# TFA State 1AC

Black and Happy - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0pposi4rlE>

***On the night they decided not to indict Darren Wilson for the cold- blooded murder of Mike Brown  
I, a well framed riot,***

***chose not to protest. Instead I shut down  
everything and like  
any good gospel conductor demanded a better harmony. Closed the windows,***

***could not deal  
with yet another choir lifting the rafter about more Black death. My body,  
an overused war drum, knows too well  
the rhythm of danger, knows  
all of the warning signs, stands too quickly whenever the alarm sounds.***

***The protests were in a part of Oakland  
I walk to near everyday, but on that night I didn’t want to be sad,  
didn’t want White supremacy  
to tell me how to feel yet again.***

**In a topic centered around black death I refuse to give the debate the satisfaction of trading in my trauma for a ballot. Upon the release of this topic, Black debaters were asked to prioritize going to choose between a screwed up medical industry or the criminal justice system. It became between us having to choose between legal injustice and public health. But doesn’t the topic committee know that our suffering isn’t just another advantage? It is something that I have to consistently live through, even in spaces like this. SMITH 13**[[1]](#footnote-1)**: It will be uncomfortable, it will be hard, and it will require continued effort but the necessary step in fixing this problem, like all problems, is the community as a whole admitting that such a problem with many “socially acceptable” choices exists in the first place. Like all systems of social control, the reality of racism in debate is constituted by the singular choices that institutions, coaches, and students make on a weekly basis. I have watched countless rounds where competitors attempt to win by rushing to abstractions to distance the conversation from the material reality that black debaters are forced to deal with every day.** **One of the students I coached, who has since graduated after leaving debate, had an adult judge write out a ballot that concluded by “hypothetically” defending my student being lynched at the tournament. Another debate concluded with a young man defending that we can kill animals humanely, “just like we did that guy Troy Davis”. Community norms would have competitors do intellectual gymnastics or make up rules to accuse black debaters of breaking to escape hard conversations but** **as someone who understands that experience, the only constructive strategy is to acknowledge the reality of the oppressed, engage the discussion from the perspective of authors who are black and brown, and then find strategies to deal with the issues** at hand. **It hurts to see competitive seasons come and go and have high school students and judges spew the same hateful things you expect to hear at a Klan rally. A student should not, when presenting an advocacy that aligns them with the oppressed, have to justify why oppression is bad. Debate is not just a game, but a learning environment with liberatory potential. Even if the form debate gives to a conversation is not the same you would use to discuss race in general conversation with Bayard Rustin or Fannie Lou Hamer, that is not a reason we have to strip that conversation of its connection to a reality that black students cannot escape.**

#### And debate seems to forget about this. This community seems to forget that we exist. That the anti-black violence everyone speaks of is not just another problem that can be solved with your fixated policies. No this violence exceeds debate, it exceeds my 1ACs, when I leave this room, this space, this tournament, the violence that is attached to my body follows me and the whack conceptions of what this 1AC is supposed to be can’t fix that

Calven Warren December 2016 [Liquid Blackness; Black Ontology and the Love of Blackness] <http://liquidblackness.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/LB6-WARREN.pdf> Keller JB

