

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY: THE DEVELOPMENT AND  
IDEOLOGICAL SEGREGATION OF BLACK NATIONALISM

A Thesis

by

JUDITH COLLEEN BOHR

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2011

Major Subject: Philosophy

A People's History of Philosophy: The Development and Ideological Segregation of  
Black Nationalism

Copyright 2011 Judith Colleen Bohr

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY: THE DEVELOPMENT AND  
IDEOLOGICAL SEGREGATION OF BLACK NATIONALISM

A Thesis

by

JUDITH COLLEEN BOHR

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Tommy Curry
Committee Members,	Claire Katz
	Wendy Moore
Head of Department,	Daniel Conway

August 2011

Major Subject: Philosophy

## ABSTRACT

A People's History of Philosophy: The Development and Ideological Segregation of  
Black Nationalism.

(August 2011)

Judith Colleen Bohr, B.A., Texas A&M University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Tommy Curry

The primary objective of this thesis is to advocate for Black Nationalism's full inclusion in the academic field of political philosophy. By bringing the thinkers in the Black Nationalist tradition into this discourse, the field of philosophy stands to gain important insight into the prejudices and unexamined assumptions that plague academia. I will flesh out the nature of these assumptions using the works of Black Nationalists like Angela Davis, George Jackson and Joy James. This will show that reading Black Nationalists as social theorists enables philosophers to unveil sources of knowledge about political economies by looking at the history of imperialism in a comprehensive manner.

The second section is devoted to an examination of how the Black Panther Party's relationship to the state reveals the role of white violence in maintaining racial hierarchies. That the Black Panthers were targeted so systematically by the state indicates that they were perceived to be a threat to the white power structure, which gives us insight into how challenging state terror is a revolutionary act in intellectual and

concrete ways. I show that the mainstream academic discourse on racism in American society assigns higher credibility to white philosophers even when Black thinkers have been producing relevant scholarship for centuries on the subject in question.

The third section examines the philosophy of the Enlightenment in terms of how it relates to the domestic colonization of African Americans and to the abuse of people of color around the globe by European and American imperialists. The purpose of this section is to show how scholars' confidence in white canonized philosophers predisposes them to overlook Enlightenment philosophy's structurally racist approach to political societies.

The fourth section provides a detailed overview of the key principles in Anti-Colonial and Critical Race Theory as they intersect with Black Nationalism. Important issues addressed in this section include the role of prisons in keeping African Americans in a state of neo-slavery. In order to situate Black Nationalist thought within a broader intellectual history, I will discuss how Black Nationalism represents the culmination of radical American and Anti-Colonial political theory.

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Dr. Tommy Curry, who introduced me to this material, and to Dr. Mary Mahoney, who introduced me to philosophy.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Curry, and my committee members, Dr. Moore, and Dr. Katz, for their guidance and support throughout the course of my graduate and undergraduate education.

Thanks also go to my colleagues and the Philosophy Department's faculty and staff for making my time at Texas A&M University a wonderful experience. Most of all, I would like to thank my classmates in Critical Race Theory and Anti-Colonialism who encouraged me to radically rethink my worldview.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	iii
DEDICATION .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vii
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. PREVENTING THE RISE OF A BLACK MESSIAH: THE NEFARIOUS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN JOURNALISM, PHILOSOPHY, AND THE STATE .....	7
2.1 Critical Theory and Deviance: A White-washed Approach to White Supremacy .....	11
2.2 There is Nothing Subtle about Black Men with Guns: The Self- defense Platform of the BPP .....	17
2.3 Conclusion.....	32
3. THE BLINDING LIGHT OF MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT: HOW THE BLACK NATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE UNVEILS IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENTS IN PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOLARSHIP .....	35
3.1 Three Dominant Perspectives on Locke’s Racism and Their Inherent Ideological Commitments .....	38
3.2 Slavery, Prisons, and other Mechanisms of Social Control Justified by the Political Thought of the Enlightenment .....	45
3.3 Black Nationalists’ Critique of Accommodating Structures and the Deceptiveness of Enlightenment Rhetoric .....	54
3.4 Conclusion.....	66
4. THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BLACK POWER.....	70
4.1 The Legacy of Anti-Colonialism in American Political Thought.....	75
4.2 The Nationalist Critique of Civil Rights Ideology .....	85



	Page
4.3 Black Power .....	92
4.4 Conclusion.....	100
5. CONCLUSION .....	103
WORKS CITED.....	106
VITA .....	114

## 1. INTRODUCTION

For centuries, Black thinkers have offered theories on the political, economic, social and ideological causes and manifestations of racism. Whites' historical response to this scholarship has been overwhelmingly one of ridicule or, more typically, total silence. This ignorance and lack of respect for Black social theorists persists despite ostensible improvements in academic and political inclusiveness for non-whites. However, the Black thinkers discussed in this thesis know from their political experiences in the United States that formal or token inclusion does not spell lasting progress or anything close to equality. My goal is to retrace this historical legacy of Black intellectuals' challenges to the economic structures, political systems, and philosophies created by and for whites. Though this commentary was historically offered simultaneously with the emergence and development of whites' new governments and ideas, they have largely been excluded from relevant academic discourses. The era of particular focus in this thesis is the historical moment in which Black Power movements received a dramatic increase in police and media attention during the 1960s and 1970s. I argue that Black Nationalism represents the culmination of Anti-Colonial philosophy in an American context, as this movement sought to use political philosophies based on historical knowledge of white supremacy in order to stop pursuing unsuccessful avenues for achieving liberation. Importantly, the Black Power activists seek to act on these

---

This thesis follows the style of *The MLA Handbook*.

revolutionary ideas and argue that widespread understanding and acceptance of these concepts is an essential step in creating a more just society.

Black Nationalism's exclusion from mainstream academic discourse and curriculum is problematic because its absence leaves a gaping hole in our understanding of intellectual history. Additionally, it devalues theories based largely on their polemical stance toward the philosophical canon which was the source of white supremacist ideology. An exposition of the social conditions and historical legacies motivating Black Nationalists' radical social theory presents an incredibly grim and violent portrait of the white race. The re-conceptualization of Euro-American culture as fundamentally colonial impeaches the authority of Western democratic ideology and presents white imperialism as one of the most violent, destructive movements in human history. Black Nationalists and other Anti-Colonialists examine the ethical implications of historical narratives that treat systematic European and American racist violence as an aberration from whites' generally democratic and humanitarian behavior. They construct a genealogy of anti-Black racism by subjecting whiteness to analysis in terms of the violence and tyrannical structures that were necessary for its conception.

It is important to clarify some things about Black Nationalism so that my use of this particular label will be properly understood in terms of its relation to other areas of Black thought and culture. This will require a synopsis of how this tradition finds its origin in both influential and forgotten predecessors. In the final section, I discuss in the American Black Nationalist movement as it is situated within the broader tradition of Anti-Colonialism, which has been subjecting white supremacy and Euro-American

imperialism to analysis for over a century. It is also important to note the diversity of opinions within the Black Nationalist movement, particularly concerning the role of women in the movement's leadership. While this conversation on the internal struggles in Black Nationalism is a significant one, it is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, this should not undermine the project at hand, as these conflicts are secondary to the Anti-Colonialist thread which unites all Black Nationalists under a single philosophical movement. It is this Anti-Colonialist tradition that will guide my historical analyses on the slave trade and on the American penitentiary system. Finally, I will discuss Black Nationalism's philosophical merits in terms of what it offers to the subsequent philosophical tradition of Critical Race Theory, specifically regarding its decisive influence on the more radical theories in Critical Race Theory like racial realism.

Black Nationalists' anti-colonial, historical critique is required if we are to uncover essential elements of white supremacy that would otherwise be overlooked in the white, liberal philosophical paradigm. In the second section, titled "Preventing the Rise of a Black Messiah: The Nefarious Partnership between Journalism, Philosophy, and the State," I analyze an article written by Todd Fraley and Elli Lester-Roushanzamir that interprets the social implications of Black Panther leader Fred Hampton's assassination through the lens of British sociology and Frankfurt School critical theory. My purpose is to show how this article exemplifies academia's practice of assigning higher credibility to European philosophers when discussing racism, even if this means doing less rigorous scholarship. I argue that we should view this pattern of inquiry into

race relations as an essentially unethical methodology that serves to downplay the prevalence and political significance of systematic white-on-Black violence.

An unapologetic interrogation of racism's significance in Enlightenment thought allows us to understand the connections between slavery and the prison system. This will be the subject matter of the third section, titled "The Blinding Light of Modern Political Thought: How the Black Nationalist Perspective Unveils Ideological Commitments in Philosophical Scholarship." By using a genealogical method to show how colonialism and the Enlightenment are intimately linked, Black Nationalists (and Critical Race theorists of close persuasions) are positing a novel theory. However, they are often disregarded for presenting a political theory that is extremely radical, particularly when it comes to Black Nationalists who are labeled as militant. However, it seems suspicious that Enlightenment philosophers' racist intentions should suddenly become irrelevant when evaluating the areas where their political theories intersect with their racist ideology. The formal political structure set up by Enlightenment thinkers and the framers permanently opened the door to the brutal oppression of an entire race of people, and what ensued was foreseeable, openly acknowledged, and at the forefront of the decisive dialogue at that time. The simultaneity of the establishment of the institution of slavery and the forming of an American democratic nation during this period was no coincidence, just as it is no coincidence that Enlightenment philosophers addressed both of these issues in their political writings. The marriage of slavery and democracy in America was coined and blessed by the theoretical justifications these thinkers provided to support their coexistence in a single political system. A double standard is exposed

when race-conscious philosophers are accused of bringing race into the discussion when they simply seek to respond to what is *already there*, and thus are in a better position to accurately evaluate a philosopher's work as a whole.

In the fourth and final section titled "The Philosophical and Historical Foundations of Black Power," I draw on major thinkers in the tradition whose works are representative of some of the field's most important tenants. Angela Davis will be a central figure in this thesis for two primary reasons. First, her work on the connections between slavery and the prison system draws heavily on her predecessors W.E.B. DuBois and Frederick Douglass rather than on derivative Foucauldian theories which lack race consciousness. Secondly, her work provides insights which are made possible by her historical position within the Black Nationalist movement and its intellectual influence on her. She describes her "political awakening" as an intellectual turn and recalls the "impact of Malcolm X's nationalist oratory...which [she] would later think of in terms similar to Frantz Fanon's description of the coming to consciousness of the colonized in *The Wretched of the Earth*" (*Davis Reader*, 299). Her work on prisons and the philosophy of the Enlightenment will be discussed primarily in the third section. The final section is devoted to surveying other major thinkers in order to summarize central political theories and to show how they are at the root of the Black Power movement. Foucault's silence on racism in *Discipline and Punishment* is analyzed excellently by Joy James, who presents a more accurate account of state violence by including the experiences of people of color who are attacked and colonized by imperialist Western

democracies. DuBois, Fanon, Cesaire, and thinkers in the Black Power movement are also discussed at length in the final section.

## 2. PREVENTING THE RISE OF A BLACK MESSIAH: THE NEFARIOUS PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN JOURNALISM, PHILOSOPHY, AND THE STATE

In 1969, the United States government escalated their ongoing war against the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, an organization that sought to end what the Panthers saw as whites' colonial occupation and terrorism in the Black community. The Federal Government's soldiers were armed, racist white men who were unleashed in an organized fashion on the BPP by the FBI's Counterintelligence Program,<sup>1</sup> whose coordinated police attacks targeted leaders and members of the Black Panther Party (BPP).<sup>2</sup> During this particularly bloody year, "twenty-seven Panthers were killed by local police and law-enforcement agencies and 749 members were arrested" (Marable and Mullings, 456). Despite the current availability of internal documents in which the government openly admits to its oppressive and violent objectives, propaganda in the news media was largely successful in influencing the general public's and academics' stance toward Black Nationalists' political thought.

A common caricature of the Black Nationalists disseminated by the media at this time presents the BPP as the aggressors rather than as the victims of unwarranted and unprovoked violence. As philosophers we must live up to our profession by challenging these dangerous and persistent assumptions. Thinking critically about the historical context in which this myth of BPP aggression originated is crucial when evaluating the

---

<sup>1</sup> Also known as COINTELPRO.

<sup>2</sup> Hereafter 'BPP.'



accuracy of these claims. This undertaking is essential if we are to appreciate that the Black Nationalist philosophy emerging from these social conditions offers an important contribution to academic political discourse. The most difficult step in this process for whites is to face the important role of violence and the press in maintaining white supremacist political structures that have been overlooked in the white liberal philosophical paradigm. Acknowledging the role of violence and the press in maintaining white supremacist political structures requires the white liberal philosophical establishment to look honestly at themselves in a new (and unflattering) light. This honesty also consequently forces philosophers to acknowledge that even the most radical continental traditions cannot be self-policing when it comes to their role in the cover-up of the political function of white violence.

The first section of this section will tell the story of the death Black Panther leader Fred Hampton, who was murdered by the Chicago police on the orders of the FBI's Counterintelligence Program. This account of Hampton's murder will set the stage for my evaluation of an article by Todd Fraley and Elli Lester-Roushanzamir on the media coverage of Hampton's assassination. This piece by Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir will be at the forefront of my inquiry, as it exemplifies the unwillingness of scholars to consult Black thinkers even when their work is far more relevant to an analysis of white violence. I argue that we should view this pattern of inquiry into race relations as an essentially unethical methodology that serves to downplay the prevalence and political significance of systematic white-on-Black violence.

In the second section, I refer to work done by Brady Heiner in order to situate Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir's article within the broader context of philosophical scholarship on race and to establish a pattern in academia's treatment of Black Nationalist literature. In his article "Foucault and the Black Panthers," Heiner examines how the Black Panthers remain largely unrecognized as the source of the ideas that Foucault appropriated in several of his canonized philosophical works. I will apply Heiner's theories on the ethical and epistemological ramifications of such trends in scholarship in order to illustrate the problematic relationship between continental philosophy and Black Nationalist literature. This is exemplified in Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir's use of Althusser's concept of the ideological state apparatus to explain whites' uncritical response to police violence against the Black community. I refer to articles published by the Black Panther Party in order to demonstrate that the members of the Black community understood the complexities of their relationship to the general public, thus rendering the Frankfurt School's concepts of ideology and British Cultural Studies' theory of deviance obsolete and inaccurate.<sup>3</sup>

In his book, *Destructive Impulses: An Examination of an American Secret in Race Relations: White Violence*, A. J. Williams-Myers provides a literature review of academic works which attempt to address the centuries-old problem of white violence against African Americans. He argues that this literature is representative of most academic work on this subject in that they fail get to the heart of the subject matter either

---

<sup>3</sup> I chose to focus on Hampton due to his leadership role in the Black Panthers, his enormous publicity in the Black community, and because the state singled him out specifically as a target for assassination.

by ignoring the prevalence and political function of white violence or by positioning this violence within a broader and more abstract discussion of societal violence in general. Williams-Myers contends that “until such time as social scientists are willing to face up to the importance of white violence as an integral variable in any discourse on race relations, windows of opportunity for elevating the discourse are impossible” (Williams-Myers, 6). In the third section, I go one step further by arguing that this failure in mainstream race scholarship is intimately connected to academics’ general refusal to cite *Black* thinkers who are willing to analyze whites’ collective culpability in this history. I argue that Black Panther philosophy is excluded from Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir’s article because such engagement would require them to examine how the constant threat white-on-Black violence defined the meaning and reception of Hampton’s revolutionary theories.

The insights offered by the Panthers’ social and political philosophies addressing the systematic occurrence and necessity of white violence against Blacks is analyzed in the last section of this section and offers what I take to be a renewed rigor in the philosophy of race and racism. In short, this section seeks to contribute to the elevation of the discourse on race by addressing the systematic nature of police brutality and the Black Panthers’ revolutionary, journalistic response. Todd Fraley and Elli Lester-Roushanzamir’s article is of particular focus in this piece because it is a prime example of the extent to which scholars are willing to ignore even the most obvious windows of opportunity for discussing the philosophical import of white violence, preferring instead

to elevate Eurocentric analyses of power.<sup>4</sup> Their unwillingness to consult Black Nationalist literature in an article purporting to examine the assassination of one of their most promising leaders points to a broader pattern in which “most traditional, white social scientists are incapable of viewing white violence holistically” (6). While Williams-Myers’s book provides an excellent historical account of white violence, Black philosophers for centuries have been arguing for the central importance of white violence in American race relations and were the first to use the historical genealogical method to expose the political function of this violence in its many diverse forms.

## 2.1 CRITICAL THEORY AND DEVIANCE: A WHITE-WASHED APPROACH TO WHITE SUPREMACY

On the early morning of December 4, 1969, Chicago police raided an apartment where Black Panther members were residing. During this raid, police killed Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. Hampton was killed by two gunshot wounds to the head while still asleep in his bed. The police were able to quickly identify Hampton’s bedroom using a detailed floor plan of the apartment that they received from Hampton’s bodyguard, an FBI informant (Blackstock, 24). This raid was orchestrated by the FBI’s Counterintelligence Program, which sought to infiltrate radical political organizations and sabotage their efforts. Particularly threatened by Hampton’s push for armed self-defense in the Black community, J. Edgar Hoover called on COINTELPRO officials to “pinpoint potential troublemakers and neutralize them before they exercise their

---

<sup>4</sup> Postmodernists and white feminists who call themselves critical race theorists have splintered the field between discourse analysts and racial realists such as Derrick Bell. Cf. Curry, “Will the Real CRT Please Stand Up?”

potential for violence” (22). These documents which are now available to the public demonstrate that Hampton’s assassination was not an isolated incident, as they establish a link between police brutality and the State’s coordinated, systemic and calculated use of the legal system to further Black subordination. The content of these and other memos provide evidence for the Black Panthers’ interpretations of the meaning of these events, which will be fleshed out in more detail in the final section.

However, a problematic trend exists in academia in which continental philosophers’ theories are favored as a means for explaining the oppression of African Americans. In “Revolutionary Leader or Deviant Thug? A Comparative Analysis of the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Daily Defender*’s Reporting on the Death of Fred Hampton,” Todd Fraley and Elli Lester-Roushanzamir discuss the press coverage of Hampton’s assassination and interpret the differences between the “general” press’s and the Black press’s presentation of the facts. They argue that these differences can be explained by applying the Frankfurt School critical theorist Louis Althusser’s concept of an ideological state apparatus to the mainstream Chicago press. In addition, they appeal to the concept of “moral panic” produced by British Cultural Studies in order to explain the general public’s hostility toward the BPP. Their article ultimately seeks to use Fred Hampton’s assassination as a means for explaining how and why “the discourse of journalism[,] professional values and norms suppress or obscure minority voices” (147).

Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir make it clear that their primary objective is not to develop an explanation of the press coverage of Fred Hampton's assassination based on the general media's racist motivations, but to supplement a pre-existing theory that is

does not address anti-Black racism. They do this by arguing that European philosophy and social science can provide an accurate framework with which to evaluate the Black Panthers' relationship with the police force and the general press. In conjunction with Althusser's concept of how ideological state apparatuses are effective at "containing social challenge and change," they believe that the events surrounding Hampton's assassination can be explained using Stanley Cohen's theory how perceptions of deviance "marginalized dissent." According to Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir, the press induced a state of "moral panic" amongst the general public by portraying the Black Panthers as deviating from traditional American values. In their application of the concept of moral panic to the *Tribune's* biased press coverage of Hampton's assassination, Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir write that through this process of distortion, "deviants become a serious threat to social values and morality; and as hostility and concern increases, the response to such threats is in the demand for greater regulation and a 'return to traditional values' (Thompson, 1998, p. 9)"(153).

The concept of moral panic was developed by Cohen in 1964 and 1965 and was based on his studies of how deviance in British youth was portrayed and understood by "the media, the public, and agents of social control" as "a threat to societal values and interests"(152). Because whites were the ones labeled as deviant by the press in Cohen's study, Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir are suggesting that whites and Blacks can be oppressed in the same way through this common mechanism of dominance (in

this case, slanderous accusations of deviance). Due to their racial illiteracy,<sup>5</sup> however, British Cultural Studies' theory of "moral panic" is inapplicable to the events surrounding the media's tolerance of police brutality against Blacks. By trying to apply Cohen's theory of deviance based on studies that concerned white, non-American subjects to the BPP in the context of the civil rights era, Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir are assuming that these findings are applicable to all groups regardless of the deep racism that was (and continues to be) the primary defining factor in the conflict between the Black community and the police state. By using concepts that have no direct link to the relationship between Blacks and the police state to explain this event, Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir are able to manipulate the issue to make it seem as though it need not necessarily apply to Black Americans, yet is still capable of explaining the public's support for their murder and mass incarceration.

Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir evaluate the stark contrast between the coverage of Hampton's assassination by the *Chicago Defender* and the *Chicago Tribune*. The morning after Fred Hampton's murder,

the *Chicago Tribune (Tribune)* ran a front-page picture consisting of rows of guns, bullets, and boxes of ammunition. The caption read, 'part of a weapons cache seized after raid on west side apartment used as secret headquarters of the Black Panther Party...' (150).

By presenting the story in this way Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir write that the general press both "trivialized" the BPP and fueled episodes of moral panic which

---

<sup>5</sup> The term "racial literacy" comes from Guinier.

“established the Panthers as the deviant other while supporting law enforcement officials and their tactics” (158). Framing moral panic as essentially unconscious racism, Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir support Lule’s theory that “as proponents of social order, *the news media ‘can hardly be expected to seek out subtleties about black men with guns’*” (Lule 288, Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir, 152).

In contrast, they claim that the “*Defender* used a more inclusive approach that resisted the commonsense view of the *Tribune* and articulated challenges to the existing journalism paradigm” (164). However, arguing that the *Tribune* was reluctant to challenge the journalistic paradigm sanitizes the discourse on race by failing to explicitly identify whites as the perpetrators. The suggestion that the white public’s and mainstream press’s support of “society’s existing power structure” (rather than “racial hierarchy”) was in any way coerced suggests that the general population and the *Tribune*’s journalists had a sense of powerlessness over the situation and failed to imagine that the situation could change. Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir frame the issue as an opportunity to use postmodern philosophy to question the nature of objectivity, exposing the *Tribune* as a “regulatory apparatus” (164). Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir contend that their “analysis of the *Defender* illustrates that competing press outlets using similar professional journalistic practices and routines can arrive at quite different outcomes” (164). By framing the problem in this way, Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir neglect the problem of violence and pardon the *Tribune*’s journalists of any willful wrongdoing. In actuality, every white journalist covering Hampton’s assassination had a material interest in maintaining a white-supremacist racial hierarchy. If we view the



journalists' motivations in terms of white supremacy and white privilege, it becomes more difficult to argue that an abstract and external force (ideological state apparatuses) decisively conditioned their interpretations. However, because Fraley and Lester chose to use Althusserian principles of structural causality, they can argue that "[t]he press, using professional journalistic discourses of objectivity and impartiality, is able to exercise this hegemonic role," yet are still "operating with complete integrity, [as they] are able to convince themselves that they choose and interpret the news objectively" (152).

Because Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir's article is based on a postmodern discourse analysis, the primary focus is on who gets to define and interpret rather than who has the power to assassinate leaders and commit violence against Black citizens with immunity. Their article reflects the unwillingness of white philosophers writing on race to engage the subject of racial violence as an issue of philosophical import. Rather than citing thinkers in the Black Panther movement, Black sociologists,<sup>6</sup> or Black philosophers, Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir choose to participate in the prevalent tendency of white scholars to explain Blacks' experiences of oppression by using white philosophers' theories rather than referring to how Black thinkers conceptualize their own experiences.

---

<sup>6</sup> Speaking to social research done on Black families, Joseph White writes in *The Psychology of Blacks* that Euro-American norms have been used as the standard by which to judge Black families as deviant and argue for the "inappropriateness of such comparisons by suggesting that it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand the life styles of Black people using traditional theories developed by Whites to explain Whites" (White and Parham, 27).

## 2.2 THERE IS NOTHING SUBTLE ABOUT BLACK MEN WITH GUNS: THE SELF-DEFENSE PLATFORM OF THE BPP

The BPP was formed with the immediate objective of protecting the Black community from police violence, which was why they were originally named “The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.” The Black Panthers encouraged the community to exercise their Second Amendment rights and made it the aim of the party to provide “the autonomous defense of the black community against the experienced threat of police brutality and other forms of State violence.” Paul Robeson points out that the demands of Black Americans are consistent not only with morality but also “have been and remain consistent with the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution” (449). The Black Panthers saw the police state as the primary producer and enforcer of the State’s racist, imperialist ideology and argued that the prison system served as a replacement for the institution of slavery. Often writing behind bars, Davis and Jackson “created a vocabulary for understanding the reciprocal social process by which radical political activism was criminalized and crime politicized” (Heiner, 319).

Most threatening to the state was the Panthers' potential to undermine the method of domination that whites have used against Blacks ever since they were brought to America in chains—violence. White supremacist ideology that portrays Blacks as a threat to white privilege and culture has for centuries been used to justify public lynching and police violence against African Americans. Justifications for this terrorist behavior have often appeared in the press in more overt ways, and the increase in

subtlety over time in the delivery of this message does not support the suggestion that whites are less aware of their hostility toward Blacks. The general public does not simply stand by and tolerate the actions of the police state, but actively participates. Built into the supposedly democratic American state are “accommodating structures”<sup>7</sup> that allow for racial violence and mob rule. In other words, the legal system in America was designed to allow for certain kinds of lawlessness (by the police *and* the general public) which are in turn pardoned by the press.

Among the few “traditional American values” that are protected through systematic violence, most relevant here is the concept of the “cultural community of whiteness,” which each white person has the legal right to protect through violence.<sup>8</sup> The central objective behind this community’s violent practices (as well as the construction of the American government around the justification of the “peculiar institution” of “racial slavery”) was to make all people of African descent “stand in fear.” This tactic of social control was an on-going process, and it allowed racialized slavery to come into being. In his discussion of segregation, Williams-Myers explains the important concept of “two worlds revolving on a single axis: one of whiteness politically and economically responsive to the dictates of white supremacy, and that of the ‘black beast rapist’ spinning tenuously and unstable, and dependent, in more ways than one, on the white world” (51).

---

<sup>7</sup> This term comes from Williams-Myers.

<sup>8</sup> Again, these are Williams-Myers’ terms.

Three decades before Williams-Myers's book was published, the *Black Panther* community as being separate from the white community, subject to violence and lacking protection and rights granted to whites. As Heiner points out in his exposition of BPP literature, "One of the central features of the philosophies of the Black Panther Party was the view that the black population within the USA constituted an internal, racialized colony—one constantly threatened, impoverished and criminalized by the occupying forces of American governmental authority" (Heiner, 322). Thus, at the heart of Black Nationalist philosophy is the expectation that the power differential between Blacks and whites in America be understood in terms of this domestic colonization.<sup>9</sup> As Eldridge Cleaver writes, "Black people are a stolen people held in a colonial status on stolen land, and any analysis which does not acknowledge the colonial status of black people cannot hope to deal with the real problem" (323).

The conflict between Black Nationalists and the police should not be understood in terms of the state's efforts to control deviance, but rather as a battle between colonizers and the colonized. Angela Y. Davis, George Jackson, and other Black Panther writers explain that the BPP "effectively declared war on the USA by declaring rights; or rather, by declaring rights, the BPP rendered explicit the ongoing, undeclared war being waged against black people in and by the USA" (323). Their analysis of state oppression exposes the political function served by prisons and police brutality. Importantly, their writings delineate the specific and concrete ways in which their oppression relates to the

---

<sup>9</sup> The concept of domestic colonization is explained and put in its historical context relative to work by other Black social theorists in Robert Allen's, *The Black Awakening in Capitalist America*.

oppression of other groups. Their work offers a genealogy of the police state and explains how its existence and meaning cannot be disentangled from the global tyranny of white imperialism and, more locally, the internal colony of the Black community. The imprisonment and assassination of Black leaders in particular cannot be understood outside of this framework, and COINTELPRO memos from the time which declare several of the state's motivations provide evidence for their analyses.

In her article supporting the armed self-defense platform of the BPP, party member Elise (no last name given) describes an event in which she and Regina Burruss, another female party member who was 5 months pregnant, were severely beaten and arrested by the police while they were simply trying to hang up posters for the BPP's Free Breakfast Program ("Fascist Tactics"). The Black Liberation Alliance's national director Robert L. Lucas argues that Hampton posed a "threat to Mayor Richard J. Daley's political machine in the ghetto wards," as "Hampton's organization of the breakfasts for children program...had been feeding some 3,000 children throughout the city" ("Black Alliance"). COINTELPRO memos that have now been released provide support for this interpretation. Hoover writes in a COINTELPRO memo on "Black Nationalist hate-groups" that "[s]pecific tactics to prevent these groups from converting young people must be developed." (Blackstock, 23). Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir's article (particularly its appeal to "moral panic") cannot provide any satisfactory explanation for how feeding impoverished children could be perceived by the general public as a threat to "traditional values." Clearly there is another motivating factor at the root of this pattern of white-on-Black terrorism that is being overlooked in their analysis.

A COINTELPRO memo written by J. Edgar Hoover on March 4, 1968—one month before the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—calls on members of the program to “[p]revent the rise of a ‘messiah’ who could unify, and electrify, the militant black nationalist movement” (22). Hoover identifies Malcom X as a primary target of their preventative tactics, and Noam Chomsky writes that “[o]ther Cointelpro files show that the FBI also had infiltrators operating within Malcom’s Muslim Mosque, Inc.”(22-3). It is also important to note that Hoover calls King “a real contender for this position should he abandon his supposed ‘obedience’ to ‘white, liberal doctrines’ (nonviolence) and embrace black nationalism” (22). Here Hoover is explicitly identifying nonviolence as the traditional value that serves the interests of the state and whites in general at the expense of Black Nationalist groups. During Hampton’s trial for theft in the spring of 1969, the state’s attorney Robert McGee questioned Hampton on his support for armed revolution. When pressed as to whether this kind of violence was justified, Hampton responded: “I believe if we tried anything else we would end up like Dr. Martin Luther King” (“Why Judge”). One clear way in which Black Nationalist ideology is a threat to American values is through its revolutionary objectives that reject the liberal creed of gradual reform and the accompanying assimilationist ideology promoted by the *Tribune*. George Jackson writes that “[t]here can be no rigid time controls attached to ‘the process’ that offers itself as relief, not if those for whom it is principally intended are under attack *now*” (*Blood*, 10).

While it is easy to single out revolutionaries like the Black Panthers as a threat to American values, it is crucial to explain that this revolutionary movement was provoked

by the fact that Blackness in itself has historically been treated as a threat to whites' values (which are based on their belief in the superiority of the white race). African Americans who refrain from any political activity or who even assist the American government in its publically supported war efforts are still subject to mob violence. In chapter 8 of his book on white violence, "Johnny's March Home: A Violent Reception in the Inter-War Years," Williams-Myers continues his cataloguing of mob lynching and large, genocidal riots such as the East St. Louis Riot in July of 1917. According to one estimate, 500 Black men, women, and children were brutally murdered by the non-elite whites who have a historically open partnership with the police state. Police officers either refused to protect Blacks or aided in the white mob's acts of lynching and genocidal riots. The East St. Louis Riot was acted out in a similar fashion multiple times all over the nation following the First World War.

Williams-Myers works to educate the reader on these issues in order to reveal the hidden secret of white violence in this suppressed history and to explain how the treatment of returning Black soldiers after World War I contributes to an understanding of white supremacy. These brave, award-winning soldiers "continued their assault on the accommodative structure of the 'cultural communion of whiteness' as they sought the 'American Dream'" (69). Williams-Myers writes,

In spite of the fact that the Black soldier put his life on the line for white Europe, he found within the cultural community of whiteness in his own country that his life had little value. At any time it could be snuffed out

by sublimated destructive impulses poised precariously at the fringes of the white psyche (63).

Williams-Myers cites W.E.B. DuBois's reports of the number of lynchings he was able to record during his time in college, when "1700 Blacks were lynched in America in an atmosphere of lawlessness, and in a country that was supposedly governed by laws." (56). Like Hampton, BPP journalists regularly referred to police officers as "pigs," defining "pig" as "an individual [who] carries himself in a manner that shows no respect for life, or liberty, no regard for property, and all the while hiding behind the 'Tin Badge of Law and Order.'" (BPP leaders and the multitude of BPP journalists repeatedly denied the charge of harboring blind prejudice against all whites, stating simply that "[w]e as human beings judge other people by their social practices" ("Racist Pigs")). In order to develop and explain those judgments, BPP journalists took it upon themselves to document whites' most brutal social practices when mainstream (white-dominated) newspapers distorted the facts or ignored cases of police brutality altogether.

Black Panthers do not deny that the press plays a significant role in suppressing dissent. However, discourse analysts frequently fall short when explaining how the public is manipulated through the press by failing to notice that the difference between verbal and physical oppression is divided along the color line. In the COINTELPRO "Black messiah" memo, Hoover says the program must "[p]revent militant black nationalist groups and leaders from gaining respectability, by discrediting them to three separate segments of the community." The ideological tactics discussed by Fraley and Lester for example only apply to the first two audiences identified by Hoover following



this statement. These groups are whites and “responsible” African Americans, who may be sympathetic to the Black Panthers but hold on to “liberal” (nonviolent) values. Discrediting the Black Panthers to the third segment Hoover identifies—Black radicals—“requires entirely different tactics from the first two.” Hoover reminds COINTELPRO officers that “[p]ublicity about violent tendencies and radical statements merely enhances black nationalists to the last group; it adds ‘respectability’ in a different way.” COINTELPRO’s chosen method of undermining the *Black community’s* confidence in the Black Panthers was to assassinate its most promising leaders. Because the Black community’s newspapers didn’t buy into the ideology promoted by the “mainstream” press, the state decided to use violence to accomplish this goal. Like others in the field, Fraley and Lester grossly overestimate the extent to which “discursive strategies...help[ed] diminish the need for repressive actions”(148).

As scholars like Heiner and Tommy Curry show, this problem in the field of philosophy has had a profoundly negative effect on race scholarship. In his article “Shut Your Mouth When You’re Talking to Me: Silencing the Idealist School of Critical Race Theory through a Culturalogical Turn in Jurisprudence,” Curry calls on scholars speaking on racial oppression to resist the field’s privileging of Eurocentric concepts and philosophical traditions such as postmodernism to explain Blacks’ subjugation under white supremacy. Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir’s article provides a clear incentive to resist Eurocentric scholars’ tendency to de-radicalize critical race studies by using white-dominated postmodern frameworks to analyze white-on-Black oppression. Both educators and scholars are prone to “ignor[ing] the role that white privilege and the

social reification of individual white identities played in maintaining white supremacy when speaking about and analogizing race.” As Curry points out, philosophy in particular is plagued by “whites’ anthropologically specific ideas of reason and humanity” and, when addressing white-on-Black racism, “philosophy is suddenly limited—incarcerated by the white imagination’s inability to confront its corporal reflection” (Curry “Saved by the Bell”, 36). The participation of critical theory scholars who are not primarily focused on race has opened the door to postmodernism and discourse analysis in what should have been an unapologetic conversation about white supremacists’ colonization of African-descended people.

Pointing to the theoretical conflict between postmodern philosophy and Black Nationalism, Heiner examines why “the insurgent knowledges of black power movements remain largely unassimilable to these [postmodern] regimes of knowledge” (315). Black Nationalist philosophy interprets society’s relation to history in a manner that impeaches (even liberal) whites’ inaction as a form of consent to the American white racial hierarchy. Criticizing idealists who fail to evaluate the concrete, material issues at hand in systematic racism, Richard Delgado emphasizes the idea that “[m]uch more than text, narrative, and mindset governs the course of race relations” (“Crossroads”, 144). Curry argues for this point in his writings on the risks involved in depending on discourse analysts who argue that critical race theorists can draw lessons from thinkers like Foucault (“Please Don’t Make Me”). Because white postmodernists

have appropriated and analogized their way into CRT,<sup>10</sup> race-crits now have to struggle against whites' attempts to control the terms of the discourse. In particular, there is a need to resist efforts to silence the discourse on whites' violence. A key method of doing this is to focus on abstract concepts such as (generally postmodern) theories of "disciplinary power, biopower and governmentality," at least partially because "the discourse and commitments of black power magnetize bullets; Malcolm X, Bobby Hutton, Alprentice 'Bunchy' Carter, Fred Hampton, Mark Clark, Brenda Harris, Jonathan Jackson, James McClain, William Christmas, George Jackson and many others have been killed precisely for having deployed them" (Heiner, 344). Fraley and Lester-Roushanzmir reflect the preference in academia for appealing to canonized figures in continental philosophy, choosing to interpret the party's relationship to society without analyzing the party's literature and to evaluate whites' perceived threat in terms of their concern for traditional values.

The Panthers' conception of power was derived from personal experience and was not inspired by postmodern thinkers such as Foucault or Althusser. In order to explain their current predicament in American society, Black Panthers employed a genealogical methodology that analyzed prisons and other oppressive systems by tracing their origin to their first contact with white colonizers. Pointing to the shift in "Foucault's method and domain of critique" in the 1970s, Heiner criticizes the lack of scholarly attention given to the Black Panthers' demonstrable role in inspiring "Foucault

---

<sup>10</sup> For more information on the harmful effects of equating racism with other forms of oppression affecting white people, see Grillo and Wildman.

the political theorist of power relations and techniques of domination” (313). By documenting Foucault’s interactions with Black Nationalists, Heiner shows that Foucault’s political, genealogical, and prison-oriented method emerges following his exposure to the Black Panthers’ particular political approach to analyzing power dynamics.

