# 1NC

### 1

#### CP: Appropriation by private entities is unjust.

#### Space policies are all grounded on representations of outer space and rely on a virtual relationship to space itself produced by mediated technological simulations — this virtual relationship erases territory as threat and risk becomes ubiquitous and requires a drive towards certainty that makes weaponization and conflict inevitable

Bormann 9 (Natalie Bormann – Teaching Professor at Northeastern University. “The lost dimension? A spatial reading of US weaponisation of space” Ch. 5 in *Securing Outer Space: International Relations Theory and the Politics of Space* (2009) pgs. 81-89. <https://books.google.com/books?id=xHt8AgAAQBAJ&pg=PA78&lpg=PA78&dq=virilio+and+%22outer+space%22&source=bl&ots=stoPb9axPg&sig=ACfU3U1kOc7P7ncw4EeHZ-k5I0XgAK6jbw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj9isOt_6XjAhWpxVkKHY5SB0MQ6AEwCXoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=virilio%20and%20%22outer%20space%22&f=false>, DOA: 8/1/19,)

The representation of a ‘battlefield’ and combat in and through space is certainly contingent in our reading of key documents; for instance, in 2001, the US Space Commission evoked the powerful image that the US is an ‘attractive candidate for another Pearl Harbor’ in space, making the case that weapons in space were needed to counter perceived US vulnerabilities in form of an attack on a virtual US territory and habitat in space. Further examples for the ways in which claims to spatiality are deeply implicated in the forging of US space weaponisation abound; they range from mapping outer space as a ‘final frontier’, the ‘ultimate high ground’, or a space that follows ‘the rules of the road’ for which there is a ‘space road map’. One finds these discourses generally embedded within the logic of the our/their space nexus coupled with the attributes of defending our space versus an offending other that allow for the drawing of the boundaries around space. In 2004, US Strategic Command (2004) contemplated that the first step in space control is identifying exactly what’s in orbit around the Earth, who it belongs to, and its mission. It goes on to claim that space control involves the ability to ‘ensure our use of space while denying the use to our adversaries. And lastly, the US National Space Policy of 1996 narrates a story along similar lines when it proposes the need to assure that ‘hostile forces cannot prevent our use of space’.

How does this matter? I argue that the task of tracing these constructions of spatiality, the meaning-giving of the ‘material’ as reality, is vital for the direction space policies have taken (and will continue to take). There is no spatiality – as produced in the aforementioned examples – that is not organised by the determination of frontiers and boundaries that in turn determine the space ‘inside’ these drawn lines. The virtual function of space weapons is what has allowed for the process of ‘drawing’ and mapping around ‘our space’, and has allowed for ‘stationing’ weapons to control, patrol and defend along a virtual territory with virtual frontiers (the extend of which has been determined by the reach of technology). The construction of a space of a certain kind, and the protection of its ‘new’ frontiers, is what precedes its weaponisation; it is what renders it meaningful. If we assume the construction of space, as opposed to the notion that space can be explored, then we need to ask: what has informed this process? What turns space into a battlefield?

‘[War] now takes place in “aero-electro-magnetic space”. It is equivalent to the birth of a new type of flotilla, a home fleet, of a new type of naval power, but in orbital space’ (Virilio 2000b). What should be clear by now is that material space is pre-constructed. According to Virilio, it is the technical that precedes the spatial. The possibility of new military technology underpins the ways we invent and organise our environment, geographies and landscapes. And it is the effects of technology which produces outer space as a place and authorises contingent action in support of weaponisation. This is not to suggest that technologies have an existence of and on their own and independent of social practice; of course, technology cannot be studied in isolation (see Bourdieu 1992).

