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### 1

#### Rawlsian justice generates racism

Garrett, 98 -

Chapter: Rawls: A Racist Theory of Justice? ByEdward Garrett Book Nationalism and Racism in the Liberal Order Edited ByBob Brecher, Jo Halliday, Klára Kolinská First Published1998 eBook Published26 October 2018 Pub. LocationLondon ImprintRoutledge DOIhttps://doi.org/10.4324/9780429449802 Pages247 eBook ISBN9780429449802 SubjectsPolitics & International Relations https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429449802-9/rawls-racist-theory-justice-edward-garrett

For Rawls racism is ruled out by his principles of justice. Here I wish to question in one particular way the extent to which, nevertheless, Rawlsian theory is as a matter of fact non-racist. There may be other arguments. In particular it might be suggested that the early Rawls is racist in proposing a comprehensive political morality with a universal reach when it is only the product of a particular political culture. 1 More generally, it might be argued that Rawls is implicated in liberalism’s commitment to the imperial project and its creation of ‘natives’ as savages as part of the substantiation of liberal law (see for example Fitzpatrick, 1990). The approach taken here differs from these possible arguments, however, in that it considers how Rawlsian justice may generate racism within societies rather than between them; and it considers this generation of racism within one specific context, that of criminal justice.

#### Rawl’s veil of ignorance reifies race neutrality

Allen, 2004

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Rawls famously presented his two main principles of justice as principles that would be adopted by persons in "the original position," placed behind the "veil of ignorance. "88 In traditional social contract theory, we are not asked to imagine that parties to the social contract are ignorant about their own characteristics. However, persons in the Rawlsian analogue-the original position-are ignorant about race and other social identities: In the original position, the parties are not allowed to know the social positions or the particular comprehensive doctrines of the persons they represent. They also do not know persons' race and ethnic group, sex or various native endowments such as strength and . ,,. mte 1gence .... 89 They are "veiled" against information and points of view that could result in bias in the design of political justice. Rawls assumed that the end product of the original position would reflect some sort of bias if the parties possessed racial (or ethnic) information. Thus, he stipulated ignorance about the parties' own racial identities. Note that it does not follow that Rawls understood thoroughgoing colorblindness to be a requirement of substantive justice. The raceignorance stipulation does not flow from a general principle mandating colorblindness in all government affairs. It is an open question whether a just, well-ordered society based on Rawlsian principles would permit government to collect race data vital for, for example, securing the health, educational achievement, or economic well-being of all its citizens.

#### White philosophy intentionally obfuscates the role whiteness plays in its theories – the same philosophy that attempts to appeal to everyone through race neutrality and universality said Black people were equivalent to parrots – white philosophy itself is contingent upon gratuitous violence against Black people

Yancy 20, George, philosopher who is the Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of Philosophy at Emory University. He has been a professor of philosophy at Emory University since fall 2015. He is also a distinguished Montgomery Fellow at Dartmouth College, one of the college's highest honors, Educational Philosophy and Theory, “Black disciplinary zones and the exposure of whiteness”, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00131857.2020.1830062>, Accessed 8/23/21 VD