In one of his speeches, Hampton emphasized a crucial principle in Black Panther philosophy on violence and power: “We are going to defend ourselves because Huey P. Newton said that...power is the ability to define phenomena and make it act in a desired manner” (*The Murder*). In America, the prison system has the power to use violence with impunity and is supported by the media’s racist portrayals of the victims of this violence. Heiner writes that Black Nationalists Angela Davis and George Jackson were key figures in “the international prison abolition movement of the 1970s,” and that “the events of revolutionary anti-racist struggle in the USA were the primary inspiration for Foucault’s genealogical reorientation” (332). While the transition in Foucault’s work from epistemological archaeology to the politicized genealogical method has been heavily examined in academia, prior to Heiner’s piece, the Black Panthers’ influence received no scholarly attention. This is in part because Foucault’s style of engagement with Black philosophy was one of erasure, particularly so when white philosophers study Foucault without problematizing the omission of African Americans’ unique historical relationship with the prison system.

Black Nationalists have also responded to Foucault’s work on prisons and punishment in terms of the part that this philosophy plays in erasing state violence. Joy

James's book *Resisting State Violence* cites and analyzes patterns of state terror domestically and in terms of America's violent, imperialist foreign policy. In this work, James criticizes what she calls "Foucauldian erasures" rampant in *Discipline and Punishment* that support "false notions of body politics and repression" (42). She argues that there is significant oversight of racism and violent punishment in his discussion of prisons' oppressive political and social functions. James's writings show how political treatises that argue for the necessity of revolutionary thought and action do not entail disengagement with European philosophy.<sup>11</sup> Like other Black Nationalists, her work does exhibit an atypical style of engagement with mainstream discourse on traditional Western philosophy in that it subjects whites to analysis as a cohesive racial group. (African Americans were not oppressed as individuals, but were defined and mistreated according to a racial hierarchy in which whites were favored above all others.<sup>12</sup>) Foucault fails to do this, choosing instead to downplay the presence of state violence and torture while ignoring the significance of race in the state's efforts to control some populations differently than others based on their physical appearance. In doing so, Foucault participates in the propagandistic erasure of white violence.

In the next section, I will continue this discussion on racist propaganda in white philosophy by examining the ways in which the celebrated ideals of the enlightenment that increase intellectual vulnerability to deceptive egalitarian rhetoric. The philosophical project at hand for Black Nationalists is to challenge assumptions about

---

<sup>11</sup> Ture and Hamilton argue, however, that whites and blacks cannot form coalitions given the present power differential and conflicting interests.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Ture and Hamilton

the necessity and function of the prison system. They argue that it serves to maintain a colonial relationship between whites and Blacks by justifying their abuse and imprisonment, and the mainstream media is a partner in this colonial enterprise. In the U.S., the accommodating structure of the prison system allowed whites to maintain their previous violence, exploitation and wide-ranging oppression of African Americans by adapting their previous tactics to create a smooth transition to “neoslavery.” (This concept will be compared with “neo-colonialism” in the fourth section.) The federal government’s anti-slavery rhetoric and Lincoln’s famous initiative in passing the second version of the Thirteenth Amendment creates the impression that benevolent whites meant to bestow on African Americans something greater than “nominal sovereignty.” African Americans were kept in a state of neoslavery through the “Black Codes enacted at the end of the Civil War [which] resembled those of the Slave Codes” (Royster, 6). This is a decisive historical moment in Black Nationalism’s genealogy of the prison system. In section 3, I explain how Davis’s genealogy of the prison system traced the emergence of surging Black prison population to the historical moment in which one’s right to be free from confinement and forced labor was inalienable except in the case of imprisonment.

The media and the state viewed the Black Panthers not simply as “deviant” but as restless colonial subjects. Black Nationalists argue that propaganda in the media and the police violence that it justifies or minimizes are meant to keep African Americans in a state of near slavery as a domestically colonized people. Jackson’s theory of “neoslavery” uses the same genealogical method of investigation as that in Anti-

Colonialism (discussed in detail in the final section). This method places whites' egalitarian claims alongside their relevant actions and demonstrates how whites use rhetoric to distort or conceal violence. In addition to the media's unfair treatment of imprisoned African Americans as dangerous to society, the prison system itself is designed to make it extremely difficult for the public to scrutinize its actions. According to Davis, the prison serves an ideological function by "reliev[ing] us of the responsibility of seriously engaging with the problems of our society, especially those produced by racism and, increasingly, global capitalism" (*Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 16). The media assists in this erasure of police violence through their portrayals of African Americans as a danger to society. Whites' fear, however, is for their privilege and not for their safety as Myers demonstrates in his historical account of mob violence.

Propaganda in the media functions through erasure and through distortions of the state's as well as the public's motivations for racial violence. Following the formal abolition of slavery, Ida B. Wells documented the surge of lynchings and proposed theories that countered the white media's explanation of what was motivating the brutal murders of thousands of African Americans. Like the BPP, Wells and her constituents produced their own publications in which to expose and analyze whites' violence when the mainstream media refused to do so. Through her systematic investigation of lynching, Wells found that the overwhelming majority of those targeted were not the victims of an overzealous mob seeking to implement vigilante justice for the rape of white women. Rather, Wells found that widespread lynching was meant to keep Black people in a state of fear so that whites could maintain a privileged position in society

akin to their status prior to the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. Wells found that whites' violence against Blacks was also out of fear of racial mixture. In one case, a Black man named Daniel Edwards in Alabama was lynched by a mob when he was arrested for having a consensual relationship with a white woman which resulted in the birth of a child of mixed race (125). Wells was personally acquainted with the victims of another lynching which was meant solely to intimidate Blacks from creating profitable business that competed with whites'.<sup>13</sup>

Following this theoretical legacy, Davis writes in "Rape, Racism and the Myth of the Black Rapist" that "Frederick Douglass' explanation of the political motives underlying the creation of the mythical Black rapist is a brilliant analysis of the way ideology transforms to meet new historical conditions" (186). Employing a similar genealogical method, Davis takes a radical turn in the standard discourse on gender roles by tracing them not just to white-male patriarchy, but to white supremacist colonialism itself. Philosophy participates in the erasure of colonial history by focusing on analyses of gender and sexuality that lack race-consciousness and thus cannot begin to explain how sexism relates directly to white supremacy in a direct (rather than analogous) sense. The emergence of "intersectionality" favored by feminists in academia as a method of understanding how racism and sexism work together fails to benefit from this work and often does a poor job at reinventing the wheel. As Greg Thomas points out, not only was Toni Cade discussing these issues "long before the issue of social construction became

---

<sup>13</sup> Three of Wells's friends were murdered by a lynch mob as punishment for trying to defend their lives and their property by returning fire with fire. (Royster, 2)



prominent in Western academia,” but she provided a basis for rejecting the Eurocentric, a-historical method of interrogating gender and sexuality. White women participate directly in the brutal oppression of Black men and women, and philosophical systems which treat white women as strictly victims of patriarchy contribute to the erasure of colonial violence. While some philosophers writing on gender do engage colonialism,<sup>14</sup> thinkers in Davis’s tradition actually address the domestic colonization of Black people.

### 2.3 CONCLUSION

The employment of theories constructed by postmodernists and white, European sociologists allows Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir to identify the general press as “proponents of the social order” without implicating its journalists or subjecting the police state to the same level of analysis (Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir, 153). Moreover, their use of Althusser’s interpretive framework to explain the ideological power-struggles at work in the press reflects a decision to participate in academia’s practice of assigning higher credibility to European philosophers when talking about race, even if this means doing less rigorous scholarship. Heiner comes to the conclusion “that Foucault takes the so-called ‘counter-historical’ discourses of Boulainvilliers and Thierry to be more credible than those of Cleaver, Davis, Jackson, Newton, Seale, etc.— or, at the very least, that he takes them to be more appropriate or legitimate types of knowledge for discussion in lectures and writings published in such widely circulating, ‘truth-bearing’ institutions like the College de France and major academic presses”

---

<sup>14</sup> Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak specifically addresses gender issues in a colonial context in her piece, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”

(Heiner, 345). In the next section, I will discuss what the Black Panthers were saying about themselves in their newspapers and will show how epistemic injustice was fought head-on through their journalism and political writings.

Heiner uses the concept of “epistemic injustice” to identify “the erasure of and silence about the link between Foucault and the Black Panthers” (344). This kind of erasure also takes place when no Black Panther literature is referenced even when the assassination, imprisonment, and public slandering of their leaders is the issue under discussion. Like Heiner, we must question the political and ethical implications of scholarship that commits a form of epistemic injustice in the authors’ willingness to write on race and power-structures without taking on white supremacy, especially when extensive literature is available on the subject. BPP members such as George Jackson wrote several books on the political significance of white terrorism, arguing that “[p]olitics and war are inseparable in a fascist state” (Jackson, “On Discipline”). Given the structural nature of racial inequality and the limitations of legislative reform, the position of African Americans in the United States continues to demand this kind of political and philosophical investigation.

Using Hampton’s death to flesh out a theory in postmodern philosophy supports an ongoing process in which assassinated Black leaders are forgotten and distorted. Following this pattern, Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir prefer to interpret the social implications of Hampton’s assassination through the lens of British sociology and Frankfurt School critical theory rather than acknowledging and benefiting from the contribution that Black Panther literature offers to philosophy. The journalism and

philosophies of the Black Panthers show that the critical examination of *violence* is a philosophical endeavor, as it “seeks to author a new world from the perspectives of the people, and sets in motion the search for truth” (Curry “Please Don’t Make Me”, 148). By excluding Black Panther literature from their political analysis and by shifting the conversation from violence to discourse, Fraley and Lester-Roushanzamir demonstrate how ideology not only directs journalism, but scholarship as well.

In the next section, I explore how contemporary scholarship on the philosophy of the Enlightenment often reflects authors’ assumptions about white philosophers’ integrity and benevolence. I examine an article by Wayne Glasser on the various positions in contemporary Lockean scholarship on how to properly weigh a philosopher’s racism against the value of their canonized philosophical works. I take issue with Glasser’s claim that these distinct approaches depart from one another primarily because of their originator’s critical predisposition toward the connections (or lack thereof) between theory and praxis. Instead, I suggest that the practice of severing a philosopher’s racist actions and theories from the rest of their scholarship is predicated on the assumption that Western philosophers can be self-policing when it comes to the issue of how to deal with a canonized figure’s historically influential actions and white supremacist convictions. Beyond the realm of scholarly debates, figures like Angela Davis show that historically, blind faith in Western philosophy’s egalitarian convictions has had negative consequences for masses of African descended people.

### 3. THE BLINDING LIGHT OF MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT: HOW THE BLACK NATIONALIST PERSPECTIVE UNVEILS IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENTS IN PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOLARSHIP

In his revolutionary article “Rodrigo’s Seventh Chronicle: Race, Democracy, and the State,” Richard Delgado draws out the inherent racism in American democracy through a dialogue with a fictional student, Rodrigo. In this conversation, Rodrigo points to the Enlightenment as a key force which makes the American form of democracy “the worst of all for minorities.” Anticipating the predictable retort that the theoretical underpinnings of American democracy are egalitarian and ideologically pro-minority, Rodrigo seeks to show that racism is a part of the American political system “[b]oth in theory and in practice” (725). Through Rodrigo, Delgado argues that the permanent historical and contemporary presence of racism in American democracy is not an unfortunate but contingent detail of its political structure, but is rather ingrained in the concrete and ideological essence of the system itself. In order to emphasize their interconnectedness, Rodrigo engages Catherine MacKinnon’s method of explaining gender oppression. In order to draw out a similar analysis of racism and liberal democracy, Rodrigo points to MacKinnon’s claim that “the sexualization of women, the construction of her in that role, is the very instrument of her oppression, and not in any contingent or means-ends sense.” Because of the inescapable “second-class status” of those sexualized as female in this society, “[s]exuality is a woman’s subordination, pure and simple.” It is no coincidence but rather a necessary fact that female sexuality and the

oppression of women are inseparable. This raises the question, if the coin metaphor could be applied to racism, where one side is “black subordination” and white racism, what would be on the other? Rodrigo gives the surprising answer that the variant of democracy born of the Enlightenment “functions for minorities as sex and sexualization do for women.” Applying MacKinnon’s analytical framework to racial subordination in the liberal state, Rodrigo emphasizes that

enlightenment-style Western democracy is its parallel, the source of black people’s subordination. Not just in a causal sense...They go together; they are two opposite sides of the same coin (729).

In addition to arguing for the merits of this position, I will also make the case that it is not possible to adequately articulate this perspective through the present framework that dominates the discourse on whether Locke’s political ideologies reflect his well-documented prejudices and active financial and political support of the burgeoning slave trade during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In order to show this, my first step in this section involves a review of the three approaches to answering this question discussed in “Three Approaches to Locke and the Slave Trade.” Its author, Wayne Glasser, claims that these three positions are ultimately in disagreement about whether theory and practice are separable, causally connected in one direction, or fundamentally reciprocal in nature. However, when a racially literate approach is introduced and elaborated through the standpoint of Black Nationalists and their predecessors, the assumption that these three approaches can be distinguished without an appeal to white supremacist ideologies is exposed as illusory.

This argument unfolds in two ways. First, I take issue with Glausser's assertion that the underlying disagreement over the relationship between Locke's philosophy and his actions can be explained according to the authors' "responses to the familiar questions of idea and act." Their position on this issue supposedly determines their "critical predisposition" toward this problem (Glausser, 200). I seek to show that a better case can be made for a different kind of critical predisposition which most heavily influences the stance one takes on racism in Locke's philosophy. An analysis of this issue from the Black Nationalist perspective (to be elaborated in the next section) can account for a critical predisposition that is most heavily influenced by a prejudicial level of trust placed in whites that is costly to Blacks.

Secondly, I seek to show how the connections between Locke's assertions on slavery, just war, and punishment structurally and permanently institute a form of government favorable to whites (property-owning or not<sup>15</sup>) at the expense of Blacks. While most scholars who argue for or against the presence of justifications for slavery in Locke's canonical texts address the connection between just war and slavery, few employ Locke's statements on imprisonment as a central part of their analyses. Contrarily, I contend that the criminal justice system's relation to both natural and civic rights must be interrogated in order to show how the systemic murder, abuse and exploitation of African Americans was able to survive the formal extinction of the

---

<sup>15</sup> See W.E.B. DuBois's theory on the "psychological wage of whiteness," as well as A.J. Williams-Myers's concept of the "cultural community of whiteness." Both of these indicate a color line in society that maintains privilege primarily for the elite and is enforced through violence primarily by the masses.

“peculiar institution” of slavery, an event that was foreseeable for the founding fathers. In addition to analyzing primary sources—particularly the *Second Treatise*—I will explain how this method of political analysis which centers on the role of prisons in controlling populations owes its origin to Black Nationalists and their predecessors.

The danger (that I am trying to avoid) in discussing racism in the Enlightenment is that if we begin this inquiry by assuming at the outset that Locke is fundamentally liberal and that Enlightenment philosophy is righteous and sophisticated in its egalitarianism, we have no choice but to excuse or sanitize their claims. More problematically, if we assume that their theories are essential to the evaluation and formation of egalitarian political institutions and principles, we have no choice but to continue relying on and applying their ideas. Moreover, the Critical Race and Black Nationalist alternative to understanding racism in the Enlightenment is not based on a minor qualification of Glausser’s well-summarized account of conflicting critical predispositions toward the connections between theory and practice. Rather, the more radical approach that I am defending has implications that extend beyond the typical limits of philosophical discourse in terms of the serious consequences that accompany the acceptance of their ideal.

### 3.1 THREE DOMINANT ANALYSES OF LOCKE’S RACISM AND THEIR INHERENT IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENTS

In “Three Approaches to Locke and the Slave Trade,” Wayne Glausser summarizes three approaches to explaining how Locke’s involvement in the slave trade relates to his political philosophy. On one end of the spectrum are those who treat

accusations of racism as ad homonyms that are irrelevant to his political theory from which his justifications for slavery are deviations. Scholars of the opposing view hold that “his treatment of slavery should be seen as part of the fabric of Lockean philosophy, however embarrassing that might be for modern admirers of one of the founding liberals” (Glausser, 199). In the safe middle category we find several scholars who wish to treat Locke’s views on slavery as an important part of Lockean scholarship but who still attempt to sanitize the theories most essential to Locke’s philosophy by arguing that while “Locke did manage to accommodate theory to practice, [he did so] only by an embarrassingly tortured logic” (199). Glausser points out the challenges in evaluating the relative merit of these three approaches, one of which is the difficulties presented by the “flaws and ambiguities” in Locke’s philosophical works. His second concern—which is of the utmost importance in this section—is that “the conclusions reached by various interpreters appear to depend as much on critical predisposition as on evidence” (200). The critical disposition guiding each of the three approaches is the author’s position on the “familiar questions of idea and act.” According to this analysis, the conservative approach sanitizes Locke’s philosophy by insisting that his personal practices deviated from his political principles, while the moderate approach argues that Locke’s practices influenced the “tortured” interpretations of his own ideals. Glausser explains that the third approach is determined by the philosophical commitment that “[t]heory and practice are inseparable, a seamless text of power relations” (200).

James Farr is an example of a scholar who fits into Glausser’s first category. Although he acknowledges that Locke was “an agent of British colonialism who issued



instructions governing slavery,” Farr argues that Locke’s actions in this arena “do not inform his theory—or vice versa.” Salvaging Locke’s political philosophy, he asserts that Locke restricted the theory of just war in a way that made it “inapplicable to America” (“New World Slavery”, 495). However, his position shows some overlap between the first and second categories when he argues for the “tortured logic” interpretation of Locke’s efforts to justify chattel slavery. Farr writes that

*if* Locke intended his just war theory to justify the execrable practices of new world slavery, about which he knew so much, then he did a *spectacularly* bad job of it. But there are reasons to believe that he did not so intend the theory, in whatever contradictions this lands him. (500)

Regardless of whether Farr is correct about Locke doing a “bad job” of using the just war defense in this way, Locke’s intentions were clearly to do so. In a work titled “Social Contract Theory, Slavery, and the Antebellum Courts,” Anita L. Allen and Thaddeus Pope also write about Locke’s “just war” justification for slavery. They show that Locke was not merely an influential as a writer, but also functioned as a political advisor and was able to clarify his position on the intended application of his political theories. Allen and Pope write:

John Locke justified slavery on these grounds in the course of advising Governor Nicholson of Virginia in 1698. Locke argued that “Negro slaves were justifiably enslaved, having been taken captives in a ‘just war’ thus forfeiting their liberty” (Morrow, 1985–6: 237). (131)

Because of his political involvement, we have a difficult time identifying where the political philosopher ends and the racist businessman begins when it comes to Locke. For Farr, however, even if Locke the businessman did expect just war his theory to justify the slave trade, his practice does not relate to his theory in a way that would warrant an interpretation of Locke's philosophy as being pro-slavery. Thus, Glausser's second category applies to Farr here in that it is only under the most tortured logic that Locke's theory could be used to justify his practice, while there are no circumstances in which Locke's practices are meaningfully reflected in his theory.

