditions, even those which are most miserable. And this in turn presupposes the human capacity to creatively turn life's negative aspects into something positive or constructive. In other words, what matters is to make the best of any given situation. "The best," however, is that which in Latin is called optimum—hence the reason I speak of a tragic optimism, that is, an optimism in the face of tragedy and in view of the human potential which at its best always allows for: (1) turning suffering into a human achievement and accomplishment; (2) deriving from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better; and (3) deriving from life's transitoriness an incentive to take responsible action. / It must be kept in mind, however, that optimism is not anything to be commanded or ordered. One cannot even force oneself to be optimistic indiscriminately, against all odds, against all hope. And what is true for hope is also true for the other two components of the triad inasmuch as faith and love cannot be commanded or ordered either. / To the European, it is a characteristic of the American culture that, again and again, one is commanded and ordered to "be happy." But happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue. One must have a reason to "be happy." Once the reason is found, however, one becomes happy automatically. *As we see, a human being is not one in pursuit of happiness but rather in search of a reason to become happy*, last but not least, through actualizing the potential meaning inherent and dormant in a given situation.

#### Ontology of Freedom. Seeking to better the world is the best reason – it articulates a fresh way of being.

Todd May, Ph.D.; Professor of Philosophy @ Clemson University, 2005, Philosophy and Social Criticism 31 (5-6)

This moment when you are seeking to change the world, whether by making a suggestion in a meeting or singing at a rally or marching in silence or asking for a signature on a petition, is not a moment in which you don’t exist. It’s not a moment of yours that you sacrifice for others so that it no longer belongs to you. It remains a moment of your life, sedimenting in you to make you what you will become, emerging out of a past that is yours as well. What will you make of it, this moment? How will you be with others, those others around you who also do not cease to exist when they begin to organize or to protest or to resist? The illusion is to think that this has nothing to do with you. You’ve made a decision to participate in world-changing. Will that be all there is to it? Will it seem to you a simple sacrifice, for this small period of time, of who you are for the sake of others? Are you, for this moment, a political ascetic? Asceticism like that is dangerous. Freedom lies not in our distance from the world but in the historically fragile and contingent ways we are folded into it, just as we ourselves are folds of it. If we take Merleau-Ponty’s Being not as a rigid foundation or a truth behind appearances but as the historical folding and refolding of a univocity, then our freedom lies in the possibility of other foldings. Merleau-Ponty is not insensitive to this point. His elusive concept of the invisible seems to gesture in this direction. Of painting, he writes: the proper essence of the visible is to have a layer of invisibility in the strict sense, which it makes present as a certain absence . . . There is that which reaches the eye directly, the frontal properties of the visible; but there is also that which reaches it from below . . . and that which reaches it from above . . . where it no longer participates in the heaviness of origins but in free accomplishments.9 Elsewhere, in The Visible and the Invisible, he says: if . . . the surface of the visible, is doubled up over its whole extension with an invisible reserve; and if, finally, in our flesh as the flesh of things, the actual, empirical, ontic visible, by a sort of folding back, invagination, or padding, exhibits a visibility, a possibility that is not the shadow of the actual but its principle . . . an interior horizon and an exterior horizon between which the actual visible is a partitioning and which, nonetheless, open indefinitely only upon other visibles . . .10 hat are we to make of these references? We can, to be sure, see the hand of Heidegger in them. But we may also, and for present purposes more relevantly, see an intersection with Foucault’s work on freedom. There is an ontology of freedom at work here, one that situates freedom not in the private reserve of an individual but in the unfinished character of any historical situation. There is more to our historical juncture, as there is to a painting, than appears to us on the surface of its visibility. The trick is to recognize this, and to take advantage of it, not only with our thoughts but with our lives. And that is why, in the end, there can be no such thing as a sad revolutionary. To seek to change the world is to offer a new form of life-celebration. It is to articulate a fresh way of being, which is at once a way of seeing, thinking, acting, and being acted upon. It is to fold Being once again upon itself, this time at a new point, to see what that might yield. There is, as Foucault often reminds us, no guarantee that this fold will not itself turn out to contain the intolerable. In a complex world with which we are inescapably entwined, a world we cannot view from above or outside, there is no certainty about the results of our experiments. Our politics are constructed from the same vulnerability that is the stuff of our art and our daily practices. But to refuse to experiment is to resign oneself to the intolerable; it is to abandon both the struggle to change the world and the opportunity to celebrate living within it. And *to seek* one aspect without the other – *life-celebration without world-changing*, world-changing without life-celebration – *is to refuse to acknowledge the chiasm of body and world that is the wellspring of both.* If we are to celebrate our lives, if we are to change our world, then perhaps the best place to begin to think is our bodies, which are the openings to celebration and to change, and perhaps the point at which the war within us that I spoke of earlier can be both waged and resolved. That is the fragile beauty that, in their different ways, both Merleau-Ponty and Foucault have placed before us. The question before us is whether, in our lives and in our politics, we can be worthy of it.

## Black FW

### K

#### We meet – debate = pipeline to the political

Dana Roe Polson, former debate coach and Co-Director, teacher, and founder of ConneXions Community Leadership Academy, 2012 “Longing for Theory:” Performance Debate in Action,” <http://gradworks.umi.com/3516242.pdf>

