



PHILOSOPHY AND THE MIXED RACE EXPERIENCE

Edited and Introduced by
TINA FERNANDES BOTTS

Philosophy and the Mixed Race Experience

Philosophy of Race

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LEXINGTON BOOKS
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Available

ISBN 978-1-4985-0942-8 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-1-4985-0943-5 (electronic)

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

Because of what their experiences can teach us, this book is dedicated to all of those who fall between the cracks of the various systems of intelligibility in which we find ourselves.

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Acknowledgments

This anthology could not have come to fruition without the tireless support and commitment of many people. I want to thank the editor of the series on the Philosophy of Race at Lexington Books, George Yancy, who inspired me many years ago to be philosophically honest about my racial experiences with his candid, straightforward and courageous ruminations on the black American experience. I also want to thank Jana Hodges-Kluck, associate editor at Lexington Books, for starting the ball rolling of turning this book into a reality, and for her patience as I struggled to complete this project under somewhat trying circumstances. Additionally, each of the contributors to the volume has brought a unique voice to the conversation on the topic of philosophy and the mixed race experience, and I want to thank each of them. Specifically, I want to thank my graduate school chums, Gabriella Beckles-Raymond and Tim Golden, for the conversations that instigated the premise for this volume. I met Ron Sundstrom in graduate school when he came to Memphis to present an excerpt from his work, *The Browning of America*, and where we had an opportunity to discuss his work on Frederick Douglass and my work on equality and race. Those discussions and the originality of Ron's vision encouraged me to press on in philosophy. I met Linda Martín Alcoff in graduate school as well, at a Spindel Conference organized by Bill Lawson, where she elaborated on some of the key ideas in *Visible Identities*, and I was blown away. Also while in graduate school—at a meeting of the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers—I met Jennifer Lisa Vest and Marina Oshana, both of whom presented ideas and work that I found simultaneously intellectually stimulating and moving. I am grateful for their contributions to this volume as well. Celena Simpson is a brilliant graduate student at the University of Oregon and I am so pleased to have her voice represented in this volume. J. L. A. Garcia's essay on race and ethnic identity represents a vantage point on race that is, in my experience, common among mixed race persons, and I want to thank Professor Garcia for agreeing to include this essay in the anthology. Jason Hill is a force to be reckoned with and I am thankful for his bold and novel contribution to this volume. No volume on the mixed race experience would be complete without a representation of this point of view. Finally, many thanks to my friend and mentor, Naomi Zack, who has been a source of unwavering support and guidance since the day I met her many years ago. Naomi's classic, early work on the concept of

race was an impetus for my later becoming a philosopher, and I continue to be impressed and motivated by her bravery and clear mind. On a personal note, thanks to my family of origin for the ways in which they have shaped my racial experience and identity, as well as my thoughts in this work; and immeasurable thanks to my partner of fifteen years, J. Michael Botts, and our two fantastic children, Teresa and Blake. Everything I do is for you.

Tina Fernandes Botts, Oberlin, Ohio, 2015

Note on Stylistic Convention

The style of this volume is to use lowercase initial letters for all racial terms in essays original to this volume. In all but one of the original essays in this volume, this is the style followed. Specifically, in Jennifer Lisa Vest's original essay, the author has chosen to capitalize certain racial terms. These are "Black," "Mixed," "Multiracial," "Mulatta," "Mulatto," "Mestiza," "Mestizo," "Mixedblood," "Fullblood," "Hapa," "Douglala," "Indigenous," and "Native." She has provided the following explanation for this stylist choice: "The use of a capital letter for the term Black was introduced by Black Pride activists in the 1980s. The terms 'Mixed,' 'Multiracial,' 'Mulatta,' 'Mulatto,' 'Mestiza,' 'Mestizo,' 'Mixedblood,' 'Fullblood,' 'Hapa,' 'Douglala,' 'Indigenous,' and 'Native' have been capitalized because they refer to identities." In essays previously published, whatever capitalization style was used originally is reproduced.

Foreword

Linda Martín Alcoff

July 31, 2015.

Many more societies are today coming to the realization that having a mixed race identity is not cause for alarm. It is neither a prelude to tragedy nor a sign of foul play. Persons who hail from mixed families are not doomed to the dis-ease of dysphoria, or a permanent vertigo, nor are they uniformly commanded to deny a parent and identify as mono-racial.

Yet, increased acceptance does not signify that the questions raised by mixed race identities have all been settled. There remain questions about who we are, or more crudely and painfully, what we are, and questions about what it means to inhabit such identities morally and responsibly given the rigid racial hierarchies that persist despite the steady accretion of consensual reproduction across enemy lines.

Is one obligated to endlessly announce one's mixed lineage so as not to be afforded advantages—such as economic advantages but also things like presumptive epistemic credibility—that are accorded to (some) non-mixed persons? Is one required to disavow or deemphasize having a white or lighter parent so as to overturn the long histories of concealment, denial, and passing? Can a mixed person speak for the varied groups to which they have a connection, or do they lack the authority, the legitimacy, to speak for anyone? Or is our very ambiguity itself a source of epistemic superiority and advanced communicative skills? Or is that last claim itself just another form of racism?

This superb collection of essays (a compliment I am inspired to make, despite the fact that included herein is an essay of my own) elaborates with philosophical dexterity and comprehensiveness the questions that surround mixed race identities and, indeed, our own mixed race lives and mixed race societies. There is much personal rumination here, but it rises beyond the memoir to analyses and arguments. There are shrewd assessments of the way in which many cultures have recently shifted toward a celebration and fascination with hybridity, and there are also brisk debates over the advisability of categorizing people in this way in the first place. Why are we still using the category of 'race'? Why are we still categorizing people by these *casta* designations bordering on botanical charts?

The writers herein address these difficult topics and many more. Philosophy is usually difficult in the sense of complicated, deep, sometimes technical, but these essays add another layer of difficulty: high, personal stakes of the sort that necessarily engender strong emotions. It makes for exciting reading.

It may seem that there is a simple and uncomplicated answer to the quandaries of mixed race identity: to let people choose for themselves, to name and classify themselves or to have the right to refuse to do so. But our troubled social and colonial histories are not so easily dispensed with by spouting slogans of individuality and freedom. And one thing these troubled histories show clearly is that people can be wrong about how they choose to present themselves, either because they are lying to others or lying to themselves. Hence, self-ascription cannot be the final word on the matter of who we are.

Racial identities may necessarily have an element—a large element—of individual self-interpretation in which we each must do the work of coming to an understanding of ourselves and making some decisions about how to name ourselves by the available terms. But racial identities are not *merely* about self-ascription, as these essays attest. They are also about the complicated and variegated ways in which we are connected to others. They are about how we are seen by others and judged by others as well as distrusted, feared, or desired by others. Hence our identities are indelibly social in a way that sets limits on individual choice. Declaring myself just a generic human being is just a form of *mauvaise fois*.

The sphere of the social, in its turn, is a mess of contradictions, and this is nowhere as obvious as when we begin to consider ideas about mixed race. Racial identities are generally designated by one of three criteria, or a combination thereof: 1) by our lineage, or our familial, biological, or perhaps geographical background; 2) by our appearance, which is about pigment but also other ‘signs’ by which our phenotypes are classified into groups; and 3) by our cultural presentation, or our way of being in the world, including dressing, eating, walking, and dancing but also feeling, speaking, and thinking. Societies differ on how to rank these three desiderata: in the United States, lineage, as in the infamous ‘one-drop rule,’ outranks appearance, while in Latin America, appearance outranks lineage. For some indigenous groups, those with exogamous lineage and appearance can develop an indigenous identity if they adopt the ways of the people. Thus, there is no universal fact of the matter about how identities are parsed, which helpfully brings to the forefront the normative questions such as *who decides* and *for what purpose* which of these desiderata will prevail? If race is a *social* construct—since societies can decide, and put into law and policy, which desiderata will be determinant—then how do we make this business of social construction more democratic, more rational, more humane?

Thorny questions remain in regard to each criterion. How is lineage to be determined (e.g., how far back)? Given that one's appearance can vary according to the perceiver, which perceivers count? The criterion of cultural presentation may seem to be the most rational of the three, since it is based on what we do and how we are inside, so to speak, rather than the happenstance of our birth or our phenotype, but doesn't this criterion necessarily breed conformism, giving those striving to belong more of a motivation to imitate than to create?

Such questions reveal that the topic of mixed race simply brings to the fore with particular force the difficult issues about identity that are relevant to all of us. Everyone must grapple with the question of how to understand their connections, and possible debts, to their forebears. All must account for how they are positioned vis-à-vis various communities, whether racially defined or otherwise. And all must wonder, as philosophers long have debated, how their own moral dispositions and political values are related to their individual lives, histories, families, and embodied, visible selves. All of these are questions that mixed persons are forced to grapple with. All of these are also questions that all persons should grapple with.

Philosophers have for some time now, as this volume attests, been weighing in on this topic, certainly, in part, because there is no richer or more meaty set of metaphysical and ethical problems to address. The idea that my brain might be existing in a vat somewhere is a strain of the imagination; having complex identities and conflicting entanglements is all around us, in every classroom. What those of us who have addressed mixed race issues have mostly striven to do is provide some conceptual clarity, some new concepts and ways of thinking about this set of experiences only now coming more into public visibility. In other words, philosophers have been endeavoring to explain and describe with more precision and acuity the topic of mixed race identity. But this agenda of description can conflict with our mandate to push against convention, to criticize, to think things anew, as Jorge Garcia reminds us here. The one task cannot replace the other. In the following pages readers will find both tasks admirably pursued, and hotly debated.

If it used to be the case that the very existence of mixed race persons was taken as a sign of cultural devolution and depravity, today we are operating in a different context. But one that is no less fraught. For, as Gabriella Beckles-Raymond notes here, today our very existence is taken as proof of the natural evolution of racial justice, the sign that equality is on the horizon. Statistics about the increase in cross-racial unions, adoptions, and so forth are studied as the objective measure of progress. But, just as before, our own mixed bodies, lives, experience, and self-understandings are elided by a narrative not of our making. We are fashioned into billboards to legitimate settler and post-colonial societies, and tallied into spreadsheets constructed and analyzed by others. These essays are,

finally, a talking back to such mono-dimensional representations, a report back, of sorts, from the field, and a call and response in which we who are mixed ourselves weigh in on the meaning of our existence, the moral obligations our identities bear, and the politics of race and identity itself.

Editor's Introduction

Toward a Mixed Race Theory

Tina Fernandes Botts

The following book is a collection of essays about the mixed race experience written by professional, academic philosophers who are mixed race.¹ Each essay is meant to represent one of three possible things: (1) what the philosopher sees as the philosopher's best work, (2) evidence of the possible impact of the philosopher's mixed race experience on the philosopher's work, or (3) the philosopher's philosophical take on the mixed race experience. The book has two goals: (1) to collect together for the first time the work of professional, academic philosophers who have had the mixed race experience, and (2) to bring these essays together for the purpose of adding to the conversation on the question of the degree to which factual identity (that is, situated, phenomenological experience) and philosophical work may be related (i.e., in terms of theme, method, assumptions, traditions, etc.). To the extent that the mixed race experience and philosophical work do seem to be related, the book also explores the possible relationship between the mixed race experience and certain philosophical positions, en route to a sub-discipline of the philosophy of race called mixed race theory.

Until very recently, there was no critical mass of mixed race, professional, academic philosophers whose work could be collected for a volume such as this.² This book is important because although in the past there have been anthologies collected about the mixed race experience written by scholars from various disciplines,³ this is the first collection of essays about the mixed race experience written entirely by philosophers. The book was self-consciously designed this way in order to explore the link between the mixed race experience and philosophical work-product. And although I think this is an interesting project in and of itself, one of the larger philosophical projects is the exploration of the link between embodied experiences of any kind and philosophical work-product through the use of a new sample group.⁴

In recent years, much has been made of the degree to which the discipline of philosophy—as it is practiced in the West—is inappropriately and problematically Eurocentric and exclusive of both persons and van-

tage points that are outside of white cultural hegemony. Almost every introduction to philosophy text, for example, begins in Greece, fails to mention Egypt, and excludes Asian philosophy, Latin American philosophy and Africana philosophy. The charge from outside of the rarefied bubble that is Western philosophy, in other words, is that philosophy thus defined is problematically white both in terms of who counts as a philosopher, but also in terms of what counts as philosophy. Moreover, the charge is that philosophy is (notoriously) in denial about its white bias, laying claim to being uniquely based in "reason" and "objectivity" while at the same time understanding only the work of persons of European descent who write about the concerns of persons of European descent as sufficiently philosophical to be taken seriously as "reasonable" or "objective." Similarly, the charge of "bias" is often levied at philosophers whose identities and/or work-product falls outside of European-based parameters.

However, many of us whose racio-cultural identity and work-product fall outside of these European-based parameters, and who also lay claim to using "reason," and to seeking "objectivity," often find that we come to entirely different conclusions than our white colleagues on the same philosophical questions. For this reason, the sentiment exists among many of us charged with "bias" that it may be time for philosophy to take a look at its own (Eurocentric) biases. Philosophy will only be better for it. The suggestion offered up for philosophy to consider is that if there is a vantage point coming out of the black experience,⁵ and a vantage point coming out of the experience of living one's life as a "woman,"⁶ and a vantage point coming out of the mixed race experience, then perhaps there is a vantage point coming out of the white/European experience as well. Perhaps all vantage points are "biased," including the mainstream philosophical vantage point in the West.⁷ Perhaps all vantage points are the product of experiences, including the classically philosophical (Eurocentric) one.

So, this book is about a distinctive way of thinking about various philosophical questions that I think emerges from the mixed black and white experience (primarily in the United States), out of what I am calling in this book, *the mixed race experience*. I am in the process of generating a philosophy of the mixed race experience that I am currently calling *mixed race theory*. The theory will be the subject of a monograph I am currently conceptualizing. In addition to providing a forum for the collecting together of the work of contemporary mixed race philosophers, then, the present collection is designed as a first step toward producing that monograph. Mixed race theory is being developed at this stage, in other words, by collecting together the work of mixed race philosophers and then looking for themes in that work. Although I suspect that there are certain ways of approaching philosophical questions that emerge from the mixed race experience, it is important that these ways are not grounded

in anything on the order of a proposed mixed race biology, or a mixed race natural kind. I am not suggesting, in other words, that in virtue of having both white and black racial heritage *alone*, that certain ways of knowing or being emerge or develop. Instead, I am suggesting that the *common experiences* of mixed black and white persons within what Ron Sundstrom and others have termed the “black white binary” at work in the United States—which includes, among other things (1) the belief in race as a natural biological kind, and (2) the belief that, by and large, there are really only two races: black and white—seem to generate certain ways of approaching philosophical questions as well as certain philosophical outlooks.⁸

It is also important that I am not suggesting that *only* mixed race philosophers could come up with the sorts of viewpoints or claims that seem to be generated by the mixed race experience (most basically, for example, that race is not biologically real). Instead, I am making the milder suggestion that there are certain claims and viewpoints that mixed race philosophers seem to share. So, for example, in chapter 5 when I mention that both Naomi Zack and Kwame Anthony Appiah are mixed race philosophers and that these two philosophers are responsible for bringing into the philosophical conversation the fact that race is not based in biology, I am *not* claiming that mixed race philosophers invented or discovered the idea that race is not biologically real. Instead, I am merely highlighting that it was *two mixed race philosophers* and *not two monoracial philosophers* who first brought this point (already well-established in biology) into the professional philosophical discussion.

Before taking a first stab at examining the essays in the volume for themes, it seems important here in this introduction to consider a sampling of pivotal, preliminary questions.

WHAT IS RACE? WHAT IS RACIAL IDENTITY? WHAT IS MIXED RACE? WHO IS BLACK? WHO IS MIXED?

In June of 2015, when Rachel Dolezal, a woman of purportedly German and Czech heritage and then president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People chapter in Spokane, Washington, was asked point-blank in a televised news interview, “Are you African American?” Dolezal stared at the interviewer like a deer in headlights; silenced by the question. “I don’t understand the question,” she replied. “Are your parents, are they white?” the reporter continued. After an uncomfortable 5 to 10 seconds or so, Ms. Dolezal simply walked off camera, seemingly unable to grapple publicly with a question that she could not seem to answer honestly, even to herself.⁹ The interview had arisen in a very strange way. Dolezal had been passing herself off as African American or black for many years prior to this interview, even having

changed her natural long, straight, blond hair over the years to, by turns, long African braids or a large, puffy hairdo meant to simulate a popular “natural” African American style. Her skin was also darker than in her youth, which she has since attributed to not staying out of the sun.¹⁰ At some point, she had married an African American man and had two sons who identify as African American. In case there was any doubt as to how Dolezal understood her own racial identity, however, she later stated that, yes, she did consider herself to be black. She has said that she definitely considers herself to be black, that she “identifies” as black.¹¹ Her white parents disagree.

The media frenzy that ensued after Dolezal’s public moment of confusion, followed by her very odd proclamations about her racial identity, tapped into a question that could arguably only come up in a society profoundly divided across racial lines, a society in which the answer to the question, “What is your race?” has such profound implications for how one is viewed, understood and treated; for the degree of one’s access to social goods; for the amount of obstacles there are between a person and the person’s ability to exercise (or even access) her personal autonomy. So, the question that F. James Davis famously asked in the early 1990s, approximately twenty-five years after the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Loving v. Virginia* outlawing antimiscegenation laws across the United States, “Who is black?” becomes particularly salient.¹² Is Rachel Dolezal black? How can we tell? Does her so-called racial ancestry determine her race? What about the way she lives, or has lived, her life? Can a person change her race from one context to the next, one period in his life to the next? Does race travel across space or time (geographical locale or era)? When assessing racial identity, what sorts of parameters are the most salient? Can one choose one’s race? Or is racial identity ascribed from without? Does one have to choose between these various ways of thinking about race?

I’d like to use the case of Rachel Dolezal to explain how I answer these sorts of questions, and in the process explain to the readers of this volume how I think about the concept of race, how I think about the concept of mixed race, and the concept of mixed race that is motivating this volume. In summary, I think about race as a product of both ancestry (or “blood”)¹³ and phenomenological experiences. This includes mixed race.

For me, the answer to the question of whether Rachel Dolezal is black is no. That is, assuming that she has the exclusively white ancestry she is believed to have (in other words, assuming she has no black/African American ancestors at all, no black “blood,” if you will), this fact alone excludes her from authentically being able to take on blackness as a racial identity. For non-white, racialized identity in America is in part about having black “blood.” It is important that readers understand what I mean by black “blood” and what I do not mean by this term. By invoking the concept of black “blood,” I am not making the claim that biological

race is real, that race is a natural kind, or that there is any scientifically objective component to human racial categories whatsoever. In fact, it has been well established at least since the 1950s, in circles well-versed in the study of race, that race has absolutely no biologically verifiable component.¹⁴ But, race nonetheless is a phenomenon that operates very meaningfully in the lives of everyone in the United States, affecting countless quality-of-life factors and life possibilities. As many other race theorists and philosophers before me have pointed out, race is something that most people in the United States believe or assume has a biological component, and this belief has created a sense of race in the United States that is of a different flavor than in other geographical and historical contexts.

The strong belief in biological race in the United States, combined with the belief in an indelible, biologically-based hierarchy of races (with whites at the top and blacks at the bottom),¹⁵ combined with a widespread belief in hypodescent (or the view that if a person has ancestors of multiple races, the person's race is determined by the lowest status race, which is always a non-white race), has created what Heidegger would call a "world" or what I would call a system of intelligibility in which, for all intents and purposes, race is determined by "blood." In other words, historically, and into the present day, the *belief* that race is determined by blood has reinforced the presumption of the reality of human racial categories, and at the same time reinforced the system of indelible racial hierarchy (according to which those with any black ancestors at all, even one, are black and by the same brush stroke inferior) in the United States that defines who belongs to which race. In order to authentically play the race game, then (that is, in order to have a racial identity within this schema of intelligibility as it has been established), the racial identity of one's ancestors has to be consulted. And if at least one of them was black, one has met the minimum criterion of blackness. Conversely, without black ancestors, one has not met the minimum criterion. So, by "blood" alone, Rachel Dolezal is not black.

However, this picture is problematized and blurred by the fact that "blood" is not all there is to racial identity. For example, while black "blood" is necessary for black identity, part of black identity is also having had the black experience. In other words, "blood" is not sufficient for black racial identity. There must also be black phenomenological experiences. In other words, there is a certain racial cohesiveness (group identity) that is created and reinforced by having had similar racially charged experiences (certain experiences of racialization).¹⁶ So, for example, if a given person has a black ancestor multiple generations back but is not aware of this black ancestry, and if the black ancestry in question is not obvious to others, and this person lives an entirely white life, full of all of the attendant white privilege and white ignorance that goes along with being white,¹⁷ if the person has never been treated as a black person is customarily treated in society, has never experienced racial discrimina-

tion, etc., and also has no sense of black culture, no sense of black identity, etc., then such a person, in my view, is removed from black racial identity in a way that makes it difficult for me to say with confidence that the person is in any sense black. Having had the black experience, then, in my view, is as key to being black as is "blood." And to the extent that Rachel Dolezal has had the black experience, this seems to be the basis upon which she lays claim to black identity.

But, what, if anything, does the Dolezal case have to say about the mixed black and white experience, or about the racial identity of mixed black and white people, or about what the mixed black and white experience might have to say about races and racial identity more broadly? According to the definition of black identity developed above through my usage of the Dolezal case as an example (that is, that blackness is a combination of having black "blood" *and* having had the black experience) mixed black and white people certainly qualify as black. That is, most centrally, they have both black "blood" and have had the black experience (at least off and on). But, what about their white ancestry? How does this affect the racial identity of mixed black and white people, if at all? The short answer is that I think mixed black and white people qualify as both black *and* as mixed race. In contravention to the one-drop rule,¹⁸ and the rule of hypodescent¹⁹ at work in the American mindset, the white (or non-black) ancestry and experiences of mixed race people do affect our racialized phenomenological experiences. And to the extent that this is the case, our black experience and our black identity are disrupted and modified. In this way, we are both black and mixed race, in my view. In a certain sense, we are a *kind* of black identity, a subset of black identity. And, in fact, many of us do self-identify as both mixed and black. It is important to keep in mind that, despite popular understandings of race in the United States, racial identity need not be an either/or proposition.²⁰

In another sense, we are symbolic of black identity in the United States, which has always been mixed race. Owing largely to the history of chattel slavery in the United States (and the forced "interracial" mixing that was the product of that institution), most African Americans or folks who identify as black do, in fact, have white "blood," or ancestors or heritage. Many African Americans have Native American heritage as well. And if the appearance of African Americans is "white" (or non-black) enough, they have probably had phenomenological experiences of being white (or non-black) as well. So, just as mixed race people qualify as black, many African Americans are mixed race. Thus, one of the things I think the mixed race experience highlights in the philosophical discussion of race is that *no race is pure*. Ron Sundstrom has put the point this way: "Thus, either we are all multiracial, or, really, none of us are."²¹ Importantly, even the so-called white race is not "pure." Instead, both racial "purity" and whiteness are notions invented to perpetuate the

privileged status of persons of European descent in American society. The biological reality, in contrast to the fantasy of white racial purity, is that there is more genetic variation *within* a given “race” than across so-called “races.”²² So, along this line of thinking, race is always and already (that is, necessarily) non-pure.

Nevertheless, for purposes of this volume, I define a mixed race person as anyone who has mixed black and white ancestry, or “blood,” who is aware of this ancestry, and who has had multiple, authentic phenomenological experiences both as a black person (sometimes called a “racialized” person) and as a white (non-black, really) person.²³ Assuming the basic criterion of having had at least one black ancestor is met, I define an authentic phenomenological experience as a black person as one in which one has been perceived and treated as if one were biologically inferior as a consequence of one’s blackness (subjectively defined). This would include the usual failure to get tables at restaurants, being followed through stores when shopping, being stopped by the police randomly, being passed over for promotions, being treated as if one is lacking in intelligence, being assumed to be the maid, the janitor, etc. I define an authentic phenomenological experience as a white person (or at least as a non-black person) as one in which one has been perceived and treated as if one were white (or non-black) and in which one has simultaneously benefitted from white privilege as a result. This would include being treated extremely courteously when shopping, being treated as someone to be protected and respected in encounters with police, having one’s opinions and views treated as important and viable contributions to a given conversation in society at large, etc. And although many mixed folk, owing to their physiognomy, can, at times opt out of the black experience (and in this way have a similar kind of choice as Rachel Dolezal has), there is an important difference for the mixed race person. Because the mixed race person knows she has black “blood” or ancestors, and because black ancestors are the defining trait of blackness in America, and because these black ancestors are (at least a part of) her people, her history, her identity, and, yes, her “soul” or sense of self, there is a sense in which *the mixed race person can never opt out of the black experience in the same way that a Rachel Dolezal can*.

It is also important that black and white mixedness, as I have defined it, does not exclude the possibility of there being other so-called races added into the mix of a given mixed person’s racial background, experiences, or identity. Particularly because being white and being non-black in America are not experiences that are entirely removed from one another, as long as a person’s ancestry includes the black component, the person has met my “blood” criterion for being black and white mixed race for purposes of this volume.

It is not inconsistent with the definition of mixed race used in this book that there is a difference between having mixed race “blood” or

ancestry and identifying as being of mixed race. It may be that a given person qualifies as mixed race according to the definition used in this volume (has at least one black ancestor, is aware of this fact, is also aware of one's white or non-black ancestry, and has had authentic phenomenological experiences of being both black and white/non-black), but does not self-identify as mixed race. So, for example, while a given person may qualify as being mixed race for purposes of this book, the person may actually self-identify as black or Hispanic. But, I want to be very clear that the definition for black and white mixedness that I am using in this book is not meant to trump or override anyone's self-identification. The definition in this book is only designed to capture a certain phenomenological experience for the purpose of exploring certain philosophical lines of inquiry based on having had those experiences.

In other words, I am defining what it means to be mixed race in this way not because I think there are no other ways to be mixed race (I think there are), nor, as I state above, because I want to redefine how folks self-identify racially (I do not); nor because I do not think it is important for mixed black and white people to identify as black for political reasons (I do), but because I think that defining mixed race in this way leads to the discovery of some common outlooks on the world that I think have something to say philosophically. I also think what the black and white mixed race experience has to say philosophically is not limited to what it has to say about the concept of race, or about racism, or about racial identity more broadly (although I think it has a lot to say on these topics), but also because I think the mixed race experience can be informative on classical philosophical questions such as the question of being, the concept of the person, appearance vs. reality, the relationship between the individual and society (how much does one owe to one's "race," culture, or country and on what basis?), the question of whether objective knowledge claims can be made, understood, or had, the question of the role of the knower in knowledge claims, the question of the degree to which anything that might be called reality exists outside of ourselves and our perceptions, and the question of the scope of our ethical obligations to others.²⁴

The full contours of a mixed race theory that speaks to these issues is still in formation, but in the meantime, in the next section of this introduction, I offer my analysis of what the essays in *this volume* may have to contribute to a mixed race theory, after which I will offer up some additional thoughts on what other sorts of ideas might be a part of a mixed race theory.

THEMES IN THE ESSAYS

In part 1, *Mixed Race Political Theory*, Ronald Robles Sundstrom defends multiracial identity as a political project and Gabriella Beckles-Raymond

examines philosophically the new popularity of the symbol of the mixed race woman. For Sundstrom, multiracialism is “called to repair (i.e., to act responsibly in the face of racism, to remember the history of race and the American family, and to engage in restorative justice in a society damaged by racism).” Multiracial persons have special obligations vis-à-vis “interracial repair,” Sundstrom posits, that are rooted in their complex racialized identities. For Sundstrom, understanding multiracialism and multiracial persons as “called to repair” “helps transform the discussion of multiracialism from individualist to communal, political, and social.” In a new postscript, Sundstrom offers the reader some facts about his own mixed race experience and expresses support for Kwame Anthony Appiah’s ethics of identity.²⁵ Beckles-Raymond highlights the disparity she sees between the image of the mixed race woman often offered as the new face of Great Britain (together with all that this image seems to promise—e.g., racial harmony) and the continuing reality of “imperialist, white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” in British society. Beckles-Raymond’s stated goal is to call us to “enrich each other’s lives rather than dismiss each other or [seeking] escape from who we are.” Together, these essays suggest to me that a mixed race politics might both highlight the potential for the mixed race experience to heal racial tensions; and caution us to be wary of simplistic answers to the social and political problems associated with race.

Marina Oshana opens part 2, *Mixed Race Metaphilosophy*, with an essay on how all aspects of her experience (including her mixed race heritage) have shaped her experiences as a philosopher; and how she finds it “perplexing” that the discipline of philosophy and professional philosophers disclaim the relevance of lived experiences to philosophical work. She finds it telling that people like herself (in terms of her race, her gender, her social background) are dramatically underrepresented in the discipline—as compared to such representation in the general population and the educated public—and suggests that the discipline of philosophy might cast a more critical gaze on its demographic homogeneity. After that, Jennifer Lisa Vest offers the reader an implicit critique of contemporary Anglophone philosophy with a clever reductio ad absurdum argument. Vest rhetorically asks whether mixed race persons even exist, or whether it is possible to have knowledge of mixed race persons, given the definitions of existence and knowledge held and accepted by society and, by implication, by many Anglophone philosophers. Since we do exist and can be known, Vest’s implication is that there is something wrong with how American society and the discipline of philosophy define what it means to be or to be known. Part 2 ends with some of my reflections on the links I see between my own mixed race experience and my work as a philosopher. In summary, I think my mixed race experience has kept me radically opened up to different ways of knowing and being. Most pointedly, I think, for what might become a mixed race metaphilosophy, how-

ever, is my suggestion that professional philosophy seems to have lost touch with its roots as a radically honest attempt to critically re-examine the presuppositions with which questions of all kinds are approached, including, most basically, questions about what sort of work qualifies as philosophy and what sorts of persons qualify to be philosophers. I believe this suggestion is in part born of my mixed race experience.

In part 3, *Mixed Race Ontology*, Naomi Zack clears up some misunderstandings about her previous work on mixed race, including the question of whether she is a racial eliminativist, and also clarifies that she believes facilitating a broad understanding of the absence of a biological foundation for human racial categories is “a more urgent objective” than mixed race recognition or identity rights. After that, Linda Martín Alcoff suggests how we might “come to terms with” mixed race identity both metaphysically and politically. Metaphysically, Alcoff expresses the belief that accounts of race as social and historical, and that include as well elements of temporal contingency and mutability, “will probably have more persistence than accounts of race that tie it to biology.” Politically, Alcoff expresses a belief that articulating a “new, non-hierarchical universalist humanism” is a politically valuable goal, as long as we are careful not to “reinstate” the meanings of some of the core concepts of universal humanism (e.g., realism, objectivity, and truth) that existed “prior to the period of antipositivist critique,” but instead are careful to reinvent these concepts from a position that acknowledges the “ineliminable importance of culture and history and the context of power.” Alcoff suggests that there is value in mixed race identity, if only in naming a previously unnamed experiential ontology, and in providing this ontology with a previously unheard voice. In the final essay in part 3, J. L. A. Garcia calls for a “new interpersonalist personalism” that completely rejects racial identity, and even rejects the proposition that race or ethnicity can give meaning to our lives. For Garcia, the core of selfhood includes “those features of the self that do not vary across times and across possible situations,” and rejects those features of the self that do so vary (like race and ethnicity). What these essays have in common, I believe, is a strong rejection of race as biologically based. A mixed race ontology, then, may be more about absence than presence, more about anti-substance than substance. In other words, the claim seems to be that there is no mixed race ontology (or racial ontology of any kind, for that matter). And what this anti-ontology might highlight for philosophy more generally is that the nature of being (of existing) is not and cannot be captured by the traditional concept of substance, which, at a minimum, requires presence for existence.

Celena Simpson and Timothy J. Golden analyze their mixed race experiences through the lens of major figures in philosophy in part 4 of the book, *Mixed Race and Major Figures*. In her essay, Simpson explains her attraction to philosophy as taking place within a grander odyssey of the

self, under the terms of which she turned to philosophy to find “answers.” She describes her “anomalous” (mixed race) birth as implicating a “vast web of questions, histories, experiences, ideas, and meanings” that she has spent her life trying to understand and “forge into a coherent position” that others might refer to as an identity. In W. E. B. Du Bois, Simpson claims to have found a kindred spirit, someone who, according to Simpson, was keenly aware of his own mixed racial heritage and confronted his political and philosophical projects with this awareness in mind. Timothy Golden finds intellectual mentors in a wide array of major figures in the history of philosophy: Immanuel Kant, Hans-George Gadamer, Frederick Douglass, Søren Kierkegaard, Franz Fanon, W. V. O. Quine, Jacques Derrida, St. Augustine, and Emmanuel Levinas, to name some of them. Golden understands his mixed race experience as creating what he describes as an insurmountable tension in his personal identity that his mirrored in the diversity of his choice of philosophical influences. Golden understands this tension not as negative, but as fuel for the fire of philosophical authenticity. Both Simpson’s choice of intellectual mentor as a scholar who was also mixed race and Golden’s choice of an eclectic mix of intellectual mentors (according to Golden, each in some way related to a different aspect of his ethno-racial experience) seem born of the mixed race experience. Taken together, these essays suggest to me that perhaps we all choose intellectual mentors who tell the stories we want to tell ourselves. If this is the case, then as the demographics of professional philosophy change to be more inclusive of persons of all ethno-racial backgrounds, genders, sexualities, ability statuses, socioeconomic statuses, etc., perhaps the philosophical canon should be revised to include figures other than straight, white, cis-gendered, able-bodied, property-owning males.

Part 5 offers one version of a mixed race ethics. Here, Jason D. Hill rejects mixed race identity, as he understands it, in favor of an identity based in virtue cosmopolitanism. Hill’s wholehearted rejection of racial ties of any kind is a popular (but not unchallenged) theme in literature about mixed race and in the mixed race experience in general, as is the call to humanism at the heart of Hill’s virtue cosmopolitanism. A theme in this essay seems to be a call for the creation of a space for human individualism within racialized ethical conversations. In other words, as important as racial identity may be to leading an ethical life, particularly for those racialized as non-white, at least one philosopher’s mixed race experience seems to caution us to balance racial identification with a recognition of the individual human person(s) at issue in a given moral situation.

MIXED RACE THEORY IN PROGRESS

Based on the essays in this volume, then, the following is a short list of potential components to a mixed race theory: **Political Theory:** A mixed race politics might *both* highlight the potential for the mixed race experience to heal racial tensions and caution us to be wary of simplistic answers to the social and political problems associated with race. **Metaphilosophy:** Professional philosophy seems to have lost touch with its roots as a radically honest attempt to critically re-examine the presuppositions with which questions of all kinds are approached, including questions about what counts as knowledge, about what counts as real, about what sort of work qualifies as philosophy and about what sorts of persons qualify as philosophers. **Ontology:** Since there is no mixed race ontology (or racial ontology of any kind for that matter, despite widespread belief in the opposite view), perhaps the nature of being (of existing) is not and cannot be captured by the traditional concept of substance. **Major Figures:** Perhaps the philosophical canon should be revised to include figures other than straight, white, able-bodied, property-owning males. **Ethics:** Perhaps racialized discussions in ethics should create a larger space for human individualism.

Other themes that have a good chance of becoming part of a mixed race theory I would develop include the following: **Philosophy of Race:** (i) Races are not and cannot be natural kinds, and (ii) There is no such thing as racial purity. **Metaphilosophy:** Philosophical questions do not come to us tied up in neat, little packages with neat, little solutions. **Ethics:** There very likely is something to the concept of a universal humanity, en route to a universally applicable ethics; although the popular present conceptions of both leave much to be desired, including a heavy cultural bias toward Eurocentric (white) values and ideals. **Methodology:** Philosophy should return to its roots as radical intellectual open-mindedness. Inasmuch as the mixed race philosopher often draws from multiple and various intellectual pots to pursue a given philosophical question and attempts to place the disparate pieces drawn from those pots into some kind of makeshift jigsaw puzzle of an answer, it seems to me that the mixed race philosopher tends to appreciate, more than the average monoracial-identified philosopher, the complexity of the philosophical enterprise, and uniquely has something to say to the discipline of philosophy about the usefulness of the kind of intersectional, interdisciplinary, intertraditional analysis that the mixed race experience, together with its ways of knowing and being, brings into high relief.²⁶

Other questions on which I think the mixed race experience might have something to say to philosophy are **African American philosophy:** The question of the role of the mixed race experience in the black American experience. **Metaphysics:** (i) The question of what the mixed race experience can tell us about personal identity,²⁷ (ii) the question of

the usefulness (or counterproductiveness?) of categorical labels for describing metaphysical kinds, and (iii) the question of whether the ontological status of the racial “passer” changes with time and space, that is, with context.²⁸ **Methodology:** (i) The question of the importance of intercultural dialogue in (cross-cultural) problem solving, and (ii) the importance of self-reflexivity and intellectual humility to true philosophy.²⁹ **Epistemology:** The question of whether all knowledge claims (especially including those purporting to be based in “reason” or “objectivity”) are “biased” including Eurocentric knowledge claims traditionally taken to be “objective.”

For now, though, the essays in this volume have been collected, in part, to provide a first glimpse of what might become a mixed race theory. I hope they will be read by all with an open mind and heart.

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NOTES

1. Notably, one of the philosophers in this collection, J. L. A. Garcia, does not self-identify as mixed race. Also of note, the book is focused on the mixed race experience in the United States, and so the essays included have been written by philosophers who live in the United States, with one exception: Gabriella Beckles-Raymond lives in Great Britain. However, Beckles-Raymond lived in the United States for many years.

2. I restrict my discussion here to mixed race philosophers working in the Anglophone tradition. The last philosopher in the Anglophone tradition to collect together essays about mixed race was Naomi Zack in 1995. At that time, Zack collected together work from scholars working in a variety of disciplines. See Naomi Zack, ed., *American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995).

3. In addition to Naomi Zack's *American Mixed Race*, see, for example, Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, ed., 'Mixed Race' Studies: A Reader (New York: Routledge, 2004); Chandra Prasad, ed., *Mixed: An Anthology of Short Fiction on the Multiracial Experience* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006); Maria P. P. Root, ed., *Racially Mixed People in America* (Newbury Park, London, & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992); Maria P.P. Root, ed., *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier* (Thousand Oaks, London & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996); Pearl Fuyo Gaskins, ed., *What Are You?* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999); and Carol Camper, ed., *Miscegenation Blues* (Toronto: Sister Vision, 1994). There have also been texts written in and out of philosophy that grapple with the issue of racial and ethnic hybridity. See, e.g., Linda Martín Alcoff's *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Naomi Zack's *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), and Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands: La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987).

4. Tracing the links between phenomenological experience and ideas goes at least as far back as feminist standpoint epistemology, according to which differences in experience based in structurally and institutionally generated social locations produce meaningful differences in knowledge claims. See, e.g., Sandra Harding, "Standpoint Theories: Productively Controversial," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 24, no. 4 (2009): 192–200.

5. See, e.g., Bernard Boxill, *Blacks and Social Justice* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1984), W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," in H. Brotz (ed.), *African-American Social and Political Thought 1850–1920*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers), 509–518; Lewis Gordon, *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995), Frank Kirkland, "The Problem of the Color Line: Normative or Empirical, Evolving or Non-Evolving," *Philosophia Africana: Analysis of Philosophy and Issues in Africa and the Black Diaspora*, 7, no. 1 (2004): 57–82, Bill Lawson and Howard McGary, *Between Slavery and Freedom* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), Alain Locke, *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York: A. and C. Boni, 1925), Tommy Lott, ed., *African-American Philosophy: Selected Readings* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), Michelle Moody-Adams, *Fieldwork in Familiar Places: Morality, Culture, and Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), Laurence Thomas, *Vessels of Evil: American Slavery and the Holocaust* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1993), and George Yancy, *African-American Philosophers: 17 Conversations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998).

6. See, e.g., Sandra Harding, "Standpoint Theories: Productively Controversial," and Kristin Intemann, "25 Years of Feminist Empiricism and Standpoint Theory: Where Are We Now?" *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 25, no. 4 (2010): 778–796.

7. This is what Gadamer is getting at when he says that in the West, there is a refusal to acknowledge the ubiquity and the necessity of prejudgments in all knowledge claims. See Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

8. For a full discussion of the black-white binary, see Ronald R. Sundstrom, *The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008).

9. Jeff Humphrey, KXLY-4 televised news interview, June 11, 2015.

10. Interviewer: "Your complexion appears darker than it did in the photos of you as a young lady. Have you done something to darken your complexion?" Dolezal: "I certainly don't stay out of the sun." Matt Lauer, NBC's Today Show, interview with Rachel Dolezal, televised June 16, 2014.

11. June 14, 2015, television interview with KREM 2 (a CBS News affiliate) news reporter; and June 16, 2015, *Today Show* interview with Matt Lauer.

12. F. James Davis, *Who Is Black? One Nation's Definition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991).

13. I will explain what I mean by "blood" later in this introduction.

14. See, e.g., UNESCO, *Race and Science: The Race Question in Modern Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951); David L. Hull, "The Effect of Essentialism on Taxonomy, Two Thousand Years of Stasis (I)," *British Journal for Philosophy of Science* 15 (1965): 322–23; R. C. Lewontin, "The Apportionment of Human Diversity." *Evolutionary Biology* 6 (1972): 381–98; Ruth Hubbard, *Exploding the Gene Myth: How Genetic Information Is Produced and Manipulated by Scientists, Physicians, Employers, Insurance Companies, Educators, and Law Enforcers*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999); and Joseph L. Graves, Jr., *The Emperor's New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race at the Millennium* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

15. For philosophical theories of the origins of this racial hierarchy, see, e.g., Robert Bernasconi and Tommy Lott, eds., *The Idea of Race* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2000); Emmanuel Eze, "The Color of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology," in *Postcolonial African Philosophy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997).

16. For discussions of how group identity can be formed as a result of similar experiences of oppression, see, e.g., Ann E. Cudd, *Analyzing Oppression* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Carol C. Gould, "Group Rights and Social Ontology," in *Groups and Group Rights*, ed. Christine Sistare, Larry May, and Leslie Francis (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001); and David Ingram, *Group Rights: Reconciling Equality and Difference* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000).

17. See Charles Mills, "White Ignorance," in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, ed. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (Albany, NY: SUNY Press), 11–38; Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Rebecca Mason, "Two Kinds of Unknowing," *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (2011): 294–307; and Charles Mills, "White Ignorance and Hermeneutical Injustice: A Comment on Medina and Fricker," *Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective*, 3, no. 1 (2013): 38–43.

18. according to which "one drop" of black blood makes one black

19. according to which one's race is determined by the race of one's monoracial minority ancestor(s)

20. Instead, it is possible to be both black and mixed race. By the same token, it is possible to be both black and mixed race and Native American, or black and mixed race and Latin American, or black and mixed race and Asian. On this view, if racial identity is to map the actual racial status of real human beings in the world, since there are no pure races, these sorts of multiple statuses are not only possible, but the norm.

21. Ronald R. Sundstrom, *The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

22. See generally, Larry Adelman, *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (San Francisco: California Newsreel, 2003).

23. So, in summary, in my view, racialized identity (particularly black identity) has both a necessary "blood" component (an ancestry component) and a social (or experiential) component that includes both experiences of discrimination and lack of choice to opt out of blackness at will.

24. For example, the mixed race experience brings into high relief the question of whether race is a morally relevant feature of a given moral situation.

25. See K. Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

26. By stating that I think these themes are generated by the mixed race experience, I do not mean to imply that such themes cannot be generated from other sorts of experiences as well.

27. I understand my mixed race experience as informative on the topic of what racialized experience is in general, particularly in late twentieth century/early twenty-first century United States. This experience contains a strange combination of both understanding my racial identity as a real and significant component of who I am as a person and an understanding of the arbitrary and context-dependent nature of racial identity at large. At an even broader level, I see the insights provided by the mixed race experience on the question of what racial identity is at large as, in turn, instructional for larger questions about personal identity in general, and about what it means to be a human being.

28. In this regard, and as the title of Marina Oshana's essay in this volume suggests, it seems worthy of note that the imagery of a looking glass may provide insight. Questions arising are (1) whether, for the mixed race person, society mirrors one's actual existence, or of some sort of alternate, fantastical existence, and (2) what it means for personal identity if one has the ability to walk through the "mirror" of society's reflection.

29. Regarding what "true philosophy" might be, I always return to Socrates for whom the only true wisdom was in knowing that one knows nothing. See Plato, "The Apology," in Plato, *Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Symposium, Republic*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, ed. Louise Ropes Loomis (New York: Published for the Classics Club by W.J. Black, 1942), 21d.

Part I

Mixed Race Political Theory

1

Responsible Multiracial Politics¹ *with a new postscript, Chasing Mixed-Race Ghosts*

Ronald Robles Sundstrom

AMBIGUITY, CONFLICT, AND HOPE

The ambiguities and conflicts around personal, and the emergent political and group-based, multiracial identity are the result of the inherent ambiguities and inconsistencies within national and colonial systems of race.² These ambiguities and inconsistencies, and outright errors disguised as racial science, were compounded by migration, trade, and other contacts—an active process which is at the heart of today's browning of America. Multiracial lives have been living signs of the profound errors of all racial systems, in their vain attempt to categorize, sort, order, and control. Multiracial lives were from the first days of modern race theories ruptures of racial mores, and they remain so at some social sites today. There is, however, a vast gulf between the common belief, which held for the majority of the history of race in the United States, that multracial persons were "mongrels" and degenerations, and the ubiquity of celebratory images multiracial persons and families that are now common. Multracial identity has evolved, in the post-civil rights decades, into an identity in rebellion against monoracialism, yet it remains the target of racist fears just as it develops its own form of racial privilege.

Multiracial identity is, as its defenders have asserted, a psychologically and socially difficult identity to live with: multiracial individuals must struggle for recognition in a society that does not fully welcome or officially acknowledge their existence.³ Likewise, the assertion of multiracial identity in the form that it presently takes in the United States is possible only as a result of a shift in dominant racial projects that have allowed, and favor, the emergence of a distinct multiracial identity and political advocacy movement, the flourishing of which may come at the expense of traditional civil rights goals—arguments, significantly, that dominate legal critical race theory discussions of these matters.⁴

This chapter revisits both sides of the debate, especially in light of the role of multiracialism in the browning of America. The next section investigates how multiracialism is a target for liberals and those on the Left who are opposed to the institutionalization and spread of multiracial identity because of its affects on the demographics of traditionally dominant American delineated ethnoracial groups and on civil rights policy. The third section turns to the manipulation of multiracialism by neoconservatives, and the careless actions of some multiracialist organizations that allowed their demands for multiracial recognition to be associated with Neoconservative color-blind policy agendas. The fourth and fifth sections investigate the charge of racism against multiracialism—a powerful charge that directly contradicts and threatens the utopian-racial-harmony vision some associate with the browning of America. The sixth section explores the worries about the expansion of multiracial recognition beyond the census to public schools, colleagues, and universities, and it presents and supports arguments in favor of the expansion of multiracialism. The chapter ends with a re-conceptualization of multiracial identity as an identity and a movement that are called to repair (i.e., to act responsibly in the face of racism, to remember the history of race and the American family, and to engage in restorative justice in a society damaged by racism).⁵ Multiracial persons, and the movement that claims to look after their interests, have special obligations that are rooted in the very experience that leads individuals to claim this identity: their obligation to memory. The demands of memory lead us to seek repair, yet they also demand that multiracialism contribute to the repair of the damage wrought by racism.

CRUEL AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE REBUKES

The criticism that multiracial, or mixed race, is an impossible identity or that multiracialism is simply a variant of racial passing available to the brown are cruel.⁶ They are cruel because they dismiss the particular experiences of multiracial persons and preclude any possibility of the existence and legitimacy of multiracial identity. Their intention is to foster incredulity about the intentions of person who dare claim multiracial identity, and to code multiracialism as simple racist betrayal. These liberal and Leftist critics of multiracialism wrongfully perceive themselves as allies of racial justice, and are unfortunately engaged in the sad project of silencing debate through cruel rebukes and denying the possibility of multiracial life.

The intention behind criticisms of multiracialism is to expose the interactions, perhaps necessary or intentional, between multiracialism and personal, social, and institutional racism; another aim is to warn off those who may be tempted to identify with multiracialism. It is a curious

strategy, because the critics use cruelty to appeal for loyalty, but their rhetoric merely drives those who most closely identify with multiracialism away.

What, then, is the political or racial project of the criticism of multiracialism? To absolutely associate multiracial identity with racist betrayal is akin to labeling so-called “illegitimate” children as bastards. Will calling a group of fatherless children “bastards” make them any more legitimate? Given the self-destructiveness of the rhetoric that many of the most vociferous critics of multiracialism deploy, their strategy cannot be to engender loyalty; rather, it is a politics driven by a post-civil rights version of racial-sexual-moral panic.⁷ Their racial project is a demand for political and social authenticity, while their political one is recrimination and revenge—it is, at its base, the repetition of the language of absolute loyalty plus the threat of disowning and exclusion that has historically marked the ruptures around multiracialism.

In contrast to those claims, critics that explore the relationship of multiracialism to personal racism are respectable as they raise serious moral and political concerns about the choices of individuals acting within networks of racial projects.⁸ Similarly respectable are the investigations of how multiracial identity, whether rooted in personal racism or not, interacts with racist systems and institutions. Both of these streams of vital critique allow for the possibility of rectification, reparation, and restoration. What must be avoided is insisting on the nonexistence or moral irretrievability of multiracialism.

Multiracial identity is an identity borne of specific experiences of being born into, and living among, the gaps of racial and ethnic categories.⁹ It is a category of people who are the result, on one hand, of numerous ruptures of racial mores, and on the other, the implications and policies of those very same mores. Race was imagined to designate deep, permanent, and impermeable barriers between varieties of peoples; yet, racial systems have consistently been accompanied by an erotic imaginary of miscegenation, and of course its widespread practice. There is a third element, though, that must be added to the dyad: the mulatto/as and mestizo/as that resulted from these ruptures and utilizations have been the object of curiosity, denial, and terror. For the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century race theory, white initiated interracial sex was privately recognized but publicly denied, and the children of miscegenation were mysterious.¹⁰

In stark contrast to the territories influenced by the power of Spain and France and the official racial systems of South Africa and Brazil, there has been little space for the expression of multiracial identity in the history of race in the United States, although the identity cannot be said to have been absent. The “one-drop-of-blood” rule for African Americans and the blood-quantum rules for Native Americans more or less guaranteed that any black-white offspring would be black, and red-white off-

spring would be white.¹¹ This is the backdrop only by which the phenomena of passing, which is distinct from the claiming of multiracial identity, or the ostracism of the racially ambiguous in the United States, can be understood. Despite, however, the widespread adoption of *de facto* and *de jure* rules to guard whiteness from specifically black inclusion, recognition of multiracialism from within and without racial and ethnic communities proliferated. Social and legal institutions in large part did not allow for an independent multiracial identity and category, yet the recognition of multiracial genealogy and experience has always been present.¹²

The critics of multiracialism are quick to recognize the presence of multiracial individuals as part of so-called monoracial, non-white communities. The recognition, however, of multiracial genealogy and experience in the history of race in America has been the cause for much of confusion in current debates, as well as the failure to properly distinguish between having multiracial genealogy and experiencing one's self and life as being multiracial. Critics argue that multiracialism is superfluous: "African American" and "Native American" already include those who are "mixed," those whose genealogy includes white ancestors—white ancestors, and families, who are largely ignorant of, or deny, familial connections.¹³ In fact, in the cases of African Americans and Native Americans, the majority of these monoracial communities have multiracial genealogies.

A corollary argument is that there are no ontological grounds for the existence of multiracial identity as a separate identity or category. Race is real at any particular site, because it results from a variety of social forces, at those sites, that place social and political meanings on bodies. In the United States, and in the black case, in particular, those forces have coded all persons with any black ancestry (and socially determined black phenotypes) as exclusively black.¹⁴ The American racial project, with few exceptions, has identified multiracial individuals as members of a single race. Although race in the United States experienced significant changes, there has been no serious alteration in the racial formation of blackness; thus, there is no justification for a multiracial category. Thus, there is no reason to label, for example, the child of a black-white union multiracial because the black (and probably the white) parent is already multiracial.

These arguments support the request, made by legal critical race theorists who criticize the multiracial movement, that multiracial persons keep their mixture a private matter and not ask the state or its institutions to make their mixture a matter of public record.¹⁵ The movement for official recognition of multiracial identity in statistics is best understood, according to these critics, as a movement toward white privilege, and a betrayal of civil-rights.

The request that multiracial individuals go in the "closet" with their identity is stunning. First, the mere counting of multiracial individuals,

who under present guidelines are counted when they check more than one racial or ethnic “box,” does not necessarily undermine the collection of data needed to enforce civil rights policies. Second, the demand that multiracials hide themselves from view in the public sphere amounts to a “don’t ask, don’t tell” multiracial policy. It advocates the application of a public-private distinction in personal identity, for the sake of accomplishing traditional civil rights goals. This demand goes hand in hand with, and would support, the restriction of public discussions of racial justice to a narrow realm of “public” affairs: jobs, income, wealth, housing, healthcare, education, and so on, which are the large-scale distributive ends of civil rights policy. Off the table would be public discussions of changes in individual identity, family structure, and the implications of the browning of America for the future of civil rights policy. Public discussions of race and the private sphere would be kept out of the realm of public discourse, on such topics as interracial intimacy, multiracial identity, interracial adoption, and the effects of racial identity in custody claims of dissolved unions—discussions that are vital to have in a browning America.¹⁶ As with the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in the United States military, such a multiracial policy effectively ignores demographic reality (there are homosexuals in the military, and there are multiracials in America), refuses to recognize a category of people that morally deserve recognition while benefiting from their presence, and refuses to deal with fundamental shifts in American social life.¹⁷ Lastly, the “don’t ask, don’t tell” demand is stunning because it so brazenly employs the private-public distinction to remove multiracialism from politics, from public life—a distinction that has been the target of decades of arguments by feminists and race theorists. On one hand, it recognizes the growing trend of multiracial self-recognition, but on the other, it asserts that multiracial persons as such are not morally or politically entitled to public recognition. As with the refusal to consider differences of social identities by liberals who support strict neutrality or blindness to social differences, “don’t ask, don’t tell” multiracial policies imperiously refuse to deal with intra-communal difference, and simply demand silence.

Further, “don’t ask, don’t tell” arguments suppose that multiracialism is primarily tied to genealogy, and with that supposition the emergence of multiracial as an individual identity and a political movement is involved in many of the problems its critics have enumerated. The largest problems have to do with the ontology of race: if there are no races, then there are no multiracial individuals. Race, though, is understood as a social concept, and belonging to one or another race is largely though not exclusively tied to racialized genealogy. Racial genealogy is not democratic, as the different races are not considered by widely held social mores and legal practices to mix equally (e.g., the one-drop-of-blood rule). Thus, racial categories already include those of mixed genealogies.

Moreover, the genealogy of individuals admits of a high degree of mixture. Thus, either we are all multiracial, or, really, none of us are.

The supposition that multiracial identity is a genealogical claim is false. It is significant that both the proponents and opponents of multiracialism make this error. Multiracialism cannot be largely a genealogical matter; rather, it is an experience. Multiracial activists and organizations that base multiracial identity on simple genealogy do grave damage to their own cause, by reinforcing absurd and discounted simplistic biological conceptions of race and standards of racial purity. Likewise, those who criticize multiracialism by merely pointing to past patterns of racial categorization fundamentally do not understand—or just have not listened to accounts of—post-Civil Rights era multiracial identity formation.¹⁸

A preponderance of accounts in art, literature, autobiography, and social science demonstrate several variants of the multiracial experience that stretch back to the birth of the concept of race.¹⁹ Denying the existence of multiracial experience, and thus multiracial identity, is patently false and absurd; it is, as has been said, cruel. Likewise, denying the existential validity of the form it takes today simply because of its past forms is not serious argument. Each multiracial experience is tied to a particular site—to a particular network of social forces that give the identity presence and effect—rendering it distinct.²⁰

Yesteryear's Octoroon is not today's Hapa. Although there has been little possibility in pre-1960s America of a multiracial identity that was separable from a traditional racial category, there have been significant shifts in social practices, mores, laws (in short, social forces) that have opened up enough social and conceptual space for such a category. Hence, X born in 1950, and whose parents were white and black, was considered by her family, friends, strangers, and herself to be simply black, even though she was largely recognized as a mulatta or in popular parlance, "redbone." X falls in love with a white person Y, and in 1980 they have a child, Z, together. Z faces racial and ethnic pressures similar to X, but as Z exists in a distinct site, she faces different degrees of those forces as well as wholly new forces. Z's experience of race is distinct, and she has an option that X never did: she can reasonably declare that she identifies as both black and white and considers herself multiracial. X never could reasonably claim to be multiracial. After the 1980s, X and Z both experience the loosening of racial mores, but Z can internalize and identify with these shifts in a way that was unavailable or incomprehensible to X. Multiracialism, then, is linked to interplays between genealogy, social forces, and the phenomenology of race.

Accusations of bad faith or betrayal are directed toward multiracialism for different reasons and from a variety of directions. Ruptures mark the experience and presence of multiracial life. Multiracial individuals are living symbols of the rupture of racial-sexual mores and divisions.

These ruptures are alive, for better or worse, in all of our families and communities. The difficulty with which white family structures deal with non-whiteness within is now a well-told tale; the tragic stories of ostracism and denial are as old as this nation—indeed they are story in this nation’s myth of political and social origins (e.g., Thomas Jefferson’s relation with Sally Hemmings).²¹ Latino, Native-, African-, and Asian-American families have to various degrees similar stories of ostracism and denial.

These stories, at once personal, familial, and social, resulted in a variety of personal choices: from the most painful choice of passing, to the contemporary declaration of multiracialism. Each of these stories carries the signs of personal-familial-social rupture. The personal expression of multiracial experience, whether racist or not, interacts with the social processes, the various racial projects, responsible for racial formation in the United States. Therefore, as the dominant racial projects connect the everyday with macro-level processes, there is a looping-effect, or a network of mutual support between racial formations on each level. The ruptures around multiracialism are transitive across the personal, familial, and social.

Each of these sites of rupture must be addressed by the work of repair that multiracialism should accomplish. These ruptures do not necessitate the shunning of multiracial identity or the dismantling of the multiracial movement, but they do entail responsible commitments and action in the face of these personal and social challenges. Has the multiracial movement engaged its issues in the spirit of repair?

If writings from the critics of multiracialism are the gauge, then the multiracial movement offers nothing more than shrill and sustained screams for multiracial identity and multiracial family identity. Certainly, some in the multiracial movement (e.g., Project Race) have offered such protests. Although their actions are understandable in the face of existential denial and assumptions of personal racism, their unfortunate tactics represent intransigence and the assertion of disconnected individuality. Calls for recognition are not by themselves acts of repair.

Yet, a careful look at the history of multiracial advocacy shows that much of their activity has been characterized by the desire for repair as well as recognition.²² It is as if the critics of multiracialism do not bother to notice this facet of the movement, and have been uncharitable and hyperbolic.²³ Theirs is a tactic, as I shall argue below, that is counterproductive and inconsistent with their political aims.

COLOR-BLINDNESS AND MULTIRACIAL PRIVILEGE

Those who bear multiracial identity are relieved to various degrees of the social forces that subject their monoracial, and often darker, relations. It

would be unfair to call their lives easier, for they live their own particular racial hardships, but they do escape some of the norms that discipline, limit, and degrade monoracial individuals. The social space they exist in, then, opens up opportunities not available otherwise: for example, judgments of their “accessible” and “exotic” beauty, or judgments of their character and normalcy based on their “mixed” characteristics; they may even have the possibility of passing. At worst, multiracial identity may be an identity based in racial opportunism that depends on anti-black racism, as well as class and racial privilege.

These complaints, however, are too focused on individuals and personal choices. Indeed, the debate suffers from an overwhelming focus on the whether or not the personal assertion of multiracial identity is racist and whether the multiracial movement is motivated by the racism of its leadership. As Paul Spickard has commented, individualism has a “stunning” predominance in the discourse on both sides.²⁴

The intentions of individuals are an important issue, and will be investigated below, but more important is the way in which multiracial identity may interact with American racial politics and macro-level processes. Multiracialism may participate in and contribute to social and institutional racism. On this point the dominant worries, of course, have been expressed about the national census and other public records closely linked (such as K-12 and college enrollment and admission forms).

Additionally, multiracialism has been adopted by the proponents of naïve color-blindness in their pursuit of law and policy scrubbed free of any reference to, and influence of, race and ethnicity. Now, there is an obvious trajectory from the politics of the American Left to support for the multiracialism, a line of descent from *Loving v. Virginia* to the 1997 congressional hearing on “Federal Measures of Race and Ethnicity and the Implications for the 2000 Census.”²⁵ Just as obvious is the appeal of multiracialism for American neoconservatives.

Neoconservatives, and others on the Right, such as right-leaning libertarians, see in the multiracial movement what they extrapolate from Frederick Douglass or Martin Luther King, Jr.: statements of one America. We should no more fault the multiracial movement, than we do Douglass or King, for the Right’s adoption or manipulation of them. Certainly there has been cooperation between a Republican majority and the movement. The 1997 hearings on the 2000 census, which were held to determine whether a “multiracial” category would be included as an identity option, were held under the aegis of the Republican leadership of the House. There is no reason to believe that a Democratic majority would have prevented the hearings. In particular much has been made by the critics of the multiracial movement of the support of the former-Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA).²⁶

Gingrich did support the addition of a multiracial category, but so did several Democrats. It is a marker of viciousness of the debate that Gra-

ham has been lambasted for praising Gingrich for his aid; those criticisms contain intentional misinterpretations and distortions of her praise for Gingrich. Graham's critics do not mention her praise for President Clinton's support or her overall point that the hearings were a bipartisan effort.²⁷

What Gingrich wrote, though, does demonstrate why the Right has appropriated, although without much cash or real support, the multiracial cause. According to Gingrich, multiracialism is a positive demographic, social, and political, development because it leads to a whole American identity. Citing the history of ethnic assimilation and, Gingrich states,

I think we need to be prepared to say, the truth is we want all Americans to be, quite simply, Americans. That doesn't deprive anyone of the right to further define their heritage. . . . It doesn't deprive us of the right to ethnic pride, to have some sense of our origins. But it is wrong for some Americans to begin creating subgroups to which they have a higher loyalty than to America at large.²⁸

Gingrich ends with an appeal for the multiracial category as a way of ceasing to force Americans into "inaccurate" and "divisive" subgroups; ultimately, as he testified in his writing, this is a step toward the ideal of having but "one box on federal forms that simply reads: 'American'." The Right's support for multiracialism, however, largely derives its opposition to color-conscious civil rights laws (it is not opposed to being conscious about color when it suits its own agenda).

The stated support of multiracialism by George Will and Ward Connerly is closely linked to their opposition to color-conscious programs, and in particular, to affirmative action.²⁹ The pro-multiracialism and anti-Affirmative Action activism on the Right are closely linked; this link is most directly visible in the rhetoric and activism of Ward Connerly. Connerly's successful efforts to pass California Proposition 209 and his failed efforts on both the California Proposition 54, as well as including "multiracial" on University of California forms, are, in his mind, one project.³⁰ The organizations he has lead, the American Civil Rights Institute and the Racial Privacy Initiative, each represent the dual directions of his anti-civil rights color-blind agenda.³¹

Connerly, along with other black conservatives (e.g., Thomas Sowell and Shelby Steele), disagrees with the principle of race-consciousness that has been securely part of the black freedom struggle since Du Bois's "The Conservation of Races." For Connerly, and other neoconservatives, appeals to race and racism are less explanations of non-white social disadvantage rather, than obstacles to assimilation and excuses for individual and group failure. Color-blindness, understood as strict racial neutrality, then, is a remedy as well as ideal; it is a remedy for the many ways that race and appeals to racism have plagued communities of color, espe-

cially Latino/as and African Americans.³² It is amusing, then, that Connerly and his allies appeal to the very tool they disparage: they demand that government institutions be color-conscious, that is, of multiracialism, to achieve the general eradication of all racial categories. As Gingrich expressed it, multiracialism is the path to the singular communal conception of “American.”

The Gingrich-Connerly example displays how multiracialism converges with naïve versions of color-blindness. Multiracialism, in some forms, is simply hostile to the collection of any racial data. As an element of that anti-race hostility, it may obfuscate the importance of race by falsely signifying the end of racism. Beyond such political posturing, multiracialism may contravene civil rights programs by obfuscating the census count of traditional racial categories; likewise, it may deny those groups members and thus lessen their political clout and be utilized as a step toward color-blindness in law and policy.³³ Beyond, though, mere frightful possibilities, is the present fact that the Racial Privacy Initiative (RPI) was explicitly used to support the end of race-conscious policies, such as affirmative action.