Definitely falling into Glausser's third category, Delgado claims (via his fictional character Rodrigo) that the political thought of the Enlightenment was designed to oppress minorities, pointing out how non-whites are singled out as the minority to which the system which prides itself on perfectionism and completeness owes very little. For Rodrigo, this is not a matter of singling out a few racist statements that happened to be made by Enlightenment *philosophers*, but rather argues (speaking to racial minorities) that "Enlightenment philosophy is the very means by which you are rendered a nonperson, always one-down." Enlightenment is not "a warm, embracing philosophy," but rather, "[i]n its images, metaphors, and foundations it has exclusion and cruelty built in" (Delgado "Rodrigo's Seventh", 733). The Enlightenment's proponents of white supremacy created a new grand narrative for Western civilization which has wide-ranging aesthetic, social and political consequences. In a synopsis directed at the victims of this racial hierarchies, Delgado writes that "[a] thousand myths and tales, a thousand scripts, plots, narratives and stories will paint you as hapless, primitive, savage,

lascivious, and not-so-smart, suitable only for menial work.” This inequality is difficult to combat in the Lockean liberal democracy “because it’s all informal and implicit,” apparently belied by the “formal guarantees” of universal rights and natural equality (734). Delgado also writes that, compared to other nations that are not wrapped up so intimately with enlightenment philosophy, American discourse “about the state seems frozen at a fairly simple level” (723). Because of the system’s egalitarian rhetoric, minorities who protest persistent inequalities are seen as denying the progress that has been made. Thus the political texts of the enlightenment are glorified beyond serious reproach. Delgado writes that this is because perfectionism is an inherent aspect of Enlightenment philosophy. The most minorities can fairly ask for under these restrictions is gradual reform, which is founded on white trust and thus cannot be formally guaranteed.

Like Glausser, I seek to uncover the philosophical commitments and assumptions that are manifested in the positions we take on the relevance of Locke’s stance on slavery. As I said before, however, I find that Glausser is mistaken in his argument that the ways in which philosophers generally address this problem is guided primarily by their stance on the relationship (or lack thereof) between theory and practice. While this contested relationship is a relevant issue, the claim that this is at the heart of one’s critical predisposition toward this problem is problematic in that it overlooks other, more critical ideological commitments that separate the third approach from the first two. Speaking to what she sees as society’s colonized consciousness, Angela Davis argues that we are taught not to question the idea that prisons are a necessary part of our society

(*Are Prisons Obsolete?*, 18-9). This faith in the prison system determines our critical predisposition toward this issue, as does placing blind trust in the ideals of the enlightenment and the assumptions upon which they rest.

Almost all of the major Enlightenment philosophers were openly racist, and the historically decisive nature of Enlightenment thinkers' promotions of racial hierarchies has been scrupulously demonstrated by intellectual historians. Regarding the rise of white supremacy, "[t]he tone was set during the Enlightenment, by luminaries such as Immanuel Kant, Johan Herder, and David Hume" (Blakely, 94). The assertion that an enlightenment thinkers' philosophy can be employed to promote racial equality is reflective of much deeper ideological commitments than the critical predisposition is central to Glausser's analysis regarding the severability of ideology and praxis. Although he contends that Locke's support of the slave trade is an issue that serious scholars must grapple with, Glausser himself plays a more subtle part in this sanitation process by asserting that Locke's philosophical claims about natural liberties were "an influential resource for abolitionist thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries." This assertion that a modern philosopher's racist theories can be sanitized by his own philosophy has been made by other scholars. In his essay, "A Lousy Empirical Scientist': Reconsidering Hume's Racism," Andrew Valls addresses Hume's statements explicitly positing the superiority of the white race and his emphasis on the inferiority of the black race. However, he gives a definite 'no' to "the question of whether the whole of Hume's philosophy is somehow racially coded, whether these remarks reflect something deep within his thought." After arguing that Hume's racism is belied by his

“commit[ment] to the universality of human nature and the (rough) equality of human beings,” Valls even goes so far as to say that “Hume’s philosophical views provide the resources to explain and correct Hume’s own racialism” (127). Regarding Lockean scholarship, Robert Bernasconi and Anika Maaza Mann reference the assertion that Locke is “the father of these natural rights, in the name of which, according to a familiar story, the slaves were subsequently to be freed” in their article “The Contradictions of Racism: Locke, Slavery and the *Two Treatises*.” Bernasconi and Mann explain that “...the tradition of Locke as a promoter of ideas that are a theoretical resource against oppression is so strong that some are reluctant to see him in another light” (90).

One of the major consequences of admitting to major contradictions and inadequacies in the philosophical canon is that it wounds whites’ pride in their thought and culture which has been built up through the Enlightenment and prejudicial political, financial, aesthetic, and social relations. The need to consult African literature in order to correct injustices and flaws in Western political thought carries with it the implication that Western philosophy on its own is incomplete. (However, African American philosophers who wish to participate in white-dominated academia are always already expected to assimilate, and thus to proceed as though their systems are incomplete.) Another upshot of interrogating and problematizing how the present political situation relates to the ugly, violent past of slavery is that it raises the question of what reparations whites should be expected to make given the extent of the damage that they have inflicted on Blacks largely through the political system.

### 3.2 SLAVERY, PRISONS, AND OTHER MECHANISMS OF SOCIAL CONTROL JUSTIFIED BY THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

In Locke's political writings, slavery, prisons, and colonialism are all connected under one political system. I contend that the key to understanding Enlightenment philosophy's most destructive caveat can be found in their canonical figures' statements concerning the right to punish and restrain offenders. Enlightenment political thought paved the way for the American prison system<sup>16</sup> largely by including in its design for a democratic society a division between those "with reason" who were worthy of participating in this government and those who were uncivilized and thus were owed nothing. Through the revocation of the rights of prisoners to be treated as citizens, the political philosophy of the Enlightenment willfully carved out an exception to a government's duty to respect the rights of all of its subjects. In their establishment of a white-supremacist American political system, "[t]he framers reinforced and legitimated a system of racist oppression that they thought would ensure that whites, especially white men of means, would rule for centuries to come" (Feagin, *Racist America*, 14). Thinkers like Locke had this specifically in mind when they envisioned and implemented this arrangement on a global scale. An honest examination of this history is instrumental in demonstrating that the categorical oppression of the Black race is not a contradiction to the egalitarian political principles of the Enlightenment. Rather, the system allows for and *necessitates* this caveat. In the following section, I will elaborate on the importance of prisons in America's enlightenment-style democracy by appealing

---

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Davis

to the works of Angela Davis and W.E.B. DuBois in order to demonstrate the prison system's structural significance in the American democratic state.

According to the *Second Treatise*, it is the capacity to reason that grants a subject freedom in civil society. However, it is not something that everyone is born with, and cannot develop fully until adulthood. Locke mentions this when he explains the conditions according to which paternal power is justified, though not in an absolute or political sense (Book II, Sec. 170). However, this argument indicates that the development of reason under the guide of paternal power is a necessary steppingstone to the maturity required for freedom and participation in a democratic government. By this logic, those who were brought into a society against their will under the just war defense of slavery can be forced into bondage for generations due to the fact that they are individuals lacking reason who have been brought into civil society (though not as participants or by consent) and subsequently are restricted in their freedom due to their lack of reason as a culture. Their lack of reason is in part evidenced by the fact that they have not formed what qualifies to Locke as a civil society (that is, a social compact founded on reason). Locke argued that freedom for the slaves would terrify them due to their lack of ability to care for themselves because of their supposed lack of reason and barbaric culture.

Individuals do not suddenly acquire the capacities such as reason when they enter a social compact, but rather do so out of their pre-existing reason. Locke certainly believed that African descended people inherited what he saw as their race's low capacity for reason, which in turn justified their continued enslavement. While this may

appear to fundamentally contradict his natural rights doctrine, he was still able to consistently hold this racist view by denying equalities in capacity (Book II, Sec. 54). Additionally, his racism is supported in his assertion that forming a civil society is a purely rational act, which in turn implies that those who have not done so are behind Europe in terms of their rationality and thus lag in other crucial areas of development (Boxill, 165). Having argued against inherited or divinely ordained political power, Locke wasn't able to say outright that certain people were born slaves. Rather, they had to be made so by civil society, which required structural accommodations for denying certain individuals' otherwise natural right to be free. Those structural accommodations are usually placed in close proximity to Locke's statements on the limits of political power.

Locke advocates for the "just war" rationalization of slavery in his *Second Treatise of Government*, where he writes, "This is the perfect condition of *slavery*, which is nothing else, but *the state of war continued, between a lawful conqueror and a captive.*" (Book II, Sec. 24) The "conquest" or "just war" justification for the institution of slavery demonstrates how the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the American democratic state that established a white hierarchical anthropology is intimately connected with the problem of imperialism. Most analyses of Locke's stance on slavery point to his just war justification for slavery and argue for or against its consistency with the rest of Locke's system and his other statements on slavery. In "Locke, Natural Law, and New World Slavery," Farr claims that "Locke's *only theory* of slavery" the "just-war" defense (496). While he speaks to Locke's statements on the right to kill, confine



or enslave prisoners of *war*, he does not address the significant exceptions that Locke makes regarding the freedom that may be justifiably revoked from ordinary prisoners. In addition, he also used a lack of reason as the excuse for imprisoning and forcing into labor those who committed crimes. The racial significance of this category of persons “without reason” is important to keep in mind given that those who Locke defined categorically as being without reason were also the ones whose numbers surged in prisons following the formal abolition of slavery. Irrationality and racial inferiority owe their union to the ideology of the Enlightenment.<sup>17</sup>

The racialization of crime emerged when racialized slavery was formally prohibited. The language with which Locke justifies imprisonment closely parallels his remarks on the racialization of irrationality. In order to racialize slavery for the first time in history,<sup>18</sup> defenders of the slave trade such as Locke argued against the enslavement of whites and thus inextricably linked white supremacy to anti-Black racism. The passionate attacks on slavery in Locke’s writing were written in defense of whites such as those who were kidnapped or sent as prisoners to America and forced into labor.<sup>19</sup> While this could be misinterpreted to apply to all enslavement, these statements are qualified in the *Second Treatise* when Locke clarifies the contingencies of freedom. According to Locke, the two clear conditions of freedom are: 1) that the subject must be

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Eze

<sup>18</sup> Among many other available sources on the invention of racialized slavery during this time period, see Reiss.

<sup>19</sup> James Farr contextualizes Locke’s anti-slavery remarks in the Two Treatises of Government to explain this intention in “‘So Vile and Miserable an Estate’: The Problem of Slavery in Locke’s Political Thought.”

rational, and 2) otherwise not a threat to the society that they inhabit. As Williams-Myers points out in his book, *Destructive Impulses: An Examination of an American Secret in Race Relations: White Violence*, the concept that whites as a race were unfit for enslavement did not always exist but rather developed along with the racist justifications for the enslavement of millions of people stolen from Africa.<sup>20</sup> This assumption developed over time as philosophers of the Enlightenment began to advocate both for whites' natural rights to be free and for Blacks' alleged inferiority.

Prisons serve as the ultimate accommodating structure that allows the oppression, murder and enslavement of African Americans to continue regardless of rhetoric promising formal progress. In the *Second Treatise*, Locke explains how the state is to deny criminals their rights to life, liberty, property, and freedom from enslavement. One's status as a prisoner is by definition one devoid of freedom according to Hobbes and Locke.<sup>21</sup> Hobbes in fact had a "narrow definition of slavery as entailing actual imprisonment ('a Captive, which is kept in prison, or bonds')..." (Baumgold, 413). Arguing that punishment and confinement are essential tools for defending a civilized society, Locke writes:

In transgressing the law of nature, the offender declares himself to live by another rule than that of reason and common equity, which is that

---

<sup>20</sup> Williams-Myers makes this point in chapter 3 in which he lists three key secrets of American race relations, the first of which is that the inconceivability of whites enslaving whites has not always existed, as the idea was acceptable in a case cited by Williams-Myers in 1607.

<sup>21</sup> Baumgold articulates Hobbes's portrayal of imprisonment and freedom as opposites.

measure God has set to the actions of men...and so he becomes dangerous to mankind... (Book II, Sec. 8).

The gravity of these transgressions justifies harsh and oppressive measures (including coerced labor) which are taken in order to protect the rest of society from the threat they pose to members of the public who possess reason. The right to punish exists in the state of nature and continues when a social compact is formed. As a part of the social compact, however, the natural right of *all* rational men to inflict punishment on offenders is given up to “the magistrate, who by being magistrate, hath the common right of punishing put into his hands...” (Book II, Sec. 11) Regardless, if individuals are labeled as offenders by the state, then the state is no longer obligated to protect their right to property and is legally permitted to confine and punish them according to Locke’s system.

An objection to this interpretation could be to point out Locke’s arguments for restrictions on the severity of punishment according to the severity of the offense. By these limitations, no one has the right in the state of nature “to use a Criminal when he has got him in his hands, according to the passionate heats, or boundless extravagancy of his own Will...” (Book II, Sec. 8). The punishment must be limited to proportional reparation and restraint. But in civil society people can rightfully be made examples those who break the laws established by those with political power, as the latter have the right to “mak[e] Laws with Penalties of Death, and consequently all less penalties...” (Book II, Sec. 3). While he appears in Section 8 to be making an unequivocal statement that punishments must fit the crimes, Locke provides a vague loophole to this formal

restriction and thus grants an accommodating structure by which the state could revoke the rights of certain subjects. Addressing the range of penalties for offenders (including death) in Book II, Sec. 12, Locke writes that “Each Transgression may be *punished* to that *degree*, and with so much *Severity* as will suffice to make it an ill bargain to the Offender, give him cause to repent, *and terrifie others from doing the like*” (emphasis mine). To use Williams-Myers’s phrase, the state has the right to do whatever they judge is necessary to make individuals “stand in fear” as a means of controlling their behavior on a comprehensive scale. Following the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, the transformation of the institution of slavery into the racially discriminatory prison system was such that the state’s method of controlling African Americans through fear of violence was thoroughly maintained in order that slavery might continue.

Those falling into Glausser’s first category (which holds that “[i]n no way can Locke’s theory be said to support chattel slavery as practiced on the American plantations”) often cite as evidence Locke’s prohibition against the inheritance of enslavement (206). Regarding the slave conquered in a just war, “the Children, whatever may have happened to the Fathers, are Free-men, and the Absolute Power of the *Conquerour* reaches no farther than the Persons of the Men, that were subdued by him, and dies with them ”(Book II, Sec. 189). Despite their shared views on Black inferiority, this appears to be in conflict with Hobbes’s mandate in the *Leviathan* that “[t]he master of the servant is master also of all he hath, and may exact the use thereof; that is to say, of his goods, of his labour, of his servants, *and of his children*, as often as he shall think fit” (emphasis mine) (Ch. 20, Sec.13). However, Locke’s statements condemning the

inheritance of enslavement do not contradict the chattel slave trade with which he was personally involved. Locke was investing in the slave trade and supporting it through his political offices and writings during a time when the companies with which he was involved were struggling to meet the demand for the *importation* of more slaves.

In defense of the egalitarian foundation of the *Two Treatises*, one might point out that Locke argues for the state's duty to protect the right of property. However, like personal freedom, this mandate is not absolute but is qualified according to how individuals measure up to certain standards of reason that are elaborated in the *Second Treatise*. There are explicit exceptions to property rights that provide structural accommodations by which colonizers can justifiably usurp another's property. After saying that everyone has the right of property over their persons, labor, and the objects in which they invest their labor, Locke adds what seems on the surface to be a reasonable qualification but is in fact the mantra of imperialism. Arguing that there are certain "*bounds, set by reason of what might serve for...use,*" Locke lays out certain guidelines according to which no one has the right to waste or misuse their property or land (Book II, Sec 31). In order to explain Locke's attempts to justify slavery through his just war ideology, Seliger points to "Locke's theory of waste land," according to which "people occupying (or claiming as property) land that they either cannot or will not develop may become aggressors against those who can or would develop that land" (Glausser, 208). Those who resist can rightfully be treated as prisoners of a just war. While Seliger (who falls into Glausser's second category of Locke scholars) argues that these oppressive claims are the result of tortured logic, Locke holds that "[n]othing was made by God for

Man to spoil or destroy.” With this in mind, Locke identifies currency as the medium of exchange by which one can avoid such waste. We can posit from this that this economic system based on monetary exchange is necessary and can be pressed upon other nations without twisting his words.

Through its accommodating structures of property, prisons, and just war, the enlightenment not only laid the ideological foundations for white supremacy, but also outlined the accommodating structures by which a society could construct an ideal form of government in which all subjects formally had natural rights while simultaneously maintaining its racial order. Additionally, accommodating structures (such as the revocation of the rights of members of the community to be treated as citizens once they are imprisoned) allow for significant formal exceptions to the promise of freedom in Western democracies. In *The Racial Contract*, Charles Mills explains that these exceptions to egalitarian rules based on race are not implicit in a contingent sense. Rather, “race is in no way an ‘afterthought,’ a ‘deviation’ from ostensibly raceless Western ideals, but rather a central shaping constituent of those ideals” (14). According to Mills, “white supremacy should be thought of as itself a political system” in which whites form a “contract” with one another by which their rights under a certain form of government are as a rule protected on the basis of their race (7). This theory is not merely abstract, but has a historical basis which will be addressed in the following section.

### 3.3 BLACK NATIONALISTS' CRITIQUE OF ACCOMMODATING STRUCTURES AND THE DECEPTIVENESS OF ENLIGHTENMENT RHETORIC

While Glausser raises important issues regarding how our assumptions about the relations between theory and practice guide much of our philosophical thinking, I argue that his method of analyzing the three categories of approaching Lockean racism leaves out an additional contribution that Black Nationalist social theory (and other similar Critical Race positions) could make to this discourse. The key to identifying this missing element lies in an unapologetic, race-conscious analysis of how whites' critical predispositions regarding race and white supremacy guide their explanations of the meaning and impact of racism in philosophy. An understanding of Davis's work on slavery, prison, and American politics is essential for producing an adequate framework through which to understand why racism in the Enlightenment has influence far beyond what the scholars in Glausser's first two categories are willing to concede. This discussion will show how Davis's rejection of many political theorists' critical predisposition toward the blind acceptance of the prison system plays a much greater role in separating her approach to slavery and the philosophy of the enlightenment.

Citing the radical and dramatic change in the racial composition of the prison system following the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, Davis writes that the institution of slavery was transformed rather than abolished in any meaningful sense of the term. This is because the prison system allowed for an exception to the formal prohibition of involuntary servitude in the case of incarcerated individuals. In her groundbreaking book, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, Davis explains that the prison system

allowed whites to continue to keep black people in chains. Not only were Black prisoners uncompensated for their labor, but they were also in the same—if not worse—position regarding their rights to life and freedom from physical abuse during slavery.