My entry into African American literature is inextricably linked to my entry into the field of European and Anglo-American (white) philosophy. In fact, it was the latter’s penchant for arid conceptual abstraction, race-evasion, anti-Blackness, and obfuscation regarding its white power and privilege, that eventually made the former a necessity, an existential urgency for a young Black man grappling with his racialized identity and what that entailed within a white supremacist America where the opposite of blackness is not simply whiteness, but the human. In short, African American literature, and Africana thought, more generally, came as a discursive lifeline, a balm for parts of my identity that needed to be developed and nurtured. To provide a sense of what was at stake, early on in my life I did not understand that the question of my humanity as a Black person was ever in question. By the time I fell in love with philosophy, I had already fallen head over heels for its whiteness, though I had not marked or named it as such. It was sort of like modeling my masculinity after the creation of Ian Fleming’s fictional character James Bond. As 007, I could be debonair and sophisticated, but I could not be Black, not really. I had to fantasize in white, to accept whiteness, if only unconsciously, to be Bond. So, even within the context of gender, I had not seen the link between conceptions and performances of masculinity and how they are historically linked to whiteness or white patriarchy. Regarding philosophy, and its subtle seduction, I should have seen it after I read the entire section on the subject of philosophy in The World Book Encyclopedia under the letter P. The faces that graced the pages were of all white men: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Bertrand Russell, William James, John Dewey, Ren e Descartes, David Hume, John Locke, and others. At the time, I was a 17-years-old young Black male living in one of America’s Black ghettoes, the public housing projects of Richard Allen Homes in North Philadelphia. It was a peculiar juxtaposition. There I was being raised in the midst of poverty, roaches, rats, and stench thinking hard about the existence or nonexistence of God, Aristotle’s unmoved mover, the reality of Platonic Forms, and Descartes’ skepticism regarding the certainty of his existence or whether or not he was dreaming when he thought he was awake. I would later come to discover that Black literary figure James Baldwin (1995/1962) was right: “You were born where you were born and faced the future that you faced because you were black and for no other reason” (p.7). However, I had not read Baldwin at that time, I had not come see my life through his eyes, through his lived epistemology dripped in Black love, hope, pain, and suffering. I didn’t receive a letter of love like the beautiful and powerful one that he wrote to his young 15-year-old nephew. I had not come to drink from his wisdom, his understanding of the cruel and oppressive logics of whiteness. Yet, hovering over the reality of that structural Black poverty, caused by national neglect, a history of racial segregation in the forms of red-lining and white neighborhood covenants, and necropolitical vectors, was a subtle white message that communicated that I was, as Baldwin says, “expected to make peace with mediocrity” (p.7). So, there I was, something of an oxymoron, reading beyond my years, beyond what the racialized urban school system intended for me to read. The trap of falling for whiteness is easy and unremarkable. It was an easy addiction, so to speak. Symbolically, it is a process of what Joy James (2004) has called “mainlining white supremacy.” She writes, “I likely started off in my preacademic years in incremental dosages, sniffing rather than shooting” (p.263). It is a powerful metaphor as whiteness involves forms of habituation that masquerade as common sense, as intelligibility itself. And once it takes control, one finds oneself in a state of denial, protesting that nothing is wrong. After all, think about it, the philosophers whom I read were not self-identified as white, the encyclopedia did not nominate them as white; they were simply philosophers, “raceless” human beings, persons. This is how whiteness functions. Whiteness structurally obfuscates its logics, it conceals its racial and racist epistemic assumptions through claims of “neutrality” and problematic claims of “universality.” Whiteness vis-a-vis philosophy also attempts to narrate an airtight history that covers over the racially motivated selective processes that undergird the normative and biased dynamics that shape philosophical canonization. As a result, I did not see white men, but human beings. In short, whiteness had succeeded. I was addicted, and whiteness thrived precisely because I had failed to see it; after all, it was invisible to me through its normativity. For me, whiteness, during many academic years of being taught white European and Anglo-American philosophy, remained unseen, unmarked, unnamed, unraced. Many years later, though, I would come to refer to the insidious operation of whiteness as the “transcendental norm,” a power structure that is binary, hierarchical, and hegemonic. I did not know that many of those same philosophers were white racists. I did not know that they saw me as a “sub-person.” I didn’t know that some actually claimed that Black people were incapable of generating original ideas and were compared to parrots (Hume, 1997, p.33), and that because I was Black I was thereby deemed stupid (Kant, 1997, p.57), or that people who looked like me or of African descent (except perhaps those from Egypt) did not possess Geist or Spirit, and that “nothing consonant with humanity is to be found in [our] character” (Hegel, 1997, p.128). I had completely missed this racialized misanthropic foundation of the philosophy taught to me by straight-faced white (predominantly male) professors of philosophy. In high school or during most of my early university years, no one informed me about the underside of modernity, the colonial history that privileged those white faces, that valorized their “true humanity” over my “lack” of humanity or “sub-personhood.” No one even hinted at the fact that many of those same philosophers would have laughed in my face had I said that I wanted to be a philosopher or perhaps desired to read their books. After all, how can a “nigger” read great philosophical texts? Indeed, how can a “nigger” read at all? Implicit here is the question: for whom were these philosophical texts