Just as with the browning of America, Multiracialism may seem at first glance to run counter to color-blindness; it is, after all, about the recognition of the proliferation of colors. Yet precisely because of this proliferation, opponents of color-conscious law and policy find in the multiracial movement ideological support for naïve versions of color-blindness.

PERSONAL RACISM

The initial complaint against multiracialism is that personal racism motivates the adoption of the identity. Those who would adopt and declare that identity are doing so because of their racist beliefs against the non-white communities whom they are associated with through genealogy. The motivating racist beliefs may involve beliefs, explicitly or unconsciously held, that the relevant non-white groups are inferior or antipathetic.³⁴ Likewise, if a nondoxastic model of racism is the guide, the racist belief plus the discriminatory act of choosing a “multiracial” identity (a label that is either inherently racist or has such effects) is what makes its adoption racist.³⁵

There is little evidence for the charge of explicit personal racism although some critics offer anecdotal evidence gathered from the ill-considered remarks of a few of the principle figures of the multiracial movement.³⁶ Certainly, personal racism was part of the psychological dynamics of those who participated in passing, an activity and choice that can be ascribed to what has been called internalized racism. It is unwarranted,

however, to read the site-specific motivations of those who passed, and who are still passing, into the current multiracial movement.

A response to this reply points to the function of multiracialism: i.e., to open what Deglar called the “mulatto escape hatch,” thus providing an individual solution to racism, and reinforcing racism (how it does so is dependent on the site).³⁷ If a person is not already white, then it is better to be mixed than not; similarly, multiracial identity reinforces the social racist belief that it is better to be partially white than non-white.

That multiracial identity functions this way, however, is not sufficient to charge self-declaring multiracial individuals with personal racism. Nonetheless, insofar as the declaration of multiracial identity discriminates against non-white groups, we can hold multiracial individuals and such movements accountable for their participation in social and institutional racist harm.

SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

The symbiosis of multiracialism with racism is displayed in four ways: First, multiracial identities exist because race theories have constructed non-white identities as inherently inferior and antipathetic. Second, it provides an individual solution to racist oppression that not only fails to question racist social structure, but also depends and profits from that structure. Third, it is a vehicle of individual and communal declaration that reinforces all three types of racism. Fourth, it sets up a multiracial group—the colored or mestizo/as—as a buffer zone that protects whiteness by ensconcing it within a protective class of brown folk who seek white privilege via the mulatto escape hatch.³⁸

These claims are thought to be supported by referencing the history of passing in the United States and multiracial identity in South African and Brazil. If multiracialism functions in any of these four ways, then it is certainly accurate to accuse it of supporting social and institutional racism. The problem with this objection, though, is that there is no evidence that any of these four processes are occurring in the United States on a level that is comparable to Brazil or South Africa.³⁹ While there may be, even today, non-whites who chose to pass as white, today’s passing is not like yesteryear’s: being white need not involve the absolute denial of all non-white ancestry. All the same, passing in the United States, or the self-declaration of multiracial identity, hardly adds up to a “buffer zone.”

The charge of social and institutional racism can still be pressed against the multiracial movement by detailing how the movement may play into the hands of conservatives opposed to civil rights legislation by supporting color-blind policy, law, and judicature. Harold McDougall, director of the Washington Bureau of the NAACP, gave a clear form of this charge at the 1998 hearings on Federal Measures of Race and Ethnic-

ity and the Implications for the 2000 Census, held by the subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology. McDougall concentrated his objection on the effects that the introduction of a “multiracial” category may have on the census and the deleterious effects that would follow for the national civil rights agenda. According to McDougall’s testimony, “Census data aggregated in its present form, respecting historically protected categories, has been used:

- to enforce requirements of the Voting Rights Act;
- to review State redistricting plans;
- to collect and present population and population characteristics data, labor force data, education data, and vital and health statistics;
- to monitor discrimination in the private sector and to establish, evaluate programs;
- to monitor and enforce the Fair Housing Act; and
- to monitor environmental degradation in communities of color.”⁴⁰

This work is not done, as McDougall forcefully demonstrated, and non-convoluted census date is integral to this effort. McDougall’s list is but a summary of the important work done with race statistics the census gathers. Representative Stephen Horn’s (R-CA) opening statement at that hearing lists some thirty-four programs, stretching from the Education department to the Justice department.⁴¹ The laws involved include the most important civil rights legislation in the history of this country. These programs are extremely important for insuring, maintaining, and extending civil rights to many Americans—they should not be toyed with for the mere self-indulgence of the multiracial identity.

It is important to note that the main de facto leadership of the multiracial movement voiced strong support for the history and pursuit of civil rights for all persons of color. Indeed, McDougall worked with AMEA, Project Race, and Hapa to lend support to the “check-all-that-apply” option over the unified “multiracial” box option. The testimony of the leadership from the AMEA, Project Race, and Hapa categorically denounced the idea that their movement strives for anything like the color-caste systems in South Africa or Brazil.⁴²

THREAT AND RECOGNITION

Traditional non-white communities did not lose a significant amount of their populations because of the decision by the Census Bureau to collect multiracial data, nor has this data convoluted the collection of data of the traditional races in the United States. What has occurred is that we now know that a significant number of Americans consider themselves multi- or bi-racial persons.⁴³ The recognition of multiracial persons in the na-

tional census extends a challenge to various institutions across all governmental levels: shall local institutions, if they collect racial data, additionally count multiracial persons?

The reasons proposed to arrest the spread of the counting of multiracial persons parallel the general objections against the inclusion of a “multiracial” category in the national census. Local, institutional arguments against the spread of counting multiracial persons are tied to local concerns, however, in addition to being vulnerable to the rebuttals discussed above, these arguments suffer from serious practical problems that are created by the urge to altogether evade the issue of multiracial presence.

Ward Connerly’s failed attempt to have a multiracial category added to the University of California’s admission forms pointedly illustrates the dynamics around local worries about multiracialism. Regent Ward Connerly, during the fall of 2004, proposed to the UC regents that the university add a “multiracial” and “multiethnic” category to its admissions forms. He argued that this category was needed to recognize both the identity of multiracial students and demographic changes in society that are reflected in the student population.⁴⁴ Fresh on the heels of Connerly’s failed Proposition 52, this move was motivated by his color-blindness-multiracial consciousness agenda.

Significantly, in opposition to Connerly’s proposal, the American MultiEthnic Association, Hapa Issues Forum, and the Mavin Foundation released a joint declaration against Connerly’s proposal. They supported the University of California’s decade-long policy of allowing students to check “one or more” racial or ethnic category on admissions forms.⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the opposition of these groups to Connerly’s color-blindness-multiracial consciousness agenda was not covered or given emphasis in the press coverage of the event. The opposition of those national groups to Connerly’s proposal belies the oppositions that are too frequently drawn between multiracialism and the traditional civil rights agenda. Multiracialism, as imagined by the most visible and representative activist organizations, is not a threat to backward-looking race-conscious law and social policy.

Despite their opposition to Connerly’s suspicious proposal, multiracial advocacy groups do want the number of multiracial individuals counted. They agree with Connerly on that single issue; their support, however, for being counted does not imply that they want their numbers removed from the counts of the traditional racial and ethnic groups, which is precisely the result that Connerly intended. The University of California allows students to “check one or more” racial and ethnic boxes on their admission forms, but it does not count the number of students who check more than one box. Opposition to such a count is based in the same fears and recriminations that have already been covered. The ends of race-conscious reparative or rectificatory policies do not justify the

refusal to count multiracial students, especially if such a count does not put the numbers for underrepresented minorities at risk. Refusal to count is tantamount to a refusal to recognize, and that failure of recognition is both morally and politically unjustified, and it is ineffective.

The refusal to count multiracial persons is simply absurd. If the worry is the loss of populations from traditional racial and ethnic groups, not counting multiracial persons will not stop the loss. Those who want to flee the traditional categories are not stopped, in this age of self-reporting, by denying access to a multiracial option on the national census or on admission forms: if they want to leave they can either resist the checking one box or they can take the radical option of passing.

Second, refusing to count multiracial persons does not stop the critics of race-conscious policies from using multiracialism as a divisive tool. Such critics as Connerly will not cease to say that, for example, affirmative action in higher education is unjustified because those whom we identify as “black” or “Asian” or “Latino” are not simply black or Asian or Latino. Counting multiracial persons exposes what the enemies of civil rights always knew: that there is a high-degree of mixing between the socially-labeled races, and that the children that have resulted are very aware of how they arrived in the world. The enemies of civil rights, at one point, hated that fact, now they seek to use it by claiming that few Americans are truly eligible for race-conscious programs. Indeed, Connerly and other opponents of race-conscious programs accuse the “civil-rights industry” of hiding the truth it fears. Not counting multiracial persons will not stop those critics, and simply amounts to a cheap and transparent cover-up. Such tactics are poisonous; they alienate multiracial individuals—a situation that completely contradicts the desire to hold multiracial persons within traditional groups—and they reek of moral and political weakness.

Further, the self-declaration of multiracial identity does not bear on the central questions at the heart race-conscious rectificatory or reparative justice. Do the generations who have suffered because of racial discrimination deserve remediation, rectification, or reparation for the crimes of racism? To what extent are the children of interracial unions qualified for these programs? It is on these grounds that the opponents of color-blind law and social policy should meet its proponents. The self-declaration of multiracial identity does not affect the essence of these questions. A mass movement of individuals asserting their multiracial identity is not necessary for multiracial genealogy to cause trouble for race-conscious laws and social policies.

Not counting multiracial persons is to act like the little Dutch boy with his thumb in the dike: we pretend to protect the status quo from unwelcome demographic changes that will fundamentally transform the life of race—with its benefits and flaws—in America. Attempts to stymie the recognition, and even the self-identification of multiracial persons, are

politically, morally, and practically flawed. The instinct to stymie this movement is rooted in the perception that multiracialism challenges race-conscious law and policy. As long as multiracial organizations act responsibly, multiracialism in itself should not threaten backward-looking arguments for race-conscious laws and policies.

Nonetheless, multiracialism does threaten popular conceptions of the ends of forward-looking race-conscious laws and policies. Forward-looking policies are concerned with nurturing social and institutional conditions that support some level of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity—a condition that is desirable for its beneficial effects on institutional ends and culture. It is significant for this conversation that the only grounds that affirmative action is justifiable, according to the Supreme Court's decision in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, are forward-looking ones. Insofar as conceptions of forward-looking race-conscious policies and laws are predicated on received, albeit contentious, visions of racial and ethnic integration paired with cultural pluralism (or perhaps even nationalism), as opposed to assimilation or amalgamation, then multiracialism is a threat to the ends of those conceptions. Multiracial does not make diversity impossible, but it does challenge preconceived notions of diversity.

Forward-looking arguments for diversity seem to assume that diversity is accomplished by having some portion of each traditional group represented in institutions. It stresses what has been called external diversity, which its critics lampoon as oddly zoological, or worse as Epcot-center-style representations of diversity.⁴⁶ Multiracialism undermines the simplistic idea that an individual is identified and represents one racial group. The multiracial movement stresses the micro-diversity that exists within families and communities, or what can be called internal diversity.

Multiracial activism, as seen on the campuses of the University of California and the California State Universities, should continue to support the ends of backward-looking race-conscious policies. Likewise, they should, in principle, support the larger ends of forward-looking programs without backing down and acquiescing to indifference. Universities and other institutions should allow the populations they serve to "check more than one box." They should also count those who have checked more than one box; they should provide statistics on multiracial students, staff, and faculty (likewise the Department of Education should follow suit).

The reasons for counting the multiracial populations begin with empirical concerns, but are founded in moral and political demands for recognition.⁴⁷ Multiracial organizations should demand recognition, and with that recognition they should forcefully push their respective visions of racial justice and harmony, in the knowledge that when such groups look forward to the future they will necessarily trouble American preconceptions of what racial justice looks like.

REPAIR

Multiracial persons find themselves born into a world riven by racial fault lines, a situation they frequently feel they carry within their bodies and identities. In reaction to racially broken societies, some have indulged in the romantic idea that multiracialism, amalgamationism, mestizaje, or some other conceptualization of ethnic or racial hybridity, is the conceptual key, or worldview that can repair racial faultlines. The idea is simplistic and messianic, and helps itself to the fallacy that a new unity equates harmony. Likewise, this argument has been forwarded in favor of multiracial or mestizo consciousness, seemingly a way of knowing and interacting with the world that does not other and that either accepts or synthesizes differences. In the extreme, this power has been identified with multiracials themselves as some messianic “cosmic race” that will sweep away the old divisions through their very existence. These romantic notions have been roundly criticized, in part by merely pointing out that mestizo nations have hardly achieved their touted values of racial democracy.⁴⁸

Yet multiracials can be said, without making them into a brown army of interracial messiahs, of having a particular role in interracial repair. All the same, we should be extremely reluctant to claim that multiracial identity is an identity called to repair. “Calling” specific categories of people to noble missions is too rhetorical. “Calling” multiracial individuals and groups to repair is not as satisfying as simply compelling them to attend the demands of social justice. Of course, one way to compel multiracial persons to attend to these matters is to not allow them to “escape” the traditional categories; thus forcing them to work against the forces of racism and oppression that afflict the traditional categories. That strategy, though, as has been argued above, is equally ineffective as “calling” them to anti-racist struggle.

Psychologists and sociologists friendly to the claims of the multiracial movement have rejected conceptions of multiracial identity as pathological or “broken” identities; they are, of course, breaking with the long-tradition of seeing multiracial persons as “mixed-up,” as “marginal” or “tragic.”⁴⁹ Asserting that multiracials are thrust in social conditions that require interracial and interethnic repair is not a return to those images of pathology. However, we need not entirely break with that tradition. Multiracial identity is a painful and difficult identity, and its richness as an experience is linked to its traditional problems and struggles.⁵⁰

All the same, it is preposterous to say to multiracial persons, “you are called to repair relationships that you did not break.” It is tantamount to burdening children born out of wedlock with being bastards, and then asserting that they are responsible for rebuilding their legitimacy. Nonetheless, multiracialism is burdened with its special measure of responsibility to repair the ruptures around race in their lives, families, and

communities. Multiracial individuals are thrust into brokenness, into the ruptures that marks their condition. They can react like libertarians and assert their absolute autonomy and disconnection, or they can acknowledge the broken world that surrounds them. In the record of multiracial activism, there is evidence of both kinds of reactions; indeed, the former reaction is modeled by the actions of *Interrace* and Project Race, and the latter we find modeled in the actions of the University of California multiracial activists.

Turning to the idea of repair as an organizing principle for multiracial identity helps to transform the discussion of multiracialism from individualist to communal, political, and social. Repair is about self among others. The work of repair—moral, political, social, and psychological repair—will refer to the social and institutional concerns that haunt the assertion of multiracial identity. Given that traditional civil rights organizations stress the continuing need for distributive justice, and rectification and reparation for past racial harms, dialogues with those groups about social justice will be driven by those traditional concerns.

Further, beyond redistribution, rectification, and reparation, the work of repair is restorative.⁵¹ Restorative justice is a form of justice that has received too little attention from traditional legal, moral, and political theorists. The truth and reconciliation committees that have occurred in South Africa, the former Yugoslavia, and now in Rwanda and Burundi, are examples of attempts at restorative justice; those proceedings precede or work in concert with criminal and distributive justice. Restorative public discussions of race in the United States tend to be more *ad hoc* and are intermingled with criminal or civil proceedings (e.g., the prosecution in 2005 of Edgar Ray Killen, who was accused of murdering three civil-rights workers in Mississippi in 1964). In future restorative conversations, multiracialism should play a central role—it marks the boundaries of what needs restoration (e.g., retelling the central myths about the birth of our nation).

Understanding multiracialism identity as “called” to repair, and being born into conditions that demand repair, will confront the nation with the need to have discourses of restoration, rather than merely discourses of distribution and separation. Discourses of restoration are disturbing, and have the potential to go all the way to the bone of our racial history. One of the interesting aspects of restorative justice is that restorative dialogues do not, and cannot, have as an end to restore people to their pre-trauma conditions. Restorative justice seeks to heal and to bring victims to a new image, a post-traumatic image of themselves.⁵² Likewise, multiracialism as repair will not bring the nation or groups back to their pre-rupture condition. Multiracial persons should not have to heal themselves into oblivion. Rather, through a reflection of our racial history, mediated through our collective experience of love during times of racism, and

racism during times of love, we are led to an image of restoration and image of ourselves that we have not yet imagined.

Turning to repair as an organizing principle for multiracial identity, experience, and organization also aids to concretize the political and moral burdens that multiracialism needs to commit to if it is to resist the traps of racial privilege. In “Being and Being Mixed-Race” I argued that multiracial groups and individuals must fulfill specific conditions if it is not going to be politically and morally irresponsible:

- A rejection of naïve popular conceptions of race and biological conceptions of race.
- An understanding of race as a social category made real by social forces.
- An understanding that race, via racism, is a mode of oppression: Social status, privileges, and burdens are parsed out according to a racial hierarchy that places whiteness at the top and darkness at the bottom.
- A rejection of, and a commitment to resist, racial hierarchy and white privilege.⁵³

Those are fine conditions, but they do not place specific obligations on multiracial persons and organizations. They can be said to apply to all persons, multiracial or not. Specific or special obligations to commit to anti-racist principles and actions for multiracials are called for because of their experience and their place in the racialization process.

Multiracial persons and organizations are uniquely situated to cause or perpetuate racist harm, as their behavior is linked to the well-being of those who are vulnerable to racism. Multiracial individuals, through their interactions with the forces for racialization and the network of existent racial projects, have a direct effect on monoracial lives.

This call to repair and restoration is not foreign to the multiracial experience. Again, the identity is one born into brokenness, and assertions of multiracial identity have consistently evoked themes of personal, familial, and social repair.⁵⁴ In particular, multiracial identity has been justified on the grounds of familial repair, that we need to recognize all the members of interracial families.

Specifically, appeals to recognize “white mothers” has become a contentious point in so much of the discussion. It has been taken as evidence of the motivating desire to “escape blackness.” Much credence should not be given to those who make such claims. There are nasty gender and race politics in those arguments, and they are largely *ad hominem* attacks. The push for multiracial identity, according to a few critics, is driven by the interests of white mothers of non-white children; those interests, accordingly, demonstrates the multiracial movement’s relationship to white privilege. Such objections are superficial and ignore the thick rela-

tionships of family belonging that are nurtured rather than rejected in the post-civil rights era.

Nonetheless, we can turn to the claims of family belonging to ground a responsible and reparative multiracial politics. The demand to recognize, if you will, our mothers is a moral response, itself grounded in our obligations to care for those who are connected to us by bonds of love. This response, as has been elucidated by the proponents of the ethics of care, is political. In that light, multiracialism is caught, like Antigone, between the demands of political communities and communities of familial love.

The way out of this trap is to affirm the obligations that multiracial persons have to the memories of their mothers. To refuse that obligation, again, is a repetition of the ruptures of interracial intimacy that marks the history of race and multiracialism. Nonetheless, the experience, internal structure, and history of multiracialism implicitly demand that it confront the dynamics of racial privilege. This demand is the result in our movement toward our mothers. Our obligation to our mothers is a call to moral interconnection, and not an invitation to *laissez-faire*, disconnected politics.

An individualistic libertarian conception of absolutely autonomous identity is the reaction that I often receive from students when I confront them with the racist dynamics of multiracialism: "This is my identity, I am not causing direct harm to monoracial groups, and I have a right to truthfully identify myself." Individualism, though, fails to meet our moral demands to our mothers, and our familial obligations. If obligation to the memory of mothers is going to be the ground for multiracial identity, then other obligations follow.

The other obligations are illustrated by the comic, sometime cynical, Cuban and Puerto Rican saying about family racial identity and the hidden grandmother: "Those who aren't descended from the peoples of the Congo are descended from the Carabalí; and for he who claims he knows no such thing, where are you hiding your grandmother?"⁵⁵ That is exactly the question I would put to multiracial individuals, as anyone else, who claims a radically individualistic conception of their social identities: Where is your grandmother? What of your obligation to the memory of your mother's mother?

The assertion of obligation to the memory of our mothers links us to obligations to the memories of our African American, Asian, Latina, Native American, and Anglo grandmothers—to their welfare of them and their children. This is a special obligation that multiracial children must face that is grounded in their experience and family ties. The demand for the recognition of multiracial identity, then, ought to be grounded in recognition of their particular responsibilities (psychological, social, economic, and political) to their mothers and their grandmothers.

The “don’t ask, don’t tell” approach to multiracialism is related to the general evasion of discussions of interracial intimacy in public discourses of racial justice. Public discussions of racial justice have been restricted to public affairs for practical purposes, so as to not enflame opponents of racial equality or to run counter to the endogamous or nationalist values of some parts of the civil rights coalition. One result of this relegation is the shock that has greeted assertions of multiracial identity. Yet, multiracialism is just a part, a highly visible part, of interracial intimacy—the very topic that was ignored and dismissed in the first place.

The continued ignoring of interracial intimacy in the time of the browning of America comes from a stubborn desire to continue with resistance as usual and the fear that the baseline of racial justice has been shifted without traditional claims ever being met—this is the demands of justice part of the black-white binary that was discussed in chapter three. Yet, it is a dangerous strategy, because its continuance will make present claims based on the legacy and categories of the civil rights movement seem irrelevant to the lives of a changing American public.

In this context of silence about interracial intimacy, multiracialism represents a breakout of dissentious discourse, not only against racial categories, but also against the refusal to think about racial progress and justice within the private sphere. Multiracialism, then, is a gateway to the other submerged controversies around interracial intimacy that ethical and political theory has likewise ignored. This is especially true for individuals, who are just as likely not to be multiracial, who engage multiracialism as a starting point for thinking about the myths, secrets, and lies of their racial family identity. So much of the interest about multiracialism, especially from the young, is about their relationships with the interracial dynamics of the modern American family that contains members that have different racial identities: half-siblings, whether recognized by the family or not, adopted siblings, stepparents, and extended family.

The injustices of the American history of race are deeply related to conflicts over interracial intimacy. The way we have loved and failed to love across the color-line needs to be a part of any reasonable vision of racial reconciliation. “Don’t ask, don’t tell” policies about multiracial is yet another sad attempt to keep discussions of racial justice in the public sphere, away from the private, and away from the potentially troubling topic of interracial intimacy. However, discussions of racial justice, progress, harmony and so on cannot be so restricted. It is precisely the racial ruptures in our private lives that must be addressed if we are to achieve societal meaningful racial justice in the public sphere, and thus societal repair.

Challenging monoracial family identity and, more to the point, the reproduction of racial identities and divisions that attends the monoracial family is not enough. All hope does not lie in new happy, healthy multi-racial families. They are not our political salvation. Integrated families

may come without substantial distributive justice or serious anti-racist policies effected. Nonetheless, the revolution of the American family, and the dismantling of racist and nationalist concepts of family belonging is an important condition of social justice. Revolutionizing, moreover, the American family will transform us in ways that will lead us to an image of ourselves that we may not welcome or recognize, but we cannot be so arrogant as to presume the face of justice before us.

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POSTSCRIPT (2015)

Chasing Mixed-Race Ghosts

My mixed-race story began abroad, at my birth in the city of Olongapo near the Subic Bay Naval Station in the Philippines in 1969. The base and the economies created around it brought sailors and marines, who were looking for entertainment, sex, and love together with locals looking for

economic opportunities. This had been the case since its founding by the Spanish Empire in 1884, then as a United States base that played a role in America's battles in the Pacific during World War II and the Vietnam War (I was born during the latter war), through its closure in 1992. The base was at the same time infamous as a mark of the Philippines' colonial domination by the United States, for its environmental damages, for the sex trade that operated around it, and the Amerasian children (many of whom were abandoned by their American fathers) created through the social connections the base made possible. I was one of those kids, and, despite being an American by birth, had to be naturalized as a citizen. Fortunately, I was taken to the other side, the American side, of the base's fence and then on to an early life of middle-class opportunities and problems. My fortune was entirely dependent on the considerable efforts of my mother and her marriage to an American who subsequently became my stepfather.

I have written about this before, in "Falling into the Olongapo,"⁵⁶ but I mention it here because I, at middle-age and mid-career, no longer feel the need to assume an objective academic stance on the topic and feel free to admit that my interest in the topic was initially motivated by my personal history, and, as a philosopher of race who has benefited from feminist defenses of embodied knowledge, I realized that a seemingly objective stance toward the topic of mixed-race identity limited as much as it aided my analysis. My personal investment in mixed-race involved the usual American confusions about racial identity (i.e., Am I Asian-American, black, white, other, or nothing at all?). But it also was just as much about chasing after the ghost of an absent biological father that I believed, particularly in my adolescence, would solve the enigma of my identity and belonging. This pained and personal story is also a global one, caught up in war, colonialism, immigration, and was multi-lingual and multi-ethnic from the start. Narratives of interracial and trans-national belonging, for that reason, have appealed to me for their ability to shed light on my experience by placing it within a global historical context. Lines such as, "Am I to be cursed forever with becoming somebody else on the way to myself?" from Audre Lorde's "Change of Season" have seemed crammed with meaning. My mother was a *mestiza* Filipina, my ghost father's ancestry was its own mixed-up white-black-and-whatever American story, and my white stepfather was largely Swedish-American. This story parallels the story of who knows how many others in the United States; mixed race has always been and remains a story of global movement and contact, and the study of mixed race identity and experience benefits from the expansion into what is now called global mixed-race studies.

Mixed race, with its global permutations, and in the age of the brown-ing of America, troubles nationalized discussions of race that are over-determined by census race-talk and its narrow categories (even with its

relatively new multiracial option).⁵⁷ It pushes discussions of American mixed-raced identities beyond the usual concerns around black-white racial identity and Native American ancestry. It adds complexity to debates about the meaning of race or its ontological status insofar as these debates are concerned with ordinary, everyday, or folk race-talk or concepts. What counts as ordinary race-talk when everyday people are increasingly tied to places, peoples, and practices whose race-talk does not match or is even inconsistent with American racial categories or practices?⁵⁸ Mixed-race identities contain legions and are collectively a specter that hangs over attempts to pin down any one meaning of race.

Humans were on the move and blending with each other long before the idea of race was invented. For most of the existence of our species, other gathering concepts that demarcated kinds of people were prominent. Race, however, is a distinctively modern concept that followed transmigrations tied to modern global political developments including nationalism, the growth of global trade, and new ways of conceptualizing human biological, religious, and cultural variety. The effects of these developments on the lives of individuals in most nations have been singularly profound.

A couple of these effects, global dispersement and transformation, are illustrated by Christopher's Cozier's painting "castaway." The image is of a black male figure afloat in a green ocean speckled with blue and above him is a sky of white, black, and blue. Impaled on his back is a mast with a rectangular sail that is also an antique map of Africa, and part of Europe and Asia, filled with the wind, and topped with a small triangular black pennant.⁵⁹ As Cozier states of the image, we are "submerged but also mobile," traveling through layers of history, memory, culture, and geography through Africa, Europe, Asian, the Caribbean, and the Americas. On the move, we are also half-drowned, but alive. The phantom-like figure evokes Marx and Engels's diagnosis of modernity in the *Communist Manifesto* that "all that is solid melts into air."⁶⁰ Yet, not all of those who have been moved through history have been melted away by the forces of progress, as in the telling of Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay *Fate*,

We know in history what weight belongs to race. We see the English, French, and Germans planting themselves on every shore and market of America and Australia, and monopolizing the commerce of these countries. We like the nervous and victorious habit of our own branches of the family. We follow the step of the Jew, of the Indian, of the Negro . . . see the shades of the picture. The German and Irish millions, like the Negro, have a great deal of guano in their destiny. They are ferried over the Atlantic, and carted over America, to ditch and to drudge, to make corn cheap, and then to lie down prematurely to make a spot of green grass on the prairie.⁶¹

In the shadow of Emerson's cruel (and false) prediction, and within an essay celebrating the exceptional individual who resists fate, I can't help but compare Cozier's castaway to Walter Benjamin's angel of history, who while being blown forward by the storm called progress, glances backward and mourns the damage in his wake.⁶² Yes, the castaway moves forward, but the women and men he stands in for not only glance backward, they are marked, impaled with history. And, in contrast to Emerson's condemnation of the castoff as compost, they survive through mestasaje, mestiſſage, creolization, and grit.

As modern, albeit contradictory, confusing, and downright messy identities, mixed-race identities were born out of the modern impulse to categorize and control. Nothing is more indicative of this practice than the Spanish New-World practice of inventing special terms for different types of people, or *castas*, that resulted from the combinations of the groups they recognized: Spanish, Crillo, Mestizo, Castizo, Mulatto, Morisco, Albino, Coyote, Lobo, Zambo.⁶³ The resulting eighteenth-century paintings that documented this practice are remarkable and presage the American "black, mulatto, octoroon, and quadroon," and the South African "white, black, coloreds, and Asian" that were about social categorization, monitoring, control, and domination. This is a fundamental part of the history of mixed-race identity, and it has led some critics to rightfully see mixed-race identities as redolent of this racist past and as tools of racial division and domination (e.g., in the concern that the proposed adoption of a mixed-race category or option on the U.S. census was part of a conservative political project to roll back and undermine civil rights policies). Some also felt that such identities were false or illusory (if races are not real then mixed-race identities are doubly silly), redundant (American non-white racial categories are *ipso facto* mixed), or asserted in bad faith (mixed race identities are dependent, continue, and support anti-black, anti-indigenous, or even simply anti-dark, racist ideas, beliefs, and attitudes). What is wrong, the critics asked, with simply being black? Mixed-race seemed dishonest, a modern version of the practice of passing, and as such retrograde and dangerous, especially in the American context, with its focus on the black-white binary.⁶⁴

The problem was that, in the post-1960s world, not clearly belonging to, or being identified with, any race or ethnic group became itself a social problem, a loss in social status. In the shadow of the civil rights movement and its legal advances, with the resulting opening up of opportunities, integration, and intermarriage, the rise of muscular-assertions of ethnic and racial pride, and the end of racist immigration quotas in 1964, many individuals and groups wanted and needed their version of *Black Is Beautiful* and the politicized pride that came with it. Being between—neither this nor that—would not do for personal, social, and political reasons, and of course there was money to be made from this new target audience and from using their adaptable and broadly appealing images.

This new, intentionally self-aware and disorganized group, formed from patches of other recognized groups, rightfully sought tolerance, recognition, and affirmation. Plus, many in this movement put little stock in the one-drop rule, the black-white binary, or America's basic racial categories. Mixed-race individuals saw themselves as multiracial and multiethnic; they were variations of Asian Americans (black-Asian, Asian-white, or Asian-Latino), or Latino/Hispanic, which is a radicalized ethnic category that already included the other groups, and per the *castas* example, had its own long history that stretched back beyond 1492. And, to boot, these new self-avowedly mixed-race individuals and groups did not like being thought of as "mixed-up," tragic, or attached necessarily to bad biological concepts of race; so much so that some groups, such as UC Berkeley's "Mixed" student organization dropped references to race, or chose an alternative label, such as "Hapa." The relatively recent collection of photographs by Kip Fullbeck of mixed-race individuals that pairs black and white portraits of individuals (focusing on the face, and bare neck and shoulders) with short, handwritten testimonials about who they were stands as a prime example of the expressive-individualistic turn of the mixed-race movement.⁶⁵

My approach to these and related concerns was laid out in the articles "Being and Being Mixed-Race," "Mixed-Race Looks," "Fevered Desires and Interracial Intimacies," in *Jungle Fever*, and in the chapters "Interracial Intimacies" and "Responsible Mixed-Race Politics" from my book, *The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice*, which is collected in this volume.⁶⁶ I sought to defend the idea that "mixed race" was a real identity, or one with social presence and effect, that was, in the usual academic lingo, socially constructed. This was largely consistent with K. Anthony Appiah's argument that racial labels are social ascriptions, "identifications," rather than "identities" with some stable material essence or clear linguistic referent. I also defended the mixed race identity and its movement against the ethical and political objections above. I stand by those defenses, although I want to clarify that my critical analysis of mixed race identities was always more concerned about the social role, value, and meaning of mixed race than its ontological status.

What I would add to that analysis now, is to stress how mixed-race identification relates to what Appiah calls the ethics of identity.⁶⁷ Self-ascriptions of mixed race are in part reactions to changing social conditions; those changes opened up opportunities for new forms of identity. Individuals and families expressed their individuality in the usual late-twentieth-century form of claiming a label, taking pride in that label, and then seeking social and legal recognition. Mixed race is one of many modern badges of honor. The label is an iteration of expressive individuality, and sometimes of possessive individuality. When thinking about mixed race, I cannot help but think about first-person assertions that individuals have the right, in proper Lockean or in libertarian form, to

name themselves, to claim their identities; how else should we think of Maria P. P. Root's "Bill of Rights for Mixed Race Peoples"?⁶⁸ These assertions should be understood as modern liberal claims of personal autonomy and authenticity, which taps into the emergence of expressive individualism of 1960s counter-cultural movements, but turns on its head that era's rhetoric of group-based autonomy and authenticity. Mixed race is indicative of modern expressive individualism; it is another version of Walt Whitman's "I am large, I contain multitudes" but now in the context of the twenty-first century and the browning of America.

This analysis is not meant to put a special onus on mixed-race identity or to accuse it of a special sort of commodification; recall Marx and Engels's categorical claim that "all that is solid melts into air." All modern identities (nearly all "identifications") are caught in the same thrilling yet destructive grip of modernity. My earlier analyses did not benefit from fairly recent and excellent sociological and critical theoretical analyses of mixed-race identities, so they did not stress enough the larger transformative social and economic pressures that made identifying as mixed race or identifying with mixed-race others possible.⁶⁹ I did, however, argue for the possibility of reconciliation and understanding, and that accusations that mixed-race identities were disloyal, racist, or otherwise destructive of present cultural forms were largely misguided.

Behind this position was John Stuart Mill's conception of individuality, with its stress on the value of experiments in living, and Josiah Royce's view of loyalty as loyalty to loyalty rather than some predetermined or scripted object of commitment. Modern individuals in the face of plural values and plural societies develop their attachments and loyalties according to their broadly social and cultural backgrounds, but their commitments will also be shaped by their individuality and personal preferences.⁷⁰ In light of these influences, I called for mixed-race individuals and groups to embrace and defend their mixed-race identities as well as a responsible politic that eschewed racial privilege and accepted anti-racist principles.

This was an essentially liberal approach, but there are, however, other relevant nineteenth-century (and early twentieth-century) approaches to individuality, such as Friedrich Nietzsche's. This is a vision driven not by responsible experimentation attuned to not harming others, but by an individuality understood as exceptional, as a work of art, and drawing on destructive as well as creative passions. This is a conception of mixed-race that critics are right to impugn with negative intentions. Such expressions of mixed-race identity are not responsible; they regard personal identity the way a libertarian regards property: as possessed and rightfully transferable (or transformable), with little regard for the effects on third parties.

This sort of expression of mixed-race identity can all too easily play into the hands of the proponents of post-racialism. The rise of mixed-race

identity, along with the other demographic trends that account for the browning of America, are what is fueling the claim that we have entered a post-racial age, or the separate claim that post-racialism is an ideal situation where the bonds of racial identity and ascription have loosened. The quick response here is offered by an avalanche of sociological facts that the United States is not in a post-racial age, and careful skepticism about post-racialism as an ideal. My view on this is that post-racialism is unreasonably idealistic, and it offers a horribly regressive path that will not get us to the desired end. I say all of this as an addendum to where I left off in "Responsible Mixed-Race Politics." My recommendations remain the same—understanding but not succumbing to the feelings of disappointment and disloyalty that others have about mixed-race identity, responsible anti-racist politics, and acting in solidarity with dominated groups—but I no longer think that reconciliation with all the critics of mixed race is possible; their feelings of betrayal and loss cannot be dispersed by arguments alone. We should not be cursed while on the path to ourselves, yet the figure and the path of the castaway should haunt us.

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NOTES

1. "Responsible Mixed Race Politics" is reprinted by permission from *The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice* by Ronald R. Sundstrom, the State University of New York Press ©2008, State University of New York. All rights reserved.

2. I appreciate the semantic edge of "mixed-race" and "mixed-blood" for their confrontational qualities; however, I chose to use "multiracial" rather than "mixed-race" because the former distances itself from the erroneous idea that there are pure, or any, races to mix. Further, there is a growing consensus among multiracial organizations to favor the prefix "multi" because of the negative psychological connotations associated with "mixed," as in, "mixed-up," which parallel the stereotype of the tragic mulatto. "Multracial" does not entirely escape the problems with "mixed race"; nonetheless it serves as useful shorthand for picking out individuals and groups who publicly represent their identity as being multiethnic or multiracial. All persons of modern nations are likely to have multiethnic or multiracial ancestry, but what makes "multracials" special in the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries is their flouting of monoracial identity (sanctioned and imposed by the state and public opinion), and their public representations of themselves as multiracial persons. See my "Being and Being Mixed Race," *Social Theory and Practice* 27 (2001): 285–307.

3. Maria P. P. Root, ed., *The Multiracial Experience* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996).

4. Tanya Kateri Hernandez, "'Multiracial' Discourse: Racial Classifications in an Era of Color-Blind Jurisprudence," *University of Maryland Law Review* 57 (1998): 97–173; Christine B. Hickman, "The Devil and the One Drop Rule: Racial Categories, African Americans, and the U.S. Census," *University of Michigan Law Review* 95 (March, 1997): 1161–1265; and Lisa K. Pomeroy, "Restructuring Statistical Policy Directive No.15: Controversy over Race Categorization and the 2000 Census," *University of Toledo Law Review* 32 (Fall, 2000): 67–87.

5. Ronald R. Sundstrom, "Being and Being Mixed Race," *Social Theory and Practice* 27 (2001): 285–307. In "Being and Being Mixed-Race," I argued that what I then called, mixed-race identity was real, and that it was best conceptualized through the experience of multiracial persons, a phenomenology of multiracial experience. Just as it is a real experience it is likewise one that is not necessarily a racist identity. Nonetheless, multiracialism may be expressed in a personally racist way, and it may be useful to racist social systems or institutions. I proposed, as a response to this challenge, that multiracial individuals have a particular obligation to systematically resist racism and reject white privilege. Unfortunately, my proposal did not place particular moral obligations on mixed-race individuals and the movement. Here I argue for specific obligations based on the ethics of memory.

6. Lewis R. Gordon, "Race, Biraciality, and Mixed Race—in Theory," in *Her Majesty's Other Children: Sketches of Racism from a Neocolonial Age* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997): 51–71; Rainer Spencer, "Assessing Multiracial Identity Theory

and Politics," *Ethnicities* 4:3 (2004): 357–79; and Jon Michael Spencer, *The New Colored People: The Mixed-Race Movement in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997). Gordon's objections to mixed-race identity, in particular, are dripping with disdain, incredulity, and are as whole unhelpful and damaging.

7. When the check all that apply option was approved from the 2000 census, NAACP officials went on a tour of African American churches to discourage African Americans from checking more than the "black" box. For the NAACP, resisting the inclusion of a multiracial category, or the spread of multiracial identity, is a civil-rights issue, and their call on the institution of the black church highlights their position. This strategy, though, is morally questionable as it encourages the equation of multiracial identity with racist betrayal and social injustice, if not sin! Surely, that strategy increased the alienation of self-identifying multiracials individuals and families in those congregations. That tour was hardly a movement of *agape*. See Frank Wu's discussion of multiracialism and the NAACP reaction in his *Yellow* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

8. Naomi Mezey, "Erasure and Recognition: The Census, Race and The National Imagination," *Northwestern University Law Review* 97 (Summer, 2003): 1701–68; and Lisa Tessman, "The Racial Politics of Mixed Race," *The Journal of Social Philosophy* 30:2 (Summer, 1999): 276–94.

9. See *supra* note 2.

10. See chapter 7 for further discussion of interracial sexuality.

11. Karren Baird-Olson, "Colonization, Cultural Imperialism, and the Social Construction of American Indian Mixed-Blood Identity," in *New Faces in a Changing America*, Loretta I. Winters and Herman L. DeBose, eds. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003): 194–221.

12. For a discussion of the historical recognition of multiracial genealogy and experience, see Werner Sollors's *Interracialism* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2000).

13. See *supra* notes 3 and 5.

14. James F. Davis, *Who Is Black?* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

15. See *supra* note 3.

16. Randall Kennedy, *Interracial Intimacies* (New York: Pantheon, 2003).

17. The effects of counting multiracials in the national census, the recognition of multiracialism, and the failure of traditional Civil Rights policy to deal with the browning in America are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

18. Ronald Sundstrom, "Being and Being Mixed Race," *Social Theory and Practice* 27 (2001): 285–307; Kerry Ann Rockquemore and David L. Brunsma. *Beyond Black* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).

19. Werner Sollors, *Interracialism*.

20. See *supra* note 4.

21. See Randall Kennedy's discussion of the Jefferson-Hemings affair in his *Interracial Intimacies*.

22. For such a careful review, see Kim M. Williams's "Multiracialism and The Future of Civil Rights Future," *Daedalus* 134:1 (Winter, 2005): 53–60.

23. For example, see Lisa Jones's *Bulletproof Diva* (New York: Doubleday, 1994).

24. Paul Spickard, "Does Multiraciality Lighten?: Me-Too Ethnicity and the Whiteness Trap," in *New Faces in a Changing America: Multiracial Identity in the 21st Century* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003): 289–300.

25. Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology, of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, House of Representatives, "Hearings on Federal Measures of Race and Ethnicity and the Implications for the 2000 Census," Serial No. 105–57, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998). See also, Michael Lind's *Next American Nation* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

26. *Ibid.*, 661.

27. Susan Graham is the executive director of Project Race. She has been accused of pursuing a multiracial agenda because, as a white mother, she is primarily interested

in passing down white privilege to her mixed-race black-white children. Graham has expressed support for Gingrich as well as some, but not all, of Ward Connerly's projects (she supported Proposition 54). She is in favor of anti-racist social policy, but refuses to support or reject affirmative action. For her positions on Gingrich and Connerly, or for that matter, Democrats and Republicans, see her letters posted on Project Race's website, www.projectrace.com. For typical exaggerated criticisms of Graham, see Spencer's "Assessing Multiracial Identity Theory and Politics."

28. See *supra* note 24, 662.

29. Ward Connerly, *Creating Equal: My Fight Against Race Preferences* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2000), and "A Homecoming, with Too Much Color," *Interracial Voice* (2001), www.webcom.com/~intvoice/connerly.html; and George F. Will, "Melding In America," *Washington Post*, (October 5, 1997): 7.

30. University of California Regents, Committee on Educational Policy, Office of the Secretary, "'Multiracial' Designation on the Undergraduate Admissions Application," RE-52, November 17, 2004.

31. See the website for the RPI, <http://www.racialprivacy.org>, for Connerly's statement to the UC Board of Regents. See, as well, the website for the American Civil Rights Institute, <http://www.acri.org/>, for more of Connerly's statements linking multiracialism and color-blindness. See also *supra* note 21.

32. See *supra* note 28.

33. Tanya Kateri Hernandez, "'Multiracial' Discourse: Racial Classifications in an Era of Color-Blind Jurisprudence," *University of Maryland Law Review* 57 (1998): 97–173.

34. Lawrence Blum, "*I'm Not a Racist, But . . .*" (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

35. J. Angelo Corlett, *Race, Racism, and Reparations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). For a discussion of both Blum and Corlett's theory of racism, see chapter 7 of *The Browning of America*.

36. Tanya Kateri Hernandez, "'Multiracial' Discourse: Racial Classifications in an Era of Color-Blind Jurisprudence," *University of Maryland Law Review* 57 (1998): 97–173; and Rainer Spencer, "Assessing Multiracial Identity Theory and Politics," *Ethnicities* 4:3 (2004): 357–79.

37. Carl N. Degler, *Neither Black Nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1971). See my discussion of the "mulatto escape hatch" in "Being and Being Mixed Race."

38. David Theo Goldberg, "Made in the USA," in *American Mixed Race*, ed. Naomi Zack (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995): 237–56, and *Racial State* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2001).

39. See *supra* note 23.

40. See *supra* 24, 582–83. See also, Lisa K. Pomeroy, "Restructuring Statistical Policy Directive No.15: Controversy over Race Categorization and the 2000 Census," *University of Toledo Law Review* 32 (Fall, 2000): 67–87.

41. See *supra* 24, 6–12

42. Still the public recognition of multiracialism could reinforce popular conceptions of the value of blackness in relation whiteness and so on. In other words, it could lend support to racial hierarchy. This potential is very much there and has been exploited by individuals and organizations, such as advertising agencies. See Kerry Ann Rockquemore and David L. Brunsma, *Beyond Black* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002); and Caroline A. Streeter, "The Hazards of Visibility: Biracial Women, Media Images, and Narratives of Identity," in *New Faces in a Changing America*, Loretta I. Winters and Herman L. DeBose, eds. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003): 301–22.

43. G. Reginald Daniel, *More Than Black?* (Philadelphia: Temple, 2002).

44. University of California Regents, Committee on Educational Policy, Office of the Secretary, "'Multiracial' Designation on the Undergraduate Admissions Application," RE-52, November 17, 2004; and Tanya Shevitz, "Connerly Wants Multi-Race Box on University Admission Applications," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 15, 2004: B2, and "Multiracial Checkbox in Doubt," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 18, 2004: B3.

45. American MultiEthnic Association, Hapa Issues Forum, and MAVIN Foundation, "Open Letter Requesting Support for Petition against Ward Connerly's 'Multiracial/Multiethnic' Category Proposal," October 26, 2004.

46. See Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004), and Walter Benn Michaels, *The Trouble With Diversity* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006).

47. Patrick F. Linehan, "Thinking Outside of the Box: The Multiracial Category and Its Implications for Race Identity Development," *Howard Law Journal* 44 (Fall, 2000): 43–72; Naomi Mezey, "Erasure and Recognition: The Census, Race and The National Imagination," *Northwestern University Law Review* 97 (Summer, 2003): 1701–68; and Lisa Tessman, "The Racial Politics of Mixed Race," *The Journal of Social Philosophy* 30:2 (Summer 1999): 276–94. Multiracialism fundamentally challenges the census, as well as forward-looking conceptions of racial justice. It forces us to think about the various racial and ethnic pressures on the American population, but it need not entail the end of all race counting. As was discussed in chapter 3, the challenge of multiracialism is consistent with attempts to radically rethink the census's race and ethnic categories. See, for example Kenneth Prewitt's "Racial Classification in America," *Daedalus* 134:1 (Winter, 2005): 5–17. I support Prewitt's recommendation that race and ethnic categories be combined and that respondents continue to be allowed to check more than one box.

48. I discussed the romance of multiracialism in chapter 4 of *The Browning of America*. For further discussion of this issue see my "Being and Being Mixed-Race," and Linda Martín Alcoff, "Mestizo Identity," *American Mixed Race*, ed. Naomi Zack (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995): 257–78. For a recent philosophical, political, and theological romance of multiracialism, see John Francis Burke, *Mestizo Democracy* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002). For a criticism of such multiracial messianism, see David Theo Goldberg, *Racial State* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2001).

49. See *supra* note 2.

50. Linda Martín Alcoff, "Mestizo Identity," *American Mixed Race*, ed. Naomi Zack (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995): 257–78.

51. Elizabeth Spelman, *Repair* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

52. *Ibid.*

53. See *supra* note 4, 302.

54. See *supra* note 2.

55. Gregory Velasco y Trianosky, "Beyond Mestizaje: The Future of Race in America," in *New Faces in a Changing America: Multiracial Identity in the 21st Century* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003): 176–93.

56. Ronald R. Sundstrom, "Falling into the Olongapo River," *Newsletter on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies* 2: 2 (2003): 25–27.

57. For current demographic information on multiracial Americans, see the Pew Research Center's "Multiracial in America: Proud, Diverse and Growing in Numbers," Washington, D.C.: 1–153. Last Modified June 11, 2015, www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/06/11/multiracial-in-america/.

58. This question and how it challenges methods in the philosophy of race is perceptively discussed by Paul C. Taylor in his "Context and Complaint: On Racial Disorientation," *Graduate Faculty Journal* 35: 1–2 (2014): 1–21.

59. This piece is a part of Christopher Cozier's series, *Tropical Nights*, which was started in 2006 but is ongoing. More about it can be found from his blog devoted to the work, <http://tropicalnight.blogspot.com/>. It is currently in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum, http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/infinite_island/highlight.php?a=EL51.41. The piece "castaway," can be seen on the artist's Flickr site, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/56271618@N00/483744370/in/set-72157600176542058>.

60. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, edited by Frederic L. Bender (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2013). I appreciate concerns about the translation of this phrase from the original German, "Alles ständische und ste-

hende verdampft," but I chose to use the present translation because it remains evocative of the velocity and effects of historical change.

61. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Fate," *Essays & Lectures*, edited by Joel Porte (New York: The Library of America, 1983): 950.

62. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations* (New York, Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1955).

63. Magali Marie Carrera, *Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body in Portraiture and Casta Paintings* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003). Samples of these paintings can be found online, http://www.nacion.com/ln_ee/ESPECIALES/raices/raices25.html.

64. The controversy over Rachel Dolezal that occurred in the summer of 2015 has some fascinating and troubling connections with the discussions over mixed-race identity and the history of passing. Commentators have focused on the fact that she was delusional, and have seemed to imply that what distinguishes her from biracial or mixed-race African Americans was that she could choose to no longer identify as black. The potential for her making that choice, however, is not unique to her case. Some multiracial individuals who identify with traditional racial groups could also cease to do so out of convenience. Indeed, Maria P. P. Root identifies this as a mixed-race "right"; see Maria P. P. Root, "A Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People," in *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier*, ed. Maria P. P. Root (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996): 3–14. See Allyson Hobbs's "Rachel Dolezal's Unintended Gift to America," *New York Times*, June 17, 2015, accessed on June 30, 2015, <http://nyti.ms/1MLBYiO>; and Anna Holmes's "America's 'Postracial Fantasy,'" *New York Times*, June 30, 2015, accessed on June 30, 2015, <http://nyti.ms/1GWCmtr>.

65. Kip Fulbeck, *Part Asian, 100% Hapa* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2006).

66. My writings were guided by and reacted to the groundbreaking work in philosophy of mixed race by Naomi Zack and Linda Martin Alcoff, and in psychology by Maria P. P. Root. See Ronald R. Sundstrom, "Being and Being Mixed Race," *Social Theory and Practice* 27 (2001): 285–307; "Mixed-Looks," *Contemporary Aesthetics*, Special Volume 2, (2009), <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=540>; "Fevered Desires and Interracial Intimacies in Jungle Fever," in *The Philosophy of Spike Lee*, ed. Mark T. Conrad (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2011): 144–62; and *The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice* (Albany: SUNY, 2008).

67. Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

68. Maria P. P. Root, "A Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People," in *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier*, ed. Maria P. P. Root (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996): 3–14.

69. Kimberly McClain DaCosta, *Making Multiracials: State, Family, and Market in the Redrawing of the Color Line* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); and Michele Elam, *The Souls of Mixed Folk: Race, Politics, and Aesthetics in the New Millennium* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

70. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, vol. 18 of *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, edited by John M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977). Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1909).

2

Mixed Race Masquerades *Myths of Multiracial Harmony in Britain*

Gabriella Beckles-Raymond

When I think about who I am, there is no such thing as just me. I am someone's wife, mother, sister, daughter, and friend. I have identities connected to these relationships and beyond. Some are accidents of birth (I was born in London), some are social constructions (I am described as mixed race), and others are both (my mother is English and my father—being from Jamaica—is not; he is British). Yet whatever I think of me, however I construct my identity, I cannot live outside of the context in which I was born—in this body, in this location, in this historical moment. Who I am and who others perceive me to be matter. Both impact my life in myriad ways, some creative, some destructive, some of which I am fully aware, and some of which I may never know. Consequently, my philosophy always begins with lived lives, with observations of the world of which I am a part. I dream; I imagine; I theorize; but my journey toward philosophical insight never begins from a Euclidean point, never makes neutrality its aim, and never makes any claims to objectivity, for I don't believe such things exist. Rather, for me, philosophy is a tool, one of many I use in the perhaps naïve, perhaps egotistical hope that we can find ways to value our rich, complex, often difficult, and often changing identities and to enrich each other's lives rather than dismiss each other or seek escape from who we are.

In the summer of 2012, along with almost 27 million people in Britain and hundreds of millions more globally, I sat down to watch the opening ceremony for the Olympics. Living in London and as a lover of sports, I was intrigued and grateful that the games were finally going to begin. How would we present ourselves to the world? How would we follow the miraculous display in Beijing? As it turned out, the response to the ceremony at home and abroad was resoundingly positive, a 'Night of Wonder', the *Guardian* declared on its front page the following day (July 28, 2012). Even responses that spoke of confusion were interpreted in a

positive light—‘quirky,’ ‘wacky,’ ‘eccentric.’ The prevailing sentiment to the mishmash celebration of culture, history and comedy seemed to be that director Danny Boyle put on a show that was quintessentially British. But something in that spectacular 2012 Opening Ceremony didn’t sit well with me. Recall the portion of the ceremony in which two young women step out of their family home for a night out, leaving their white mother and black father waving goodbye at the door. One of the sisters, as we learn through texts which narrate this sequence, is single and becomes the focal point as she and the cast dance their way through contemporary British pop music and culture.¹ Something about this picture of British multiculturalism seemed contrived and incongruent.

More generally, images of women racialized as mixed² adorn billboards everywhere in London, advertising everything from chocolate to financial services. They are the face of social campaigns and serve as some of the best ambassadors for cultural expression Britain has to offer: Emeli Sandé and Corinne Bailey Rae (music); Jessica Ennis (sport); Zadie Smith (literature and culture); Andrea McLean and Alesha Dixon (TV); and Thandie Newton (film) to name a few. And in 2012, when Britain presented itself on the world stage both in the Olympic media campaign in which Jessica Ennis, whose mother is English and father is Jamaican, was ‘the poster girl for Team GB’ and for the Olympic Opening Ceremony, the image of the mixed race woman became Britain’s selfie. So what are we to make of the mixed race woman representing Britain’s current understanding of itself? Does she signify ‘a nation secure in its own post-empire identity’ as Sarah Lyall of the *New York Times* summed up the Olympic Ceremony in her July 27 article? According to an article published on January 19, 2009, on BBC Caribbean.com, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC),³ seems to echo this sentiment:

Britain is changing in a remarkable way. One in five of our children are from an ethnic minority background and young people are six times more likely to be mixed race compared to adults. . . . This is hugely positive and we can afford a moment to celebrate.

This apparent embracing of mixedness seems, on the surface, a contrast to bygone times. When I was a little girl, being ‘half-caste,’ as we were called then, was not so cool. Could it be that in my lifetime we women racialized as mixed have become symbols of Britain’s racial progress? In this paper, I suggest the answer to that question is unfortunately not.

I want to consider the possibility that what on one level may appear to be positive, may, on another level also actually be problematic. A great deal has been written about the impact of negative stereotypes, both in terms of how they affect persons associated with them and how others in turn come to view such persons.⁴ A less explored phenomenon is the negative impact of seemingly positive images. My claim here is that images of women racialized as mixed, now so publicly visible, mask deeper

racisms that persist in British society today. Mixed race woman's ascension from 'half-caste mutt' to leading lady obscures the enduring impacts of structural inequality in the lives of racialized persons. In this regard, what I will refer to as the social phenomenon of 'masking' has ethical and normative import.

As I define the concept later in this chapter, masking left undetected or unchecked can affect the development and outcomes of public policy. In effect, masking disguises and conceals racism and sexism, and therefore negatively affects our ability to address these issues. To explore this claim, in the following chapter I discuss three ways in which images of women racialized as mixed are used to conceal Britain's racial reality. I refer to these as representational, cultural, and feel-good masquerades. My aim is to contrast the rosy picture of racial progress that images of women racialized as mixed paint in British society with Britain's racial reality. Before explaining these three ways in which images of mixed race women are used to conceal Britain's racial reality, however, I will explain the conceptual framework I use to accomplish this task.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: MASK, MASKING, AND MASQUERADE

My conceptual framework consists of three elements which I describe below: mask as object, masking as process, and masquerade as the site of manifestation where object and process are jointly displayed.

Mask

A mask is used to hide, conceal or disguise the face, as one might in a masquerade ball. The word derives from the old French *mascurer*, to masquerade, interestingly, to black the face. The terms 'masking' and 'masquerading' are also used metaphorically to refer to persons wearing a facial expression that conceals their true character, feelings, or intentions. Masking, however, can also apply to objects. For example, I have occasionally masked the taste of vegetables my son doesn't like by mixing them in with a sauce. In this sense, masking seeks to make the offending item imperceptible or indistinct. These conventional uses of masking or masquerading operate at the level of the individual. Even when it is not a person that is being masked, as in the case of my attempts to ensure my son eats healthily, masking in these examples occur in and make reference to personal circumstances and experiences. However, the framework I discuss below does not refer to personal situations. Rather, it seeks to illuminate and identify a social-political phenomenon.

As such, I define a mask as any object—including, crucially, the outcome of a process of objectification—that functions to hide, conceal or disguise any social-political phenomenon. In this context the social-politi-

cal phenomenon is racism in Britain. Anything and anyone can function as a mask but for the purposes of this discussion the mask in question is mixed race woman—a social construction based on the objectification of the bodies of actual women racialized as mixed. These objectified human masks can be forged from celebrities and persons across the media in advertisements, music videos, characters in TV programs, in the news, etc. While these are persons who have their own intentionality, I am not suggesting that they deliberately aim to contravene anti-racism efforts. They do not wake up in the morning and set out to be masks for the day. My claim here instead is that the term mask refers to the outcome of an objectification of persons who have their own intentionality. By now it should be clear that insofar as a person functions as a mask, the person is not applying herself or himself to any phenomenon directly. Instead, the mask itself is produced insofar as it is understood as the object that creates a masking effect.

Masking

This brings us to the second element of the conceptual framework, which is masking. If the mask as object serves a function, then masking is the process by which the object operates. This includes both the creation of the mask and its application to a social-political phenomenon. It is useful here to provide some context around the specific case of racism in Britain and women racialized as mixed.

To uncover the mask is not to interrogate women racialized as mixed on the basis of what their bodies look like, but to interrogate the history, ideologies, and processes that render these bodies susceptible to being used as masks in the first place. What constitutes the relevant context in this case is Britain's colonial history. Racialized women served multiple functions in the British Empire (slave, breeder, concubine, etc.), and were exploited both sexually and for economic gain. Indeed, Eric Williams famously demonstrated the relationship between capitalism and slavery, and racialized women were, and continue to be, big business. Through this historical frame, we can understand how today the bodies of women racialized as mixed, like their colonial counterparts, can be used to serve imperialist, white-supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal agendas in twenty-first century Britain.⁵ For example, as DaCosta observes, 'Unlike targeted marketing, in which a message or product is created to appeal to a particular demographic, this kind [multiracial branding] of marketing uses multiracialism to appeal to a mass audience. By definition, such images created before there were statistic and industry research reports on multi-racial, rely on stereotypes, clichés, and dominant ideas of racial mixedness.'⁶ DaCosta further notes that one of the primary ideas persons racialized as mixed are used to symbolize is 'racial harmony.'⁷ For this reason, having what Stuart Hall famously referred to as 'historical amnesia,' as is

too often the case in discussions of mixedness, is profoundly problematic because it prevents us from understanding not only the lessons of the past, but also the manner in which systems of domination are self-perpetuating. And as I hope to show, one of the ways systems of domination are able to achieve such continuity is by masking the current racial reality with an image of racial harmony. The intent here is not to suggest that the lives of racialized persons in Britain today are qualitatively comparable to their colonial counterparts, but that the current public visibility of women racialized as mixed should be viewed as a legacy of British colonialism.

Masking as process then, refers to an activity (1) that disguises and conceals any given state of affairs, (2) that can occur at the individual or structural level, and (3) can be either directly or remotely executed. The idea of masking can be applied to a range of social-political phenomenon: in this case, the characterization of mixed race woman as successful, attractive, and socially unencumbered is masking the deeply entrenched and enduring racial inequality in British society. Masking of this sort suggests that Britain is a fairer society today than it actually is.⁸

Masking within this conceptual framework is active, insofar as it is “doing” something—hiding, disguising, or concealing. Importantly, the masking to which I am referring, does not speak to the actions of any particular individual but rather to the collective process and effect of multiple actions, by multiple persons, in multiple arenas. However, that the racism that exists in British society is masked by pictures and images that show bright, smiling, mixed raced woman as the symbol of the new Britain, does not amount to subterfuge, intentional deception, or conspiracy. Indeed, the intent of persons who include women racialized as mixed in their advertising campaigns and various different cultural media might well be noble. Such persons might actually understand themselves to be making a positive contribution to the advancement of racial justice and harmony in Britain. So the connotation here does not suggest any deliberate malevolence or malice. My aim in discussing masking as disguising, obscuring, concealing, covering up is not accusation but observation.

In addition to questions of intent, the question of positioning is also important here. In the conventional use of masking, a person who uses the mask is typically covering their own face, identity, intentions, character, etc. The mask user makes an intentional and also immediate choice to apply the mask or engage in a masquerade. By contrast, in masking as I am using the term, the application of the mask might not only be unintentional but also remote from the origin of the mask itself as well as the site of application.

Masquerade

On this account then, a masquerade, the third element of the conceptual framework, is the particular site (not necessarily physical or geographical) where masking occurs. Masquerade is the sphere in which a mask (object) and masking (process) function jointly to disguise and conceal the effects of a social-political phenomenon. So to take the example of the Olympics, the Opening Ceremony would be the masquerade within which the complex array of processes used to tell a story of British history and culture functioned as a form of masking—in this case disguising the reality of racism in today's (and yesterday's) Britain—coming together with the mask of the mixed race woman, and together portraying a harmoniously multicultural Britain. Similar dynamics can be observed, for example, in university recruitment websites, in job application forms, in TV programs or public reports, and so on. The possibilities are as numerous as the forums of social interaction. I describe below three kinds of masking whereby the image of mixed race woman is used to mask Britain's racial reality.

Representational Masquerade

When young, mixed race woman emerges from her multiracial household and into the Olympic ceremony, is this an instance where she is quintessentially British? Or, is this the moment the EHRC is encouraging us to celebrate the increase of persons racialized as mixed? Or, is the role of mixed race woman to make people racialized as black in Britain feel they too are part of the Olympic proceedings, not just in the role of athletes but as an acceptable, even celebrated part of British culture via their collective non-whiteness (shared with the mixed race woman)? Or, are we to perceive mixed race woman as an individual and not representative of any particular group, just a person, who could have been anyone of any race? Representational masquerade would have us believe we can answer yes to all of these questions. But, by implying that mixed race woman can represent anyone and everyone, it conceals the absence of racial equality in Britain.

Representational masquerade can take various forms. The first kind supposes that images of women racialized as mixed can be used to represent any and all races in Britain and/or that mixed race woman can be perceived as just individuals. The notions that mixed race woman represents everyone or anyone in Britain and indeed that anyone and everyone could identify with her represent a denial of the divisive effects of racializing and othering. It suggests that persons can function in British society as individuals, unencumbered by race, gender, social status, history, culture and so on; that the very process of being raced and gendered has no impact on a person's identity, either in terms of how they see themselves

or with respect to how they are viewed and treated by others. The myth here is that the vigorous individualism of our liberal democracy can be enjoyed by all persons. It is a claim to which many persons racialized as mixed subscribe, but one that remains unsubstantiated by empirical evidence and rigorously refuted theoretically with respect to its legal implications and applications,⁹ epistemological, political and/or moral accuracy,¹⁰ and its failure to acknowledge the myriad ways in which physical embodiment necessarily impacts how we are perceived by ourselves and others.¹¹

While it is accepted that mixed race woman can be British, she is still very much 'other.' For example, the now clichéd 'Where are you from?' question (the British variant of 'What are you?') remains a common intrusion for persons racialized as mixed. A typical conversation might go something like this:—'Oh wow, I love your hair. Where are you from?'/ 'London'/'Yes, yes, I know ok, but where are you *really* from?'/ 'London'/'Yes, but where are your *parents* from?,' accompanied by a look of encouragement, designed to illicit some deeper elaboration as a display of shared understanding about what is really being asked. The game can go on with different variations to an ending dependent on the mood, politics, and/or perspective of the person racialized as mixed in this encounter. Even where the person racialized as mixed never may have travelled outside Britain, questions of the legitimacy of the person's Britishness remain written in their skin and hair. So, does the white majority really see themselves reflected in mixed race woman or identify with her as 'English like me,' 'Scottish like me,' 'Welsh like me,' or 'Northern Irish like me'? Or, more importantly, as 'a person, like me'? The prevalence of these sorts of interactions indicates not.