I think the Talented Tenth is actually the wrong metaphor for leadership in the performance debate community. Du Bois, later in his life, sharply criticized and disavowed a reliance on the Black elite to lead, believing that they were more preoccupied with individual gain than with group struggle, and willing to work within current structures rather than calling for radical change. They were becoming Americanized, Du Bois believed, and deradicalized. This deradicalization “occurs when more privileged African Americans (re) align themselves to function as a middle class interested in individual group gain rather than race leadership for mass development” (James, 1997, p. 24). Instead of his youthful belief in the Black elite, “Gradually, black working-class activists surpassed elites in Du Bois’s estimation of political integrity and progressive agency. He democratized his concept of race leaders through the inclusion of the radicalism of nonelites” (James, 1997, p. 21). The young people who have emerged as leaders in the performance debate community were definitely not those Du Bois would have identified as the Talented Tenth in 1903. Du Bois was talking to and about the Black elite, the educated middle class. Earlier in Du Bois’s life, he assumed that those people, college-educated, were the natural leaders. My participants who might be seen as potential leaders do not come from such backgrounds. Many do end up going to college and becoming potential leaders, but they are privileged through this process rather than prior to it. In addition, their focus is most definitely political as opposed to cultural. Nowhere in my research did I hear a Bill Cosby-esque injunction for Black people to shape up and work harder. Instead, the critique is focused on “uplift as group struggle” for continued liberation. Finally, these young leaders are most definitely radicalized as opposed to interested in incremental change that rocks no boats. From CRT and their open critique of white supremacy to their willingness to call for change openly in debate rounds, these young leaders are contentious and bold. Two of my participants, and many of their former debate peers, are involved with a Baltimore group called Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle (LBS). The website of the LBS establishes their identity: We are a dedicated group of Baltimore citizens who want to change the city through governmental policy action. Our purpose is to provide tangible, concrete solutions to Baltimore’s problems and to analyze the ways that external forces have contributed to the overall decline of our city. (“Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle,” n.d.) As we see in this statement of identity, then, LBS as one model of leadership is focused on the political and on an analysis of external influences; this focus is very different from a racial uplift position, and their model of leadership very different from the Talented Tenth. LBS has developed platforms regarding jobs, education, incarceration, and many other issues facing Black people in the city. They hold monthly forums for discussion of these topics, inviting guests and discussing the topics themselves. Further, one of the LBS members ran for City Council this year. He lost, but plans to run again. The training my participants discuss, therefore, is not in the abstract: it is training for the real world, for their own empowerment and that of their communities. This work is extending into local high schools, as well, and Paul Robeson High School now has students involved in LBS. They attend events and meetings not only to help out but as a form of leadership training.

#### Their desire for a single political strategy is a link

Simon Tormey, Head of the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Sydney, 2006, ‘Not in my Name’: Deleuze, Zapatismo and the Critique of Representation”

Thinking more generally about the socio-political ideology of Zapatismo, what becomes evident is the reluctance to commit themselves to a ‘vision’ or blueprint of how the world should be transformed, or indeed how even the Chiapas should be transformed. This again is a source of irritation for otherwise sympathetic onlookers who would like to see in the Zapatistas the vanguard of an attempt to construct a viable ‘counter- empire’ of the kind influentially discussed by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their controversial work Empire. Surely it is asked, there must be some notion of what the world should look like in order to mobilise people against the world as it is now? Again, the notion that ‘resistance against’ can only make sense when seen as the antonym of a ‘resistance for’, in this case in favour of a distinct political system or space is one that is challenged both implicitly and explicitly by Zapatista practice. As Marcos insists: Zapatismo is not an ideology, it is not bought and paid for by a doctrine. It is … an intuition. Something so open and flexible that it really occurs in all places. Zapatismo poses the question: ‘What is it that excluded me?’‘What is that has isolated me?’ In each place the response is different. Zapatismo simply states the question and stipulates that the response is plural, that the response is inclusive … 29 In attempting to elaborate what Zapatismo is, communiqués articulate the idea of ‘a political force’ that operates in negation to that which is, as opposed to the embodiment of something that has yet to be created. In this sense they directly eschew the idea of a government or system ‘in waiting’ as per the classic ‘putschist’ rhetoric of traditional revolutionary movements. As has often been noted, they have yet to articulate a response to the ‘land question’, which is the very issue that caused the Zapatistas to come into being in the first place. Zapatismo is ‘silent’ on this and all the other matters that have animated left radicals over the past two centuries, that have nurtured them in the ‘hard times’, and helped to maintain their faith that history is on their side. But the ‘silence’ is surely telling in positive ways. As we noted at the outset, this is a political force that prefers not to ‘speak’, but rather to ‘listen’ and provide what Marcos terms an ‘echo’ of what it ‘hears’. As Marcos notes, this would be: An echo that recognises the existence of the other and does not overpower or attempt to silence it. An echo that takes its place and speaks its own voice, yet speaks with the voice of the other. An echo that reproduces its own sound, yet opens itself to the sound of the other. An echo […] transforming itself and renewing itself in other voices. An echo that turns itself into many voices, into a network of voices that, before Power’s deafness, opts to speak to itself, knowing itself to be one and many, acknowledging itself to be equal in its desire to listen and be listened to, to recognising itself as diverse in the tones and levels of voices forming it.30 To Marcos this is a different kind of political practice. It is one that insists that there are no a priori truths that can be handed down to ‘The People’; there is no doctrine that has to be learned or spelled out; there is only ‘lived experience’. Zapatismo is a political force that is concerned with the means by which people can be ‘present’ as opposed to being represented, whether it be by political parties, ideologies, or the other familiar devices and strategies that have prevented voices being heard. To quote Marcos, what they are struggling for is a world in which ‘all worlds are possible’. Similarly In The Second Declaration from the Lacandon Jungle, Marcos declares (on behalf of the Zapatistas) that: ‘we aren’t proposing a new world, but something preceding a new world; an antechamber looking into the new Mexico. In this sense, this revolution will not end in a new class, faction of a class, or group in power. It will end in a free and democratic space for political struggle’.30 Their struggle is one to permit other conceptions of the world to come into being. Of course this is punctuated by a view of what it is that such spaces require: the obliteration of party machines, of the bloated and antique structures of representation that clog Mexico’s political system; but the point is such strictures are regarded as the basis upon which a genuine political process can take place. What is left out is any ‘final’ account of justice, equality or democracy. Contrast Zapatismo in other words, with traditional revolutionary rhetoric and more particularly with the communist struggles of the past with their tightly knit, disciplined hierarchies built on a thorough going utilitarianism that is prepared, as Trotsky once bluntly put it, ‘to break eggs to make an omelette’. In Zapatismo we find on the contrary a sentiment that insists that all the ‘eggs’ are of value. It is ‘dignity’ and ‘respect’ for the singular voice that animates this struggle against representation, not a desire to fulfil the historical or foreordained destiny to which all voices are or will be subject. In this sense as in the other senses discussed here, it seems to me that this is a very Deleuzian kind of struggle, and Deleuze (and Guattari) anticipate on the plane of high theory the kinds of demands being articulated by Marcos and the Zapatistas. This is also to say that the search for a post-representational form of political practice should not be read as necessarily ‘nihilistic’ (as Laclau insists) or as one that inevitably pits the aristocratic ‘one’ against the many. Or if it is, then it is a nihilism that, as per Deleuze’s reading of ‘eternal return’, isa struggle in which being and difference are constantly affirmed. It is an affirmation of difference itself, of the singular voice, and of the possibility of and necessity for ‘spaces’ in which those voices can be heard. In the terms offered by Deleuze and Guattari this would be ‘smooth’ space as opposed to the ‘striated’ space of representational systems. It would be a ‘deterritorialised’ space of combination and recombination in accordance with differentiated, disaggregated desires; not the territorialised space of hierarchy, fixed and known roles that define ‘identity’. In terms of Zapatismo, this is a space in which ‘all worlds are possible’and in which it is the constant combination and recombination of the indigenous peoples that determines what ‘happens’.