Davis engages with her predecessors Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois in her work, “From the Prison of Slavery to the Slavery of Prison: Frederick Douglass and the Convict Lease System.” In this piece, Davis accounts for Frederick “Douglass’s silence regarding the post-Civil War southern system of convict lease, which transferred symbolically significant numbers of black people from the prison of slavery to the slavery of prison” (*Davis Reader*, 75). While salvaging and upholding Douglass’s key contributions to the discourse on slavery and prisons, Davis seeks in this work to explain how “blackness is ideologically linked to criminality in ways that are more complicated and pernicious than Douglass ever could have imagined” (75). Of central importance regarding her interpretation of Douglass’s philosophy is Davis’s argument that “Enlightenment principles and a philosophy of history that accorded the bourgeois state a foundational role in guaranteeing racial progress...militated against an understanding of the prison system, and its specific role in preserving and deepening structures of racism” (92).

While laws like the Black Codes were enacted following the abolition of slavery, the political ideology in place prior to these new laws had already established the use of the criminal justice system as a means of oppression. Although Douglass protested the horrific conditions in the prison system before the legislature, he still believed that formal emancipation made black people the owners of their labor. Confined



conceptually within these democratic principles of formal rights, Douglass saw the vote as the path to blacks' meaningful inclusion in the democratic process and identified their labor as the key to their freedom. Douglass recalls how any attempt by an enslaved person to provide for his or her own personal well-being through the possession of property—“[t]o eat the fruit of his own toil”—was considered to be a form of theft (74). Douglass believed that the end of slavery would eventually allow for an improvement in blacks' overall material conditions now that they were formally given property rights in regards to their own labor. Davis explains that he consequently believed that as this material progress occurred, they would gradually “cease to be treated as a criminalized class” (75).

In contrast, Davis explains that DuBois deviated from Douglass in that he seriously addressed these issues in his article “The Spawn of Slavery: The Convict Lease System of the South,” which is an indication that DuBois was not intellectually confined by the Enlightenment philosophers. However, Davis reports that although this article, which was published in 1901, “proposed a radical analysis, it seems that it was not widely read or discussed” (77). His work has much philosophical import in this discussion, as DuBois stood apart from other philosophers by not thinking solely within the parameters of Enlightenment thought. Rather, DuBois presented an anti-colonial framework which was to become a guiding method of investigating the nature of racism in America in African American philosophy, particularly during the 1960s. DuBois's work continues to be underappreciated and is still not widely discussed in academic philosophy. This is perhaps because he challenged the central assumptions of the

Enlightenment philosophy and questioned what was taken most for granted about the necessity of prisons and property rights. By exposing these institutions' undemocratic nature and contesting the views of the most progressive public intellectuals, Davis writes that "Du Bois's analysis of the convict lease system implicitly contested Douglass's construction of black labor as 'free'" (81). DuBois's interpretation here is supported by later statements made by the National Committee on Prison Labor in 1911, which maintained that "[t]he State has a property right in the labor of the prisoner" (78). Blacks continued to be colonized as a people, and DuBois posited radical, anti-colonial challenges to the injustices rampant in the capitalist-driven criminal justice system. According to Davis's interpretation of his statements on prisoners and property, "[w]ith the abolition of the profit motive, Du Bois seemed to imply, a powerful incentive for the racism at the core of the system would cease to exist" (89). DuBois and Davis show us how the social contract cannot be evaluated solely in terms of the state's obligation to protect property rights—it is essential to critically examine the state's property rights relative to its subjects.

Davis argues that this historical and philosophical investigation has concrete relevance to American political activism, as "by understand Douglass's reluctance to directly oppose the penitentiary system of his era, we may acquire much needed insight into the difficulties activists encounter today in organizing movements against the contemporary prison industrial complex" (92). This is a particularly crucial project today, as "at the close of the twentieth century, carceral regulation of black communities has reached crisis proportions." Not only does the United States have the highest

incarceration rate in the world, but they are also transparently predisposed to arrest, incarcerate, and execute black individuals at far beyond the rates of whites. For a complete understanding of how and why this came to be, Davis appeals to “Douglass’s historical views on the criminalization of black communities and the racialization of crime” as her point of departure in this particular work (75). This historical analysis provided by Douglass will aid her in her overall philosophical project of identifying how the “ideological and institutional carryovers from slavery began to fortify the equation of blackness and criminality in the U.S” (75).

Davis’s analysis of Douglass’s delayed reaction to the convict-lease system provides crucial insight into how Enlightenment thinkers have served to incarcerate the imagination<sup>22</sup> by subtly prohibiting particularly threatening forms of criticism against the state. This is another critical predisposition that has a greater impact on one’s analysis of the connections between slavery and the political ideals that shaped the American democratic state than one’s implicit assumptions about ideology’s relationship to action. It is worth noting not only what Douglass observed about the persistence of racial oppression after the formal abolition of slavery, but also what someone of his intelligence, experience, and education failed for a long time to notice. Frederick Douglass defined slavery as “the granting of that power by which one man exercises and enforces a right of property in the body and soul of another” (74). While it is true that the Thirteenth Amendment formally prohibited this practice, Davis zeros in on the caveat which was immediately seized upon on a comprehensive scale after its passage in 1865:

---

<sup>22</sup> “Incarcerated imagination” is Davis’ term.

“Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except as a punishment for crime*, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or anyplace subject to its jurisdiction’ (emphasis added)” (76). It is important to notice how the language of this loophole so closely parallels Locke’s choice of words in his argument for the exclusion of prisoners from the group of individuals protected by the social contract (and thus involuntary servitude).

On the surface, it may appear logical that gravity of certain transgressions makes it so that harsh and oppressive measures may be taken in order to protect the rest of society from the threat they pose to public safety.<sup>23</sup> However, Douglass points out that the gross majority of reasons that were given for Blacks’ incarceration (such as vagrancy) did not warrant any kind of confinement based on the goal of public safety. Confirming Douglass’s observations, Davis catalogs the crimes for which black people could be incarcerated and forced to work in chain gangs which were known as the “Black Codes.” She also explains how the Black Codes which so immediately followed the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment were constructed not to protect society but to ensure that black people would continue to be deprived of their own rights to protection. Like many other black leaders, however, Douglass did not identify the incarceration of black people as a predominant method of racial oppression and “also failed to recognize that black boys and girls were not exempt from the convict labor system,” which in itself

---

<sup>23</sup> The nature of punishment and crime is an issue that has been discussed at length in the Philosophy of Law and other philosophers have provided justifications for the existence of the criminal justice system, such as those found in *Punishment as Societal Defense*. However, those reasons are inapplicable here because of their obviously corrupt implementation in American democratic state.

highlights the absurdity of the societal defense justification for punishment in this context (*Davis Reader*, 78).

Davis's historical methodology should not call into question the ultimately philosophical nature of her work, as it is used to demonstrate how easy it is to ignore the existence and purposes of these caveats apart from their implementation by those who intended to use them in defense of their corruption. The first two steps to demonstrating the philosophical import of Douglass's inadequate opposition to the convict leasing system include exposing how the American criminal justice system functioned to provide labor for the convict leasing system, and secondly showing that Douglass's writings and public statements indicate that he was generally aware of the system's abuses. From here, Davis interprets Douglass's failure to vigorously oppose the convict leasing system at the crucial historical juncture during which it was just beginning to emerge and was thus more vulnerable than it would be twenty years later when Douglass started to accept the gravity of its implications for black liberation. The Lockean caveat to the social contract which is also present in the Thirteenth Amendment blinded Douglass at this crucial moment.

Davis cites Mildred Fierce's extensive study on the convict lease system in which Fierce contends that during this time, "black leaders fell victim to the notion that 'criminals' were getting what they deserved and, despite the cruelty of convict leasing, a crusade on behalf of prisoners was not seen as more important than fighting the lynching bee, opposing voting restrictions, or protesting the acts of racial bigotry that abounded" (77). Douglass failed to use his political power to fight the prison system due to his

inability to recognize the centrality of the prison system in the extension of the institution of slavery. Explaining the ideological causes for this lack of recognition, Davis recalls how “Douglass continued to define freedom as access to political rights” which were by definition unavailable to those who were incarcerated.

Davis emphasizes the concrete historical consequences of this theoretical confinement, arguing that when “Douglass’s voice was most needed to trouble the rise of this new form of slavery—experienced directly by thousands of black people and symbolically by millions—his political loyalties to the Republican Party and his absolute faith in principles of Enlightenment seemed to blind him to the role the federal government was playing in the development of convict leasing and peonage” (77). Like Douglass in the case of the convict leasing system, academic philosophers today run the risk of overlooking crucial issues because they are blinded by interpretations of Enlightenment philosophy which sacrifice a comprehensive study of the text in favor of a charitable interpretation which ignores its infelicities.<sup>24</sup>

Delgado argues that Enlightenment philosophy was structured so that opposing views would be categorically excluded or judged in relation to a conflicting system that already determines itself to be superior to all other systems. Attempts to criticize a system that declares itself to be perfect and complete by definition must take place in the form of polemics (Delgado “Rodrigo’s Seventh”, 732). Any problems and contradictions in the American democratic state are still typically criticized as being misapplications of

---

<sup>24</sup> Lewis Gordon warns against ignoring such infelicities and identifies this project as a “theodicy of the text.”

Enlightenment egalitarian principles. In Davis's analysis, these problems are cast in a new light as being recurring symptoms of a fundamentally corrupt system meant to curtail or stall certain kinds of progress. Douglass's critical stance toward the American government was undermined by his faith in the doctrine of gradualism (slow progress that is achieved through cooperation with the state) and democracy, prioritizing the ballot as the primary method of emancipation. Douglass's effectiveness at truly ending the enslavement and institutional oppression of black people was compromised by his ideological allegiance to the state, "which was combined with an Enlightenment philosophy of history that emphasized inevitable future progress for the former slaves" (*Davis Reader*, 79). Davis's genealogical method of exposing this philosophical propaganda about the American political system demonstrates the importance of fact-sensitivity in political theory, as the loopholes are easy to overlook if we fail to pay careful attention to how seemingly democratic institutions have been used throughout American history to oppress people of color. It is no coincidence that this was the explicit goal of the Enlightenment philosophers who produced this political ideology.

Black Nationalists seek to demonstrate that the institution of slavery and the mass incarceration of black people in America cannot be discussed separately from the global colonization of Africa and all of its descendants. Black Nationalist thinkers have created a philosophy that interprets and provides a compelling justification for why the prison system, which replaced the institution of slavery as the primary method of white domination, cannot be accurately explained outside of the broader context of colonization. When Black Nationalists like Davis, Eldridge Cleaver, George Jackson, and

Joy James are brought into this discussion, it becomes possible to make a much tighter argument that the criminalization of blackness which replaced the formal institution of slavery is *a type of warfare*. In “Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation,” Davis argues that one of the political functions of the prison system is to prevent a revolution before it can get started (*Davis Reader*, 39-52). “Political prisoners” as a category encompasses not only those like herself who are imprisoned for their allegiance to a radical political ideology, but also includes black people who are incarcerated in large numbers as a means of oppressing an entire racial group for political reasons.

In addition to those who experience the most abject form of slavery through the prison system, Michelle Alexander writes that Blacks were kept in a state of near-slavery through Jim Crow laws. The insight that serves as a point of departure for Alexander’s book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* is the “dynamic, which legal scholar Reva Siegel has dubbed ‘preservation through transformation,’ is the process through which white privilege is maintained, though the rules and rhetoric change” (21). Following the formal abolition of slavery, the rhetoric connected with whites’ property became less explicit, though their violent and exploitative actions. The unity of violence, racism and exploitation that made chattel slavery possible remained through the law, the white mob, and the police state following the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. Jackson explains that the state serves to unify whites’ exploitation of and violence against African Americans, writing that “[t]he pig is an instrument of neoslavery...he is pushed to the front by the men who exercise the unnatural right over property” (*Soledad*, 191-2).



Segregation (following Blacks' official emancipation) protected whites' sense of their racial superiority, which was enforced through systematic lynching and imprisonment. For over a century journalists and activists like Ida B. Wells have sought to undermine whites' excuses for violence, "offer[ing] provocative evidence that these practices were particularly malevolent and barbarous." The connections between the Enlightenment and colonial history directly affected the values and practices of whites in the U.S. In the following section, I will solidify this link by explaining in more detail how Black Nationalists understand themselves to be a domestically colonized people, subject to whites' violence and whites' collective economic exploitation (which implicates all whites who benefit). Arguing that "no one colonizes innocently," Césaire unapologetically implicates the whole of Western civilization that rationalizes, tolerates, or actively participates in colonialism. He writes that "a civilization which justifies colonization—and therefore force—is already a sick civilization, a civilization which is morally diseased, which irresistibly, progressing from one consequence to another, one denial to another, calls for its Hitler, I mean its punishment" (39). Enlightenment ideals were in fact useful to Hitler in his writing of *Mein Kampf*, in which "he spoke of Jews and Blacks in phrases eerily reminiscent of Kant's essay on 'The Beautiful and Sublime'" (Blakely, 96-7). Hitler wrote that the Jews "'culturally...contaminate art, literature, the theatre, make a mockery of natural feeling, overthrow all concepts of beauty and sublimity...'" (97). Citing this excerpt in her piece titled "European Dimensions of the African Diaspora: The Definition of Black Racial Identity," Allison Blakely refers to a particularly analogous passage in Kant's aforementioned work in

which he asserts the “fundamental differences between these two races of man,” placing generally flattering depictions of Europeans alongside “[t]he African Negro [who] by nature has no feelings which rise above the trifling” (94). Kant claims that even if African descended individuals are technically freed from slavery, they do not possess the mental qualities necessary for making them respectable human beings. (This is significant in light of Locke’s insistence that those who lack rationality are a threat to a society of those who possess it, which is the language he uses when he justifies imprisonment.) Citing another influential thinker of that period, Kant continues that “Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite an example in which a Negro has shown talents, and asserts that among the hundreds of thousands of blacks who are transported elsewhere from their countries, although many of them have even been set free, still not a single one was ever found who presented anything great in art or science or any other praise-worthy quality, even though among whites some continually rise aloft from the lowest rabble, and through superior gifts earn respect in the world” (Kant, 110-1).<sup>25</sup>

It is doubtful that Kant was unaware of how these words would be taken, and there is ample evidence that Enlightenment thinkers understood exactly how these statements would be used to justify colonialism. They also had an accurate understanding of the atrocities that the slave trade entailed, particularly Locke given his

---

<sup>25</sup> I argue that this indicates that race for Kant was not simply a matter of social setting or circumstances. Much of Enlightenment was meant to establish a scientific, historical, and philosophical basis for white supremacy.

travels and direct involvement.<sup>26</sup> Speaking to his influence, Bernasconi and Mann explain how “Locke was one of the principal architects of a racialized form of slavery whose severity was by no means predestined” (90). Thus, the trade which took the lives of millions of Africans (and the colonization that led to systematic genocide against the stolen lands’ native inhabitants) owes much its ideological justification to the Enlightenment.

### 3.4 CONCLUSION

As contemporary scholars continue to cite Enlightenment thinkers to support aesthetic and political claims, it is irresponsible not to remain consistently vigilant of the atrocities and racism that these works intentionally justified, the effects of which are still felt today.<sup>27</sup> In her discussion of Hitlerism as well as contemporary scholarship,<sup>28</sup> Blakely emphasizes Kant’s and Hume’s decisive contribution to race prejudice. Speaking to their racist publications, Blakely reports that “Hume[‘s]...and Kant’s early pronouncements became the accepted wisdom for centuries to follow” (96). One’s predisposition toward admiring these white supremacist thinkers ensures that the texts which are not explicitly about race are viewed as more “basic” to their philosophy.

---

<sup>26</sup> For further evidence on the consciousness with which Locke and Hobbes promoted these genocidal practices, see Baumgold.

<sup>27</sup> There are too many possible sources to list for this claim, as this is a principle to which anti-colonialist scholars and most critical race scholars adhere. For one particularly accessible analysis of the connections between slavery and present income inequality in America, see Joe Feagin’s work on whites’ continued “unjust enrichment” due to the enslavement of Africans that was practiced on American soil for the majority of whites’ history in America. While this claim is recurrent in Feagin’s scholarship, it is espoused in his book, *Racist America*.

<sup>28</sup> Blakely argues that this ideology continues to infect Western thought, citing as an example contemporary author Dinesh D’Souza’s utilization of Kant’s writings “to lend respectability to more recent postulations of black inferiority” (97). Blakely is referring to D’Souza’s book, *The End of Racism*.

The suggestion that Locke's political writings are usable as an abolitionist resource indicates the extent to which scholars are willing to go in order to avoid reading black philosophers like DuBois and Douglass. That these scholars would actually suggest that a slave-trader's texts are instrumental in tearing down justifications for slavery shows how deep whites' academic prejudices go. With all of its tortured logic and contradictions, academics still treat Locke's work as superior to the plethora of abolitionist writings by thinkers like DuBois and Douglass that account for and avoid anti-Black prejudice when speaking about egalitarianism.

To emphasize the necessity of including enlightenment thinkers' statements on race in any serious study of their work, I believe that the engraving on the Jefferson Memorial presents a helpful example for why this is the case. Like John Locke, Thomas Jefferson is a poor source on abolitionism due to his brutality as a slave-owner, his contribution to promoting anti-Black ideology in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, and his significant political and financial support for the institution of slavery (despite his two-faced rhetoric on equality, freedom, and weak objections to slavery). Yet, "his famous words on the subject are those now inscribed on the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.: 'Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free.'" However, the sentence that immediately followed this statement is "omitted on this monument: 'Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government'" (Feagin *Racist America*, 69). It is one thing to make a rigorous argument that Jefferson's enlightenment-influenced egalitarian rhetoric is more "basic" to his political philosophy than his racist political texts. It is another

thing to suggest that there is no prevarication in omitting, for example, the statement immediately following Jefferson's engraved quotation. Such a supposition is on par with claiming that Lockean scholarship on liberalism and democracy that does not consistently remain vigilant of his racism commits no epistemic injustice.<sup>29</sup> In the closing of his piece, "The Study of the Negro Problems," W.E.B. DuBois writes that "there is but one coward on earth, and that is the coward that dare not know" ("Problems", 27).