Moreover, while Jessica Ennis, whose father is Jamaican and mother is English, in addition to fronting the Olympic media campaign, has been hailed the 'face of the census',¹² we must keep in mind Britain's racial demographics. Based on the 2011 census, which includes large waves of migration and/or asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East that have occurred since the previous census, Britain is still 87.1 percent white. Of the remaining 12.9 percent that are classified as ethnic minorities, 3 percent are black and another 2 percent are mixed race.¹³

If women racialized as mixed make up such a small fraction of the actual population, how is the implied claim that she represents all possible? Contemporary mixed race identity, from within and without, has been constructed in a manner that facilitates representational masquerade. Mixed race identity has come to signify the raceless, post-race individual.¹⁴ Mixed race woman is not connected to any particular party and stands for no distinctive ideology,¹⁵ perhaps other than the doctrine of uniqueness. She has no religious identity, although she is not necessarily understood to be offensively atheist. Similarly, mixed race woman seems to defy any clear-cut class signifiers and has the added attraction of not

being associated with any particular struggle or social problem. The problems of racial difference and racism have typically been represented through imagery of intermixing between men racialized as black and white women.¹⁶ Note the re-transcription of this set-up onto the happy Olympic narrative where the mixed race child is no longer an unwelcome addition to ‘the brown baby problem’ but the promise of a happier future.¹⁷ Mixed race woman does not carry the racial baggage written on the bodies of men racialized as black or mixed; the latter group cannot distance themselves from black men and all the accompanying stereotypes as readily.¹⁸ Meanwhile, she is also not the white norm and thus does not signify the structural power of the white man that might be off-putting to those looking to Britain for some post-colonial humility or a touch of cultural sensitivity. Nor does she embody the same kinds of problematic contemporary narratives about race relations and sexism in Britain that are housed in the bodies of white and black women.¹⁹ White women who have ‘mixed’ with black men, despite all of this celebration of mixedness, still carry the historic stigma of race traitors, prostitutes, and/or women of ill repute. And if not sullied with racial stains, white women are read through a spectrum of controlling gender stereotypes with genteel Victorian submissiveness at one end and ‘unladylike’ bra-burning feminists at the other.²⁰ Mixed race woman has no ties to the feminist movement. She is noticeably absent from the Olympic Ceremony’s lesson on the suffragettes. Nor is she associated with black feminism or womanism, neither of which features in mainstream discourses in Britain in any case. Women racialized as black, if recognized at all, still labor under old, worn stereotypes that characterize them as sexually licentious, aggressive and domineering, maternally unfit, or asexual.²¹ By contrast, unfettered by social ills, mixed race woman seems free to dance her merry dance across Britain.

If she cannot represent all British people, can attractive, unencumbered, thriving, mixed race woman at least represent other persons racialized as mixed? As with all racialized groups, the diversity and complexity of the ‘group’ is seldom acknowledged. And although in the case of women racialized as mixed the stylized depiction is intended as a flattering one, such narrow, simplistic narratives negate, silence, and render invisible the lived experiences of those excluded by the commercialized, mainstream narrative. There is an emerging portion of the demographic racialized as mixed who occupy a higher socio-economic status, are better educated, and have more social and cultural power than that previously associated with persons racialized as mixed.²² However, crucial intersections including class and gender combine to generate very different lived experiences within the group racialized as mixed. Supposedly positive images foster a skewed perspective that not only negates alternative narratives, but can also adversely affect public and social policy insofar as the images fail to expose or challenge existing stereotypes about

persons racialized as mixed from low income households who are more likely to be the target of state intervention. The implications for social outcomes come into sharp focus when we consider that a disproportionate number of persons racialized as mixed go through the 'care' system in Britain and that men racialized as mixed are pathologized and criminalized in much the same fashion as men racialized as black and are disproportionately represented in the juvenile delinquency and criminal justice systems.²³ While it is important to recognize class intersections, images of middle class mixed race woman also function as masks which render issues of racism imperceptible or indistinct. This gives rise to another problematic narrative, namely the idea that racism is not a problem; that the real issue at play is class. While it is true that many life outcome measures are impacted by class, to fail to recognize racism as one of a number of intersectional variables that impact the life chances of persons is hugely problematic.

Again by extension of our understanding of race as a group, in the third kind of representational masquerade, mixed race woman is expected to do the work of expressing the voices, needs, and experiences of the profoundly diverse group known as black people. The profile of persons racialized as black in Britain has changed dramatically with various waves of immigration since the height of a politicized 'black' identity politics in the 1980s.²⁴ And with generations of persons racialized as black now born in the Britain it would be dangerous to assume these diverse peoples necessarily have a shared history, culture, or set of experiences in Britain or abroad such that one catch-all label could facilitate meaningful public policy. Indeed, we can readily question whether there even exists an idea of blackness around which such persons might form a common identity.

A further concern with this version of the representational masquerade is whether persons racialized as black are comfortable with their bodies, needs, perspectives, and lived experiences being represented by persons racialized as mixed and indeed, whether persons racialized as mixed are comfortable with carrying that mantle. The question of whether a person can and should be considered a spokesperson for the wider black community is of course rife with problems even if the person is racialized as black. Has the person garnered a consensus from the community? Does the person actually have meaningful ties and engagement with the community such that they might be rightly considered representative of the group? When the person speaks does the person think they are speaking for the group? These questions assume further import when applied to representatives racialized as mixed, given the non-political bent many such persons express, individualistic philosophies they often adopt, and/or discomfort with racial labels they often express. Take, for example, Adam Afriyie, first 'black' member of Parliament for the conservative party, whose mother is English and father is Ghanaian, 'I consider

myself post-racial,' he declared. 'I don't see myself as a black man. I refuse to be defined by my color or pigeon-holed in that way.'²⁵ Moreover, in media surrounding persons racialized as mixed the subject of race is often avoided, omitted, downplayed, or given minimal attention. Furthermore, mixed race privilege and the lack of trust between persons racialized as black and persons racialized as mixed suggest any arbitrary claim to wider group representation is highly problematic. These are not minor issues that can be glossed over simply because all racialized persons might be said to have a common enemy—white supremacy—or because we can all trace our roots back to Africa.

Cultural Masquerade

Of the three kinds of masquerade I introduce, cultural masquerade gets to the heart of what is problematic. It operates such that the supposed advancements in cultural representation of women racialized as mixed attest to equivalent progress in the battle against structural racism in Britain. In this respect, the achievements of the few conceal the marginalization of the many. Insofar as mixed race woman is characterized as free, transcendent, and unbound by social baggage, one of the most powerful messages mixed race woman implicitly send is that structural power dynamics play at best an insignificant role in reproducing racial and gender inequalities in Britain. Mixed race woman lacks social or historical context (we never trace her history back further than her two parents). The closest we get to a discussion of the relevance of political, economic or social structures in the life of mixed race woman are stories of being bullied at school because she is mixed and does not fit in. No matter how painful such experiences were or how 'confused' about not fitting in mixed race girl is, she invariably overcomes these personal setbacks and becomes the mixed race woman we are so familiar with. As Elam observes, 'Mixed race as a category gains the most political "presence and impact" when it appears to validate the most cherished and powerful "mores, values and traditions" of the national credo.'²⁶ Successful mixed race woman underpins Britain's cherished credo of tolerance, meritocracy, and fairness.

Cultural masquerade, like representational masquerade, is multilayered. The first myth is that visual representation in popular culture reflects holders of structural power; that the presence of mixed race woman on billboards speaks to her presence boardrooms. Images of mixed race woman provide a concrete reference for persons who claim 'things are not like they used to be.' These images of success mislead people to believe that on the one hand such individual achievements necessarily translate into meaningful structural shifts in the power base of a given industry or society as a whole, and on the other, that persons in power have for some inexplicable reason, changed their attitudes and behaviors

with respect to race and gender. Unfortunately, again, the evidence does not support this view. From Parliament to the boardroom to academia, persons racialized as black are grossly underrepresented in top positions.²⁷

A second myth of cultural masquerade is that familiarity and acceptance of images of mixed race woman is a meaningful proxy for the kind of interaction, collaboration, and commitment between persons of all races required for positive structural change. This is where the mask that is mixed race woman really comes into its own. The idea that interracial sex, and the children it sometimes produces, speaks to a disruption of the status quo has been repeated so often in so many guises, it has become something of a mixed race mantra. Intermix.org, one of Britain's most prominent organizations for persons racialized as mixed, believes that 'acknowledging and celebrating the achievements of Mixed-Race individuals and their families . . . will re-educate society with the objective of ensuring the Twenty First Century will not see the Mixed-Race experience as an issue but as a positive contribution towards a more harmonious society.'²⁸ Mainstream media has jumped on recent versions of this bandwagon, championing interracial sex as iconically 'British' and cause for the nation to congratulate itself. The BBC's three-part documentary 'Mixed Britannia,' which aired in October, 2011, fervently promoted the supposed revolutionary powers of interracial sex. In closing George Alagiah, himself in a mixed race relationship, captures the current attempt to portray Britain's attitude towards race as laudable,

Take a look at them, they're British, every one of them . . . their story is also the story of modern Britain. We've seen how this country's been exposed to the same poisonous mix of racist theory and prejudices as the rest of Europe and America. Through it all we've cut a rather unique path. Trade and Empire had a part to play. Personal courage was matched by a sort of communal pragmatism, and then of course there was love and lust. Whatever the reasons, Britain has emerged as one of the most mixed nations on Earth, and I for one am proud of that.

Just exactly how the mere presence of persons racialized as mixed or even the recognition and celebration of their presence will lead to a more harmonious society is never really explained.

The historical picture certainly doesn't bode well for interracial sex being an effective tool for bringing an end to structural racism and sexism either at home or in the former colonies. As Naomi Zack notes, 'The shifting racial taxonomies have not reflected changes in scientific consensus about race, but have expressed political power, social attitudes and economic interests.'²⁹ The source of current optimism about the power of interracial sex and those born of it seems at best a mystery. Again, the empirical evidence doesn't inspire confidence. Persons racialized as black fare worse than their white counterparts on a host of indicators across the

entire lifespan including mortality rates, educational attainment, unemployment, contact with the criminal justice system, and health. Furthermore, as noted above, with persons racialized as black so under-represented in positions of power, the prospect of shifting these trends in a more positive direction does not look promising.

The concern, again, is the implications for public policy. While important social changes have taken place in Britain over the last fifty years with respect to people's attitudes about race,³⁰ the cultural success of the image of mixed race woman suggests we don't need to be political anymore. However, persons racialized as mixed, like their black counterparts, are not regarded as equally valuable in Britain and are plagued by disparate life chances as the old stereotypes endure powerfully below the surface. Even when it appears to indicate respect and value, cultural recognition is fleeting, especially in these times of instant celebrity. It cannot, therefore, serve as a reliable indicator or substitute for social and political reform.

Feel-Good Masquerade

Feel-good masquerade operates such that positive images of women racialized as mixed should necessarily be viewed in a positive light; that we should indeed feel good about them. This imperative to feel good about such images in our society masks the actual feelings both white persons and racialized persons experience as a result of racism in Britain. The allure of mixed race woman is that she makes us feel good. We want to believe that somehow mixed race woman's face at the Olympics representing her country—on billboards, on top of the charts, on the red carpet—means we can stop talking about or stop feeling guilty about the fact that we're not talking about racism and sexism. The idea that we don't have to go toe-to-toe with these monolithic, impenetrable institutions because somehow, miraculously, things are different now, is a welcome message, particularly in these times of political disillusionment and apathy. However, buying into this illusion requires us to ignore the fact that the very idea that images, identities, and ideologies can be layered on top of the bodies of women racialized as mixed as if these bodies are not real people who have their own agency, experiences, and perspectives, is itself profoundly disturbing.

The image of mixed race woman is unique in its ability to achieve the precarious balancing act of managing to appear to have it all and yet does not connote privilege in the way that inspires envy or resentment. Unburdened by life, she is thriving in a way most of us only dream of. She is beautiful, desirable, talented, successful, carefree, and independent. Who would not want to be her or have her? Her looks are the result of providence or genetic fortune depending on your world view. Her talents, while in some cases may be perceived as a function of her racial origins

(singing, dancing, playing sports, for example), elude presumptions that she has some essentialized, innate capacity for certain activities. And while it is clear that she is not economically challenged, nor has she grown up with the proverbial silver spoon in her mouth. Mixed race woman is often well educated: Newton and Smith both went to Cambridge; Sandé went to medical school and has often expressed her passion and dedication to education. However, mixed race woman does not trigger images of stuffy, traditional British boarding schools, with all their related elitism and snobbery. Because of her multifarious heritage, mixed race woman has a kind of cultural fluidity that permits her to traverse the globe. Her 'ethnic' heritage also suggests she has meaningful ties to 'exotic' lands, and incidentally, the means to travel to such faraway places, though not in the somewhat creepy, great white hope way that harks back to missionary enterprises, so common nowadays. Mixed race woman might simply be visiting her relatives. Whatever mixed race woman's motive, as is the case with any good advertising, her image captures a lifestyle many yearn for while simultaneously giving the appearance of attainability. With mixed race woman we believe 'the dream' is reachable.

Yet my concern here is not with the menu of lifestyle options mixed race woman represents. In likening the public visibility of a particular characterization of women racialized as mixed to advertising, the intent is not to feign naiveté about how advertising is designed to work on all people regardless of their racial classification. That being said, I am suspicious of the mixed race visual utopia because, as Elam rightly observes, 'A good deal of mixed race advocacy remains indebted to precisely the visual fetishes and specular epistemologies of race that proponents claim to overthrow.'³¹ It is too quick, too simple to accept the idea that images of mixed race woman signal a substantive shift in race relations without critical analysis of what tropes such images call upon to achieve their cultural traction and whose interests the preponderance of such images serve. Indeed, I am wary of the current tendency to re-create the image of mixed race woman without reference to her historical, cultural construction and current social political context. In this sense, the dream that is being sold is not a lifestyle but a particular characterization of British society. Images of prospering mixed race woman, I suggest, makes us feel good because they reify and reinforce Britain's moral self-image as a nation of tolerance and a champion of multiculturalism and meritocracy. This national narrative completely ignores and belies Britain's horrific and brutal history as a colonial and imperial global power. Amazingly, despite the ongoing debates about immigration, the connection between Britain's exploitative colonial past and contemporary Britain's multicultural, multiracial population is not made.

One way we might understand the force and impact of feel-good masquerade is through Just World Theory, pioneered by social psychologist

Melvin Lerner.³² The basic idea is that most people believe in a just world. Consequently, when people are confronted with stories of other people whose suffering is not of their own making, this threatens their belief in a just world and causes psychological discomfort. To soothe this discomfort, rather than relinquish their belief that the world is fair and just, people blame the victim as a way to rationalize underserved suffering. The effects of racism and sexism in Britain run counter to our belief in a just world. As such, the images of successful mixed race woman are a welcome balm that allows us to restore our faith in the basic fairness of British society. If racialized persons are struggling in Britain, it is a function of their own limitations. Positive images of a person who is both racialized and gendered supposedly bear witness to the enduring legacy of British tolerance, proving that unlike less morally and socially evolved nations, we have come to live the liberal ideal of a democratic, pluralistic meritocracy. In short, feel-good masquerade provides a source of British pride. At this particular moment in British history, when the country finds itself in the midst of an identity crisis, reflected in a host of factors both global and local—their diminishing status as a global power, loss of the moral high ground as a result of the financial crisis, indecisiveness about its place/ or not in the European Union and the Scottish referendum—the importance of this cannot be overestimated.

Feel-good masquerade also silences the voices of those wishing to challenge the racial and gendered status quo.³³ Those who do persist in speaking up are perceived in a problematic light: they have a proverbial chip on their shoulder; they are ungrateful for all Britain has given them; they are old fashioned in their thinking (after all, identity politics is dead—it's so 1980s); or worst of all, they are self-serving opportunists. My contention is that feel-good masquerades project a misguided picture of race relations and of the racial climate in Britain. This, in turn, facilitates a tendency to dismiss challenges to the prevailing social order. Again, the psychology is quite straightforward: Demonizing the offending individual frees us of the collective responsibility for our nations' troubles.

This silencing also has the more insidious function of framing how racialized persons perceive their own context vis-à-vis racism such that they too buy into the skewed version of Britain's racial progress. Indeed, one of the core functions of feel-good masquerades is to depoliticize race, racism, and sexism, rendering these social realities personal challenges rather than social and/or political concerns. As with cultural and representational masquerade, this process obscures and conceals the reality of racism, making it difficult for racialized persons to identify and articulate structural forms of race and gender oppression. This in turn makes it difficult to hold the appropriate agencies accountable for addressing those challenges. For example, when riots erupted across England in 2011, despite the fact that the primary factors cited as motivators for

protestors (poverty, policing, government policy, unemployment, shooting of Mark Duggan) are all deeply raced in British society, only 54 percent, of these people attributed racial tension as a motivating factor for their actions.³⁴ How is this perceptual disconnect between the social reality and the social myth possible for both white and racialized persons in Britain? More worryingly, if race is not understood as at least an intervening factor in these major social problems, what are our policy strategies for addressing poverty, unemployment, policing, etc., going to look like? Will we be having this same conversation in the aftermath of another episode of riots/ protests as British history suggests and observers cautioned after the events in 2011?³⁵ Perhaps the most disturbing characteristic of feel-good masquerades is that they are self-perpetuating. In the context of the just world effect, the seemingly positive image of mixed race woman gives rise to a set of attitudes that reinforce our denial of racism and sexism in Britain. With dissenting voices silenced or pathologized, national pride riding high, and the race- and gender-based injustices in British society placed firmly with the individual, everyone can go home feeling good in the knowledge we have done our moral duty.

ISN'T POSITIVE JUST POSITIVE?

Here I consider four possible objections to my claims about masks, masking, and masquerades. First, one might argue that such images foster racial harmony. As we have seen, attitudes towards people of different racial backgrounds have softened in Britain and surely the presence of racialized persons in the media have played a part in shaping those attitudes. Second, images of racialized people challenge the hegemony of 'white' as the only legitimate British identity. Third, the positive images of women racialized as mixed serve as important role models, which are desperately needed to counteract the predominantly negative depiction of racialized persons, particularly women, in the media. Fourth, such images can be a valuable source of hope to other women racialized as mixed, especially young women, about what they can achieve. On this view, this sense of hope is an important psychological weapon against the often demoralizing effects of racism and sexism.

I can readily accept all the above objections, but nevertheless insist that what I am proposing still stands. My claim does not in any way refute or reject these very important benefits the public visibility of the image of positive mixed race woman may contribute to dismantling imperial white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy in Britain. To be clear, my contention is not that we should remove or reduce the public visibility of positive images of women racialized as mixed or indeed any other racialized persons. I agree that along with the four possible objections, there are many additional reasons we need greater positive public visibility

and increased representation of women racialized as mixed and all other racialized persons. The claim here is that a great deal more work needs to be done before we can rest assured that such images do not also have the negative effect of masking social injustices as I am proposing they do. If positive images of women racialized as mixed are to avoid having the negative effects of functioning in the service of representational, cultural, and feel-good masquerades, we need to take more radical action that helps to identify and eradicate the deeply entrenched systems of domination that govern our social, political and cultural structures. Indeed, the key word here is action; presence without praxis is a hollow victory. Even as we have noted the talented female celebrities who are touted as the mixed race face of British culture, we must be mindful of the way in which images of successful mixed race woman can mask race and gender-based inequalities in Britain and distract us from examining the interlocking systems of domination, rightly described by bell hooks as imperialist, white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy, that give rise to these disparities. That same list of talented female celebrities must serve as a note of caution. For, as visible or popular as she may seem, a mixed race woman is not the face of structural or institutional power in any domain of British society. She is not the face of British politics, nor is she the face of Britain's influential financial and legal systems. She is not the face of science and technology, she is not the face of business and industry, and she is not the face of academia.

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NOTES

1. This segment of the ceremony is entitled 'Frankie and June say . . . thanks Tim' and begins approximately one hour into the ceremony and occurs after the 'Interlude' that includes the Chariots of Fire sequence.

2. Just to clarify and explain the terminology used in this paper, I use the phrase 'racialized as mixed,' instead of mixed race, multi-racial, or other similar alternatives,

to emphasize and remind us that racial identities are social constructs. While this is a widely accepted point, we are yet to develop a satisfactory terminology to reflect this and my concern is that continuing to refer to people as mixed race or whatever the racial label in question is, re-transcribes the idea that racial identities are some kind of essential characteristic rather than the social constructions that they are. So while I appreciate the phrase 'racialized as mixed' is not as smooth on the ear as I might like, it is more concise than having to explain race as a social construction at every mention and hopefully gets us at least a step away from reifying race as an essential human characteristic. I use the phrase 'racialized persons' to refer to those persons assigned a non-white race in our racially stratified globe. While there has been much discussion about 'white' as a racial group, I think whiteness still operates as a non-racialized norm rather than as a racial identity as such things are commonly understood.

I use the phrase 'mixed race woman' to refer to the stylized, stereotype caricature that is the media image of a woman racialized as mixed, which like all other racial stereotypes, while may contain some small grains of truth about the lives of some of the people the stereotype refers, does not refer to or capture the reality of any actual real person, for real people are necessarily more complex, rich, and interesting.

Lastly, when using 'mixed,' I am referring to 'black'/'white' mixes. Primarily because the history of black/white relations is distinct, albeit not entirely separate, from the histories of other mixes in Britain and the United States. Second, given that my discussion focusses on both Britain and the United States, historical differences between the two countries mean that they are populated by very different racialized groups such that a discussion pertaining to the mixes beyond the black/white binary are beyond the scope of this paper.

3. The Equality and Human Rights Commission is a non-departmental public body in Britain, sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Established by the Equality Act 2006, it took over the responsibilities of three previous commissions—the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission (which was responsible for gender equality), and the Disability Rights Commission. Today the (EHRC) monitors human rights, protecting equality across nine grounds—age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, and gender reassignment.

4. See for example, Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963); Claude Steele's work on stereotype threat, including *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011); and implicit bias research, for example, Daniel Kelly and Erica Roedder, "Racial Cognition and the Ethics of Implicit Bias," *Philosophy Compass* 3 (3) (2008): 522–540.

5. bell hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (New York: Atria Books, 2004), 17.

6. Kimberly McClain DaCosta, *Making Multiracials: State, Family, and Market in the Redrawing of the Color Line* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2007), 163.

7. DaCosta, *Making Multiracials*, 163.

8. See "How Fair Is Britain" 2010 Report, accessed on May 13, 2014, <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/how-fair-is-britain>. It is 'the most comprehensive compilation of evidence on discrimination and disadvantage ever compiled in Britain . . . provides the independent evidence and benchmarks for reviewing the state of social justice...[and] assess the "fairness factor" in public policy'

9. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

10. Kristie Dotson, "Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression", *Social Epistemology* 28 (2) (2013): 115–138, and Donna-Dale Marcano, "White Racial Obligation and the False Neutrality of Political and Moral Liberalism," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 47 (2009): 16–24.

11. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000), and Linda Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
12. British Future, *The Melting Pot Generation*(2012), accessed December 1, 2014, <http://www.britishfuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/The-melting-pot-generation.pdf>.
13. In Scotland and Northern Island the mixed category does not distinguish different kinds of mixes as in the England and Wales version. Note taken from ONS spreadsheet: Due to question and response category differences in the country specific ethnic group question asked in the 2011 Censuses of the UK, some responses are not directly comparable. The UK output on ethnic group is therefore presented using a high level classification as recommended by the ONS "Primary Standards for Harmonised Concepts and Questions for Social Data Sources," accessed December 7, 2014, <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-and-quick-statistics-for-local-authorities-in-the-united-kingdom---part-1/rft-ks201uk.xls>.
14. See Naomi Zack, *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), Suki Ali, *Mixed Race, Post-Race: New Ethnicities and Cultural Practices* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), Michele Elam, *The Souls of Mixed Folk: Race, Politics, and Aesthetics in the New Millennium* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2011), and mix-d.org, accessed December 7, 2014, <http://www.mix-d.org/parenting>.
15. Unlike persons racialized as black, who are typically associated with the 'loony left,' a pejorative term that was used in the lead up to the 1987 general election in Britain, which characterized the Labour party as being paranoid about and irrationally obsessed with race and gender issues.
16. The pervasive imagery of intermixing between men racialized as black and white women functions as a corollary of the fact that women racialized as black are excluded from discussions of race and gender while white men, insofar as they are taken to be the universal norm float above these discussions altogether.
17. The 'brown baby problem' was a phrase used by the government and media to refer to children born to African-American GI's and British women during the second world war. With interracial marriage illegal in the United States, British women were left at home with their 'illegitimate' brown babies, many of whom were given up for adoption on account of the social stigma attached to these liaisons. Mixed Britannia, Episode 2. Aired on BBC2, October 13, 2011.
18. A recent tragedy in Britain is illustrative: In the summer of 2011, a man was shot and killed by the police during an attempted arrest. Mark Duggan was uniformly referred to as 'a black man,' in the media and was characterized as a gang member and drug dealer. Mark Duggan was actually the son of one parent racialized as black. His white mother repeatedly appeared on the news in his defense. English footballers are another notorious example. Many players who self-identify as mixed and have publicly discussed their lack of familiarity with and connection to the black community are routinely referred to as black. See http://www.intermix.org.uk/features/FEA_21_football.asp.
19. While in the U.S. context, one would immediately assume the very existence of persons racialized as mixed screams out the history of colonialism and rape of the black female body by the white slavemaster, Britain has accomplished a quite spectacular perceptual slight-of-hand that enables its national historical narratives to begin primarily with the Second World War. When Britain is forced into the uncomfortable position of going back into its own colonial history, it positions itself as heroes of abolition rather than as architects and primary beneficiaries of the slave trade. One obvious example of this shaping of the historical imagination can be observed in the events and the reporting of the 2007 bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade. See Ross Wilson, "A Kindly Act—Newspaper Coverage of the Bicentenary of the 1807 Abolition Act," 2007, accessed on December 7, 2014, <http://ww.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated/media/analysis/kindly.html>.

20. E. R. Boyd, "Lady: Still a Feminist Four-Letter Word?" *Women and Language* 35 (2) (2012): 35–52.
21. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, 69–96.
22. Chamion Caballero, Rosalind Edwards, and Shuby Puthussery, "Parenting 'Mixed' Children: Negotiating Difference in Mixed Race, Ethnicity and Faith Families" (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2008) 13.
23. Dinah Morley and Catherine Street, *Mixed Experiences: Growing Up Mixed Race—Mental Health and Well-Being* (National Children's Bureau, 2014).
24. Will Somerville, Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, and Maria Latorre, *United Kingdom: A Reluctant Country of Immigration*, Migration Policy Institute, 2009, accessed December 7, 2014, <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/united-kingdom-reluctant-country-immigration>.
25. David Cohen, "Adam Afriyie: From Peckham Council House to Shadow Minister," *London Evening Standard*, February 8, 2010, accessed December 1, 2014, <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/adam-afriyie-from-peckham-council-house-to-shadow-minister-6735252.html>.
26. Elam, *The Souls of Mixed Folk*, 8.
27. John Wood and Richard Cracknell, *Ethnic Minorities in Politics, Government and Public Life*, House of Commons Library Standard Note SN/SG/1156, October 16, 2013; Andrea Felsted and Brooke Masters, "Pru Leads Way with Black CEO," *Financial Times*, March 20, 2009, accessed December 7, 2014, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/cf54a138-14ef-11de-8cd1-0000779fd2ac.html#axzz3eHIUesER>; and Jack Grove, "Black Scholars Still Experience Racism on Campus," *Times Higher Education*, March 20. Accessed December 7, 2014. <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/black-scholars-still-experience-racism-on-campus/2012154.article>. Also note, the black Asian and minority ethnic designation is a category created and used by the government and public policy makers. It is a hugely problematic for research purposes because of the diverse groups it encompasses (including anyone from Somalis to Romanian gypsies and any and everyone else who is not British white) and the resultant distortions of social reality that arise. Some 'ethnic minorities' in Britain have higher than average life outcomes in many areas, while others are disproportionately experiencing negative life outcomes in multiple areas (see "How Fair Is Britain" report). The use of average BAME statistics conceals these disparities and makes racial and ethnic differences undetectable.
28. Intermix.org, accessed on December 1, 2014, <http://intermix.org.uk/abt/index.asp>.
29. Naomi Zack, "American Mixed Race: The U.S. 2000 Census and Related Issues," *Harvard Black Letter Law Journal* 17 (2001): 33–46.
30. See British Future, *The Melting Pot Generation*, 2012.
31. Elam, *The Souls of Mixed Folk*, 24.
32. Melvin J. Lerner, *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion* (New York: Plenum Press 1980).
33. For an analysis of silencing, see Kristie Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," *Hypatia* 26 (2) (2011): 236–257.
34. See "Reading the Riots" and "How Fair Is Britain".
35. Race riots have been a reoccurring theme in Britain since the beginning of the twentieth century; see en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ethnic_riots#United_Kingdom for a list of dates and locations. For views on whether riots will reoccur see also <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/nov/28/england-riots-urgent-action-panel>.

Part II

Mixed Race Metaphilosophy

3

Through the Looking Glass *What Philosophy Looks Like from the Inside When You're Not Quite There¹*

Marina Oshana

My experience as a philosopher invariably has been tempered by my experience as a person of mixed racial heritage, just as it has been tempered by my experience as a woman, as someone who came of age in a civil-rights neighborhood, as someone from economically strained circumstances, and as a first generation university student. I find it perplexing that philosophy and those who make professional philosophy their life work have long sought to disclaim the relevance and, more so, the value of the lived experiences of its members to the work we do. Professional philosophy has looked askance upon efforts to introduce first-personal practical insight into the discipline, believing that to do so would distract from the central task of attaining the clear-eyed view from nowhere said to mark the authentic philosopher. To turn to subjective lived experience would compromise the methodology needed to yield the scientific-like authority of rigorous philosophical argument. To this I say, "What hubris, and what folly!" How could subjectivity *not* make a difference in how each of us does our job, and in the things that engage us? How could it fail to infiltrate our work, in often beneficial ways? Feminist philosophers have been among the vanguard in insisting that the experiences of women and the testimony of women were crucial to philosophical theorizing in the areas of ethics and political philosophy, philosophy of language, epistemology, metaphysics, and science.² Philosophers of color such as Charles Mills, Tommie Shelby, Naomi Zack, and George Yancy, among others, have carved the way for the same approach with respect to race.³

I am very pleased to have been granted the opportunity to enlist my experiences as a person of mixed race in the service of this essay. I should note at the outset that this is not an essay in philosophy, but an essay about philosophy. The topic of the essay is the culture of our profession, and about the significance of my presence within the culture. That my

presence here is “significant” sounds self-congratulatory. Let me assure you it is not. If anything, the significance of my presence here is due to the fact that people like me—who share my ethnicity, my gender, my academic pedigree, and social background—are not found in our discipline in numbers anywhere near proportional to our presence in the general population or in the educated public. Indeed, we are barely found at all. Molly Paxton, Carrie Figdor, and Valerie Tiberius write that “in March of 2000, the U.S. National Center for Educational Statistics reported that women make up twenty-one percent of full-time faculty in philosophy (Division APAP 2011), a much smaller percentage than for any of the other humanities.”⁴ The American Philosophical Association boasts a membership of approximately eleven thousand professors and graduate students. No official tally is maintained of the number of racial and ethnic minorities in this association.⁵

The association does maintain statistics on the percentage of bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degrees awarded to members of racial and ethnic minority groups as well as to members of traditionally underrepresented minorities between 1995 and 2009.⁶ The APA reports that in 1996, a total of 369 PhDs were awarded in philosophy: 261 went to men, 108 to women, 0 to Native Americans, 12 to people who self-identified as Asian, 6 to those who identified as black, 261 to identified as white, and 10 to people who called themselves Hispanic. In 2009, traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic minorities received approximately 12 percent of all bachelor’s degrees in philosophy, an increase from 9 percent in 1995. At the master’s level, traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities earned 8.27 percent of philosophy degrees awarded, up from 6.5 percent in 1995. By 2006, completions of philosophy doctorates by traditionally underrepresented minorities had reached a high point of almost 8 percent, a level nearly three times greater than the 2.71 percent reported in 1995. The number of doctoral degrees declined in 2009, when traditionally underrepresented minorities constituted 5 percent of philosophy doctorates in 2009. For African-American, non-Hispanic students, the numbers are worse: we earned 4.77 percent of the bachelor’s degrees awarded in 2009, and 2.48 percent of the PhDs conferred that year. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that in 2003–04, 5,467 doctorate degrees in the humanities were granted. 84.4 percent went to white persons, 4.4 percent to black, 5.5 to Hispanic, and 5.4 to Asian, and 0.4 percent to Native American/Alaskan.⁷ Statistically, only a small fraction of these humanities degrees went to philosophers, and I’d venture that very, very few were awarded to first generation, lower-income college students..

In what follows, I explore a set of conditions that may explain the fact that, in 2015, I remain an anomaly in philosophy. Specifically, I want to say a few things about the nature of our profession that contributes to this state. Section 1 begins with a bit about the background circumstances

that prompted me to take on this topic. Section 2 considers four features of the culture of philosophy that may influence the underrepresentation of mixed race persons such as myself in the discipline.

WHAT PROMPTED THIS ESSAY

The phenomenology of my experience in philosophy serves as the first catalyst for my desire to scrutinize the separation of the culture of philosophy from that of my lived experiences outside of the discipline. There is something about the discipline of professional philosophy that has led me to feel as Alice must have felt when she stepped through the looking glass.⁸ In *Through the Looking-Glass*, Alice considers what the world is like on the other side of a mirror and, to her astonishment, she is able to move through the glass to experience this other world. Philosophy often feels like an alternate world, partly because it deals in abstraction, speculation, and theory, but not just for this reason. After all, much of the interesting intellectual scholarship in the humanities, and in the hands-on sciences does this, too. But in the time I have traveled from my days as an undergraduate to my current position as full professor, I have felt increasingly less at ease with the culture of philosophy rather than more so. I have gone from firmly believing myself to have found an intellectual abode in the study and the practice of philosophy to being less confident of this belief, from experiencing the terrain as *terra firma* to *terra infirma*. In short, I have traveled from a place where it simply did not occur to me that philosophy was something to which I did not rightly belong, to a schizophrenic sense of wondering what I am doing here. I am increasingly conscious of my difference as a minority, a mixed race woman who defies pigeonholing by my colleagues, the administration, my students, other faculty of color, and so on. I am an anomaly on too many levels.⁹

Self-awareness is, in a nutshell, “co-awareness” of ourselves in interaction with others in the world. Adequate self-understanding rests on an appreciation of the role others play in confirming our identities, notably by the positive or negative reinforcement given to the identity we have presented. For persons of mixed race such as myself, self-conceptions can be perplexing and tenuous, and the social climate that contributes to one’s self-conception can be unwelcoming. There are no readily available norms or behavioral requirements, no habituation “to certain socially instilled general prescriptive principles” that mixed race persons have internalized and that are “constitutive of individuals situated in communal forms of life.”¹⁰ For these reasons, it is harder, where racial identity is concerned, for a person who identifies as mixed race to be aware of oneself in the sense of bearing witness to oneself where matters of race are at issue. I suspect this is due, in part, to the fact that racialized self-awareness, like most forms of identity-awareness, is socially mediated.

The culture of philosophy and the subject matter of philosophy have been historically that of Europe, of men, and of the economically privileged. It is a culture that ignores (at best) and penalizes (at worst) attempts to include the imprint of the racial identities of its members (especially non-white racial identities) into the practice of philosophy. Philosophy calls upon us to, in a sense, forget ourselves. But for “those of us who are dark,” racial identity is of such salience that it cannot fail to operate at the foreground of our self-conceptions.¹¹ Forgetting one’s identity is always hard work. Forgetting calls for a break in self-awareness and detachment from a part of one’s lived experience of which, where race (or gender, or economic status) is concerned, absence of awareness is near impossible, particularly when one is non-white. Academic philosophy and the academy more generally are complicit in lapses of self-awareness. Consider the position of an underrepresented minority in a university. Because we find ourselves in a situation of being the unfamiliar face—the novelty, the sought-after representative—the racially-identifying elements of our experiences and attitudes assert themselves all the more starkly as elements of our self-conception. Sociologist Roxanna Harlow explored how self-awareness of oneself as of a particular race is reinforced by one’s experiences in the classroom. Harlow interviewed in equal numbers a cross section of black and white professors, male and female, at the ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor at “a large Midwestern state university with a 91 percent white student population.”¹² She found (not surprisingly) that “negotiating a devalued racial status . . . affects the negotiation of self and identity in the classroom.”¹³ Notably, a majority of the black faculty members attempted to employ a strategy of “selectively incorporating responses from interactions [with their students] that confirm[ed] conceptions of self, while rejecting responses that conflict with such conceptions, regardless of the significance of that interaction in defining a highly central or salient identity.”¹⁴ In other words, at a greater rate than their white colleagues, the black faculty learned to ignore cues from interactions with students that challenged their professorial identity and reported efforts to discount exchanges that marginalized their professional self-conception. In addition, black faculty relied less upon external validation from their students and colleagues, instead developing their professional identity through confirmatory exchanges with friends, family, and other professionals of their race.

A second fact prompted me to reconsider my place in philosophy. This was the first gathering of the newly formed Collegium of Black Women Philosophers, a groundbreaking event in which I participated in 2007. The collegium was the brainchild of Kathryn Gines, at the time a fairly recent PhD out of the University of Memphis. Gines initiated the collegium by email, contacting hundreds of persons in an attempt to identify African-American female professors of philosophy in the United States. She had tremendous success: all thirty-one were contacted. We

did not all make it to the collegium, but in conjunction with a handful of graduate students managed to put together what Anita Allen, a professor of law at the University of Pennsylvania who holds a PhD in philosophy, labeled (with no irony) a “critical mass” of forty-one.

A third fact has spurred my ruminations. Some of you have no doubt come across Sally Haslanger’s deeply personal and clear-eyed appraisal of the profession in “*Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)*.¹⁵” Haslanger is a professor of philosophy at M.I.T.; her area of specialization is core analytic metaphysics and epistemology; she received her PhD from Berkeley, and has taught at Michigan and the University of Pennsylvania. No one can question Haslanger’s credentials, or relegate her to the sidelines as a philosophical lightweight. Save for her gender, she should count as one of the club. She does not. Haslanger recounts her experiences as a woman in the discipline and the bulk of the paper is devoted to exploring the reasons for the continued and, on her assessment, systemic, underrepresentation of women and people of color in philosophy. Here is the opening portion of the paper:

There is a deep well of rage inside of me. Rage about how I as an individual have been treated in philosophy; rage about how others I know have been treated; and rage about the conditions that I’m sure affect many women and minorities in philosophy, and have caused many others to leave. Most of the time I suppress this rage and keep it sealed away. Until I came to MIT in 1998, I was in a constant dialogue with myself about whether to quit philosophy, even give up tenure, to do something else. In spite of my deep love for philosophy, it just didn’t seem worth it. And I am one of the very lucky ones. One of the ones who has been successful by the dominant standards of the profession.

Reading this paper was as consoling as it was depressing—a sense of comradeship mingled with that of discouragement. If Haslanger, who should count as an “insider,” has this impression of the culture of philosophy, imagine how the rest of us feel. So, having read the piece, I was inspired to share it with my colleagues at the time and with our graduate students. In my naiveté, I hoped for at least a dialogue to ensue. I wanted to shake things up in a place where, as the only woman in my department, and the only ethnic minority, neither the fact that I was the lone woman nor the fact that I was the sole ethnic minority appeared to register as significant in the minds of my colleagues. In response I received replies from two female graduate students, one insightful reply from an Asian male graduate student, and one from a (white male) emeritus colleague. I found this response disheartening, but not unexpected. My colleagues were kind people, and represented the standard open-minded persona of a liberal university. Yet all were white males, and all, I believe, were simply blind to the fact that the culture of philosophy was proble-

matic. This was their terrain. (Less charitably, I would conjecture that some simply did not care that there was a problem, if indeed they were inclined to acknowledge the possibility of a problem.)

So these three occasions—the phenomenology of my experience, the forming of the collegium, and Haslanger’s scathing assessment of the field—were the catalyst for my desire to scrutinize the “looking glass” that marks the separation of the culture of philosophy from that of the real world. My point is not that the real world is ideally suited to persons of my ethnicity, gender, and upbringing whereas the culture of philosophy is not. Far from it. But because I reside in philosophy as much as I do outside of it, I want to figure out how to feel at home in both, or figure out why this may not be possible. It is borne upon me to try to make sense of the Alice-through-the Looking-Glass experience. What accounts for it?

THE CULTURE OF PHILOSOPHY

Four possibilities come to mind. To begin, there is the obvious fact that, like Alice, people like me are relative strangers in this territory. I have heard that philosophy is, among the humanities and physical sciences, the whitest, most male-dominated field—even more so than physics—and I can believe it. I think it is revealing that over the course of the two-day collegium, though the audience shifted, not one of Gines’s white, male colleagues dropped by. Anita Allen’s keynote address drew a handful of white graduate students and junior faculty, as well as the chairman of the philosophy department (which co-sponsored the event). But it was, to quote Tommie Shelby (in conversation), an audience of “the usual suspects.” Perhaps Gines’s colleagues felt unwelcome, or believed that their presence would be intrusive. Maybe the specter of thirty-plus black women scared them. Kelly Oliver, W. Alton Jones Chair of Philosophy and professor of women’s studies at Vanderbilt, offered the following assessment in remarks to a reporter covering the event:

‘Historically, philosophy has primarily been the domain of white men,’ Oliver commented, as well as an enterprise that sees itself as ‘trying to discern what is universal about experience.’ ‘Ironically,’ she continued, white males ‘have usually bracketed out consideration of race and gender and taken their perspectives unwittingly as universals.’ But, she continued, ‘those so-called universal perspectives haven’t been universal at all. They’ve just been disguised white-male privileged perspectives’ that leave little room for other viewpoints.¹⁶

Oliver’s point was that in philosophy, as in much of American life, the default standing is that of white men. This default comes with an acute, but predictable, blindness to the fact of their majority status, and offers persons such as myself a curious ghost-like, marginalized presence. For

example, while I am present at meetings of the American Philosophical Association, no one quite knows what to make of me there; my presence is out of the ordinary, so what I might say or do is given special notice, or little notice at all.

I doubt it was overt racism or sexism that kept people away from the collegium papers. I think the absence of Gines's colleagues may be due to a disinterest of a fairly benign and common sort. Few of us find every variety of philosophy captivating—I certainly don't—and perhaps people believed that the collegium would highlight areas of the discipline that were unconventional and uninteresting to most philosophers. A majority of the women at the collegium were specialists in continental philosophy or in critical race theory. I was one of only three whose area of specialization was Western analytic philosophy. However, underlying this benign disinterest is a more malignant disorder. On a deeper level, what might have kept people away rests on what Oliver notes as the irony of philosophy, and this signals something disturbing about the culture of the discipline. This brings me to the second source of the through-the-looking-glass experience.

The irony is this: We are participants in a discipline that claims an affinity for the deeper, foundational questions that persist through millennia. A perusal of any philosophy department webpage will find some gesture in that direction, in an effort to reach out to those who inquire into what philosophy is about. At the webpage for the philosophy department at the University of Florida, prospective undergraduates and their practically-minded parents find the following:

Philosophy Addresses Foundational Questions. These are questions the answers to which inform our basic understanding of one or another domain of inquiry, or some fundamental aspect of the world or of ourselves or our relation to the world. Philosophical inquiry is therefore not restricted to any particular subject matter. In this respect, it is different from every other subject studied at the university.¹⁷

From my own undergraduate institution, one that very much caters to working, middle-class, and non-traditional students, we find this description:

Philosophy is traditionally defined as the love of wisdom, the ability to think well about the foundations of human action, the nature of reality, and the purposes and priorities of life. The department offers the opportunity for a systematic study of the philosophies of past and present, of East and West, a study that deepens and broadens one's outlook on the world and on human affairs, and thus provides a more secure basis on which to develop one's own philosophy.¹⁸

Finally, from the undergraduate webpage at Bowling Green State University, where I taught for five years, and which serves many first-generation students, we read the following:

Over two thousand years ago Plato argued that the unexamined life is not worth living. Philosophy examines questions like those above that are central to living a distinctively human life. Such questions are worth asking because in answering them we come to better understand who we are and how we ought to live. Philosophy classes offer a unique opportunity for addressing such permanent questions and considering the most impressive answers that people have managed to produce since Plato's time.¹⁹

This is very appealing. It conveys what Jacqueline Scott has described as "philosophy as the art of living."²⁰ But the professionalization of philosophy—the culture of the profession and the discourse of the profession as it is enforced in graduate training and beyond—is somewhat unfaithful to the picture sketched in these web blurbs. I think this is one source of the through-the-looking-glass quality of our field. Professional philosophy is a culture that tends to more highly prize and deem worthwhile the abstract and arcane dimensions of the discipline, and this emphasis may be partly responsible for the fact that people like me are few and far between in our ranks. Philosophy *begins*, we are told, in wonder. As undergraduate students, we are exhorted to look at the world in a different light—to direct a lens of clarity, rigor, and critical assessment on the conventional pictures of how things are, whether in our assumptions about the nature and origin of knowledge, our beliefs about use and meaning in language, or views about determining what counts as morally right action. Our study of philosophy *begins* by urging us to analyze from a broader, deeper vantage point the values, ideas, and systems of beliefs we have until that time held in an unexamined fashion. The light of reason in all its glory beckons.

But then somewhere along the way, as we become "professional philosophers," the light shifts. What we as budding philosophers might have regarded as a powerful liberatory tool, a resource that could be of assistance in addressing problems of practical import, shrinks. We are most successful, by the standard measures of the profession—research, publication in prestigious journals, talented students, engaging colleagues—when our training outfits us as model practitioners of an increasingly specialized subfield, preoccupied with a fairly narrow set of problems. Those of us who stepped through the looking glass enamored of the big picture might find this professional transformation somehow "inauthentic"; philosophy looks less like the "love of wisdom, critical assessment of the broader issues that excite the mind" field than it did when we stepped across the threshold. It can become harder to recognize as welcoming and familiar terrain.

I suspect the professionalization of philosophy might be especially disconcerting for those of us, such as myself, who are not children of the ivory tower and the elite. For those of us who are children of the grounded, this transformation from a discipline that can marshal living

problems in a way that is empowering and illuminating to a discipline that valorizes narrowness of focus and, at times, arid analysis denuded (it seems) of practical import, is unsettling, a bait-and-switch. I am reminded of a remark of Charles Mills, a philosopher at Northwestern, who once referred to academic philosophy in the United States (and Anglo-American philosophy more generally) as “a lot like Antarctica: cold, white, and barren.” People who come to philosophy from having lived in a very hands-on world may be, like Alice, susceptible to an experience of not-belonging, and of not knowing the language anymore. They may experience disparagement of their philosophical interests and their approaches to the discipline from those who are more at home in the terrain. Consider Alice’s exchange with Humpty Dumpty:

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.” “The question is, said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.” “The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master—that’s all.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Humpty Dumpty is not merely preoccupied with mastering the language himself, he is preoccupied with which language is to master us, and he assumes that a single master must exist. Assuming this is correct, what is to be master in the practice of philosophy? The narrow and the dry, or the wide and fecund? This is not merely an academic question. It is a question that has very real implications for our professional lives—for our success in the classroom, for the reception we receive from our colleagues, for our prospects of professional exposure and respect, for tenure, and so forth.

The narrowness of philosophy has a number of manifestations. And here we find a third source of the odd, through-the-looking-glass quality of our profession. There is an undeniable *hierarchy* within the subspecialties in philosophy, and the hierarchy is one of credibility or respectability. It is a hierarchy that demarcates, by area of specialization, who plays “hard ball” as a professor of mine once stated, or who has the “cajones”. For instance, one who does history (especially history of ideas) is regarded as less of a heavyweight—less of a real philosopher—than one whose area of specialization is metaphysics and epistemology. The same is true—but to a lesser degree, my colleagues assure me—of one who works on ethics. Critical race theory, continental philosophy, and feminist philosophy were heavily represented at the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers, all areas that have not escaped scorn and are commonly relegated to the bottom of the hierarchy of “genuine” philosophy.

So, many who are underrepresented statistically in philosophy are marginalized within the discipline as well, given their subdisciplinary interests.

Now, it is a fact that philosophers who are women and/or are people of color tend to migrate towards normative ethics, or social and political philosophy, or history. Haslanger discovered that, statistically, publications in these areas are underrepresented in the top (most selective in terms of acceptance rates) philosophy journals—such as *Noûs*, *Mind*, *Philosophical Review*, the *Journal of Philosophy*, and even more so by authors who are women. And it is by garnering a publication record of just this sort that we capture the approval and high regard of our senior colleagues, and of tenure and promotion committees. Moreover, there is a stigma to approaching even traditional, core areas of epistemology, or mind, or Kant, or political philosophy, in novel ways, even when one has secured a strong reputation in the profession. Think of Lorraine Code's "feminist epistemologies," or Rae Langton's work on speech acts and pornography, Haslanger's work on metaphysics, objectivity, and feminism, or, if I may so bold, of my own work on autonomy and on self-identity. I recall once broaching the possibility of teaching "analytic feminism" as a special topics course or graduate seminar. I was met with supercilious smirks, as if I have said something inherently contradictory.²¹ Now undeniably, some subject matter is relegated, and rightly so, to the margins of genuinely reputable philosophical scholarship. Undeniably, and rightly, there are standards of clarity and rigor that are upheld by the discipline. Not everything should count as professional academic philosophy, nor should every way of "reading" a "text" count as a philosophical reading of a text. But the philosophers I have mentioned, and many, many more, are advancing the discussion of seminal issues in philosophy with clarity and rigor. If we are not permitted to count their work as legitimate even within a narrow canonical tradition, the practical upshot is a field that is as thin-skinned, fragile, and self-important as Humpty Dumpty.

It is not insignificant that the majority of those who defend a particular canonical interpretation are the progeny of educational institutions where the students and the faculty are predominately white, predominately male, and predominately of socially privileged backgrounds. In such institutions, the canon is promoted as the Absolute. Wrestling with the question of what is to be our master as practitioners of this discipline and as educators has as much (or almost as much) to do with why I feel as if I have stepped through-the-looking-glass, and am now on-the-inside not-quite-there, as does the fact that the demographics are not in my favor. And this is in spite of the fact that I am one of the mainstreamers—the ones who study and find intriguing the work of the canon. I am as much an inhabitant of the looking glass and an adherent of the canon I charge with narrowness as I am a foreigner to it.

Finally, there is the fact that the etiquette of professional philosophy makes it an uncomfortable world to occupy. The standard behavior in colloquia or when presenting a paper is militaristic: target, attack, and destroy the rival view (and, in the process, the messenger). Stepping through the looking glass, we find ourselves in a positively combative place. I have been so demoralized by the response I have had to my work or to the way I have handled exchanges during talks that I have almost given up asking questions at colloquia, and have flat out refused to even consider sending my work to certain journals. Some of my research, most recently on self-identity, draws from first-personal experience, and for that reason has been derided by some philosophers as illegitimate. My female graduate students have reported lacking the courage to speak up in seminars for fear of being dismissed as fuzzy-headed, or “sounding like they came from the English Department.” When I taught at the University of Florida, there was one other woman in the department, an untenured assistant professor, a Stanford PhD from a solid, conventional middle-class African-American background. She was there for less than five years before she chose to resign from the university and from the profession for reasons due, in part, to the nastiness of the culture. This climate is reflected in what Allen herself reports:

I have not been able to encourage other people like me to go into philosophy because I don't think it has enough to offer them. The salaries aren't that great, the prestige isn't that great, the ability to interact with the world isn't that great, the career options aren't that great, the methodologies are narrow. Why would you do that, she asks, when you could be in an African American studies department, a law school, a history department, and have so many more people to interact with who are more like you, a place where so many more methods are acceptable, so many more topics are going to be written about? Why would you close yourself off in philosophy? I feel that philosophy is hoisting itself by its own petard. Its unwillingness to be more inclusive in terms of issues, methods, demographics, means that it's losing out on a lot of vibrancy, a lot of intellectual power.'

Despite delight at the birth of the collegium, Allen admits, “philosophy still feels to me like an isolated profession. I don't think I would encourage a black woman who has big ideas necessarily to go into philosophy,” Allen says. “Why? What's the point?”²²

Gines expresses similar frustration when called upon to answer those who question why she chose a career in philosophy:

At stake here is the more general question of “Who and/or what qualifies as a philosopher or as philosophy?” And, furthermore, “Who has access to the discipline and discourse of philosophy?” These are questions that both discourage me and motivate me. When these questions discourage me, I ask, “Why do I insist on inserting myself (or other intellectuals who are women and/or people of color) into this space that

has been constructed as explicitly white and male?" When they motivate me, I seek to expand the philosophy canon and continue to create spaces for myself (and "others") within a discipline that is capable of being both hospitable and hostile.²³

In the past several years, an increasing number of female undergraduates, minority students, and first generation students have worked with me, taking multiple classes, special independent study courses, and participating in mentoring groups. I am torn between advising my students to avoid this discipline at all costs, and urging them to jump in even though the water is cold.²⁴ Something, after all, urges me to stay in philosophy. It is not mainly inertia; I stay because I love philosophy, and because I identify as a philosopher. One reason to stay in philosophy is that a fresh perspective is brought to philosophical interpretation by the experiences of women, people of color, nontraditional students, working and middle class students, first-generation students, and so forth. Our lived experiences position us to "shake up conventional notions," even when we analyze standard problems, figures, and texts, as I do. To a bright curious mind, the whole enterprise of philosophy can be so invigorating. It offers an opportunity for intellectual birth that stands out among the more empirically informed social sciences and the more familiar terrain of English departments, history departments, and so forth. So, I have attempted, unlike Alice, to remain at home in the looking glass, even when it feels as if I am attempting to make real what seems impossible:

"I can't believe that!" said Alice.

"Can't you?" the queen said in a pitying tone. "Try again, draw a long breath, and shut your eyes."

Alice laughed. "There's no use trying," she said. "One can't believe impossible things."

"I dare say you haven't had much practice," said the queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Trying to do what feels impossible can be wearying. My identity as a mixed race female and first-generation academic philosopher is shades away from that of the standard model of professional philosopher. The "shades away" speaks as much to do with my distance from a particularly male (gendered) or white (ethnic/racial) orientation as it does with the fact that philosophy rewards, and sets out as its ideal, an enterprise that often seems unfaithful to its original, one that values a methodology I find (and I suspect others like me find) sterile, uninspiring, and uncompromising, and combative. It may be hard to change this, and I do hope I have not been so discouraging as to lead you to think change is impossible. I stay in philosophy because it is a kind of Wonderland, and be-

cause I persist in the belief that we can make real what often seems impossible.

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NOTES

1. A previous version of "Through the Looking Glass: What Philosophy Looks Like from the Inside When You're Not Quite There" was presented as a keynote address to the Society for Women's Advancement in Philosophy's Fourth Annual Conference for Topics of Diversity in Philosophy, Florida State University, Tallahas-

see, February 23rd, 2008. Professor Oshana is thankful to the audience on that occasion for their helpful comments.

2. Just to name a handful: in the philosophy of language see the work of Louise Antony and Jennifer Hornsby; in moral epistemology, see Margaret Olivia Little, "Seeing and Caring: The Role of Affect in Feminist Moral Epistemology," *Hypatia*, 10(3) *Analytic Feminism* (Summer, 1995), 117–137; in epistemology, look to Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), Elizabeth Fricker, "Testimony and epistemic autonomy," in Jennifer Lackey and Ernest Sosa (eds.), *The Epistemology of Testimony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 225–253, and Kristie Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 26(2): 236–257. In the philosophy of science see the work of Lisa Lloyd, Alison Wylie, and Helen Longino.

3. See, for example, Charles Mills's *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Tommie Shelby's *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007); Georg Yancy's *Reframing the Practice of Philosophy: Bodies of Color, Bodies of Knowledge* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012), and Zack's *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993).

4. See Molly Paxton, Carrie Figdor, and Valerie Tiberius "Quantifying the Gender Gap: An Empirical Study of the Underrepresentation of Women in Philosophy," *Hypatia* 27(4) (Fall 2012): 949–957.

5. Unofficial tallies place the number of black professional philosophers in the United States at approximately 156, with approximately 55 of those being female. See, e.g., Tina Fernandes Botts, Liam Kofi Bright, Myisha Cherry, Guntur Mallarangeng, and Quayshawn Spencer, "What is the State of Blacks in Philosophy?" *Critical Philosophy of Race* 2(2) (2014). In 2011, Kathryn Gines reported that "today, still fewer than thirty Black women (including Black women who are not African American) hold a PhD in philosophy and work in a philosophy department in academia." Kathryn Gines, "Being a Black Woman Philosopher: Reflections on Founding the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers," *Hypatia* 26(2)(Spring, 2011): 429–437, 435.

6. APA Resources on Diversity and Inclusiveness, Minorities in Philosophy Fact Sheet http://www.apaonline.org/?page=diversity_resources These statistics are drawn from the U.S. Department of Education, the Institute of Education Studies, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

7. Table 304. Statistical profile of persons receiving doctor's degrees in the humanities: Selected years, 1979–80 through 2003–04. The National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. nces.ed.gov/index.asp, accessed February 14, 2008.

8. Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson), *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871) (New York: Bantam Classics, May 1, 1984).

9. For another philosopher's description of her own "schizophrenic" sense of place in philosophy, see Jacqueline Scott, "Toward a Place Where I Can Bring All of Me," in *Reframing the Practice of Philosophy: Bodies of Color, Bodies of Knowledge*, ed. George Yancy (Ithaca, NY: SUNY, 2012), 203–223.

10. Anita L. Allen, "Forgetting Oneself," in *Feminists Rethink the Self*, ed. Diana Tietjens Meyers, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 105 and 106.

11. I am borrowing here from the title of Tommie Shelby, *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007).

12. Roxanna Harlow, "'Race Doesn't Matter, But . . . ': The Effect of Race on Professors' Experiences and Emotion Management in the Undergraduate College Classroom," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 66(4) (2003), 348–363, 350.

13. Ibid., 348.

14. Ibid., 360.

15. Haslanger, "Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)," *Hypatia* 23(2) (Apr.–Jun., 2008): 210–223.

16. Carlin Romano, "Meeting of Minds Is 'An Extraordinary Event': The Collegium of Black Women Philosophers Has Its First Gathering", *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October, 2007.
17. Prepared by the Philosophy Department at the University of Florida. © 2007 <http://web.phil.ufl.edu/ugrad/whatis/>, accessed February 14, 2008.
18. <http://www.sfsu.edu/~phlsphr/>, accessed February 21, 2008.
19. <http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/phil/>, accessed February 21, 2008.
20. Jacqueline Scott, "Toward a Place Where I Can Bring All of Me," 207.
21. "Analytic feminism applies analytic concepts and methods to feminist issues and applies feminist concepts and insights to issues that traditionally have been of interest to analytic philosophers. Analytic feminists, like analytic philosophers more generally, value clarity and precision in argument and use logical and linguistic analysis to help them achieve that clarity and precision." Ann E. Cudd, the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Supplement entry on "Analytic Feminism," ed. Donald M. Borchert (New York: Simone and Shuster Reference, 1996), 20–21, <http://web.ku.edu/%7Eacudd/Anal-femdef.htm>.
22. Carlin Romano, "A Challenge for Philosophy: Penn's Anita Allen Is at the Top of Her Field, But She Has Serious Concerns about Its Lack of Openness and Diversity." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 2007.
23. Kathryn Gines, "Being a Black Woman Philosopher: Reflections on Founding the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers," 433–444.
24. Thanks to Joel Anderson for this metaphor.

4

Being and Not Being, Knowing and Not Knowing

Jennifer Lisa Vest

BEING AND NOT BEING MIXED

Does the Mixed person exist? Is it possible to exist when your existence is refuted by society? Is it possible to exist when knowledge of your existence is not possible? Is it possible to exist when you pop in and out of reality as different persons? What does existence mean for a person who is frequently in places and spaces where s/he fails to exist?

The Mixed person's existence is always in question; to be Mixed in a racially-ordered and stratified society like the United States is to have an unverifiable existence—a purely subjective existence not verifiable in terms of objective facts, an existence that is explicitly refuted and denied. S/he may know herself/himself to be X, but the Mixed person can never know herself/himself to be X in a world that also knows her/him irrefutably to be X.

For in order to be, the Mixed person must not be Mixed. Only through not being is the Mixed person able to be. And this problem is of interest not just to scholars concerned with identity or self-image issues. This Mixed dilemma is an ontological puzzle that is philosophically interesting. The existence or nonexistence of the Mixed person in the social ontology of human kinds is about how we as a society define reality and as such, the being or nonbeingness of Mixed persons affects the possibility of beingness for all persons.

Human kinds are defined in a racially-stratified society like ours in terms of one another. Races are co-constructed and thus the question of Mixed beingness impacts the question of Black or white or Asian or Native American beingness. It affects our notion of beingness and questions the very definitions of beingness we use.

In lieu of an actual, assertable, knowable, verifiable existence, the Mixed person must instead adopt a false existence, a partial existence, a provisional existence or be willing to embody a shifting existence that changes according to context and environmental need. Thus, sometimes a

Mixed person is urged or required to adopt a false monoracial identity which may or may not be associated with a partial existence. For example, a person is seen only as a person of race X, despite being an actual descendant of persons who have belonged to or been raced as members of races X, Y, and Z. Maria P. P. Root describes this as the “fragmenting” or “fractionizing” of oneself “in order to make others more comfortable.”¹ The most obvious, and arguably the most important, form of this imperative is that of the “one-drop rule” in which anyone of partial African ancestry is viewed and counted as a monoracial Black person regardless of her/his parentage, cultural experience, or identity.² The one-drop rule is but one species of the rule of hypodescent, which in a racially-stratified society assigns the subordinate race to any mixtures in order to maintain an edifice of white superiority and white privilege.³ The one-drop rule is uniquely applied to Blacks. As Adrian Piper points out:

This “one-drop” convention of classification of blacks is unique not only relative to the treatment of blacks in other countries but also unique relative to the treatment of other ethnic groups in this country. It goes without saying that no one, either white or black, is identified as, for example, English by virtue of having some small fraction of English ancestry. Nor is anyone free, as a matter of social convention, to do so by virtue of that fraction. . . . In the case of other disadvantaged groups in this country, the convention is different. Whereas any proportion of African ancestry is sufficient to identify a person as black, an individual must have at least one-eighth Native American ancestry in order to identify legally as Native American.⁴

In the case of the Native/Black, Black/Asian, or Black/Hispanic mixtures, the one-drop rule requires that blackness trump all other heritages. In some cases, a Mixed person is raced as belonging to a race to which s/he in fact has no ancestral ties, but which in the current context, is the only race possible. In such cases, s/he has a provisional race. The person’s existence is provisional in this instance. S/he exists in a temporary, contingent way. Once s/he changes locations, s/he ceases to exist as a member of that race and either ceases to exist altogether or embodies a new existence, categorized in a new way in a new context.

A Mixed person may also have a shifting existence. In such a case the existence may be consistent with aspects of the person’s identity. So, for example, while in Hawaii a mainland Mixed person may exist as a Hapa or while in Trinidad a Mixed American may be raced a Dougla. S/he may exist in those places but when s/he returns home to mainland United States s/he does not. A Mixed person may be able to exist as a shifting self: Black in South Carolina, Native American in Florida, and “foreigner” in New York. There is an insecurity in the existence of the Mixed person in each of these instances. There is no stability, no permanence, no sureness allowed. S/he exists but with a change of time or place, s/he can

cease to exist. Changes in one's appearance (for example, owing to a suntan or a change in hairstyle) can also affect one's ability to exist provisionally.

WHY MIXEDNESS IS A PROBLEM

The problem of mixedness occurs because of the way races are defined as pure categories of being. According to Zack, "the idea of race rests on fantasies of racial purity,"⁵ and "when race is taken seriously, racial mixture is viewed as a problem" because mixedness creates "a contradiction in the facts of racial reality."⁶ If pure races occur and if all persons are categorizable in terms of pure races then Mixed races cannot exist and Mixed people cannot exist.