#### Claims of fairness and ground are ways to marginalize the out group and retrench power structures

Delgado, Law Prof at U. of Colorado, 1992 [Richard, “Shadowboxing: An Essay On Power,” In Cornell Law Review, May]

We have cleverly built power's view of the appropriate standard of conduct into the very term fair. Thus, the stronger party is able to have his/her way and see her/himself as principled at the same time. Imagine, for example, a man's likely reaction to the suggestion that subjective considerations -- a woman's mood, her sense of pressure or intimidation, how she felt about the man, her unexpressed fear of reprisals if she did not go ahead-- ought to play a part in determining whether the man is guilty of rape. Most men find this suggestion offensive; it requires them to do something they are not accustomed to doing. "Why," they say, "I'd have to be a mind reader before I could have sex with anybody?" "Who knows, anyway, what internal inhibitions the woman might have been harboring?" And "what if the woman simply changed her mind later and charged me with rape?" What we never notice is that women can "read" men's minds perfectly well. The male perspective is right out there in the world, plain as day, inscribed in culture, song, and myth -- in all the prevailing narratives. These narratives tell us that men want and are entitled  [\*820]  to sex, that it is a prime function of women to give it to them, and that unless something unusual happens, the act of sex is ordinary and blameless. We believe these things because that is the way we have constructed women, men, and "normal" sexual intercourse. Yet society and law accept only this latter message (or something like it), and not the former, more nuanced ones, to mean refusal. Why? The "objective" approach is not inherently better or more fair. Rather, it is accepted because it embodies the sense of the stronger party, who centuries ago found himself in a position to dictate what permission meant. Allowing ourselves to be drawn into reflexive, predictable arguments about administrability, fairness, stability, and ease of determination points us away from what  [\*821]  really counts: the way in which stronger parties have managed to inscribe their views and interests into "external" culture, so that we are now enamored with that way of judging action. First, we read our values and preferences into the culture; then we pretend to consult that culture meekly and humbly in order to judge our own acts.

#### Racism disad – working within the system simply recreates and equilibrates racism

Tansy Woan, Master of Arts in Philosophy, Politics, and Law in the Graduate School of Binghamton University, August 2011, “The value of resistance in a permanently white, civil society,” <http://gradworks.umi.com/14/96/1496586.html>

Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, in then influential Black Power, describe reformist strategies as "playing ball" with the white man. They argue that reform plays the white man's game in order to gain rights, i.e. appeal to a white supremacist government that is the precise agent responsible for the original harms they are seeking to alleviate.9 While this may very well result in the granting of new rights previously denied, it maintains a hierarchical system between whites and nonwhites, since the latter will have to continue to appeal to the former to ask for rights they never should have been denied in the first place. This places the former in a position of power to accept or deny such requests. Thus, in Carmichael and Hamilton's view, attempting to resist white supremacy by working within white supremacist institutions maintains a dangerous system of power relations that lock in place the hierarchy between whites and nonwhites. / It is unfortunate enough that members of minority groups face public and private racial discrimination. It is worse, however, to place the burden of combating this discrimination on them. What Carmichael and Hamilton aptly point out is that the hierarchy between races mentioned above is what is responsible for this undue burden. There is not only the constant physical struggle of protesting, writing letters, and being dragged through litigation that can often get expensive, but there is the psychological struggle as well. Why am I not worthy of equal protection under the law? Why is it that others do not even notice the disparate impact of the law? Or, even worse, why is it that those who do notice, seem to not care? / What inevitably comes with these types of reformist strategies is an emotional struggle, namely, an inferiority complex that makes the victimized individual stop and wonder — who put the white man in charge of my body? Appeals to the federal government to repeal discriminatory acts that deny minorities rights becomes analogous to asking whites to eliminate such policies and to allow others access to the same rights they enjoy every day. The racial state becomes in charge of what nonwhites can and cannot do, and when nonwhites continue to go to whites asking them to pass certain policies, nonwhites further legitimate this system of power relations. It is difficult to see how true equality can be achieved wider such a system. / B. Missing the Root Cause: The Racial State / Omi and Winant further support this claim and explain that it is not merely individual policies passed by the United States federal government that are racist, but that racial oppression is a structure of the government itself.10 They describe this structure as the "racial state" to show that the state does not merely support racism, but rather, it supports the concept of race itself. As will be discussed later in this paper, Omi and Winant explain how the state is the agent that has defined race, and that this definition has evolved over time, to maintain the concept of race and support racism. / Given the existence of the racial state, Omi and Winant critique reformist strategies as falling short of achieving normative goals of eliminating racism since the reforms merely get re-equilibriated. A look at the history of racial victories in the United States further supports this critique. Racial victories for one minority were often made possible only with the entrapment of another racial minority. For example, while many celebrate the racial victory of the 1954 Brown v. Board decision, many fail to see this happened the same year as Operation Wetback, which shifted the racial discrimination to a different population, removing close to one million illegal immigrants, mostly Mexicans, from the United States.11 Moreover, soon after the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments granting citizenship and suffrage to Blacks. Congress chose to deny citizenship to Chinese immigrants.12 In 1941, shortly after the establishment of the Committee on Fair Employment Practices permitted Blacks into defense industries, Japanese Americans were taken from their homes and sent off to internment camps. Pei-te Lien argues that all of these "coincidences" support critiques of reformist strategies that merely target individual policies, since without challenging the racial state as a whole, even the **elimination of these individual policies will fail to eliminate racism, as they will simply replicate themselves or shift elsewhere and target racial minorities in different ways**.14 / C. Separatist Movements / This helps to explain why political activists began adopting other more revolutionary strategies. Contrary to Martin Luther King Jr. and many of his followers during the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement emerged and began advocating for more separatist strategies that rejected making reformist appeals to the United States federal government. In his speech "The Ballot or the Bullet," Malcolm X argued: / When you take your case to Washington D.C., you're taking it to the criminal who's responsible: it's like miming from the wolf to the fox. They're all in cahoots together. They all work political chicanery and make you look like a chump before the eyes of the world. Here you are walking around in America, getting ready to be drafted and sent abroad, like a tin soldier, and when you get over there, people ask you what you are fighting for, and you have to stick your tongue in your cheek. No, take Uncle Sam to court, take him before the world. / Critics of reformist strategies, such as Malcolm X, understood the United States as being inherently racial and thus incapable of reform. They use the "coincidences" listed above as evidence to support this claim. They view the United States federal government as a racial state that will merely continue to define race in new and more modernized ways, ensuring the permanence of racism with the passage of new policies supporting these definitions. This is why they believe reformists are wrong to attack individual policies, rather than the racial state itself. / For example, the legal enforcement of a racially discriminatory housing covenant may have been justified due to a racist belief that members of the minority race restricted from acquiring title within that neighborhood is inferior to the Caucasian race. More specifically, one might support said covenant because one believes the inferiority of that minority race and the potential they might become your neighbor will result in a decrease in the fair market value of your property. After vigorous ongoing protests from civil rights activists, that particular law enforcing those covenants might get repealed. However, the reason for the repeal of that law might arise not from an ethical epiphany, but rather an economic rationale in which the homeowner is shown his property value will remain unaffected, or perhaps even increase. Thus, that particular act may get repealed, but the policymakers responsible for its original draft will still be in power, and will maintain the same beliefs that motivated that piece of legislation in the first place. Because there has been no ethical realization of the injustice in their conduct, the chances remain high that they will construct new, apparently different but equally discriminatory policies that will force activists to join forces once again and continue the same fight. / This is why it is not the individual policies, but the government itself that is the "preeminent site of racial conflict."17 Omi and Winant's proposal of the "racial state" views the government as "inherently racial," meaning it does not simply intervene in racial conflicts, but it is the locus of racial conflict.18 In addition to structuring conceptions of race, the government in the United States is in and of itself racially structured.19 State policies govern racial politics, heavily influencing the public on how race should be viewed. The ways in which it does so changes over time, often taking on a more invisible nature. For example, Omi and Winant describe the racial state as treating race in different ways throughout different periods of time, first as a biologically based essence, and then as an ideology, etc. These policies are followed by racial remedies offered by government institutions, in response to political pressures and in accordance to these different treatments of race, varying in degree depending on the magnitude of the threats those pressures pose to the order of society. Notable achievements during the Civil Rights Movement have served as a double-edged sword. While the reformist strategies utilized during that period helped make certain advances possible, it also drove other more overt expressions of racism underground. These more invisible instantiations of racial injustice are far more difficult to identify than its previously more explicit forms. **Praising these victories risks giving off the illusion that the fight is over and that racism is a description of the past**. / For example, the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment gave off the illusion that all citizens thereafter had equal access to the right to vote. Those who supported its ratification now felt entitled to the moral credentials necessary to legitimize their ability to express racially prejudiced attitudes.21 For example, voter turnout today remains relatively low for Asian-Americans, and many blame this on cultural differences between Asians and Americans.22 Asian-Americans are labeled as apathetic in the political community and they themselves have been attributed the blame for relatively low representation of Asian-Americans in the government today.23 This however, ignores the way in which other more invisible practices serve to obstruct Asian-Americans from being able to exercise their right to vote. / Research by the United States Election Assistance Commission by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, for example, indicates that restrictive voter identification requirements have effectively served to disenfranchise Asian Pacific Islanders (APIs) from voting.24 In the 2004 election, researchers found APIs in states where voters were required to present proper identification at the polls were 8.5% less likely to vote.25 This study confirmed that voter ID requirements prevented a large number of APIs from voting.26 / Voter suppression tactics also play a large role in the disenfranchisement of APIs. According to a Voter Intimidation and Vote Suppression briefing paper by Demos, a national public policy center, an estimated 50 Asian Americans were selectively challenged at the polls in Alabama during August of 2004, as being ineligible to vote due to insufficient English-speaking skills.27 Many states have allowed this selective challenging of voters to take place at the polls, resulting in a feeling of fear, intimidation, and embarrassment among APIs, driving them away from the polls. / The danger in treasuring monumental victories such as the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment becomes apparent when people interpret this ratification as an indication that voting discrimination is no longer a problem, and that if the voter turnout of Asian-Americans is consistently low, it must be because they are politically apathetic or disinterested in American ideals. Because they originally supported the ratification of the amendment, whites can now feel as if they have the moral credentials to make conclusions such as the cultural differences rationale. The same can be seen after courts ordered the desegregation of public schools and after affirmative action programs became more widespread. People began assuming African-Americans now had an equal opportunity for education and that if they did not succeed, it must be a reflection of their intelligence or work-ethic, failing to see the ways the problem has not been solved, but rather disguised itself in other costumes, such as tracking programs in schools or teachers who view their presence as merely "affirmative action babies" and expect them to fail. / **One might ask, then, why can we not change the racial state one policy at a time?** Perhaps one could first work to gain the right to vote, and then move on to combat discriminatory identification requirements and political scare tactics. It would not seem entirely implausible to assume that the success of individual piecemeal reforms within the government could eventually result in a transformation of the institution itself. However, simply eliminating discriminatory policies is insufficient for an overhaul of a racial institution. / Understanding the motivating reasons for the elimination of individual racist policies is a critical factor in determining the success of a movement. While one justification for passing the Fifteenth Amendment might consist of arguments in favor of equality and exposing racial injustice, another justification might involve maintaining order and minimizing disruption, which is important to the federal government and its ability to run smoothly. Thus, the government often seeks out ways to normalize society through eliminating disruptions to preserve order. When those being denied certain rights grow significantly discontent, they rebel and become disruptions to the functioning of white, civil society. This can take the form of civil disobedience, such as protests, peaceful demonstrations, petitions, letters to the government, etc., or more revolutionary measures, such as damaging government offices or violently harassing officials to acknowledge the injustices and change policy. / All of these measures, however peaceful or violent, disrupt society. A town cannot run smoothly if protesters are filling up the streets or blocking frequently-used road paths, and most certainly cannot run smoothly if town halls are being lit on fire. Thus, in order to return to the desired homeostasis, those in power may often compromise and offer to rectify the situation at hand by granting rights to individuals through changes in legislation in order to appease them and "eliminate" the disruption (the protests, demonstrations, etc.). The lack of effort made towards protecting these rights bolsters Bell's argument that these reforms serve more of a symbolic value rather than functional. If still operating under the racial state, these piecemeal reforms will fail to solve the original racial injustices in the long term, as they will only succeed in establishing a new unstable equilibrium, only to be followed with the replication of new racial problems.28 These new problems will once again create resentment, generate protest, and the cycle will begin to replicate itself, ensuring the permanence of racism. Omi and Winant term this cycle of continuous disruption and restoration of order as the trajectory of racial politics.29 This trajectory supports the treatment of racism as inevitable