The officer, intoxicated by unchecked power over black bodies, wanted to injure “something” else, not just the teenager’s body. The reverend states, “What that officer did is not just violate a body, but he injured a spirit, a soul, a psyche. And that young boy will not easily forget what happened to him, in public with his girlfriend. It’s hard to really put gravity and weight to that type of offense.” Rev. Brown introduces a “type of offense,” which is difficult to decipher or translate into a framework of redress and injury. The offense he describes lacks a grammar to capture precisely the “target” of such violence. The phrase “a spirit, a soul, a psyche” moves us toward a conceptualization of this target, but it remains indecipherable in some sense, a “something” vulnerable to destructive practices. We can also understand the “strip search” itself as an allegory of anti-black violence: what is stripped is not just clothes and garments, but something metaphysical, a metaphysical stripping away of the constitutive elements of a person’s being. “A spirit, a soul, a psyche” is sadistically stripped and dishonored. The “gravity and weight" of the offense is the density of a metaphysical violence— in which black being is incessantly stripped, ripped apart, and humiliated. This violence is without end, without reprieve, without reason or logic. Both the metaphysical target and the violence are indecipherable because they constitute a non-sense sign within the grammar of redress and humanism. Put differently, anti- blackness renders both metaphysical violence and the “spirit, soul, psyche” untranslatable within ethics, law, and politics since these fields assume a coherent human ontology—and Blacks lack being. Furthermore, neither law, ethics, nor politics can adequately address “what” is injured (this “whatness” is invalid within its precincts); in other words, it cannot redress what it cannot address. Black existence confronts metaphysical violence continually, without the possibility of political or legal reprieve (since the object of the violence does not translate politically or legally). Violence without end, violence without reprieve, violence constitutive of a metaphysical world (the violence sustaining the world’s systems and institutions) is what the teenager experienced. The injury is, indeed, immeasurable— it fractures “something,” a deep metaphysical structure. The question before us becomes: How does black existence address metaphysical violence? Moreover, can we even answer this question and with what grammar do we broach it? These are, indeed, difficult questions but our aim, here, is not to answer them apodictically (since such an endeavor is impossible), but to present a meditative strategy: black care.

#### Round after Round, Tournament after tournament , tagline after tagline, Debate psychologically exhausts me. Here I cannot separate my blackness from my speech acts there is not a realm where I can simply fiat away the source of my trauma, I cannot simply assume the role of policy maker without simultaneously roleplaying as my oppressor. Screw debates conception of what this 1AC is supposed to be.

#### In a topic that asks us to prioritize public health over a system that tries to criminalize me, I don’t know what to do when that very same system that won’t let me speak.

#### So, I want to thrive and live in spite of the way the world attempts to victimize me. In spite of death, in spite of suffering, in spite of redistribution of my narrative from the mouths of those who can never understand it, I will embrace forms of black joy, become the blasphemous black, and speak of a new understanding of how my blackness can exist here

#### I affirm the permanence of Blashpemous Blackness as a rejection of this topic’s forced choice. This is an act of self-care for Black people to be able to disrupt the systems of domination. Javon **Johnson** is an Assistant Professor of Performance and Communication Studies at San Francisco State University. (“Blasphemously Black: Reflections on Performance and Pedagogy,” October 20**15**, Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies Vol. 11, No. 4, <http://liminalities.net/11-4/blasphemously.pdf> Keller JB)