Mixed people cannot exist qua Mixed. The only hope for existence for the Mixed person is in partial existence in the form of monoracialization. The only human kinds to which Mixed people can legitimately belong are monoraces; the only identity a Mixed person can legitimately assert is a monoracial identity (i.e., a partial identity). In a society such as ours the urge to monoracialize is strong. Everyone we encounter must be placed in a monorace. Everyone must assert a monoracial identity. To do otherwise to is to live in a fantasy world of one's own making. Any person claiming to be Mixed is always asked, "But what are you really?" Anyone with an ambiguous phenotype creates confusion for onlookers in a racially stratified society. The urge to monoracialize requires that a race be assigned, even if it is not obvious which race should be assigned. A race must be found. A fix must be found to the confusion. Without the assignment of a race, social existence is not possible. It is for this reason that Mixed people often find complete strangers walking up to them and asking them, "What are you?" As one mixed teen writer put it,

They had to find some sort of glass to look at me through, and everything else came after that. This is why people who I had never met before would stop me as I walked around at school or while I spoke to my friends to ask me the question, "What are you?" Because, according to them, race is inherently what you are. Not who, but what. And they could not go a day without knowing what I was.⁷

In order to know her, the Mixed person's interlocutors had to identify her. They had to place her in the social ontology as a kind. What are you? We cannot know what does not exist. Prior to the asking, the inquirer cannot know what s/he is seeing. The process of placing the Mixed person in a category plays out as the urge to monoracialize. Monoracialization determines the external ascription and identification process but is also expressed in the self-identification process.

Mixed race persons are almost always urged to adopt a monoracial identity. The urging may take a variety of forms from gentle pragmatic appeals to outright coercion:

“Just identify as white. Life will be easier.”

“You look like a Fullblood, so why do you keep insisting you are Mixed? Are you ashamed to be Indian?”

“Chicanos need you more than Asians do. You should align yourself with La Raza. We’re all Mestizos anyway”

“One drop of Black blood makes you Black. It doesn’t matter who your parents/grandparents are.”⁸

“Everybody sees you as _____. Why fight it?”

Mixed people must identify with their ascriptions in order to exist.

Mixedness is also a problem for political and psychological reasons. The possibility of Mixed existence creates “discomfort,” a “crisis of racial meaning,” or else elicits a fear of annihilation, political betrayal, or capitulation with colonialist and racist projects. In a racially stratified society, race is central to our interactions. As Omi and Winant explain, “One of the first things we notice about people when we meet them (along with their sex) is their race. We utilize race to provide clues about *who* a person is. The fact is made painfully obvious when we encounter someone whom we cannot conveniently racially categorize—someone who is, for example, racially “mixed.” . . . Such an encounter becomes a source of discomfort and momentarily a crisis of racial meaning.”⁹

This *fear of a Mixed planet* is also expressed by those who fear that the assertion of Mixed personhood will annihilate monoraces or contribute to racist agendas.¹⁰ There are those who believe that the assertion of Mixed identity will betray Black emancipatory projects and reverse Indigenous sovereignty achievements.¹¹ For example, Lewis Gordon has argued that Mixed race identities ultimately result in the elimination of blackness.¹² In an anti-black world, Gordon argues, the elimination of races requires the elimination of blackness and the elimination of blackness is exactly what anti-black racists want. Gordon claims that “there is no way to reject the thesis that there is something wrong with being black beyond the willingness to ‘be black.’” He sees being Mixed as an evasion of being Black.¹³ Being Mixed in this understanding eliminates the possibility of being Black. In order for Mixed people to exist, Black people have to exist. If Mixed people fail to self-identify with a Black ascription, or blackness, they are part of the problem. For such theorists, Mixed existence isn’t just impossible; it is a bad idea.

There are also some whites who feel that Mixed beingness disallows white beingness. White supremacists, who have produced a centuries-long discourse on the subject, view Mixed peoples as the living embodiment of threats to the borders of white identity. For them, “mongrelization” is the worst form of genocide. Much has been written about the

inferiority of the Mixed, Mulatto, or “mongrel” races by white supremacists who have seen “mongrelization” and Mixed race identity as “threaten[ing] the system of racial classification on which slavery and Jim Crow were based.”¹⁴ For white supremacists, “[because] subjects only become living and viable as they become racialized, mongrelization . . . is death. Properly racialized subjects are the only subjects that qualify for life in this discourse. Interracial sexuality threatens to erase not only racial difference but the actual continued existence of the white race and humanity.”¹⁵

It is through the construction and maintenance of racial boundaries, and the demarcation of ‘whiteness’ as a racially pure identity, that the white subject is constructed. While those who are discovered to be of mixed black/white ancestry are usually defined as black in the United States, they nevertheless represent a potential threat to the construction of racial identity based on the illusion of white racial purity. More important, mixed-race people signal the instability and permeability of racial boundaries.¹⁶

Mixed existence threatens white existence. Indeed whiteness as a privilege and a form of property in the United States cannot exist if Mixed people exist. According to legal scholar Cheryl Harris’s analysis,

Rights in property are contingent on, intertwined with, and conflated with race. Through this entangled relationship between race and property, historical forms of domination have evolved to reproduce subordination in the present. . . . The origins of whiteness as property lie in the parallel systems of domination of Black and Native American peoples out of which were created racially contingent forms of property and property rights. . . . Following the period of slavery and conquest, white identity became the basis of racialized privilege that was ratified and legitimated in law as a type of status property. After legalized segregation was overturned, whiteness as property evolved into a more modern form through the law’s ratification of the settled expectations of relative white privilege as a legitimate and natural baseline.¹⁷

It is also a problem for post-traumatic/symbolic reasons. For many people who have suffered from the savage conquest, colonialism, and slavery imposed upon their countries by Europeans, people who appear as racial hybrids symbolize the rape of their ancestors. In Vietnam, the “dust of the earth” are what the soldiers left behind after the war. In places like Korea, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and throughout North America, Mixed race faces represent the savage genocidal violence that was endured at the hands of Europeans. To recognize the existence of Mixed people is to recognize a shameful history of oppression.¹⁸

Still other scholars like David Theo Goldberg have argued that the assertion of a Mixed race identity reifies race.¹⁹ If Mixed people exist then race exists and if race exists then racism exists. But the opposite argument

is made by Mixed scholars who have argued that the existence of Mixed people proves that race is not real and without race, racism is not possible. Self-identified Multiracial philosophers, scholars, and activists have argued that the assertion of a Mixed race identity and the recognition of the existence of Mixed persons will have the effect of subverting the existing racial hierarchical structure and could potentially even eliminate the notion of race upon which racism relies. Mixed philosophers Naomi Zack and K. Anthony Appiah have both argued for the elimination of race on the basis that the term is nonscientific in its basis, logically incoherent in its use, and morally repugnant in its application. According to Appiah, race "is a notion that underlies the more hateful racism of the modern era." Mixed philosopher Ron Sundstrom has argued that "a proper mixed race consciousness . . . challenges widespread and false conceptions of race held uncritically by the public."²⁰ Multiracial scholar G. Reginald Daniel argues that self-identified Multiracials challenge both race and racial hierarchies.²¹ Mixed scholar Maria P. P. Root has argued that Mixed race individuals expand the discussion on race and can potentially take us beyond race.²² Within post-colonial studies, there is a concept of hybridity which offers mixedness as a radical third space.

[Post-Colonial theorist Homi] Bhabha stresses the interdependence of hybrid parts (e.g., the colonizer and the colonized) and challenges the assumption that cross cultural encounters will automatically be regulated by a dominator-dominated relationship. Instead, such encounters create what Bhabha (1996) describes as "the Third Space." This hybrid space, Bhabha argues, breaks down binary categories and enables a form of subversion by the colonized of the colonizer. In this in-between, hybrid, "Third Space," a new space of negotiation emerges where "power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal."²³

But, existence precedes identification so we cannot very well use identity claims to prove existence, can we?

MY OWN BEINGNESS: A BIOGRAPHY OF SORTS

I grew up a hungry, raggedy farm child running through the mountains in Provence, France, looking for food with which to feed my siblings. The local people called my sisters and me "les petites noirs." They called our blond, blue-eyed, long-haired brothers the Beatles. They called my step-father a Jew. My mother called herself a hippy.

I grew up in Chicago as the proud descendant of a Black family of teachers and bibliophiles from the Midwest, whose long-ago Black ancestor ran away from Kentucky at the age of twelve, moved his elderly ex-slave mother north, and built an empire, despite racism.

I grew up a tragic, light-skinned Mulatta in an all-Black neighborhood in North Chicago who got beaten up every day by groups of Black girl bullies who called me “white girl,” “zebra,” and “Pocahontas.”

I grew up a Black girl in a redneck region of rural Illinois where gangs of white boys threw rocks at my sisters and me, chased us, and called us niggers.

I grew up always being asked what kind of Indian I was. I grew up in Michigan hearing my grandmother recite stories of our Seminole past and how proud she was that ours was the tribe that had never been conquered, never given up, never lived on a reservation.

I grew up “talking white,” reading Black history, going to pow wows, attending mosques, the Church of God in Christ, and Methodist, Presbyterian, and Religious Science religious services, identifying as Black *and* Indian *and* white [even though nobody ever let me], playing and winning at the dozens, having “good hair” in the Black community and “bad hair” in the white community, being considered well-off in my working class, Black, white, Mexican, and Puerto Rican neighborhood, and poor at my all-white, wealthy prep school. I came of age being sexually objectified by boys and men of all colors and self-identified races who assumed Mulattas/Mestizas were over-sexed exotics not deserving of respect.

I grew up with relatives of various shades and ethnic and racial identities, including a “German-American” mother, a “Black” father, a “Seminole” grandmother, a “Haitian” great-grandfather, two “Mexican” aunts, a “Colored” grandfather, and a triracial (Black–Native American–German) great-grandmother.

I grew up going to week-long rock festivals to hear white artists like Jethro Tull, Yes, and Genesis with my mother, and listening to my father’s Eartha Kitt, Temptations, and Marvin Gay records. I grew up hearing stories and learning about herbs from my Cherokee great-grandmother.

I grew up living in apartments and riding public transportation in the city, and shoveling manure and riding in a truck in the country.

As a young adult, I went to an all-white college to study physics and philosophy, then attended an HBCU for my master’s degree, where I wore cross colors and doodoo braids, spoke Black English, became an anti-racist, anti-war, feminist activist performance artist in the Black Arts community in Washington D.C., came out in the Black, gay community, studied African and Afro-Caribbean history, and still got questioned on a regular basis about my “country of origin.” In my twenties, I started attending sweat lodges on a regular basis, became active in the urban Indian communities in every city I lived in, visited the Seminole reservation, talked to the elders, learned some words of my language, studied Seminole history, and worked for several Native American organizations. One of my closest Black friends at this time told me that the fact

that I attended a Black school but went to Native events meant I was confused.

EXISTENCE PRECEDES IDENTITY

Before and after identity, there is external identification. And before identification there is existence. But in the case of human existence in the United States, existence is confined to a limited number of categories of existence. Beyond even the claiming, before the claiming or naming, there is the being. Being Mixed is not merely an issue of claiming an identity, as so many have assumed. The problem of Mixed existence precedes the problem of Mixed identity and is more fundamental. It is a problem of beingness. Existence precedes identification and in the case of the Mixed person, the inability to self-identify occurs precisely because it is not possible to identify as something that does not exist. And this is the real problem. Regardless of how s/he self-identifies, the Mixed person does not exist. The Mixed person's existence is vehemently denied because Mixed existence is logically incompatible with existing definitions of race. In the United States, to be is to be raced.

One is limited in how one can racially identify by how one is raced and one's racialization is limited/overdetermined by the social consensus on the existence of races. Until Mixed race is a real category of existence, Mixed race identity is irrelevant at best, illusory or symptomatic of being delusional or out of touch with reality at worst.

Social kinds (i.e., human kinds) have a reality, says Mixed philosopher Ron Sundstrom, but it is a reality defined differently. In his metaphysically pluralistic account, "there are naturally occurring and constructed kinds . . . [where] naturally occurring includes the kinds of physics, chemistry and biology [and] constructed [kinds] include the kinds of people." In his account, human kinds like race are social kinds. Reality for social kinds is defined in terms of three social forces. These forces include: (1) "the force from above (the act of classification or labeling by some authority), (2) "the force from below (intentionally acting under the label by the so labeled)," and (3) "lateral forces (normative standards that become attached to the label)." Thus, he explains, "Human kinds . . . are institutional and intentional rather than natural." But they are also real. Races are real in Sundstrom's account, but what about Mixed race? Is that real? Mixed race is not real in the way race is. Mixed race, he argues, occupies "a space in the grades between nominal and real."²⁴ So that while it "has a degree of reality" it is "not fully real in the way traditional racial categories are real." But what does a "degree of reality" feel like? If kind-of-real is the best that a Mixed person can hope for, in a world where race is real, the urge to monoracialize might make sense. After all, a degree of reality is probably better than no reality.

Sundstrom argues for the reality of Mixed race because of the existence of Mixed race identity claims. "Some people identify themselves or are identified by others as mixed race, and thus mixed race is real to a degree, and mixed race identity makes sense."²⁵ For Sundstrom, identity precedes existence. But I contend that identity is not the real issue. Identity assumes existence. Shouldn't existence precede identity and identification? I cannot identify as a citizen of Mars if life does not exist on Mars. Can I claim to be Mixed if Mixed people don't exist according to our social ontology?

BEING MANY THINGS TO MANY PEOPLES

In my youth I was many things. In Waukegan, Illinois, I was alternately "Black" and "a white girl" and "Creole". In Winnetka, Illinois, twenty-nine miles away, I was "non-white." Throughout Chicagoland during the Iran-Contra crisis, I was a terrorist or "Middle-Eastern." In New York City in the summers of 1985 and 1998 I was a Boricuan. In Old Town, Chicago, I was a Mexican, a Puerto Rican, or Black, depending on the people I was with. In Skokie, Illinois, I was a South Asian Muslim.

As an adult who travels I become many more things. In Tanzania, I am a Zanzibari. In Paris, I am a North African Arab. In Trinidad, I am a Doubla. In Jamaica, I am an Indian or a white. In Barbados, I am a "[brown-skinned] white." On the Seminole reservation in Florida I am a Seminole. At any given pow wow I am Native American. In Canada, I am aboriginal. In Puerto Rico, I am Puerto Rican. In Sri Lanka, I am Sri Lankan. In Tahiti, I am Tahitian. In Malaysia, Singapore, I am an Indian or a Desai. After 9/11, I became once again a terrorist or an "Arab."

EITHER/OR, BOTH/AND

The dualities and exclusionary definitions inherent in the way racial categories are defined in the United States prevent a whole, stable, verifiable existence for Mixed persons. One cannot simultaneously be both race A and race B, much less a combination of races A-D. Races are not defined that way. They are defined in terms of each other.²⁶ They are defined in inconsistent and illogical ways and they are defined as opposing options. In the case of whiteness for example, purity is inherent to the definition, whereas for Blackness, purity is unnecessary and irrelevant. Hispanic/Latino is an ethnic identity masquerading as a "race," and Native American is the only "race" that requires a government-issued identity card which, once obtained, excludes one from membership in any other race or in more than one tribe. To claim to be white and Black and Native American, then, is to misunderstand the definition of whiteness or blackness or Native Americanness.

To be Black is to *just* be Black; to be white is to lack any Black or brown blood; to be Indigenous is to be from here, only here. To be immigrant is to be from there, only there. How can one be both here and there? How can one be both Black and not-Black? How can one be Indigenous if one is the child of an immigrant? Race is defined in such a way that one must be either/or but never both/and. Racial logics do not allow for the occupation of more than one racial kind by a person. Despite these facts, Mixed persons often have simultaneous identities. The term Multiracial was coined by Mixed people who wanted to claim multiple racial identities simultaneously.²⁷

CATEGORIZATION OR CATEGORY MISTAKE?

While much has been written about the Mixed person who passes for white in order to obtain white privilege and status, the reality is that Mixed persons are always passing, and they pass for many different races, not just the white race.²⁸ Anytime a Mixed person is ascribed or chooses a monorace, s/he is passing. If a Mixed person decides to follow the rule of hypodescent and adopt the racial identity of the parent from the subordinate race, the Mixed person is passing. If without even trying, the Mixed person is often raced as race X, s/he is passing. The problem of passing (if it is a problem) for the Mixed race person is a constant problem. The Mixed race person is always passing because everywhere the Mixed race person goes people are ascribing a race to her/him. Passing is something that Mixed persons do both voluntarily and involuntarily. They can be raced in a variety of ways precisely because others refuse to see them for who and what they are: Mixed. The urge to monoracialize leads inexorably to the act of passing.²⁹

Of course the concept of passing includes the belief that a fraud is being perpetrated and that there is always the possibility of being found out. There is always the possibility that one's *true race* will be discovered. But what if there is no *true race*?

Similarly, when a Mixed person refuses to "pick a race" and instead picks too many, it is not the case that s/he simply got it wrong. S/he did not simply make a mistake in self-categorization. But mistakes in self-categorization are precisely what our social ontology requires. People trying to make sense of the situation see the Mixed person's choice of race as a mistake of categorization that can be fixed. "If you refuse to pick a race, we can pick one for you." "If you are confused, we can clarify things for you." "If you pick too many races, we can collapse them into the correct one, the *true race*."

But the truth of the matter is that the Mixed person has no *true race*. And, in fact, categories cannot accommodate Mixed existence. As Judy Scales-Trent puts it, while for the monoracial person, "categories make

the world appear understandable and safe,” Mixed persons live in “a world where categories do not clarify, but confuse; a world where one must question the very existence of those categories in order to survive.”³⁰ The Mixed person is caught between choosing personal existence or the existence of categories, and this is why Mixed people know from an early age that races are illusory at best. A Mixed person may agree to external namings and claimings, classifications, and framings but the Mixed person can never be sure that s/he exists as a true self in a world that denies her/his absolute existence.

STORY

When I was a master’s student, I was required to check a race box at registration. As checking multiple boxes was not permitted, I checked my race as “Other.” The following semester my race had been corrected to indicate that I was Asian. I once again changed it to “Other.” The next semester it had been changed to Hispanic. I once again changed it to “Other.” The following semester it was changed to Black. They did not have a Mixed box but someone was determined to find the correct category for me. I did not change it again. My work was done.

The persons who kept changing my racial designation (using the eyeball test) were determined to reduce my otherness to a single race. They were certain that they could eventually get right what I got wrong. But with Mixed persons, it is not the case that someone—including the Mixed race person—can *get it wrong* and that someone else could *get it right* because, in fact, there is no right answer, no correct race, that can be checked from the options available.

The concept of race prevents the possibility of Mixed people. When they get [mis]categorized/pass as a member of a monoracial group it is not simply a matter of miscategorization but it is more along the lines of a category mistake. It is not the case that you can identify the correct racial category in which to put a Mixed person if you try very hard to be accurate. It is not the case that one category is *more* accurate than another. The Mixed person has no *true race*. They are all wrong. So what is happening when Mixed people get miscategorized or are forced to pass as a race?

In the same way that the university is the buildings plus the campus plus the students and is neither the buildings nor the campus nor the students so the Mixed person is both monorace X and monorace Y and is neither X nor Y but belongs to an entirely different category. It is not possible to describe the Mixed person by only describing X or Y, even though X and Y are constituent parts of the Mixed person.

KNOWING AND NOT KNOWING

What can anyone know about personhood when certain persons are unknowable within the accepted taxonomy of persons? Can Mixed personhood be known when Mixed beingness is not possible? To know race is to not know the possibility of Mixedness. When it comes to Mixed people, we know by not knowing.

Although races are social constructs with no biological reality, the effects of our collective belief in their reality are real. Our societal consensus regarding the reality of races shapes our overall reality and has real life and death impacts. Thus, how you get raced determines your life chances: who will employ you, how much potential employers will pay you, how likely you are to get potentially life-saving medical care, where you will be allowed to live, and whether or not the police will beat or kill you for no reason. How you get raced determines your rates of chronic illness, your life expectancy, and your likelihood of living in poverty or of being imprisoned. How you get raced is a life or death matter. In the United States, proximity to blackness decreases one's life chances and one's proximity to whiteness increases one's life chances. So the Black/white binary matters, regardless of who and what one is. To be known as Black is to be placed in the crosshairs of every potential non-Black gun. To be known as white is to automatically inherit and benefit from a legacy of white supremacy and privilege. What people think they know about the Mixed person's *true race* matters.³¹

Prior to the Emancipation Proclamation, persons of any African heritage were not defined as, viewed as, or treated as persons by law, or by consensus. The law of the land defined them as partial persons (3/5 of a man) at most.³² For the most part, they were simply deemed as/treated as nonpersons. The Black Lives Matter movement has shown how the lynching of Black bodies/those perceived to be Black continues today in the form of police brutality and murder.³³ And it turns out that according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Fatal Injury Data on Legal Intervention Fatality Rates by Race/Ethnicity for the years 1999–2013, Native Americans have been killed by police at nearly the same rates as African Americans. So what people think they know about a given person's race matters in extreme ways.³⁴

What people think they know about race precludes the possibility of Mixed race. In order to know that Mixed people exist, self-identified monoracials would have to give up knowing what race to assign to people they see or meet. They would have to give up their concept of race. They would have to give up the urge to monoracialize, the need to assign a *true race* to Mixed persons. They might have to give up their own identity as a member of a race. They would have to admit that they don't know. They would have to abandon the hostile refusal to know Mixedness as a real thing. And giving all of that up is just asking too

much. Giving that up would require that white people give up all of their unearned privilege. Giving that up would require that Blacks give up their political solidarity movements, so essential in the face of institutional and individual racist violence. It might require that Indigenous people give up their treaty rights, their nationhood, or their sovereignty, or redefine them in the absence of federal definitions of Indianness as racial/based on [ancestral or current determinations of] blood quantum.

What people do know about mixedness they only know in not knowing. The resistance to knowing is great. In fact, the not knowing that most people have about the existence of Mixed people is not a simple lack of knowledge. It is an intentional not knowing. It is not ignorance that can be fixed with information. Rather, it is a *hostile refusal* to know. It is a *repudiation of knowledge* rather than a lack of knowledge.

"There is no such thing as Mixed people!"

"We are all Mixed."

"Mixed doesn't mean anything."

"You are not Mixed, you are really X."

"Well, most people see you as Y, so it doesn't matter what you say you are!"

"You don't look Mixed."

"What is Mixed anyway? It's not a thing."

"Mixed? Mixed what with what? How much? How far back?"

"What are your parents?"

"Pick a race. You are just trying to avoid picking a race."

"Face reality."

The not knowing is also a resistance to the implications of knowing. When the Mixed person claims to exist, it is like a child with male genitals insisting upon being the parents' daughter. "But we have no daughter," they insist. "There is no daughter. No daughter exists. We only have a son." "No," the child insists, "I am your daughter!" But to know they have a daughter the parents would have to change their understanding of reality. They would have to accept the possibility that a child could be born with male genitals and yet be female. They would have to see beyond the two genders presented as the only two options. They would have to believe in the possibility of simultaneous genders and of third or fourth genders. And to believe in such would destabilize the whole edifice of gender and bring their own gender identities into question. What is a male if a male can also be a female? What is a male if it is not the only alternative to female, if it is not defined as non-female? How do we maintain patriarchy if we cannot determine who to accord male privilege?! How can we maintain gendered racial hierarchies if we cannot identify people's race or gender? The possible existence of extra-racial, Mixed human kinds presents a problematic challenge to hegemonic structures of inequality in a way that is similar to the problem created by the existence of extra-gendered human kinds. The co-construction of ra-

cial and gender oppressions further obstructs the possibility of knowing about Mixedness.

Some people are confused by me and ask me what I am but many people are not confused. They are sure they know who I am. By the same token, I am not confused about what I am. I am sure I know who I am. It just so happens that my knowing and the knowing of most people I encounter do not converge. There is no consensus. Our knowledges do not line up, do not converge; they fail to coincide. They are irreconcilable. What I know is not what they know.³⁵ And this inability to know has nothing to do with identity. I am neither confused nor tragic but I have always lived in a tragically confused world of non-knowers.

INVISIBILITY CLOAKS AND DISAPPEARING ACTS

More proof that Mixed persons fail to exist in the way other persons exist is provided by the way Mixed people appear and disappear. The inability or unwillingness of people to know that Mixed people exist manifests as an inability to see them as well. It is as if being Mixed confers on persons an invisibility or blinding cloak.

There was once a famous bank robber in Los Angeles who successfully robbed thirty banks without being caught. When witnesses were asked to describe the bank robber they all gave different descriptions. Nobody could agree on what race he was. Some said he was white, and others said Latino, Arab, or Black. There was never any consensus on his racial or ethnic identity. As a result he was never caught.

He was, it turns out, a Mixed race man of African and European ancestry. He was able to appear to be a variety of races. In addition to having an often indecipherable race, he engaged in both active and passive forms of passing. As he explained, by simply shaving or not shaving, growing or not growing his hair or his beard, wearing a hat or not, getting a tan or not getting a tan, he was able to change his perceived race.³⁶ The people who had seen him acted as if they had not seen him by failing utterly to be able to describe what he looked like. Because nobody could ascribe him a consistent race he was impossible to see.³⁷

The Mixed person can appear and disappear depending upon the context. The disappearance of the Mixed person and her reappearance as various races occurs as a result of the urge to monoracialize and the effort to “fix” perceived miscategorizations. Mixed persons can be raced and re-raced or else their appearance can so dramatically confound racialized perception that it blinds the seer.

Once, when I was in the hospital for five days, I managed to disappear and reappear as different races every day I was there. On day 1, my EKG listed me as white. On day 2, my EKG listed me as Asian. On day 3, my EKG listed me as Native American, and on Day 4, I was listed as Black.³⁸

From the perspective of the hospital administrators, there had been a white person in the heart failure ward one day, an Asian patient the next day, a Native patient the next day, and a Black patient the next day but only one admission and only one discharge. Where did all of the other patients go? Like the particle/wave problem in physics, one minute there is a particle, and the next there is a wave, and nobody knows what happened to the particle. It was there and then it was not there. It was a wave and then it was not a wave.³⁹

The disappearance and reappearance of the Mixed person can occur according to the needs of a racist discourse, in order to maintain a racial hierarchy. As Mixed scholar Sheng-Mei explains, "the meaning of the Mixed race lies in its disappearance into one or the other race at the moment of discrimination."⁴⁰ The reductionist collapse of mixedness into monorace occurs most dramatically when a Mixed person gets raced in a way that leads to her oppression along specific lines. Thus, for example, I have experienced [gendered] anti-Black racism, anti-Indian racism, anti-Asian racism, and anti-Arab racism as well as anti-immigrant discrimination. On each occasion I was raced as a monoracial woman deserving of a particular type of discrimination. I have also experienced [supposedly] in-group sexism and homophobia from men and heterosexuals who thought I belonged to their racial group and who therefore thought they were in a position to control and monitor my behavior.

MIXED EXISTENCE AS INTERRUPTION AND STRATEGY

As a neither/nor proposition, the Mixed person interrupts the binary conversation. The Mixed race person is neither Black nor white, domestic nor foreign, Indigenous nor immigrant. S/he is the non-Black, the non-white, the Other, the undefined, the Indigenous immigrant, the domestic foreigner. S/he is on neither side of the equation and is on both sides. S/he renders well-defined boundaries illegitimate. The Mixed race person questions the very existence of static and pure races, peoples, groups, and biologies. Mixed people, both intentionally and unintentionally, interrupt the racial discourse, problematize the racial hierarchy, and raise questions about the possibility or usefulness of race/racial categories by being despite the fact that their beingness is disallowed, by knowing themselves despite being surrounded by people who refuse to know their existence. The Mixed person challenges and interrupts.

The first time I consciously interrupted the racial narrative was when I was in kindergarten and was asked what my race was. I replied Black, white, and Indian and the teacher responded that I could not be all three and had to pick one. I recall thinking that she was not making any sense at all. Why should I pick? How should I pick? And wouldn't that be like giving the wrong answer? Why would a teacher want the wrong answer?

And why did I refuse to give the wrong answer? Why did I refuse the urge to monoracialize? Mixed persons who refuse the silences of passing engage in passive or active interruptions of racial discourse.

When I was working at the National Archives during my master's degree, I checked too many boxes and was called down to meet with the director of the whole Archives. She was very alarmed that I had picked too many boxes. "You don't understand," she said. "They might classify you as white!" She was apparently terrified by this possibility. It occurred to me upon reflection that she was concerned about losing her affirmative action badge for having hired me—a clearly non-white person. "You have to pick one race and it can't be white," she insisted. I had no desire to pick white. If there was one thing that living in the segregated south had made clear to me, it was that I was not white and never would want to be, given the rampant racism of southern whites. But I did enjoy unsettling the National Archives. I enjoyed having yet another opportunity to hold forth on the existence of Mixed people and the foolishness of forms that pretended we did not exist. In the end they labeled me Hispanic since Hispanics could be a mixture of Black, Native, and white, like me.

Mixed persons can refuse to participate in activities which suggest their own non-existence. They can protest and question and irritate those who request their silence. They can tease and provoke and annoy those who seek to maintain constructed boundaries. They can slowly pick at the consensus which insists on the impossibility of their existence. They can interrupt and interrupt and interrupt until they are sent from the room or until a small fissure begins to develop in the façade of racial hierarchy.

When I was selected for an internship as a historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History in Washington, D.C., I was asked to check a race box when going through employment orientation. The directions said that I was to pick one and only one race and that if I was unsure which race to pick, I could leave it blank and the person handling my paperwork would pick a race for me. I decided to go with this option as I had no desire to pick a race (and besides I thought it would be fun). So I handed my paperwork to the clerk and she looked at my form and looked at me and then looked at the form and it was clear she could not figure out what to check for me. A visibly Mixed person/phenotypically ambiguous person has a phenotype which transgresses the racial binary.⁴¹ She had a look of utter frustration on her face. Inside I was laughing and thinking that will show you not to rely on the "eyeball test"! But the joke was not taken so lightly. Apparently she submitted the form as is and shortly thereafter I got a call from the Pentagon (yes, race is *that* important!). A high-ranking administrator of some type was calling me to determine what my race actually was. I explained to the man that his form was logically inconsistent and scientifically inaccurate. I told him about the 1983 UNESCO report I had read in college that declared races

pseudoscientific fictions.⁴² "What data do you actually want?" I asked him. "Hispanic is a linguistic group, Black is linked to African ancestry but seems to be an umbrella political term for a diverse group of peoples that was created during slavery to keep property in the hands of masters, Native American is an international grouping of sovereign nations but also defined culturally (as the form indicated, one must be actively practicing Native American culture to check that box), Asian appears to refer to a continent, and white just seems to be a group of people defined by the absence of African, Asian, or Native American ancestry, with no shared culture. "What do you want to know?" I asked. "Ethnicity, language, ancestry, or culture? Your form is a mess!" He told me to write it all down and send it in a letter to him at the Pentagon so they had a record of my critiques of the form and he could make a decision about my race. But after he received the letter, he still did not know what race to pick for me so he asked me to come to the Pentagon so he could meet me. I figured he was inviting me so he could perform his own high-level eyeball test. What fun, I thought. I get to go to the Pentagon and maybe change things!

When I got there, the official turned out to be a self-identified, phenotypically-aligned Black man and he asked me a series of authenticity questions. What was I studying? Where was I from? Why was I attending Howard? In the end he told me he was considering classifying me as Black because I was attending an HBCU and studying Afro-Caribbean history—signs that surely indicated I was [culturally?] Black. "That's fine," I said and then reiterated what I told them from the beginning. "I don't care what you put down on that form. I know who I am and I am not listed on your form because your form is faulty." I did not care how I was identified by the Pentagon. It was never about me. I was much more interested in interrupting the racialization process. Race was a fiction I was determined to reveal. I do not know if I was successful.

Years later, when I was a Ph.D. student at UC Berkeley, I was approached by a secretary in the Ethnic Studies Department who informed me during my second year that I had filled out the race box form incorrectly at registration and that the form would have to be corrected. I had checked all the relevant boxes but no, she said, you can only pick one. "Well," I said, "which one should I pick? "I only know you as Native American," she replied. "But I am actually Mixed," I replied. I am also Black." "Yeah, but . . . uh, well . . . don't you work as a teaching assistant for a Native American professor? And besides," she continued, "all the Native students here see you as an Indian. I think it makes most sense to put down Native American." "Ok, sure," I said, "whatever you want to put down is fine with me." Because she was Native American herself she felt strongly about claiming me and I let her. But, I did not let her claim me by acquiescing to silent passing. I made sure that her urge to monoracialize me became a conscious act in the face of all the facts.

MY OWN PHILOSOPHICAL WORK

As a philosopher, the central focus of my work has been the provocation of dialogue and debate across disciplinary and ethnic boundaries, and the troubling of the very existence of such boundaries in order to instigate an expansion of the discourse. As a Mixed person aware from an early age of the constructed and problematic nature of racial boundaries, perhaps it was inevitable that I would seek to challenge boundaries in my intellectual work. My existence, if possible, has always been predicated on the destruction of these boundaries.

Metaphilosophical, comparativist, and interdisciplinary in nature, my research and creative production is diverse in both its methods and its topics. I am intellectually many things to many people. I am simultaneously an African philosopher, a Native American philosopher, a feminist philosopher, an analytically trained-philosopher, a continentally-trained philosopher, and a critical ethnic studies theorist masquerading as a philosopher. My work is simultaneously decolonialist, deconstructive, and foundational. My work has been preoccupied with defining what counts as philosophy, with inspecting and rethinking the very foundations of the discipline. This is perhaps a project well suited to a Mixed person whose very existence has necessarily shaken the foundations of what people think they know about race, identity, existence.

In particular, my work has focused on (1) the creation of foundations for “intellectually sovereign” Indigenous philosophies and the expansion of the discipline to include such works, (2) the instigation of cross-cultural philosophic dialogue beyond mainstream East/West dichotomies; the creation of what I call a New Dialogic, and (3) the formulation of new methodologies for doing philosophy through an exploration of orality, interdisciplinarity, and non-Western poetic artistic traditions.

It may be no surprise that I have been concerned primarily with the creation of dialogues. Historically, the “Mixed blood” has always been the messenger and the bridgebuilder, walking in two worlds, suspect in both, belonging in neither. I have sought to define indigeneity while also crossing back and forth across borders in order to foment dialogues across difference. How can I be concerned both with indigeneity and hybridity and cross-cultural philosophic discourse? I am Mixed. How can I not be? Where other philosophers of color have been preoccupied with race and identity in philosophy, I have tended to focus on cultural philosophies. The Mixed person knows the fiction of race, knows that identity premised on race is foolish and precarious. Cultural traditions transcend race and temporary definitions of nationhood.

The Mixed person in her/his personhood creates both interruptions and silences; the Mixed philosopher can exploit these instances to engage in strategic intellectual interrogations of racial hierarchy. The Mixed philosopher, by both failing to occupy a stable identity and failing to be

consistently ascribed, is in a position to critically assess the race- and gender-assumptive foundations of knowledge-making and knowledge-validating practices. The hybrid critiques of the hybrid philosopher have the potential to challenge the discipline in ways other critiques do not and cannot. I think they are critiques that are necessary, albeit sometimes annoying. This writing is not a lament. It is a long-winded attempt to interrupt. I hope I have succeeded.

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NOTES

1. Maria P. P. Root, ed., *Racially Mixed People in America* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1992).
2. Nikki Khanna. "'If You're Half Black You're Just Black': Reflected Appraisals and the Persistence of the One-Drop Rule." *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Winter 2010): 96–121.
3. "Hypodescent" is the term used by anthropologist Marvin Harris to describe the American system of racial classification in which the subordinate classification is assigned to the offspring if there is one "superordinate" and one "subordinate" parent. Under this system, the child of a Black parent and a white parent is Black. Marvin Harris, *Patterns of Race in the Americas* (New York: Walker, 1964), 37, 56. Cheryl I. Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Ha Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 106, No. 8 (June, 1993): 1738, note 137. For a larger historical discussion of this term, see Joel Williamson, *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States* (New York: Free Press; London: Collier Macmillan, 1980). As recently as 1985, the Louisiana Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the great-great-great-granddaughter of a white, French planter and his Black mistress could not identify herself as white. See *Jane Doe v. State of Louisiana*, 479 So. 2d 369 (1985), 1985 La. App. LEXIS 10022; 479 So. 2d 371 (1986); and F. James Davis, *Who Is Black?: One Nation's Definition* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1991). The descendant of this interracial affair, Susie Phipps, was denied a passport because she indicated that she was white while her birth certificate states she is "colored." The court held that regardless of how Phipps wished to racially identify, the official designation of her race could not be changed because the evidence showed that it was recorded correctly. In 1986, the Louisiana Supreme Court declined to review the decision, noting that it concurred with the court of appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court dismissed the appeal in the same year. Even in the present time, the highest courts in the land have not only upheld the one-drop rule but also have indicated that multiracial individuals cannot choose their identity but rather must be classified as members of the lesser socially advantaged group. See Arnold K. Ho, Jim Sidanius, Daniel T. Levin, and Mahzarin R. Banaji, "Evidence for Hypodescent and Racial Hierarchy in the Categorization and Perception of Biracial Individuals," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 100, No. 3 (2010): 492–506, 493. Ho et al. found in 2010 that hypodescent still operates today. They write, "Across five experiments, we consistently found that hypodescent applies to both Asian-white and black-white biracial targets and that the magnitude of the effect is greater for black-white targets, reflecting the prevailing racial hierarchy," at 503. "Throughout these studies, we find that the rule of hypodescent works in a manner consistent with the hierarchical arrangement in the United States and similarly serves to maintain the existing hierarchy," at 504.
4. Adrian Piper, "Passing for White, Passing for Black." *Transition*, Vol. 58 (1992): 4–32, 18.
5. Naomi Zack, "Mixed Black and White Race and Public Policy." *Hypatia*, Vol. 10, No. 1, *Feminist Ethics and Social Policy*, Part 1 (Winter, 1995): 120–132, 126.
6. Naomi Zack, ed., *American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), 300.
7. Rainy123 (an online alias), "An Answer to Your Question," *Teen Ink: Magazine, Website & Books Written by Teens since 1989*, accessed June 29, 2015, <http://>

www.teenink.com/nonfiction/personal_experience/article/810055/An-Answer-to-Your-Question/.

8. See, for example, the work of Kevin Noble Maillard, who argues that racial purity laws were not applied to Native Americans the way they were to Blacks despite the de jure legal parity. Kevin Noble Maillard, "The Pocahontas Exception: The Exemption of American Indian Ancestry from Racial Purity Law," *Michigan Journal of Race & Law*, Vol. 12, No. 107 (2007).

9. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 126.

10. This is a play on the name of the album, *Fear of a Black Planet*, by the hip hop group Public Enemy, released on April 10, 1990, by Def Jam Recordings/ Columbia Records. Lyrics can be found at <http://www.publicenemy.com/album/3/75/fear-of-a-black-planet.html>.

11. Terry Wilson, "Blood Quantum: Native American Mixed Bloods," in *Racially Mixed People in America*, 108–125. Historically, federal Indian policy has sought to explicitly undermine Native sovereignty by engaging in cultural and biological forms of genocide. Cultural genocide was attempted through boarding schools, the IRA, and relocation, and biological genocide was attempted through race-mixing and the defining of Indianness in terms of blood quantum.

12. Lewis Gordon, "Critical 'Mixed Race'?" *Social Identities*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1995).

13. Lewis Gordon, "Race, Biraciality, and Mixed Race," in *Her Majesty's Other Children: Sketches of Racism from a Neocolonial Age* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997): 67. I can't help wondering why Gordon wants to conserve the Black *race*. I am much more interested in conserving Blackness as a *culture*.

14. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the Unites States*, 98, note 11; and see Earl Finch, "The Effects of Racial Miscegenation," in *Papers on Interracial Problems: Communicated to the First Universal Races Congress*, held at the University of London: July 26–29, 1911, ed. G. Spiller (London, P.S. King and Son; Boston: The World's Peace Foundation, 1911): xlvi, 485, quoted by E. Franklin Frazier, "Children in Black and Mulatto Families," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Jul., 1933): 12–29. Frazier felt the need to conduct a study to prove that Mulattoes did not suffer from fertility problems as had long been argued by racist scholars who insisted that mixing the races was unnatural and result in the creation of a degenerate race in the form of American Mulattoes.

15. Abby Ferber, "Mongrel Monstrosities," in *Multiculturalism in the United States: Current Issues, Contemporary Voices*, eds. Peter Kivisto and Georganne Rundblad (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2000): 60.

16. Abby Ferber, "Mongrel Monstrosities," 58.

17. Cheryl I. Harris, *Whiteness as Property*, 1714.

18. See works by Kieu Linh Valverde and Cynthia Nakashima.

19. David Theo Goldberg, "Made in the USA: Racial Mixing and Matching," in *American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity*, ed. Naomi Zack (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995): 237–255.

20. Ronald R. Sundstrom, "Being and Being Mixed Race," *Social Theory and Practice*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (April 2001): 285–307, 307.

21. G. Reginald Daniel, "Passers and Pluralists: Subverting the Racial Divide," in *Racially Mixed People in America*, ed. Maria P. P. Root, 91–107; Jennifer L. Hochschild, Vesla M. Weaver, and Traci R. Burch, eds., *Creating a New Racial Order: How Immigration, Multiracialism, Genomics, and the Young Can Remake Race in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).

22. Maria P. P. Root, ed., *Racially Mixed People in America*. A large literature authored by Mixed-race identified scholars exists. See, for example, Christine Catherine Iijima Hall, "The Ethnic Identity of Racially Mixed People: A Study of Black-Japanese" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1980); George Kitahara Kich, "Eurasians: Ethnic/Racial Identity Development of Biracial Japanese/White Adults" (PhD diss., The Wright Institute of Professional Psychology, 1982); Michael Charles Thorn-

ton, "A Social History of a Multiethnic Identity: The Case of Black Japanese Americans" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 1983); Stephen L. H. Murphy-Shigematsu, "The Voices of Amerasians: Ethnicity, Identity, and Empowerment in Interracial Japanese Americans" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1986).

23. Silvia Cristina Bettez, "Secret Agent Insiders to Whiteness: Mixed Race Women Negotiating Structure and Agency" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007). Bettez references Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 58.

24. Ronald R. Sundstrom, "Being and Being Mixed Race," 295–296.

25. Ronald R. Sundstrom, "Being and Being Mixed Race," 301.

26. According to Zack, both "white" and "Black" are defined in terms of blackness. She writes, "The schema implies that both whiteness and blackness are defined in terms of blackness. Thus American racial categories are interdependent, and because there is no positive definition of blackness, American racial categories are groundless—they have no empirical foundation." Naomi Zack, *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 11.

27. See, for example the work of Velina Hasu Houston, Christine C. Iijima Hall, and Ariko Ikebara who have written about "simultaneous membership," "multiple fluid identity," and situational identities. See, for example, Christine C. Iijima Hall, "2001: A Race Odyssey," in *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier*, ed. Maria P. P. Root (Thousand Oaks, London, & New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), 395. See also the articulations of simultaneous identities in the anthologies, *What Are You? Voices of Mixed Race Young People* and *Miscegenation Blues: Voices of Mixed Race Women*. See Pearl Fuyo Gaskins, ed., *What Are You?* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999), and Carol Camper, ed., *Miscegenation Blues* (Toronto: Sister Vision, 1994).

28. See, for example, Judy Scales-Trent, *Notes of a White Black Woman* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); Adrian Piper, "Passing for White, Passing for Black;" and James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990, 1912).

29. Teresa Kay Williams writes about active passing by "Asian descent multiracial individuals" when she explains that "active and conscious passing (implying racial disclosure, concealment, and even dishonesty) can be argued as an instrumental choice made by multiracial individuals to maximize their benefits, life chances, and quality of life." See Teresa Kay Williams, "Race-ing and Being Raced: The Critical Interrogation of 'Passing,'" *Amerasia Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 1(1997): 61–65, 62. "However, the cultural and phenotypical ambiguity of many multiracial individuals also facilitates the possibility of what sociologist Ari Rosner has called, 'passive passing.' Passers can be active, passive, or manipulative participants. Passing can occur based on physical appearance, cultural display, or both." Williams, "Race-ing and Being Raced," 62.

30. Judy Scales-Trent, "Commonalities: On Being Black and White, Different, and the Same," 2 *Yale J.L. & Feminism* 305 (1990).

31. For more on white privilege, see the works of white studies scholars Peggy McIntosh and Tim Wise.

32. See the Three-Fifths Compromise, enacted July 12, 1787, which allowed a state to count three fifths of each Black person in determining political representation in the House of Representatives. U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 2, Paragraph 3: "Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons."

33. See Black Lives Matter website, <http://blacklivesmatter.com>.

34. For data on police killings of Native Americans, see, for example, Zak Cheney-Rice, "The Police Are Killing One Group at a Staggering Rate, and Nobody Is Talking About It," *Mic*, published February 5, 2015, accessed June 30, 2015, <http://mic.com/>

articles/109894/the-police-are-killing-one-group-at-a-staggering-rate-and-nobody-is-talking-about-it.

35. Example: I once worked with a man for a year before he made some offhand comment about Palestinians like me. "What do you mean you are Black? All this time I just knew you were Palestinian!" He never asked me. He *knew* I was a Palestinian. There was no need for an inquiry, or for the collection of data.

36. This information was obtained firsthand from the ex-bankrobber himself in a public presentation he gave in which he discussed how he changed his hair/beard to effect different looks.

37. According to a report in the *LA Times*, "Although security cameras caught the robber on videotape, he was not easy to identify. He usually wore dark glasses and a baseball cap to shield his face. Witnesses could not agree on whether he was black, white or Latino. Dyer is of mixed race." See David Rosenzweig, "Remorseful Bank Robber Gets 9 Years," *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 2002. Accessed June 30, 2015. <http://articles.latimes.com/2002/may/31/local/me-bandit31>.

38. By day 4, I had recovered enough to have conversations with doctors and to reveal that I was part Black, which, using the one-drop rule, made me just Black.

39. See Heisenberg's uncertainty principle: An experimenter's attempt to measure the momentum of a subatomic particle affects the value of the position of the particle. Similarly, an experimenter's attempt to measure the position of a subatomic particle affects the value of the momentum of the particle. See Werner Heisenberg, "Über den anschaulichen Inhalt der quantentheoretischen" (1927).

40. Sheng-mei Ma, "The Necessity and the Impossibility of Being Mixed-Race in Asian American Literature," in *Reconstruction Hybridity: Post-Colonial Studies in Transition*, eds. Joel Kuortti and Jopi Nyman (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2007), 51.

41. Desiree Valentine, "Visualizing a Critical Mixed-Race Theory," *Stance*, Vol 2 (April 2009), 22, writes, "The very existence of a mixed individual can spark discussion. The visual transgression of the racial binary actively creates confusion. This confusion has the power to actively debunk notions of firm racial binary logic." Valentine argues that "through not only theoretical inquiries, but also practical engagement with the topic of mixed race, there exists a key outlet for addressing the problem of racism that cannot be ignored," 25.

42. UNESCO, "Science and Racism," Symposium to Examine Pseudo-Scientific Theories Invoked to Justify Racism and Racial Discrimination (Paris: UNESCO, 1983).

5

A Mixed Race (Philosophical) Experience

Tina Fernandes Botts

At the core of my philosophical work is an existential removal from the ability to fully or permanently identify with any particular theory, narrative, story, framework, system, schema of intelligibility, or so-called fact set combined with an acute sense that there are human values that extend across cultures, and that can contribute in positive ways to human flourishing. This combination of a radical openness to multiple ways of knowing and multiple realities, together with an abiding belief in some sort of universally applicable morality I believe was born of my mixed race experience. In the following passages, I will explore possible correlations between my mixed race experience and the philosophical views I hold. To do this, I will first lay out the basic contours of my mixed race experience, and then provide detail on the topic of my work as a philosopher. After that, I will offer a few remarks on the connections I see between the two. I leave it to the reader to assess (1) whether the connections I see between my mixed race experience and my philosophical work seem warranted; (2) whether the connections I see between my mixed race experience and my philosophical work are informative on the topic of the possible connections between the mixed race experience writ large and certain philosophical positions; and (3) to the extent that there seem to be such connections, whether these connections are informative on the topic of how personal experiences in general may be related to the philosophical positions taken by persons who have had those personal experiences.

MY MIXED RACE EXPERIENCE

I have only recently taken on the identity of being a person of mixed race, although I think I have always felt the way that many mixed race persons describe feeling; that is, like a perpetual stranger, always on the outside looking into the world, rather than being immersed in it; never feeling fully integrated into any particular frame of reference, or into what I like

to call a particular system of intelligibility. To some extent, it seems to me that this feeling can be attributed to the philosopher's natural disposition, but in my case, I believe my mixed race experience has significantly contributed to that feeling. I want to say very clearly that this is an all-encompassing feeling, permeating all aspects of my life and who I am, including how I think, what my priorities are, how I choose to live, and how I interact or do not interact with others; and that this aspect of my mixed race experience is one that many mixed race persons have indicated to me that they share. For this reason, and because other mixed race persons have confessed to having similar feelings, I have come to understand this aspect of my mixed race experience as highly correlated with (if not fundamental to) the mixed race experience more generally. So, if and when I mention the mixed race experience *at large* or *in general*, that is, separate and apart from my own specific mixed race experience, it is this globalized sense of alienation from all particularized frames of reference or accounts of reality to which I am referring.

When I say that I have only recently taken on the identity of being a person of mixed race, I mean that for most of my life, I thought of myself simply as black person. My father is a mixed race person from Trinidad (his mother was from St. Vincent and his father was from Portugal) and my mother is a very light-skinned African American woman who is often mistaken for white. My upbringing, home, and family of origin were nothing other than black American, from the shared history of racial struggle in the United States, to the music to the food to the (largely) racially segregated social circle. Nevertheless, growing up I was very much aware that my family was extraordinarily light-skinned, that each of us was often mistaken for white, and that each of us could pass for white if we chose to do so. There were family stories on this topic.¹

Complicating this picture were stories of fairly remote white ancestors. Regarding my mother's side of the family, we were all aware of the fact that there were many white (as well as Native American) ancestors in our family tree, but this was not a common topic of conversation. Instead, the existence of the white ancestors was referenced in hushed tones (that of the Native American ancestors a bit more openly). The exact details of the lives of these white ancestors were fuzzy and the sorting out of these details was (apparently) not something one was at liberty to do, at least not openly. There were tales of interracial romantic relationships and common law marriages, whispers of famous white male patriarchs ("You know, your great-great grandfather was [insert name of prominent white male]"). On my father's side of the family, the white and otherwise non-black ancestry was discussed more openly, but the details of the lives and identities of these ancestors were just as fuzzy. There was a great-great-great grandmother who had emigrated from Scotland to Trinidad, for example, as well as my father's father who had emigrated from Portugal to Trinidad. I call him my father's father rather than my grandfather

because I never met the man. He abandoned my black grandmother and their four children when my father was a young child, and has been largely obliterated from the family storyline ever since. Despite these fuzzy details, however, it was an indisputable fact that there were many white persons in our family tree: My parents, brother, sisters, and I wore their existence on our bodies like neon signs.

Our family's white ancestry was (and still is) particularly apparent on my own body. I am one of the lightest skinned people in my family. I was so light skinned as a newborn that the hospital in which I was born indicated on my birth certificate "White." None of my other family members' races were so designated on their birth certificates. Looking the way I did, with the family I had, as I grew up I had the strange experience of walking around inadvertently benefitting from white privilege in circumstances in which my African ancestry was not known (for example, in the anonymity of a public setting), but of experiencing the kind of discrimination and ill treatment that all African Americans experience in circumstances in which my African ancestry was known (for example, at school or in other predominantly white, public settings). At the same time, outside of my family's fairly rarefied circle of friends, I was often alienated from full membership in African American social circles among my peers. I would float back and forth between experiences of white privilege and black discrimination on and off depending upon the circumstances.

It was during these formative years that I began to suspect (although I did not have the proper vocabulary to articulate as much at the time) that none of the epistemological or metaphysical frameworks into which I floated in and out were objective, that the very idea of objective knowledge or of objective reality was a contradiction in terms. I was nevertheless also aware that my loyalties lay with my black ancestors, that they held the moral high ground, that while there may have been a number of white ancestors, they were all fringe elements to the family identity, outliers, interlopers, visitors. I was aware, too, that the struggles faced by black Americans (as a social group) were brought on by the oppressive actions of white Americans (as a social group); and that the presence of members of this fringe, oppressive group in our family tree was to a certain extent shameful and somewhat disturbing.

For simplicity's sake and yes, for what I thought were self-preservation reasons at the time, I spent the first half of my adult life (passively) passing. I never actively told anyone that I was white; nor did I ever deny my black ancestry when queried. But, if no one else brought up my racial identity, neither did I. In public spaces (school, work, and public social spaces), I went about my daily activities largely as if race were a nonexistent phenomenon in the world. This way of living had its advantages and its disadvantages. The advantages were that I benefitted from white privilege a good deal of the time. The disadvantages can be summed up by

saying that I was profoundly lonely. Outside of family contexts or with close personal friends, no one in my life (my public life, really) knew who I was.

White friends were not friends because I could never be sure if they would still be my friends if they knew the truth. Black friends were an impossibility because the pain of hiding from them was far worse than the pain of hiding from white people, with the result that I made very few new black friends. This alienation from myself manifested itself in all aspects of my life. In my work (at this time, I was a practicing attorney), I did not do the work I really wanted to do (e.g., civil rights work), but instead chose areas of law that were completely benign and without meaning for me (e.g., estates and trusts). I engaged in self-destructive personal habits such as smoking cigarettes and reckless driving. My day-to-day existence was one of going through the motions with no sense of personal direction or purpose.²

Through a stroke of good luck, at a certain point in this period, I was provided with the opportunity to complete a Ph.D. in philosophy that I had started many years prior, before law school. Once I found philosophy again, I began to re-engage with the questions that had always intrigued me and began to figure out who I was as a person. I was a philosopher. That much began to become crystal clear. And it was through re-establishing my relationship with philosophy—my first love—that I began to grapple self-consciously with my racial identity and with questions about meaning and reality that had plagued me since childhood; particularly the intersections between these (philosophical) questions and my racial identity and experiences.

At a certain point in the process of re-engaging with philosophy, I encountered other philosophers who described themselves as mixed race and with whom I felt a profound kinship. Although we may have differed on fine points, it seemed to me that inasmuch as we had all shared the mixed race experience (as described in the editor's introduction to this volume), we shared similar outlooks on key philosophical questions, and thought about the problems of race and racism in similar ways as well. During this period, I also directly confronted the fact that despite my understanding of myself as black, there was a degree of white privilege I was afforded in virtue of looking white; and this disconnect between how I felt and how I was perceived caused varying degrees of dissonance in many social environments. It was at this point that I thought I should start owning up to what my physiognomy seemed to betray: I was mixed, not black; and this distinction had salience and significance. It also had the ring of authenticity. Of all available options, it felt the most comfortable and true. Taking on this identity allowed me to excavate and then re-examine in the light of day various aspects of my racial experiences that were not captured by a black identity, aspects that felt important and deserving of philosophical and political exploration.

For example, I have been encouraged by more than one philosopher working in the phenomenological tradition to bring into philosophical conversation certain aspects of my experiences as a mixed race *philosopher* (not just as a mixed race *person*).³ These philosophers have suggested that I bring to the philosophical table the way that my epistemological or testimonial credibility as a professional philosopher has often changed depending upon whether I have been perceived as white or black in a given academic context. So, I'd like to take a few moments to add to my own mixed race personal narrative a few details of these experiences. I started my journey as a professor at a time in my life when I was not making an issue of my racial identity. To the extent that passing can be by omission, I guess one could say I was passing as white. In any event, the point is that my racial identity was not something that was a topic of discussion, either inside or outside the classroom (e.g., within a given philosophy department). In each of these contexts, I was initially perceived as a (white) hotshot of sorts, as a highly qualified, extremely knowledgeable expert in my area of specialization: philosophy of law. The signs of this perception were plentiful: deference with regard to knowledge of content, deference with regard to teaching methods, respect from the students, and respect from colleagues. But, as soon as my racial identity became known (or as soon as the implications of my racial identity became important for whatever reason, usually having to do with my feeling compelled to stand up against racial injustice against blacks), that is, as soon as my blackness was revealed (in each case by me), I suddenly became perceived as incompetent, in need of guidance, not deserving of respect. My knowledge base and knowledge claims became suspect. In one particularly disturbing context, a white male with no law degree and little in the way of training in the philosophy of law became the resident expert in philosophy of law, while I was relegated to having knowledge in matters concerning race only. Unfortunately, it is an exaggeration to say that I was even granted epistemological authority on topics of race. For, as it became clear that my ideas about racism and an acceptable academic climate for persons of color were quite different than those of my white colleagues, I was suddenly stripped of epistemic authority on topics of race as well.

I believe these experiences are important both on the topic of my racial identity, and on the topic of any possible relationship between my mixed racial identity and my work as a philosopher, because they demonstrate, among other things, first, that racial identity is a function of context (which, I think, is a lesson that the mixed race experience highlights), and second, how a philosopher's perceived racial identity affects the space created (or eliminated) by the profession for the kinds of work a racialized person (a person assigned a non-white race) is able (by this I mean permitted) to do in professional philosophy in the West.

That said, I would like to take this opportunity to make explicit that my areas of specialization in philosophy are philosophy of law, hermeneutics, and philosophy of race. My areas of competence include feminist philosophy, ethical theory, social and political philosophy, and the history of philosophy. I begin with a philosophical question, usually one related to how a particular law or paradigm has been or is interpreted to the detriment of members of a marginalized, oppressed, or subjugated group (often a racialized minority group); and then I use my philosophical training and skills to try to untangle and then reimagine the problem in search of a solution that better respects that population. My work is interdisciplinary, intertraditional, and designed to be useful in the world.

MY WORK AS A PHILOSOPHER

Interdisciplinary and Intertraditional

All of my work is both interdisciplinary (uses the tools of philosophy as well as other disciplines such as law, sociology, and history) and intertraditional (explores philosophical questions through both the analytic and the continental lenses). I begin with a philosophical question and then use whichever methods or tools seem best suited to answer the particular question. Key to this process is a radical openness to the problem at hand, the question before me, which includes trying to understand what the salient features of the particular problem or question are.⁴ I then try to tailor the solution to the needs of the problem, rather than going the reverse and more popular route of trying to apply a particular philosophical methodology, modus operandi, or theory to whatever the problem or question is in a sort of top down approach. It has always struck me that, for example, using a particular ethical theory to solve an ethical problem, or a particular method of constitutional interpretation to interpret or understand the constitution is question-begging. In other words, the decision as to which ethical theory to apply, for example, is a decision as to desired outcome before analysis of the problem has even begun. A more organic method seems to me to be, to allow the relevant features of the question itself (including features unique to the particular context) to play a higher role in the development of the outcome, solution or answer. I use insights from philosophical hermeneutics to help me see the unique features of a given question or problem (i.e., to perform a kind of phenomenological reduction on the matter at issue), and to help me solve the problem on its own terms.

Hermeneutics

The hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger and Gadamer is the attempt to lay bare the presuppositions with which all inquiry begins.⁵

All inquiry, for them, takes place within a given schema of intelligibility and a historicity that is directed. We find what we seek, in other words, and what we seek is a function of the culture, society, or framework of meaning in which we find ourselves. The pursuit of what Heidegger calls fundamental ontology and what Gadamer calls hermeneutic ontology is the attempt to elucidate the conditions of intelligibility that allow things to show up for us in the ways that they do, to confront the presuppositions with which we begin all inquiry in an attempt at a more authentic understanding of the nature of things. Heidegger's view that the fundamental meaning of being is interpretive (that is, that nothing comes to us un-interpreted) resonates with me. The inescapable circle of interpretation that Heidegger describes in *Being and Time* and later work, and that Gadamer develops in his work, is the method and structure upon which I base all of my work, from inquiries into the nature of law, to questions regarding the meaning and value of human rights, to questions about the nature of race and racism, to ethical questions, etc. I see hermeneutics as metaphilosophy at its best, for it entails a critique of any method or way of knowing or understanding the world that does not question itself and its presuppositions, that is lacking in self-reflexivity. From the hermeneutical point of view, in other words, understanding is always limited by the extent to which it is not self-critical; and conversely, understanding is always improved by the laying bare of that which is assumed.

To the extent that hermeneutics has content, it is embodied in hermeneutic ontology, which entails, most fundamentally, a full-scale rejection of the kind of dualistic ontological framework that took root in the modern period, and that is typified by the insistence upon a hard and fast distinction between, for example, method (also known as procedure or process) and content (what counts as truth, what counts as knowledge, what counts as real, what counts as existent).⁶ Hermeneutics rejects also an entire list of other assumptions that modern philosophy takes for granted (but that I think have been undermined by the discoveries of modern physics and by certain late nineteenth-, twentieth-, and early twenty-first-century continental philosophical traditions). Examples of common modern assumptions that hermeneutics rejects are those contained in scientism, dualism, what Derrida calls the metaphysics of presence, the distinction between fact and value, and the assumptions contained in liberal political and legal theory.⁷ In place of these ideas, hermeneutics puts ways of understanding that allow for the complexity and dynamic nature of all attempts at understanding the world around us, without the need to categorize reality or attempt to neatly compartmentalize one way of understanding from another; or one reality from another; or one phenomenon from another.

The hermeneutic cycle of understanding (also known as the hermeneutic circle) begins with the phenomenon before us, as it is in its everyday milieu (what Heidegger calls is "average everydayness"), but then

asks us to step away from this everyday understanding to gain a view of it from a distance. This broader vantage point will include the various levels of context in which the phenomenon takes place or exists, as well as a critical examination of the multiple pieces of that context. Then, once again the interpreter can examine the phenomenon anew, being able to see it a bit more clearly than before. One key idea of this process is that the hermeneutic circle is never-ending. One can never say with certainty that *the one* correct understanding of anything (e.g., a law, a social phenomenon, a theory, or a concept) has been had. The most one can say is that one has arrived at an understanding at a particular time and place, or in what I like to call a particular *interpretive moment*.

What this means in practical terms is that when approaching philosophical problems, I always have a set of hermeneutical guidelines in mind. These include: (1) an appreciation that one can neither understand nor solve any problem without understanding the context in which it takes place, (2) a recognition that the relevant context goes beyond just the immediate context into the larger historical context, (3) an understanding that all inquiry is directed, and since that is the case, it is important to take stock of one's own presuppositions and examine them for their legitimacy when attempting to solve any problem, (4) for the same reason it is important to examine the presuppositions of any interpreter prior to oneself who has attempted to solve the particular problem at issue, in the past, (5) a rejection of a sharp boundary between fact and value; that is, an understanding that all so-called facts are value-laden, (6) a pursuit of maximum authenticity in the solution to the problem, with a concomitant realization that an absolute or perfect solution is a fiction, (7) perpetual openness to new information on the topic of the problem, and (8) an understanding that any solution to any problem (any interpretation of any "text") will change with time; that is, a given solution to a problem is unique to a particular time and place; that is, it is situation-specific and not generalizable.

An example of my work in hermeneutics is my chapter in *The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics*, "Hermeneutics, Race, and Gender," where I use hermeneutics to support the claim that race and gender are social constructs that change with spatiotemporal context.⁸

I am especially interested in questions of interpretation that arise in the philosophy of law, the philosophy of race, feminist theory, ethics, and social and political philosophy.

Philosophy of Law

Legal Hermeneutics

For me, law is a practice like language. In Heidegger's terms, it is a *world*. To understand its workings is to recognize that legal interpretation

begins with a set of presuppositions, it proceeds into practice and then ends up as a concept or a series of concepts, all of which takes place within a given epistemological paradigm that has a sort of cohesion or manner of hanging together which is concrete enough to be useful, but is also organic and living. *In other words, legal meaning changes and evolves.* To discover the nature of civil or constitutional rights is to examine these phenomena in terms of how they show up in the world, and in terms of the schemas of intelligibility in which they are, and have been, produced and utilized.⁹

Critical Legal Studies

Critical legal studies is of particular interest to me. Critical legal studies is an interdisciplinary approach to philosophy of law that challenges the traditional, liberal approach to legal thought by emphasizing the highly political nature of the law.¹⁰ For the critical legal theorist, law as traditionally practiced perpetuates hierarchies of race, gender, power, and privilege. Critical legal theorists are indebted to the civil rights movement and seek to demystify and deconstruct the ideologies of mainstream legal practice en route to laws and legal systems that address the rights of those traditionally left out of the legal mainstream, including women, African Americans, gays and lesbians, indigenous peoples, the disabled, and the poor.¹¹ Critical legal theorists see law as traditionally practiced and understood as a vehicle of oppression and social injustice and seek to find new ways to use the law for the opposite purpose.

Critical Race Theory

The main question for scholars interested in critical race theory is how to achieve racial justice in a society teaming with systemic structural racism. The starting point for all of these theorists is that a given culture constructs its own social reality in ways that promote its own self-interest. This means denying the rights and realities of those whose existence challenges that self-interest—for example, persons of color. One goal of critical race theory in the philosophy of law is to confront, in the manner of Heidegger's existential analytic of what he called *Dasein* (or *Being-in-the-world*), the presuppositions upon which the racist institutional structures of American society have been built.¹² The ultimate goal is to create new realities, new structures, and new laws in which the rights of persons of color are satisfactorily addressed and the realities of persons of color are given voice.