written? Who was the intended recipient/reader? Clearly, it was not me or Black folk who looked like me. So, there I was reading texts that were not intended for me to read, or, more precisely, were deemed impossible for me to read. By this logic, I must not be Black. Or, I was indeed white, which is the same thing. But since I was/am Black, I must not be “truly Black,” or perhaps I was “off Black” or an “aberration” of Blackness. In any case, it was as if I had broken a law of nature. Historically, it is important to note that it was Hume who claimed that my Blackness vis-a-vis whiteness, and all the characterological differences that constituted the racial divide, was due to an original distinction made by nature. This makes me a thing fit for teratology, something monstrous, or perhaps a miracle. After all, my Blackness, my being “inferior,” was made possible, for Hume, because of a “natural distinction” made by nature itself. So, to read philosophy, to do philosophy, to eventually become a professional philosopher I had, following logically from Hume’s racist assumptions, defied nature. It was only later that I came to get a handle on my addiction, to see through the lie of whiteness, its structural prevarication, its structural invisibility. The very assumption that philosophy qua philosophy is an exclusively white European or Anglo-American phenomenon—that reason is a white creation, that creative and rigorous thought itself is white, that the quintessence of humanity is white, that civilization is exclusively a white achievement, that white people are destined to rule the world, that goodness, virtue, beauty, and honor are white—is interwoven with a narcissistic, genocidal impulse to play the role of a malevolent “god.” White people who have succumbed to this form of idolatry speak to Black people with pity and contempt. As W. E. B. DuBois (1995) writes, “My poor, un-white thing! Weep not nor rage. I know, too well, that the curse of God lies heavy on you. Why? That is not for me to say, but be brave! Do your work in your lowly sphere, praying the good Lord that into heaven above, where all is love, you may, one day, be born—white!” (p. 454). That, however, is a “rebirth” that I refuse. Indeed, it is a “rebirth” that is actually a form of death, an invitation to commit a form of suicide, self-denial, selfnullification. It sounds like a Faustian bargain to me. This is one reason why African American literature became so incredibly important to me. In fact, it became so important that in the middle of my work toward completing the PhD in philosophy at Duquesne University, I decided to take a break to engage in intensive study for an MA in Africana Studies at New York University. At this time, African American literary figure Toni Morrison’s Playing in the Dark had hit the right historical and conceptual note with me. She helped me to see just how Blackness is always already linked to the construction of whiteness, how, as I read that philosophical entry in The World Book Encyclopedia, my identity formed the constitutive outside of the normative structure of white philosophy. By “white philosophy” I don’t simply mean its monochromatic whiteness, but what African American/Afro-Caribbean philosopher Charles Mills (1998) calls, “the conceptual or theoretical whiteness of the discipline” (p.2). The meta-philosophical assumptions of the discipline, its intuitions, its ethical and epistemic claims, its historical and social emergence as linked to contexts of white domination, had been, for me, concealed, unknown. As an undergraduate studying philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh, the conceptual whiteness of philosophy was not simply unmarked, but seemed irrelevant or perhaps irreverent. As a graduate student studying philosophy at Yale University, the conceptual whiteness of philosophy remained unspoken or unrecognized through, I would argue, willful ignorance. In terms of thematizing or naming the whiteness of philosophy while pursuing my PhD at Duquesne University, there was silence in the form of undergraduate and graduate courses offered. Neither the courses offered nor the comprehensive examination to be taken by philosophy graduate students toward the end of their course requirements dealt seriously with race, whiteness, racism. Again, Morrison’s important text proved indispensable. By thematizing the binary racial structure embedded within literature written by white people, Morrison had helped me to see, by extension, that white European and Anglo-American philosophy had also been playing in the dark. This raises a profound question: what if white philosophy—many of its significant epistemic tropes, ethical assumptions, and philosophical anthropologies—is predicated upon its paradoxical closeness and distance from Blackness? More frighteningly, what if white philosophy is predicated upon the social death of, and gratuitous violence imposed upon, Black people? What if the recent horrible murder of George Floyd is what makes the structural and systemic dynamics of whiteness secure and safe? In stream with Morrison (1992), this would indicate a form of what she calls “Africanism.” She writes, “Africanism is the vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; not repulsive, but desirable; not helpless, but licensed and powerful; not history-less, but historical; not damned, but innocent; not a blind accident of evolution, but a progressive fulfillment of destiny” (p.52). By “American self,” Morrison means a white American self. In our contemporary moment with Trump at the American presidential helm, that equation is dangerously truthful, maliciously xenophobic, and sadly fixed. To make America “great again” is to pretend that America was ever great. What is the “greatness” of America’s past other than a time of unabashed and cruel white supremacy, a time of celebrating the ideals of white “purity”? While a symptom, but not the cause, it is Trump who is stoking the flames for envisioning and celebrating new forms of white purity, which is indicative of an ideological white racist madness out of the Nazi playbook of racist horror. In September 2020, at a rally in Bemidji, Minnesota, Trump said to the white crowed, “You have good genes. A lot of it’s about the genes isn’t it, don’t you believe? The racehorse theory you think was so different? You have good genes in Minnesota” (Embury-Dennis, 2020). This is not a dog whistle, but a terrifying overture toward the inhuman practices of forms of “purification” that were embedded within the history of eugenics.