By “blasphemy,” I mean “a trangressive act of cultural translation,” where black bodies, such as those in Kendrick Lamar’s video, are able to celebrate the whole of ourselves, even the untranslatable parts.11 It is not necessarily blas- phemy in a religious sense of the term, but a “secular blasphemy” that “is not merely a misrepresentation of the sacred by the secular,” but a performative act where blackness rejects unquestioned higher power, overwhelming and alienat- ing white authority “in the act of translation,” that tells us how to properly, civ- illy, respectably, and—dare I say whitely—perform.12 Indeed, at the very core of blasphemous blackness is the recognition and rejection of the notion that “The American idea of racial progress is measured by how fast [we] become white.”13 Far from reducing blackness to a monolithic way of being and doing in the world, blasphemous blackness “goes beyond the severance of tradition and re- places its claim to a purity of origins with a poetics of relocation and reinscrip- tion” that is always shifting, moving, maneuvering, and remixing.14 In this way, to be blasphemously black refers to how blackness, in all of its brilliant manifes- tations and expressions—that is, the queers and queens, the bourgeois and boughetto, the pastors and prostitutes, and everything else—refuses to perform in the comfortable confines of white supremacy and black respectability alike. Throughout the 2014-15 academic year my blasphemously black perfor- mances literally and figuratively saved me. On the days when students wanted me to center their whiteness, when the media tried to force-feed me a steady diet of black death, when it appeared that to be black and alive was oxymoron- ic, when the institution I worked for seemed not to care, and when everything around me felt chaotic and constricting, the rejection of it all was my saving grace. In this way, my black, in all of its blasphemy, is angry when whiteness assumes it should be happy, and happy when whiteness assumes it should be angry or sad. It openly defies the “rules” and proudly embraces a “politics of disrespectability” because it knows that in an anti-black racist world, blackness itself is marked as an unforgivable sin. My blackness refuses to apologize for the moments in which it disrupts the “purity” of the classroom, mainly because my blackness understands, knows it in its bones, that the classroom was never a pure place to begin with. My blackness comes to class angry, hurt, and saddened by the state-sanctioned ter- rorization of black bodies and wonders why more critical scholars do not say they feel the same. My blasphemous blackness will not be silent, unless it is for strategy. It is loud. My blackness will not allow for a disembodied lesson, be- cause it recognizes that my body is always the lesson. To be blasphemously black is not limited to or shaped by trauma. To be blasphemously black is to find joy, black joy, unmistakable and life affirming black joy in the rejecting, reviling, and rebuking of supposedly sacred white standards. It is knowing that the very act of transgression can be transformative in its attempt to locate a space unconcerned with, and perhaps outside of, white supremacy. It is knowing that black joy is “a real and imagined site of utopian possibility” where we create and are given the “space to stretch our imagina- tions beyond what we previously thought possible... to theorize a world in which white supremacy does not dictate our everyday lives.”15 And, this is in- credibly blasphemous because, despite every reason not to, we still smile; we still live, laugh, and love. To be blasphemously black is to be unconcerned with “white fragility”; to not care if your neighbor’s air conditioner unit is malfunctioning because white supremacy is quite literally and figuratively trying to burn your black house down. And, here lies some of the conflict: how does one effectively teach and engage (fragile white) students when embracing black blasphemy has been so life saving? When the service of self seems at odds with service to the institu- tion, but you refuse to choose between being black and being a professor, how does one negotiate this conflict, especially at a moment such at this? To teach while blasphemously black is/was difficult but necessary. At times it was a refusal to placate or even engage white fragility, while at other times it meant openly and fiercely challenging it. It meant showing my students multiple ways of responding to and resisting the state and white supremacy. It meant finding and living in the joy in all of this. As a pedagogical strategy, to be blas- phemously black is to decenter whiteness in almost every way, at nearly every turn, without apology or reservation, and using that as the lesson itself. In other words, to be blasphemously black is to look a crying white student in the face, inform her that white supremacy has taught her this tactic, deny it, and remind her of the lesson in all of this. To be blasphemously black is to check white fragility and any other tactics that promote white supremacy whenever, wherever, and however necessary to save black lives. It is to recognize that this essay may not necessarily save any other life except for my own, which is a revolutionary act, but it can lead to im- portant and, dare I say, blasphemous dialogues. This is not to suggest that the issues I highlight in this essay will come to an easy close as this piece draws to an end, but instead my turn to critically creative writing, that is journaling and authoring poetry as a means of becoming authoritative over my own life, was, and still is, incredibly salient for me. “I speak here of poetry as the revelation or distillation of experience” that must be articulated, negotiated, and unpacked.16 In this way, “Poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence,” as Lorde so aptly and pithily claimed of women of color.17 Poetry is not only a tool to reveal our experiences and critique unfair power regimes, it allows us to imagine beyond the beyond, to make possible what we previously thought impossible, and to articulate safer worlds and new modes of being that inherently counter the current dominant power structures. Why else would Socrates expel the poets from Plato’s Repub- lic? Poets, and their constant reminder that truth rests on who is telling the sto- ry and how it is told, are uniquely poised to challenge the unquestionable au- thority of the philosopher-king, of ruling classes.