Critical race theorists who operate in the hermeneutic tradition such as myself advocate a “call to context.” From this vantage point, general laws may be appropriate in some circumstances (e.g., mathematics) but political and moral discourse is not one of them. Normative discourse, like civil rights theory, is highly fact-sensitive, which means that adding

any one new fact can change the legal landscape (for example, how legal rights are or should be addressed) radically. Along the way, critical race theorists explore issues having to do with, among other things, the problem of how race can be deployed to right racial wrongs, intersections between critical race theory and queer theory and feminist theory, an examination of what is known as the black-white binary, and how to resolve both inter- and intra-group tensions.¹³

Combining the Approaches

In the past, I have used legal hermeneutics, critical legal studies, and critical race theory together, to reinterpret the relationship between anti-discrimination law and the multiracial experience,¹⁴ and to argue that marriage is a fundamental right.¹⁵ In my current work, I use legal hermeneutical interpretive insights, ideas central to critical legal studies, and critical race theory methods to argue that hate speech should be unprotected by the First Amendment (like fighting words, defamation, obscenity, and child pornography) for the reason that hate speech commits and causes the social harm of perpetuating oppression,¹⁶ and to argue that the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution (vis-à-vis racial discrimination) should be interpreted and understood as a remedial measure for combating historically situated and legalized racial oppression rather than as a tool to eradicate racial discrimination *per se*.¹⁷

Philosophy of Race

Philosophy of race is, for me, about inquiry into what races are, what they mean, and how they operate in the world. It is also inquiry into how the phenomenon of race *should* operate in the world, what the concept of race *should* mean, and, more specifically, how, if at all, the concept of race can and should be used to combat racial oppression. I confess to sympathizing with those idealists who believe the world would be a better place without the concept of human races. I do not think I am alone among those with mixed race ancestry in holding this view. The early work of Kwame Anthony Appiah and Naomi Zack had a deep impact on me, vis-à-vis this topic, as a young undergraduate studying philosophy.¹⁸ It is difficult to throw ourselves back into the mindset of the time when this early work was published, but the proclamation in mainstream philosophical scholarship that the concept of human racial difference was absurd was revolutionary at the time; both because it was rare to find anyone stating this fact anywhere, and also because philosophy was not historically in the business of dealing with the messy reality of race.¹⁹

Weak Social Construction

To put my way of thinking about race in philosophical jargon, I am a weak social constructionist on the question of the reality of race.²⁰ This means I believe that socio-historical practices have given rise to the concept of race, but that these socio-historical practices are not reality-conferring. I opt for weak social constructionism over strong (which does include the idea that socio-historical practices are reality conferring) more because I do not believe that anything on the order of an objective reality exists in the first instance than because I do not think race in particular is real. I think race is as real as anything else (e.g., apples, automobiles, Socrates). It's just that, for me, nothing is real in any sort of hard, full-stop sort of way. I reject reconstructionism because I think it sidesteps the metaphysical question, not because I do not think race should be used to achieve social justice ends. I do think race should be used to achieve social justice ends, and that confronting the way in which race permeates our society, and the ways race deeply affects differential access to social goods for everyone, is essential to those ends.²¹

Race is Not a Natural Kind

It seems to me that the mixed race experience is in the unique position of being able to highlight for discussions in the philosophy of race the fact that race is not a natural kind. K. Anthony Appiah and Naomi Zack brought this fact into philosophical discussion in the 1980s and 1990s, but at the time the fact that *both* of these philosophers were of mixed racial heritage was not thematized and examined in the literature. It was certainly well enough known (by their own admissions), of course, that Zack and Appiah both had parents of different races (white and black), but the link between this common heritage and their similar philosophical positions (stressing that race was not a natural kind) was not made in the literature of the time. However, for me, the link between the mixed race experiences of these philosophers and their insistence that race was not biologically real was glaringly obvious. Based on this (as well as my own view of the reality of race, as well as the views of every mixed race philosopher that I know), it is my hypothesis that mixed persons phenomenologically understand, in a way that those with stronger identifications with one race or another do not, that race is not and cannot be a natural kind, that the concept of human racial categories is absurd.

By way of contrast, it is informative (at least to me) that there are still philosophers today (particularly, those who at least appear to have strong monoracial identifications) who continue to make the case for a biological component to the phenomenon of race, even in the face of overwhelming scientific evidence to the contrary.²² To be fair, I think what many of these philosophers are trying to thematize and articulate

(at least the non-white ones), however, is the popular view that in order to lay claim to black racial identity in the United States, one has to have had at least one black ancestor.²³ However, to articulate that black racial identity in the United States necessitates having had at least one black ancestor (a view with which I agree) and to articulate that human racial categories are based in biology are two different claims. This is because the first claim is about the how the social reality of race has been thematized and constructed in U.S. culture (resulting in the creation of the contours of racial identity at work in American society) and the second (mistakenly) lays claim to some sort of objective basis for racial categories.

Critical Philosophy of Race

I am fascinated by this new area of philosophy known as critical philosophy of race, which, according to the new journal by the same name, is focused on “philosophical examination of issues raised by the concept of race, the practices and mechanisms of racialization, and the persistence of various forms of racism across the world.”²⁴ This is certainly the focus of much of my work, although my interest in racism (as opposed to my interest in the concept of race) is primarily centered around the black-white binary in the United States and its consequences.²⁵

Feminist Philosophy

What most attracts me to feminist philosophy are feminist accounts of metaphysics and epistemology. Feminist metaphysics interrogates the cultural sense of gender difference through an examination of the extent to which society’s values are embedded in the categories and descriptions with which reality is customarily cognized and framed,²⁶ and feminist epistemology questions how we justify our knowledge claims.²⁷ For me, these same ideas apply to racial difference. In other words, I interrogate the cultural sense of racial difference through an examination of the extent to which society’s values are embedded in the categories and descriptions with which race is customarily cognized. I also question how white society/European philosophy justifies its knowledge claims. Feminist standpoint theory is attractive to me because it allows for the social construction of the category of woman as a subject of study, while at the same time allowing for an epistemologically cognizable and credible knowledge source in women *rooted in their experiences*.²⁸ Once again, for me, these same sorts of ideas work for racialized persons. I believe there are ways of thinking about race that are generated from the black experience, there are ways of thinking about race that are generated from the white experience, and there are ways of thinking about race that are generated from other sorts of racialized experiences. This includes the mixed race experience. Of course, these ways of thinking are not mono-

lithic, fully separable, or fully categorizable. It is just that there are general trends and ways of thinking about race that can be traced, in my view, to certain racialized experiences.²⁹ Theorists like Linda Martín Alcoff take up these ideas explicitly. For Alcoff, for example, race is a location from which each of us understands the world, including the experience of interacting with others. Race (and gender as well, incidentally) is embodied and situated.³⁰ These are sentiments with which I agree wholeheartedly.

I also very much appreciate the extent to which feminist philosophy acts as a gadfly on mainstream philosophy more generally, calling it to look at itself critically and to examine the extent to which it is biased in favor of a way of understanding and processing the world that is (unreflectively) rooted in the experiences of a particular demographic, that is, heterosexual, cis-gender, straight, white, property-owning males.³¹ For example, it is taken for granted in the philosophy of mind that an external, objective reality exists.

Ethical Theory

Moral Particularism

Ethical theory was interesting to me as a young philosopher because it was a way of grappling with ethical and social problems without bringing religion into the discussion. The classical way of using philosophy to solve ethical problems (top down application of an ethical theory to an ethical problem), however, never seemed to me to be the best approach. Real-life ethical problems were too complex, too complicated, too embedded in their own particularities, to be resolvable through such a simplistic process, I always thought. This fundamental disconnect between mainstream ethical analysis and the nature of ethical problems in the world was the explanation for why so-called ethical dilemmas were thought to exist, I always thought. From my point of view, it was not that ethical dilemmas actually existed in the world; it was just that trying to solve ethical problems through wholesale application of a theory to a real-world ethical problem was a futile exercise, bound for failure and intellectual paralysis, and very likely to end in so-called ethical dilemmas. Aristotle got it right, I always thought, in recognizing that ethical decision-making, or what he called *phronesis*, must always begin with the facts of the particular case before one. The closest thing to this sort of approach in analytic ethics is moral particularism, according to which there are no moral principles that can be applied broadly across all cases and the legitimacy of moral decisions is limited to particular cases.³² Despite this attraction to the examination of ethical questions on a case-by-case basis, as I mentioned at the top of this chapter, I nonetheless have the intuition that there are moral truths in the world, whether or not it is

within our power to determine what they are (which I suspect, it is not, at least through rational means).³³

Hermeneutic Ethics

In the continental tradition, hermeneutic ethics, according to which ethical obligation arises out of a shared experience of what Heidegger called *Being-in-the-world*, captures well the tension in me between a belief that ethical questions are best answered on a case-by-case basis and an intuition that some sort of universal moral truths do indeed exist. From the hermeneutical point of view, all ethical questions are certainly situated (that is, bound by the context in which they occur), but at the same time—encapsulated in Heidegger’s conception of *Being-with*, and in the hermeneutic concepts of the *spirit of the text* and a *tradition*—there are, respectively, a profound commitment to the welfare of the others with whom we share our world, and a way to assess the relative value of different ethical decisions—that is, in terms of the relevant context. The acknowledgment that we are all connected, along with the concomitant collective responsibility for communal welfare, together hint at the kind of minimalist universal moral truths that I think exist in the world, and that I think are necessary for human flourishing.³⁴

Social and Political Philosophy

There are two key areas of inquiry in social and political philosophy that pique my philosophical interest: the concept of equality and the phenomenon of oppression.

Equality

I first became intrigued with the concept of equality when studying equal protection law in law school. While reading Supreme Court cases interpreting the Equal Protection Clause of the fourteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the meaning of the word “equality” seemed to change from case to case. During the separate-but-equal era (roughly from the 1896 decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson* through the 1954 decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*), equality included the notion of separation/segregation between blacks and whites. Schools and public accommodations could be equal but also separate/segregated. This was a very strange conception of equality indeed.³⁵ The various ways in which the equal protection clause has been interpreted by the Supreme Court since 1954 have not made the concept of equality at work in the equal protection clause any more clear. I am at work on an examination of the equality at work in the Equal Protection Clause. I did preliminary work on this in my dissertation and am currently at work on an academic monograph explores this topic more fully.³⁶

Oppression

Historically, oppression has not been an area of philosophical reflection in the Anglophone tradition. I think there is a more neutral explanation for why this is the case, and there is a more sinister one. The neutral explanation is that oppression is so mired in the corporeal world that it is by its very nature, unsusceptible to the kind of high abstraction that characterizes most Anglophone philosophizing. The more sinister explanation is to ascribe a kind of neglect, or even reckless disregard for the plight of the marginalized and the subjugated, to the Anglophone tradition in philosophy for failing to grapple with oppression, and the ways in which it affects the quality of life for so many. Of notable exception is Ann Cudd's work, which I have found to be very insightful on the topic of the oppression of women.³⁷

The real work on oppression in philosophy, however, the way I see it, originates in Marxism and the Frankfurt School, with Marx's critical method having been taken up by theorists such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and Jürgen Habermas.³⁸ For Frankfurt School theorists, theory is politically engaged, relying on Marx's idea that the point of philosophy was not just to interpret the world, but to change it. Engaged theory, on this view, is responsive to important social transformations. A key component of Frankfurt School thought was Marx's critique of classical political economy. Capitalism and classical political economy were not *natural*, for Marx, but ideological. All of this was a general critique of positivism, defined as a way of thinking about the world based only on observable so-called facts, the relations between them, and the so-called natural laws that bind them. Beneath all of these claims to naturalism, for Frankfurt School theorists, and later for theorists like Derrida and Foucault, are *power differentials masquerading as absolute truths*.³⁹ Oppression takes place within these masquerades, and is meted out through structured and systematized ideological narratives that stymie the emancipatory thoughts and, ultimately the actions and life possibilities, of the oppressed. I have reserved explicit treatment of these questions and themes for my later work, but the questions these themes raise motivate all of my current work.

CONNECTIONS?

So, what is the relationship, if any, between my mixed race experience and my interests and work in philosophy? I will ruminate on that in a moment. In the meantime, I think it is important to say it seems to me that to the extent that my experiences of being a mixed race person in the United States during the time that I have lived so far (late twentieth, early twenty-first century) are typical of the experiences of other mixed race

persons alive during this same time period, the interplay between my experiences and my work may be very telling on two very important philosophical questions: (1) the question of whether there is a link between factual identity and philosophical work, and (2) the question of what the mixed race experience might have to say about philosophical questions of all sorts. With these possibilities in mind, I offer the following observations on the links I see between my own mixed race experience and my work as a philosopher.

I see a direct relationship between my attraction to hermeneutics and my mixed race experiences. The core idea of hermeneutics is that objective knowledge claims cannot be made or had, but more importantly, that objective reality does not exist. This is something I came to believe at a very early age as I floated in and out of systems of intelligibility (white and black) that were drastically different with completely different ways of perceiving, understanding, and being in the world. These differing systems of intelligibility, it is important to highlight, were not experienced by me as mere frameworks of meaning, but as *completely different ways of being*. In other words (to put this concept in analytic terms as best I can) these experiences were indicative of differing *realities*. But, more profoundly, I have never felt like exclusively one race or another at any given time (e.g., black or white) and living in a world that required me to choose one race or another created, I believe, an openness to multiple ways of knowing and multiple ways of being. I believe these experiences lead to interdisciplinary and intertraditional work, with my never feeling comfortable staying inside any particular disciplinary or traditional box.

Critical race theory is appealing to me because it allows me to examine questions of how justice is meted out for oppressed, racialized groups in American society, a subject with which I am, of course, intimately familiar. As mentioned above, within the philosophy of race, I am a (weak) social constructionist on the topic of whether race is real, owing, in my view, to the fact that, in virtue of my mixed race experiences, I phenomenologically understand, on a daily basis, the ludicrousness of the concept of biological race. At the same time, owing to those same life experiences, I am keenly aware at a meta level of how race operates in the world and of the power it has to affect quality of life, access to social goods, and life possibilities.

Themes in feminist metaphysics and epistemology resonate with me because they capture my sense, rooted in my mixed race experience, that dominating paradigms of knowledge or reality are charades, vast ideological fantasy worlds in which the roles have already been assigned and the scripts written out in permanent ink by the powerful.

I am drawn to hermeneutic ethics because it captures the inner conflict I feel between the moral particularism my reasoning process dictates and my intuition that there are universal moral truths at work in the world that transcend race, gender, sexuality, and any other aspect of embodied

identity. That I hold within me (and, to my mind, consistently) these two competing ways of thinking about ethics (i.e., in terms of particularism and in terms of universal moral truths) is something I think is born of my mixed race experience, which, in my view, has always required that I possess a very intense version of the kind of double-consciousness that Du Bois first described.⁴⁰ In the realm of ethics, this double consciousness takes the following form: On the one hand, I believe that ethical questions are asked inside of systems of meaning and intelligibility that legitimate the goals behind ethical systems (I understand, owing in large part to my experiences as a black person, that the problem of racism contains different morally relevant features for black people than for white people). On the other hand, I have a sense of universal humanity and of the (ethical) human condition that transcends the racial divide (I am in close contact with the humanity of persons of all races).

My preoccupations with equality and oppression are unquestionably rooted in my experiences as a person of color. It is less clear to me than in some other areas of my work how these preoccupations might relate to my distinctive experiences as a mixed race person, except to say that historically, many mixed race persons have been leaders in the fight for racial justice. For myself, I think my preoccupation with these topics is rooted in a sense of guilt I feel for the white privilege that is often bestowed upon me owing to the way that I look, and a sense of responsibility for social change that this guilt motivates. A form of white guilt? Maybe. But, for a mixed race person like myself, this guilt and sense of responsibility are more born, in my view, of the profound sense of kinship I feel with the black experience in virtue of my African American heritage.

With all of the above said, I leave it to the reader to assess whether the connections I see between my mixed race experience and my work in philosophy are warranted. It may very well be that I am too close to the situation to judge it well, that what Gadamer would call my pre-judgments on this topic are illegitimate.⁴¹

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NOTES

1. For example, there was the story about my maternal grandmother who (apparently) often had her hair done in upscale white salons in the deeply segregated Washington, D.C. of the 1950s, and tales of white-looking great uncles who had vanished into the white world.

2. This sort of alienated or purgatorial existence for mixed race persons is described in the mid-twentieth-century work of sociologists, Robert E. Park and Everett Stonequist. See, e.g., R. E. Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 33, No. 6 (1928): 881–893; and E. V. Stonequist, *The Marginal Man, A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1937).

3. I would like to particularly thank George Yancy for this suggestion.

4. I borrow this methodology very generally speaking from both Aristotelian virtue ethics and contemporary moral particularism. See, e.g., Aristotle, W. D. Ross and Lesley Brown, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); and Jonathan Dancy, *Ethics Without Principles* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 2004).

5. See, generally, Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper, 1962), and Hans-George Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

6. By contrast, for example, hermeneutic ontology has been described as an "ontology of the in-between." See Nicholas Davey, *Unquiet Understanding: Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York, 2006): 15–17.

7. For a concise explanation of the key ideas of hermeneutics, see Lawrence K. Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics* (Stocksfield: Acumen, 2006).

8. Tina Fernandes Botts, "Hermeneutics, Race, and Gender," in *The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics*, eds. Jeff Malpas and Hans-Helmuth Gander (London: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 498–518.

9. An excellent collection of essays on legal hermeneutics is Gregory Leyh, *Legal Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

10. See, Roberto Unger, *The Critical Legal Studies Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

11. Legal scholarship that focuses on how the law affects a particular marginalized, oppressed, or subjugated group is sometimes called outsider jurisprudence. See

William N. Eskridge, Jr., *Gaylegal Narratives*, 46 Stan. L. Rev. 607 (1994): “‘Outsider’ scholarship posits that the law’s traditional stories reflect neither neutrality nor consensus. Outsider work generally consists of authors who are female, nonwhite and/or gay. Outsider scholars usually have a different view of the law than do their traditionalist colleagues: From the outsider’s perspective, the law not only makes errors of deduction or fact. . . . But also makes errors arising out of bias and global ignorance. Outsider scholarship seeks to challenge the law’s agenda, its assumptions, and its biases.”

12. For more on Heidegger’s existential analytic of *Dasein*, see Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1991).

13. See Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: New Press, distributed by W.W. Norton & Co., 1995).

14. Tina Fernandes Botts, “Antidiscrimination Law and the Multiracial Experience: A Reply to Nancy Leong,” *Hastings Race and Poverty Law Journal* (Summer 2013): 191–218; and Tina Fernandes Botts, “Multiracial Americans and Racial Discrimination,” in *Race Policy and Multiracial Americans*, ed. Kathleen Korgen, (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, January 16, 2016).

15. Tina Fernandes Botts, “Separate But Equal Revisited: The Case of Same Sex Marriage,” *Paper presented at the annual meeting of The Law and Society Association*, July 4 2006, http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p95675_index.html. In *United States v. Windsor*, 570 U.S. _____. (2013) (Docket No. 12–307), the U.S. Supreme Court recently agreed with me, holding that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (1 U.S.C. § 7), which restricts the terms “marriage” and “spouse” to apply only to heterosexual unions, is an unconstitutional violation of the due process right of liberty of the person.

16. Tina Fernandes Botts, “Silencing as Social Harm: Hate Speech as Oppression,” early versions of which were presented at the Diversity in Philosophy Conference, University of Dayton, Dayton, OH, May 2013; and at a Roundtable on *The Ethics of Hate Speech* at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, San Antonio, TX, February 2013.

17. Tina Fernandes Botts, *The Concept of Race, Aristotelian Equality, and the Equal Protection Clause*, monograph in progress.

18. See, e.g., K. Anthony Appiah, *In My Father’s House* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) and “The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 1, “Race,” Writing, and Difference (Autumn, 1985): 21–37. See also Naomi Zack, ed. *Race/Sex: Their Sameness, Difference, and Interplay*, (New York: Routledge, 1997): 29–44, and *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993).

19. In fact, quite the contrary. The discipline of philosophy is infamous for, as a rule, ignoring the question of race completely.

20. For scholarship in which I explore a social constructionist concept of race, see, e.g., Tina Fernandes Botts, “Multiracial Americans and Racial Discrimination,” *supra*, and Tina Fernandes Botts, Review of *The Philosophy of Race*, by Albert Atkin, Acumen Publishing, 2012, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, June 2013.

21. For more on social constructionist and reconstructionist views of race, see Albert Atkin, *The Philosophy of Race* (Durham, NC: Acumen Publishing Ltd, 2012), 47–75.

22. See, e.g., Quayshawn Spencer, “What ‘Biological Racial Realism’ Should Mean,” *Philosophical Studies*, Vol. 159, No. 2 (2012): 181–204. Spencer defends race as a “genuine kind” here rather than a natural kind, but there is still a biological component to it, for Spencer argues that “race is a genuine kind in biology.”

23. Although this idea is rooted in the so-called “one drop” rule in the United States, according to which “one drop” of black blood made one black, the effect of the rule was that black identity became socially defined as having at least once black ancestor. So, although racial identity is a social construction; part of the social con-

struction of black racial identity in the United States is that one has to have black "blood" or ancestry.

24. "Letter from the Editors," *Critical Philosophy of Race*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013): iv–vi, iv.

25. The black-white binary in the United States is the generally held, twofold conception that (1) there are such things as human races, and (2) there are primarily only two: black and white. For a good discussion of the black-white binary, see Ronald R. Sundstrom, *The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

26. See, e.g., Sally Haslanger, "Feminism in Metaphysics: Negotiating the Natural," in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminism in Philosophy*, eds. M. Fricker and J. Hornsby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 107–126.

27. See, e.g., Linda Martin Alcoff, "Gadamer's Feminist Epistemology," in *Feminist Interpretations of Hans-Georg Gadamer* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

28. See, e.g., Selya Benhabib, *Feminist Contentions* (New York: Routledge, 1995); and Eloise A. Baker, "Feminist Social Theory and Hermeneutics: An Empowering Dialectic?" *Social Epistemology*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1990): 23–39.

29. These include the differential ways in which different sorts of women of color have different experiences with patriarchy. See Tina Fernandes Botts and Rosemarie Tong, "Women of Color Feminisms," in *Feminist Thought*, 4th ed., ed. Rosemarie Tong (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2013): 211–253.

30. See, e.g., Linda Martin Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

31. For a recent collection of essays that challenge the way in which the discipline of philosophy fails to be self-critical about the extent to which it is biased in favor of the methods and views of this demographic, see Namita Goswami, Maeve M. O'Donovan, and Lisa Yount, eds., *Why Race and Gender Still Matter: An Intersectional Approach* (London and Brookfield, VT: Pickering & Chatto, 2014).

32. I have been inspired by the work of Jonathan Dancy, for example, to examine the question of when and where race is or should be considered a morally relevant feature of a given moral situation. See, e.g., Jonathan Dancy, *Ethics Without Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

33. For an interesting line of inquiry in this regard, see, e.g., Sally Sedgwick, "Can Kant's Ethics Survive the Feminist Critique?" in *Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant*, ed. Robin May Scott (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press): 77–100.

34. For an examination of hermeneutic ethics, see, e.g., Nicholas Davey, *Unquiet Understanding: Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006): 9: "With its roots in the philosophy of consciousness, philosophical hermeneutics seems at first sight to lack an ethical orientation. . . . On closer inspection, a rich vein of ethical thinking becomes discernible. Philosophical hermeneutics de-centers the subjective experience and brings the subject into profound dependence upon cultural realities that are not of its own making. . . . The event of understanding is not an individual achievement but presupposes an ethical encounter with an other."

35. Derrick Bell has written about the odd conception of equality at work in the law. For Bell, whatever this concept of equality is, it does not include equality between whites and blacks. See Derrick A. Bell, Jr. "Racial Realism," in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: New Press, distributed by W.W. Norton & Co., 1995): 302–312.

36. See Tina Fernandes Botts, *The Concept of Race, Aristotelian Equality, and the Equal Protection Clause*, monograph in progress.

37. See Ann E. Cudd, *Analyzing Oppression* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

38. See, e.g., Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. G. S. Noerr, trans. E. Jephcott (Stan-

ford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); and Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. C. Lenhardt and S. W. Nicholsen, (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1990).

39. See, e.g., Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press); and Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended": *Lectures at the Collège de France 1975–1976*, eds. Maurizio Bertani and Alessandro Fontana (Picador: New York, 2003).

40. See W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Avenel, NJ: Gramercy Books, 1994).

41. For Gadamer, everyone approaches every question with a set of presuppositions Gadamer calls *prejudgments*. If a given *prejudgment* proves reliable, Gadamer calls the *prejudgment legitimate*. If it does not prove reliable, Gadamer calls it *illegitimate*. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

Part III

Mixed Race Ontology

6

The Fluid Symbol of Mixed Race¹

Naomi Zack

Philosophers have little to lose in making practical proposals. If the proposals are enacted, the power of ideas to change the world is affirmed. If the proposals are rejected, there is new material for theoretical reflection. During the 1990s, I believed that broad public recognition of mixed race, particularly black and white mixed race, would contribute to an undoing of rigid and racist, socially constructed racial categories. I argued for such recognition in my first book, *Race and Mixed Race*,² a follow-through anthology, *American Mixed Race*,³ and numerous articles, especially the essay "Mixed Black and White Race and Public Policy," which appeared first in *Hypatia* in 1995.⁴ I also delivered scores of public and academic lectures and presentations on this subject, all of which expressed the following in varied forms and formats: Race is an idea that lacks the biological foundation it is commonly assumed to have. There is need for broad education about this absence of foundation; mixed race identities should be recognized, especially black–white identities.

Given some of the discussion of my work on race and mixed race, I should reiterate that my position was neither a denial of the existence of race nor advocacy of the elimination of race as a category. That is, while I believe that the elimination of race as a category would be a good thing in many contexts, I have never advocated for such elimination as a next step for a society that is as entangled with ideas of race as ours is. And furthermore, I am wary of the delusional aspect of any philosopher believing that she has the authority, much less the power, to wield an idea like a magic wand over the world. Race exists insofar as people use race to identify themselves and others racially. What does not exist is a biological foundation for human races or human racial divisions. It is an empirical question whether broad public understanding of this lack of foundation, in a society where many think that such a foundation in biological science exists, would result in an "elimination" of race terms and practices.

The recognition of mixed race that I have advocated would proceed from where we are now, in a society where many people continue to think that human racial taxonomy has a biological foundation. Recogni-

tion of mixed race would be fair, because if racially “pure” people are entitled to distinct racial identities, then so are racially mixed people. Also, the false belief in biological races logically entails a belief in mixed biological races. But, of course, in true biological taxonomic terms, if pure races do not exist, then neither do mixed races.⁵

However, by the time I finished writing *Philosophy of Science and Race*,⁶ I had come to the conclusion that broad understanding of the absence of a biological foundation for “race,” beginning with philosophers, was more urgent than mixed race recognition or identity rights. Against that needed shift away from the false racialisms to which many liberatory race theorists still clung, advocacy of mixed race recognition seemed self-serving, if not petty. And I think that the shift is still a work in progress. But still, the ongoing historical phenomena of mixed race and the distinctive experiences of mixed race people continue to merit consideration, and I am grateful for this opportunity to revisit my earlier confidence and enthusiasm that mixed race recognition was on the near horizon, with the full-scale undoing of race soon to dawn.

The twenty-first century has so far supported greater recognition of mixed race, but not as a distinct or stand-alone racial category, which was what I had hoped to see happen. Biracial black and white Americans continue to voluntarily identify and be identified by others as black. This is surprising because the efforts of several overlapping multiracial “movements” culminated in the U.S. census 2000 allowance for more than one box to be checked for race. In response to that opportunity for new self-identification, 6.9 million respondents, or 2.4 percent of all respondents, designated themselves as members of “two or more races,” while 16 million, or 5.5 percent, indicated that they were “some other race.”⁷ However, these substantial figures are rarely disaggregated as statistics pertaining to specific racial mixtures. Based on recent political events and a current unscientific sense of contemporary culture, it is now safe to say that the black–white distinction is as sharp as it ever has been in the United States. And mixed race, despite more robust acknowledgement, seems to have passed from a possibly viable independent identity into a variable or fluid symbol of not only this or that presumptively pure race, but a symbol of race relations as well. I think that if we carefully examine this symbolic condition of mixed race, we might learn or relearn something about the nature of our ongoing social, racial categories. Such an examination of mixed race and race would be a project of what has come to be accepted as critical race theory. Maybe these terms should be defined before proceeding further.

RACE, MIXED RACE, AND CRITICAL RACE THEORY

The term *race* refers to a system of human typology or a classification scheme in modern Western history that is believed to be based on real and important biological differences among groups. In addition to its presumed, but false, biological foundation, race has a real genealogical foundation that connects the race of an individual with the race of his or her parents and ancestors. However, children have the same race as their parents and ancestors only if those forebears are of the same race. If forebears are of different races, offspring are “mixed.” In the United States, racial mixture usually results in assignment to the ancestral group of lower “racial” status, a practice known as *hypodescent*. For example, biracial black and white Americans are classified as black, according to the “one drop rule” of black racial identity. This “one drop” has become almost completely metaphorical, because educated people no longer believe, as they did in the nineteenth century, that racial inheritance is a matter of the intergenerational transmission of racial blood types; indeed, it is unlikely that anyone still knowingly subscribes to pre-Mendelian hereditary theories of this nature. Also, hypodescent is not applied rigorously and literally; for example, few if any believe that one remote black ancestor automatically means that an individual is black. Rather, black racial identity is based largely on how others identify the person, which is in turn based mainly on appearance. Individuals are assumed to be black and likely to identify as black if their appearance conforms to broad expectations of what black people look like. But this rule has never been symmetrical. If a person looks white, but has recent known black ancestry, many may still consider her identification as white to be an instance of “passing,” and passing is generally regarded as a kind of inauthenticity—whatever that may be.

Race is simultaneously a quality of distinct groups and of the individuals who constitute them. If the reality of the biological foundation of race is bracketed, the cultural differences of racial groups, based on their history and current economics, politics, and social values, remain undeniable. This is another way of saying that human racial taxonomy may at the same time be both biologically unreal and socially and psychologically real. This is not as magical as it seems, because it is merely an instance of human beings creating culture based on what they believe. The nonexistence of something does not affect the reality of human action based on the belief that it does exist, nor does it affect the meaningfulness of sentences that have the entity in question as their subject. For example, we can talk meaningfully about Santa Claus, witches, and religious deities who we ourselves do not believe exist.

Overall, the term *mixed race* refers to a variable characteristic of individuals whose parents or ancestors are of different races. If race lacks a biological foundation as a system of human types, then so does mixed

race, which would derive its foundation from that of the races in any given mixture. Culturally, mixed race has been more of a highly variable property of individuals than a stable property of groups, because mixed race groups do not have the same extended, intra-group shared history as their members' variable ancestry in presumptively pure racial groups. Self-identified intergenerational, mixed race groups have nonetheless existed in quasi-isolated communities throughout the United States, particularly in the mid-Atlantic region. But such groups have remained largely invisible to the broad population, are small in number, and do not have any political clout or distinctive entitlements. These small, intergenerational communities of multiracial Americans are primarily attended to as subjects of specialized study for anthropologists and sociologists.⁸ By contrast, the multiracial "movements" of the late twentieth century consisted largely of first-generation, mixed race individuals, who to varying degrees continue to study themselves and their situations, in virtual communities.

What does critical theory have to do with all this? Critical theory as developed by the Frankfurt School in reaction to early twentieth-century logical positivism has held that the social world could or should be studied in exactly the ways in which it has failed to live up to common ideals and could or should be perfected. The purpose of such critical study is to improve the social world. Critical *race* theory originated in studies of American anti-black racism that was legally in accord with founding documents and existing laws. Critical race theorists usually hold that much of what is broadly associated with distinct racial groups is the result of history, custom, and legalized injustice. For example, that a slave counted for 3/5 of a person when the U.S. Constitution was signed is both a legal fact about our early representational democracy and a social and psychic hypothesis about the injured and diminished personhood of enslaved individuals.⁹ The hypothesis about personhood is exactly the theoretical part of critical race theory.

Personhood, apart from how people are counted for the purpose of political representation, is an abstract notion, and equal respect for persons is an abstract ideal. To get from certain legal facts to a theory about social and psychic conditions (e.g., slavery, segregation, ongoing disadvantage associated with black identities) that fall short of stated ideals (e.g., that all humans are created equal and are endowed with certain inalienable rights) requires something like a "transcendental argument": What must be the case in society and individual hearts and minds for a specific injustice to be legal and acceptable by the majority in a democratic society? The inference to diminished personhood is relatively automatic, given the existence and broad acceptance of black chattel slavery when the Constitution was signed.

I am suggesting that a critique of the status of mixed black and white race in the United States at this time reveals not only distinctive discrimi-

nations experienced by individuals of mixed black and white racial ancestry, but that from such facts and their ongoing legality, certain underlying ideas about the black and white racial groups might plausibly be inferred. Of course, nothing remotely similar to the brute reality of slavery facilitates the inference (i.e., mixed-raced Americans are not now slaves). Instead, insofar as mixed black and white individuals are considered simply “black,” their racial identity is erased. This erasure of racial identity is odd in a society where everyone is categorized by race, so the task for the critical theorist of mixed race is to examine what the erasure implies about the public imaginary of race. As mixed race is not part of that imaginary as a distinct or stand-alone category, the invisibility of mixed race might reveal something about what is still believed about the presumptively pure races, but no longer explicitly stated. Before proceeding with this critique, it might be useful to consider the history of mixed race in the United States more systematically, and also make good on the claim that biological race is itself a social construction.

THE HISTORY OF MIXED RACE AND THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF BIOLOGICAL RACE

These two subjects are inextricably related. Even an intuitive and anecdotal understanding of the history of mixed race can shed light on how race itself is a social construction. Take the case of dog breeds. Anyone who is acquainted with dog owners knows that mutts generate a tremendous amount of speculation about their ancestry. The outcome of such speculation is highly variable, despite the expertise and experience of discussants. Even the ontological status of mixed breeds *per se* is not uniform. If you consult the classified section of your local newspapers on either U.S. coast, you will likely find that dogs are advertised haphazardly in terms of breeds, so that an ad for miniature poodle puppies might be followed by one for Great Danes and that might be followed by an ad for a mixed German Shepherd—Rottweiler litter, ending with an entry for greyhounds. In other parts of the country, the dog section of the classifieds might have a separate subsection for “mixed breeds.”¹⁰

As a species, dogs have a tremendous degree of genetic variation.¹¹ The original dog ancestors who were domesticated by human beings doubtless had different physical traits depending on the environmental conditions to which their ancestors had adapted. What we call the “pure breeds” were selectively bred over generations for exactly the traits that are prized in each breed. This means that something like mutts came before the breeds were selected for (by their human breeders), so for any given dog with unknown parentage, there is no way to tell, based on its appearance, what, if any, pure-breds were among its forebears. It is possible that all of its forebears were members of the pre-pedigree gene pool,

although any genetic analysis of a dog's ancestry will not go beyond statistical probabilities concerning the geographical location of its ancestors.

There are similarities between human and canine racial identification in the practice of racial genetic typing. Human mitochondrial DNA, inherited only through mothers, is compared with the mitochondrial DNA of populations that have lived continuously in specific areas of different geographical continents.¹² Something like this had been done in a specific case when Henry Louis Gates Jr. informed Oprah Winfrey in a popular PBS documentary that all of her ancestors likely came from Africa, meaning that she was "purely black."¹³ Despite the strong racial values associated with Oprah's initial discovery and her subsequent journey back to Africa in search of her "roots" in a sequel to the original documentary,¹⁴ there is very little, if anything, distinctively racial in a physical scientific sense about such genetic studies. It is presumed that Americans typed as racially black have ancestors who originated in Africa. But Africa is itself a vast continent with extreme variations among its populations in exactly those physical traits that are culturally associated with black or nonblack racial membership.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the conflation of black race with African ancestors has been a long-standing cultural staple. For example, when Barack Obama was born, the entry for "father's race" was filled in by the word "African."¹⁶ Given all of the oppression, pride, and suffering that have attended the modern biological notion of race, one would expect that something greater than continental origins of ancestors underpinned it scientifically. Also, most population geneticists now believe that modern humans originated in Africa,¹⁷ which suggests that ancestral continental origins would at best support the existence of one human race, rather than a taxonomy of two or more. And our ordinary ideas of race require a taxonomy.

There is a self-revised scientific history of ideas of race, but that is not the same thing as a scientific foundation. The need for such a foundation or some intellectual justification for the enslavement of Africans and the oppression and exploitation of indigenous peoples during the period of European colonization— and its subsequent racisms—without question motivated belief in human races. But when Hume, Kant, and Hegel constructed their sweeping cultural theories about human classifications and European excellence, theories that were subsequently used to justify what are now viewed as pseudo-scientific studies of race, they merely assumed that human beings are divided into different races that in turn have scalar degrees of intelligence, beauty, culture, and moral worth.

Thus, according to Hume:

I am apt to suspect the negroes and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion

than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation.¹⁸

Hume just assumed that human races or species existed, and did not take great care to distinguish between races and species. But Kant did entertain the question whether there were races, before basing an affirmative answer on the existence of mixed race:

In this way Negroes and whites are not different species of humans (for they presumably belong to one stock), but they are different races, for each perpetuates itself in every area, and they generate between them children that are necessarily hybrid, or blendings (mulattoes).¹⁹

However, Kant simply asserted that “the reason for assuming the Negroes and Whites to be fundamental races is self-evident.”²⁰ Without argument, Kant applied a scalar taxonomy of human worth to the racial one; thus, “the Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling. Mr. Hume challenges anyone to cite a single example in which the Negro has shown talents.”²¹

Building on Kant, who relied on the authority of Hume, Hegel based his taxonomy of race on geography. He privileged the fortuitous climate and location of Europe, dismissed Asia as a site of “mutual conflict,” and reserved the greatest disparagement for Africa. Hegel wrote:

From the earliest historical times, Africa has remained cut off from all contact with the rest of the world. It is the land of gold, forever pressing in upon itself, and the land of childhood, removed from the light of self-consciousness of history and wrapped in the dark mantle of night.²²

When biological ideas of human races were first formulated in the human sciences, they thereby had canonical theoretical justification in the writings of at least three of the greatest Western philosophers. Both top-down theories based on distinctive racial essences as causes of observable racial traits and bottom-up inductive compilations and descriptions of observable traits in distinct populations flourished for a long while.²³ However, no one ever discovered a racial essence or any general causal property of any distinctive race. The population theories, especially when combined with evolutionary accounts of different traits, for example, that people living closer to the equator were advantaged by darker skin hues, had greater empirical credibility. But these theories also broke down as scientific theories of race, because there are hundreds of thousands of human populations, and they do not simply line up with a taxonomy of three or five or twelve or sixty races.²⁴ The only way that races can be defined commonsensically in terms of populations is if one projects the unjustified commonsense taxonomy of a few major races onto clusters of populations, or in current racialist speak, “clades.”²⁵ Cavalli-Sforza, one

of the leading late twentieth-century population geneticists, put it this way:

The classification into races has proved to be a futile exercise for reasons that were already clear to Darwin. Human races are still extremely unstable entities in the hands of modern taxonomists, who define from 3 to 60 or more races. To some extent, this latitude depends on the personal preference of taxonomists, who may choose to be "lumpers" or "splitters." Although there is no doubt that there is only one human species, there are clearly no objective reasons for stopping at any particular level of taxonomic splitting. In fact, the analysis we carry out . . . for the purposes of evolutionary study shows that the level at which we stop our classification is completely arbitrary.²⁶

The point here is that ordinary ideas about race cannot be based on contemporary science unless it is first assumed that the ordinary ideas point to real distinctions in the world. If they did point to real distinctions in the world, then there should by this time be something in scientific taxonomy that independently draws the same distinctions, and there is not.

Furthermore, it is not as though the ordinary distinctions or taxonomies of race are themselves coherent. Take skin color. Differences in skin shades can of course be measured, but there is no qualitative genetic or developmental difference between people with very dark skin and those with very light skin. The former simply have more melanin than the latter.²⁷ Also, some researchers note that skin color is evolutionarily unstable and difficult to verify for ancestral populations because soft tissue does not endure as archeological material. There are, in addition, grounds for hypothesizing that the early human population in Africa was hirsute and had very pale skin, similar to present chimpanzees.²⁸

On the social level of race, some people classified as black have lighter skin than some people classified as white. Indeed, there is no set of traits considered to be racial traits that are shared by all members of any of the major commonly understood races. J. Craig Venter, head of Celera Genome Corporation, which came up with the first map of the human genome, summarized the relevance of such research to race as follows: "Race is a social concept, not a scientific one. We all evolved in the last 100,000 years from the same small number of tribes that migrated out of Africa and colonized the world."²⁹ All human beings have the same genes, but differ in their *alleles* or forms and in the part of human DNA that does not consist of genes. Group comparisons of mitochondrial DNA (inherited from mothers) and Y chromosome DNA (inherited from fathers), as well as nuclear DNA (inherited from both parents), place the overall genetic difference within the human species at 0.2 percent. Within this 1/500, 90–94 percent is believed to occur within social racial groups, and 6–10 percent of the difference, or between 1/8000³⁰ and 1/5000³¹ of

human genetic material, can be found between groups that are first separated according to social criteria for race.

Almost every aspect of racism that can be cognitively expressed originated in earlier ideas of race that were accepted on the scientific authority of their day. The biological sciences have constantly revised themselves in this regard, although common sense has lagged. Much of this discrepancy is evident in the history of ideas of mixed race. We have seen how beginning with Kant, mixed race was taken to be evidence for the existence of pure races, a type of "transcendental" reasoning that could also justify inferences of tall and short "races" from the existence of people with "average" height. In some American states during the nineteenth century, anyone who had 1/8 or less known black ancestry, for example, one black great-grandparent or two black great-great grandparents, was legally white. The census then included mixed black and white categories such as mulatto, quadroon, and octoroon. This "fractional" theory of mixed race, compatible with Darwin's theory of heredity, but propounded by his cousin, Francis Galton, was in principle revised as the result of twentieth-century discoveries in heredity. Post-Mendelian heredity made it evident that at conception, half of the genetic material of each parent is not passed on, because the offspring gets a literal half of her genetic material from each parent. This entails that family history alone is insufficient to determine what an individual has inherited from whom.³² But the fractional theory contributed to long-standing notions of conflict in the psyches of mixed-race people, and it persists in popular self-identification, for example, "half Chinese and half Jewish," "half black and half Asian," or "one-third Irish, one-third Italian, and one-third Sioux."

By 1900, the one-drop rule became the general law for black classification, and in 1920, mixed black and white racial categories were deleted from the U.S. census. During this period, segregation was also the law of the land, and marriage between blacks and whites was largely prohibited. Theories of racial dilution and special physical, cognitive, and moral debilities of mixed-race persons were in wide circulation; there were minor panics about purportedly large numbers of blacks who were successfully passing as white. After the civil rights movements, in 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that all anti-miscegenation laws were unconstitutional. During the 1990s, mixed-race births within marriage were commonly referred to as the fastest growing category of births in racial terms.³³ As noted, the 2000 census permitted respondents to check more than one category for race. All things considered, it would seem as though the social phenomenon of mixed race is no longer as fraught as it used to be. No one still believes, or could credibly proclaim to an educated audience, that mixed-race people suffer special physical or mental disabilities, or that mulattoes are inherently tragic.

Still, it should be noted that this relatively recent American progress is hardly the vanguard of global progress. In Latin America, for example, it is commonly remarked that racial mixture has been recognized and taken for granted for centuries. Moreover, who counts as black or mixed has been dependent on time and place ever since racial categories emerged in the modern period. That there should be global variations in racial categories and attitudes is not surprising insofar as racial divisions and attitudes lack an objective (determining) foundation, apart from the contingent historical, political, and economic conditions in which they arise. But there remains something ineffably but distinctively incomplete about mixed black and white racial identity in the United States. And this incompleteness about black-white mixed race facilitates its ongoing symbolic functions. The perceived public persona of Barack Obama during the 2008 election process is perhaps a present-day apotheosis of the symbolic nature of black-white mixed race.

BARACK OBAMA AND MIXED RACE

The story of Barack Obama's life as retold in the media quickly achieved the status of legend or myth, and it does not depart much from the official U.S. Congress bioguide, as follows:

Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, August 4, 1961; obtained early education in Jakarta, Indonesia, and Hawaii; continued education at Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA; received a B.A. in 1983 from Columbia University, New York City; worked as a community organizer in Chicago, Ill.; studied law at Harvard University, where he became the first African American president of the Harvard Law Review, and received J.D. in 1991; lecturer on constitutional law, University of Chicago; member, Illinois State Senate 1997–2004; elected as a Democrat to the U.S. Senate in 2004, and served from January 3, 2005, to November 16, 2008, when he resigned from office, having been elected president; elected as the 44th President of the United States on November 4, 2008.³⁴

This official congressional bioguide omits the facts of Obama's multi-racial ancestry, for his mother was a white woman from Kansas and his father an international student from Kenya. Why this omission in the official record? It simplifies matters immensely if Barack Obama can be regarded as simply "African American." But the vast majority of African Americans have ancestors who were enslaved on U.S. soil, and do not have white mothers. Perhaps we could say that as a mixed black and white race individual, Barack Obama was able to successfully, and now according to the congressional bioguide, seamlessly, symbolize an African-American individual.

When Obama delivered his victory speech, his symbolic power went further, to stand for all those African Americans with family histories of

segregation and slavery. He accomplished that through an extended reflection on how the election may have seemed to Ann Nixon Cooper, a 106-year-old African American woman who had voted for him in Atlanta. But his address was not limited to African Americans. He included his white supporters in continual affirmations of the greatness of the whole country that had elected him.³⁵

I do not think there is any problem with a mixed-race person choosing to identify as black. Indeed, many who write about mixed race posit a right to choose one's race, for multi- and biracial Americans.³⁶ However, Obama's *choice*, as a multiracial individual, to become black, is often overlooked, even though its development is well chronicled in his first best-selling book, *Dreams from My Father*.³⁷ To be sure, it is not difficult to understand how a multiracial person who "looks black" could symbolize a generalized African-American identity. But students of race should note that there is both a thin and a thick notion of race, particularly black race, in American culture. The thin notion concerns appearance only; the thick notion includes a family genealogy of enslavement. The election and inauguration of the first African-American president in the United States was an occasion of great joy for perhaps hundreds of millions of people, in the United States and globally. But in the United States, some of that joy involved someone whose black identity was based on the thin notion of race symbolizing many whose black identity was based on the thick notion. I do not mean that the joy was based on knowledge of the symbolism, but rather that the joy ignored the symbolism of the movement from mixed race to black race, as well as the power of the thin idea of race to fully represent the thick idea. And somehow, because the electorate was predominantly white, the preservation of whiteness as pure whiteness through the seamless application of the one-drop rule (hypodescent) was also ignored in favor of a celebration of "racial transcendence" and hopes for better white-black race relations in the future.

Questions therefore arise about the nature of the power symbolically attributed to a mixed-race individual for rectifying racial injustice based on black and white racial divisions, particularly injustice that has a material foundation in exploitation, differential treatment, intergenerational poverty, and their accompanying aversions and contempt. Would someone with slave ancestry have that same power? Could a white person or a mixed-race person who looked white have it? I do want to emphasize, however, that the joy among the white 1960s-type liberals, African Americans, Africans, and other people of color in the United States and the world after Barack Obama's election is no small matter.

At a Radical Philosophy Association meeting in San Francisco, several days after the election, Angela Davis remarked on this joy in the context of Herbert Marcuse's emphasis on the aesthetics of human experience. But she also asked the question of what the moment in American history still left undone for radical philosophers.³⁸ The next day, Lucius Outlaw

posed a rhetorical question suggesting that the radical philosophers in his audience had since the 1960s taught a generation and created the intellectual foundation that had made it possible for Barack Obama to be elected president.³⁹

The answer to Angela Davis's question is that much work still needs to be done in addressing ongoing issues of social injustice for African Americans. Lucius Outlaw is correct that some members of the philosophical academy have not only supported the successes of the civil rights movement, but have extended them. And I think on my own account that we need to reconsider the lack of a distinct category for mixed-race black and white Americans. One broad question, given facts of national variation in the recognition of mixed race, is, Why do Americans continue to resist recognition of mixed black and white racial identity? An adequate answer to this question requires a new understanding of American racial history. I cannot provide that here.⁴⁰ But there are more manageable and narrower questions evoked by Barack Obama's symbolization of African Americans in ways that have appealed to so many white Americans: If many whites are more comfortable with mixed-race than with presumptively pure black people, what does this say about how they regard black people? Are mixed black and white people required, expected, and assumed to be black in large and official public contexts? If they are, is it because the one-drop rule is an implicit law, or because the history of African Americans would rather be forgotten? Have we as a culture substituted the thin notion of race, based on skin color only, for the thick one that carries individual genealogies and group histories?

But even these questions cannot be fully answered before we see what happens in coming decades, so I can offer no more than the following tentative replies. Whites are probably not comfortable with mixed black and whites, as such, but they are more comfortable with blacks who appear to be "light-skinned blacks" than with blacks who have relatively dark skin. Mixed black and white people do now experience strong social and political pressure to identify as black, which is what most of them do. That pressure is probably as much the result of whites' felt needs to be racially "pure," both individually and as members of a "pure" race, as it expresses a white desire to keep mixed black and whites in the black group (with the lower status thereby implied). And the desire of those who are mixed black and white to live in solidarity with their black family members should also be kept in mind. The thin notion of race has not taken the place of the thick one, if only because someone who looks white, but has recent known black ancestry, would not be considered white by many whites. But the thin, skin-color notion of race is easier to use in sorting people, and it has the advantage of transnationality, which genealogy and group history, tied as they are to specific places, lack.

MIXED-RACE IDENTITY NOW

If race as imagined to have a biological foundation in the sense of taxonomy is unreal, then so is mixed race. But insofar as what is believed to be race and attitudes and customs based on such beliefs are an important part of social, individual, and political life, then mixed race should be real. And to an extent mixed race, genealogically understood, is real sociologically and psychologically, although not yet as a distinct or stand-alone category in the case of black and white.

The danger of insisting on black and white mixed-race political recognition in a system in which blacks are disadvantaged is that a mixed-race group could act as a buffer between blacks and whites and re-inscribe that disadvantage. It is interesting to note that under apartheid in South Africa, there was not only a robust mixed population known as "colored," but individuals were able to change their race as their life circumstances changed.⁴¹ From the perspective of mixed-race individuals, this example may seem as though even South Africa was more liberatory on the grounds of race than the one-drop-rule-governed United States. (This is not to say that South African coloreds had full civil liberties under apartheid, but only that they were better off than many blacks.) But from a more broad perspective, in terms of white-black relations, recognition of mixed-race identity, while it may advantage mixed race individuals and add sophistication to a black and white imaginary of race, does little to dislodge white supremacy overall. The public and political recognition of mixed-race identities could be quite dangerous to white-black race relations overall if the position of blacks remained unchanged.⁴² But continued obliviousness about mixed-race identities holds the immediate danger of denying the existence of injustice for some presumptively pure blacks who do not have the advantages of white parentage.

People who are mixed race remain entitled to the same amount of freedom and self-expression on the grounds of race as everyone else is. Fortunately, what is left at this time in terms of mixed-race identity *per se* is a tremendous amount of choice and self-expression. I will close by suggesting how these identities are richer than they have ever been. First, let us note that blacks and whites are by no means the only groups who have conspired toward mixed progeny. The 2000 census allows for four racial categories: black, white, Asian, and Indian (U.S. Census 2000). Based on these four categories, there are fifteen different categories: all four groups combined, each of the four groups taken separately, black-Asian-Indian, black-white-Asian, black-white-Indian, white-Asian-Indian, black-white, Asian-white, Asian-Indian, Indian-white, black-Asian, and black-Indian. There is in addition the added factor of Latino/Hispanic identity. Actually, the 2000 census afforded fifty-seven different racial identities, a complexity that makes it difficult to compare results with those of earlier compilations.⁴³ We should expect

that mixed-race identities do and will continue to vary depending on whether it was parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents who were members of the different races in a person's mixed-race ancestry. And I think we should continue to be open to the fact that many mixed-race individuals do and will continue to change their preferred racial identities, depending on personal and public context, life phase, and other factors. Some of those changes might be surprising.

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NOTES

1. "The Fluid Symbol of Mixed Race" by Naomi Zack is reprinted by permission from *Hypatia*, 25(4) (Fall, 2010), published by Wiley on behalf of Hypatia, Inc., pp. 875–890. ©2010, Hypatia, Inc. The present version of this essay has benefited from presentations at Florida Atlantic University and Florida International University in January 2009 and at the University of Oregon in May 2009. Professor Zack thanks those audiences, particularly members of the Undergraduate Philosophy Club at the University of Oregon, who sponsored her talk there while it was being videotaped by Abacus Productions. Professor Zack also thanks Alison Wylie and Lori Gruen, the co-editors of the special issue of *Hypatia* in which this chapter originally appeared, as well

as *Hypatia*'s anonymous editors for their support and request for clarification of parts of the penultimate version of this paper.

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3. Naomi Zack, ed., *American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995).
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5. Zack, "Mixed Black and White Race and Public Policy," 183–184; Naomi Zack, *Philosophy of Science and Race* (New York: Routledge, 2002), chap. 7.
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10. When I attended a conference in Atlanta, Georgia, in 2001, after having bought a dog in Eugene, Oregon, I first noticed this difference. It is not clear to me whether categorizing mixed breeds of dogs, separately, recognizes them as a stand-alone category or devalues them in comparison with pure breeds.
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24. Zack, *Philosophy of Science and Race*, 52.
25. Naomi Zack, "Ethnicity, Race, and the Importance of Gender," in *Race or Ethnicity? On Black and Latino Identity*, ed. Jorge Gracia (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2007), 102–122.

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40. The historical understanding that I presented in 1993, in *Race and Mixed Race*, I now consider insufficient. It generated an expectation that making the demographics of mixed race known, together with information about the biological emptiness of all racial taxonomies, would result in broad recognition of mixed black and white race. That expectation has been spectacularly unfulfilled.
41. David Theo Goldberg, "Made in the USA," in *American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdiversity*, ed. Naomi Zack (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995), 237–256.
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7

On Being Mixed¹

Linda Martín Alcoff

Latin Americans have never been able to take a racial or cultural identity for granted:

Who are we? asks the Liberator [Venezuelan] Simon Bolivar. “ . . . We are not Europeans, we are not Indians, but a species in between. . . . We find ourselves in the difficult position of challenging the natives for title of possession, and of upholding the country that saw us born against the opposition of the invaders. . . . It is impossible to identify correctly to what human family we belong.”²

Part European, part indigenous, culturally a mix between the legacy of colonial aggression and colonial oppression, neither Latin Americans nor U.S. Latinos have ever had an unproblematic relationship to the questions of culture, identity, race, ethnicity, or even liberation. Alicia Gaspar de Alba goes so far as to call this hybridity a “cultural schizophrenia” that afflicts all “New World” peoples as the psychological effect of the Conquest and subsequent split identity.³

At the same time, Latin American thought has been in constant dialogue with European thought, and the latter has tended toward purist constructions of race, ethnicity, and culture. The subsequent contradiction between those ideas and Latin American reality has produced a rich tradition of philosophical work on the concept of cultural identity and its relation to the self.⁴ In countries where nationalist aspirations cannot attach themselves to purist constructions of identity (as is invoked by the phrase “as American as apple pie” in the United States), a different set of practices and concepts around identity has emerged, one not without its own racisms, but one that might evoke an alternative conceptualization for mixed race and ethnic identities.⁵

In the 1980s and 1990s, the movement of mixed racial identity first became widely public in the United States, as new political groups formed, magazines and journals were created, and major lobbying efforts were launched to open up the census categories.⁶ This movement raises a number of important, concrete political questions in regard to a state-recognized mixed race category, with implications for apportionment,

representation, educational funding, and the statistical claims that can be made about the overall situation of racialized groups. Many, many more people in the United States are of mixed races than is often acknowledged—as much as 90 percent of African Americans, 30 percent of southern whites by some estimates, and almost all Latinos, Filipinos, and Native Americans—and marriages between people of different races are increasing in every category. If all of these people were removed from statistical calculations of group identity the assessments of many groups would be significantly altered.

There are essentially two sets of questions that the mixed race movement raises: the first set concerns policy issues of various sorts, and the second concerns philosophical issues. As Maria P. P. Root explains, “The existence of racially mixed persons challenges long-held notions about the biological, moral, and social meaning of race.”⁷ What is the identity of a mixed race person? Can we meaningfully adumbrate identities by percentages based on familial genealogy? Or do mixed persons transcend existing categories altogether? And besides the metaphysical question about the “real” identity of mixed race persons, there are also philosophical questions about the political and symbolic meanings of being mixed. Is mixing a form of identity degeneration, a politics of conquest, or a laudable goal within a liberatory politics? Do mixed race persons symbolize positive political values or problematic ones?

In this chapter, as in earlier ones, I will not attempt to formulate policy, and thus I will not pursue the first set of questions just described. Rather, my interest is again more philosophical, toward exploring the metaphysics and politics of being mixed, as well as the conditions (metaphysical, historical, etc.) under which being mixed creates an identity problem in the first place. I will also consider various proposed solutions to the problem, including assimilationism and nomadic subjectivity, and I will conclude with a description, assessment, and political analysis of the two main metaphysical options for conceptualizing mixed identity. The primary focus will remain on mixed racial identity, but race is mediated by ethnic and cultural identities in such a way that these cannot always be neatly disentangled. In certain respects the philosophical issue at stake is the same whether the object is mixed race, mixed ethnicity, or mixed culture: all have been devalued as incoherent, diluted, and thus weak.

RACED PURELY OR PURELY ERASED

For a variety of reasons that I will explore in the next section, during the European conquest of the Americas, Spanish colonizers intermarried with indigenous people at a higher rate than did the English colonizers of the North. Moreover, Africans were involved in the conquest from the

beginning, initially as participants alongside the Europeans. And the importation of slaves from Africa two centuries after the conquest began had the same effect wherever it occurred throughout the Americas: a mixing of groups, both through massive coercion as well as some voluntary unions. The result is that the population of Hispanics today is a mix of Spanish, indigenous, and/or African heritages. Neocolonial relations between the United States and Latin America since 1898 (the date of the so-called Spanish-American War, which inaugurated the period of U.S. imperialism) have created the conditions to continue this practice of intermarrying (the joke in Panama is that the most lasting effect of the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama will be found neither in politics nor in the drug trade but in the thousand marriages and births that resulted).

My own family is a typical case. My father's father was an immigrant from Spain, who came to Panama in the early part of the twentieth century and married a woman from the interior (my Grandmother Eugenia's precise racial ancestry is unknown, but her African ancestry was visibly apparent). The subsequent canal-based relations between Panama and the United States created conditions in which my father came to study in Florida and married a white Anglo-Irish woman, that is, my mother. And through my father's subsequent liaisons, I have a range of siblings from black to brown to tan to freckled, spanning five countries and three continents at last count (Panama, Costa Rica, Spain, Venezuela, and the United States). Ours is truly the postcolonial postmodernist family, an open-ended set of indeterminate national, cultural, racial, and even linguistic allegiances.

However, despite the normality of such mixing in Panama, in the United States it is a different story, and my own experience of my identity has been at times painful and confusing. In Panama, my older sister and I were prized for our light skin, and in fact, because I was exceptionally light, with auburn hair, my father named me "Linda," meaning pretty. There, the mix itself did not pose any difficulties; the issue of concern was the nature of the mix—lighter or darker—and we were of the appropriately valued lighter type. When my parents divorced, my sister and I moved with our mother to her white parents' home in central Florida, and here the social meanings of our racial identity were wholly transformed. We were always referred to as her "Latin daughters," and the fact that we were mixed made us objects of peculiarity and subject to a certain amount of familial alienation. My white extended family had not wholly embraced my mother's marriage to a nonwhite foreigner, and my sister and I instantiated the "mistake" they felt she had made. Moreover, in the central Florida of the 1950s, a biracial system and the "one-drop rule" still reigned, and our mixed race status meant that we had a complex relationship to white identity: if assimilated in language, dress, and behavior, we could be accepted as "almost white"; but if we maintained Spanish and other markings of "otherness," our situation was much more

precarious.⁸ My sister, who was darker and spoke only Spanish at first, had to make a dramatic transition, but she still suffered discrimination at school and second-class status at home. We eventually became highly assimilated, but for both of us this process created feelings of alienation and inferiority. Passing requires vigilance and self-censorship, and thus it causes one to dislike those aspects of self that reveal otherness. I believe these experiences also, however, helped us to critique the Jim Crow system, for through the experience of having racist whites sometimes unknowingly accept us we could see all too clearly the speciousness of the biracial illusion as well as the hurtfulness and irrationality of racial hierarchies and systems of exclusion. I remember hearing a popular white girl refer to people in racist ways one day while I was standing in the lunch line at school, and thinking, "You could be talking about me." For those of us who could pass, our community acceptance was always at the price of misrecognition and the troubling knowledge that our social self was grounded in a lie.⁹

In cultures defined by racialized identities, infected with the illusion of purity, and divided by racial hierarchies, mixed white/nonwhite persons face an irresolvable status ambiguity. They are rejected by the dominant race as impure and therefore inferior, but they are also sometimes disliked and distrusted by the oppressed race for their privileges of closer association with domination. Surprisingly consistent repudiations of mixing are found across differences of social status: both oppressed and dominant communities have often disapproved of open mixing, both sometimes fail to acknowledge and accept mixed offspring, and both often value a purity for racial identity.¹⁰ The mixed race person cannot easily escape condemnation: if they are perceived to be trying to pass, they will be condemned by dominant groups for lying and by oppressed groups for individualist opportunism; but if they announce their non-dominant status, they will be condemned for another kind of political opportunism. These problems are particularly obvious for persons whose mix includes whiteness, but it can even beset those who have two non-white parents of different races, since the races are so often placed on a scale of oppression with one race seen as less oppressed or "almost dominant." Of course, there is some truth to the political valence accorded various kinds of mixed identities and certainly to that accorded various kinds of opportunistic behavior: I am not repudiating the very legitimacy of all political judgment here. But what is also true is that the judgment of mixed identities themselves, as opposed to the behavior of mixed race persons—for example, to see the mixed person as the manifestation of conquest, or as the result of one parent's attempt to assimilate—is based on historical events to which the mixed person herself did not in any way contribute.

Interestingly, this problem has not been restricted to a single political ideology: both left and right political discourses have placed a premium

on racial purity. For the right, race mixing is a form of “pollution” that requires intermittent processes of ethnic cleansing, which can take the form of genocide, segregation, or simply rural terrorism (the kind practiced by the Ku Klux Klan, the Confederate Knights of America, and the White Aryan Resistance). The very concept of “rape as genocide”—the belief that a massive transcommunity-orchestrated series of rapes will result in the genocide of a culture—assumes purity as a necessary and prized cultural identity attribute. Right-wing nationalist movements have also been grounded, in some cases, on the claimed need for a separate political formation that is coextensive with a racial or ethnic identity; here the state becomes the representative of a race or ethnic group and the arbiter over questions of group inclusion.¹¹ The state must then make it its business to oversee the reproduction of this group, thus to engage in what Foucault called “bio-power,” in order to ensure a continuation of its constituency.¹²

For the left, cultural autonomy and community integrity are held up as having an intrinsic value, resulting in mixed race persons treated as symbols of colonial aggression or cultural dilution. The very demand for self-determination too often presupposes an authentic self, with clear, unambiguous commitments and allegiances. Thus, as Richard Rodriguez suggests sarcastically, the “Indian [has] become the mascot of an international ecology movement,” but not just any Indian. “The industrial countries of the world romanticize the Indian who no longer exists [i.e. the authentic, culturally autonomous Indian without any connection to capitalist economic formations], ignoring the Indian who does—the Indian who is poised to chop down his rain forest, for example. Or the Indian who reads *The New York Times*.¹³ The mythic authentic voice of the oppressed, valorized by the left, is culturally unchanged, racially unmixed, and, as a matter of fact, extinct. The veneration of authenticity leads the left to disregard (when they do not scorn) the survivors of colonialism.