#### Their reformist measures simply provide fuel to sustain global white supremacy and are the global modalities of genocidal violence

**Rodriguez ’11** [Dylan, PhD in Ethnic Studies Program of the University of California Berkeley and Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies at University of California Riverside, “The Black Presidential Non-Slave: Genocide and the Present Tense of Racial Slavery”, Political Power and Social Theory Vol. 22, pp. 38-43]

To crystallize what I hope to be the potentially useful implications of this provocation toward a retelling of the slavery-abolition story: if we follow the narrative and theoretical trajectories initiated here, it should take little stretch of the historical imagination, nor a radical distension of analytical framing, to suggest that the singular institutionalization of racist and peculiarly antiblack social/state violence in our living era - the US imprisonment regime and its conjoined policing and criminalization apparatuses - elaborates the social logics of genocidal racial slavery within the American nation-building project, especially in the age of Obama. The formation and astronomical growth of the prison industrial complex has become a commonly identified institutional marker of massively scaled racist state mobilization, and the fundamental violence of this apparatus is in the prison's translation of the 13th Amendment's racist animus. By "reforming" slavery and anti-slave violence, and directly transcribing both into criminal justice rituals, proceedings, and punishments, the 13th Amendment permanently inscribes slavery on "post-emancipation" US statecraft. The state remains a "slave state" to the extent that it erects an array of institutional apparatuses that are specifically conceived to reproduce or enhance the state's capacity to "create" (i.e., criminalize and convict) prison chattel and politically legitimate the processes of enslavement/imprisonment therein. The crucial starting point for our narrative purposes is that the emergence of the criminalization and carceral apparatus over the last forty years has not, and in the foreseeable future will not build its institutional protocols around the imprisonment of an economically productive or profitmaking prison labor force (Gilmore, 1999).16 So, if not for use as labor under the 13th Amendment's juridical mandate of "involuntary servitude," what is the animating structural-historical logic behind the formation of an imprisonment regime unprecedented in human history in scale and complexity, and which locks up well over a million Black people, significantly advancing numbers of "nonwhite" Latinos as, and in which the white population is vastly underrepresented in terms of both numbers imprisoned and likelihood to be prosecuted (and thus incarcerated) for similar alleged criminal offenses?17 In excess of its political economic, geographic, and juridical registers, the contemporary US prison regime must be centrally understood as constituting an epoch-defining statecraft of race: a historically specific conceptualization, planning, and institutional mobilization of state institutional capacities and state-influenced cultural structures to reproduce and/or reassemble the social relations of power, dominance, and violence that constitute the ontology (epistemic and conceptual framings) of racial meaning itself (da Silva, 2007; Goldberg, 1993). In this case, the racial ontology of the postslavery and post-civil rights prison is anchored in the crisis of social meaning wrought on white civil society by the 13th Amendment's apparent juridical elimination of the Black chattel slave being. Across historical periods, the social inhabitation of the white civil subject - - its self-recognition, institutionally affirmed (racial) sovereignty, and everyday social intercourse with other racial beings - is made legible through its positioning as the administrative authority and consenting audience for the nation- and civilization-building processes of multiple racial genocides. It is the bare fact of the white subject's access and entitlement to the generalized position of administering and consenting to racial genocide that matters most centrally here. Importantly, this white civil subject thrives on the assumption that s/he is not, and will never be the target of racial genocide.18 (Williams, 2010) .Those things obtained and secured through genocidal processes - land, political and military hegemony/dominance, expropriated labor - are in this sense secondary to the raw relation of violence that the white subject inhabits in relation to the racial objects (including people, ecologies, cultural forms, sacred materials, and other modalities of life and being) subjected to the irreparable violations of genocidal processes. It is this raw relation, in which white social existence materially and narratively consolidates itself within the normalized systemic logics of racial genocides, that forms the condition of possibility for the US social formation, from "abolition" onward. To push the argument further: the distended systems of racial genocides are not the massively deadly means toward some other (rational) historical ends, but are ends within themselves. Here we can decisively depart from the hegemonic juridical framings of "genocide" as dictated by the United Nations, and examine instead the logics of genocide that dynamically structure the different historical-social forms that have emerged from the classically identifiable genocidal systems of racial colonial conquest, indigenous physical and cultural extermination, and racial chattel slavery. To recall Trask and Marable, the historical logics of genocide permeate institutional assemblages that variously operationalize the historical forces of planned obsolescence, social neutralization, and "ceasing to exist." Centering a conception of racial genocide as a dynamic set of sociohistorical logics (rather than as contained, isolatable historical episodes) allows the slavery-to-prison continuity to be more clearly marked: the continuity is not one that hinges on the creation of late-20th and early-list century "slave labor," but rather on a re-institutionalization of anti-slave social violence. Within this historical schema, the post-1970s prison regime institutionalizes the raw relation of violence essential to white social being while mediating it so it appears as non-genocidal, non-violent, peacekeeping, and justice-forming. This is where we can also narrate the contemporary racial criminalization, policing, and incarcerating apparatuses as being historically tethered to the genocidal logics of the post-abolition, post-emancipation, and post-civil rights slave state. While it is necessary to continuously clarify and debate whether and how this statecraft of racial imprisonment is verifiably genocidal, there seems to be little reason to question that it is, at least, protogenocidal - displaying both the capacity and inclination for genocidal outcomes in its systemic logic and historical trajectory. This contextualization leads toward a somewhat different analytical framing of the "deadly symbiosis" that sociologist Loi'c Wacquant has outlined in his account of antiblack carceral-spatial systems. While it would be small-minded to suggest that the emergence of the late-20th century prison regime is an historical inevitability, we should at least understand that the structural bottom line of Black imprisonment over the last four decades - wherein the quantitative fact of a Black prison/jail majority has become taken-for-granted as a social fact - is a contemporary institutional manifestation of a genocidal racial substructure that has been reformed, and not fundamentally displaced, by the juridical and cultural implications of slavery's abolition. I have argued elsewhere for a conception of the US prison not as a selfcontained institution or isolated place, but rather as a material prototype of organized punishment and (social, civil, and biological) death (Rodriguez, 2006). To understand the US prison as a regime is to focus conceptually, theoretically, and politically on the prison as a pliable module or mobilized vessel through which technologies of racial domin8ance institutionalize their specific, localized practices of legitimated (state) violence. Emerging as the organic institutional continuity of racial slavery's genocidal violence, the US prison regime represents a form of human domination that extends beyond and outside the formal institutional and geographic domains of "the prison (the jail, etc.)." In this sense, the prison is the institutional signification of a larger regime of proto-genocidal violence that is politically legitimized by the state, generally valorized by the cultural common sense, and dynamically mobilized and institutionally consolidated across different historical moments: it is a form of social power that is indispensable to the contemporary (and postemancipation) social order and its changing structures of racial dominance, in a manner that elaborates the social logics of genocidal racial slavery. The binding presence of slavery within post-emancipation US state formation is precisely why the liberal multiculturalist narration of the Obama ascendancy finds itself compelled to posit an official rupture from the spectral and material presence of enslaved racial blackness. It is this symbolic rupturing - the presentation of a president who consummates the liberal dreams of Black citizenship. Black freedom, Black non-resentment, and Black patriotic subjectivity - that constructs the Black non-slave presidency as the flesh-and-blood severance of the US racial/racist state from its entanglement in the continuities of antiblack genocide. Against this multiculturalist narrative, our attention should be principally fixated on the bottom-line Blackness of the prison's genocidal logic, not the fungible Blackness of the presidency. CONCLUSION: FROM "POST-CIVIL RIGHTS" TO WHITE RECONSTRUCTION The Obama ascendancy is the signature moment of the post-1960s White Reconstruction, a period that has been characterized by the reformist elaboration of historically racist systems of social power to accommodate the political imperatives of American apartheid's downfall and the emergence of hegemonic (liberal-to-conservative) multiculturalisms. Byfocusing on how such reforms have neither eliminated nor fundamentally alleviated the social emergencies consistently produced by the historical logics of racial genocide, the notion of White Reconstruction departs from Marable's notion of the 1990s as the "twilight of the Second Reconstruction" (Marable. 2007. p. 216)19 and points toward another way of framing and narrating the period that has been more commonly referenced as the "post-civil rights" era. Rather than taking its primary point of historical departure to be the cresting of the Civil Rights Movement and its legacy of delimited (though no less significant) political-cultural achievements. White Reconstruction focuses on how this era is denned by an acute and sometimes aggressive reinvention and reorganization of the structural-institutional formations of racial dominance. Defined schematically, the recent half-century has encompassed a generalized reconstruction of "classically" white supremacist apparatuses of state-sanctioned and culturally legitimated racial violence. This general reconstruction has (1) strategically and unevenly dislodged various formal and de facto institutional white monopolies and diversified their personnel at various levels of access, from the entry-level to the administrative and executive levels (e.g., the sometimes aggressive diversity recruitment campaigns of research universities, urban police, and the military); while simultaneously (2) revamping, complicating, and enhancing the social relations of dominance, hierarchy, and violence mobilized by such institutions - relations that broadly reflect the long historical, substructural role of race in the production of the US national formation and socioeconomic order. In this sense, the notion of White Reconstruction brings central attention to how the historical logics of racial genocide may not only survive the apparent disruption of classical white monopolies on the administrative and institutional apparatuses that have long mobilized these violent social logics, but may indeed flourish through these reformist measures, as such logics are re-adapted into the protocols and discourses of these newly "diversified" racist and white supremacist apparatuses (e.g.. the apparatuses of the research university, police, and military have expanded their capacities to produce local and global relations of racial dominance, at the same time that they have constituted some of the central sites for diversity recruitment and struggles over equal access). It is, at the very least, a remarkable and dreadful moment in the historical time of White Reconstruction that a Black president has won office in an electoral landslide while well over a million Black people are incarcerated with the overwhelming consent of white/multiculturalist civil society.