***[Our stance] cannot be  
about Black death, it’s  
about how that night we listened  
to Tupac, imagined heaven’s ghetto.  
Corner stores draped in gold. An ocean  
of Black faces smiling as wide as before  
the beginning, when it was still Black  
and still good. Little girls playing double- dutch, and him, still dancing.***

***When I awoke the next morning to an arrogant sun, I called  
my mother. She was the only god worth praying to. We laughed,***

***and said, “I love you.”  
I wanted her to know…  
how political that call was.  
How political it always is.***

***But this poem cannot be  
about politics, cannot be  
about Black on Black  
crime, or the prison industrial complex. This poem is not a metaphor;***

***it is simply about Black love.***

#### And, this is our time—a Black time—and it is everything queer and Black and unimaginable. Our time is an immanent refusal of the transparency that the state seeks to make transparent about Blackness. Thus the Role of the Judge is to endorse the debater with the best praxis for constructing Black Futures Stephen Dillon is an assistant professor of Queer Studies, holds a B.A. from the University of Iowa and a Ph.D. in American Studies with a minor in Critical Feminist and Sexuality Studies from the University of Minnesota. (2013) “It's here, it's that time:” Race, queer futurity, and the temporality of violence in BorninFlames, Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory, 23:1, 38-51, DOI: 10.1080/0740770X.2013.786277