Thus, in many cultures today, mixed race people are treated as the corporeal instantiation of a lack—the lack of an identity that can provide a public status. They (we) are turned away from as if from an unpleasant sight, the sight and mark of an unclean copulation, the product of a taboo, the sign of racial impurity, cultural dilution, colonial aggression, or even emasculation. Which particular attribution is chosen will reflect the particular community’s cultural self-understanding and its position as dominant or subordinate. But the result is too often the same: children with impure racial identities are treated as an unwanted reminder of something shameful or painful, and are alienated (to a greater or lesser extent) from every community to which they have some claim of attachment.

Some theorists have suggested that when such a rigidity around racial identity manifests itself among oppressed people, it is the result of their

internalization of oppression and acceptance of racist, self-denigrating cultural values.¹⁴ But I am not sure that this is the cause in every case, or the whole story—the problem may be deeper, in that foundational concepts of self and identity are founded on purity, wholeness, and coherence. A self that is internally heterogeneous beyond repair or resolution becomes a candidate for pathology in a society where the integration of self is taken to be necessary for mental health. We need to reflect upon this premium put on internal coherence and racial purity, and how this is manifested in Western concepts and practices of identity as a public persona as well as subjectivity as a foundational understanding of the self. We need to consider what role this preference for purity and racial separateness has had on dominant formulations of identity and subjectivity, and what the effects might be if this preference was no longer operative.

Behind my claim that an important relationship exists between purity and racial identity is of course the presupposition that an important relationship exists between race and identity, a relationship that may not always exist but isn't in danger of imminent deconstruction. Today, it is easily apparent that acceptance and status within a community is tied to one's racial identification and identifiability. In the U.S., census forms as well as application forms of many types confer various sorts of benefits or resources according to racial identity, thus affecting one's social status. Less formally, one's ability to be accepted in various kinds of social circles, religious groups, and neighborhoods is tied to one's (apparent) race. And I would also argue that not only social status is affected here, but one's lived interiority as well. Such things as government benefits and employment opportunities have an effect on one's subjectivity, one's sense of oneself as a unique, individuated person, and as competent, acceptable, or inferior. In other words, without a coherent identity, an individual can feel an absence of agency. Dominant discourses, whether they are publicly regulated and institutionalized or more amorphous and decentralized, can affect the lived experience of subjectivity. Discourses and institutions implicitly invoke selves that have specific racial identities, which are correlated to those selves' specific legal status, discursive authority, epistemic credibility, and social standing.

Identity is not, of course, monopolized by race, and race does not operate on identity as an autonomous determinant. Mixed race persons probably notice more than others the extent to which “race” is a social construction, ontologically dependent on a host of contextual factors. The meanings of both race and such things as skin color or hair texture are mediated by language, religion, nationality, and culture, to produce a racialized identity. As a result, an individual's racial identity and identifiability can change across communities, and a family's race can change across history. In the Dominican Republic, “black” is defined as Haitian, and dark-skinned Dominicans do not self-identify as black but as dark Indians or mestizos. Coming to the United States, Dominicans

"become" black by the dominant U.S. standards. Under apartheid in South Africa, numbers of people would petition the government every year to change their official racial classification, resulting in odd official announcements from the Home Affairs Minister that, for example, this year "nine whites became colored, 506 coloreds became white, two whites became Malay . . . 40 coloreds became black, 666 blacks became colored, 87 coloreds became Indian."¹⁵ The point here is not that racial identities are often misidentified, but that race does not stand alone: race identity is mediated by other factors, political and economic as well as national ones. And appearance is also socially mediated: the dominant perspective in the United States on a person's racial identity or whether they "look" Latino or black or even white is not based on natural perception. Appearances "appear" differently across cultural contexts.

To the extent that this public and private self involves a racial construction, this self, in the United States, has been constructed with a premium on purity and separation. The valorization of cultural integrity and autonomy found in diverse political orientations, from left to right, brings along with it the valorization of purity over dilution, of the authentic voice over the voice of collusion, and of autonomy over what might be called "biopolitical intercourse."

RACIAL HIERARCHIES AND THE MELTING POT

What, then, is the American, this new man? . . . He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of the life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. —Hector St. Jean de Crèvecoeur, 1782

If it is generally true that selves are constituted in relationship to communities that have been racially constructed, what happens when there are multiple, conflicting communities through which a self is constituted? What would a concept of the self look like that did not valorize purity and coherence? If we reject the belief that retaining group integrity is an intrinsic good, how will this affect our political goals of resisting the oppression of racialized groups?

Within the United States, assimilationism has been the primary alternative to a racial purity and separateness, but it has notoriously been restricted to European ethnicities, and it has worked to assimilate them all to a northern European WASP norm—thus Jewish and Catholic Southern Europeans were more difficult to assimilate to this norm and never quite made it into the melting pot. And of course, the melting pot failed to diminish racial hierarchies because it was never really intended to include different races; no proponent of the melting pot ideology ever promoted miscegenation.¹⁶

Moreover, as Homi Bhabha remarks, "Fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/ racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition."¹⁷ Thus, the fluidity of cultural identity promoted by the assimilationist discourse actually was used to bolster northern European-American's claims to cultural superiority: their (supposed) "fluidity" was contrasted with and presented as a higher cultural achievement than the (supposed) fixity and rigidity of colonized cultures. Here, fixity symbolized inferiority while flexibility symbolized superiority (although of course, in reality, the designation of "fixity" generally only meant the inability or unwillingness to conform to the northern European norm). This paradox of the meaning of fixity explains how it was possible that, simultaneous to the Panama Canal Commission's construction of rigid racial groups working on the canal, the ideology at home (i.e., the United States) was dominated by the melting-pot imagery. The WASPs could be fluid, tolerant, and evolving, but the natives could not be so. The very fluidity of identity that one might think would break down hierarchies was used to justify them as superior to rigidly traditional societies. Given this, there exists a *prima facie* danger in drawing on assimilationist rhetoric, as it was espoused in the United States, to reconfigure relations of domination.

The fact of the matter is that throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, a true melting pot of peoples, cultures, and races was created unlike anything north of the border. The liberal, modernist-based vision of assimilation succeeded best in the premodernist, Catholic, Iberian-influenced countries, while the proponents of secularism and modernism to the north were too busy to notice. Richard Rodriguez points out that, still today, "Mexico City is modern in ways that 'multiracial,' ethnically 'diverse' New York is not yet. Mexico City is centuries more modern than racially 'pure,' provincial Tokyo. . . . Mexico is the capital of modernity, for in the sixteenth century, . . . Mexico initiated the task of the twenty-first century—the renewal of the old, the known world, through miscegenation. Mexico carries the idea of a round world to its biological conclusion."¹⁸

Today, the liberalism that spawned assimilationism has metamorphosed into an ethic of appreciation for the diversity of cultures. In the name of preserving cultural diversity, and in the secret hope of appropriating native wisdom and the stimulation that only exotica can provide to a consumption-weary middle class, indigenous cultures and peoples are commodified, fetishized, and fossilized as standing outside of history and social evolution (if they are not totally different than "us," then they will not be exotic enough to have commodity value). Thus, an image of the American Indian straddling a snowmobile (as appeared in the *New York Times*) evokes affected protestations from educated Anglos about the tragic demise of a cultural identity, as if American Indian identity can

only exist where it is pure, unsullied, fixed in time and place.¹⁹ The project of “protecting” the cultural “integrity” of indigenous peoples in the guise of cultural appreciation secures a sense of superiority for those who see their own cultures as dynamic and evolving. Anglo culture can grow and improve through what it learns from “native” cultures, and thus the natives are prized for an exchange value that is dependent on their stagnation.

ASSIMILATION NORTH AND SOUTH

In North America, then, assimilationism and its heir apparent, cultural appreciation, have not led to a true mixing of races or cultures, or to an end to the relations of domination among cultures. However, interestingly, both the concept and the practice of assimilation resonate very differently in South America and Central America. As I will discuss later in this chapter, for Mexican philosophers such as Samuel Ramos and Leopoldo Zea, assimilation did not require conformity to a dominant norm; instead, assimilation was associated with an anti-xenophobic cosmopolitanism that sought to integrate diverse elements into a new formation. What can account for the different practices and theories of assimilation in North and South cultures? And what were the elements involved in U.S. assimilationism that allowed it to coexist with racism rather than come into conflict with it? Finding the answer to such questions can be instructive for the project of developing a better alternative to identity constructions than those based on racial purity. Toward this, I have already suggested that assimilationism in the North was organized around an implicit normative identity (WASP) to which others were expected to conform; hence its exclusive application to northern Europeans. And I have also suggested that the flexibility of identity claimed by assimilationists was used to bolster WASP claims to cultural superiority over the supposedly rigid peoples and cultures that could not be made to conform. I want to offer two further elements toward such an answer, one taken from cultural history and the other involving the Enlightenment concept of secular reason.

Latin American and North American countries have different cultural genealogies based on the different origins of their colonizing settlers: respectively, Roman Catholic Iberia and Germano-Protestant England. In North America, race mixing generally was perceived with abhorrence and made illegal. In the countries colonized by Spain, by contrast, “elaborate racial taxonomies gained official recognition from the outset . . . and these casta designations became distinct identities unto themselves, with legal rights as well as disabilities attaching to each.”²⁰ After independence, the casta system was eliminated from official discourses, and racial discrimination was made illegal, since such practices of discrimina-

tion obviously could not work in countries where as few as 5 percent of the population were not mestizo of some varied racial combination.

According to Carlos Fernandez and the historian A. Castro, this contrast in practices regarding racial difference can be accounted for in the historical differences between Nordic and Latin cultures.

Due primarily to its imperial character, the Roman world of which Spain (*Hispania*) was an integral part developed over time a multiethnically tolerant culture, a culture virtually devoid of xenophobia. The Romans typically absorbed the cultures as well as the territories of the peoples they conquered. Outstanding among their cultural acquisitions were the Greek tradition and, later, the Judaic tradition. It was the Roman co-optation of Judaic Christianity that the Spanish inherited as Catholicism.²¹

Thus, in the missionary zeal of the Spanish Christians can be found both the spirit of Roman imperialism as well as its cosmopolitanism.

By contrast, the Germanic peoples of northern Europe “emerged into history at the margins of the Roman empire, constantly at war with the legions, not fully conquered or assimilated into Roman life.” Fernandez hypothesizes that this “condition of perpetual resistance against an alien power and culture” produced the generally negative attitude of the Germans toward foreigners, especially since the Roman legions with which they fought included numerous ethnic groups. This attitude had profound historical results: “The persistence of the German peoples, born of their struggles against the Romans, can also be seen later in history as an important element in the Protestant schism with Rome accomplished by the German Martin Luther. It is no coincidence that Protestantism is primarily a phenomenon of Northwestern Europe while Catholicism is mainly associated with Southern Europe.”²²

Leopoldo Zea’s analysis supports Fernandez’s account, although, as we will see, Zea portrays the difference as between Christianity and modernism rather than between kinds of Christianity.

Whether founded on Christianity, the history of Germanic tribes, or Spain’s multicultural past, the different attitudes toward race-mixing are not the whole story as to why genocide was so widespread in America and not in the South: “The difference in the size and nature of the Native American populations in Anglo and Latin America also helps account for the emergence of different attitudes about race.”²³ In the North, the indigenous peoples were generally nomadic and seminomadic and comparatively less numerous; in the South, the indigenous peoples were very numerous and “lived a settled, advanced (even by European standards) agricultural life with large cities and developed class systems.”²⁴ So the resultant integrations between race and cultural formations that developed differently in the North and the South were the product not just of

different European traditions but also their interaction with the different cultures in the New World.

And certainly Roman imperialism was not less oppressive than Germanic forms of domination: both perpetrated a strategy of domination. But it is instructive to note the different forms domination can take, and the different legacies each form has yielded in the present. In the North, the melting pot set up a border patrol reminiscent of the strategy by which Germanic peoples resisted being incorporated into the Roman superpower, which was ethnically and racially diverse but centered always in Rome. Thus, for Nordic peoples, assimilation and cultural integrity were posed in conflict, and in order to maintain the distinctness of their borders they were willing to commit sweeping annihilations. Such a view was held by Louis Agassiz, an influential nineteenth-century Swiss naturalist, who stated: "The production of half-breeds is as much a sin against nature, as incest in a civilized community is a sin against purity of character. . . . No efforts should be spared to check that which is abhorrent to our better nature, and to the progress of a higher civilization and a purer morality."²⁵ For Rome and Hispania, however, assimilation meant expansion, development, growth. Cultural supremacy did not require isolationism or separation but precisely the constant absorption and blending of difference into an ever larger, more complex, heterogeneous whole. Border control was thus not the highest priority or even considered an intrinsic good. This is why the concept of assimilationism has never had the same meaning in the South as it has in the North, either conceptually or in practice; in the North assimilation has always meant in practice that "others" must conform to the dominant norm, whereas in the South it signifies what is always more the reality, that two or more identities are each altered as a result of juxtaposition and interrelationship.

This quick overview and history is no doubt simplistic, and it should be stressed again that racism of color shades continues to plague Latin America. But the story Fernandez provides remains useful if only for helping us to reconceptualize the relationship between purity and cultural flourishing.

The second part of the story about assimilation involves the Enlightenment concept of secular reason. The northern variant of assimilationism was strongly tied to the development of a liberal anti-feudal ideology that espoused humanism against the aristocracy and secularism against the fusion of church and civil society. The Enlightenment in northern Europe put forward a vision of universal humanism with equality and civil freedoms for all citizens of a secular state. Diverse ethnicities and religious allegiances could coexist and unite under the auspices of a larger community founded on natural law, and that natural law could be discerned through the use of secular reason, which was conceived as the common denominator across cultural differences. Thus, reason became

the means through which the Nordic immigrants to North America could relax their borders enough to create a new ethnically mixed society.

But why was the banner of reason incapable of expanding beyond white WASP communities? To understand this it helps to recall that the European Enlightenment was flourishing at exactly the same time that European countries were most successfully colonizing the globe—exploiting, enslaving, and in some cases eliminating indigenous populations.²⁶ What can account for this juxtaposition between the invocations of liberty for all and the callous disregard of the liberty as well as well-being of non-Europeans? To answer this we need to look more critically at what grounded the claims to liberty.

Universalist humanism was based on a supposedly innate but unevenly developed capacity to reason. Both Leopoldo Zea and Enrique Dussel have written about the ways in which the western notion of reason is Eurocentric and was used from the beginning of the Conquest to judge the humanity of the Indians and then later the criollos and mestizos.²⁷ When the paradigm of reason is represented as culturally neutral but defined as the scientific practices of European-based countries, the result is a flattering contrast between Europe and its colonies. Reason is contrasted with ignorance, religion to superstition, and history to myth, producing a cultural hierarchy that vindicates colonialist arrogance. Dussel argues that the trick to produce such contrasts is to constitute “the other . . . as part of the Same”: the practices of other cultures cannot be understood in their alterity so they are portrayed as inferior copies or less mature developments of European forms of rationality.²⁸ In this way, (purportedly) universal standards and articulations of rationality serve colonial and neocolonial policies by providing a uniform yardstick for measuring uneven development.

Following this, Zea has argued that identity is a central philosophical problematic within Latin America. The question of identity is not only relevant within cultural studies but also within the public sphere where the use of power is contested.²⁹ Recall from chapter 4 that the capacity for reasoning and science on the Western model requires an ability to detach oneself, to be objective, to subdue one’s own passionate attachments and emotions. Such a personality type was associated with northern Europeans and contrasted with Latin temperaments, or any group mixed with Latins.

Thus a humanism based on secular reason, far from conflicting with racism and cultural chauvinism, supported their continuation. In its most benign form, reason could only support Europe’s role as beneficent teacher for the backward Other, but could never sustain a relationship of equality. It is for this reason that Zea concludes:

The racial mestizahe that did not bother the Iberian conquerors and colonizers was to disturb greatly the creators of the new empires of

America, Asia, and Africa. Christianity blessed the unity of men and cultures regardless of race, more a function of their ability to be Christian. But modern civilization stressed racial purity, the having or lacking of particular habits and customs proper to a specific type of racial and cultural humanity.³⁰

Thus, secularization actually promoted racial purity by replacing Christian values with culturally specific habits and customs. In challenging what is still a powerful orthodoxy—the claim that secularization has only progressive effects—Zea’s critique of modernism strikes more deeply than even much of postmodernism. To today pretend that these existing concepts—of reason, of philosophy, and of religion—can be extracted from their cultural history and purged of their racial associations and racial content is a delusion. Reason, it turns out, is constitutively associated with whiteness, at least in its specific articulations in Western canonical discourses. Therefore, an account of the core of human nature which is based on a reasoning capacity is a racialized concept of the self passing for a universal one.

Given this history, then, it is no longer a surprise that the concept and practice of assimilationism that developed in this northern European context sought (a) to maintain its borders against the devouring capacities and polluting effects of other cultures, and (b) to unite its diverse ethnic groups on the basis of a criterion that simultaneously excluded others: the capacity for reason and science in the mode of northern Europe. Can the concept of assimilation be transformed and salvaged? This is doubtful, given that its legacy and connotations in the United States remain powerfully problematic. But the idea of assimilao—of two-way rather than one-way cultural influence—is surely on the right track.

NOMADIC IDENTITIES

I want to look briefly at one other, more current alternative to conceptions of identity based on purity—the notion of nomad subjectivity introduced in the work of Deleuze and Guattari and developed as a political concept by feminist theorist Rosi Braidotti.³¹ This concept is not analogous to assimilationism in being widely disseminated within dominant cultural discourses, but it is influential in certain academic, theoretical circles that take aim at essentialism and the outdated metaphysics of modernism. Proponents of nomad subjectivity announce that fluidity and indeterminateness will break up racial and cultural hierarchies that inflict oppression and subordination. Freed from state-imposed structures of identity by the indeterminate yet powerful flows of capital, which melts all traditions, belief systems, and institutions in its path just like a lava flow, nomad subjectivity deterritorializes the self toward becoming like

"a nomad, an immigrant, and a gypsy."³² Within language, as within subjectivity,

there is no longer any proper sense or figurative sense, but only a distribution of states that is part of the range of the word. The thing and other things are no longer anything but intensities overrun by deterritorialized sound or words that are following their lines of escape. . . . Instead, it is now a question of a becoming that includes the maximum of difference as a difference of intensity, the crossing of a barrier.³³

The flow of deterritorialization does not move between points but "has abandoned points, coordinates, and measure, like a drunken boat."³⁴ Deterritorializations thus have the effect of deconstructing racial and morphological identity categories along with national, cultural, and ethnic ones, and so the result is not a multiply situated subject but a nomadic subject. The concept of the situated subject was developed by feminist theorists to counter an abstract, immaterial subject—the knower who is represented only by mind without body. The idea of being situated is that one is in a material place, a concrete or objectively describable context, that there is no knowing except knowing from a context, but Deleuze and Guattari's description of the nomad subject floats free of all fixed locations and is not bound by the limits or barriers of a concrete materiality.

This sort of view obviously connects more generally to the postmodernist notion of the indeterminate self, a self defined only by its negation of or resistance to categories of identity.³⁵ And as we have seen, there is a strand of this in academic feminism among theorists who repudiate identity-based politics in the name of anti-essentialism. Liberation is associated with the refusal to be characterized, described, or classified, and the only true strategy of resistance can be one of negation, a kind of permanent revolution on the metaphysical front.

In her book *Nomadic Subjects*, Rosi Braidotti argues that a feminist emphasis on the embodiment of the self leads directly to an anti-essentialist account of female identity. To "be" a woman is simply to be the "site of multiple complex, and potentially contradictory sets of experiences, defined by overlapping variables such as class, race, age, lifestyle, sexual preference, and others."³⁶ An attentiveness to embodiment works to undermine any moncausal characterization that would privilege one variable over another, on Braidotti's view. The best model for such a self is "the nomad," that is, "a situated, postmodern, culturally differentiated understanding of the subject in general. . . . In so far as axes of differentiation such as class, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and others intersect and interact with each other in the constitution of subjectivity, the notion of nomad refers to the simultaneous occurrence of many of these at once."³⁷

Braidotti puts forward nomad subjectivity as a strategy designed to help feminist theory refigure the grounds of its own liberatory project, so

that it will not be caught privileging gender over race or any of the other array of constitutive variables. She argues that "nomadic consciousness . . . is a form of resisting assimilation or homologation into dominant ways of representing the self. . . . The nomadic tense is the imperfect; it is active, continuous; . . . The nomad's relationship to the earth is one of transitory attachment and cyclical frequentation; the antithesis of the farmer, the nomad gathers, reaps, and exchanges but does not exploit."³⁸

On the one hand, I can appreciate Braidotti's goal of incorporating difference and rejecting the certainties that tend toward dogmatism and stifle both theoretical and political creativity. On the other hand, this does not work for me at all. Multiply entangled relationships complicate life but do not uproot it. Gathering and reaping can be terribly exploitative when it is disrespectful of people's historical ties to a land. Braidotti's imagery evokes for me the figure of the person who resists commitment and obligation, one who tries to avoid responsibility by having only "transitory" attachments. Most ungenerously, I have images of white feminists trying to unload their attachment to whiteness. And as I argued in *Visible Identities*, a real attentiveness to embodiment would privilege our differential relationship to reproduction as the basis of female identity. The fact that any given individual female or male is never reducible to her or his relationship to reproduction does not require us to cast our identities as nomadic.

Braidotti herself tries actually to combine her nomadic strategy together with political activism within communities. She says that being a nomad does not require one to sever all the ties that sustain identity, nor does it mean that one has no sense of identity.³⁹ And she rejects the gender eliminativism that would counsel feminists to simply refuse female identity in any and every articulation. However, this combinatory project is unsuccessful. Imagine having a transitory attachment to a child; no less troublesome is the idea of a transitory attachment to a community. Oppressed communities have long voiced anger at those activists who come and go, who have the class mobility to withdraw their energy and resources whenever they choose. Activism itself—Braidotti's overarching concern—requires more than transitory commitment. The model she supplies is full of good intentions but seems best suited to maintain the volitional freedom for middle-class activists who can pick and choose their battles.

Thus in my view nomadic subjectivity works no better than assimilationist doctrine to interpellate mixed identity: the nomad self is bounded to no community and in actuality represents an absence of identity rather than a multiply entangled and engaged identity. This is not the situation of mixed race peoples who have deep (even if complex and problematic) ties to specific communities: to be a free-floating unbound variable is not the same as being multiply categorized, or ostracized, by specific racial communities. It strikes me that the postmodern nomadic vision fits far

better the multinational CEO with fax machine and cell phone in hand who is bound to, or by, no national agenda, tax structure, cultural boundary, or geographical border. And what this suggests is that a simplistic promotion of fluidity will not suffice.

I am concerned with the way in which a refusal of identity might be useful for the purposes of the current global market. The project of global capitalism is to transform the whole world into postcolonial consumers and producers of goods in an acultural world commodity market, a Benetton-like vision in which the only visible differences are those that can be commodified and sold. Somewhere between that vision and the vision of a purist identity construction that requires intermittent ethnic cleansing we must develop another option, an alternative that can offer a normative reconstruction of raced identity applicable to mixed race peoples.

A MESTIZO RACE

Oh, you're one of those "mixed-up" people.
—My hairdresser

In this final section I want to consider how we might best understand and come to terms with mixed race identity both metaphysically and politically. One possible solution to the problem with identity that mixed race people have is to propound a racial eliminativism—on the assumption that doing away with race will do away with the problems of mixed race. Naomi Zack argues for this position. In fact, she argues that there are irresolvable problems with the belief in race, and that mixed race concepts, far from subverting racial purity, simply reinforce race.⁴⁰

However, as I argued in *Visible Identities*, it seems clear that, within the context of racially based and organized systems of oppression, race will continue to be a salient internal and external component of identity. Systems of oppression, segregated communities, and practices of discrimination create a collective experience and a shared history for a racialized grouping. More than any physiological or morphological features, it is that shared experience and history that cements the community and creates connections with others along racial lines, although morphological features that are given social significance produce a shared experience which is part of what builds identity. And that shared experience and history do not disappear when new scientific accounts dispute the characterization of race as a natural kind.⁴¹ Accounts of race as a social and historical identity, which bring in elements that are temporally contingent and mutable, will probably prove to have more persistence than accounts of race that tie it to biology; history will probably have more permanence than biology.

Moreover, I would argue that, given current social conditions, any materialist account of the self must take race into account. This is not to

deny that generic and universalist concepts of human being are both possible and necessary. Despite my concern expressed in the last section against formulating a universal humanism based on reason, there do exist connections between persons that endure across differences of sexuality, race, culture, even class. Thus, articulating a new non-hierarchical universalist humanism is a politically valuable goal. However, if we restrict a philosophical analysis of identity and subjectivity to only those elements that can be universally applied, our resulting account will be too thin to do much philosophical work. In the concrete everydayness of "actually existing" human life, the variabilities of racial designation mediates experience in ways we are just beginning to recognize.

Racial eliminativism is not viable. Mixed race persons are racialized, but the particular form of their racialization has not been accorded a general social recognition, which I would suggest is likely to lead to problems of self-alienation. Many theorists of oppressed identity have described a pattern of self-alienation in which the oppressed person views himself or herself from an imaginary perspective of the dominant. Du Bois and Fanon were perhaps the first to describe how nonwhite peoples internalize the perspective of white identity. In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison dramatically captures this pathology for the young black child who wants blond hair and blue eyes, having internalized a white aesthetic in which only whiteness has value or beauty. Simone de Beauvoir and Sandra Bartky have written about a form of female alienation in which women see themselves and their bodies through a generalized male gaze that produces feelings of disgust at normal female embodied experiences and disciplines behavior to a degree worthy of Foucault's description of the Benthamite Panopticon. And Samuel Ramos argued that the Mexican peoples' shame in their poverty led to a problem of selfalienation with disastrous results: "As a consequence of living outside the reality of our being, we are lost in a chaotic world, in the midst of which we walk blindly and aimlessly, buffeted about by the four winds."⁴² Ramos and other philosophers-analysts of colonialism such as Zea and Dussel have suggested that Eurocentric versions of modernism effected a temporal displacement of the "now" as experienced in countries such as Mexico, so that the "now" is seen as what is happening in the United States or Europe, whereas the present tense of the Global South has not yet "caught up."

Such patterns of alienation from one's own perspectival experience have profound effects on the capacity for self-knowledge, a capacity that Western philosophers as diverse as Plato and Hegel have seen as critical for the possibility of any knowledge whatsoever. If knowledge represents a concrete vision correlated to a particular social location, then the alienation one suffers from one's own perspectival vision—or one's own denigration of that first-person perspective—will have ramifications throughout one's life. For mixed race persons in North America and many other

places in the world, this problem can be particularly difficult to overcome. The mixed race person has been denied that social recognition of self which Hegel understood as necessarily constitutive of self-consciousness and full self-development.⁴³ For us, it is not a question of reorienting perspective from the alien to the familiar, since no ready-made, available, or socially acknowledged perspective captures our contradictory experience. Without a social recognition of mixed identity, the mixed race person is told to choose one or another perspective. This creates not only alienation, but the sensation of having a mode of being which is an incessant, unrecoverable lack, an unsurpassable inferiority, or simply an unintelligible mess. This blocks the possibility of self-knowledge: the epistemic authority and credibility that accrues to nearly everyone at least with respect to their “ownmost” perspective, is denied to the mixed race person. Vis-à-vis each community or social location to which s/he might claim a connection, s/he can never claim authority to speak unproblematically for or from that position. Ramos warns that without a connection to an ongoing history and community, human consciousness devolves to an animal existence that has no ability “to project the imagination toward the future.”⁴⁴ Only communities have continuity beyond individual life; cast off from all communities, the individual has no historical identity and thus is unlikely to value the community’s future.

Because nationality, culture, and language are so critical to identity, some propose that, for example, nationality could be taken as a more important distinguishing characteristic than race. For example, the opponents of multiculturalism such as Hollinger and Schlesinger promote national identifications to racial or ethnic identifications. Nationality could provide a strong connection across racialized communities, increasing their unity and sympathetic relationships. However, nationality does not provide an all-inclusive identity; it merely shifts the contradictions and criteria of inclusion from race to immigration status. U.S. nationalism in particular encourages minority communities to become anti-immigrant, even when the immigrants are of the same racial group or share a cultural background. Thus African American schoolchildren fight with West Indians in Brooklyn, and Cubans disdain the Central American immigrants flooding Miami. Such conflict is sometimes based on class, but it is also based on a claim to the so-called “American” identity. In this way, U.S. minorities can ally with the (still) powerful white majority against new immigrants and perhaps share in the feeling if not the reality of dominance. Politically, then, an identification that places nationality over race portends, at least for the present, an increase in anti-immigrant violence. Metaphysically, nationalism is too weak as a substantive form of subjective identification to completely replace other ethnic, cultural, and racial identifications, and because of its political problems, many in minority communities resist the imposition of nationalism as hegemonic over other ties.⁴⁵

Eliminating racial identification or replacing it entirely with nationality are unrealistic options. Racialization remains a powerful determinant over identity, and the increase in cross-racial alliances will create an increasing constituency of mixed race persons. We need a positive (in the sense of substantive) reconstruction of mixed race identity. What can this mean? It must begin with facing squarely the phenomenological features of mixed identity.

In her celebrated book *Borderlands/La Frontera*, the late Gloria Anzaldua offered a powerful and lyrical vision of the difficulties that Chicanos can endure because of their position between cultures and races. Contrast the following description with Deleuze and Guattari's romantic portrait of the nomad and the schizophrenic as a paradigm of liberation. She writes: "The ambivalence from the clash of voices results in mental and emotional states of perplexity. Internal strife results in insecurity and indecisiveness. The mestiza's dual or multiple personality is plagued by psychic restlessness."⁴⁶ Anzaldua worried that the shame and rootlessness of the mestizo would lead to excessive compensation, especially in the form of machismo:

In the Gringo world, the Chicano suffers from excessive humility and self-effacement, shame of self and self-deprecation. Around Latinos he suffers from a sense of language inadequacy and its accompanying discomfort; with Native Americans he suffers from a racial amnesia which ignores our common blood, and from guilt because the Spanish part of him took their land and oppressed them. He has an excessive compensatory hubris when around Mexicans from the other side. It overlays a deep sense of racial shame . . . which leads him to put down women and even to brutalize them.⁴⁷

For Anzaldua, developing an alternative positive articulation of mestizo consciousness and identity is essential to provide some degree of coherence and to avoid the incessant cultural collisions or violent compensations that result from the shame and frustration of self-negation. And note that for her, any adequate articulation must be accurate to the truth: it cannot pretend to an amnesia about a difficult aspect of the identity as a way to achieve comfort. Thus her aim is not simply a political solution at any cost, but a more accurate rendering. Her argument is also, however, that some of the political discomfort comes from a value system that eschews hybridity as an inadequate basis for self-respect.

Anzaldua suggests that we can draw out a positive identity through seeing how the mixed race person is engaged in the valuable though often exhausting role of border crosser, negotiator, and mediator between races, and sometimes also between cultures, nations, and linguistic communities. The mixed person is a traveler often within her own home or neighborhood, translating and negotiating the diversity of meanings, practices, and forms of life. This vision provides a positive alternative to

the mixed race person's usual representation as lack or as the tragically alienated figure. Being mixed means having resources for communication and understanding that are vital for political movements.

One should note here the significant difference between Anzaldua's positive formulation and Vasconcelos's, for whom the mestizo represented something like a biological and cultural vanguard with Hegelian world-historical powers.⁴⁸ Vasconcelos's view worked to counter the European denigration of mixed identities as infertile, cultural dead ends by representing hybridization as more culturally rich and advanced than the stale, unmixed idealized cultures aspired to in Europe. Thus, his view promotes the mixed identity through a denigration of the unmixed. Although Anzaldua seems to share Vasconcelos's view that hybridity has important advantages, she does not make this a comparative claim. In fact, the advantages of being mixed that Anzaldua cites are advantages because they provide resources for the various cultural communities to which she has some connection.

My only worry with Anzaldua's strategy is based on the fact that such figures who can negotiate between cultures have been notoriously useful for the dominant, who can use them to better control their colonized subjects. Thus, such figures as la Malinche (Cortes's concubine) and Pocahontas are often reviled for their cooperation with dominant communities and their love for specific individuals from those communities. There is no question that such border negotiations can exacerbate and not just ameliorate oppression. Today large numbers of bilingual and biracial individuals are recruited by the U.S. military and the FBI to infiltrate suspected gangs or communities and countries designated as U.S. enemies. To my dismay, many Latinos in the U.S. military were deployed in the invasion of Panama. Here again, an allegiance based on nationality is used to circumvent a racial or cultural tie. I suspect that for mixed race persons, especially those who have suffered some degree of rejection from the communities to which they have some attachment, such jobs hold a seductive attraction as a way to overcome feelings of inferiority and to find advantage for the first time in the situation of being mixed. Where I agree with Anzaldua is the positive spin she puts on the mixed race identity. But where I would place a note of caution is the idea that border crossing is in and of itself a political good; it is always a valuable ability, but it can be put to both positive and negative uses.

Another element worth exploring is Samuel Ramos's concept of an assimilation that does not demand conformity to the dominant or consist of imitation. Assimilation in Ramos's sense is an incorporation or absorption of different elements. This is similar to the Hegelian concept of sublation in the sense of a synthesis that does not simply unite differences but develops them into a higher and better formulation. In the context of Latin America, Ramos called for a new self-integration that would appropriate both its European and Indian elements. An imitative stance toward

the other is based on cultural inequality, but an assimilative stance in this sense comes out of self-knowledge combined with a healthy self-regard. It is less a volitional act than a natural outcome of the metaphysics of hybrid experience. "When we reach some understanding of the idiosyncrasies of our national soul, we will have a standard to guide us through the complexities of European culture," and thus become capable of "selecting conscientiously and methodically the forms of European culture potentially adaptable to our own environment."⁴⁹ Ramos believed that this process of active assimilation cannot occur without reflective self-knowledge. An imitative stance toward the other, and a conformity to dominant norms, will occur unless the empty self-image of the Mexican is replaced by a more substantive perspective indexed to the Mexican's own cultural, political, and racial location.

I believe that the concept of mestizo consciousness and identity can contribute toward the development of such a perspective by creating a linguistic, public, socially affirmed identity for mixed race persons. Mestizo consciousness is a kind of double vision, a conscious articulation of more than one heritage, allegiance, and tradition. Jose Vasconcelos called this new identity the cosmic race, *la raza cosmica*, to signal its inclusivity and dynamism.

There are three possible ways to name and characterize mixed race identity: (1) as a generic "mixed" identity; (2) as a mixed identity of a specific type, such as mestizo; (3) as a combinatory identity straddling two or more identities. The movement to create a new census category for mixed race persons in the United States seems to follow this first option in conceptualizing the mixed race person as having a new identity with substantive attributes of its own. By not specifying anything other than the fact of being mixed itself, this option encompasses Asian/white, African American/Latino, Native American/African American, and so on without specification or differentiation. But because of the immense variety of possible combinations, and the variable way such persons will be publicly interpellated and treated, it seems to make little sense to create a social category based on simply being bi- or multiracial. There are probably some experiences such persons have in common, but the variability seems too great to warrant a single category for all. Imagine a group of people brought together because they are all mixed race of one sort or another. Each may potentially have experienced some challenges in life due to this feature of their identity, but the specific challenges that they faced would probably have much to do with the specific communities to which they were attached. And such a category would not be parallel to "mestizo," which does not really mean simply "mixed" but rather refers to a very specific mix. Thus, the first option would have allowed the census to have persons pick a box marked simply "mixed," implying that more important than the kind of mix they are is the fact of being mixed itself. In providing such a box the census would not have been able to

count how many of such persons are part black, part Latino, part Native, part Arab, or part Asian American, thus skewing the statistical tabulations of these communities. Thus, the first option for characterizing mixed identity is too metaphysically and phenomenologically thin to provide much information and has political disadvantages for minority communities as a system of counting.

The second characterization follows the Latin American concept of mestizo more accurately, which is not simply a way to note mixing of any and every type but is an acknowledgment of a very specific mix: in this case Spanish and Indian. On this understanding, the mixed race person manifests an identity of a new type, with its own substantive features, its own phenomenological being in the world and hermeneutic horizon. For Vasconcelos, the mestizo combines elements of its diverse forebears but creates something new, a new identity with new and different political values and possibilities. The question here is whether mixed race persons in the United States have created something new, an identity, a political orientation, a way of thinking about themselves in the world, all of which have come out of being positioned in a certain way in the society. Mestizo peoples in much of Latin America have existed for several centuries, have held a unique political and social status, have been recognized by the state as mestizos, and thus arguably have developed an identity (or features that contribute toward their identity). This is not obviously the case in North America, where mixed race persons have generally been identified by only one of their multiple identities, where there has been almost no official or even social recognition, and where there is little community and historical experience from which a horizon might emerge.

The third option for understanding mixed race identity is the model of hyphenation, in which the person is understood as both or all of what they are, in combination. That is, rather than interpellated by an entirely new category, the person is interpellated by combining his or her actual genealogy, such as Latino/white, African American/Asian American, and so on. This method would actually follow the mestizo model more accurately because it would preserve a social recognition of the particular groups in the person's genealogy. Moreover, by preserving the particular identities that the mixed person has connections with, the capacity for moving between such groups might be acknowledged. It seems to me that this is the most accurate characterization for many mixed race persons in the North today: they are often capable of negotiating elements of more than one identity, perhaps experiencing the double consciousness Du Bois describes in a new way. So their social or public recognition needs to acknowledge not simply that they are mixed, but what the mix is in particular to understand that person.

Two arguments against such a hyphenated model come immediately to mind. First, some will argue, rightly, that for some mixed race persons

their phenomenological experience of embodiment is tantamount to having a single racial identity. In the context of the United States, this is most often true of persons with a black parent, who are then simply assimilated to blackness by the dominant culture because of the one-drop rule. Phenomenologically, white people are much more used to accepting that black people come in a huge array of shades than they are to the idea that white people could come in just as many shades. This is a historical fact, and it is changing, but slowly. The rule of hypodescent continues to exert a powerful influence.

However, I would argue that the public interpellation cannot be the sole determinant of a person's identity in any true and meaningful sense. In the account I developed in chapter 4, identity includes lived experience, the horizon of meanings to which a person has access, in other words, their own subjectivity. We especially should not take white people's point of view as the determinant criterion here, such as would be the case if we were to argue that, because white people will tend to see person A as having X identity, then person A has X identity. If person A is viewed as an X by whites, that will be a significant aspect of their existence without doubt, but it is not all-determining over their life experience, what historical narratives they experience a connection with, what cultural resources they have access to, how various nonwhite groups will categorize them, and so on. Thus, I would argue that the hyphenated model might still make intelligible sense as an accurate description of an identity that is part black.

A second argument against the hyphenated model comes from those who are concerned that any mixed conception retains the essentialist and homogeneous understanding of the identities that the mixed race person combines. This is, for example, Zack's argument against use of a mixed race identity: that it works to preserve rather than subvert the idea of race itself. However, here again my argument would be that identities—even racial ones—do not need to be understood in these kinds of biologicistic, ahistorical, nondynamic, and essentialist ways, nor is it necessarily the case that their everyday usage implies these elements. Thus, on this third option, a hyphenated identity simply marks a person as having a connection to more than one historically changeable, dynamic, and complex social identity.

My defense of this third option is very tentative. The three options as I described them are meant simply to help us begin a conversation about representing mixed race identities.

Only recently have I finally come to some acceptance of my ambiguous identity. I am not simply white nor simply Latina, and the gap that exists between my two identities (indeed, my two families)—a gap that is cultural, racial, linguistic, and national—feels too wide and deep for me to span. I cannot bridge the gap, so I negotiate it, standing at one point here, and then there, moving between locations as events or other peo-

ple's responses propel me. I never reach shore: I never wholly occupy either the Anglo or the Latina identity. Paradoxically but predictably, in white society I feel my *latinidad*, and in Latin society I feel my whiteness, as that which is left out: an invisible present, sometimes as intrusive as an elephant in the room and sometimes more as a pulled thread that subtly alters the design of my fabricated self. Peace has come for me by no longer seeking some permanent home onshore. What I seek now is no longer a home, but perhaps a lighthouse that might illuminate this place in which I live, for myself as much as for others.

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NOTES

1. "On Being Mixed" by Linda Martín Alcoff, is reprinted by permission from *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 264–284.

2. Leopoldo Zea, "Identity: A Latin American Philosophical Problem." *Philosophical Forum* 20 (fall–winter 1988–1989): 37.

3. Alicia Gaspar de Alba, "Born in East L.A.: An Exercise in Cultural Schizophrenia," in *The Latino Condition: A Critical Reader*, edited by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 227.

4. See esp. Ofelia Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

5. Recent work that refutes the myth that Latin America is nonracist because it is promestizo includes Peter Wade *Blackness and Race Mixture: The Dynamics of Racial Identity in Colombia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), and Nancy Appelbaum, Ann S. Macpherson, and Karin Alejandra Rosemblatt, eds., *Race and Nation in Modern Latin America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

6. See discussions in Maria P. P. Root, "Within, Between, and Beyond Race," in *Racially Mixed People in America*, edited by Maria P. P. Root (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992); Maria P.P. Root, *The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996); and Carol Camper, ed. *Miscegenation Blues: Voices of Mixed Race Women* (Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1994).

7. Root, "Within, Between, and Beyond Race," 3.
8. Latinos in the Florida of the 1950s were generally classified as "almost white" or as "black" depending on their color. But most lived in Miami and Tampa, which were even then cosmopolitan cities very different from the Deep South cities in northern Florida and other southern states. The biggest source of ostracism for Latinos then, as now, was language. Today, the many dark-skinned Latinos who have moved to southern Florida are ostracized not only by white Anglos but by African Americans as well for their use of Spanish. Anglos of all colors ridicule the sound of the language, share jokes about uncomprehending sales clerks, and commiserate across their own racial and ethnic differences about the "difficulties" of living in a bilingual city. The experience of Latinos in the United States makes it very clear that so-called racial features never operate alone to determine identity but are always mediated by language, culture, nationality, and sometimes religion.
9. For a moving and insightful literary description of this situation, see Nella Larsen's brilliant novel, *Quicksand* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993).
10. Although in the United States, the internal rule of hypodescent (where an offspring of a mixed union is identified with the lower status parent) has made most African American communities open and accepting of difference.
11. For example, it seems likely that the problems Israeli feminists are having in gaining acceptance for a reproductive rights agenda has to do not only with the close association between the Israeli state and Judaism, but also because the state's self-understood legitimization requires the reproduction of an ethnic identity.
12. Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon, 1980).
13. Richard Rodriguez, *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father* (New York, NY: Viking, 1992), 6.
14. See, e.g., Root, "Within, Between, and Beyond Race."
15. Quoted in Trinh T. Minh-ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 73. Notice that, as Minh-Ha points out, no whites applied to become black.
16. See John Hope Franklin, *Race and History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).
17. Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds. Frederick Cooper and Ann Louria Stoler (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, October 28, 1984), 66.
18. Rodriguez, *Days of Obligation*, 24–25.
19. Rodriguez, *Days of Obligation*, 6.
20. Fernandez, "La Raza and the Melting Pot: A Comparative Look at Multiethnicity," 135.
21. Fernandez, "La Raza and the Melting Pot: A Comparative Look at Multiethnicity," 135.
22. Fernandez, "La Raza and the Melting Pot: A Comparative Look at Multiethnicity," 136.
23. Fernandez, "La Raza and the Melting Pot: A Comparative Look at Multiethnicity," 136.
24. Fernandez, "La Raza and the Melting Pot: A Comparative Look at Multiethnicity," 137.
25. Louis Agassiz, as quoted in Gould, "American Polygeny and Craniometry: Blacks and Indians as Separate, Inferior Species," 98.
26. Just as feminist historians have countered the usual assessment of the Renaissance, arguing that in this period women's situation actually worsened, so that there was no renaissance for women, so it has been argued that the Enlightenment offered nothing for those people of the world newly colonized. These epoch-dividing categories reflect the perspectives of the dominant.

27. See Zea, "Identity: A Latin American Philosophical Problem," 33–42; Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*.
28. Dussel, *Philosophy of Liberation*, 36.
29. See Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought*, 86.
30. Zea, "Identity: A Latin American Philosophical Problem," 37.
31. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983); Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). For a critique, see Caren Kaplan, "Deteritorializations: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse," *Cultural Critique* (Spring 1987): 187–98.
32. Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 19.
33. Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, 22.
34. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 296.
35. See Paul Smith, *Discerning the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Linda Martín Alcoff, "On Mastering Master Discourses," *American Literary History* (Summer, 1993): 335–46.
36. Rosie Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 4.
37. Rosie Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, 4.
38. Rosie Braidotti, 25.
39. Rosie Braidotti, 31, 33.
40. Naomi Zack, *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993).
41. See Naomi Zack, "Race and Philosophic Meaning," *APA Newsletter on Philosophy and the Black Experience* (Spring 1994).
42. Samuel Ramos, "Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico," trans. Peter G. Earle, in *Latin American Philosophy for the 21st Century: The Human Condition, Values, and the Search for Identity*, eds. Jorge J. E. Gracia and Elizabeth Millán-Zaibert (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004), excerpted from *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico*, trans. Peter G. Earle (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962): 281–85, 282.
43. Self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it is only by being acknowledged or 'recognized.' George Wilhelm Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 229.
44. Ramos, "Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico," 69; see also Schutte, *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought*, 77.
45. See, e.g., Xavier Albó, "Our Identity Starting from Pluralism in the Base," trans. Michael Aronna and José Oviedo, eds. John Beverly, Michael Aronna, and José Oviedo (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 18–33.
46. Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands, The New Mestiza—La Frontera* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987), 78.
47. Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands*, 83.
48. José Vasconcelos, *The Cosmic Race, La Raza Cósmica: A Bilingual Edition*, trans. Didier T. Jaén (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).
49. Ramos, "Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico," 284.

8

Racial and Ethnic Identity?¹

J. L. A. Garcia

Emotion—and, with it, sentiment, affection, desire, preference, choice, and intention—meets race most saliently in two phenomena. The first is racism, wherein individuals invest racial classifications, especially of others, with such affective responses as hatred, disregard, contempt, and callousness, often letting those attitudes infect their personal conduct and poison that of their institutions. The second is what some call “racial identity” and identification, where people invest racial classifications, especially of themselves, with more positive and appealing feelings of pride, affection, loyalty, trust, and commitment. Having developed a somewhat distinctive position on racism over a series of articles during the last ten years, I here wish to turn in a somewhat preliminary way to reflection on racial and ethnic identity.²

My discussion, first, raises some problems about the claim that such direction of feelings, projects, loyalties are properly seen as constituting identities. Second, it explores some difficulties that arise in two of the more promising philosophical elaborations of such group identities—those of Jorge J. E. Gracia and J. A. Corlett—accounts that focus on ethnicity rather than on race, and on being Latina/o, more specifically. I find both accounts wanting, especially in Corlett’s suggestion that someone’s ethnic identity might properly be conceived as comparative and scalar (that is, that it can admit of degrees). Third, I critically examine Linda Alcoff’s well-informed, reflective, and spirited defenses of ethnic identities and what she calls “identity politics.” My conclusion offers and sketches a few proposals—that we strive for a kind of diffidence about claims of racial and ethnic affiliation, recognizing that we are unsure of their content and scope, and on that basis, that we adopt a more deflationary approach to such claims, minimizing consideration of such matters in our deeper self-conceptions and in our emotional and moral lives, therein repudiating the very idea of ethnic and racial identities.

IDENTITY AND IDENTIFICATION WITH

Kwame Anthony Appiah divides his seminal essay in *Color Conscious* into two parts: the first is titled “Against Races,” and the second “For Racial Identities.” In the former, Appiah argues that there are error and mischief in the racialist thesis that there exist human races, each with a distinctive “essence.” The position of the essay’s second part is more complicated. Appiah writes, “Racial identity . . . I shall roughly define as a label, *R*, associated with [widespread] . . . descriptive criteria for applying the label, and . . . a shaping role for the label in the intentional acts of the possessors, so that they sometimes act as an *R*, where there is a history of associating possessors of the label with an inherited racial essence.”³ So far, this says only what racial identities would be, not why Appiah is “for” them. In his essay’s conclusion, he describes it as having “defended an analytical notion of racial identity.”⁴ Again, this “defends” the concept only as having application, not as desirable. I once heard Richard Bernstein, questioning Appiah from the audience at a New York City conference several years ago, suggest that Appiah’s position on racial identities, and on their associated racial loyalty, solidarity, trust, and pride, amounts to a qualified affirmation, a “Yes, but . . .” Bernstein then pointedly added that Appiah’s discussion so focused on his reservations about racial and some other forms of collective identity—that is, on the “but” clause—that the grounds for Appiah’s affirmation, his “yes,” were left obscure.

Appiah now sees group identities as important to many people’s values, projects, purposes, sense of community, even the meaning they find in life.⁵ By itself, however, that leaves it unclear what if any good is done by specifically *racial* identities. He does allow that “racial identity can be the basis of resistance to racism.” Appiah describes himself, not so convincingly, as “looking forward” to a time when he “takes up, along with others, the fruitful imaginative work of constructing collective identities for a democratic nation in a world of democratic nations.”⁶ However, that racial identity *could*, or even *can*, be the ground or motive for antiracist struggle does not show it *is* the best such foundation, in either its effectiveness or its moral or epistemic justification. Paul Gilroy suggests that “action against racial hierarchies can proceed more effectively when it has been purged of any lingering respect for the idea of ‘race.’” While recognizing that “for many racialized populations, ‘race’ and the hard-won, oppositional [racial] identities it supports” will not die easily, he calls for its “demise” and deems “liberation from ‘race’ . . . an especially urgent matter for . . . [such] people as modern blacks in the period after transatlantic slavery.”⁷ We do not need to pursue the merits of Gilroy’s case here. It is enough to observe that the possibility and even availability of what Gilroy calls a “postracial . . . version of what it means to be human” make plain what should be obvious anyway: that Appiah’s tepid

acknowledgment of some use for racial identity is not much of a “defense” of it normatively.⁸

Naomi Zack allows that “the term ‘identity’ is ambiguous . . . because it is used to mean both subjective experience and shared group membership that includes history and group self-image.”⁹ For her, “Identity is that about an individual that he or she reflects on, accepts, and develops, in the self.” In contrast, “Identification is what others . . . use to distinguish that individual from others.” This latter use seems to me somewhat idiosyncratic. At least, it omits the close connection often asserted between someone’s identity on the one hand and that with which and as which she identifies (herself) on the other.¹⁰ Appiah is closer to the norm, I think, in calling “identification; the process through which an individual intentionally shapes her projects—including her plans for her own life and her conception of the good—by reference to available labels, available identities.”¹¹

Someone’s “plans for her life and . . . conception of the good” are rather grand, inclusive matters. Even at a more mundane level, some people think that someone’s race or ethnicity should matter crucially in determining what she cares about, prefers, likes, wants, and strives for in a variety of areas from *musk* and literature to politics, as well as shaping her feelings of special loyalty, affection, pride, solidarity, and so on. As they see it, someone’s race and ethnicity are, or ought to be, parts of her “identity.” At least, they hold this for members of some racial or ethnic groups, those who have been systematically oppressed, exploited, and disadvantaged. Such people, they think, ought to be personally—that is, affectively and normatively—*invested in* their race and ethnicity; they ought to *identify with* being Black or Latina/o, for example.

Adrian Piper offers these helpful accounts of the crucial concepts: “Agent A is personally invested in some state of affairs *t* if the existence of *t* is a source of personal pleasure, satisfaction, or security to A . . . A identifies with/if A is disposed to identify *t* as personally meaningful or valuable to A”¹² Plainly, what Piper speaks of in terms of satisfaction, meaningfulness, and value involves, a range of affective phenomena including feelings of pride, loyalty, special affections, as well as projects and commitments that touch us emotionally. It is this depth that makes some want to say that race and ethnicity are by their nature, or ought to be by her design, matters of someone’s very identity (or “identities”).

RACIAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Though our ethnic classifications are not the same as our racial ones, the concepts themselves are not clearly distinguished. Many of the considerations that motivate racial identity also motivate ethnic identity, and many of the same difficulties that afflict racial identity also afflict ethnic

identity. Hereafter, I will seldom attend to the differences.¹³ Appiah, recall, offered a “rough” definition of a racial identity as “a label, *R*, associated with [widespread] . . . descriptive criteria for applying the label, and . . . a shaping role for the label in the intentional acts of the possessors, so that they sometimes act as an *R*, where there is a history of associating possessors of the label with an inherited racial essence.” Appiah allows that, so understood, a person can have a racial identity even if races are illusory and seems to think that someone who, like Appiah himself, does not believe in races may nonetheless coherently and even sensibly strive for such an identity.¹⁴

This is plainly problematic. Insofar as racial identity involves identifying with one’s race and (presumed) racially characteristic features, and involves specifically *racial* solidarity, affection, pride, and loyalty, it cannot be intellectually legitimate in a world without races.¹⁵ If Appiah, Zack, and others are correct in thinking there are no races, then neither ought there to be anything that can count as racial identities. For that matter, even ethnicity is a more problematic notion than generally acknowledged. Ethnic groups seem to be defined by their cultural distinction, but the cultures are themselves sometimes individuated by their connection to the groups. Similarly, like race, ethnic classification involves an uneasy collection of factors—biological, ancestral, religious, linguistic, and cultural—leaving it very unclear just how some are to be classified and what is being said in assigning anyone to this or that ethnic grouping. My focus here, however, will not be on the difficulty that the problems inherent in our ideas of race and ethnicity cause for the concepts of racial and ethnic identity. Rather, I wish to present the enthusiast for racial and ethnic identity with difficulties from another direction, that is, from the concept of identity itself and from complications that afflict efforts to extend it to such supposed “collective identities” without stretching it past the breaking point.

IDENTITY AND GROUP IDENTITY

Our term *identity* derives from the Latin word *idem* (same), and philosophers have chiefly engaged identity-talk when asking whether something is the same as what exists in some real or imagined different situation. This is a long way—too long, in my view—from today’s talk of ethnic or racial identity and other so-called “group” or “collective” or “social identities.”

The social psychologist Erik Erikson seems to have been particularly influential in this shift. One commentator maintains that one “Eriksonian concern is the centrality in human life of a ‘sense of identity’—the *construction* of a self that makes sense for the particular individual as well as for the community in which that individual lives.”¹⁶ I agree with those

who argue that efforts to understand someone's ethnicity as consisting in roles or scripts, as the social construction of ethnicity would require, are both implausible and manipulative. We should note that Erikson's view, as summarized, in addition to presupposing the false thesis that each individual lives in only one community, holds both the implausible claim that identities are invented and the dangerous one that someone's identity is constructed in part by others to enable them better to "make sense" of her.¹⁷ The idea seems to have been that everyone needs an image of herself, beginning with a notion of her boundaries, and that the process of developing one is identity-formation. From there it can seem a small step to the claim that a group similarly develops a self-conception, which forms its identity, raising the question of what role, if any, this group self-conception does and ought to play in an individual's own self-concept. At that point, we have entered the territory of collective identity, including ethnic and racial identity.

Appiah suggests that "each person's individual identity is seen as having two dimensions. There is a collective dimension, the intersection of her collective identities; and there is what I will call a personal dimension, consisting of other socially or morally important features of a person . . . that are not themselves the basis of forms of collective identity." He pertinently adds that "only the collective identities count as social categories, kinds of person."¹⁸ This view is multiply problematic. In holding that someone's individual identity includes some subset of her collective identities, it supposes that her identity is both individual and plural, begging an important question. It reduces the person herself simply to her features, the notorious "bundle" view found in Hume, with its egregious inability to account for change, for persistence through time, or for identity across possible situations. It appears also to assume and entail that the only social kinds that exist, the only "kinds of person," are those socially recognized. Moreover, it is unclear how this could account for the fact that most within a given society may not only misclassify some individuals but mistakenly think some empty classes to have members, as in Appiah's own illuminating example of witch-free societies (some of) whose members falsely believe others (or themselves) to be witches.

How shall we think of identity in connection with ethnic, racial, and other so-called "social identities"? Here is one illuminating suggestion, from Virginia Dominguez:

Whereas material objects have a concrete existence whether or not people recognize their existence, social identities do not. *An identity is a conception of the self* [emphasis added], a selection of physical, psychological, emotional, or social attributes. . . . It is not an individual as a concrete thing. It is only in the act of naming an identity, defining an identity, or stereotyping an identity that identity emerges as a concrete reality. Not only does that identity have no social relevance when it is

not named, it simply does not exist when it has not been conceived and elevated to public consciousness.¹⁹

Yet there are manifest difficulties in making anyone's identity something imposed on her rather than inherent, something she need not have at all, a matter consisting in how she (or others) thinks of her rather than in what she unavoidably is. Even if it made sense to think that your being Black or Latina/o was just your being so classified, which I doubt, it seems to be a long way from simply fitting into a recognized category to having an identity.

There are many statements of the form "*S* is *P*," where *P* does not give the subject's identity. Why think that being a Hispanic or a Black person is having a special identity—a Hispanic or Black one—especially when the discourse of any such ethnic or racial identity differs so radically from central cases of identity-talk, as in discussion of identity over time or across possible worlds?²⁰ After all, logically perspicuous identity-talk makes sense only when it naturally finds (or, at least, permits) two-term expression, as in talk of *A*'s being identical with *B* (through qualitative changes, across times, in different possible situations),²¹ Any inherently nonrelational identity-talk, which the discourse of "ethnic identity" seems to be, is therefore inherently suspect.²² As the anthropologist Adam Kuper remarks, "The concept 'identity' is an oxymoron used in relation to an individual, since how [sic] can an individual not correspond to himself or herself? . . . The notion of Identity is connected rather to the idea that the self has certain essential properties and some contingent ones. There is a real me."²³ Kuper's last remark, of course, opens the door to construing identity as personal essence, what philosophers have called *haecceitas*. Unfortunately, any such move runs counter to the anti-essentialist approach to identity²⁴ and to the claim that individuals have multiple identities.²⁵ For there is something odd in suggesting a person could have a plurality of personal essences. Yet claims about individuals having plural identities are staples of recent treatments of ethnic and racial identity.²⁶

Ethnic identity is radically dissimilar to identity in its central and clear cases (as in the diachronic or "transworld" identity that philosophers discuss). Racial and ethnic identity does not easily permit formulation in relational form, nor derive from issues of sameness. Where such identities are seen as socially conferred or "constructed," as in Dominguez's account and most others today, they cannot involve the self in her deepest features or personal essence. I suspect talk of "identity" here trades on illicit and misleading hypostatization (reification) in several ways. It disallows the necessary question "Identical *with* whom/with what?" It loses the necessary connection between identity and sameness. It obscures the question *in respect* to whom/to what this and that may be identical, treating identity as if it were not relativized to fields and features. Moreover,

when, as in familiar accounts, my ethnic identity hinges on that as which I identify myself (or what others identify me as being), or on that with which I identify (in my feelings, preferences, etc.), or when I am seen as having multiple identities, then such identity becomes so contingent logically, changing temporally, that it relinquishes that aspect of identity-talk in which whatever warrants the designation as someone's "identity" must be something logically necessary, metaphysically essential, temporally fixed, deep, and comprehensive (exhausting herself).

Gracia's treatment is, to my knowledge, the most metaphysically informed, sensitive, and meticulous elaboration of any such ethno-racial identity.²⁷ His discussion focuses specifically on the "panethnic" (better, multiethnic) category that he calls "Hispanic identity," but he means it to have more general application. Gracia initially spells out his membership conditions for someone's being Hispanic, with which he seems to identify her having a Hispanic identity, by concentrating on the person's ancestors, especially their history and geography.²⁸ Comparing his account to Wittgenstein's famous treatment of games in terms of "family resemblance," he insists, "there are no common characteristics to all those people whom we wish to call Hispanics," only a network of similarities linking one Hispanic person to another.²⁹ This creates obvious tension with his claim that all Hispanics share "a common identity of a familial, historical sort."³⁰ For a shared ethnic identity appears to be a shared quality, insofar as an identity seems to be a quality. Even if having an identity is not having a quality, having an identity *is* a quality.³¹

Gracia's claims pull in opposite directions: one has to go. Gracia must abandon either his antiessentialist claim that Hispanics share no features, or his claim that we share Hispanic identity.³² Given the difficulty of identifying such a quality shared by all and only Hispanics, and the fact that any shared Hispanic identity in the absence of shared characteristics could only be an empty one, which is not worth having, I think Gracia (and the rest of us) should abandon the claim that Hispanics as such share an ethnic (or multiethnic) identity.

Gracia adds an important qualification to what he call his Familial-Historical (ancestor-focused) View of Hispanic identity: a Hispanic is someone who belongs to certain geographically defined groups, or has ancestral links to them, *only* if she *also* "preserve[s] some link to those people" or, as he puts it a bit later, "preserve[s] close ties to them."³³ This qualifier adds new problems, some stemming from its vagueness. We want to ask what *sort(s)* of ties are required, and how close they must be. More important, we want to know *why* these ties are needed. If *H*, a descendant of the Iberians, now loses all contact with them and their other descendants, does she at that point cease being Hispanic? (If so, does she lose all ethnicity or just the broad 'panethnic' Hispanic identity, while retaining a narrower ethnic identity, such as Cuban or Puerto Rican?) To affirm that is to reintroduce a cultural element to an ethnic (or

pan- or multiethnic) category shaped by geography and ancestry. We might say that *H* is not culturally Hispanic, in the sense that she diverges from certain ways of thinking and behaving that arose among the Iberians and their descendants and that are thought to characterize the life of some Hispanic groups. However, she still seems to be of their lineage. Should we say, then, that someone's cultural features determine not *whether* she is Hispanic but *how* Hispanic she is? That suggestion is initially appealing. However, I think closer examination of Corlett's careful attempt to develop just such a position reveals insurmountable shortcomings.³⁴

SCALAR AND COMPARATIVE ETHNORACIAL IDENTITY

Often nowadays a person's racial or ethnic membership is understood as her ethnic or racial identity, and her ethno-racial identity, or her having such a "group identity" is regarded as a desideratum. As we observed earlier, this identity of hers is taken to involve her "identifying with" her ethnicity or race. The latter project must stress cultural features, taking pride in or striving to acquire preference for what are thought to be some of the group's characteristic musical or literary forms, cultivating or affecting various tongues or distinctive linguistic styles or phrasings, making a point of certain styles of clothing, and so on. These are the marks of having an ethnic identity; it is sometimes thought, at least, of being authentic in it. Appiah notes that "ethnic identities characteristically have cultural distinctions as one of their primary marks. . . . Distinct practices, ideas, norms go with each ethnicity in part because people want to be ethnically distinct, want the sense of solidarity that comes from being unlike others."³⁵

Yet immediately a problem arises. For we intuitively think that whether you are, say, a Black person or a Puerto Rican is more a matter of your ancestors' geographic origin and culture than it is of yours. Any talk of degrees or comparatives in regard to something's identity seems patently unacceptable.³⁶ How can I have my identity, be what I am, *more or less* or *to a certain extent*? Of course, there may be something plausible in the idea that ethnicity itself admits of degrees and comparatives. It may make sense to say some people are more Latina/o than others are, and perhaps, too, we can sometimes legitimately talk of how Latina/o someone is.

Lawrence Blum is a good example of someone who seems to allow for more or less intensive ethnicity. He distinguishes what he calls "thick ethnicity" from "thin ethnicity." The latter is said to be what Herbert Gans calls "symbolic ethnicity" and Waters "voluntary ethnicity." Where "thick" ethnics live "daily li[ves] immersed in and permeated by [their] ethnoracial identity," for "thin ethnics" their "ethnicity is not very salient

in their daily existence." Blum also distinguishes "identity ethnicity" from "anti-discrimination ethnicity." In this use, and somewhat surprisingly, "identity ethnicity" (which, confusingly, is itself only one type of ethnic identity) possesses "no cultural content" and is a matter simply of someone's seeing herself as belonging to a certain ethnic group—or of merely realizing that others do, contrary to her own preference and self-classification. Such an individual "take[s] on an ethnic *social* identity without having the *cultural* substance often assumed to accompany it."

Blum's notion of "anti-discrimination" ethnicity seems a poor contrast, since this is a matter of the limits of and reasons for a person's "identification with her group." Someone with such an ethnicity identifies with the group when, "because and insofar as," the group faces discrimination. I think it confused to consider these four types of ethnicity, and worse still to conceive them, as Blum does, as "four forms of ethno-racial identity." His "thick" and "thin" represent a real distinction, but it is a distinction among different extents to which ethnic culture pervades daily life, not among depths of *being Latina/o*, etc., nor of having any kind of identity.³⁷

This talk can arise and seem reasonable especially in cases of ethnically mixed ancestry. What is problematic is the claim, however initially appealing, that one's ethnic *identity* can admit of comparatives and degrees, that someone's cultural participation and emotional commitments make her ethnic identity greater or less. To see what motivates such a position and how it goes awry, we should return to Corlett's discussion.