The new technologies that allow us to penetrate outer space are producing new domains of experience and new modes of representations and perception. Now, that technology is deeply infatuated with current policies in outer space comes to no surprise, and we find ourselves amidst visions of ‘hyper-spectral imagery’, ‘advanced electro-optical warning sensors’ and ‘space-based radars and lasers’. While I am interested in these technologies of, and soon in, space I am even more interested in the ways in which they augment spatiality and accelerate claims to, and over, spatial authority. Thus, how do these technologies relate to space? Virilio is clear on this: to begin with, and to strip these technologies of their obfuscation, they shrink the planet (and space outwith the planet, the exoatmospheric); and they do so in two ways. First, Virilio insists that technologies lead to a doing away of spatial distance and the geo-strategic reference points that go with it. As the Rumsfeld Commission put it quite aptly, ‘Space enters homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and government offices’ (US Space Commission 2001). To take this notion further and to include the idea of a space-based laser as an example, from any given spot in outer space we will be able to strike and destroy each other at any given point and at any given time. Space stops to matter. The author contends that technologies therefore lead space to suffer from ‘torsion and distortion, in which the most elementary reference points disappear one by one’ (Virilio 1991: 30). The foreseeable deployment of a space-based laser, or, of a kinetic energy interceptor missile (designed to ‘hit and kill’ an incoming hostile missile) are testament to this sense of distortions insofar as space-based weapons would overcome the ‘location problem’ and the need of proximity close to target. As a recent study put it aptly, ‘interceptors fired from orbiting satellites could in principle defend the United States against ICBMs launched from anywhere on Earth [. . .]. Their coverage would not be constraint by geography’. The Transformation Study Report of 27 April 2001, reflects similar sentiments, claiming that ‘Space capabilities are inherently global, unaffected by territorial boundaries or jurisdirectional limitations’ [emphasis added]. It follows from here that, second, technologies ‘reduce-distance-reduce-reaction-time’ – or, as Virilio puts it much more eloquently: not only does technology deterritorialise space it also de-personalises it (and us in our relation to space). No doubt, outer space plays a key role in the ‘real-time’ enhancement of military operations on a global scale. Satellites are not only used to spot targets as they emerge and transmit data but they also allow us to offset weapons that meet these targets anywhere and at any time – instantly. The swiftness blurs if not erases the assumed (and familiar) distinction between offence and defence, which affects our views on spatiality insofar as the image of the battlefield can now become ubiquitous: ‘Every place becomes the front line’ (Virilio 1991: 132). Virilio further clarifies this for us; whereas in the past there was a sense that the ‘front’ is where the tanks are, now, he suggests, we assume that ‘where we find the satellites there is the fourth front’ (Virilio 2002: 3). This is furthered and amplified by the US Air Force vision that calls for ‘prompt global strike space systems with the capability to directly apply force from or through Space against terrestrial targets’ (US Air Force Space Command 2003). And fast forward to the present, the Quadrennial Defense Review of 2006 is clear in its visualisation for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance in which it seeks to establish what it aptly terms an ‘unblinking eye’ over the ‘battlespace’ that suggests the instant, constant and ‘persistent surveillance’ of US space in outer space (Quadrennial Defense Review 2006: 55). For Virilio, this process of de-materialisation of space in outer space along these lines can turn into a de-realisation of the objectives of fighting and destruction, and as suggested by the problematic of proximity that this chapter addresses. There is no time left for reflecting on, and responding to, warfare and its mode of targeting, hitting, destruction and killing and, subsequently, no time to invent space differently. The author expresses this as the ‘dematerialization of armaments, de-personalisation of command, de-realisation of the aims of war’ (Virilio 2000: 87).

In an attempt to close the circle to the start of this chapter and draw the line back to the notion of an imagination of outer space as a battlefield – yet devoid of matter – consider the following: creating, fabricating, moulding and representing a field of combat in outer space, ubiquitous and instant in its ability to project modes of destruction and killing, in fact determines, reproduces and locks in the very existence and rationale of the need to defend space against an other, colonise space before a competitor can do so, and divide space into ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’. Put differently, the invention of outer space as a battlefield with the above ‘qualities’ assumes a notion of vulnerability and threat to that space – at any time and from anywhere – before it in fact becomes one. Thus, outer space as a sphere of permanent crisis in effect constitutes and constructs the very reality that it purports to counter. I am referring here to Carol Cohn’s (1987) argument that military projects pre-empt threats and threatening intentions. In the context of past US/Soviet rivalry she contends that, if one asks what the Soviets ‘can’ do, one quickly comes to assume that ‘that is what they intend to do’. In other words, strategic planning and the logic of worst-case-scenarios commit us to assume something will happen. Foucault’s notion of ‘technologies of normalization’ springs to mind by way of summary, and by which the author depicts technology as an essential component in the systematic creation, classification and control of space, habitat and its claim to contingent action drawn from that control over that space.