#### The ROB is to vote for the debater that best combats racism – this is a prerequisite to any other ROB because debate itself is structured to exclude and silence Black voices – every other ROB presupposes a level playing field to evaluate arguments but that’s simply false

Reid-Brinkley 19, Shanara, Co-Director of CSUF Forensics and College of Communications professor, The Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies, “Voice Dipped in Black: The Louisville Project and the Birth of Black Radical Argument in College Policy Debate”, <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199982295.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199982295-e-28>, Accessed 8/24/21 VD

For Black people, Watts’s interpretation of voice is a critical examination of the power of rhetoric in the context of racial politics, and yet there are theoretical blind spots in his analysis. While Watts’s work attempts to speak to the problem of raced rhetorical moments, his lack of engagement with the notion of anti-Blackness produces conceptual limits for his interpretation of voice and the capacity of the Black to produce moments of voice. Watts’s understanding of voice requires negotiation among speakers and audiences marked by “obligations and anxieties” and produced by the “ethical and emotional dimensions of discourse.” In other words, to make voice a “happening” requires a recognition by those engaged in the rhetorical moment. Yet the politics of recognition for the (p. 217) Black body are necessarily tied to the social and political narratives attached to the Black body as a speaking body. The Black body represents dirt or a stain, or to use symbolic anthropologist Mary Douglas’s language, a “pollutant,” on and in the social body, one that must be controlled and contained (Douglas 2002). That bodies of color remain present despite the fact that they are supposed to be absent “is exactly what maintains white privilege” (Warren 2003, 47). The soundingness of Blackness only achieves recognition in a sociopolitical context where the very fact of Blackness holds significant meaning. In other words, the acoustic markers of Blackness are not just about differentiating the vocal utterings and tonal inclinations of particular cultures. It is about the announcement of the Black body into acoustic space where the utterance by the Black is inhabited simultaneously by the marker of not white, and thus not proper. Black utterance enters acoustic space as improper sound even in moments where the Black vocally attempts to mimic sound propriety as marked by normative whiteness. I am attempting to think through that which allows anti-Blackness to continue to cohere the American political landscape. It is the dynamics of the preutterance, that is, at the level of the flesh, that Blackness precedes the heardness or sonorousness of sound. By filling in the cracks between voice, the Black body and forces of anti-Blackness, I hope to contribute to Watts’s discussion of voice as a rhetorical happening and to voice studies’ engagement with theories of anti-Blackness. If the Black body can never be rendered fully invisible, then that body must somehow be contained, its excesses subdued to produce a form of the Black body that can become recognizable within the space of whiteness. Society tames Blackness by requiring those marked by Blackness to demonstrate their commitment to the norms of whiteness through the performance of the body; generally a mimicking of whiteness. If whiteness is normative, then in order for the speaking Black body to be heard, or come to voice, it must perform in a manner consistent with that norm. For example, the stylistic norms of the college debate community are inextricably tied to the social performance of identity attached to racialized bodies. Style includes bodily performance, how our bodies signify as part of rhetorical practice. In other words, body performance is integral to communal practices in debate that produce a social and competitive environment hostile to Blackness. If the image of the nationally successful debater is a white, male, and economically privileged body, then the stylistic practices of those bodies become the standard by which all other bodies are evaluated. Their practices, their behaviors, their identities become the models or thrones upon which others must sacrifice their identities in the pursuit of “the ballot,” or the win. Racially different bodies must perform that difference according to the cultural norms of the debate community. For Black students it can often mean changing their appearance, standardizing language practices, and eschewing their cultural practices. In essence, in order to have an opportunity for achieving in debate competitions Black students must performatively whiten. “Acting Black” is problematic because those performative identities are not recognizable in the normative frame of debate practice. In fact, Blackness signifies a difference, an opposite; a negative differential. It is not that the debate community explicitly operates to exclude people based on race; rather it (p. 218) competitively rejects Black presence, or non-normative nonwhite performance. It is the combination of cultural values, behavioral practices, and the significance of Black flesh that produce barriers to meaningful inclusion.

#### The alternative is African American literature – this contests the race neutrality of white philosophy while giving voice to black life and allowing us to rethink philosophy itself