Anti-Colonialists consider this interrogation of racism in Western civilization to be paramount to successfully liberating people of color from the oppressive values and structures of imperialist, white supremacist nations. They share Black Nationalists' concern that if colonized subjects hold unrealistic beliefs in their colonizers' potential for change, they will fall prey to imperialists' increasingly complex tactics for intellectual, emotional, and physical domination of Blacks by whites. In his piece "Racism and Culture," Anti-Colonialist Frantz Fanon "[t]he social constellation, the cultural whole, are deeply modified by the existence of racism" (*African Revolution*, 36). He warns that "[t]he habit of considering racism as a mental quirk, as a psychological flaw," supports the "verbal mystification" through which whites cover up their imperialist practices and the colonial values that now infect their culture (37-8). In particular, the egalitarian language of Western democratic governments is used to mystify their tyrannical behavior. The Anti-Colonialists discussed in the next section present historical patterns of colonizers' destructive practices and use this knowledge to

---

<sup>29</sup> 'Epistemic Injustice' is a term taken from Brady Heiner.

undermine the myth that colonization has a civilizing effect and places societies in contact.<sup>30</sup> Like Black Nationalists, Anti-Colonialists produce scholarship uses a new vocabulary to construct a radical theoretical framework for evaluating political power—one that skeptical of the possibility of adequately reforming imperialist governments from within.

---

<sup>30</sup> Césaire gives a definitive ‘no’ to the question: “has colonization really placed civilizations in contact?” (33).

#### 4. THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BLACK POWER

My primary objective has been to show how contemporary academic philosophy actively maintains racist ideologies by excluding non-white perspectives from serious consideration. In order to begin the long process of correcting its prejudices, academic philosophy must begin to treat Black Nationalists as social theorists. By surveying the works of thinkers including W.E.B. DuBois, Frantz Fanon, Derrick Bell and Aimé Césaire, I make the case that an academic environment that excludes or tokenizes these perspectives also excuses our ignorance of the long-standing philosophical tradition of Black thought upon which Black Nationalist theories are grounded. My thesis will show that reading Black Nationalists as social theorists will not only serve to highlight what we are missing in political philosophy, but will also offer an important perspective on the ways in which academic philosophy can be used as a propaganda device.

The two previous sections each worked to identify and criticize “white trust,” the disproportionate benefit of the doubt that whites receive in the state, in the media and in academia. To provide examples of thinkers who proceed without automatic white trust, this section introduces social theorists who have been heavily influential in Black Nationalist thought or who exemplify their critique of white supremacy in American political systems. The philosophers subjected to analysis in this section will be discussed through an examination of their political treatises that exemplify the main tenants of the Black Nationalist framework.

I will position Black Nationalism's critique of the colonized status of African Americans within the broader field of Anti-Colonialism, much of which is not focused on the United States. American manifestations of Anti-Colonialism are visible in DuBois's work and were clearly influential in the Black Power movement. Anti-Colonialists like Fanon and Césaire who experienced French colonization are ideologically united with Black Nationalists like Malcolm X in their shared belief that colonized subjects must create an independent base of power so as not to fall prey to counterproductive negotiations with whites. As a central figure in the "racial realist" school of Critical Race Theory, Bell is an incredibly useful resource in understanding the historical patterns that have led thinkers in this radical tradition to believe that anti-Black racism is permanently ingrained in the economic, political, and social structures of the United States. Bell shares with Black Nationalists Kwame Ture<sup>31</sup> and Charles V. Hamilton the conviction that Black people must recognize "the ethnic basis of American politics as well as the power-oriented nature of American politics" in order to effectively confront white supremacy (Carmichael and Hamilton, 47). Critical Race Theorists like Derrick Bell of the racial realist tradition also share Black Nationalists' understanding that racism is a permanent part of American and European political, social and economic structures.

Thinkers in this tradition uniformly reject as myth the supposed inevitability of progress for people of color while they are still under the control of imperialist

---

<sup>31</sup> Kwame Ture was formerly known as Stokely Carmichael. The cited work *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America* was published under Ture's former name.



governments. They argue that certain political and economic mechanisms (or “structures”) are consistently present where progress for African-descended people is tenaciously pursued to no avail. These structures—such as prisons—serve a protective function for the racist system to which they are closely connected. Black Nationalists believe that an honest evaluation of how these structures relate to systemic racism can produce a more plausible explanation for their past and present status as colonized subjects of Enlightenment-inspired, racist democratic governments.

Black Nationalism is necessarily Anti-Colonial because it works to identify the values and methods of domination fundamental to what they understand to be an essentially imperialistic Euro-American culture. Franz Fanon and Aimé Césaire are instrumental in clarifying the basic principles of Anti-Colonialism.<sup>32</sup> Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth* is particularly well known for its powerful influence on Black Nationalist thought in the United States. Fanon’s *Toward an African Revolution* and *Wretched of the Earth* are the key texts for outlining Anti-Colonialism’s central political claims about how colonized subjects should and should not deal with the imperialistic governments that have been imposed on them. The question of using violence to resist colonization is a key issue in this discussion, and it has been the source of much contention with liberals who claim to otherwise be sympathetic with the plight of colonized people. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. problematized this heritage by taking a critical stance toward Black

---

<sup>32</sup> Additionally, the section of *Black Skin White Masks* in which Fanon defends of Césaire’s concept of “Negritude” against Sartre’s claims about racial authenticity in “Black Orpheus” exemplifies themes of Existentialism and Social and Political Philosophy in this tradition of thought.

Power, breaking with them primarily in his unwavering insistence on nonviolence. Because Black Nationalists and Anti-Colonialists like Fanon see their relationship to their colonizer as necessarily one of violence, they argue that nonviolence is an unfair and irresponsible expectation when struggling for liberation from oppressive regimes.

Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* is an essential text in this tradition. Like Fanon, Derrick Bell, Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton, Césaire lists consistent patterns of behavior definitive of the colonial style of contact. Césaire draws on the history of colonialism when making the overarching diagnosis of Western civilization that is fundamental to his anti-colonial thought: “‘Europe’ is morally, spiritually indefensible.” With the destruction of a colonized people’s original culture comes the degradation (and often extermination) of the non-whites’ previous means of sustenance and system of values. A central project in Black Nationalism is to promote a deeper understanding of African history and culture so as to resist “Anglo-conformity,”<sup>33</sup> an attitude that “sustain[s] racism” by “assum[ing] the ‘desirability of maintaining English institutions (as modified by the American Revolution), the English language, and English-oriented cultural patterns as dominant and standard in American life’” (62). In addition resisting indoctrination into white American values and assumptions, Black Nationalists uphold efforts to strengthen the Black community by creating parallel institutions when those controlled by whites consistently prove to be insufficient. The works on Black Power discussed here do not seek to function as blueprints for specific

---

<sup>33</sup> Ture and Hamilton discuss (62). They cite its use in Professor Milton M. Gordon’s book *Assimilation in American Life* (88).

programs but rather as a theoretical framework for understanding and resisting racist systems.

Black Nationalists have expanded the Anti-Colonialist critique to encompass the colonial nature of American government and enterprise in their use of the internal colonization model. Black Nationalists in the U.S. generally understand themselves as being subject to what Robert Allen calls “domestic colonization.” Black Nationalists Ture and Hamilton compare whites’ international imperialist activities to the institutional racism experienced by African Americans. The case for domestic colonization is made by unveiling “constants” of colonialism addressed by Anti-Colonialists and demonstrating their presence in the United States. In addition to their imperialistic practices abroad, the U.S. employs methods of domination that run parallel to the mechanisms dissected in Fanon’s “First Truths on the Colonial Problem” and other Anti-Colonialist writings. Anti-Colonialists analyze patterns in the history of Western colonialism and expose these recurrent themes of violence and exploitation. Fanon warns that these patterns remain despite the fact that colonial governments are gradually becoming more “jostled” by liberation movements and have had to adapt their strategies for controlling formally independent nations (*African Revolution*, 120). These efforts have been successful in maintaining the destructive “colonial style of contact” between these nations and their former occupiers, a phenomenon known as “neo-colonialism.” A parallel is drawn between this concept of neo-colonialism and the American phenomenon that Allen calls “domestic colonization” in order to draw out the main tenants of Black Nationalism. This internal colonization model has been used by

social scientists like Kenneth Clark, who argues that “[t]he dark ghettos are social, political, educational, and—above all—economic colonies” (11). Anti-Colonialists and Black Nationalists use their insights about the flexibility of colonial structures to argue against future liberation movements that rely on these structures and on the good intentions of the colonizer.

#### 4.1 THE LEGACY OF ANTI-COLONIALISM IN AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Before and after the institution of slavery was officially abolished, thinkers like Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, Booker T. Washington, and W.E.B. DuBois were bravely publishing pieces in which the racism in American democracy was exposed and criticized. An early pioneer of theories on oppressive “accommodating structures” such as prisons, DuBois made enormous contributions to the field of sociology, providing empirical data that he contextualized politically and historically. Feagin writes that in the mid 1890s, he personally “conducted the first empirical study of urban Black Americans” in which “he combined survey research methods and a descriptive statistical analysis with some qualitative data and historical analysis of the community studied.” DuBois utilized some of these sociological and historical methods when he produced “The Souls of White Folk,” which was “the first major analysis in Western intellectual history to probe deeply White identity and the meaning of Whiteness” (Feagin “Introduction”, 11). This led to a broad examination of how material and political conditions influence values, ethics and philosophical movements. This multifaceted area of inquiry critically examines how whites think about themselves and behave toward

others who they have labeled as different. Thinkers in the Black Nationalist tradition are particularly interested in learning how systems of knowledge and values serve to justify violent behavior toward specifically targeted groups.

“The Souls of White Folk” is in large part a treatise against the inherent value of whiteness. DuBois begins by exposing the ridiculousness of the white supremacist propaganda that seeks to “make children believe that every great soul in the world ever saw was a white man’s soul; that every great thought the world ever knew was a white man’s thought; that every great deed the world ever did was a white man’s deed; that every great dream the world ever sang was a white man’s dream” (*Darkwater*, 57). DuBois insists that this belief is entirely false and serves as a cover-up for Europe’s willingness to brutally manipulate international relations to its benefit. In order to justify this global dominance and the use of people of color for whites’ own cruel and selfish ends, white educational systems promote ignorance of all other cultures in order to cover up non-whites’ achievements.

While “[t]he using of men for the benefit of masters is no new invention of Europe[,]...Europe proposed to apply it on a scale and with an elaborateness of detail of which no former world ever dreamed” (*Darkwater*, 67). By promoting anti-Black propaganda, whites created the first system of racialized chattel slavery on an enormous scale. Regarding the damage that has been done to Africa by whites, DuBois claims that “[t]he white followers of the meek and lowly Jesus” killed 85 million African descended people (68). As an adaptation to numerous uprisings, the white supremacy used to rationalize this behavior is gradually becoming more subtle. However, colonial

governments use predictable deceptive rhetoric to explain and protect their position throughout the globe. Anti-Colonialists uncover the concrete meanings of these terms by tracing the emergence of such terminology and noting the historical patterns associated with these terms. In “The Souls of White Folk,” DuBois writes that when “Herr Dernberg of the German Colonial Office called the agreement with England to maintain white ‘prestige’ in Africa,” this actually expresses “the doctrine of the divine right of white people to steal” (71). In addition to analyzing this rhetoric, he promotes historical narratives of European history that expose the mendacity behind whites’ accounts of their own actions as well as the important gaps in their historical and political generalizations. For example, DuBois describes how war finally broke out between white nations when tensions reached their pitch over European nations’ competition with each other over the territories, labor and resources obtained through centuries of imperialist conquest.

Contrary to Europeans’ self-righteous, arrogant depictions of the progression of their societies, DuBois maintains that imperialism drives European history. In “The Souls of White Folk,” DuBois argues that the cause of the First World War was colonialism. He explains that “[t]he cause of war is preparation for war; and of all that Europe had done in a century there is nothing that equaled in energy, thought, and time her preparation for wholesale murder” (*Darkwater*, 69). This is not the typical account of the provocations of the World War, but this lack of insight is due to whites’ predisposition toward ignoring the suffering that they have inflicted on the rest of the world. Just as “the deliberately educated ignorance of white schools” explains the lack of

knowledge expected on historical figures of color, these wars receive little attention due to Europe's self-centeredness as well as its embarrassment over the death and destruction that it has caused in the name of progress (64). This embarrassment is not a matter of guilt, but is rather results from its wounded arrogance inflicted by the exposition of this contradiction. Speaking to Germany's hyped-up aggression in Belgium, DuBois insists that "[w]hat Belgium now suffers is not half, not even a tenth, of what she has done to black Congo..." (62-3). Yet, no other imperialist nation will seriously criticize what they are also doing and thus lend their silence to these enormous tragedies in history. Speaking to the recent atrocities, DuBois's synopsis of the spirit of the white world parallel's Césaire's in his claim that "[t]his is not Europe gone mad; this seeming Terrible is the real soul of white culture—back of all culture,—stripped and visible today" (63). DuBois also warns that the rise of Europe, due to its brutal use of technological methods of world conquest, will be accompanied by a greater fall, pointing to the First World War as an example.

Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* also subjects to analysis the destructiveness of white imperialist culture and explores the existential condition of colonized subjects who are forced to live according a social order that they know is built on deceit. His sharp analysis of the twisted neuroses behind the evil and deceitful spirit of imperialism is poetically applied to the kind of society that was built upon it. Incredibly important to this piece is previously mentioned concept of a colonial "style of contact," which Fanon also addresses in detail in *Toward the African Revolution*. Césaire demands to know: "has colonization really *placed civilizations in contact?*" (33). Like Fanon, Césaire

unequivocally asserts the valueless nature of imperialist societies that destroy native cultures and commit genocide under the hypocritical guise of progress. The spirits of *Toward the African Revolution* and *Discourse on Colonialism* are the same, and are united most clearly in the following statements. Fanon writes,

I see clearly what colonization has destroyed: the wonderful Indian civilizations—and neither the Deterding nor Royal Dutch nor Standard Oil will ever console me for the Aztecs and the Incas. (*African Revolution*, 101)

Likewise, Césaire repudiates the hollow belief in the value of Western conquest by arguing that it cannot be properly understood apart from the tragic erasure of what *could have been* when he states:

The port of Mers El Kebir and the Boufarik airfield for jet planes will never console us for the great intellectual, moral, and material wretchedness of our people. (42)

Césaire argues that the colonial style of contact is introduced by the colonizer during the supposed progression of civilization (which of course presupposes that non-whites are naturally uncivilized). In reality, “it is the colonized man who wants to move forward, and the colonizer who holds things back.” The “progress” purportedly brought about by this contact is in reality premeditated destruction. The progress myth is completely a-historical as well as belligerent in its disregard for contemporary circumstances: “The proof is that at present it is the indigenous peoples of Africa and Asia who are demanding schools, and colonialist Europe which refuses them” (46).



The imperialist West asserts itself as morally, intellectually, and religiously superior, but Césaire holds that this is debunked by the concrete consequences of their actions today and for centuries prior. For a civilization that asserts itself to be highly rational, white imperialists' most brutal actions are oddly irrelevant to their analyses of their historical impact. As Césaire catalogues the genocide and oppression that accompanies the destruction of native peoples, art, culture, and language, he demands to know whether, "if these things are true, as no one can deny, will it be said, in order to minimize them, that these corpses don't prove anything?"(41). Whites often respond that these atrocious acts of genocide do not prove anything about those Westerners who were indirectly involved, who never personally pulled any triggers or desecrated towns. Césaire's retort encapsulates the main idea of his book, which is "the idea...that no one colonizes innocently, that no one colonizes with impunity either; that a nation which colonizes, that a civilization which justifies colonization—and therefore force—is already a sick civilization, a civilization which is morally diseased, which irresistibly, progressing from one consequence to another, one denial to another, calls for its Hitler..." (39). As long as the masses continue to participate in racism and profit from the racial subordination that necessarily follows, they are supporting the structures built on the ideology of white supremacy.

Continuing Césaire's critique of Europe, Fanon lists in "First Truths on the Colonial Problem," several of the conditions that imperialists impose on their subjects when a colony attempts to become independent (*African Revolution*, 120-6). The concept of Neo-colonialism is thus explained in terms of how oppressive structures

manage to adapt and remain deeply ingrained in a former colony's politics, economy, and culture. Fanon provides a brilliant analysis of the problems inherent in popular methods of reform, giving special attention to Algeria and the FLN's methods of resisting colonizers' common but deceptive tactics. As these former colonies struggle for liberation throughout the twentieth century, Fanon asks how historians will think about the political upheavals of this era.

In *Toward the African Revolution*, Fanon outlines the historical patterns and idiosyncrasies of imperialism in order to expose hollow promises that have quelled so many revolutions. By examining the oppressive mechanisms employed by colonialists who are being "[j]ostled by claims for national independence," Fanon describes the dialectic by which newly independent nations still remain bound to their "former oppressor" (*African Revolution*, 121). Fanon does not see this dialectic as a necessary pattern, and he looks to Algeria for insight as to how colonial subjects can effectively disrupt a society's distribution of power and prevent their colonizers from immediately regaining their balance.

The first "condition" that Fanon seeks to lay bare in "First Truths on the Colonial Problem" is the expectation that the "rights" of the former colonizer to keep the properties wrongfully acquired during their reign of power be protected. When "former colonizers" keep their stolen resources and territory, they maintain the powerful position in society that was built on those things and thus continue to be occupiers in the most literal sense. Closely related is a second issue that always takes precedence in negotiations on independence: the idea that the rights of the occupier mean exactly those

rights which are withheld from the people as a condition of their “nominal sovereignty.” Fanon explains how “rights of the occupier” is double-speak (not his term) for the sacrifices made on behalf of the colonized, while “aid and assistance program” is code for economic stranglehold. Exploiting instability at every turn, Neo-colonialists feign benevolence in order to justify the influx of troops and use internal conflicts to justify their control of the economy at the expense of the public’s welfare. Thus ensues the dialectic of colonization in which independence is reluctantly conceded, unacceptable terms are laid out by the colonizer, and finally, “[o]nce the hours of effusion and enthusiasm before the spectacle of the national flag floating in the wind are past, the people rediscovers the first dimension of its requirement: bread, clothing, shelter” (122). Then, once their equilibrium is again disrupted by revolt, the colonizer moves to plan B and strategically strikes at its subjects’ weaknesses by exploiting their instability or through all-out war.

The “second obstacle” to real independence is the colonizers’ use of “zones of influence” through which to maintain control of the colony’s land and resources. In the name of maintaining economic or political “order,” colonizers continue to occupy the nation because “the handling of their national riches by the colonized peoples compromises the economic equilibrium of the former occupant” (122). Propagandistic language is examined in Fanon’s writings on zones of influence (the most obvious example being the use of the word “influence” rather than despotism). Zones of influence are created and maintained through “intervention,” which is double-speak for war. Zones of influence exist all over the globe, and are formally announced through

policies like Truman's Monroe Doctrine in Latin America and Nixon's Economic Aid Commission in Africa. Benevolent on its surface, "aid and assistance" is double-speak for imperialist large-scale theft and destruction of long-term economic potential.