I began this chapter by implicitly suggesting that the ‘problem’ of outer space lies in the fact that – unlike the ‘blue sky above us’ or the ‘Azure Coast’ in the Virilio quote at the outset – we cannot ‘see’ outer space; unlike the tanks, guns, and soldiers, on ground and air, we cannot ‘see’ the satellites, anti-satellite weapons and space-based lasers. Both the place of outer space and its reference points for space-based weapons are presented to us through that which we can know about them – a particular reality, a certain landscape, and as organised in a meaningful and common-sensical way. This is not to suggest, however, that what we ‘see’ (again, ‘the blue sky’) is not equally dependent on that which we can know about it. According to Virilio, there is ‘little’ physicality in our geographical vision; most of what we ‘see’ is achieved through certain modes of representation, technology, narrating, and so forth. In this sense, this chapter was interested in that which we cannot look at on, and from, Earth and in the distance – yet, which is always-already ‘Earth-bound’ and locally embedded. It was interested in the landscapes and geographies of outer space which we cannot ‘see’ and visualise – yet, which are presented to us and narrated as spatially contingent. And it was concerned with the military technologies in outer space which are ‘Earth-bound, locally embedded, and close to us’ – yet, which provide for the possibility of a mode of war fighting and destruction ‘from the distance’, clean and sanitised, instant and with no time left for reflection.

#### Technological control of outer space is what designs and upholds contemporary imperialism — the United States’ overwhelming satellite infrastructure generates unfettered economic and military domination of the world by means of arranging legal regimes and manufacturing emergencies to secure its role as the benevolent colonizer

Jason Beery, 2016, Ph.D. in Human Geography from University of Manchester, “Terrestrial Geographies in and of Outer Space”, Ch.1 in *The Palgrave handbook of society, culture and outer space*, Eds. Peter Dickens and James S. Ormrod, pgs. 64-67 [entire chapter pgs. 47-70]

While the legal regime was being negotiated, technological developments made human activity in outer space possible. Improved geophysical knowledge of the mechanics of Earth in space and of Earth's orbits brought with it speculation about how these orbits, and outer space more broadly, could be used to facilitate and improved existing activities on Earth, such as military reconnaissance, communication, navigation, scientific research, and weather forecasting. Much of the technological developments came in the form of artificial satellites. As scientific satellites recorded more measurements about the geophysical characteristics of Earth and the orbital environment, satellites were improved, even more potential uses and benefits imagined, and orbits were made into vital resources for terrestrial activities. In turn, these satellite technologies, made possible by the scientific and legal production of outer space, have been central tools in the production of contemporary terrestrial geographies. Over the last several decades, some geographers have employed satellite technology in their research, while others have examined how space technologies have been deployed, (re)shaped economic landscapes and often (re)produced the social relations under which they were developed.

Satellite technology has facilitated scientists' (geographers included) knowledge of terrestrial nature. Through various forms of photographic reconnaissance and measurement, remote sensing satellites have provided vast amounts of information about a wide variety of human and environmental spatial relations and processes, ranging from identifying hazardous environmental risk and impact areas, types vegetation covers, geological formations, water drainage patterns, fisheries, and fertile soils, to monitoring non-human animal movements, human movements, pollution, and land cover change, and to measuring sea-level rise, temperature changes, wind patterns, polar ice coverage, and other meteorological phenomena. Many geographers rely on and create such information in their own research. These images, measurements, and other scientific representations of Earth are contemporary constructions of terrestrial natures. Geographers and others, as demonstrated in this volume, through the creation, interpretation, or application of such representations, have contributed to the production of Earth. In addition, these representations of terrestrial natures have been performed in the spatial practice of many terrestrial activities, as highlighted in the introduction to this chapter, including environmental management, agriculture, urban planning, weather forecasting, military incursions, and resource extraction, all of which have reshaped terrestrial geographies by affecting how terrestrial spaces and natures are organized and incorporated (and by whom) into wider flows and processes.