Corlett presents his exploration as "a philosophical analysis of the nature of a specific ethnic group," an effort to "analyze the notion of Latino identity," a search for "the nature of a Latino person," an inquiry into "the necessary and sufficient conditions that define membership in a Latino group, ethnically speaking," into "who qualifies as a Latino" and "the nature [or 'properties'] of Latina/hood."³⁸ Presumably, the author does not really mean that a Latina/o person has a different "nature" from, say, an Anglo or an Aryan person as that talk suggests. (If he did mean that, then the first thing for him to do would be to show us that we should think there exists such a nature for him or anyone to find.) The issue instead seems to be what it is for a person to be a Latina/o. Note that nothing in this description makes the project into "an analysis of Latino identity," as Corlett also puts it. I see no good reason to speak of "identity" in this discussion at all. Let us begin by treating it as an inquiry into what it is to be a Latina/o, deferring for now the narrower business of her having Latina/o identity.³⁹

These two claims constitute the nub of Corlett's chief account of what (I think, misleadingly) he calls "Latino identity":

(C1) Someone's ancestral connection to the peoples of Iberia after 1492 is necessary and sufficient for affirmatively answering the question whether she is a Latina/o,

(C2) There is a certain "cluster of attributes which, when held in some combination and to some significant degree, serve to identify [some]one as being more or less a Latino." These attributes include mastery of the Spanish language, having a Spanish name, and familiarity with and appreciation for various Hispanic customs.⁴⁰ Those who, possessing the needed genealogical ties, have more of these are therein more Latina/o.

On Corlett's account, whether a person L is Latina/o depends simply on her ancestry.⁴¹ However, "Latino identity is a matter of degree," and how Latina/o she is—the extent to which she is (a) Latina/o—varies according to various cultural and linguistic factors.⁴² There is a conceptual difficulty built into any such view. For it is hard to see how someone's (or something's) having some property *P* could consist in her (its) having some feature *F_i*, while her (its) being *more P* than another is (or than she/it used to be) consists in comparative possession of some entirely different feature *F₂*. What applies here to the comparative question also applies to the scalar.

In "Analyzing Latino/a Identity," Corlett offers a "clarification" that seems to me a different position. While defending his view that ethnicity is (an) identity on the dubious grounds that it is part of who someone is, Corlett now retreats to the claim that someone's cultural participation merely "indicates" the degree of her cultural "identification," comparing it to the way in which someone's devotion may mark how much she cares about her marriage and her spouse while it is legal facts that determine whether she is married. If this level of cultural identification is meant as a metaphysical account of being comparatively or intensively Latina/o, for example, then it cannot work because it makes being more or less Latina/o (or Latina/o to degree *M*) no longer the proper comparative of the quality that constitutes simply being Latina/o.

Corlett talks as if he were offering an account of being more, less, or just so Latina/o in the same sense in which (though, problematically, on different grounds from those on which) someone is simply Latina/o. It is now plain that that is not the case, and his rhetorical slide from ethnicity to ethnic identity to ethnocultural identification only obscures the fact that he is talking about two entirely different matters—what someone is and how much it matters to her. The latter is in no way a comparative or an intensity of the former. Moreover, it should be clear that his marriage analogy undermines Corlett's view more than it clarifies or supports it, because we know there is no such thing as being more or less (or this much) married. Again, being married is one thing and caring about it something quite different, not at all related as a comparative term is to its positive, unmodified form. Finally, and important for our purpose, we

can ask why we should consider ethnicity an identity. Is it assumed that every quality, even every relational quality, is similarly internal to the self? If so, has not Corlett mired himself in the Hegelian doctrine of internal relations?⁴³

Returning to my critique of Corlett's account of ancestry, how could a subject's being *P* consist in its having feature *Fi*, when *how P* it is—the extent to which it is *P*—consists in the amount it has of some different feature *F2*? If something's being *P* is identical with its being *Fi*, then its being more *P* (than some *X*) can only be identical with its being more *Fi*.⁴⁴ Corlett's claims, then, appear to violate the logic of comparative and scalar terms. Yet that is the form of the claims that constitute Corlett's account, if we replace "*P*" with "Latina/o," "*Fi*" with the relevant features of Iberian lineage in *Cx*, and "*F2*" with some requisite cultural feature(s) from *C2*.⁴⁵

Any such account as Corlett's also faces a problem from the lower limit. As the level of Latina/o cultural involvement shrinks, the subject, *L*, approaches not being Latina/o at all, until there is no cultural involvement at all and *L* is not Latina/o. When the answer to the question of the degree to which something is *P* is "None at all," then the answer to that of whether it is *P* is *eo ipso* answered. There is no need to look to some other ancestral features, as Corlett wants. In this way, the "whether" and "how" questions are logically linked, but any account like Corlett's treats them as independent. Of course, his ally can try to block the problem by insisting that the question of how Latina/o someone is—and thus recourse to cultural involvement—cannot arise unless and until the question of whether the subject is Latina/o—the matter of her genealogy—is answered affirmatively. However, any such stipulation is ad hoc; it needs both its propriety and intelligibility to be shown.

Corlett acknowledges that, on his account, we would need to know not just *which* factors count toward someone's being Latina/o—better phrased, toward how Latina/o she is or "the *degree* to which one is a Latino"—but also *how* and *how much* each factor counts.⁴⁶ The problem is deeper than this, however, and Corlett's account can be shown to have counterintuitive implications. On it, as a Latina/o, *L*, Anglicizes first her Christian name, then similarly changes her middle name from Spanish, and finally her surname, her "Latina/hood" fades; she becomes less (a) Latina/o. *Unless*, that is, over the same period, she does some things Corlett's account treats as more "Latina/o-making" (as we might say), such as gaining greater mastery of Spanish, or coming to know more Latin music or literature. This picture of waxing and waning ethnicity—waxing and waning across persons and times—complicated now by tradeoffs he cannot consistently deny, strikes me as unrealistic and far-fetched. More important, we must observe that waxing and waning "identity" is even odder, at the margins of coherence. Corlett also needs

to provide some account of the commensurability of these very different matters.

The difficulty is not merely the one Corlett concedes, that we do not yet know *how much* Spanish a Latina/o would have to learn, for example, in order to offset what he imagines to be the de-Latinizing effects of her Anglicizing her name. Rather, I want to ask how *can L's* learning *any* amount of Spanish replace some of the Latina/o hood that she supposedly lost in changing her name? What is the metric in which this sort of commensuration could take place? What could be the relevant unit of measure?⁴⁷ Finally, we should note that Corlett's account is rather unclear about whether our person *L* also has to *like* the music for it to tend to make her more (of a) Latina/o. Corlett talks here of "respecting . . . elements of Latino culture." Suppose, however, that *L* comes to know more Latin(o/a) music, but likes it less.⁴⁸ Maybe the novelty wears off, or it comes to seem shallow in *L's* mind compared with Ravel, or (the no longer Lil') Romeo, or "Riverdance," or whatever it is that now captivates her. What if she gradually gains respect for, say, Spanish drama but increasingly despises Cuban poetry? How does that affect her standing as a Latina/o? I mean these questions to be rhetorical, but they point to what is unanswerable. The problem goes beyond that of assigning specific weights to the various factors. My point is that there is something highly counterintuitive in the very suggestion at the heart of Corlett's account that these cultural matters can weigh at all in the required way, tending to make someone more or less (a) Latina/o as they grow or shrink, indeed, making her Latina/o identity track this ebb and flow.

These matters are not without possible psychological consequences, we should remember, and they, are not without possible normative implications. There is, of course, an ancient tradition in the West (and East, for that matter) according to which the fundamental ethical project is that of being fully what one is. Where *X* is supposed to be some deep feature of the self, as any matter of identity ought to be, to say that someone is a *X*, but not much (of one), is already a normative judgment and a negative one at that.⁴⁹ Corlett denies that his comparative talk is inherently normative. This response is unpersuasive. His account explicitly holds that someone may be "more or less a Latino," and implicitly allows that some Latina/o people are more Latina/o than others. It puts some "at the core of Latina/o hood [sic]" and others at "its periphery," holds that some Latinas/os are "Latinos in a strong sense," others "Latinos in a weaker sense."⁵⁰ All this has strong normative import, including ethical, as is made clear by Corlett's insistence that "we should wear our ethnic label with pride," and his criticism of what he calls "the unfortunate disposition" and "self-deception" in someone who "seeks to completely opt out of what is clearly her genealogically based ethnicity."⁵¹ With such stakes in the background, I think Corlett needs some stronger defense of so controversial a model, some more explicit defense against the concern

that his metaphysical account is politically loaded and the worry that it is politically motivated. (I do not presuppose—or even believe—that the latter charge is, in the end, correct, only that the worry it expresses is justified.)

How can we correct the problems I have identified in Corlett's view? I have no definitive solution, but I propose, rather tentatively, that we drop what we might call Corlett's "total Latina/o score"—how Latino/a someone is, all things considered—and allow measurement (*not grading*) only of how typical of Latina/os she is in this or that respect. Rather than following Corlett in saying that someone who knows and appreciates Latino/a literature is, so far forth (or *pro tanto*) "more Latino" than someone who does not, it seems to me more appealing to stop with what is given, namely, that the former is simply *more typically* Latino/a *in* her knowledge of literature (or, what is different, in her preference, etc.).

It appears best to content ourselves with saying that someone is more or less typical of Latinos in her name, her linguistic competencies, and other attributes. Whether someone is a Latino/a person may in the event be, as Corlett allows, largely determined by her genetics. However, rather than then using cultural factors to determine how Latino she is, to place her near or far from the group's "core," to make her Latina/o in a "stronger sense," to fix the extent of her "Latino/a identity," we do better to allow a way simply to determine how *typical* she is of Latinas/os in this or that taste, in her knowledge of certain texts, topics, etc., in her religion, and in other such matters. We can say that person *L*₁ more resembles most Latinas/os than does *L*₂ in these or those (many or few) respects. Why do we need more than this? Why do we need, why should we accept, and how could we either interpret or verify, talk of someone's being more or less (a) Latino/a *tout court* (beyond the way fixed perhaps by mixed ancestry), still less, of one Latino/a having more Latino/a identity than another has?

In any case, whatever may be true with respect to scalar or comparative ethnicity, our concern here is more specifically with ethnic (and racial) *identity*. I think it doubtful Corlett's scalar and comparative account of Latina/o hood as a group identity, or a *fortiori* any such account of an ethnic (or pan- or multiethnic) identity, can be saved. The notion is inherently implausible. Its two-part structure runs into problems from the lower limit. Its picture of temporally waxing and waning identity is strange. The possibility of tradeoffs and offsetting factors exposes the absence of defensible (nonarbitrary) measures and the seeming impossibility of any metric in which to conceive—let alone, execute—the needed commensuration.

The element of truth in Corlett's claims may be that, in the people he discusses, what is at the core or periphery is a particular ethnic category within their self-image (and in the self-images of some others). Per Corlett, it is not that the person is at the periphery of the ethnic group. It

remains an open question, to which I return below, whether assigning ethnicity (or race) prominence in one's identity is a reasonable or desirable course. Let us consider the most influential claim: that some people's ethno-racial identity should determine their politics.

ALCOFF'S DEFENSE OF "IDENTITY POLITICS"

Linda Martin Alcoff sympathetically cites the Combahee River Collective's 1977 "Black Feminist Statement." There, she says, "identity politics emerges as a belief in the relevance of identity to politics, such that, for example, one might justifiably assume that those who share one's identity will be one's most consistent allies." Its authors "did assume that identities mattered, and that they were in some sense real."⁵²

By now it should be clear that any assertion of the reality of ethno-racial identities, or of identities of gender or sexual orientation which seem also to have interested the collective, is more complex than it looks. Its defender must show not only that ethnic, racial, and gender groups really do have members, but also that this membership merits classification as an "identity." Even the claim that races and ethnic groups genuinely have members is more problematic than it appears. More important for us, I have offered reasons to hold that these groups are not accurately and illuminatingly considered identities.

Alcoff's discussions take us through a sometimes fascinating tour of intellectual history from Hegel to Foucault and Judith Butler, offering modest, nuanced accounts of essentialism, ontological pluralism, Althusser's "interpellation," Fanon's "corporeal malediction," and much more. However, it does little to show that belonging to an ethnic group or a race, let alone having a gender or sexual orientation, constitutes someone's identity. She talks of social "processes in which identities are constructed" and maintains that "social identities are real (or not) within the social world," proceeding sympathetically to summarize the view that "identities are real in the sense of [i] being lived, [ii] of having real effects, and [iii] constituting real features of our shared reality."⁵³ Especially, "identity is conceived as something that belongs to a group," involving a sense of "'linked fate'" among them, "a felt connection to others of one's identity group based on the belief that their fate will impinge on one's own," which feeling "operates to tie individuals together on the basis of being subject to a certain kind of treatment."⁵⁴ That our neighbors assign you and me to the same category may, of course, affect how we are treated by them and others, how we live our lives, how each of us thinks of her/himself, and how we feel about each other. None of that, separately or together, suffices to secure the classification's accuracy, let alone make it into your identity or mine. The neighbors may be mistaken, and even if they are not, the classifications to which they attend may reflect

little of what is most important, defining, fixed, inherent, or distinctive in either of us.

What then of the claim that ethnicity and race, whether or not identities, "matter"? What matters therein makes a difference. What sort of differences is it claimed that ethnicity and race make, and how do they make them? Alcoff talks of "the normative and epistemological implications of identity," asking "whether identities are politically healthy or reliable sources of truth."⁵⁵ By "normative" here, Alcoff seems to have in mind political or moral considerations, so she really is conjoining two very different types of issues. It behooves us to separate them. Alcoff, whose own mainstream philosophical research centers in issues of knowledge, focuses on ethno-racial identity's claimed epistemological import. She holds that "to say that we have an identity is just to say that we have a location in social space, a hermeneutic horizon that is both grounded in a location and an opening or site from which we attempt to know the world." Given that "identity . . . is something like social location," it is "plausible" to "claim that identity has epistemic salience." Indeed, so construed, Alcoff maintains, Derrida and others cannot be right to see the social categories of Black, or woman, or "gay," as identities to be claimed only as a part of the process of putting the classifications behind us. For "it is incoherent to view identity as something we would be better off without."⁵⁶

Of course, where someone is situated relative to others will affect what and how she experiences. An interesting claim for the "epistemic salience" of race or ethnicity requires more than this. The advocates of deep identity politics, I think, do claim more than what Alcoff asserts, the mere fact that it is likely that members of a specially recognized group (call them *E*s) will or do think similarly about some topic, *T*. They claim that *Ei*, and any *E*, *ought* to think like other *Js*s, where this "ought" is not merely probabilistic but is chiefly a normative political "ought." There is thought to be something wrong with the thinking of those who do not think like the others. Moreover, they suppose this defect to result from failings that are both intellectual and political. This is the heritage, among today's professors, of the calls from yesterday's students for consciousness-raising, solidarity, La Raza, sisterhood, Black nationalism, and similar agenda.

These stronger claims by the partisans of so-called identity politics should, I think, be challenged on two fronts. First, even when these category memberships may have some moral/political force in what a certain person ought to believe, feel, decide, and the like, they are not dispositive and must operate in the right way. What someone thinks, feels, or works for should not normally or substantially be a function of her desire to be like others assigned to the same group, nor emerge from group loyalty, nor reflect merely that group's interests, as if they were paramount. Rather they ought to, especially, provide information for appreciation and

application of moral principles and the deeper concerns and virtues they express. So, we should reject the view that how others in someone's group think, feel, and act provide her good ground for how she should think, feel, and act. Yes, experience, group-typical or not, provides both information and opportunity for sensitization. In that way, we might even be able meaningfully to talk of Black, or Latina/o, or women's "perspectives" on certain issues. Nevertheless, shared or unshared experiences, rooted in social classification or otherwise caused, only serve as occasions and opportunities to reflect, understand, and appreciate.⁵⁷ This is far from conceding what we might call the "identitarian" claim that someone's membership in a (disadvantaged) race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or whatever ought to have pride of place in shaping her moral reasoning, opinions, feelings, and commitments. Still less does it lend support to the view that conforming to the opinions, preferences, and agenda of others in the group is a desideratum, let alone, a proper goal of action.

Second, we should challenge accepted views on just what it is that the typical experiences of women, African-Americans, Latinas/os, and so on provide as a guide to thinking, feeling, and deciding. Contrary to the usual agenda, for example, someone could reasonably maintain that women have special grounds to oppose abortion, and African-Americans to reject all appeals to race prejudice and race distinctiveness. Even if ethnic and sexual categories matter morally, we need to know *how* they matter, *how much* they matter, and what is the range of their legitimate forms of impact. This is a dispute about how properly to learn from shared experiences, what lessons they ought to teach. In any case, the dispute is then what it ought to be: one about moral principles, sensitivity, and virtues. In short, the issue is what we can learn from our experiences and our reflection about moral truth and value, what they are, and where they reside. Of course, we can and must learn from our experience, whether or not shared with others similarly socially classified. However, everyone—and especially those from within stigmatized, silenced, and disadvantaged groups—ought to reject any claim that it is these groupings that constitute our identities (or Alcoff's "forms of identity"). It is not such factors that make us who we are.⁵⁸ It is moral conviction that shapes a decent person's political commitments, and mere group loyalty and conformity cannot shape the moral conviction of a sensible person. That holds whether the groupings are real or imagined, natural or artificial, subjective or intersubjective or objective, imposed from without or adopted within, resisted or embraced, malignant or strategic. Alcoff's lesson in intellectual history is instructive, but it does nothing to show that the self is somehow constituted by gender or race, as those classifications are used in rule-governed social practices.

To the contrary, in an old article of mine, and giving no thought at the time to issues of purported social identity, I built on a suggestion of John

Searle's to propose that the canonical form of a statement of a constitutive rule is "*S* should be counted and treated as *P*." That requires that *S* exist prior to, and independent of, any rule's constitution of her *as a P*. It follows that constitution cannot go all the way down, *contra* the followers of Richard Rorty. Anyone's essence whatever it is can only preexist her social categorization and, what is different, her constitution as someone of this or that type.

There are many other troubling positions in which Alcoff's discussion finds merit. That what I am as a self is partially influenced by external forces is no news. If, however, what I am as a self is determined by external forces, especially insofar as this includes some people's malignant designs, which is what Alcoff seems to think, then we are caught in (really, we are victims of) heteronomy of the worst sort. We are other people's creatures. That is appalling, whether or not one thinks it blasphemy.

Relatedly, Alcoff's distinction between someone's public identity and her subjectivity, besides being murky and fishy, is also dispiriting and dangerous in the context of her further view that the public, in forming my public identity, also therein constructs my subjectivity, fixing its content. "The 'internal' is conditioned by, even constituted within, the 'external,' which is itself mediated by subjective negotiation. Subjectivity is indeed located." Note that the "location" of which she speaks here is my position in the social net and hierarchy that other people devise. Note also that Alcoff defines "subjectivity" as "my own sense of myself, my lived experience of myself, or my interior life." Only the very easily pleased will find much comfort in Alcoff's concession that the external forces fixing my social location and therein forging my identity do so in a process that is "mediated by subjective negotiation." That is like your cheering because, when everyone jointly decides what clothes you are to wear each day, you also get a vote. Even if you got two votes where each of the rest gets only one, your situation is thoroughly heteronomous. More plainly put, you are oppressed. Only what is at stake here is not merely what you wear, but your identity, what you *are*.⁵⁹

Alcoff thinks it "obvious that one's identity in this full sense, one's positional consciousness, will play a role in one's actions." She talks illustratively and admiringly of speakers at a political rally who "spoke *as* young people . . . *as* African-Americans and Latinos . . . *as* U.S. citizens."⁶⁰ Yet, we can ask, what is it for someone to speak as an *E*, that is, as a member of a certain ethnic or racial group? More important, what is it for her to reason, or believe, or feel, as one? Is it merely that she thinks or feels what she does on grounds partially affected by her belonging to that group? Alcoff says of the speakers that "their identity made a difference in what they knew about and how they approached a problem." That may be true, but it seems too modest. It will not be enough to give most partisans of robust identity politics what they want. Such partisans want

these categories to dictate how we should react and what we should think.

For Alcoff, “to self-identify even by a racial or sexed designation is . . . to understand one’s relationship to a historical community, to recognize one’s objective social location, and to participate in the negotiation of the meaning and implications of one’s identity.” I have no complaint, of course, with understanding or recognition. Couching either in talk of “identity,” however, suggests that this historical connection and social location capture and exhaust the real self, and I find that claim unsupported, unjustified, degrading, and dangerous. (Talk instead of “multiple identities,” which some prefer, may block the monopolization, but it is of doubtful coherence and threatens the self with schizophrenia and irrevocable sundering.)

Alcoff claims that “a realistic identity politics . . . recognizes that social categories of identity often helpfully name specific social locations from which individuals engage in, among other things, political judgment” and concludes by asking, “What is there to fear in acknowledging that?”⁶¹ There is nothing to fear, I suppose, in acknowledging the fact. Still, the fact that some people take their political causes from group self-interest, rather than from larger moral concerns, is an unfortunate, degraded, and antisocial phenomenon. While shared experiences can bring moral issues into sharper focus they can also obscure them, and while reflecting on them sometimes sensitizes us to certain moral considerations, they can desensitize us or narrow our sympathies.

What Alcoff asserts, then, is too narrow, generalized, and one-sided. The real dispute about identity and its place in politics is not Alcoff’s concern, which seems to be that public policies need to be evaluated in part on the basis of their impact on certain groups, and that people within those groups should therefore be consulted and listened to. That is virtually beyond dispute. The deeper conflict is over whether those consulted within the groups ought to be considered its spokespersons, whether there is a special view that is peculiar to the group and that it is their responsibility (perhaps owed to the group) to articulate, whether their and others’ membership in the group should be a major force in shaping their thinking and feeling and action, and whether following the group in these matters ought to be one’s project in part because in so doing and only in so doing people realize and fulfill their true selves act, and feel, and think authentically.

Alcoff sunnily remarks that here “identities had important epistemic and political roles to play precisely in ensuring and enhancing solidarity.” I find this altogether too sanguine, even blasé, about the ways in which purported identities will be policed and enforced so as to “ensur[e] and enhance[e]” the group solidarity that is politically demanded in thought as well as action. This goes well beyond the merely probabilistic anticipation of consistent alliance with which Alcoff, as we saw, began.

Alcoff comes closest to what I see as the heart of the matter when she modestly allows that “the particular meaning and significance of one’s identity is interpreted in many different ways.” She proceeds tolerantly to suggest that “one may take one’s racial identity . . . as more or less central to one’s life,” as if less were as eligible as more. Her allies on the front lines of identity politics are, I fear, not always so liberal and pluralistic. They invoke the rhetoric of identity precisely to make the point that their political opponent within the group needs a “reality check,” that she is unaware of who and what she really and most fundamentally is, that her consciousness needs raising.

This regimen and ideological stricture are normative and ideological politics masquerading as epistemology and ontology. This is one important reason why the often false, fraudulent, and dangerous rhetoric of social identity needs unmasking for the errors and fallacies it involves. The philosopher Julius Moravscik once wrote an article titled “Who Are We, What Ought We Care About, How Should We Live?” The progression implicit in that title illustrates the sort of slide that here concerns me. We need to take care lest the partisans of identity and identity politics, ignorant of the truth or unconcerned about it, invoke the ambiguous rhetoric of identity to put in place a meretricious and indefensible answer to the first question, thereby hoping to mask and prop up insupportable responses to the second, and ultimately to turn the third question to (frequently extreme) political agendas. Whatever one thinks of those agendas’ reasonableness and morality, one ought to join in rejecting the strategy’s first moves as without theoretical justification.

ETHNO-RACIAL SKEPTICISM AND A DEFLATIONARY APPROACH TO RACIAL AND ETHNIC AFFILIATION

Alcoff’s self-described “defense” of “identity politics” does little to justify either the claim that ethnicity is identity or that ethnicity has normative importance. Let us distinguish three types, not at all mutually exclusive. We can call the first *existential racialists* (that is, metaphysical realists about race). They maintain that humanity is really divided into a variety of races; they think races exist in reality. The second we can call *normative racialists*. They hold that for many of us, our racial affiliation *ought* to significantly guide our feelings, commitments, tastes, and the like. The third are *affective racialists*. In them, what they think to be their own or others’ racial affiliation *does* significantly shape their preferences, projects, specialized affections, commitments, and so on. Here I have taken no position on the first type, and I maintain an agnosticism on race’s reality, in contrast to Lucius Outlaw’s naturalist realism and Appiah’s and Zack’s antirealism.⁶² Rather, I have noted that, even setting aside the controversies over whether races really exist and claims of ethnic affilia-

tion can be adequately clarified in their content and extension, racial and ethnic membership ought not to be conceived as identities. On that basis, I suggest we regard ethno-racial classification of or by ourselves or others with a certain diffidence and skepticism. In this way, I hope to have done something toward undermining the grounds on which anyone might reasonably aspire to join either of the other types, the normative and affective racialists.

In my view, neither Black for Black, White for Black, White for White, nor Black for White favoritism is inherently immoral. However, the latter two will rightly be more suspect in a society like ours, because they are apt to conceal genuine racism, which is not mere favoritism but hostility, contempt, or disregard. Those latter forms of favoritism, pro-White favoritism, are also more dangerous in a society with a history like this one's. Still, unquestioned, unreserved, and overemphasized attention to race is a bad thing. I should extend the same concern to ethnicity. Seeing Black advancement simply as a grab for power, rather than a demand to end the injustices of racial bias, demeans the cause. Justice is a virtue, and virtue is both a kind of reward in its own right and a possibility whose pursuit is *everyone's responsibility*.

It is tempting to say that race/ethnicity should be irrelevant to beliefs and tastes. I think this somewhat too strong, since having some beliefs, tastes, and habits of feeling may stem from such vices as contempt, ingratitude, disloyalty. Surely, there is something *especially* odious in an African-American descendant of slaves endorsing slavery or unrestricted majoritarianism, or maintaining that Black people are racially inferior and merit only such treatment. The chief reason seems to be that the history of slavery and Jim Crow is so recent and egregious in many instances that we can expect almost anyone, and especially an African-American, to know this history and to draw some obvious lessons. That is less a matter of racial loyalty or "identity" than of mere moral sensitivity and educability. It is a belief process, a conviction that anyone could and should have. That makes it different from supposing that, say, an African-American ought think or feel a certain way simply because others do, or that they should all draw the same conclusions from Black history.

Cases where it seems right to say of someone that she ought to do or feel or want because of her race or ethnicity are rare exceptions rather than the rule, and usually someone's drawing moral or other beliefs from her racial affiliation threatens to introduce irrelevant and irrational elements. Allowing ethnicity to matter very much to individual beliefs and tastes may also be bad for *the group*. That is because it may discourage innovation in thinking, in beliefs, in artistic forms, in cultural expressions, and so on. This is especially worrisome insofar as it afflicts the educated, on whom the group may depend for intellectual and cultural trailblazing.⁶³

Appiah suggests what he calls “a more recreational conception of racial identity,” which allows forms of identification that are “play[ful]” and “ironic,” insisting,

It is crucial to remember always that we are not simply black or white or yellow or brown, gay or straight or bisexual Jewish, Christian, Moslem, Buddhist, or Confucian but that we are also brothers and sisters; parents and children; liberals, conservatives, and leftists; teachers and lawyers and auto-makers and gardeners; fans of the Padres and the Bruins; . . . students and teachers, friends and lovers.⁶⁴

We do well to reflect on some items from Appiah’s list of “identities” in light of what we have said. Being Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or a member of most other religious groups already and inherently involves accepting various moral standards and trying to live by them. To treat these religious affiliations as “identities” may help to capture the importance they properly have in someone’s life. Surely, someone who subordinates her religion to her politics, ethnicity, or race, is foolish. Nevertheless, to conceive them as identities dangerously downplays the subject’s ability to change her mind in both her beliefs and her commitments. To treat the sexual items on Appiah’s list as identities errs in ways both similar and different. Where religion seems inherently serious, many of these sexual matters may be mere personal velleities and predilections, shading over into idiosyncrasies, quirks, kinks, even perversions. To regard them as identities is often hyperbolic, melodramatic at best. At worst, such misleading thinking can pose a serious obstacle to confronting personal vice and undertaking moral reform and reorientation. (When Hannibal Lecter adopts an “identity” as a cannibal, this self-image imports extraneous matters into his self-conception and retards his ability to see his preference as a temptation to be resisted in practice whether or not he is able to reorient his tastes.) Such “identification” is part of a flight from reality into moral complacency, self-deceit, and evasion.

Gardening and fandom are merely recreational, as Appiah says, but therein they cannot really be “identities” in any serious and proper use of the term. The term *fan* derives from *fanatic*, and the sensible fan must always live out her attachment in a way that is playful and touched with irony. She sees herself with detachment as acting, being silly, making much out of what she must, in a calm moment, acknowledge is really nothing. Such minimal good sense is perhaps rarer at times when adults make a point of holding on to such childish things as the expensive merchandise in any Disney store, but it is a requirement of reasonableness, if not sanity.

The other items on Appiah’s list move closer to the heart of our moral lives, moral selves. For, I have elsewhere argued, any moral virtues or vices or duties or prerogatives or rights or claims that we have are ones that we have in virtue of and relative to such relationships as brother,

sister, parent, offspring, lover, friend, or employee or employer (to adapt from Appiah's list), or citizen, or fellow (to go beyond it), or occupant of some similar role-relationships that define and constitute our moral lives.⁶⁵ It is not from the so-called "social identities" of what are called "race" or "gender" or "sexual orientation," nor ethnicity or socioeconomic class, that our moral features emerge, and they will not play a central role in the self-image (or other-images) of the morally sober person. In the end, what reflection on the place of identity in practical rationality indicates is that we should learn from what we can term a kind of "role-centering" in which the moral claims on anyone's concern are variously and differentially distributed among people in their various tighter and looser modes of connection to her.

The personal and interpersonal categories that matter most—that determine her moral virtues and duties—are those of friend, of fellow, of citizen, spouse, parent, offspring, and so on. These morally determinative roles are analogues of friendship, most of them forms of friendship. Some of these we choose to enter and occupy. All of them pose choices. Some we discover ourselves already to occupy. That discovery is a kind of achievement of reason, to be sure. However, it is not unaided reason, but reason informed by the responses Adam Smith and David Hume called "sympathy." That sympathy, feeling what the other feels, is a starting point. In an adequate theory, the Scotsmen's "sympathy" needs to transform itself into a critical benevolence, where we want (and are therein motivated to seek) for the other not simply what we imagine we would want in her place, nor what she happens to want, but what is objectively beneficial to her, rooted in a reflective understanding of human beings, our needs and capacities, and pursued in light of our varied connections also to others. This involves intellectual virtues that may themselves be forms of moral virtues.⁶⁶

All this need not exclude—indeed, it recommends and even requires—forms of affection, community, pride, and solidarity.⁶⁷ Most fundamentally these will be universalized and contextually nuanced, in community with each Other, especially those close enough to work with in joint efforts against hatred, injustice, disrespect, and the effects of past hatred, injustice, and disrespect. It ought also to involve specialized emotional attachment to victims and their plight. We need not deny the possibility that race and ethnicity might sometimes serve as crude markers for some of the forms of solidarity suitable to such life. Still, no endorsement of anything that merits the name of "identity" ought be recognized here.

Recognizing that there is a gap between the doubts I have cast on ethnicity and identity and any positive program, let me sketch some positive suggestions about identity, emotion, and ethno-racial categories. They are, I think, not merely compatible with my critique, but consonant with it and in its spirit. My suggestions are that we strive toward what

might be called ethno-racial skepticism and a deflationary conception of race and ethnicity. The ethno-racial skeptic recognizes and takes account of the fact that we are very unclear about the extension and content of ethnic and racial affiliations. We do not know at this stage whether we should say races exist at all, and even ethnicity is a complicated notion, perhaps caught in unavoidable and vicious circularity with the vague notion of ethnic culture. I think we might generally do better to replace as much as possible such putative, ascribed affiliations with more restrained talk of ethnic (and, more problematically, racial) *background*, especially ancestry. We ought often simply to say that someone today is of this or that background, rather than flatly that she *is* this or that ethnicity. That is better because it seems more likely that ethnic groups used to have distinct and separate cultures and memberships than they do now.

Substituting “What is NN’s ethnic ancestry?” for “What is NN?” (in the sense of “What is NN’s ethnic identity or ethnicity?”) helps avoid some of the pitfalls that lurk here. The former question has a clearer answer (though often more complex and compound), and avoids raising such pseudo-problems as whether these collective identities are discovered or invented (by the members themselves or by others). Similarly, we ought to say that this person is more typical of Latinas/os, Black people, or some other ethno-racial group than is that one—more similar to most others we assign to the group—in her name, her language, her musical, or literary tastes, among other things, instead of following Corlett in saying flatly that the one is “more Latina/o” (more Black, White, and so on), is closer to the group’s core, or has a stronger ethno-racial identity. It is only the former sort of claim that we can know, and we do well to restrict ourselves to these facts rather than using them as bases for the more politically and metaphysically loaded claims Corlett wants.

Second, the deflationary approach does not comfortably fit the way some liberals talk of each individual’s determining her own “way of being” Black or Latina/o.⁶⁸ This idea is well-meaning in its fight to free individuals from imposed ethno-racial scripts, but it remains unacceptable because it suggests that being Black (or Latina, etc.) is an (ongoing) activity that can be conducted in different manners, styles, or methods. Rather, it is simply a static (and, I think, contra Corlett, nonintensive) condition of group inclusion, and something that a person cannot normally acquire or lose during her lifetime. Even if the group ceases to exist as such, through some natural or artificial calamity (e.g., genocide), it still remains true that she is of that (recently existing) people.

Third, in a deflationary account, ethno-racial special ties of pride, loyalty, fellow-feeling, and solidarity are best regarded and realized as normally morally neutral (neither obligatory nor preferable); as without major significance; as impermanent; as light-hearted and low-key when sensible; as tolerant, appreciative, and uncritical, not only with respect to others’ ethnic affiliations but also to other responses/attitudes that people

(within or without one's own group) do or might have to their ethnicity. Further, they should be regarded as matters to be treated not very seriously (i.e., as largely inconsequential) in their positive role (as projects, aspirations, or simply as found inclinations), but with constant and grave awareness of their potential for mischief; as external to the moral self rather than constitutive of it; as not at all determinative of moral, political, or religious commitments, but of only minor and indirect relevance to them (as when reflection on the history of African-Americans sensitizes one in general to dangers of deference to majorities); and as shallow in both the self-image (that is, what is often mischaracterized as someone's "identity") of a sober-thinking person and in her view of others. Finally I suggest that we view these ethno-racial ties as integrated with other commitments and always subordinated to universal moral projects (self-control and self-development, loving service to persons), to cooperative moral partnerships, and to morally definitive role-relationships. If notions of race and ethnicity are legitimately to persist they will need to be pruned of their normative pretensions.

To say all this, of course, is only to gesture toward the work needed. A serious treatment of the supposed moral claims inherent in ethnic or racial identity would require some complexity. At least three types of "ought" judgment, for example, seem involved in questions of whether Black people ought to have the sort of special feelings of racial kinship, pride, loyalty, and solidarity sometimes gathered (misleadingly, I think) under the rubric "racial identity." The first is moral, usually indicating moral obligation, but sometimes supererogation. The second is sociopolitical, perhaps distinguishable from the moral, and rooted in assumed net beneficial social effects for fighting racism or, alternatively, in the value thought to inhere in the self-realization of Black people as a people, an organic and collective self. The third type of "ought" judgment is self-interested, and especially tied to alleged benefits to psychological health, as in some social psychologists' racial identity theory.

In addition to these differences in the source of "ought" judgments, there are also differences in their stringency. Thus an adequate treatment of the morality of racial pride and special affection would also need to distinguish the question of whether racial kinship, and so on, are permitted or forbidden, from that of whether they are desirable (in themselves or for their effects), from that of whether they are supererogatory, and from that of whether the lack of such feelings of kinship is forbidden or even undesirable (what some have called "suberogatory"). Finally, it is likely that no overall answer can be given, especially not in abstraction from an individual's personal situation and the group's historical context. We should acknowledge that so-called "racial identity" or "racial solidarity" may need to be disaggregated for moral analysis and evaluation. Perhaps the morality of feelings of racial loyalty (and actions therefrom) is different from that of racial pride, or of special racial affection, or

favoritism. This is also likely to be affected both by a group's history and social situation, and the individual's own.

The skeptical and deflationary approaches combine to capture some of the substance and goal of Appiah's call for "recreational" forms of ethno-racial identity, recognized as contingent, shaped by individual choice, lived in irony and playfulness. However, they dispense entirely with the claim, which even Appiah could not bring himself to abandon, that ethnicity and race do or ought to constitute forms of collective identity. Instead, the approach suggested here substitutes questions and claims about ethno-racial background for ones simplistically assigning someone today to this or that race or ethnicity. Likewise, it replaces the claims that someone is more Latina/o (or Black, etc.) than another, closer to the group's core or essence with the weaker and less problematic claims that one person is more typical than is another of members of their group in this or that respect. Finally, it takes some steps toward sketching and defending a more detailed strategy for collapsing the airs and limiting the dangers of ethnic and racial affiliation.

The core of anyone's self-image (and of others' image of her) should be the core of the self. That includes, first, those features of the self that do not vary across times and across possible situations (as ethnicity and race may, and are especially prone to do if, as is so commonly said nowadays, they are "socially constructed"). Second, it comprises those which have the greatest impact on moral virtues, duties, and the like. Such self-images may allow us to achieve internal coherence of self without ethnic or racial purity.⁶⁹

This is not to endorse some fashionable cosmopolitanism. Among the problems in cosmopolitanism, and in the "irony" that attends it in Appiah, Rorty, and others, is that the cosmos, the world, is made to do the work of community in giving people a sense of belonging and of joint striving, something it is simply too large to do, unless we adopt certain special cosmological assumptions. We will need smaller or, at least, more unified groupings. However, ethnicities, especially in this age of diaspora, are ill suited to fill this role. And this is all the more true if the doubts I have raised about the very notion of ethno-racial identity have any plausibility. Another difficulty is that cosmopolitanism allows too great a role to each individual to define herself and her identity. That again, is unrealistic, especially with regard to ethnicity. Someone's choosing to be a Latina/o does nothing to make her one. Obviously it does not, if she has no Latina/o ancestors. However, even if she does, the choice cannot affect a category that inherently involves her lineage. At the extreme, this could assign siblings, even identical twins reared together, to different ethnic groups.⁷⁰

What we need, perhaps, is a new interpersonalist personalism, stressing self- (and other) images that emphasize the status of someone as a human being, as a rational animal, or even as a creature of God, among

other concepts, with a past, an inherent nature, existing always with other persons in relationships of dependence and concern, which relationships are also normatively significant vocations, containing the clues from which someone can come to understand who she is and what suits (or behooves or becomes or fits) such a one. Glenn Loury has written, "The most important challenges and opportunities confronting any person arise not from his racial condition, but from our common human condition."⁷¹ Extending Loury's point beyond race to ethnicity, we can agree that humans are "identical in essentials, different only in details. . . . It is a great—if common—moral and political error to advance the view that a person's race is his most important characteristic." Our being as persons is always being-with, being-in-relationship-to. Yet the relationships and roles that constitute our moral lives are not and ought not to be seen in ethno-racial terms.

Despite what is almost routinely said, it is implausible to maintain that race or ethnicity, or the cultures with which some associate them, can give "meaning" to its participants' (members') lives.⁷² There is reason to think these notions simply too vague, ill-defined, shifting, and indeterminate in content to play a central role in any self-image in which someone is well advised to invest. In any case, merely following what others have done, conforming to accepted patterns, and so on, is insufficient to justify beliefs, feelings, desires, or actions, let alone to insure their meaningfulness. (Note that it is merely a bad pun to maintain that cultures provide standards of meaningful life on the grounds that they are themselves systems of symbols and thus of meaning. One could as fallaciously argue that because we can assign semantic meaning to someone's words, s/he cannot be nonetheless chattering meaninglessly, in the sense of incoherently or pointlessly.) It is unclear just what such meaning is, but it would appear to need some higher validation than custom and an ill-justified sense of "belonging" can provide. If any imminent meaning for human life is possible, which is doubtful enough, these poor materials cannot suffice.⁷³

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NOTES

1. Reprinted by J. L. A. Garcia, "Racial and Ethnic Identity?," from *Race or Ethnicity?: On Black and Latino Identity*, edited by Jorge J. E. Gracia. Copyright ©2007 Cornell University. Used by permission of the publisher, Cornell University Press.
2. Elaborate the content and implications of a virtues-based account of racism, which focuses on mental states, in Garcia, "Current Conceptions of Racism," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 28 (1997): 5–42; and "Racism as a Model for Understanding Sexism," in *Race/Sex: Their Sameness, Difference, and Interplay*, edited by Naomi Zack (New York: Routledge, 1997), 45–59.
3. Anthony Appiah, "Race, Culture, and Identity: Misunderstood Connections," in *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race*, ed. Appiah and Amy Gutmann (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 80–81. Sally Haslanger has pointed out to me how counterintuitive it is to think an identity of someone could consist in a mere "label."
4. Appiah, "Race, Culture, and Identity," 104.
5. Appiah, *Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), esp. 24–26. Also see chaps. 1, 3 *passim*.
6. Appiah, "Race, Culture, and Identity," 105.
7. Paul Gilroy, *Against Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 12, 13, 15.
8. Bryant has pointed out that prior to Du Bois's famous call, at the beginning of the twentieth century, for the "conservation of race," there was rather a long history of African American reform activists repudiating the very idea of racial classification as artificial, un-Christian, and un-American in what they saw as its implicit denial of universal human fraternity. For a differing, but underdocumented, view, see Paul Taylor, "Appiah's Uncompleted Argument: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Reality of Race," *Social Theory and Practice* 26 (2000): 103–28.
9. All quotations here are from Naomi Zack, *Thinking about Race* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1998), 67.
10. Zack concedes that, despite the way she understands the distinction between someone's (or some group's) identity and some process of identification, "the sense of identity that is relevant to race and identity is not entirely free of identification." *Ibid.*, 67.
11. Appiah, "Race, Culture, and Identity," 78.
12. Adrian Piper, "Higher-Order Discrimination," in *Identity, Character, and Morality*, ed. Owen Flanagan and Amelie Rorty (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 296.
13. J. Angelo Corlett, *Race, Racism, and Reparations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 9, suggests replacing the concept of race with that of ethnicity, David Tlío Goldberg combines them into "ethno-race," and Alcoff appears to think the two notions are insufficiently different even in principle to make sense of either replacement or combination. "The differences between race, ethnicity, and culture... begin to recede once we look at how the terms are actually used." Linda Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 242.
14. "In fact, we might argue that racial identities could persist even if nobody believed in racial essences, provided both ascription [of racial membership by others] and identification [with the race's presumed characteristics by those assigned to it] continue" (Appiah, "Race, Culture, and Identity," 8a). Later, Appiah talks approvingly of "identities [as women, Blacks, homosexuals] toward which so many have struggled in dealing with the obstacles created by sexism, racism, homophobia," and even of his own joining their project of "constructing" such "identities" (*ibid.*, 104).
15. Zack, "Philosophical Racial Essentialism," paper read to Boston University's Institute on Race and Social Division workshop, February 2001. We should also note, contra Appiah, that even if people do have group or collective identities, which I will here dispute, it is implausible to think them mere words ("label[s]").

16. Howard Gardner, "The Enigma of Erik Erikson," *New York Review of Books* (June 24, 1999): 53, emphases added.
17. Though Erikson campaigned against racial hatred, his view opens the door to our defining your identity in such a way that it fits comfortably into our prejudices about what we regard as different types of people, thereby helping us to "make sense" of you.
18. Appiah, "Race, Culture, and Identity," 93.
19. Virginia Dominguez, *White by Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 286, as quoted in Mary C. Waters, *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 44.
20. Gracia notes that some do or might prefer such terms as *Latina/o*, or *Latin American*, or *Ibero-American* to pick out a larger or smaller subset of the ethnic group(s) he has in mind, and, despite his book's title, carefully argues for the superiority of the term *Hispanic*. Jorge J. E. Gracia, *Hispanic/Latino Identity: A Philosophical Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), chaps. 1 and 3. I find his reasoning appealing, but will move freely between talk of things and people Hispanic and those Latina/o, without troubling over the distinction. I will also use the more gender neutral "Latina/o," except in quotations, whenever the context leaves gender unspecified.
21. One difference is that some people do talk of identity in these contexts (e.g., "identity politics"). However, some of us think they should not, and one thing a philosopher should do here is query this sort of naive practice and explore ways of justifying its presuppositions.
22. I hasten to add that I am aware that Frege, Strawson, and Geach, among others, have denied that identity itself is a relation. See Thomas Morris, *Understanding Identity Statements* (New York: Humanities, 1984), esp. chaps. 2 and 5. I do not beg, or even engage, that question. My claim here is only that meaningful identity—talk must naturally lend itself to (or, minimally, must allow) formulation in two-term language. It is this test that, whatever the nature (if any) of identity itself, talk of identity across time and across possible worlds passes, and talk of ethnic identity fails.
23. Adam Kuper, *Culture: The Anthropologists' Account* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 234ff.
24. See, especially, Gracia, *Hispanic/Latino Identity*, 48ff.
25. "This [i.e., Gracia's] conception of who we are is open and pluralistic, allowing the coexistence of other, multiple, and variegated identities." Gracia, *Hispanic/Latino Identity*, 69.
26. Ibid., 60; Corlett, "Latino Identity," *Public Affairs Quarterly* 13 (1999): 273–95.
27. These paragraphs treating Gracia's book are excerpted and adapted from Garzia, "Is Being Hispanic an Identity?" *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 27 (2001): 27–43.
28. "My proposal is to adopt the term 'Hispanic' to refer to us: the people of Iberia, Latin America, and some segments of the population in the United States, after 1492, and to the descendants of these people anywhere in the world as long as they preserve close ties to them. . . . the use of this term does not imply that there are any properties common to all of us throughout history. Its use is justified rather by a web of concrete historical relations that ties us together, and simultaneously separate us from other peoples." Gracia, *Hispanic/Latino Identity*, 52; also see 48.
29. Ibid., 48.
30. Ibid., 44.
31. In *Surviving Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality: A Challenge for the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), Gracia now clarifies that a group (including ethnic) identity is a kind of quality (or "property"), but only of a second-order type. I cannot here pursue this new wrinkle in Gracia's position, nor do I see whether or how it can turn the trick of enabling him consistently to retain both his antiessentialism about ethnic identities and his claim that they are something in which people share.

32. Strictly speaking, a shared quality is necessary but not sufficient for an essence. So, someone could deny a Hispanic essence while still affirming that some features are universal among Hispanics. As Garcia denies all Hispanics as such share either an essence or even any features, however, we need not attend to the difference.

33. Gracia, *Hispanic/Latino Identity*, 48, 52.

34. Most of the following discussion is adapted with minor changes from Garcia, "How Latina? More Latina?" *American Philosophical Association Newsletter Art Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* 1 (2001): 93–97.

35. Appiah, "Race, Culture, and Identity," 89.

36. Geach to the contrary, if he is, notwithstanding.

37. Lawrence Blum, "Ethnicity, Identity, and Community," in *Justice and Caring: The Search for Common Ground in Education*, ed. Michael S. Katz, Nel Noddings, and Kenneth A. Strike (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999), 129–33; 131, emphasis retained; 129; 132. Several of the problems, discussed below, that appear in Corlett's cultural intensive conception of Latina ethnicity and ethnic identity will, I suspect, also be found in Blum's view, though I will not try to make that case here. So-called "identity ethnics" need not identify with their ethnic group at all, need not even identify themselves as belonging to it. It is odd to think they reveal any type of ethnic identity. For someone to resent discrimination against *Ls* on the grounds that she is herself (a) *L* presupposes her ethnic self-classification. This is not a type or form of ethnicity, let alone of ethnic identity.

38. Corlett, "Latino Identity," 274ff., 278, 294, *passim*.

39. There is a complication here, because in *ibid.*, 35, at note 19, Corlett asserts that being a Latina/o is different things in different places: "Latino identity is contextually contingent. . . . being Latino in East L. A., for instance, is different than one's being Latino in, say, Brazil or Cuba." However, he seems not to think that variation extends to necessary and sufficient conditions. I am not sure how that variation-claim avoids introducing inconsistencies into his account, but I mention the complication for construing his project as specifying what it is to be a Latino. If what it is to be a Latina/o at place P1 is something different from what it is to be a Latina/o at P2, then should not Corlett's inquiry be into "what is it to-be-a-Latino-AT-(some-)place-P? (Rather than into his "what is it to-be-a-Latino?") And then, to be consistent, should not that question also be further relativized to times? Can time be irrelevant here, if place is crucial?

40. Corlett consistently talks of "willful and voluntary" participation in Latina/o culture. This suggests too narrow, too active, and too voluntaristic a conception of culture and cultural involvement. Many of the habits and patterns of response that are thought to constitute someone's culture are matters of a person's beliefs, desires, likes and dislikes, preferences, etc. It is mistaken to think that, when she spontaneously possesses these responsive states as a result of her cultural environment, she is "willfully and voluntarily" participating in her culture. Nevertheless, they may be an important part of her ethnocultural life.

41. The preceding account summarizes the position taken in Corlett, "Latino Identity." Corlett, "Analyzing Latino/a Identity," *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* 1 (2001): 97–104, and *Race, Racism and Reparations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), chaps. 2, 3, revise the ancestral condition necessary (and sufficient) for someone's being Latina/o from her having genealogical ties to past Iberian peoples to her having such ties to other Latinas/os. While he takes refuge in talk of the possibility of "virtuous circles," however, this one is plainly vicious (Corlett, *Race, Racism and Reparations*, 57–58). It requires an infinite past series of Latinas/os if there are any current Latinas/os, since *A* will be Latina/o only if an ancestor *B* was, but *B* will have been a Latina/o, in turn, only if some ancestor *C* was. And so on, ad infinitum. Moreover, this account of being Latina/o can never be usefully applied without a prior account of the same matter, possessing which renders this one unnecessary. For, according to it, in order for me to find out if someone *A* is Latina/o, I need to find out if some ancestor *B* is. However, if I already have some independent way of determining that for *B*, then I should be able to use that method

also for A, rendering Corlett's recursive circular account otiose. If I do not, Corlett's account is still of no help, because it requires me already to know of someone precisely what it is supposed to tell me, i.e., whether s/he is Latina/o.

42. Corlett, "Latino Identity," 285.

43. Corlett, "Analyzing Latino/a Identity"; Corlett, *Race, Racism and Reparations*, 56. Some seem unembarrassed by such association. Thus Alcoff insists, "The Other is internal to the self's substantive content . . . a part of its own identity. . . . It is less true to say that I am dependent on the Other—as if we are clearly distinguishable—than that the Other is part of myself" (*Visible Identities*, 45). But if not every quality is an identity, then why should we think that ethnicity has the needed profile? Of course, it is true that many people attend to this classification of some people by others, but your view of me can hardly be what makes me me. It is just too contingent, too extrinsic to who I am. It is also true that some people invest emotionally in such classification. Still, they must exist and, being necessarily self-identical, have their identity, independently of this emotional investment. And it strains credulity to say one person can (let alone, must) be part of a second. Of course, it will be said that these matters relate to individual identity while the issue is about whether ethnicity is a social (that is, group, collective) identity. However, here I suspect many partisans of ethnic identity want to have it both ways, distinguishing someone's individual identity from her social identities, but then defining the former, as we found in Appiah, as the intersection or union of the latter. (See also Corlett, *Race, Racism, and Reparations*, 54: "My ethnic identity is part of my overall identity.")

44. One might object: Can it not be true that being a Red Sox fan, for example, is being devoted to the Sox, but how much of a fan someone is remains a matter of her having more or fewer insignia merchandise, banners, bumper stickers, etc.? That is mistaken, I think. Being more of a Sox fan is indicated by these things, but only insofar as they are signs of greater devotion, and being more of a Sox fan consists in being more devoted to them, because being a fan consists in being thus devoted.

45. When I presented some of this material at the Center for Social Concerns of the University of Notre Dame, Kenneth Sayre suggested to me that, even if we take ethnicity to be biologically fixed, still, what I call "self-image" might usefully be employed to determine how Latina/o (etc.) someone is. For the general reason just offered against Corlett's account, and because of puzzles in the very idea of degrees of culturally defined ethnicity, I find problematic Sayre's rather different suggestion about how Latina/o S might have a different basis from whether S is Latina/o.

46. Corlett, "Latino Identity," 287, emphasis retained.

47. Note that this problem of identifying and explaining the needed units of measure (of Latina/o hood?) is a different and deeper one from the difficulty that Corlett acknowledges, which is, in effect, that of specifying how many of such units L gains in learning Spanish and how many she loses in changing her name.

48. In "Analyzing Latino/a Identity," Corlett carefully talks of someone's "respect[ing]" her Latina/o culture. This is a kind of answer to the question of what attitude, if any, is needed for being 'more Latina/o,' but it seems to me not to answer my question whether it is necessary or relevant whether the person likes the cultural elements, enjoys the music's sound, the food's taste, etc.

49. Here is a putative counterexample to this claim of mine. Maybe it is not an insult to say "You're not much of a liar or a thief." Still, insofar as you are a liar or a thief, there is some negative imputation in saying you are a poor one. In any case, being a Latina/o is not something presumptively bad, as being a liar or thief is, and being a liar or thief is not something deep in the responsible agent, so the purported counterexample is not relevantly similar.

50. Corlett, "Latino Identity," 285, 288.

51. Ibid., 275, 290.

52. Alcoff, "Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?" in *Reclaiming Identity*, ed. Paula Moya and Michael Hames-Garcia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 313, and *Visible Identities*, 15. The Combahee River Collective's April 1977 "Black Feminist

Statement" is reprinted as chapter 7, in *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement*, ed. Audre Lorde et al. (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 59–66. I do not here dispute Alcoff's interpretation. However, it should be noted that the matter may not be so straightforward. The statement affirms, "Our politics evolve from a healthy love for ourselves, our sisters, and our community, which allows us to struggle and work. This focusing on our own oppression is embodied in the concept of identity politics. We believe that the most profound and potentially the most radical politics come directly out of our own identity, as opposed to working to end somebody else's oppression." That seems to fit Alcoff's interpretation. On the other hand, the statement also insists that "to be recognized as human, levelly human, is enough" (Lorde, *Identity Politics*, 61). That may suggest that the self-described Black, feminist, lesbian authors think the identity most pertinent for purposes of political morality is their identity as human, contrary to the emphasis on race, gender, and sexual orientation characteristic of the way in which identity politics seems to have developed, and the way that Alcoff construes it. The matter is, as I say, complex. For within a few sentences, the Collective's statement proceeds: "our situation as black people necessitates that we have solidarity around the idea of race," an affirmation more typical of the emphases we nowadays think of as identity politics.

53. Alcoff, "Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?" 324, 318.

54. Ibid., 319.

55. Ibid., 334.

56. Ibid., 335. In fairness, I should point out that in *Visible Identities*, chap. 4, Alcoff offers what seems to be a substantially different account of social identity, there conceived as "interpretive horizons" with "embodied dimensions." I confess my inability to follow this combination of Gadamer's jargon with Merleau Ponty's epistemological speculation, and concentrate on Alcoff's earlier, somewhat clearer statements.

57. For more on this matter of ethno-racial perspectives on normative issues, see Garcia, "African-American Perspectives, Cultural Relativism, and Normative Issues," in *African-American Perspectives on Biomedical Ethics*, ed. Harley Flack and Edmund Pellegrino (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 11–66. See also Garcia, "Revisiting African American Perspectives and Medical Ethics," in *African American Bioethics: Culture, Race, and Identity*, ed. Lawrence Prograis and Edmund Pellegrino (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, forthcoming).

58. Alcoff, "Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?" 312.

59. Ibid., 336–37. Similarly, Alcoff's rather carefree adoption of Gooding-Williams's repellent distinction between someone's "being black" and her "being a black person" is outrageous both philosophically and morally. Just what is the ontological, and thus moral, status of those people who are Black but do not undertake "to make choices, to formulate plans, to express concerns, etc., in light of one's identification of oneself as black?" (Alcoff, "Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?" 339, quoting Gooding-Williams). They are, *exhypothesi*, Black. Are they, then, Black nonpersons, Black subpersons? Is this where the politics of identity lead us, back to the racist's rhetorical sewers?

60. Alcoff, "Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?" 340, emphases retained.

61. Ibid., 341.

62. See Lucius Outlaw, *On Race and Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Piper, "Higher-Order Discrimination," 285–309; Appiah, "Race, Culture, and Identity" and *Ethics of Identity*; and Zack, *Thinking about Race*.

63. Thus, I disagree with the categorically hostile reaction—found in, for example, Paul King, "A Matter of Pride," *Emerge* (October 1997): 62, 64, 65—to Randall Kennedy's suggestions that special intraracial feelings of loyalty, affection, pride, and solidarity are morally problematic (Kennedy, "My Race Problem—and Ours," *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1997, 55–65). There, King, a Black businessman responding to Kennedy in a Black news magazine, maintains that "to reject racial kinship is to embrace self-hate." He accuses Kennedy of "promot[ing] . . . mentacide—a cultural suicide, of sorts, a psychological assassination." More interesting is King's quoting the great playwright August Wilson as maintaining that "race matters [because] . . . it is the largest

category of identification . . . the one that most influences your perception of yourself, and . . . the one to which others in the world of men most respond." King's claim that racial kinship feelings are necessary for Black survival would matter if it were clearly true. It is not, however, and the claim itself is ambiguous on whether it is individual Black people who need kinship if we are to survive or Black culture that needs it. However, even if there is such a culture and its perpetuation would be a good thing, two dubious assumptions, we need some explanation of why that hinges of feelings of racial kinship. The claim attributed to Wilson, also unsupported, seems to be without the intended normative import. It may well be that my race does matter psychologically and socially in that I and others make much of it, without it following that either I or they should. It is only the latter, normative thesis that Kennedy's position contradicts. (This is not the place for me to register my own disagreements with Kennedy's position.)

64. Appiah, "Race, Culture, and Identity," 103–4.

65. For more on this conception of morality, see, among other works, Garcia, "The Primacy of the Virtuous," *Philosophic!* 20 (1990): 69–91, and "Interpersonal Virtues: Whose Interests Do They Serve?" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71 (1997): 31–60.

66. It likely will also require revivified study of human nature— informed by the natural and social sciences, but resolutely philosophical— perhaps of the sort recently undertaken by Alasdair MacIntyre. See especially *Dependent Rational Animals* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999).

67. On solidarity as a moral virtue, see Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Encyclical Letter, 1987.

68. This is a recurrent theme in Appiah, "Race, Culture, and Identity," and, even more, in *Ethics of Identity*.

69. This is what Alcoff seems to seek. See Alcoff, "Mestizo Identity," in *American Mixed Race: The Culture of Microdimisity*, edited by Naomi Zack (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995), 257–78; "Who's Afraid of Identity Politics?" and *Visible Identities*.

70. Corlett's view allows that, while someone's choice *by itself* does nothing to determine whether she is a Latina/o, her choice is likely causally to affect *how* Latino/a she is, by prompting her to act (and to get herself to) feel, and think as Latinos/as do. Of course, I suggested above that Corlett's view is implausible conceptually and problematic in its *normative* guidance.

71. Glenn Loury, "Individualism before Multiculturalism," *Public Interest* (Fall 1995): 92–106

72. See, for example, Outlaw, *Race and Philosophy*, "Introduction"; and esp. Kuper, *Culture*, chap. 3, on Geertz; and Appiah, *Ethics of Identity*,

73. I am grateful to Linda Martin Alcoff, Lawrence Blum, J. Angelo Corlett, Sally Haslanger, and others for sharing with me their writings and thinking on these topics, and to audiences at Boston University's Institute on Race and Social Division (IRSD), University of Notre Dame, Boston College, Calvin College, Baylor University, at a session organized by the American Philosophical Association's Committee on Hispanics at the 1999 APA Eastern Division Meeting in Boston, and at the 1999 Ford Fellows Conference in Washington, for discussion of earlier versions of some of this material. Tommy Lott offered helpful commentary on some of this material at the University of San Francisco's 2001 Conference, "Passions of the Color Line," and on that occasion I also profited from Paula Moya's suggestions. Jorge J. E. Gracia read and commented on an entire draft, while Jerome Veith provided research assistance. I appreciate their help and the contributions of an audience at the 2005 State University at Buffalo conference, "Black Ethnicity, Latino Race?" I am also indebted to Rutgers University's Competitive Leave Fellowship Program, to Boston College, and to IRSD for supporting my research on these topics over several years. This essay is dedicated to the memory of Pope John Paul II, whose splendid life ended the weekend of the Buffalo conference. His last book treated some of the issues with which my colleagues and I here wrestle.

Part IV

Mixed Race and Major Figures

9

A Mixed-Race Du Bois

Celena Simpson

PHILOSOPHY AND ME: A LOVE STORY

Some might say that philosophy is not about stories, but is instead about arguments. And while “Philosophy and Me: An Argument” might be a more conventionally philosophical title, the importance of narrative in my philosophical work is too central for my engagement with philosophy to be characterized solely as an argument. While there are reasons, problems, systems, categories, definitions, and traditions in my work, there are also pools of longing, jagged edges of rage and uncertainty, and thousands of other untidy bits of experience that give rise to those more recognizable and recognized aspects of philosophy. Thus, this story is dedicated to those untidy bits—to the history that produced them, and to the self that has been shaped in its struggle with them.

This is a story about mixed race, philosophy, and me. It will inevitably have a number of things in common with other stories by other mixed race philosophers, or other mixed race thinkers more generally, but, since particularity is so important when thinking about and theorizing from mixed race, I will try to emphasize the particularities of my experience.

I found philosophy because I wanted *answers*. I now (of course) realize that this was, in some ways, doomed from the start, but that's where it started. Actually, this story starts with my parents, and their parents. More precisely, this story starts with the mysterious meeting and relationship between a black man and a white woman, from which my father emerged. While I know very little about his life, I do know that he met and had a child with a white woman, my mother. In this single act of creation, I was implicated in a vast web of questions, histories, experiences, ideas, and meanings that I have spent my life endeavoring to understand and forge into a coherent position (one might call this position an “identity”).

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

As I grew up, I developed more particular questions and struggled with more particular problems. Some of these questions and problems are not unique to me, and are widely shared with other people who self-identify as being of mixed racial heritage. These include: the problems faced when trying to identify oneself on any number of documents requiring information regarding race, resembling or not resembling one of one's parents and what that means in one's larger community, appearing in such a way that inspires people to ask the imprecise question "What are you?," and the questions that arise from being in a position to face these problems—"What am I?," "Where do I belong?," "What should I do?," "What are my ethical and political obligations?"

Of course, while I have these general problems and questions in common with others, the ways I encounter them are particular. Growing up, it was always important to my mother that I knew I was mixed race and that it was something to embrace and be proud of. This knowledge and encouragement manifested itself in a strange sense of racial affinity, if not belonging, by which I mean that from a very young age, I had a deep sense of connection to a variety of elements of black culture—music, style, writing, and history. This seemed quite out of place in my overwhelmingly white environment.

Looking back on it now, it seems even more strange to me how preoccupied I was with race as a young person. Since so much of my world was dominated and populated by whiteness, and I had no access to my father or his family, the blackness to which I was somehow bound had that peculiar quality of ancestral memories, or those memories of one's early life one adopts through the reliable testimonies of others. There was a piece of myself that felt just out of reach, something that felt true, but that I couldn't quite recollect (like skidding down the hallway in my socks as a child). More important than hallways, however, this memory was suggested anytime I saw pictures of my father, or looked in the mirror, or recognized that I had questions my friends didn't share. This element of my self, moreover, felt urgent and important, not only because it was valued by my mother, but also because I began to see it as a jewel that was both mine and not mine, but precious nonetheless.

Because my sense of racial identity felt so culled together and only vaguely my own, there were inevitable gaps in that identity, and I turned to a broader history in an effort to fill them. I took almost any and all opportunities throughout my education to research, present, or enact my interests in black culture(s) and race, more generally. In fifth grade, for example, we were asked to write our own stories using the chapter titles from *My Side of the Mountain*. I took the creative freedom and wrote a slave narrative that I titled "My Journey North." As the years went on, if

there was an opportunity to discuss or study race, I was there; my specialization started early.