Western supremacy is the foundation for containment policies like those seen during the Cold War. This relates directly to existence of zones of influence, as nations are divided according to "the policy of the two blocs." The "competitive strategy of Western nations" requires an absolute "with us or against us" framework for distinguishing Western territories from nations that have succumbed to communism. That means that all colonial struggles for independence are seen as communistic and are framed and treated as a direct threat to Western supremacy. The "third bloc," however, seeks to create a new dimension in defiance of the two bloc world order. Fanon explains that the third bloc represents the position of newly independent nations struggling to avoid conflict and focus on its people's welfare. Terms associated with the third bloc include "positive neutralism," "non-dependence," and "non-commitment." This isolationist approach is essential for the well-being of a former colony's people. Based examples like Toussaint's revolution Haiti and Fanon's analysis, Black Nationalists argue that diplomacy with an imperialist nation is nothing other than collaboration with an enemy who is intent upon your demise.

The final constant of imperialism discussed in "First Truths on the Colonial Problem" is the "prestige of the West." This refers to a psychological, hypnotic "beni-oui-ouism" in which colonized people's manipulated "yes-man" stance toward politics forces them to make catastrophic economic and cultural concessions to the colonizer

(125). C.L.R. James concludes his analysis of Haitian history in *Black Jacobins* by arguing that political independence is always unraveled without economic and cultural independence as well.

In “Decolonization and Independence,” (*African Revolution*, 99-105) Fanon points to the French as one of the “jostled” nations of the twentieth century that is “hanging on” to its colonial position in Algeria. Fanon argues that the new phenomena apparent in the Algerian war are worth exploring. The FLN is unique in its unambiguous *demands* (not pleas or prayers) for independence. Because of their unwillingness to repeat the mistakes of other nominally sovereign former colonies through diplomacy, the FLN is criticized to the point that their mission and principles are shallowly understood if not completely overlooked. (A very similar problem exists regarding Black Nationalists such as the Black Panthers, and is largely due to the success of imperialist double-speak.) Fanon explains that “violence” really refers to the act of taking back what was stolen by colonizers, and “indecision” (directed at the FLN’s lack of colonial diplomacy) is double-speak for: “they didn’t choose the West.” Regarding the FLN’s militancy, Fanon writes that their singular “language of authority” is gained through combat. Fanon writes that the FLN is persistent in its desire to “rid the relations between the colonized and colonizer,” but doesn’t appeal to the shallow sympathy or inconsistent humanity of the French in order to do so.

Regarding the place of the individual in the collective struggle for independence, Fanon insists that the independence of a nation is contingent upon the liberation of the individual. The FLN’s boldness in the face of colonial intimidation has inspired a new

consciousness in the colonized Algerian people on individual levels. This new personality is not based on self-effacement, nor does it seek to identify with the colonizer. The FLN is conscious of the fact that “progressive solutions” cause a people to unlearn the knowledge gained through previous struggles for independence. Buying into myths of gradualism only serves to “break the revolutionary torrent.” For all of these reasons, the “Algerian Revolution introduced a new style into the struggle for national liberation” by rejecting the colonial “style of contact” (104).

Like Césaire, Fanon writes that “colonialism is fundamentally inexcusable” (101). This points to another unique phenomenon in the Algerian resistance, as the Algerians refuse to go along with the colonizers’ assertion of their positive value, arguing instead that there are only negative outcomes in the colonial style of contact. They therefore “refused to let the occupation be transformed into collaboration.” The FLN firmly demands independence, NOT occupation. These principles are central to Black Nationalism.

#### 4.2 THE NATIONALIST CRITIQUE OF CIVIL RIGHTS IDEOLOGY

All of the Anti-Colonial and Black Nationalist thinkers discussed in this section emphasize the need to fight racism on a structural level. A recurrent question in the discipline is how to deal with the fact that formal progress does not have any necessary connection with lasting, meaningful change. Bell’s theory of interest convergence supports Black Nationalism’s conviction that white humanitarianism is an unreliable and unlikely source of progress. The predominant academic interpretation of *Brown v. Board* is one of the many blatant inaccuracies that emerge because of whites’ manipulation of

America's undemocratic history to make it appear compatible with their political philosophy.

DuBois's later work emphasizes the historical reasons for resisting reformist and integrationist models for improvement. In "The Collapse of Europe," DuBois promotes scholarship that resists the impatience and irresponsibility of a-historical analyses of contemporary social and political problems. According to DuBois, history has taught us that it is imperative for the colonized to tear themselves from the ideological, political and financial abuse carried out by white missionaries who invade Africa along with their respective nations. White missionaries who say they want to help simply cannot be relied upon. In a specifically American context, Kenneth Clark also expresses disillusionment with the possibility of gradual improvement through whites' help. Clark writes that the inconsistent presence of social services often has a negative impact on those who would have been better served by being given the opportunity to learn how to help their own communities. This assigns individuals in need of assistance to the role of a perpetual client who does not have the tools to truly begin to treat the problems in the ghetto. Moreover, to help residents of the ghetto on a personal, attentive level goes against the economic interests of social workers who are rewarded in the form of class ascendancy for further removing themselves from those for whom they purport to work.

The ideological abuses which he so eloquently catalogues in "The Souls of White Folk" have a decisive causal relationship with every-day oppression and must be resisted if colonized people are to resist colonialism's historical patterns. Clark explains how this ideological abuse—manifested in the "pathology of the ghetto"—is largely a product of

the colonial status of African Americans. Within the ghetto resides a complex dynamic of hope, fear, despair, and resentment. The “alienation” that residents of the ghetto experience results from the mixture of these conflicting feelings as well as the racist, “one-way” communication between whites and blacks on separate sides of the wall. Clark goes on to explain that with this division comes whites’ expectation that blacks seek progress through ineffective means such as non-violence and the Civil Rights movement. However, Clark explains that “[n]o real revolt can be convenient for the privileged,” nor can cooperating with the oppressors by going through the white-supremacist legal system lead to anything more than something along the lines of the Civil Rights Act, which “was so long coming it served merely to remind many Negroes of their continued rejected and second-class status” (17). Clark argues that what is needed instead is a new, self-affirming black identity that is contingent on a more substantial revolt, regardless of how problematic black militancy may be for white bigots and “liberals” alike.

Sharing the Black Nationalist disillusionment with the Civil Rights Movement, Derrick Bell argues against the widely unquestioned myth of the inevitability of progress in American politics (“Racial Remediation”). He says that in reality, the “unstated, but firmly followed principle [which] has characterized racial policy decisions in this society for three centuries” is the maxim that “white self-interest will prevail over black rights.” This paints a gloomy but historically accurate picture of the potential for political struggles which happen within the system. Whites—conservatives *and* liberals—typically buy into the inevitable progress myth which has been instrumental in keeping



black people oppressed in America. After making his case for why this unfortunate analysis of American history and its present political organization is true, Bell discusses strategies for improvement which bear these concerns in mind. Following this introduction, Bell devotes the second section, titled “Black Rights—White Benefits,” to demonstrating how his theory of interest convergence and the structural permanence of racism in America is the best method of explaining the historical cases that he describes, ranging from *Brown v. Board* to the close, disputed election between Hayes and Tilden in the wake of Radical Reconstruction.

The patterns and common traps of colonial negotiations that Fanon described in *Toward an African Revolution* are discernable in the era following the American Civil War. Recall that the first issue that former colonizers address in negotiations is which rights of the former occupier will be protected in the wake of revolutionary struggle. Following the Civil War, southern whites were for the most part allowed to keep the wealth that they accumulated by enslaving African Americans. During the Reconstruction, the federal government ultimately chose to gratify whites’ racism by essentially agreeing not to intervene in racist political institutions and exploitative social practices. As members of the Black Power movement emphasize, whites are historically loyal to each other. Even though southern whites were the ones who committed treason and nearly tore apart the nation in a long, bloody civil war, African Americans were the ones who received “nominal sovereignty” while whites’ citizenship status was fully restored. Citing other scholarly support for his theory on how white self-interest (rather than whites’ benevolence and formal civil rights gains) is the most decisive cause of the

ebb and flow of racial progress, Bell refers to Professor C. Vann Woodward's analysis of the compromise between whites in the North and South motivated by the election following the Civil War. Woodward writes that "[j]ust as the Negro gained his emancipation and new rights through a falling out between white men, he now stood to lose his rights through the reconciliation of white men" during this historical juncture (20).

Bell's work on *Brown v. Board* is central to understanding his disillusionment with formal progress. The failure of *Brown* provides a particularly poignant example of Bell's racial realist theory of interest convergence because it shows how whites' selfish motivation for the formal declaration of the unconstitutionality of segregated schools belies the myth of inevitable progress that keeps the corrupt American political system in place. Mary Dudziak provides ample evidence for the claim that self-interest motivated the passage of *Brown* (rather than, say, a change hearts and minds) in her article, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative." Dudziak presents an air-tight empirical case for this claim by citing the amicus briefs and other recorded statements by public officials who openly confessed to using *Brown* as a public relations tool in order to defuse international criticism of the rampant lynching and Jim Crow segregation that dominated the American political scene. This international criticism was happening at a particularly inconvenient time in American history, as the true stories leaking out about whites' horrible cruelty toward blacks in America gave legitimate ammo to communist nations and sympathizers to use in their criticisms of the sham that is the U.S. so-called democracy. Despite initial faith in its positive potential, Robert Carter also criticizes the

passage of *Brown* as a sham in his article, “The Warren Court and Desegregation.” It is important to keep in mind that Carter was initially willing to be optimistic about the possibility of progress following the passage of *Brown*. He was not, however, willing to allow whites’ grandiloquent, democratic rhetoric blind him to worsening conditions in the Black community. Whites’ more pleasant assumptions about reform are a privilege of their middle class environment as well as their faith in the ability of the system to undo its previously racist practices through egalitarian declarations.

The lessons of history expose the shallowness and deliberate deceptiveness behind whites’ promises that future racial progress can and will happen through the democratic process. As pessimistic as this may appear on its surface, Bell contends that strategies for remediation must be informed by this history. Thus, these theories are meant to make struggles for liberation more productive rather than to give reason why black people should stop collectively resisting racial oppression. Also, Bell has argued that “most whites view the racial plight of blacks as an injustice that should be corrected.” A central message of his article is that the hierarchy of priorities that most whites *also* believe in unfortunately indicates that “racial equality, like whale conservation, should be advocated, but with the understanding that there are clear and rather narrow limits as to the degree of sacrifice or the amount of effort that most white Americans are willing to commit to either crusade” (23). However, Bell qualifies this analogy by pointing out that white people don’t have the same level of resentment for the whales as they have historically for African Americans.) Regarding the myth of inevitable progress, Bell points out that the white response to blacks’ progress often

directly increases whites' level of resentment and is held up as proof that the system works, which allows whites to blame the victims of the racist system for their place within it. This is a crucial point because this "provid[es] the rationalizing link between the nation's espousal of racial equality and its practice of racial dominance" (25). The "unspoken and totally facetious maxim" of equal opportunity and individual responsibility for one's own fate is belied by the fact that "success for individual blacks demands exceptional skills exercised diligently in settings where their efforts will further or, at least, not threaten white interests." Consequently, "no more than a small percentage of blacks is likely to be graced by so felicitous a set of circumstances" (24-5).

In "The Integrationist Ethic as a Basis for Scholarly Endeavors," Harold Cruse also provides a critique of the myth of inevitable racial progress. First, he points out buying into this myth (particularly in its American context) requires African Americans to have blind faith in the system that has caused their oppression, which in turn requires them to assume as whites ask them to that the system is not fundamentally broken. His article seriously calls into question the ideology that the system can and should be self-policing despite the fact that it was designed by whites to uphold their privileged position and has directly and deliberately caused immeasurable death and suffering for people of color.

When he was reaching the age of seventy, DuBois writes about his travels to Africa, in reporting that "West Europe is still determined to base its culture and comfort on underpaid labor and the virtual theft of land and materials by white investors" (Sundquist, 669). Like DuBois, C.L.R. James does not view Western democracies as

conducive to change, writing that “imperialists envisage an eternity of African exploitation” (376). (The imperialism that continues to this day supports this prediction.) C.L.R. James’s detailed historical account of the French occupation of Haiti shows that there is little reason to believe that becoming a citizen of the occupier’s empire ends the destructive impact of their colonial presence. Anti-Colonialists point to similar historical patterns and demand evidence (aside from Western democracies’ formal egalitarian declarations) that integrationist reform—rather than violent revolution—is a tenable option for the victims of colonialism.

#### 4.3 BLACK POWER

Regardless of religious affiliations, Black Nationalists are united in their commitment to a socialist society. Jackson contends that because of their colonized status, “[t]he principle reservoir of revolutionary potential in Amerika lies in wait inside the Black Colony” (*Blood*, 10). Blacks should not use this potential to try to become a part of the white middle class, as true “[r]evolutionary change means the seizure of all that is held by the 1 percent, and the transference of these holdings into the hands of the remaining 99 percent” (11). Jackson rejects reform in a capitalist state as “bourgeois revolution.” (8). The rejection of reform is a central conviction of Black Nationalists including Malcolm X and Ture and Hamilton. Ture and Hamilton’s description and defense of Black Power comprises the theoretical lynchpin of my analysis of Black Nationalism. Ture and Hamilton define Black Power as “a call for black people in [the United States] to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community” by beginning to “define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support

those organizations.” Following the Anti-Colonial critique of white culture, Black Power in the United States is “a call to reject the racist institutions and the values of this society” (44).

Although Malcolm X’s views and associations with the Nation of Islam shifted over time, he is also an excellent resource on the unwavering convictions of Black Nationalism. When Malcolm X broke with the Nation of Islam, he founded the Muslim Mosque, Inc. The latter is clearly an organization associated with the Muslim faith, though Malcolm X assures Spellman that “the political philosophy of the Muslim Mosque will be black nationalism, the economic philosophy will be black nationalism, and the social philosophy will be black nationalism” (*By Any Means*, 27). Though he later changed his mind, Malcolm X means to endorse a political philosophy founded on “complete separation” (24-27). Regardless of his temporary “back-to-Africa separatism,” his position on improving the present situation in America is in line with other Black Nationalists who also see an independent power base as a necessity for the Black community. Eldridge Cleaver, Jackson and Malcolm X all ultimately wished to resolve divisions created by religious controversy and did not want Malcolm X’s break with the Nation of Islam to become the cause of strife among blacks, as their unified front against white domination was their only chance at achieving domestic decolonization.

George Jackson is an example of someone who was clearly a political prisoner, having been sentenced to one year to life for supposedly committing robbery. Writing from prison, Jackson employed the genealogical method in order to understand

contemporary racism in terms of what Jackson called “neoslavery” (*Soledad*, 191). This inquiry yields knowledge about the causes of present problems so that Blacks can investigate whites’ rhetoric alongside the facts belied by their claims. Recall that Fanon described “neo-colonialism” as an adaptive method of governance used by colonizers who are being “jostled” by their subjects’ struggles for independence. Fanon traces the historical juncture at which neo-colonialism emerged by pointing to European colonizers’ deceptive, exploitative styles of negotiation and compromises following liberation movements. Fanon and Cesaire show that colonizers abroad create exceptions to independence or citizenship agreements which allow them to break their promises to respect newly won independence. These accommodating structures implemented by colonial powers include “aid and assistance programs” and military occupations allegedly intending to maintain law and order. Accommodating structures exist in the U.S. that are direct parallels to these used in international imperialist activities. Kenneth Clark and other social theorists who use the domestic colonialism model (discussed in the final section) in their analysis point out the problems with whites’ social services and DuBois extends this critique to encompass missionaries and white charities in Africa. In addition to deceptive domestic “assistance” programs are used to maintain whites’ financial exploitation and white’s police occupation in the ghetto is also justified on the grounds of maintaining order.

Based on this history, Black Power advocates insist that an independent source of power is a necessary condition for prospect of meaningful political participation, freedom from violence and basic universal living standards. The need for Blacks to gain

an independent base of power economically, politically, socially and intellectually is centered on the corruptive nature of the American dream of individual monetary success. Ture and Hamilton argue that the middle class “*is the backbone of institutional racism in this country*” (41). Institutional racism is distinct from individual racism in that it upholds a “racial caste,” defined by Michelle Alexander is “a stigmatized racial group locked into an inferior position by law and custom” (12). Contrary to the individual racism which many whites would not publically support, institutional racism protects white privilege through “caste systems” meant to keep African Americans oppressed, including Jim Crow, slavery, and the prison system. Ture and Hamilton thus warn against trying to join the middle class, as they operate under a system of values “based on material aggrandizement, not the expansion of humanity” (40). Black Nationalists unequivocally “reject the goal of assimilation into middle-class America because the values of that class are in themselves anti-humanist and because that class as a social force perpetuates racism” (41).

Informed by the history of colonialism in America and Europe, Black Nationalists and their predecessors also asked for an honest answer as to what methods of resistance are capable of significantly altering social, political and economic relationships. In *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*, Ture and Hamilton illustrate the obstacles to reform by analyzing the failure of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) to empower African Americans by increasing their political participation. The MFDP formed in response to “the white racist-segregationist Mississippi Democratic Party, the major political force in the state” that “supported the suppression



of black people in every way” (88). Although the law is clear on the right of African Americans to vote, violent mobs and their white political allies have frequently prevented them from doing so. Ture and Hamilton explain that although the MFDP “abided by the law *legally*[,] they did not control the law *politically*” (91).

Because “Might makes Law” as Ture and Hamilton argue, it is difficult to use the law against those with the power to change it or fail to enforce it. Despite the brutality of whites’ constant racist abuses of the legal system, Ture and Hamilton report that

[f]requently, in the textbooks and classrooms, we are told that America is a ‘society of laws, not of men,’ the implication being, of course, that laws operate impartially and objectively, irrespective of race or other particular differences. This is completely inconsistent with reality. Law is the agent of those in political power; it is the product of those powerful enough to define right and wrong and to have that definition legitimized by ‘law’ (95).

Ultimately, reform is valuable only insofar as the government’s renewed promise to follow its own fundamental laws is a cause for celebration. Philosophers in this tradition point out that the state is constantly breaking its own laws. Black Nationalists like Elaine Brown argue that the behavior and demands of the Black Power movement are in agreement with the law, particularly concerning the right to self-defense. Paul Robeson also publically demanded that the U.S. government uphold the constitution, including (but not limited to) the Second Amendment.

Black Nationalists argue that it is an injustice that white liberals essentially ask African Americans to unlearn history and embrace nonviolence as a plausible approach to meaningful change. Terrorized by lynching, changing the system in fundamental ways was understood a matter of necessity for the Black community. To suggest that nonviolent resistance appeals to whites' consciences can eradicate the colonial style of contact (which is a constant threat to their existence) when these methods have repeatedly failed is another instance of an unethical epistemology. Malcolm X takes an ethical stand against the doctrine of nonviolence in Black liberationist organizations, arguing that those who profess this ideology in the Black community are doing a great disservice to those who are fighting for revolutionary change.