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My direct engagement with African American literature provided me with a Black culturally rich, symbolic, and narrative medium through which I was able to engage questions that were relevant to my lived experience as Black. Hence, African American literature functioned counter-hegemonically, encouraging me to contest the self-proclaimed “racelessness” of white philosophy. Critically rethinking the process of thinking as an historically mediated process became a vibrant way of making sense of and appreciating multiple philosophical voices and variegated social locations vis-a-vis different epistemic assumptions, and styles of knowledge production. Morrison’s text, Playing in the Dark (and her broader literary corpus) also helped me to think critically about the ways in which African American literature can speak to the situational facticity of Black people, their integrity, and their forms of meaning making in a white supremacist world, where they do not constitute the silent background that gives significance to whiteness, where they do not function as an axiological scaffold for uplifting the whiteness of humanity. Hence, African American literature, through its narrative tarrying with the quotidian complexity of Black life, helped me to understand how processes of racialization, and the gravity of anti-Black racism, are indispensable to understanding Black existence, and how Black people actively engage in processes of negotiation within and resistance to a world that denies them their right to be. African American literary figure Maya Angelou (2009/1969) speaks of how the human voice can infuse words “with shades of deeper meaning” (p.96). African American literature is a process of giving voice to Black life, of developing narrative creativity, of uncovering a broad and complex range of emotivity expressed by and between Black characters; it is a process of discerning the complexity of Black life and infusing Black life with shades of deeper meaning. This idea of accessing or expressing deeper meaning is what led me to new ways of thinking about the practice of philosophy and its limits, its epistemic closures, and aspirational aims toward mere conceptual purity. So, I was moved to rethink how to do philosophy, how to write philosophy, how to teach philosophy, and how to render visible the socially and politically constitutive, though contingent, forces that impact philosophy as a practice from somewhere, not nowhere. Black life, within the context of national and global anti-Blackness, mocks the academicism of many forms of philosophical practice within white academic spaces. Philosophy was not born from the head of Zeus fully formed, but born, as African American philosopher Leonard Harris says, of struggle. Philosophy, for me, is a site of suffering, not simply wonder or the effort to gain conceptual clarity. Confronting the status quo of white supremacy, allowing the pain of others to speak, challenging existing hegemonic social ontologies and oppressive political regimes, can leave a mark. Sometimes, as in my case, there are even threats of physical violence. After writing the article “Dear White America” in 2015 at The New York Times (“The Stone”), I personally experienced the weight of white racist hatred; it was affectively and somatically registered. The body has a way of keeping track of trauma. n terms of my own meta-philosophical turn, I came to understand that doing philosophy is an activity, one that is framed by various historically grounded assumptions, paradigms, disciplinary matrixes, linguistic communities, metaphorical devices, and narrative frames. Fundamentally, doing philosophy is a form of social engagement that is always already a process in medias res. And even while thinking “alone,” one does not think without a language, which is socially and historically saturated with meaning. Many white philosophers that I’ve encountered, despite their pretensions to the contrary, are unable to brush off the dust of history and begin doing philosophy ex nihilo. More specifically, philosophizing is an embodied activity that begins within and grows out of diverse lived contexts; philosophizing takes place within the fray of the everyday. In their attempt to escape the social, to defy history, and to reject the body, many white philosophers have pretensions of being godlike. They attempt to defy the confluent social forces, the multiple identificatory registers, and their historicity and particularity, that shape their philosophical voices. They see themselves as totally detached from the often inchoate, social, and existential traffic of life and the background assumptions (race, gender, class, ability, sexuality) that are constitutive of a particular horizon of understanding. Having “departed” from life, having rejected the force of effective history, embodied orientations (broadly construed), white philosophy is as good as dead, devoid of relevance, devoid of particularity, and escapist. This is why Mills (1998) says so provocatively that “a lot of philosophy is just white guys jerking off” (p.4). The dynamic racialized narrativity self-consciously embedded within Morrison’s literary work functioned as a template of how I might begin to write philosophy in a way that captured what African American philosopher Cornel West calls the funk of life (West & Ritz, 2009, p.4). I wanted my words on the page to do things, to carry the weight, in this case, of historical racist catastrophe. In an important interview that articulates the weight of African American literature as a mode of epistemic and social ontological generativity, Morrison communicates, it seems to me, the importance of African American literature as a way of reframing philosophical issues that mark the importance of situated narrativity vis-a-vis Black life. Indeed, describing how she understands her own literary efforts, Morrison says that her “books are about very specific circumstances, and in them are people who do very specific things” (Dreifus, 1994). She continues that “the plot, [and] characters are part of my effort to create a language in which I can posit philosophical questions. I want the reader to ponder those questions not because I put them in an essay, but because they are part of a narrative” (Dreifus, 1994). Within the context of a narrative, as opposed to a philosophical architectonic system, Morrison is able to place the reader into a lived space, a powerful narrative space that is able to articulate modalities of lived existence where, in this case, Black bodies are raped, racially brutalized, dehumanized, marginalized, and traumatized. In short, through a form of rhizomic narrativity, Morrison moves the reader through the messiness of the impact of existentially contingent history upon the Black body. Hence, one might say that Morrison posits philosophical questions that are inextricably linked to a dynamic racialized embodied narrative that is grounded within the quotidian, an everydayness that contains multiple and entangled roots in the deep and complex lives of Black people. After all, Black lives are lived narratives, journeys of pain, endurance, contradiction, death, inter-subjectivity, suffering, racism, sexism, terror, and trauma. Avoiding abstract and non-indexical discourse, Morrison reveals the power of literature to embody the flesh and blood reality of what it means to be Black within an anti-Black world. Mills (1998) also understands the existential gravity of an anti-Black world and how Western philosophy “abstracts away from what has been the central feature of the lives of Africans transported against their will to the Americas: the denial of black humanity and the reactive, defiant assertion of it” (p.9). Hence, Mills frames the African American literary tradition as one which contests the assumptions of a solipsistic Cartesian subject that is detached from the sociality of Black life within an anti-Black world. He references “those invisible native sons and daughters who, since nobody knows their name, have to be the men who cry ‘I am!’ and the women who demand ‘And ain’t I a woman?” (pp.9-10). Mills turns to this Black literary tradition to upend the universal pretensions of white philosophy by revealing the experiences of Black people and the specificity of the existential and identificatory predicaments that they face. Hence, Mills names the motifs found in Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Man, Richard Wright’s Native Son, James Baldwin’s Nobody Knows My Name, John A. Williams’ The Man Who Cried I Am, and Sojourner Truth’s self-declaration of her Black womanhood in 1851 at the Woman’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. By rendering explicit these motifs, Mills dethrones the assumption that what constitutes a philosophical conundrum is determined a priori. This move expands the domain of the range of the morphology of philosophical questions and problems addressed, and the origins of the literary-philosophical texts in which they emerge—who are the writers and what are their, in this case, racialized contexts? It was during my MA work in Africana Studies that such deeply and engaging texts were made available: The History of Mary Prince; Celia, A Slave; The Polished Hoe; Corregidora; I, Tituba: Black Witch of Salem; Muse & Drudge; Breath, Eyes, Memory; The Salt Eaters; Negritude Women, and so many more. Each text demonstrated how the Black human voice can infuse words with shades of deeper meaning, and how Black people are constantly negotiating questions of empire, and racialized denigration. African American literature was/is essential to how I approach my philosophical writing and how I think about the importance of philosophical focus, which attempts to uncover deep racialized existential trauma as it is lived, situated, and embodied within the belly of the white American beast. I aim to enflesh philosophical discourse that fails to capture the concrete fractured joys and prolonged sorrows of Black life, especially as Black life continues to be rendered nugatory and disposable in contemporary America. This is why within the context of my own philosophical interventions, I have unapologetically integrated into my philosophy courses African American literary texts, those that speak to the experiences of Black students who don’t see themselves reflected in traditional white philosophical texts. In this way, Black students do not feel overlooked or rendered invisible. In this way, their collective or shared histories are not denied or implied as having no philosophical value. African American literary texts are embedded with cognitive, emotive, visceral, somatic, interpersonal, intra-physic, surrealistic, political, ideological, spiritual, geopolitical registers. Such texts challenge fixed ontologies that, as Fanon (1967) would say, leave “existence by the wayside” (p.110). To attempt to understand Black-being-in-the-world, especially within the context of the past and present of white America, is to engage and phenomenologically elucidate the lived experiences of Black people through the lens of the sociogenic, which is, among other things, the space of social constitutionality and relationality. On this score, Fanon’s work, especially his famous chapter five of Black Skin, White Masks, tarries with the somatic, symbolic, and semiotic constitutionality of Black life, and how our Black bodies undergo processes of what I have called the “phenomenological return” (Yancy, 2017). It is a process where the Black body is thrown back, returned, as an object occupying space as it is “seen” by the white gaze, which is structurally procrustean. Fanon’s writing in Black Skin, White Masks, gets at the very heart of a racialized Black identity that undergoes processes of white interpellation that leaves his body in a state of malediction.