Throughout Born in Flames, countless members of the Women’s Army declare: “This is our time.” The time of the revolution was not the time to abolish anti-blackness, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchy. It was a time that left behind and captured poor (queer) women of color through the progress of democracy and equality. In this way, “our time” and state time are two antagonistic temporalities of violence in the film. As James Scott argues, the modern state’s utopian aim is to reduce the disorderly and chaotic social order under its purview into a mirror of the administrative knowledge central to its observations and governance. The state works to produce temporal and spatial intelligibility with the goal of manufacturing the orderly administration and regulation of the nation’s population, resources, and infrastructure. By disrupting and dismantling spaces, populations, and epistemologies that are illegible to its regimes of knowing and governance, the modern state creates a utopia of visibility and legibility that is open to policing and control (Scott 1998, 82). The management of time is central to this process. “Our time” is what the state seeks to capture. In Born in Flames, state time extends and expands the violence of the past, while “our time” is a temporal regime that exceeds and undoes state time. Again, Fanon proves useful for understanding these differences. In The Wretched of the Earth, Fanon describes a “time lag, or a difference of rhythm, between the leaders of a nationalist party and the mass of the people” (Fanon 1963, 107). According to Fanon, the rank and file of anti-colonial rebellions demand the complete and utter immediate destruction of the forms of power that render them “more dead than alive,” while both colonial and nationalist governments attempt to manage, temper, and restrain the demands of those who have no more time to give to the promises of a future that is always coming, but never arrives (51). For example, in the film, the state promises that “in the future” there will be jobs, an end to sexual violence, and racial and gender equality. But for Fanon, the “hopeless dregs of humanity” (or the wretched of the earth) are filled with an “uncontrollable rage” and thus exist in a temporal regime apart from that of the party or the nation. This is a time of intensity and immediacy (“the slaves of modern times are impatient”), where the future of the present as it is means no future at all (74). Like the financial, epistemological, and racialized legacies of slavery Baucom sees intensifying in our current moment, Fanon diagnoses the future of colonialism as the accumulation of the social, biological, and living death of the native. The native lives a death in life produced by the racism of slavery and colonialism. The future’s horizon is the accumulation of past forms of racial terror and violence. In this way, Baucom and Fanon draw connections between race and time that are crucial to questions of queer futurity. The relationship between race, gender, death, and the future is central to the immediacy and spontaneity of the Women’s Army and is foundational to the film’s critique of the future. We can turn to the Fanonian-inspired prison writings of George Jackson to further explore the relationship between death, race, and the future. In his 1972 text Blood in My Eye, published shortly after he was shot and killed by guards at San Quentin prison, Jackson writes of racism, death, and revolution: Their line is: “Ain’t nobody but black folks gonna die in the revolution.” This argument completely overlooks the fact that we have always done most of the dying, and still do: dying at the stake, through social neglect or in U.S. foreign wars. The point is now to construct a situation where someone else will join in the dying. If it fails and we have to do most of the dying anyway, we’re certainly no worse off than before. (Jackson 1972, 6) Here, Jackson argues that the social order of the United States is saturated with an anti-blackness that produces, in the words of Ruth Wilson Gilmore, “the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death” (2007, 28). Jackson’s text is littered with a polemic that links race and death in a way that preemptively echoes Michel Foucault’s declaration that racism is the process of “introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power’s control: the break between what must live and what must die” (Foucault 2003, 254). When Jackson, Gilmore, and Foucault define race as the production of premature death, they make a connection between race and the future. Race is the accumulation of premature death and dying. For Jackson, race fractures the future so that the future looks like incarceration or the premature death of malnutrition, disease, and exhaustion. The future was not the hopefulness of unknown possibilities. It was rather the devastating weight of knowing that death was coming cloaked in abandonment, neglect, incarceration, or murder. In other words, according to Jackson, death was always and already rushing towards the present of blackness. In the last line of No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive, Lee Edelman similarly connects the future to premature death when he references the murder of Matthew Shepard. He writes: “Somewhere, someone else will be savagely beaten and left to die – sacrificed to a future whose beat goes on, like a pulse or a heart – and another corpse will be left like a mangled scarecrow to frighten the birds who are gathering now, who are beating their wings, and who, like the death drive, keep on coming” (Edelman 2004, 154). For Edelman, the future will necessarily continue to produce a world that is unlivable for queer people. In this way, the polemics of black liberation and Edelman’s anti-social thesis share an affinity around the theorization of the future as overdetermined by premature death, yet they diverge in how they imagine death’s relationship to race and power. For Edelman, the future looks like repetition of the death of Matthew Shepard (a white gay man), while for Jackson, it looks like the premature death of incarceration, the ghetto, and chattel slavery’s haunting contortion of the present. In other words, the state and anti-blackness were central to the anti-sociality of the black liberation movement. Within Jackson’s analysis, the state is the primary mechanism for unevenly distributing racialized regimes of value and disposability. Following the writing of Fanon, Jackson argued that for this relationship to be abolished: “The government of the U.S.A and all that it stands for, all that it represents, must be destroyed. This is the starting point, and the end” (Jackson 1972, 54). Jackson’s polemic crescendos when he describes the future he desires: We must accept the eventuality of bringing the U.S.A to its knees; accept the closing off of critical sections of the city with barbed wire, armed pig carriers criss-crossing the city streets, soldiers everywhere, tommy guns pointed at stomach level, smoke curling black against the daylight sky, the smell of cordite, house-to-house searches, doors being kicked down, the commonness of death. (Jackson 1972, 55) If the past and present have produced the accumulation of the premature death of black people, then Jackson imagines the complete undoing of the social order as the way out of temporal capture. The future of the social order means no future, and so the future must come to an end. Fanon similarly imagines the relationship between the native and the future of the social order: “They won’t be reformed characters to please colonial society, fitting in with the morality of its rulers; quite on the contrary, they take for granted the impossibility of their entering the city save by hand grenades and revolvers” (Fanon 1963, 130). Here, the invitation to the safety and security of the city (or the social order as it is) is an offer to continue a life that is a half-life. Possibility comes from a starting point that is an end.

***And, you cannot kill Blackness;  
too much of it is wrapped in unshakable joy. And, aint that why they think we magic  
in the first place?  
That despite every reason not to,  
we still love.  
We still Black.  
We still…***

1. Smith, Elijah. History maker, best assistant coach ever. A Conversation in Ruins: Race and Black Participation in Lincoln Douglas Debate CQ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)