#### Ani concludes aff – we must decolonize education

Marimba Ani, BA degree at the University of Chicago, and holds MA and Ph.D. degrees in anthropology from the Graduate Faculty of the New School University, 1994, “Yurugu: An African-centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior,” pg 1-2

This study of Europe is an intentionally aggressive polemic. It is an assault upon the European paradigm; a repudiation of its essence. It is initiated with the intention of contributing to the process of demystification necessary for those of us who would liberate ourselves from European intellectual imperialism. Europe's political domination of Africa and much of the "non-European" world has been accompanied by a relentless cultural and psychological rape and by devastating economic exploitation. But what has compelled me to write this book is the conviction that beneath this deadly onslaught lies a stultifying intellectual mystification that prevents Europe's political victims from thinking in a manner that would lead to authentic self-determination. Intellectual decolonization is a prerequisite for the creation of successful political decolonization and cultural reconstruction strategies. Europe's political imperialistic success can be accredited not so much to superior military might, as to the weapon of culture: The former ensures more immediate control but requires continual physical force for the maintenance of power, while the latter succeeds In long-lasting dominance that enlists the cooperation of its victims (i.e., pacification of the will). The secret Europeans discovered early in their history is that culture carries rules for thinking, and that if you could impose your culture on your victims you could limit the creativity of their vision, destroying their ability to act with will and intent and in their own interest. The truth is that we are all "intellectuals," all potential visionaries. / This book discusses the evolution of that process of imposition, as well as the characteristics of cultural beings who find it necessary to impose their will on others. It is not a simple process to explain, since the tools we need in order to dissect it have been taken from us through colonial miseducation. It is necessary to begin, therefore, with a painful weaning from the very epistemological assumptions that strangle us. The weaning takes patience and commitment, but the liberation of our minds is well worth the struggle. / My chosen field is African-Centered cultural science — the reconstruction of a revolutionary African culture. I teach Pan-African studies. The experience convinces me more and more, however, that teaching Pan-African studies well means teaching European studies simultaneously. To be truly liberated, African people must come to know the nature of European thought and behavior in order to understand the effect that Europe has had on our ability to think victoriously. We must be able to separate our thought from European thought, so as to visualize a future that is not dominated by Europe. This is demanded by an African-centered view because we are Africans, and because the future towards which Europe leads us is genocidal.