### 2

#### Counterplan Text: Workers ought to unconditionally strike.

#### Acts of recognition by the colonizer block the future potentialities for change and reifies colonial oppression – the aff is an act of fixity, a colonial mimicry where the Other is only valuable once their desire to be recognized by the colonizer has been assured and fulfilled

LaRue 11, Robert LaRue, “MOVING BEYOND THIS MOMENT: EMPLOYING DELEUZE AND GUATARRI‟S RHIZOME IN POSTCOLONIALISM”, Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Arlington in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON August 2011, <https://rc.library.uta.edu/uta-ir/bitstream/handle/10106/6148/LaRue_uta_2502M_11318.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>, accessed 11/1/21, sb

Throughout his work as a psychiatrist, Fanon‟s attempts to delineate the path(s) of colonial oppression and find a way to help colonized individuals move beyond the problems of colonization always returned to the idea that “the last shall be first” (Wretched 2). Although presented in various forms, Fanon‟s desire to replace the first with the last only creates a loop because, instead of opening new pathways, it seeks to “substitute” one “thing” for another (Wretched 1). Even though, for Fanon, it seemed that ontology did “not [to] permit us to understand the being of the black man” (Black Skin 110) it seemed so because the ontology of the colonized was viewed as starting in, and around colonization. Since the rhizome refuses points, instead preferring continuous connections and fluid motions, understanding ontology as effect serves no purpose. This reliance on a point-based experience, if Cartesian humanism holds that existence is to be understood as a series disconnected instances of “I‟s,” becomes most clearly evidenced in the language of colonization each time the colonizer, or even Fanon himself, articulates that it is the colonizer who “fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonized subject” (Wretched 2). Fanon seems to look at Sartre‟s existentialism as a way to connect the dots. However, as discussed in chapter 1, in joining the “I‟s” into one system, Sartre presents Fanon with a new set of challenges. Fanon‟s insistence on the colonizer being the “point” of the colonized, and postcolonial, existence fixes postcoloniality. The rhizome, in its “lineness,” soothes the tensions between these points. While it must be acknowledged that it was the colonizer who created circumstances that brought the “colonized” into a state of colonization, the existence of colonized individuals should not be understood as fixed at the point of interaction. Instead, the existence of the colonized extends beyond—both before and after—this “moment” of interaction. An understanding of this extension is precisely what the rhizome promotes. In soothing the series of disjointed points into multiple lines, Fanon‟s attempt to escape the fixity of his colonized body can be more easily realized because there can be an understanding that the stereotype (which becomes the linguistic model to signify the colonized) does not, and cannot exist. Fixity blocks the history—and futures—of bodies by turning them into singular sites that begin at the present moment(s) of “recognition,” or, as Homi Bhabha so aptly states it, fixity “facilitates colonial relations, and sets up a discursive form of racial and cultural opposition in terms of which colonial power is exercised” (112; emphasis in original). Through colonial linguistics, the body becomes expressly felt, “overdetermin[ing the colonized] from without” (Black Skin 116). At each interaction with the white world, the colonized are “assailed at various points” while “the[ir] corporeal schema crumble[s], its place taken by a racial epidermal schema” (112) so that the only understanding of their body is that which is handed to them by the colonizer. The body no longer becomes just the experiences of the individual, it becomes layered with the images that the colonizer has of the black man‟s experience. If Fanon s interested in having “those who have kept [the colonized] in slavery” so that they can “help rehabilitate man, and ensure his triumph everywhere, once and for all” (Wretched 61; my emphasis) there can be no freedom from this fixed body because the signifying colonized will always carry “traces” (as Derrida would put it) of its previous image/utterance relationship. Fanon‟s insistence that postcolonials can finally be “elevated” and given recognition as “humans” seems contradictory because, within the colonizer‟s mind, the separation of “Us” and “Them” is needed in order to assure the colonizer of his/her place. Therefore, Fanon‟s desire to “take [the] place” of the colonizer (Wretched 23) belies the truth that the postcolonial individual will never have a place within the colonist‟s system of power. By demanding a substitution of roles, Fanon seems to have ignored—either intentionally or unintentionally—his own recognition that “in the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of bodily schema” and any “consciousness of the body” comes as “a third-person consciousness” (Black Skin 110-11). In other words, within the “white world” of colonization, there is no room for “man of color” to be anything other than what the white man sees him as. The fixed categories of “the Other” always remain because the without them, the colonizer‟s own identity becomes jeporadized since there would no longer be an understanding of “me” based on what “I am not.” By introducing Deleuze and Guattari‟s rhizome into this understanding of experience as reality, the reading of the body expands so that the body, instead of remaining fixed, becomes a state of constant motion. Through an understanding of the rhizome, the postcolonial body no longer becomes a single unit (a monolith), instead, it becomes lifted from its binary relationship as a signifier (it is lifted from its status as a monolithic corporeal schema) and is able to be “read” as fluid and as a system of possibilities. As the language of colonization turned the existence of colonized individuals into one of fixed categories (i.e. savage, cannibalistic, uncivilized, etc.), the rhizome‟s multiplicities offer a chance to, as Ingram argues, move beyond a state of representation—where the body has its meaning(s) inscribed on it from outside sources, such