Just like in previous centuries, these constructions of terrestrial space(s) and nature(s) are tied to existing political, economic, social, and environmental contexts and relations. In this context, satellite technology and outer space are means through which these relations themselves are reproduced. As Warf Observes, 'Although satellites circulate in outer space, their origins and impacts Occur very much on the ground' (2007, p. 385). Warf explains that satellite technologies have reflected terrestrial power relations (i) through large, longstanding imbalances in the number of satellites, especially communications and reconnaissance ones, and in the number of Earth stations between industrialized and developing countries, (ii) through imbalances again between industrialized and developing countries in participation in international satellite organizations, (iii) through re-regulation, neoliberalization, and privatization of major satellite networks such as Intelsat, which are primarily based in industrialized countries, and (iv) through the commodification of satellite-based and enabled products, such as photo imagery. 'Satellites', he argues, 'do not simply reflect the world's geopolitics, they are simultaneously constitutive of it, blurring the boundaries between earth and space' (2007, p. 395). Such imbalances, though, were always part of the outer space project. Even before the first satellites were launched, the US government envisioned potential military and commercial uses for satellite technology and sought to ensure, during the negotiation of the international legal regime, its ability to use orbits and satellites to their maximum political and economic advantage (Beery, 2011).

The US government's political and economic ambitions have played out through the geo-positioning and reconnaissance capabilities of satellites, which have aided the ability to extend and exert power across Earth. For example, the US military utilized these capabilities to carry out anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan in the early 2000s (Beck, 2003), as it did again to locate and monitor the capture of Osama bin Laden (Whitlock & Gellman, 2013). These technologies offer (the US mostly) an Apollonian view-from-above (Cosgrove, 1994; MacDonald, 2007) that normalizes geopolitical activity through constant surveillance from orbit (MacDonald, 2007, p. 601). This view is also beneficial to the extension of corporate power and profits through the sale of vast numbers of routinely used products that use and rely on geo-positioning and navigation (MacDonald, 2007). Importantly, as MacDonald emphasizes, the use of this powerful satellite gaze to pursue US geopolitical and geoeconomic power is neither happenstance nor a mere Cold War artifact: some US government policy-makers and officials actively sought during the Cold War, and still seek today, to use space technologies to establish US dominance in outer space to dominate Earth (2007).

The gaze of non-military satellites, too, has been implicated in the perpetuation and extension of power and uneven social relations. Despite notions of the neutrality and objectivity of remote sensing and the communication of remotely sensed images, questions of power and control abound. Dodge and Perkins (2009, p. 48) point out, 'resolution and specifications vary, and despite apparent democratisation of access, "shutter control" remains firmly in the hands of powerful government institutions and unaccountable corporations. Beyond questions of what sites should be sensed and with what resolution, the satellite images must be 'grounded — that is, read, decoded, and contextualized — in order to signify anything other than its orbital perspective, to even remotely make sense' (Parks, 2005, p. 113). By 'grounding' images in this way, the ‘neutrality' of the image becomes inseparable from the multiple discourses that surround the sensed object, whether those discourses be ones of race, gender, class, colonialism, power, or some combination of these and others. Even when this remote sensing imagery in the hands of individuals, it may reflect and re-inscribe existing race and class divisions on a cyberlandscape, as was the case in the social online mapping of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina hit the city in 2005 (Crutcher & Zook, 2009).

Although the production of outer space as a space free of sovereign claims, to which all countries should have access, and in which activities should be conducted for the benefit of humankind suggests equal access, use, and benefit, it has enabled economically developed countries to access outer space when and where they please. As such, they have placed large numbers of satellites in orbit, which have been fundamental in terrestrial political-economic infrastructures, flows and processes dominated by industrialized countries and their private companies over the last 50 years. By enabling military and civilian surveillance, establishing high-speed, long-distance communications networks, aiding navigation of goods and missiles, and forecasting weather for agricultural speculation, these infrastructures, flows, and processes have integrated and reshaped terrestrial geographies this last half-century. Although some developing countries have launched their own satellites into orbit, they have not done so at nearly the same magnitude, nor have they benefitted economically to the same degree (Beery, 2011). In these ways, outer space has been a means to contemporary imperial practices on Earth (Dickens & Ormrod, 2007). Indeed, the production of outer space has been central to the production of terrestrial uneven development over the past 50 years (Beery, 2011). The production of outer space and Earth remains tethered to the reification of terrestrial social relations and hierarchies of power.

### 2

#### 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 reject the aff in favor of African American literature – the alternative understands the permanent failure of Western metaphysics as a method of creating new theorizations of philosophy based in black experience

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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.

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