#### They are a view from nowhere – that upholds structures of whiteness

George Yancy, 2005 (Associate Professor of Philosophy at Duquesne University and Coordinator of the Critical Race Theory Speaker Series, “Whiteness and the Return of the Black Body”, The Journal of Speculative Philosophy 19.4 (2005) 215-241, Muse :)

I write out of a personal existential context. This context is a profound source of knowledge connected to my "raced" body. Hence, I write from a place of lived embodied experience, a site of exposure. In philosophy, the only thing that we are taught to "expose" is a weak argument, a fallacy, or someone's "inferior" reasoning power. The embodied self is bracketed and deemed irrelevant to theory, superfluous and cumbersome in one's search for truth. It is best, or so we are told, to reason from nowhere. Hence, the white philosopher/author presumes to speak for all of "us" without the slightest mention of his or her "raced" identity. Self-consciously writing as a white male philosopher, Crispin Sartwell observes: Left to my own devices, I disappear as an author. That is the "whiteness" of my authorship. This whiteness of authorship is, for us, a form of authority; to speak (apparently) from nowhere, for everyone, is empowering, though one wields power here only by becoming lost to oneself. But such an authorship and authority is also pleasurable: it yields the pleasure of self-forgetting or [End Page 215] apparent transcendence of the mundane and the particular, and the pleasure of power expressed in the "comprehension" of a range of materials. (1998, 6) To theorize the Black body one must "turn to the [Black] body as the radix for interpreting racial experience" (Johnson [1993, 600]).1 It is important to note that this particular strategy also functions as a lens through which to theorize and critique whiteness; for the Black body's "racial" experience is fundamentally linked to the oppressive modalities of the "raced" white body. However, there is no denying that my own "racial" experiences or the social performances of whiteness can become objects of critical reflection. In this paper, my objective is to describe and theorize situations where the Black body's subjectivity, its lived reality, is reduced to instantiations of the white imaginary, resulting in what I refer to as "the phenomenological return of the Black body."2 These instantiations are embedded within and evolve out of the complex social and historical interstices of whites' efforts at self-construction through complex acts of erasure vis-à-vis Black people. These acts of self-construction, however, are myths/ideological constructions predicated upon maintaining white power. As James Snead has noted, "Mythification is the replacement of history with a surrogate ideology of [white] elevation or [Black] demotion along a scale of human value" (Snead 1994, 4). How I understand and theorize the body relates to the fact that the body—in this case, the Black body—is capable of undergoing a sociohistorical process of "phenomenological return" vis-à-vis white embodiment. The body's meaning—whether phenotypically white or black—its ontology, its modalities of aesthetic performance, its comportment, its "raciated" reproduction, is in constant contestation. The hermeneutics of the body, how it is understood, how it is "seen," its "truth," is partly the result of a profound historical, ideological construction. "The body" is positioned by historical practices and discourses. The body is codified as this or that in terms of meanings that are sanctioned, scripted, and constituted through processes of negotiation that are embedded within and serve various ideological interests that are grounded within further power-laden social processes. The historical plasticity of the body, the fact that it is a site of contested meanings, speaks to the historicity of its "being" as lived and meant within the interstices of social semiotics. Hence: a) the body is less of a thing/being than a shifting/changing historical meaning that is subject to cultural configuration/reconfiguration. The point here is to interrogate the "Black body" as a "fixed and material truth" that preexists "its relations with the world and with others"3 ; b) the body's meaning is fundamentally symbolic (McDowell 2001, 301), and its meaning is congealed through symbolic repetition and iteration that emits certain signs and presupposes certain norms; and, c) the body is a battlefield, one that is fought over again and again across particular historical moments and within particular social spaces. "In other words, the concept of the body provides only the illusion of self-evidence, facticity, 'thereness' for something [End Page 216] fundamentally ephemeral, imaginary, something made in the image of particular social groups" (301). On this score, it is not only the "Black body" that defies the ontic fixity projected upon it through the white gaze, and, hence, through the episteme of whiteness, but the white body is also fundamentally symbolic, requiring demystification of its status as norm, the paragon of beauty, order, innocence, purity, restraint, and nobility. In other words, given the three suppositions above, both the "Black body" and the "white body" lend themselves to processes of interpretive fracture and to strategies of interrogating and removing the veneer of their alleged objectivity. To have one's dark body invaded by the white gaze and then to have that body returned as distorted is a powerful experience of violation. The experience presupposes an anti-Black lived context, a context within which whiteness gets reproduced and the white body as norm is reinscribed. The late writer, actor, and activist Ossie Davis recalls that at the age of six or seven two white police officers told him to get into their car. They took him down to the precinct. They kept him there for an hour, laughing at him and eventually pouring cane syrup over his head. This only created the opportunity for more laughter, as they looked upon the "silly" little Black boy. If he was able to articulate his feelings at that moment, think of how the young Davis was returned to himself: "I am an object of white laughter, a buffoon." The young Davis no doubt appeared to the white police officers in ways that they had approved. They set the stage, created a site of Black buffoonery, and enjoyed their sadistic pleasure without blinking an eye. Sartwell notes that "the [white] oppressor seeks to constrain the oppressed [Blacks] to certain approved modes of visibility (those set out in the template of stereotype) and then gazes obsessively on the spectacle he has created" (1998, 11). Davis notes that he "went along with the game of black emasculation, it seemed to come naturally" (Marable 2000, 9). After that, "the ritual was complete" (9). He was then sent home with some peanut brittle to eat. Davis knew at that early age, even without the words to articulate what he felt, that he had been violated. He refers to the entire ritual as the process of "niggerization." He notes: The culture had already told me what this was and what my reaction to this should be: not to be surprised; to expect it; to accommodate it; to live with it. I didn't know how deeply I was scarred or affected by that, but it was a part of who I was. (9) Davis, in other words, was made to feel that he had to accept who he was, that "niggerized" little Black boy, an insignificant plaything within a system of ontological racial differences. This, however, is the trick of white ideology; it is to give the appearance of fixity, where the "look of the white subject interpellates the black subject as inferior, which, in turn, bars the black subject from seeing him/herself without the internalization of the white gaze" (Weheliye 2005, 42). On this score, it is white bodies that are deemed agential. They configure "passive" [End Page 217] Black bodies according to their will. But it is no mystery; for "the Negro is interpreted in the terms of