as the perceptions of others—and towards a state of signification—where the body is no longer tied to fixed categories of meaning (3). By moving beyond the reliance on representation—which can never fully grasp the entirety of the thing it attempts to represent— and moving towards signification, postcolonial individuals gain the perspective that they have “meaning, but not one that is fixed or predetermined” (18). The European humanism, from which Fanon draws his claims, depends on these representations. It is because of this dependence that there can never be a new understanding of the postcolonial individual within the system of European humanism. The rhizome seeks to “think outside of the form/matter binary” (9) and allow all of its lines to create their own meanings—meanings that are not created by the Other, but created with an understanding of the Other as part of, not apart from, each line. This may seem problematic since it seems to corrode any knowledge of the “Self,” but, in fact, the body is freed from an understanding of the “Self” that relies on a point-based system of “mirroring” (Lacan) which holds the system of oppression in place. This psychology is based on a single fixed point: the “dictatorial conception of the unconscious (Deleuze and Guattari 17). The unconscious, in the system of mirroring, becomes the point of origin for the Self. This once again brings about the searching for an origin, for the point of beginning for the individual. And, since much—if not all—of psychoanalysis grounds itself in Western concepts/ideals, any attempt to excavate the postcolonial individual‟s origin from a psychological (or more appropriately psychoanalytical) means only leads back to a troubled system of power. Instead of looking to “uncover” or “reduce the unconscious or to interpret it or to make it signify according to a tree model,” a rhizome “is precisely th[e] production of the unconscious” because it disengages itself from the “leader/follower” framework (17-18). It is not safe to say that the rhizome is a social body, since it does not require agreements the way that language does (rhizomes do not require the approval of its member to validate its existence). It simply is. Each line in the rhizome exists with or without recognition. Saying that existence relies upon mutual recognition insinuates that neither party exists prior to their mutual interaction. Insinuations such as these once again seek to fix the location of individuals, turning them into subjects in a game of power. Lacan is correct when he discusses the mirror‟s role in the construction of the self, showing how it creates new movements and new recognitions within the individual (2); however, this admission is near-sighted because he fails to note the effects that the individual has upon the mirror. On their own, the two bodies exist independently of one another. When they meet, not only is the individual altered by the mirror‟s reflection, but the mirror is altered by the individual. Each wave of the individual‟s arm deterritorializes the mirror and reterritorializes it, giving it new properties and new motions. Each new reflection creates a new mirror, just as it creates a new understanding in the mirrored. And each understanding shifts in accordance with different mirrors. There no longer remains a singular “source,” a singular “point” from which the individual can take its recognition. It is by understanding these multilateral effects and assemblages (the ways in which each line of interaction) cast effects on one another that the rhizome comes to “produce” the unconscious. Instead, rhizomes should be seen as natural connections of bodies based, with a large emphasis, on motion. In addition to this, rhizomes require reconstitutions of all “bodies” involved, removing the unilateral shifts that are typically assumed to occur in colonization. In other words, as explained by Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, among others, postcoloniality can no longer be seen as the sole existence of the once colonized “Others.” As a rhizome, then, the postcolonial body (not only how it physically connects with the microbes, viruses, and other life forms in its environment, but the psychological understanding of it as well) exists in a constant state of flux and as a constant source of deterritorializations and reterritorializations. In the postcolonial context, this is a powerful shift in focus because it allows Fanon‟s theory of the body to free itself from the singlesided transmissions of colonial knowledge(s). While Bhabha‟s discussion on mimicry makes a similar move of shifting colonial knowledge from a monologue to a dialogue (as he argues that mimicry highlights the “performance” of the colonist‟s existence), it too rests on performance which is problematic because the system of ascension remains intact since “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other”8 (122). And, it is this upward movement that threatens to impede the progress of postcoloniality. Even as colonized individuals disrupt the security (or the certainty) of the colonists‟ knowledge of their (the colonists‟) own place, the postcolonial‟s desire to “prove” themselves only serves to validate the colonizer‟s superiority. Deleuze and Guattari‟s rhizome, however, moves beyond mimicry, as “[mimicry] relies on binary logic to describe phenomena” (11), insisting on understanding reality as a something like a giant ocean where each instance of contact sends forth ripples, and as each ripple moves outward, which alter the dynamic of the surrounding waters. As the rhizome highlights the interconnectivity of beings (of bodies), the hierarchical structure of mimicry is laid horizontal, placing all subjects equal to one another. Rhizomes “are flat, in the sense that they fill or occupy all of their dimensions” existing on a single plane (9). Rhizomes can never contain “a dualism or a dichotomy, even in the form of the good and the bad” because there is no end. Every seeming “rupture” always “tie back to one another” (9), and this ability to self-heal and avoid dualisms or dichotomies speaks directly to the systems through which postcolonial individuals must work. An understanding of the postcolonial Self can be, then, understood as a line in a multiplicity of lines which can never be separated because they are one another.