Slavery clearly demonstrates that whites are not likely to collectively develop a guilty conscience and demand reform when they see Black people being abused, despite the popular myth that "White philanthropists... 'freed the slaves.'" According to DuBois, "enslaved African Americans brought their own liberation 'by armed rebellion, by sullen refusal to work, by poison and murder, by running away to the North and Canada, by giving point and powerful example to the agitation of the abolitionists and by furnishing 200,000 soldiers... in the Civil War'" (Feagin "Introduction", 16). Lincoln firmly believed in their inferiority and had originally offered to the South as a compromise a different version of the Thirteenth Amendment which would have permanently legalized slavery in existing slave states. (The South refused.) Following the Civil War, Lincoln made no effort to protect formerly enslaved African Americans, allowing the Southern states to implement the "Black Codes" and other laws that preserved the previous racial

order. Despite portrayals of Lincoln as a crusader against the oppression of African Americans, he had no intention of granting them political power, refusing to redistribute property and only conceding that “black soldiers who had fought gallantly during the Civil War or perhaps those few black men who showed particular ‘intelligence,’ might be awarded voting privileges” (Royster, 5). Violence was the only effective approach for enslaved African Americans to meaningfully influencing their fate—reform depends solely on the discretion and benevolence of those already in power.

Because of the Civil Rights Movement’s reformist approach, activists like King acknowledged that they were unable to significantly alter exploitative economic relations and the Black community continued to be the target of systematic state violence. Addressing Angela Davis as a historian in a letter dismissing the merits of non-violent reform, Jackson reminds her about

how long and how fervently we’ve appealed to these people to take some of the murder out of their system, their economics, their propaganda....We’ve wasted many generations and oceans of blood trying to civilize these elements over here. It cannot be done in the manner we have attempted it in the past (*Soledad*, 216).

Arguing that the continuation of state violence and unlivable economic conditions call for revolution rather than reform, Malcolm X similarly says, “I’ve never heard of a nonviolent revolution or a revolution that was brought about by turning the other cheek, and so I believe that it is a crime for anyone to teach a person who is being brutalized to continue to accept that brutality without doing something to defend himself. If this is

what the Christian-Gandhian philosophy teaches, then it is criminal—a criminal philosophy” (*By Any Means*, 31).

Regarding the need for intellectual independence, Black Nationalists hold that white society is structured by incentives which cloud their ability to critically examine the meaning of their actions and the merits of the system in which they are heavily invested. This self-deception varies in degree of severity on a sliding scale, influenced by material greed as well as psychological “wages.” Malcolm X explains that the youth are particularly open to more radical challenges to central political and economic structures because they “have less stake in this corrupt system and therefore can look at it more objectively” (28). In this kind of discourse, Black Nationalists seek to answer in the philosophical question of how our position in society affects the ways in which we approach facts and shapes the criteria by which we judge which areas of inquiry are worth exploring. In *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil*, DuBois shows that African Americans offer an indispensable perspective on the areas of inquiry that they pursue by necessity. His claim is that “those behind the veil of racial subordination can see much better into what Whites and White society are about, than Whites can see into the realities of racially subordinated groups” (Feagin “Introduction”, 10).

In addition to their epistemologically privileged social position in the study of race relations, Black Power advocates contend that African Americans are in a unique position to influence the future. Addressing the “darker world that watches” as Europe tears itself apart after founding a culture on hatred, DuBois points out in “The Souls of White Folk” that non-whites “form two-thirds of the population of the world.” Thus,

“[i]f the uplift of mankind must be done by men, then the densities of this world will rest ultimately in the hands of darker nations” (*Darkwater*, 71). Just as Fanon warns the colonized people of the world not to become another Europe in *Wretched of the Earth*, DuBois encourages the majority of humanity to distinguish themselves from whites by taking pride in the declaration of their distinct racial identity. This focus on embracing a Black identity resists the self-hatred that whites have tried to teach Blacks for centuries. Through the development and nurturing of Black history and culture, Blacks can resist the “pathology of the ghetto” produced by whites’ colonial exploitation and violence. Fanon writes in “Decolonization and Independence” that colonial people must not seek freedom from whites through whites, but should set aside the goal of integration into white society and values in favor of becoming “a liberated individual who undertakes to build the new society” after independence is won through violent struggle (*African Revolution*, 102).

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

The treatment of Black Nationalists as social theorists is indispensable in contemporary political philosophy. By consulting these thinkers’ representative texts, my objective has been to demonstrate that this tradition offers a historical accuracy and vigilance missing from other philosophers in academia who speak to issues of race and racism. It is important to be familiar with most of these thinkers when making claims about whites’ racism, as their concepts cannot be articulated through canonized (and white) philosophy. In his critique of the integrationist ethic, Cruse argues that faith in whites’ ability to be self-policing is reflected in their ideology which “was obviously

predicated on an intellectual consensus which held that the political, economic, and cultural values of the Anglo-American tradition were sufficiently creative and viable enough to sustain the American progression to realization of its ultimate potential” (Cruse, 4). His vision for black studies involves drawing a distinction between revolution (institutional, substantive improvement) and gradual reform, the latter obviously being the preferred method for whites.

Curry writes on the consequences of this intellectual colonization in his article “On Derelict and Method: The Methodological Crisis of African American Philosophy's Study of African Descended Peoples under an Integrationist Mileu.” His project is first to show how academic philosophers (despite the growing amount of scholarship on race) “remain mired in the need to negotiate with the conceptual fantasies of [African Americans’] oppressors and hopelessly enchanted by the traumatic neglect of white thinking about Blackness” (19). Next, he argues that this does real harm to the academic field of Africana Philosophy by demonstrating how the conceptual confinements of the mainstream, white-dominated academic paradigm of integration only serves to uphold a theoretical framework that largely apologetic and not concerned with concrete change. This causes harm on two levels. As Curry shows, white theories cannot and have never been able to accurately portray the realities that African Americans face. This leads to a “conceptually dehumanizing” paradigm for scholarship on race (Curry “On Derelict”, 19). This is true in spite of the fact that African American Philosophy has begun to be gradually more included in academic philosophy, as scholars in this field are expected to

primarily respond to and critique whites' theories while whites are not expected to have any working knowledge of the field of Africana philosophy.

Cruse says it best when he writes that “the present internal social and racial crisis we are experiencing proves beyond a doubt the failure of this integrationist ethic” (19). The method of philosophy seen here involves subjecting theories which are uncritically accepted in mainstream academia to analysis by appealing to concrete situations and social facts. These writers promote the further development of this methodology which seeks to draw out myths and contradictions—i.e. propaganda—in political philosophy. The primary conclusion regarding future standards for methodology is to affirm the value of blacks' analysis of their social position (by studying and citing one another) rather than seeking legitimating from white philosophers who are unconcerned with (and uneducated on) the problem of racism which African American philosophers have been working on for centuries.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In the field of philosophy, colonized individuals wishing to participate in the mainstream academic discourse are expected to draw upon canonized Western texts and methods of inquiry by showing how these ideals encompass their own worldviews. Plato's "Myth of the Cave" is the quintessential canonized academic text, and is meant to serve as an allegory for the ways in which inherited, unchallenged assumptions generate intellectual confinement. The rebellious ideals espoused by Nietzsche on the petty tactics of the weak to assert control over the strong contain elements that may resonate with those who have struggled against mass society's manipulative approach to ideological indoctrination. But how do these widely-admired lessons speak to those whose chains are literally real, to those who must live according their captors' assumptions while remaining conscious of the fact that their captors' dominant values are corrupt?

The colonized for centuries have had a great deal to say about these questions. The philosophical method unique to colonized persons is a product of their social conditions and concrete constraints—sometimes literally in the form of chains. The colonized are positioned in such a way that they can aspire to break their chains but are still limited to a geographical space, nation, or imperialist framework—"the cave" in which they are incarcerated. They see that those incarcerating them are not themselves in chains, and rather than shadows they find themselves constantly staring directly into the faces of their captors. Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césaire do not emphasize a return to the



pre-colonial past in which native cultures are intact, as this is impossible. The philosophy teacher who would drag them out of the cave and into the sunlight is himself in chains, and the colonized know that they are being lied to but are limited in their capacity to change the liars by whom they are involuntarily surrounded.

Regardless of whether one agrees with Bell in saying that racism is permanent, it is clear that whites' racism is ideologically powerful enough to consistently motivate them to create accommodating structures to absorb progressive challenges. Historical genealogical methods are used by Black Nationalists in order to overcome false assumptions about civilizations by looking at what whites have done and said in the past in order to make sense of the apparent conflict between their contemporary rhetoric and their continued exploitation of African descended people. Black Nationalists work to break free of the chains of colonialism by first forming a theoretical framework through which to investigate which paths to progress are mythical, and which ideals of Western society are hollow.

In her autobiography, Angela Davis invokes the mythical Roman god Janus<sup>34</sup> to describe the uncertain historical juncture between the unchangeable "violent, confining past broken only by occasional splotches of meaning" and her uncertain future, "glowing with challenge, but also harboring the possibility of defeat" (106). Like the two faces of

---

<sup>34</sup> The use of ancient Greek and Roman myths is a long-established method of conveying philosophical ideas and has been used by canonical thinkers such as Freud. It is quite common in the field of aesthetics, particularly among the German Romanticists Friedrich Hölderlin, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, and Arthur Schopenhauer, who use the myth of Tantalus in their poetry and in their philosophy. These myths were seen as having deep political significance by F. Schlegel and other Romanticists.

Janus facing in opposite directions, Davis struggled with how the open question of the future might be fettered by the chains of her past. Joy James invokes Davis's imagery of the Janus head and relates this metaphor to other tensions between hope and fear in American history. In one application, the Janus head "represents hypocrisy and denial, a 'two-facedness' manifest when states or political systems claim democratic principles while systematically disenfranchising marginalized peoples or political minorities" (James "Introduction", 2). Firmly rejecting the historically unsuccessful strategies for reform-based mobilization, Black Nationalists remain vigilant of the significant incongruities in whites' brutal practices and the grandiloquent humanitarian speech produced by their most prominent thinkers. Black Nationalists seek to empower others to understand and begin to more effectively address these tensions.

## WORKS CITED

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New Press, 2010.

Allen, Robert L. *Black Awakening in Capitalist America, an Analytic History*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990.

Baumgold, Deborah. "Slavery Discourse before the Restoration: The Barbary Coast, Justinian's *Digest*, and Hobbes's Political Theory." *History of European Ideas* 36 (2010): 412-18.

Bell, Derrick. "Racial Remediation: A Historical Perspective on Current Conditions." *Notre Dame Law Review* 52 (1977): 5-29.

Bernasconie, Robert, and Anika M. Mann. "The Contradictions of Racism: Locke, Slavery, and the *Two Treatises*." Ed. Andrew Valls. *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2005. 89-107.

"Black Alliance Sides with Panthers Here." *The Black Panther* 29 May 1969.

Blackstock, Nelson. *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom*. New York: Anchor foundation, 1988.

Blakely, Allison. "European Dimensions of the African Diaspora: The Definition of Black Racial Identity." *Crossing Boundaries: Comparative History of Black People in Diaspora*. Ed. Darlene Clark Hine and Jacqueline McLeod. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999. 87-104.

Boxill, Bernard. "Rousseau, Natural Man, and Race." Ed. Andrew Valls. *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2005. 150-69.

Carmichael, Stokely, and Charles V. Hamilton. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.

Césaire, Aimé, and Robin D. G. Kelley. *Discourse on Colonialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000.

Chomsky, Noam. Introduction. *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom*. New York: Anchor Foundation, 1988. 9-38.

Clark, Kenneth B. *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Cohen, Stanley. *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: the Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1972.

Curry, Tommy J. "Will the Real CRT Please Stand Up: The Dangers of Philosophical Contributions to CRT," *The Crit: A Journal in Critical Legal Studies* 2, No. 1 (2009): 1-47.

Curry, Tommy J. "Saved by the Bell: Derrick Bell's Racial Realism as Pedagogy," *Philosophical Studies in Education* 39 (2008): 35-46.

Curry, Tommy J. "Please Don't Make Me Touch Em': Towards a Critical Race Fanonianism as a Possible Justification for Violence against Whiteness," *Radical Philosophy Today* 5 (2007): 133-158.

Curry, Tommy J. "On Derelict and Method: The Methodological Crisis of African American Philosophy's Study of African Descended Peoples under an Integrationist Mileu." Forthcoming in *Radical Philosophy Review* (2011).

Curry, Tommy J. "Shut Your Mouth when You're Talking to Me: Silencing the Idealist School of Critical Race Theory through a Culturalogical Turn in Jurisprudence." Working Paper Series. Social Science Research Network.

Davis, Angela Y. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003.

Davis, Angela Y, and Joy James. *The Angela Y. Davis Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998.

Davis, Angela Y. "Rape, Racism and the Myth of the Black Rapist." *Women, Race, & Class*. London: Women's Press, 1982. 173-201.

Davis, Angela Y. *Angela Davis--an Autobiography*. New York: Random House, 1974.

Delgado, Richard. "Crossroads and Blind Alleys," *Texas Law Review* 82 (2004): 121-152.

Delgado, Richard. "Rodrigo's Seventh Chronicle: Race, Democracy and the State," *UCLA Law Review* 41 (1994): 721-757.

Douglass, Frederick. "The Nature of Slavery." *Frederick Douglass: Autobiographies*. New York: Library of America, 1994.

D'Souza, Dinesh. *The End of Racism: Principles for a Multiracial Society*. New York: Free Press, 1995.

DuBois, W.E.B. "The Spawn of Slavery: The Convict-Lease System in the South." *The Missionary Review of the World* 14 (2009): 737-745.

DuBois, W.E.B. *Darkwater*. Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2003.

DuBois, W.E.B. "The Collapse of Europe." *The World and Africa*. Millwood, NY: Kraus-Thomson, 1988.

DuBois, W.E.B. "The Study of the Negro Problems." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 11.1 (1898): 1-23.

Elise. "Fascist Tactics." *The Black Panther* 6 Dec. 1969: 7.

Eze, Emmanuel C. *On Reason: Rationality in a World of Cultural Conflict and Racism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967.

Fanon, Frantz. *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*. New York: Grove Press, 1988.

Farr, James. "Locke, Natural Law, and New World Slavery." *Political Theory* 36.4 (2008): 495-522.

Farr, James. "'So Vile and Miserable an Estate': The Problem of Slavery in Locke's Political Thought." *Political Theory* 14.2 (1986): 263-89.

Feagin, Joe R. *Racist America*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Feagin, Joe. Introduction. *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil*. By W.E.B. DuBois. New York: Humanity, 2003.

Fierce, Milfred C. *Slavery Revisited: Blacks and the Southern Convict Lease System, 1865-1933*. Brooklyn, NY: Africana Studies Research Center, Brooklyn College, City University of New York, 1994.

Fraley, Todd, and Elli Lester-Roushanzamir. "Revolutionary Leader or Deviant Thug? A Comparative Analysis of the Chicago Tribune and Chicago Daily Defender's Reporting on the Death of Fred Hampton." *Howard Journal of Communication*. 15.3 (2004): 147-167.

Glausser, Wayne. "Three Approaches to Locke and the Slave Trade." *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 51.2 (1990): 199-216.

Gordon, Milton M. *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Grillo, Trina, and Stephanie M. Wildman. "Obscuring the Importance of Race: the Implication of Making Comparisons between Racism and Sexism (or Other Isms)." *Duke Law Journal*. 1991.2 (1991): 397-412.

Guinier, Lani. "From Racial Liberalism to Racial Literacy: Brown V. Board of Education and the Interest-Divergence Dilemma." *Journal of American History*. 91.1 (2004): 92-118.

Hampton, Fred, Mike Gray, and Howard Alk. *The Murder of Fred Hampton*. Chicago, IL: Facets Video, 2007.

Heiner, Brady T. "Foucault and the Black Panthers." *City*. 11.3 (2007): 313-356.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Ed. C B. Macpherson. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968.

Hoover, John E. "Black Nationalist--Hate Groups." Letter. 04 Mar. 1968.

*Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom*. New York: Anchor Foundation, 1988. 22-23.

Jackson, George. *Soledad Brother: The Prison Letters of George Jackson*.

Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1994.

Jackson, George. *Blood in My Eye*. Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1990.

George Jackson, "George Jackson: P.S., On Discipline." *The Black Panther* 27 March 1971.

James, C L. R. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.

James, Joy. Introduction. *The Angela Y. Davis Reader*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1998. 1-28.

James, Joy. "Erasing the Spectacle of Racialized State Violence." *Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender, and Race in U.S. Culture*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1996.

Kant, Immanuel. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*.

Translated by John T. Goldthwait. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960.

Locke, John, and Peter Laslett. *Two Treatises of Government*. Cambridge

[England: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Lule, J. "News Strategies and the Death of Huey Newton." *Journalism Quarterly*.

70.2 (1993): 287.



Marable, Manning, and Leith Mullings. *Let Nobody Turn Us Around: Voices of Resistance, Reform, and Renewal: an African American Anthology*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.

Montague, Phillip. *Punishment As Societal-Defense*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995.

Morrow, Nancy V. "The Problem of Slavery in the Polemic Literature of the American Enlightenment." *Early American Literature* 20.3 (1985-6): 236-55.

Robeson, Paul, and Philip S. Foner. *Paul Robeson Speaks: Writings, Speeches, Interviews, 1918-1974*. New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1978.

Royster, Jacqueline J. "Equity and Justice for All." Introduction. *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: the Anti-lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*. Boston, MA: Bedford, 1997. 1-45.

Spivak, Gayatri C, and Rosalind C. Morris. *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

Sundquist, Eric J. *The Oxford W. E. B. Du Bois Reader*. New York: Oxford UP, 1996.

Thompson, Kenneth. *Moral Panics*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Valls, Andrew. "‘A Lousy Empirical Scientist’: Reconsidering Hume’s Racism." Ed. Andrew Valls. *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2005. 127-149.

Watson, Bob. "Racist Pigs Shoot an Innocent Child in Toledo, Ohio." *The Black Panther* 19 Sept. 1970.

Wells-Barnett, Ida B. and Jacqueline J. Royster. *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*. Boston, MA: Bedford Books, 1997.

White, Joseph L, and Thomas A. Parham. *The Psychology of Blacks: An African-American Perspective*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

"Why Judge Jailed Black Panther Aid." *The Black Panther* 12 Dec. 1969.

Williams-Myers, Albert J. *Destructive Impulses: An Examination of an American Secret in Race Relations: White Violence*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995.

X, Malcolm. *By Any Means Necessary*. New York: Pathfinder, 1992.

## VITA

Name: Judith Colleen Bohr

Address: Judith Colleen Bohr  
C/O Dr. Tommy Curry  
Department of Philosophy  
Texas A&M University  
314 Bolton Hall  
College Station, TX 77843-4237

Email Address: [jcbohr@gmail.com](mailto:jcbohr@gmail.com)

Education: B.A., Philosophy, Texas A&M University, 2008

M.A., Philosophy, Texas A&M University, 2011