the white man. White-man psychology is applied and it is no wonder that the result often shows the Negro in a ludicrous light" (Braithwaite 1992, 36). While walking across the street, I have endured the sounds of car doors locking as whites secure themselves from the "outside world," a trope rendering my Black body ostracized, different, unbelonging. This outside world constitutes a space, a field, where certain Black bodies are relegated. They are rejected, because they are deemed suspicious, vile infestations of the (white) social body. The locks on the doors resound: Click. Click. Click. Click. Click. Click. ClickClickClickClickClickClickClick! Of course, the clicking sounds are always already accompanied by nervous gestures, and eyes that want to look, but are hesitant to do so. The cumulative impact of the sounds is deafening, maddening in their distorted repetition. The clicks begin to function as coded sounds, reminding me that I am dangerous; the sounds create boundaries, separating the white civilized from the dark savage, even as I comport myself to the contrary. The clicking sounds mark me, they inscribe me, they materialize my presence in ways that belie my intentions. Unable to stop the clicking, unable to establish a form of recognition that creates a space of trust and liminality, there are times when one wants to become their fantasy, to become their Black monster, their bogeyman, to pull open the car door: "Surprise. You've just been carjacked by a ghost, a fantasy of your own creation. Now, get the fuck out of the car." I have endured white women clutching their purses or walking across the street as they catch a glimpse of my approaching Black body. It is during such moments that my body is given back to me in a ludicrous light, where I live the meaning of my body as confiscated. Davis too had the meaning of his young Black body stolen. The surpluses being gained by the whites in each case are not economic. Rather, it is through existential exploitation that the surpluses extracted can be said to be ontological—"semblances of determined presence, of full positivity, to provide a sense of secure being" (Henry 1997, 33). When I was about seventeen or eighteen, my white math teacher initiated such an invasion, pulling it off with complete calm and presumably self-transparency. Given the historical construction of whiteness as the norm, his own "raced" subject position was rendered invisible. After all, he lived in the real world, the world of the serious man, where values are believed anterior to their existential founding. As I recall, we were discussing my plans for the future. I told him that I wanted to be a pilot. I was earnest about this choice, spending a great deal of time reading about the requirements involved in becoming a pilot, how one would have to accumulate a certain number of flying hours. I also read about the dynamics of lift and drag that affect a plane in flight. After no doubt taking note of my firm commitment, he looked at me and implied that I should be realistic (a code word for realize that I am Black) about my goals. He said that I should become a carpenter or a bricklayer. I was exposing myself, telling a trusted teacher what I wanted to be, and he returned me to myself as something [End Page 218] that I did not recognize. I had no intentions of being a carpenter or a bricklayer (or a janitor or elevator operator for that matter). The situation, though, is more complex. It is not that he simply returned me to myself as a carpenter or a bricklayer when all along I had this image of myself as a pilot. Rather, he returned me to myself as a fixed entity, a "niggerized" Black body whose epidermal logic had already foreclosed the possibility of being anything other than what was befitting its lowly station. He was the voice of a larger anti-Black racist society that "whispers mixed messages in our ears" (Marable 2000, 9), the ears of Black people who struggle to think of themselves as a possibility. He mentioned that there were only a few Black pilots and that I should be more realistic. (One can only imagine what his response would have been had I said that I wanted to be a philosopher, particularly given the statistic that Black philosophers constitute about 1.1% of philosophers in the United States). Keep in mind that this event did not occur in the 1930s or 1940s, but around 1979. The message was clear. Because I was Black, I had to settle for an occupation suitable for my Black body,4 unlike the white body that would no doubt have been encouraged to become a pilot. As with Davis, having one's Black body returned as a source of impossibility, one begins to think, to feel, to emote: "Am I a nigger?" The internalization of the white gaze creates a doubleness within the psyche of the Black, leading to a destructive process of superfluous self-surveillance and self-interrogation. This was indeed a time when I felt ontologically locked into my body. My body was indelibly marked with this stain of darkness. After all, he was the white mind, the mathematical mind, calculating my future by factoring in my Blackness. He did not "see" me, though. Like Ellison's invisible man, I occupied that paradoxical status of "visible invisibility." Within this dyadic space, my Black body phenomenologically returned to me as inferior. To describe the phenomenological return of the Black body is to disclose how it is returned as an appearance to consciousness, my consciousness. The (negatively) "raced" manner in which my body underwent a phenomenological return, however, presupposes a thick social reality that has always already been structured by the ideology and history of whiteness. More specifically, when my body is returned to me, the white body has already been constituted over centuries as the norm, both in European and Anglo-American culture, and at several discursive levels from science to philosophy to religion. In the case of my math teacher, his whiteness was invisible to him as my Blackness was hyper-visible to both of us. Of course, his invisibility to his own normative here is a function of my hyper-visibility. It is important to keep in mind that white Americans, more generally, define themselves around the "gravitational pull," as it were, of the Black.5 The not of white America is the Black of white America. This not is essential, as is the invisibility of the negative relation through which whites are constituted. All of embodied beings have their own "here." My white math teacher's racist social performances (for example, his "advice" to me), within the context of a [End Page 219] white racist historical imaginary and asymmetric power relations, suspends and effectively disqualifies my embodied here. What was the message communicated? Expressing my desire to be, to take advantage of the opportunities for which Black bodies had died in order to secure, my ambition "was flung back in my face like a slap" (Fanon 1967, 114). Fanon writes: The white world, the only honorable one, barred me from all participation. A man was expected to behave like a man. I was expected to behave like a black man—or at least like a nigger. I shouted a greeting to the world and the world slashed away my joy. I was told to stay within bounds, to go back where I belonged. (114–15) According to philosopher Bettina Bergo, drawing from the thought of Emmanuel Levinas, "perception and discourse—what we see and the symbols and meanings of our social imaginaries—prove inextricably the one from the other" (2005, 131). Hence, the white math teacher's perception, what he "saw," was inextricably linked to social meanings and semiotic constructions and constrictions that opened up a "field of appearances" regarding my dark body. There is nothing passive about the white gaze. There are racist sociohistorical and epistemic conditions of emergence that construct not only the Black body, but the white body as well. So, what is "seen" when the white gaze "sees" "my body" and it becomes something alien to me?