### Case

#### Setting aprioris on arguments about race operate as a tool of epistemic racism – making us meet the prerequisite of whiteness to be seen as “experts” or a valid argument reinforces racialized knowledge hierarchies

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Public cultural deployments of expertise evolved in response to rapid scientific and biotechnological development and the concomitant need to reconstruct the relationships between whiteness and property and (neo)coloniality and property. In an age of biotechnology, whiteness, in Cheryl Harris’s words, remained “a prerequisite to the exercise of enforceable property rights,” 25 here in the context of expertise. However, the precise landscape of (white) expertise took on new forms. As Zoltan Majdik and William Keith write, “[D]elimiting who can be an expert and whose decisions come from a place of expertise to the provenance of epistemic principles limits our ability to act as experts.” 26 The epistemic distinction between nature and science that emerged as overt and extractive racism in the colonial era also became a de facto racial division in the race liberal era. That updated distinction facilitated the understanding of certain kinds of raced knowledge—and the persons who created it—as less valuable than others. Because whiteness and expertise remained linked in race liberalism’s racial episteme, those producing traditional knowledge were often constructed as less than whole people without the capacity to invent. 27 Whiteness continued to operate as a priori evidence of access to expertise or potential to expertise while non-whiteness worked as a marker of non-expertness and suspectness about potential to expertise. Moreover, because values such as hard work and ingenuity continued to hold a special place in the American imaginary, those who comported with those values were deemed good intellectual property citizens. People of color largely produced raw materials, which were “purified” and “refined” in the science-industrial complex for sale in the global economy. They did not do the hard scientific labor, in part because they simply could not do it, that merited valuable patent protection. Unconscious racial and (neo)colonial judgments about expertise, built into the racial episteme of the nation, thus delineated between nature/culture and expertise/non-expertise, and reified fundamentally raced hierarchies of knowledge production.

#### The ideas of presumption and permissibility reify a racial script that works in strict opposition to Black creatorship

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All evidence suggests that the young Phillis Wheatley did not set out to become the first African American to publish a book of poetry in 1790. Publishing the book was no small feat, and it happened only with the encouragement of her owner, Susanna Wheatley. 35 In order to receive copyright protection for her work, Wheatley was forced to prove to eighteen white men, who declared themselves the “most respectable characters in Boston,” 36 that she indeed possessed the creative capacity to write the poems that she claimed as her own. While Wheatley ultimately convinced those men that she had produced copyrightable poetry, she did so at great cost, both personal and racial. 37 Wheatley’s continuing difficulties highlight the extent to which her struggle was not simply about the quality of her work; it also had to do with the racial scripts and racist sentiments around Blackness at the time. Despite the complex legal negotiations over the vocabulary of copyright, specifically the standard of originality, that emerged in the 1820s, there does not appear to be any white analogue to Wheatley’s trial**.** Proving originality, a legal doctrinal standard that became more restrictive in the early and mid-1800s before becoming more liberal, nonetheless would not likely have given rise to suspicions about an inherent lack of capacity to imagine, as it did with Wheatley. 38 Instead, as Wheatley’s trial demonstrates, the presumptions against Black creatorship were unique and ingrained in American culture. For centuries after the trial, African American writers and artists sought to refute the claim that Black people lack imagination and, therefore, the ability to create with originality. Moreover, the anti-Black spectacle of Wheatley’s trial mobilized racial scripts that could be applied to other groups, such as Indigenous peoples and Latinx persons, thereby articulating and amplifying racist and colonialist sentiments about their incapacity to create. In 1781, Thomas Jefferson, who had never met Phillis Wheatley, described her as lacking the capacity for true imagination. Jefferson’s racialized proclamations about the capacity to create and the definition of true imagination, with analogues to “imitation,” came to be embedded in copyright law’s originality standard as continuing justification for racism. In essence, true imagination and imitation evolved into shorthand for racial scripts about Black creatorship. At a time when the violence of Jim Crow operated as a structural barrier to full equality for African Americans in the South, the phrase worked to demarcate white creativity from Black creativity. Jefferson, who crafted a secondhand racist and sexist account of Wheatley, commented in Notes on the State of Virginia: Misery is often the parent of the most affecting touches in poetry. Among the Blacks is misery enough, God knows, but not poetry. Love is the peculiar oestrum of the poet. Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. Religion, indeed, has produced a Phillis Wheatley; but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism. 39

#### Extend our ROTB – racism comes first

#### 1 – Accessibility – the debate space and communication itself is structured to exclude black bodies – this precludes any other discussion of what debate ought to look like

#### 2 – Psychic violence – black debaters are forced to conform to white norms like TT to win ballots – that comes first and o/w’s any fairness offense

#### 3 – Silence – discussions about racism and the debate space never happen – the K is an intervention that addresses these issues and breaks that silence – they can truth test anytime but the K in this debate is key b/c these debates never happen

#### TT is racist –

#### 1 – evaluating things in binary terms like true/false disavows the diverse ways blackness functions and operates

#### 2 – it writes out our performance because we haven’t conformed to white norms – that reifies racism in the space

#### 3 – the idea that TT is a “neutral” way to judge the debate reinforces race neutral narratives that write out black people’s truths – that turns their paradigm because it’s a question of whose truths actually matter