As I entered high school, the terrain became more dangerous and much more difficult to navigate. Instead of engaging in my more-or-less private fascination with the small jewel that my race had become, I experimented with foregrounding my racial identity in my social life. What began as an attempt to share a sense of wonder and deep value quickly became a test of limits and license. Being one of the only mixed race kids in my cohort, and being so fair that people often identified me as white, I offered my small circle what seemed to them to be the best of both worlds—they could partake in the edgy comedy of race and race relations (because I was their black friend), but they weren't faced with any of the problematic aspects of their behavior, nor did they have to reckon with the recognition of their privilege, otherness per se, or any unsavory aspects of heterogeneity (because I wasn't *really* black). As this trend continued, it became a major source of confusion for me. My early questions about history and black culture—"Where did I come from?," "What am I a part of?," "What is my legacy?"—became, at this stage, questions about the ethics and politics of humor, language, and representation, and hinted at larger questions about identity and responsibility—"Is this okay?," "Can they say that?," "Can I say that?," "How?," "Why?," "In what situations?," "What are the consequences?," "What part am I playing in this?," "Who is responsible for how I'm taken up?"

These larger questions of responsibility came increasingly to the fore when I was in college. I was stronger and clearer about what was acceptable behavior from my friends, and I had a better sense of their motivations, privileges, and blindnesses. In other words, the questions and problems created by humor and sociability became easier to navigate and the instances that brought them up were fewer and farther between. The new questions that plagued me had to do more pointedly with my role and responsibility in the world of diversity initiatives in higher education. These questions began in hushed tones, a vague feeling of unease at the periphery of my excitement; I had been accepted to college and was given a diversity scholarship to support me throughout my undergraduate education. Those same hushed, low tones of confused obligation ebbed and flowed throughout my early college years until I was accepted into the McNair Scholars program,¹ at which point the tones of obligation became much louder and demanded my attention. My desire to both be myself and "do the right thing" required that I face these questions about who I am and what that means as a political and ethical agent. I dedicated my McNair summer research (the first in a long line of similar research projects) to asking myself myriad questions on the topic of the relationship between race and responsibility: "Should I be receiving these benefits on the basis of my race?," "In supporting me, what did these programs mean to support?," "Was I what they were expecting, what

they were paying for?,” “Did I represent a diverse voice?,” “Am I even a person of color?,” “What responsibilities does my privilege confer?,” “What do I have to do to deserve this, to ‘represent’?,” “Who am I representing?,” “What work does that require of me?”

I turned to philosophy for these answers.

(WHY) PHILOSOPHY

I decided that, in order to answer these questions, I needed to understand the nature of racial categories—what they meant, their history, their logic—as well as to gain a much more complete sense of ethical and political responsibility. Philosophy was introduced to me as a way of making sense of the world, and it quickly became a way for me to endeavor to understand and solve the problems I experienced. It was also a space dedicated to the “big questions”—the space for truth-seeking, for structures, definitions, and fundamentals. I was looking for answers to questions that loomed large and complex, trying to solve problems that I was convinced relied on a logic I didn’t understand. I desperately desired to make sense of this world of race and my place in it. Because race in the United States seemed to make sense to everyone around me, I had a deep belief that there was a truth out there, that I needed merely to see the structure, read the book, find the argument that would tell me what I was, and what I was supposed to do as a result. I planned to *discover* my answers. And philosophy, with its clean expansiveness and all the powers of disambiguation, was going to help me.

It was this conviction, and all my (still) unanswered questions that propelled me into graduate study in philosophy. From the beginning, my intention was set, my selfish exploration was singularly focused on race questions that demanded answers. I quickly found, however, that the experiences, problems, and questions arising out of my experience of mixed race were nearly invisible in the world of professional philosophy (to which I had tethered myself). If I was to do what I had intended, I needed a strategy.

The strategy I developed was two-fold: (1) I would combine theories, traditions, problems, and approaches to explore their generative possibilities and (2) I would try to find ways that philosophical language and resources across the discipline could describe, make sense of, or speak to the race questions I faced. With these strategies in hand, I found quick allies in the problem-centered and grounded approach of American Pragmatism, the language of facticity, freedom, and responsibility of existentialism, as well as the keen attentiveness to the structures of experience articulated in phenomenology. I also turned to feminist philosophy, finding that the resources of intersectionality gave me a more expansive way of understanding structures, positions, alliances, politics, and ethics, and

at the same time forced my uncertainty, privilege, and ignorance out into a world of Others.

And then there was of course the dizzying array of arguments, positions, and approaches in the philosophy of race and racism literature. If I was going to find a truth about me, discover the answers I so hoped to find, I was sure that it would be held in these conversations. And in some ways I was right; there were answers and truths aplenty. There were simply too many, however, to provide the stable consensus I assumed was hidden somewhere, the net of shared understanding in which I was hoping to land. According to the experts, I was at once white, black, mixed, entirely without race, delusional, passing, tragic, irresponsible, deeply implicated in anti-black racism, the answer to all racial woes, the future, the past, everywhere, and nowhere.

This terrain turned out to be much rougher than any before, since the stakes were so much higher, the “truth” so varied. My sense of my project as both a philosopher and a mixed race person (since they were so bound up with one another) was the least clear it had ever been. I had a really difficult time processing the arguments in philosophy of race as arguments put forth by people who had experiences, questions, problems, and strategies like mine; because they came from real black scholars, a status I didn’t accept for myself. I privileged these arguments and raised their claims to a space beyond particularity, beyond human fallibility. It became increasingly clear that (unbeknownst to me) I assumed that the “truths” about race, racism, representation, and responsibility were whole and consistent, and that there were people who knew them because they had experiences I hadn’t had. In some ways (though not the ways I thought) this seems to have been “true”. There seem to be bodies of knowledge about the structure of race and racism that come out of experiences to which I don’t have access. It also seems “true” to me now that not all knowledge claims regarding race and racism are “equal,” nor should they be held equally normative or worthy of consideration.² That being said, however, it follows that others with very different experiences do not necessarily hold the truth about *me*. This is not to suggest that others can’t (or don’t) make claims about where I stand in the U.S. racialized taxonomy and what that should entail for my self-understanding and political obligations. It is instead to suggest that there might not be a “truth” about me at all—especially not one that is whole or consistent—and that it could be dangerous to pursue a definition or “truth” about who I am that is grounded in experiences as varied and external to my experience as are black experiences.

Finding my search for answers frustrated and distressing, I began to doubt the possibility of *discovering* any answers at all. I knew a lot more about different attitudes and histories and interpretations of my position, but the way in which I was to embody it was still unclear to me.

DU BOIS AND ME: A MENTORSHIP

As my search for answers and discovery and “truth” became increasingly untenable, I began reaching for other ways of moving forward. Encountering Du Bois provided me with an opportunity to imagine my philosophical and personal work as more profoundly generative and constructive and less dedicated to discovering truths “out there.” Perhaps as important, the more of his work I read, and the more I knew about his life and times, the stronger I felt that the faint glimmer of recognition I experienced was the result of a constellation of experiences, problems, and questions we shared. I began to (re)collect and explore a Du Bois who was keenly aware of his mixed racial heritage and who confronted his political and philosophical projects with this awareness.

One element of this recollection engages Du Bois’s conceptual work on the concept of races, and his definition of race and blackness, in particular. In my account, Du Bois utilized his many histories and definitions of Black folk as a way of creating a history that included him and justified his ability to play the representative political role he desired.

His 1897 address “On the Conservation of Races” and the “Concept of Race” in *Dusk of Dawn* are prime examples of Du Bois’s consistent engagement with and revision of racial categories in such a way that he was not only included, but given an important role.³ Du Bois described his own belonging into existence by creating narratives and histories that gave him a firm place, a belonging, in the racialized world around him. He also endeavored to articulate a set of political obligations entailed by this existence. Significantly for me, Du Bois developed and explored a terrain wherein his mixed racial heritage and his black identity were not mutually exclusive, nor did his mixed racial heritage conflict with his struggle for racial uplift on behalf of people of color. Looking to his example creates room for the development of a more deeply historicized understanding of many contemporary conversations about what things like identity and choice mean and should mean in a racist environment. At least, this is what has happened for me.

Since its beginning, my relationship with philosophy has been very personal, problem-centered, and exploratory. The abstraction and puzzles have never been the pull for me. While I originally came to philosophy expecting answers, I stayed for the expansive resources and deep personal insights. Researching Du Bois has provided me with permission to articulate my experience, even (and perhaps especially) when it is most uncertain, important, and personal. Researching Du Bois made my isolation bloom, gave me access to many borderlands, and helped me learn my limits. There is no longer the search for the net, the resting place. As I stand now, there is only the promise of flux and the particularities that enable both difference and connection. Philosophy gave me the tools to listen and the courage to speak. Doing this very human, fragile work has

given me the painful knowledge that I exist in a professional world with other *people*, that we make mistakes, that theories and arguments sometimes need to be mediated and healed over in order to be productive. Through my exploration into what it meant to be a mixed race person in the world, philosophy has taught me a lot about being a person, though it often did so in the space between the ideas, books, traditions, practitioners, and conversations—a space so vast and full of (messy) life, space in which I can now understand myself more clearly, a space I can now embrace as my own.

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NOTES

1. The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, otherwise referred to as the McNair Scholars Program, is a grant-funded program to help prepare undergraduate students for graduate study. The primary goal of the program is to encourage students from "disadvantaged" backgrounds or backgrounds underrepresented in graduate study to pursue advanced degree programs, thus increasing the number of such students in higher education.

2. Example: My students' claims that "United States' society is post-racial and racism no longer exists" does not hold the same weight of the counterclaims of the enduring existence of racism from people of color.

3. W. E. B. Du Bois, "Concept of Race," in *Dusk of Dawn; an Essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), and W. E. B. Du Bois and Philip Sheldon Foner, "Conservation of Races," in *W.E.B. Du Bois Speaks: Speeches and Addresses, 1890–1919* (New York: Pathfinder, 1970).

10

German Chocolate

Why Philosophy Is So Personal¹

Timothy J. Golden

"My father was a white man."

—Frederick Douglass²

"I am . . . the truth."³

—Holy Bible

NATURE OF THE INQUIRY

Since it is apropos for a philosopher to begin an essay with a question, I begin this essay by asking the following: why are my philosophical interests so diverse? In this chapter, I provide an answer to this question in claiming that my hermeneutic situation is always already concerned with my diverse mixed race and multi-religious background, resulting in philosophical interests that thoroughly reflect that same diverse background. The chapter is titled "German Chocolate" because the components of both my racial identity and my philosophical work are partly German and partly African-American. My mixed race background also contributes to my multi-religious background, which, although secondary to my principal concern with my mixed race identity throughout this chapter, is also thoroughly reflected in my academic work.

This chapter presents a reading of my own philosophical research with certain aspects of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as set forth in *Truth and Method*. Specifically, I argue that my mixed race and multi-religious background together constitute my "historically effected consciousness" (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*) as Gadamer discusses this notion in *Truth and Method*. I conclude that, viewed in light of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, my own work seeks understanding rather than truth. My attempt to understand philosophical texts is a fusion of the horizon of my mixed race and multi-religious background that interacts with the horizon of the philosophical text itself to form a fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*) that is, in turn, a "truth" of sorts: the

kind of truth that demands a perpetual struggle for justice between the interpreter and the text rather than some sort of certainty about what “truth” really is in itself. I thus attempt to reveal the ethical dimension of my research as an epistemic humility in my approach to texts that fundamentally destabilizes the notion of a fixed, unitary subject with unmediated access to original meaning. Understanding that the projects of textual interpretation and self-interpretation are inseparable, I strive for the higher truth and for the higher virtue of hermeneutic and epistemic justice, and my research is thus geared toward the critique and destabilization of oppressive epistemic and hermeneutic regimes.

The next section of this chapter is autobiographical in nature, as it is a more thorough explication of my mixed race background, and the ways in which my philosophical work reflects both my mixed race and my multi-religious backgrounds. Again, my theological and religious identity, although secondary to my mixed racial identity, is an indirect yet significant result of my mixed race background. I also grapple with a nagging but nevertheless important problem of self-identification as African-American as an act of resistance to whiteness, which not only wants to exclude me from being white because of my phenotypical presentation, but also wants to prevent me from self-identifying as black because of my mixed race background. What I want to accomplish in this section is to provide insight into how my project of self-interpretation is a response to the insidious nature of whiteness and its attendant existential conundrums. It is against the outrageous demands of whiteness and in the face of existential absurdity, despair, and paradox that I freely choose to identify as African-American without denying my white mother—a woman whose goodness toward me and love for me is entirely independent from—and thoroughly at odds with—whiteness itself.

The section after that is an analysis of Gadamer’s notion of the “historically affected consciousness.” Prior to discussing this concept, however, I briefly survey some of the ways that Western philosophy has conceived of truth. This discussion both situates Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics in the context of the notion of “truth” in Western philosophy and it also lays the foundation for an account of my philosophical research in light of Gadamer’s “historically affected consciousness,” which composes the remaining sections of the chapter.

After the section on Gadamer, I discuss both the “German” and the “Chocolate” of my mixed race identity, and the connections between it and my philosophical interests. In this section, I detail some of my philosophical work as it relates to Kant, Heidegger, and African-American thought, especially Frederick Douglass. Specifically, I engage my book, *Subjectivity, Transcendence, and the Problem of Onto-Theology*,⁴ where I appropriate Heidegger’s and Kant’s critiques of “onto-theology,” and where I read onto-theology as a breeding ground for Christian theological justifications of oppressive social and political regimes such as

American chattel slavery. Here, and throughout each subsequent section of the chapter, I show how the horizons of my mixed race background merge with the horizons of both German and African-American philosophical texts, avoiding both the classical mode of hermeneutics as an objective “truth” and also a sense of universal history where “Hegel’s whole philosophy of mind claims to achieve the total fusion of history with the present.”⁵

I next turn to an engagement with Douglass and Levinas, as discussed in my book, *Frederick Douglass and the Philosophy of Religion*.⁶ My mixed race background takes a quasi-religious turn here, as it is discussed in terms of my Jewish and my African-American ancestry. The sixth section of the chapter details my African American and Protestant background. Here, I discuss my “chocolate” side of my research from my essay “From Logos to Sarx: Black Philosophy and the Philosophy of Religion”⁷ in relation to the tradition of protest in the Christian tradition that pre-dates Luther and hearkens back to the medieval iconoclast Marsilius of Padua. In this section, I take Douglass and Kierkegaard to be representatives of the black prophetic tradition, and the Protestant tradition, respectively. The commonalities between these traditions are emphasized, as are some of the similarities between Douglass and Kierkegaard from my book chapter, “Morality, Art, and the Self: Existentialism in Frederick Douglass and Søren Kierkegaard.”⁸

The final substantive section of the chapter details my hermeneutical situation in terms of my African-American and Catholic background in two ways. First, I discuss what I think are the shortcomings of Kristen Deede Johnson’s bold and creative—but ultimately, in my view, unsuccessful—proposal for an Augustinian theological solution to the problem of pluralism in Western democracy. And second, I discuss how my commitment to Derrick Bell’s racial realism is in tension with but balances the notion of a universal human brotherhood as articulated in Augustine and Douglass.

I then conclude.

MY MIXED RACE BACKGROUND

My father was an African-American Baptist from Southern Virginia, my mother was German and Irish-Catholic and was raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, my paternal great grandfather was a Jew, I was raised Catholic, and in my young adulthood, I converted to Seventh-Day Adventism, a Protestant sect which emerged from the second great religious awakening in the nineteenth century. All of these racial and religious identities are thus instantiated in me, in my “self.” Thus held together in a chaotic bundle of tensions and contradictions, these identities form my hermeneutic “situation,” or my “horizon” which Gadamer defines as

"the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point."⁹ When engaged in the reading of philosophical texts, my horizon merges with that of the text to form a *Horizontverschmelzung* that is my philosophical research. Both prior to and contemporaneous with my interpretation of philosophical texts, however, is my own project of self-interpretation. Text and self, which history separates in classical hermeneutics, are united through the *Horizontverschmelzung* of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. Accordingly, before I address my interpretation of the text, it is important to address my interpretation of myself. In this regard, I first address an existential problem related to my self-identification/interpretation as African-American. That problem is the problem of whiteness.

Self-Identification and the Problem of Whiteness

I self-identify as African-American. One may consider this self-identification strange, given that although I had an African-American father, I also had a white mother, whose ethnic background was both German and Irish. Many people—mostly whites, some blacks—have asked me how I can legitimately identify as African-American when I am bi-racial. "Aren't you excluding your mother from your identity?" people will ask. My response to this question is that the question itself is problematic, for it is fraught with the problem of whiteness in that the question of excluding my white mother from my self-identification is a manifestation of white anxiety in the face of my existential assertiveness as an act of resistance to whiteness. I detail this existential conundrum and my response to it below. Before proceeding, however, it is important to address a conceptual issue concerning the term "whiteness," and my mother's racial status as a "white" person.

My white mother and whiteness are distinct. My self-identification as African-American is an act of resistance not against my white mother, but rather is an act of resistance against whiteness itself. According to George Yancy, "Whiteness is not a metaphysical substantive. Rather, whiteness is a *relationally lived* phenomenon.¹⁰ In contrast, my mother was a living, breathing human being with her own distinct ontological status apart from the social ontology of whiteness. Being a "relationally lived phenomenon," as Yancy puts it, my mother simply chose not to relate to others through the mode of whiteness with all of its attendant evils. My mother was thus not only distinct from whiteness, but her "relationally lived" experience with respect to me, my father, and my siblings was one which eschewed whiteness altogether. Therefore, to self-identify as African-American is not to deny my white mother. My mother did not love and care for me because of whiteness. No. She was simply a good and loving white person. So insofar as my white mother and whiteness

are distinct, I can justifiably and lovingly embrace my white mother while vigilantly resisting whiteness.

I now turn to the existential conundrum of whiteness and my response to it. When someone asks, “Aren’t you excluding your mother from your identity?” this question reflects the pernicious social ontology of whiteness as what George Yancy has called the “transcendental norm.” Borrowing this phraseology from Kant, who argues that there are certain a priori conditions for the possibility of experience, Yancy points out that whiteness becomes the condition for the possibility of human experience such that whites define others as non-white (and thus less human), yet somehow escape definition themselves.¹¹ According to Yancy, “[T]o say that whiteness is deemed the transcendental norm is to say that whiteness takes itself to be the same across a field of difference. Indeed, it determines what is deemed different without itself being defined by that system of difference.”¹² Whiteness thus always excludes and defines, but nothing outside of it can ever exclude or define it. Whiteness is always engaged in action because it is not a mere concept, but rather is a “relationally lived phenomenon.”¹³ That I, one who has a white mother and a black father, would identify myself as an African-American runs counter to what whiteness demands that I do: reject my blackness by over-emphasizing the white in my mixed race background.¹⁴ But if I take that course of action, my phenotypical presentation causes whites to remind me—rather forcefully I might add—that I am black.¹⁵ Here lies the dilemma: whites want to exclude blacks from whiteness, but do not want whites excluded from my own black narrative of self-identification. This makes those who are beholden to whiteness as the transcendental norm uncomfortable. Thus it is that the whites and the blacks who question my self-identification as African-American have allowed whiteness to make them anxious and insecure. They do not wish for whiteness to be excluded.

Consider the profound existential dilemma that whiteness creates in my situation. The “concern” that whiteness exhibits for the exclusion of my white mother from my narrative of self-identification reflects poorly on the appreciation for the ways in which my phenotypical presentation as African-American excludes me from my white identity, generating absurdity, despair, and paradox. *Whiteness wants me to be neither white nor black.* Indeed, if whiteness had its way, I would arguably exist in an absurd and bizarre “zone of non-being” much worse than that of the Fanonian sort. I would be the prototypical “tragic mulatto,” and experience the absurdity of being a person who is not a person.

To illustrate the powerful effects of whiteness on mixed-race persons such as myself, I turn to William Wells Brown’s novel *Clootie; or, The President’s Daughter*. My use of fictional narrative in this manner is well suited to expose the pernicious effects of whiteness, for, as Yancy has pointed out, because whiteness is a “relationally lived phenomenon,”

narrative has a powerful capacity to communicate lived and imaginative dimensions of reality. This approach advances the importance of narrative as a dynamic structure through which we weave and re-weave the particulars of lived experience into the philosophical discourse without losing either imaginative power or theoretical rigor.¹⁶

So it is that later in *Black Bodies, White Gazes* Yancy devotes an entire chapter to the fictional character Pecola Breedlove from Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* in order to expose the effects of an internalized aesthetic dimension of whiteness that makes Pecola Breedlove desire blue eyes to such a degree that she measures "herself by the bright eyes and white pure innocence of Shirley Temple."¹⁷ I employ Yancy's strategy of exposing the powers of whiteness through fictional narrative here to show how whiteness creates an existential conundrum of absurdity, despair, and paradox for me as a mixed race person.

Clotel, the central character in William Wells Brown's novel that bears her name, is the mulatto child of President Thomas Jefferson and his mulatto mistress named Currer. The novel opens with the sale of Clotel, her sister Althesa, and her mother sold at a slave auction.¹⁸ Their family was thus entirely unacceptable to white society. Clotel could not be white. A white man named Horatio Green purchases her at the auction for fifteen hundred dollars. Clotel soon finds herself in love with Horatio, even having a child, Mary. Since miscegenation was forbidden, Horatio and Clotel never married, and when Horatio decides to run for public office, he leaves Clotel and Mary and marries Gertrude, a white woman. Gertrude eventually discovers that Clotel and Horatio were lovers and that Mary is their daughter. In anger, Gertrude demands that Clotel be sold into slavery, and takes Mary as a house slave. After Clotel is sold into slavery, she escapes with another slave named William. William flees to Canada, but Clotel is determined to reunite with her daughter, Mary, so she returns to Virginia in search of her. Clotel is captured by slave catchers and before she is sold, she escapes and is cornered. She commits suicide by flinging herself into the Potomac River.

As a mixed race person, Clotel is still considered black and is bought and sold as chattel. White society certainly does not accept her, so whiteness tells her that she is chattel. She was thus "black" and considered a piece of property. She was either white, or she was black and considered an object. As one having "black blood," Clotel could not be white. She was therefore black and considered an object. But objects do not form loving relationships and have children, as did Clotel. So she was an object, but when she was an object, she felt human emotions, yet whiteness still does not consider her to be human. Clotel was thus akin to a table or a chair that has a full range of emotions, needs, and desires. To say that Clotel felt love for her child, Mary, is thus to say that "the table loves Mary." As absurd as this is, this is where whiteness has led Clotel: she is

trapped in an absurd social reality that makes her an object with feelings. She was simultaneously human and non-human, having to endure the worst of existential paradox and conundrum.

Such existential absurdity and paradox lead Clotel to experience what Anti-Climacus referred to as the “sickness unto death.”¹⁹ The white “Christians” who bought and sold Clotel as chattel could not have a sickness unto death because of their belief in the resurrection. Anti-Climacus writes: “Christianly understood, death itself is a passing unto life. Thus, from a Christian point of view, no earthly, physical sickness is the sickness unto death, for death is indeed the end of the sickness, but death is not the end.”²⁰ But the sickness unto death, which is despair, is different: “Literally speaking, there is not the slightest possibility that anyone will die from this sickness or that it will end in physical death. On the contrary the torment of despair is precisely this inability to die.” Anti-Climacus continues, “When death is the greatest danger, we hope for life; but when we learn to know the even greater danger, we hope for death. When the danger is so great that death becomes the hope, then despair is the hopelessness of not even being able to die.”²¹ Clotel experienced the sickness unto death as she was unable to escape from despair because her mixed race identity would always be with her. As the ultimate act of resistance, Clotel committed suicide by jumping into the Potomac River to avoid being sold into slavery. The color-blind abstraction “human” did her no good in a world in which she had to live as black and thus as a slave. Here, Clotel exhibits the behavior of one who, like Camus, understands that the most serious philosophical question is found neither the conceptual analysis of race, nor that of theoretical, formal abstractions such as color-blindness, both of which would lead her to the experience-denying conclusion that she is, analytically speaking, “human.” Instead, the crucial question for Clotel was the existential question that Camus articulated in *The Myth of Sisyphus*: whether or not she could continue to live in an absurd world devoid of meaning. Tragically, she decided that she could not.

I cannot abandon my mixed race identity any easier than could Clotel. In many ways, I am subject to the same sorts of existential dilemmas as she was. My mixed race background is unchangeable and thus I cannot avoid the absurdity, paradox, and despair that whiteness thrusts upon me by on one hand rejecting me, while on the other hand demanding that I embrace its corrupt imperative to acknowledge it by denying my African-American identity. In the face of these existential dilemmas, I strive for a Douglassonian sort of existential self-determination in the face of a whiteness-grounded epistemic and ontological framework of oppression that outrageously thrusts an identity upon me, resulting in the absurdity, despair, and paradox of being a mixed race (that is, black-white) person. My assertion of existential self-determination is an act of resistance as Douglass’s was in his fight with Covey: in a Clotel-like life

and death struggle for personal meaning and self-determination, I have made a conscious choice to freely determine my identity, rather than to allow something outside of it to do so. In Sartrean terms, I've allowed my existence to precede both the essence of and the demands of whiteness. This will, of course, be the source of some white anxiety, as manifested in the question about whether my self-identification as African-American somehow denies my white mother.

An interlocutor may argue that I have a third option, which is to choose neither white nor black, but simply to be "human." This option is not viable, however, as it would force me into a process of abstract generalization to consider myself "human," which means that I must deny my lived experience that tells me that my humanity is lived as black. Again, as it was for Clotel, so it is for me: abstraction and generalization that lead me to the concept of "human" may make for interesting philosophical inquiry, but on the level of lived-experience, it does not help me deal with the more serious philosophical question of whether or not life is worth living in an anti-black racist world. But my self-identification as African-American does precisely that: it provides me with an existential and phenomenological home from which I can interpret myself and my experience as meaningful in an absurd world of anti-black racism.

I wish that those who asked me this question, "Aren't you excluding your mother when you identify as African-American?" could have seen the look on my mother's face as she described in agonizing detail the way that her brother disowned her when she married my father, when she described how she would take my older brothers and sisters who were, at the time, small children to her mother's neighborhood in the white working class Frankford section of Philadelphia, and when the car had to be parked around the corner and her own phenotypically black children had to duck in the car to stay out of sight. For if the neighbors who knew my grandmother knew that she had black grandchildren, they would have made her life quite difficult. Understandably, my grandmother, because she had to live in that neighborhood, was concerned about this, and, perhaps overwhelmed by her permanent residence in a racist community, recommended that her phenotypically black grandchildren hide themselves not only for the sake of their safety, but also for her own. I wish that those who asked me if I am excluding my mother from my identity could have spoken to her so that she could tell them that the worst perpetrators of exclusion were indeed whites and not blacks. I wish that they could have seen the joyful sadness that marked her countenance as she on one hand was labeled a pariah by whites, and was accepted by blacks. My mother was able to make her home in the black community. She raised her children there. They were safe from physical harm within the black community, something that she knew would not be the case in a white neighborhood. So what bothers me about the question "Aren't you excluding your mother when you identify yourself as African-

American?" is that it shows a certain white paranoia at the prospect of being excluded, while whites have practiced (in the form of Jim Crow), and continue to practice (in the form of mass incarceration and gentrification of black neighborhoods) the most virulent forms of social, political, and cultural exclusion toward African-Americans.

To summarize, whiteness as what Yancy calls the "transcendental norm" creates the following existential dilemma: on one hand, whiteness excludes me, yet it is unacceptable for me, as a mixed race person who phenotypically presents as an African-American to claim African-American as his identity, because whiteness makes whites—and some blacks—nervous about being excluded. I am thus, like Clotel, thrust into an absurd world where I choose to identify as African-American as an act of self-determination and as an act of resistance to the hubris-laden, outrageous demands of whiteness.

Racially, Philosophically, and Theologically Mixed

Aside from the sheer amount of racial and religious diversity, what makes my racial and religious identity of philosophical interest to me is that there are four dimensions of my racial identity that are fraught with historical conflict between them, and the fifth dimension of my racial identity stands outside of the other four as a part of me that is always already excluded. Consider the tensions between German and Jew and between Catholic and Protestant. Although German and Jew, and Catholic and Protestant have been enemies, all four have to some degree benefitted from whiteness and have thus, in varying ways, been at odds with African-Americans. So it is that my racial identity as a black person trumps the whiteness of German, Jew, Catholic, and Protestant. None of the tensions that hold together my mixed-race, and multi-religious identity are ever resolved. And I prefer it to be that way, since a resolution of any of these tensions means that I have oversimplified not only my philosophical work, but also that I have oversimplified myself. And as a philosopher, such an oversimplification is unacceptable. Having considered my task of self-interpretation, I now turn to the groundwork for my interpretation of philosophical texts, which I find in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as discussed in *Truth and Method*.

GADAMER, "TRUTH," AND THE "HISTORICALLY EFFECTED CONSCIOUSNESS"

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is important because it re-thinks the notion of truth itself, which is at the heart Western philosophy. Indeed, it is in *Truth and Method*, where philosophical hermeneutics receives its fullest treatment, and where Gadamer distinguishes himself as one of the most significant philosophers of the twentieth century. Gad-

amer's work is so consequential because it took seriously the notion that interpretation and meaning cannot be divorced from one's experience. To fully appreciate exactly what Gadamer is doing in *Truth and Method* that is pertinent to my mixed race background, I will recount a few of the conceptions of truth throughout Western philosophy. Since space does not allow for an exhaustive treatment of the concept of truth in Western philosophy, the following examples are not intended in any way to be exhaustive. I simply want to lay the foundation for my discussion of his notion of the "historically effected consciousness," which is the backdrop against which I interpret my philosophical research in relation to my mixed race background.

Thales gets credit for being the first philosopher because he makes a subtle yet discernible turn away from the *mythos* of Homer and Hesiod and toward the *logos* of a rational, naturalistic reductionism. Although he adhered to Greek paganism (e.g., his statement that "anything that moves is full of gods"), his claim that "All is water" secures his place as the "founder" of Western philosophy. Thales introduces a notion of truth that is fundamentally external. Philosophical truth is "objective"; it becomes about what is "out there" in the world, and less about what is either "within" or connected to people. After Thales, philosophers continued to separate human beings from the world. Philosophy thus became about the love of wisdom conceived of as a search for external "truth," a search for an objective reality that somehow corresponds to my ideas about a world that is supposedly independent of the self. To understand this "truth," to secure it, to grasp and comprehend it, is the task of Western philosophy. This notion of truth as a correspondence to being, or to what is actually "out there" in "the world" reaches its apex in the failed project of logical positivism and its verificationist theory of meaning, which articulated a conception of philosophy that was coterminous with the "objectivity" of the natural sciences. Before Quine's indeterminacy of translation thesis and Derrida's *differance* reminded us that language cannot be divorced from experience, Kierkegaard warned of the dangers of such extreme objectivity. Kierkegaard thus used his pseudonym, Johannes Climacus, to refer to human existence as "unscientific."²² Kierkegaard's aesthetic and literary sensibilities would lead him to proclaim that "truth is subjectivity," meaning that as it relates to certain matters such as human existence, one ought not evaluate truth by objective measures, but rather by the extent of one's passionate inward relation to what one purports to believe. Whereas scientific method aims to take oneself out of the process of experimentation to avoid biases and prejudices, certain practices—like Christianity, for Kierkegaard—demand that one *passionately put oneself into them*. This is what it means for one to be "true" to this or to that thing. Presaging what we now call the "postmodern," Kierkegaard moves us away from the now discredited canard that the sum total of all truth is based solely on a correspondence of thought and

being, and moves us *toward* the notion that there are multiple truths at work in human experience. Now, understanding that a raw empiricist conception of truth is one sort of truth is, of course, important. Facts matter. But the Kierkegaardian legacy is that such a conception of truth is not the only one. The appeal of having another standard of truth is, in part, that it calls into question the Cartesian notion of a fixed, stable, and unitary subject with immediate access to meaning of a world that is “out there” beyond human beings through the use of reason. The Cartesian subject, having successfully withdrawn from all manner of lived experience, is now free to engage in thought experiments using hyperbolic doubt so that it can arrive at mathematical and scientific “truths” that are the key to understanding the world. To believe that there is such a subject is, according to some segments of twentieth century European thought, a tragic oversimplification that affects the very core of how we understand not only the world but ourselves as well, and that can have some devastating moral, social, and political consequences.

Enter Hans Georg Gadamer, whose *magnum opus*, *Truth and Method*, aims, in part, to dispel the notion that one can interpret a text free from all prejudice and without regard for one’s own “hermeneutical situation.” According to Gadamer, each time one approaches a text to interpret it, one does so with one’s own pre-established interpretive framework, therefore any interpretation that we glean from the text is one that is always already colored by our own “historically affected consciousness.” To think that we can avoid such a consciousness to achieve an “objective” interpretation of a text is a serious mistake. The notion of enlightenment objectivity, absorbed into the classical hermeneutics of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, incorporates this error, resulting in textual interpretations that evince what Gadamer calls a “prejudice against prejudice.” The enlightenment is thus to blame, at least in part, for our interpretive hubris that makes us think that we can disregard ourselves when interpreting a text to see what the author “really meant.” For Gadamer, the “truth” and the “method” which we use to seek it are fundamentally opposed to one another.

According to Gadamer, “The main deficiency in theory of experience hitherto—and this includes Dilthey himself—is that it is entirely oriented toward science and hence takes no account of the inner historicity of experience.”²³ He continues: “The aim of science is so to objectify experience that it no longer contains any historical element. Scientific experiment does this by its methodological procedure.”²⁴ What Gadamer calls “the human sciences” does the same thing and thus “just as in the natural sciences experiments must be verifiable, so also must the whole process be capable of being checked in the human sciences also. Hence there can be no place for the historicity of experience in science.”²⁵ Viewing the human sciences in this way led “Schleiermacher and, following him, nineteenth-century science” to “conceive the task of hermeneutics in a

way that is formally universal. They were able to harmonize it with the natural sciences' ideal of objectivity, but only by ignoring the concretion of historical consciousness in hermeneutical theory."²⁶ For Gadamer, it was "Heidegger's description and existential grounding of the hermeneutic circle" that marked "a decisive turning point."²⁷ Classical hermeneutics understood that texts had an inner-circularity to them that ended once one "perfectly understood" the text. Heidegger understands, however, in a way that classical hermeneutics does not, the importance of *entering* the circularity of interpretation with the right approach as opposed to *leaving* the text with a singular "correct" interpretation. Since Heidegger's hermeneutics is ontological in nature, it is concerned with the nature of Dasein's being-in-the-world, which implies that one can never separate oneself from the meaning of a text just as one cannot achieve a separation from the "world." Instead of hermeneutics being about one's interpretation of a text that is viewed as separate and distinct from the individual, it is Dasein's connection to the text as a result of its being-in-the-world that makes the task of textual interpretation a task of self-interpretation. So it is that Gadamer writes of Heidegger that he "describes the circle in such a way that the understanding of the text remains permanently determined by the anticipatory movement of fore-understanding. The circle of whole and part is not dissolved in perfect understanding but, on the contrary, is most fully realized."²⁸ What is important for Heidegger is not that one ever leave the circle with some sort of "original understanding" of the text, but rather that one enter the circle with their prejudices in mind. For only in acknowledging our pre-interpretive prejudices can we "clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place."²⁹ It is important to note that the conditions of the understanding do not indicate some sort of hermeneutic method or procedure, such that one can "separate in advance the productive prejudices that enable understanding from the prejudices that hinder it and lead to misunderstandings."³⁰ For Gadamer, "The prejudices and fore-meanings that occupy the interpreter's consciousness are not at his free disposal."³¹ Our hermeneutical situation is thus not within our control.

Gadamer defines "historically-effected consciousness" (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*) in the context of a broader discussion of what he takes to be the destructive influence of scientific method on the hermeneutic enterprise. He points out that "we should learn to understand ourselves better and recognize that in all understanding, whether we are expressly aware of it or not, the efficacy of history is at work."³² He goes on to argue that knowledge is actually deformed if there is a "naïve faith in scientific method" that "denies the existence of effective history."³³ To be conscious of being affected by one's history is to be conscious of one's "hermeneutical situation."³⁴ And because one is already in a hermeneutical situation rather than standing outside of it, one is "unable to have any objective knowledge of it."³⁵ So, for Gadamer, "To acquire an awareness

of a situation is, however, always a task of peculiar difficulty.”³⁶ To understand our hermeneutical situation or “throwing light on” our hermeneutical situation is, according to Gadamer, “a task that is never entirely finished.”³⁷ What makes this task unending is that a consciousness of one’s nature as a historical being, that is, consciousness of oneself as a being immersed in a concrete hermeneutical situation demands a complete discovery within subjectivity of all of the things which determine who and what we are. In this regard, Gadamer claims philosophical hermeneutics has as its task “to retrace the path of Hegel’s phenomenology of mind until we discover in all that is subjective the substantiality that determines it.”³⁸ With my mixed race background and Gadamer’s notions of “horizon,” “situation,” and the “historically effected consciousness” in mind, I now turn to the place where my horizon meets the horizons of the texts that I engage in my philosophical work to make the *Horizontverschmelzung* more explicit.

GERMAN CHOCOLATE: DOUGLASS, KANT, AND HEIDEGGER

Viewed against the backdrop of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics, my own “historically effected consciousness” is a consciousness that is partly German, and partly African-American, or what I call “German Chocolate.” This part of my mixed-race background is most prominent in my book, *Subjectivity, Transcendence, and the Problem of Onto-Theology*.³⁹ In this book, my mixed race background informs my “historically affected consciousness” in that Kant, Heidegger, and Husserl form a trilogy of German philosophers that reflect my German background. And Frederick Douglass reflects my African-American (or “Chocolate”) background.

On the German side, Kant, Heidegger, and Husserl all provide compelling critiques of hyper-abstraction. Kant and Heidegger provide critiques of the abstractions of rational theology, and Husserl provides a powerful critique of an instrumental rationality which surfaces in scientific investigation that has also been used in the philosophy of religion, especially in theodicy. And on the Chocolate side, abstraction has, generally speaking, never been kind to African-Americans. Whether it is the pernicious thought experiments of Hobbes, Locke, or Rawls in political philosophy,⁴⁰ or Alvin Plantinga’s incessant theorizing about the attributes of God and theodicy in the philosophy of religion, abstraction typically results in such a high degree of obfuscation that meaningful political or moral concerns of African-Americans are ignored.⁴¹ Indeed, much of my scholarship is focused on the dangers of abstraction for African-Americans as it relates to philosophy of religion. Since African-Americans have consistently been on the receiving end of oppression at the hands of such hyper-rational theoretical abstractions in theology, the

work of Kant, Heidegger, and Husserl has resonance with African-American philosophical thought. What I want to show in my work is that while the “German” side of my mixed race background provides that theoretical critique, the “Chocolate” side of my mixed race background does that and more: it not only provides theoretical critique, but also existential and phenomenological insights into lived experience, and a praxis of resistance to oppression. I now want to consider each philosopher of the “German Chocolate” quartet in turn, with continual reference to the way that Douglass’s philosophical work—and his life—show that he lived through the dangers of rationality which prompted each of the German critiques of reason.

Kant

Kant’s critical philosophy, with its twin aims of vindicating Newtonian physics while finding a place for moral accountability and religious faith has profound implications for subjectivity in the areas of moral agency, freedom, and responsibility. For Kant, our epistemic limitations provide a narrow conception of what counts as knowledge, and the traditional subjects of speculative metaphysics such as God, freedom, and the nature of the soul cannot be matters of objective knowledge. Since the subjects of traditional speculative metaphysics are not actual objects of knowledge, Kant points out that rather than abandon them, or “consign them to the flames,” as Hume’s dogmatic skepticism would have us to, we must consider rational psychology, rational cosmology, and rational theology as matters of practical and moral concern. In other words, the proper place for such beliefs is in humanity’s practical, rather than its theoretical dimension, which means that Kant’s moral subject is autonomous (capable of acting freely and independent of natural causes), and morally responsible. At the core of Kant’s critical philosophy is the desire to reconcile freedom with nature, and theology with science, all while ensuring that human beings have the dignity needed to restore humanity’s place within the center of earthly life, despite the Copernican insight which discredited the false Aristotelian/Scholastic notion that the earth—and hence human beings—were at the center of the universe. Significantly, Kant diagnoses human beings as being in a peculiar epistemic dilemma: on one hand, human beings are rational creatures that will consistently demand answers to the most pressing metaphysical questions, yet on the other hand, the same human nature that prompts us to ask such questions is the same human nature that limits us in our ability to answer the questions that the other part of our human nature is asking in the first place.⁴² This insight is arguably at the core of the motivation for the critical philosophy itself, because Kant is trying to settle the dilemma so that the questions of speculative metaphysics on God, freedom, and the nature of the soul are still considered legitimate, but are given a practical

rather than a theoretical foundation. Moreover, Kant simultaneously legitimates Newtonian physics, placing it squarely within the realm of synthetic a priori judgments, or what Kant calls “the land of truth.” Kant tries to accomplish this because, in his view, it would be absurd to give morality a theoretical foundation and to give science a practical foundation. For Kant, although a belief in God must be epistemologically shunned, that same belief is morally necessary.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR), Kant aims squarely at rational theology, and makes his celebrated claim that “existence is not a predicate,” thus attempting to dismantle Anselm’s ontological argument for God’s existence. Once the ontological argument fails, says Kant, the cosmological and teleological arguments must also fail because they covertly depend upon the existence of a perfect being for their validity. And, Kant argues, if the ontological argument cannot prove the existence of such a perfect being, then neither the cosmological nor the teleological arguments can pass logical muster. Thus it is that Kant became known as “The Great Destroyer.” But, as Kant was eager to warn us time and again, we ought not to view the critical philosophy as only destructive. To the contrary, we ought to see the critical philosophy as an approach advances practical, moral interests of speculative metaphysics, rather than seeking its demise. This is why one is mistaken if one takes the CPR as the end of the story concerning Kant and his relationship with speculative metaphysics. It is in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (CPrR) that Kant re-instates the belief in God on a practical and moral foundation: a belief in God, while not epistemologically worthwhile, is morally useful. Its moral use emanates from the compelling need for human beings to see their moral trials and tribulations as being somehow worthwhile. Since the world is so corrupt that moral persons seem to suffer and immoral persons seem to prosper, believing in a God who can precisely apportion moral desert according to one’s conduct, Kant argues, is essential in order for our moral experience to make sense. Significantly, however, our moral desert must not be the motive for our conduct. Instead, our conduct must be motivated solely by our duty to the moral law. One’s duty to the moral law has primacy over traditional Christian religious beliefs, which can, according to Kant, easily be corrupted. Kant points out, however, that one’s duty to the moral law leads to the formation of an ethical community—a church—where people are not moral because they attend church, but rather people attend church because they are moral. Kant is concerned here with authenticity in moral and religious practice. Kant’s ecclesiology attempts to prevent the corruption of a church where people reduce their Christianity to mere objective indicia such as church attendance, public prayer, quoting Scripture, singing hymns, etc. As I will argue below, the sort of corrupt religious community that Kant eschewed as morally worthless was the community in which Frederick Douglass lived as a slave.

Douglass

Douglass lived in a community in which many church-going “Christians” openly participated in the slave trade. Indeed this was the slaveholding “Christian” community that met in church on Sunday while Madison Washington, a slave, lamented his condition alone in a field outside of the church walls, as depicted in Douglass’s novella, the *Heroic Slave*.⁴³ This was the community of people who made Douglass wish that if he was ever returned to slavery, he would rather be the property of a non-believer than a Christian because he found that Christians were worse than their non-Christian counterparts in that they found biblical and theological sanction for their inhumane treatment of slaves. In his autobiographical narrative, Douglass writes that after leaving the bondage of Mr. Covey, he went into the bondage of Mr. Freeland. Douglass writes of Mr. Freeland that “I must do him justice to say, that he was exceedingly free from those degrading vices to which Mr. Covey was constantly addicted.”⁴⁴ He then continues on to point out that “another advantage I gained in my new master was, he made no pretensions to, or profession of, religion; and this, in my opinion, was truly a great advantage.”⁴⁵ Douglass considered himself to be advantaged in this regard because “of all the slaveholders with whom” he had “ever met, religious slaveholders are the worst. I have ever found them the meanest and basest, the most cruel and cowardly of all others. It was my unhappy lot not only to belong to a religious slaveholder, but to live in a community of such religionists.”⁴⁶ Interestingly, in *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Douglass’s 1855 autobiographical narrative, Douglass claims not to know why this is so, when he writes, “It is not for me to explain the fact. Others may do that; I simply state it as a fact, and leave the theological, and psychological inquiry, which it raises, to be decided by others more competent than myself.”⁴⁷ But in his first autobiographical narrative from 1845, Douglass provides a clue to why this is so, despite the lack of competence that he proclaims in *My Bondage and My Freedom*. There, in his description of his master, Captain Auld’s, religious conversion, he writes that after his conversion at a Methodist camp-meeting, he “indulged a faint hope that his conversion would lead him to emancipate his slaves, and that, if he did not do this, it would, at any rate, make him more kind and humane. I was disappointed in both these respects. It neither made him to be humane to his slaves, nor to emancipate them.”⁴⁸ Douglass continues: “If it had any effect on his character, it made him more cruel and hateful in all his ways; for I believe him to have been a much worse man after his conversion than before.”⁴⁹ Douglass then muses that this is because “prior to his conversion, he relied upon his own depravity to shield and sustain him in his savage barbarity; but after his conversion, he found religious sanction and support for his slaveholding cruelty.”⁵⁰

Douglass hints at an interesting relationship between dogmatic religious beliefs—such as those rational, theological pretensions that Kant rejected—and religious hypocrisy. Auld became more immoral after his religious “conversion” because he was not inwardly changed. There was no genuine moral conversion from within him. He simply cloaked his immorality with religious garb. And this was Kant’s concern, for he points out in *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* that mere church-going “contributes nothing to the quality of the citizen as citizen in the Kingdom of God but rather debases it and serves to hide under a deceptive veneer, from the eyes of others and even from his own, the bad moral content of his disposition.”⁵¹ Kant continues on to write that church rituals like communion cannot in and of themselves be considered “*a means of grace*” because to do so “is a delusion of religion which cannot but work counter to the spirit of religion.”⁵² It thus seems that Douglass lived through what Kant feared: he was a slave in a community of people who, in taking their religion to consist merely in outward observance of ritual, merely used religion as a cover for their immoral deeds. Perhaps the greatest of these immoral deeds was the very notion of enslavement itself, for Douglass, like Kant, recognized that without freedom, there could be no morality. In *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Douglass writes, “Make a man a slave, and you rob him of moral responsibility. Freedom of choice is the essence of all accountability.”⁵³ In both Douglass and in Kant, not only is freedom the foundation of all morality, but religion can never simply be a cover for wrongdoing. There must be an inward moral conversion. Kant, or the “German” gives us the theoretical critique, and Douglass, or the “Chocolate,” gives us theoretical critique and a compelling account of a moral praxis of resistance in the form of Douglass’s escape from the slave system that was so morally corrupt.

Heidegger

Reflecting on Kant’s relationship to Douglass then led me to Heidegger’s critique of onto-theology, which I saw as a critique akin to Kant’s critique of rational theology from both the CPR and the CPrR. Heidegger argues that metaphysics is onto-theologically constituted such that rationality demands the location of a “generative ground” in order for philosophy to do its work of providing a rational account of all that is. But Heidegger believes—as does Kant—that any such “generative ground” can never be the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition, for the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition is not a God that is the product of rationality, but rather is the God who proclaims, “Let us make man in our image.”⁵⁴ Heidegger’s point is that on the philosophical account, the generative ground is not the “God” who creates human beings in His image, but rather is a “god” whom human beings have created in their image. Accordingly, Heidegger points out that such a “god” is unworthy of

either praise or worship, as no one can “play music and dance” before this god.⁵⁵ Furthermore, this “god,” as both Kant and Heidegger point out, is a god that is created at the behest of and in the interests of reason. And since it is created in the interests of reason, this “god” is always present and prepared to do the bidding of reason to further its interests. But what happens when the interests of reason are corrupt? What happens when the rational tradition that produces metaphysical speculation is a white tradition with colonial, financial, and imperial aims that the slave trade furthers? Under these conditions, the same “god” that is the product of human reason is there to serve the corrupt interests of the rationality that produced it. Thus it is that American chattel slavery had a plethora of Christian theological justifications ranging from the nature of the slave’s soul,⁵⁶ to the Hamitic curse, and to the servants of Abraham, where William Wells Brown quotes Reverend Theodore Clapp, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of New Orleans, as claiming that with reference to Abraham and his servants: “Here we see God dealing in slaves; giving them to his own favourite child [Abraham], a man of superlative wealth, and as a reward for his eminent goodness.”⁵⁷ Such theological justifications of American chattel slavery are offered in the service of maintaining an epistemic regime of oppression that is firmly grounded in whiteness as rationality, or in service to the “god” of onto-theology.

Husserl

Along with Kant and Heidegger, Husserl also provides a compelling critique of abstraction and hyper-theorization in favor of a greater emphasis on lived experience. The rigors of the *epoché* demonstrate the noetic structure of consciousness at work: prior to our theorizations which occur in the naiveté of the “natural attitude,” there is a *lebenswelt* that we ignore at our own peril. The more we access the *lebenswelt*, the more we are able to see that the real crisis of the European sciences is a hyper-theorized, scientific account of nature that prevents us from recognizing the contributions that human beings make to the world. Husserl’s phenomenology represents an attempt to re-insert human experience into the scientific enterprise. Thus humanized, science can reign in its instrumental rationality in the service of a better understanding of humanity. As it is in the European sciences, so it is in white theology. White theology enters its own crisis because of theodicy, which theorizes good and evil to such a degree that evil is made useful in the form of some a priori, conceptual necessity to justify a theoretical belief in God. Instead of making evil useful in this manner, Emmanuel Levinas, despite his critique of Husserl for other reasons, offers a pre-theoretical phenomenological account of suffering that renders it useless.⁵⁸ The “Chocolate” side is strong here, for a plethora of theological justifications of evil have been repeatedly offered to explain the suffering of African-Americans. So many jus-

tifications of evil have been offered that some African-American philosophers have been prompted to ask of theodicy: "Is God a White Racist?"⁵⁹ and "Why Lord?"⁶⁰ In the context of these pressing phenomenological and existential questions, Douglass is now pushed to the fore, as his narrative methodology, in contrast to the abstractions of white theology, exposes us to a pre-theoretical world of suffering that can be understood not as a hyper-theorized conceptual necessity, but rather as a phenomenon of no enduring value at all to the slave that must be disregarded in favor of just treatment.⁶¹ As Levinas may put it, Douglass's suffering was "useless."

AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND JEW: DOUGLASS AND LEVINAS

Since I believe that Gadamer is correct about the "historically affected consciousness," and its impact on interpretation, it makes sense that one with my mixed race background (in part Jewish and in part African-American) would be sensitive to systems of oppression. For even as Levinas critiqued theodicy because God "let the Nazis do what they wanted" at Auschwitz, and even as Douglass condemned the slaveholding Christianity of the United States, so do I (an African-American with a Jewish background) condemn rational theological justifications that come from George Zimmerman when he claims that it was "God's plan" that he shoot and kill Trayvon Martin.⁶² Zimmerman, neither philosopher nor theologian, somehow almost intuitively resorts to theodicy as the *Deus Ex Machina*, to fill the gaping moral lacuna in his behavior toward Trayvon Martin.⁶³ He thus bears witness to the truth of the Kantian insight that the faculty of reason inevitably seeks the conditioned when the unconditioned is given. Displaying remarkable pretensions to transcendent insight, Zimmerman claims to know the will of God in an attempt to legitimize his immoral conduct. But since God is epistemologically off limits, we never even experience him as we would an object in the realm of appearances, let alone understand his will well enough to use it as a justification for our immoral conduct. This is what Kant terms "inauthentic theodicy,"⁶⁴ and it is what prompts Levinas to call for an end of theodicy.⁶⁵

Such theological justifications of human suffering are perhaps more abominable than the actions that they seek to justify, as they provide what Charles Mills calls, in political terms, a world in which the world is seen with a "set of mistaken perceptions" that "will be validated by white epistemic authority, whether religious or secular."⁶⁶ Undergirding this world is the epistemological dimension of what Mills calls the "racial contract," which is rooted in "white misunderstanding, misrepresentation, evasion, and self-deception on matters related to race" which, in turn, are "a cognitive and moral economy required for conquest, coloni-

zation, and enslavement.”⁶⁷ It is easy to understand then, how theoretical abstractions such as theodicy both develop and maintain the basic structures of white domination. By theorizing evil and suffering, African-Americans must accept their lot in life whether as slaves or as targets of the new Jim Crow as divine fiat. For both Douglass and for Levinas, theodicy is an evil itself that ought to be shunned.

As an African-American and Jew, my historically effected consciousness leads me to another point of contact between Douglass and Levinas: the way that Levinas’s notions of totality and infinity are represented in concrete, existential terms between Douglass and Covey in their life and death struggle as depicted in Douglass’s autobiographical narrative. According to Levinas, Western philosophy is beset by a dreadful moral deficiency: it takes ontology and epistemology rather than ethics as its starting point. Levinas points out, in numerous places throughout his corpus, the problems that arise when we take “first philosophy” to consist in an encounter with a world that we desire to know, grasp, and understand. When we pursue the world as philosophy tells us we should pursue it, we seek an account of being and of knowing that violently disregards the moral concern that we should have for who Levinas refers to as “the Other.” This tendency to know and understand the world in this way, to absorb it into the framework of human rationality, is what Levinas calls a tendency toward “totality.” In seeking to totalize the world, we run the risk of disregarding all things that are alien or foreign to us. For Levinas, the one thing that can never be brought within the parameters of an ontological or epistemological scheme is the face of the other person. It is this face of “the Other” that presents itself to me prior to any metaphysical interests that I may have. So the first encounter that the self has with the world is not a world that one can totalize, but rather is a world in which one sees the face of the other person, staring down at him, making moral demands upon him. The self has little or no time to calculate or to think as does the rational moral agent in deontological, utilitarian, or virtue ethics, but only rather may react and render aid to the Other, who represents the other side of Levinas’s ethical metaphysics: infinity. Unlike objects in the world which can be grasped, known, comprehended, and understood, the face of the Other is infinite and cannot be brought within a scheme of intelligibility. It is not the self that dictates to the Other, but it is the Other that dictates to the self. The origin of moral obligation is not in a rational, self-legislated moral law (as in deontology), it is not in a rational self that calculates the greatest good for the greatest number (as in utilitarianism), and it is not in a rational self that, through habituation, cultivates a virtuous character by locating the mean between the extremes of deficiency and excess (as in virtue ethics). For Levinas, the self has no time for such calculation. It must respond to the Other.

The fight between Douglass and Covey represents, I believe, the struggle between totality and infinity in this Levinasian sense. This fight is, in a sense, a microcosm of the ontological and epistemic preoccupations of Western philosophy as Levinas has diagnosed them. Covey, as an overseer, exists as a cog in the machinery of slavery, a machinery which extends far beyond the plantation in Maryland where the confrontation took place. Covey worked for a plantation owner, who traded for slaves on the open market as part of a vast stream of national and international commerce that Douglass appropriately referred to as "man stealing." This stream of commerce is, in turn, part of a broader project of white supremacy which seeks to develop and maintain structures of white domination in the form of American chattel slavery, and that does so not only through the economic system that buys and sells humans as chattel, but that also finds support in both civil law and also in Christian theology. White supremacy establishes a certain world order: whites are the seat of all legitimacy and authority, and all non-whites, whether they be indigenous Americans or Africans are either savage or sub-human, and must be "civilized" into the system of white domination, colonization, and control either through brute force in the form of "westward expansion," or through enslavement. It is in this context of white supremacy's epistemologically driven colonial project that certain realities, ways of knowing, and symbols emerge. Metaphysically, the world is structured in such a way that whiteness defines what either is or is not the case. Epistemologically, everything that is "known" or that counts as "knowledge" comes from a standard of whiteness, and dark skin, non-European modes of dress, and non-white cultural practices become signifiers of inferiority that point to the signified of either "savage," "sub-human," or "outlaw." So when Covey initiates the fight with Douglass, he does so against someone who is, from his vantage point, sub-human. Douglass's darker skin and his life with other slaves made him property, a mere thing to be seized. Epistemologically, Covey, in his mind at least, "knew" all that there was to "know" about Douglass. And ontologically, this was the way that the world—at least Covey's world—actually was when he encountered Douglass: Douglass was a slave, and Covey was the "slave breaker." Douglass effectively had no alterity as it related to Covey; he was brought completely within Covey's racist imaginary such that he was nothing more than a "slave" who needed to be taught a lesson. In each of these ways, we see Levinas's notion of totality at work in the fight between Douglass and Covey.

But Covey did not know as much about Douglass as he thought; for Douglass, unbeknownst to Covey, had a moral agency and an internal capacity for resistance. We see this when Douglass points out, immediately prior to his fight with Covey that "you have seen how a man has become a slave, now you shall see how a slave becomes a man." So whereas Covey's epistemological and ontological totalization of Doug-

lass had Douglass thoroughly “known” as someone who was supposed to be a “slave” because of their color, Douglass was much more than this fixed, determinate, “thing” or piece of chattel. Covey mistook his totality, which is motivated by a desire to “know” Douglass as a slave, to constitute the entirety of all there was to know about Douglass. Covey did not know that within the bosom of this “slave,” this “nigger,” or this “thing,” was a person who wanted to be free, who had dignity, self-respect, and courage. Covey did not know that this “piece of chattel” would eventually travel the world as an eloquent abolitionist and become an advisor to President Lincoln. In short, there was arguably an infinite number of things that Covey did not know of Douglass, but Covey allowed his thirst for totality to overcome the infinity that he did not know. Covey was thus deceived, and when Douglass rose to meet the challenge of his attempted seizure—a seizure that was ontological, and epistemological before it was physical—he experienced the full force of Douglass as infinity. Douglass was transformed before Covey’s very eyes from an “other” as a thing into *the Other* as infinity that made the demand on Covey not to kill him, and ultimately turned Covey into an “other” that was hoping that Douglass would not kill him. In the end, Douglass regards Covey’s request in a way that Covey disregarded his.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND PROTESTANT: KIERKEGAARD AND DAVID WALKER

The black prophetic church tradition and Protestantism—present both in my mixed race background and in my philosophical research and thus formative dimensions of my “historically informed consciousness”—have a common origin: both theological traditions are conceived in opposition to oppressive theological schemes rooted in hyper-rational epistemic and ontological frameworks. Protestantism is conceived in opposition to Papal authority, which, for centuries, exploited many of the poor, illiterate masses through a widespread system of economic and social control. Buttressing and justifying this widespread system of social and economic control was a complex theological worldview in the form of Scholasticism, which recast Aristotelian metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, biology, astronomy, and ethics as church doctrine to be adhered to at peril of death. Thus merged with Christian theology, the best—and worst—of Aristotle became part and parcel of the “Christian” canon.⁶⁸ What is more, the masses of the people were illiterate, and the knowledge of the Bible was reserved for the few who had sufficient material or familial resources to be considered part of the educated elite. When Martin Luther tacks the ninety-five theses to the door of the church at Wittenburg, and declares “*Sola Scriptura*,” he does so in response to and in opposition to a system of exploitation that the few operate to the

detriment of the many. Luther was thus demonstrating a praxis of liberation. But before Luther, it was Marsilius of Padua, who, through a more thoroughly developed liberation theological hermeneutic, condemned the oppression of the poor and illiterate masses through the interpretation of Christ as one who voluntarily assumed the status of “supreme poverty” with a stinging critique of papal authority through a reading of Aristotle’s *Politics* in his essay, *Defensor Pacis*.⁶⁹

The black prophetic church tradition has a similar origin. Perhaps best articulated in David Walker’s *Appeal*, the prophetic tradition of the black church represents an act of resistance against white supremacy recast as divine imperative. When Walker points to the hypocrisy of white Christians, and structures his *Appeal* such that it mirrors the structure of the United States Constitution (a preamble and several articles), he, like Luther and Marsilius before him, is condemning with prophetic fervor the abuses of a corrupt Christianity run amok. Underlying the slaveholding brand of Christianity, as I have already discussed it, is an epistemic, ontological, theological, and semiotic structure that justified a system of oppression akin to the oppressive Aristotelian-infused Scholasticism that justified the oppression of the poor during the medieval period. An irony of Protestantism is that the protest of Luther in Europe became the complicity of slaveholding white Christians in the United States, as various Protestant denominations (Methodist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian) justified and thus furthered the enslavement of Africans through corrupt theological notions, as I discussed earlier. So it was that even as Protestants sought liberation from oppressive Papal authority, they also offered theological justification for the enslavement of human beings. The oppressed became the oppressor.

As an African-American who is also a Protestant, my historically informed consciousness leads me to Douglass and Søren Kierkegaard in this section of the chapter as representative of the prophetic black church tradition and the Protestantism, respectively. Like David Walker and Marsilius, both critique corrupt Christian communities that reinforce systems of oppression. David Walker, Douglass, and Marsilius are important figures in my essay “From Logos to Sarx: Black Philosophy and the Philosophy of Religion.”⁷⁰ And Douglass and Kierkegaard are important figures in my essay “Morality, Art, and the Self: Existentialism in Frederick Douglass and Søren Kierkegaard.”⁷¹

In reading Douglass and Kierkegaard together, I attempt to build upon the work of George Yancy and Lewis Gordon, who have interpreted Frederick Douglass as an existentialist by reading him with post-1945 phenomenological and existentialist literature. I am interested expanding the work of scholars like Yancy and Gordon by asking the following questions: can one read Frederick Douglass as an existentialist without resort to the twentieth-century atheistic existentialist tradition? And if so, what sort of Douglass emerges from such a reading, consider-

ing Douglass's interest in and ongoing critical engagement with Christianity?

To answer these questions I read Douglass with Kierkegaard because Kierkegaard provides existentialist categories (anxiety, despair, freedom, choice, responsibility, and subjectivity) from a Christian point of view--a view with which Douglass was actively engaged throughout his career as a philosopher, abolitionist, and public intellectual. I argue that there are three affinities between Douglass and Kierkegaard that are rooted in the same moral and philosophical/theological motivation, which is a demand for authentic Christian practice. These three affinities thus reveal a Douglass that is yet unseen in the extant literature: a Douglass that not only gives us phenomenological and existentialist insights, but also a Douglass that is, in a sense, appropriating and transforming Christianity for just ends.

First, Douglass labors against a community that is arguably as deluded about their status as Christians as those whom Kierkegaard believed were deluded in Denmark. In support of this claim, I examine certain chapters of two of Douglass's autobiographies: (1) his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845), and (2) *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855). These texts, when read with two of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments* (CUP), and *Fear and Trembling*, display a remarkable similarity between the mindset of slaveholding Christians in the United States, and that of the "baptized pagans" that Kierkegaard's pseudonym, Johannes Climacus, castigates in the CUP. Both Douglass and Kierkegaard thus expose the serious limitations of a *Sittlichkeit* that is indeed rather unethical.

Second, Douglass's narratives reveal that an indirect communication in the Kierkegaardian sense is what led Douglass to advocate for moral suasion. In support of this point, I argue that Douglass commits to moral suasion because of an indirect communication that causes what Kierkegaard would call double reflection; for Douglass commits to moral suasion after reading a fictional account between a slave and his master in the abolitionist tract, *The Columbian Orator*. Here, I apply the principles of Kierkegaard's notion of indirect communication from *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* to Douglass's experience of reading the fictional dialogue between the master and the slave.

Third, Douglass experiences Kierkegaard's (Anti-Climacus's) notion of despair from *The Sickness Unto Death* when he is becoming literate. Douglass wished himself to be either a slave or "the meanest reptile" as he realized the extent of the profound damage done to slaves. Douglass essentially wants to return to a sub-human state; he does not want to be conscious of having a self; and this is Kierkegaard's notion of despair. By reading Douglass and Kierkegaard together in this way, I reflect the African-American and Protestant dimensions of my "historically effected consciousness."

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHOCOLATE: DOUGLASS, AUGUSTINE, AND DERRICK BELL

African-American social, political, and philosophical thought is not monolithic; it is varied and nuanced, even in the face of the same event or stimuli. For example, the nineteenth century saw black abolitionism not only from the point of view of Douglass's moral suasion, but also from the point of view of Henry Highland Garnet's armed resistance. Yet another point of view was Martin Delany's emigration strategy. There are, then, if I may employ the parlance of this chapter, different kinds of "Chocolate." And in this section of the chapter, I contrast the racial optimism of Douglass with the racial realism of Derrick Bell. On one level, Douglass's optimism and hope for a universal human brotherhood resonates with my Irish-Catholic upbringing because of its resonance with the beloved community of Augustine's *Civitas Dei*, but Derrick Bell's racial realism argues that such an outcome is impossible, given what he argues is the permanence of racism in America. As one who was raised in the Catholic tradition but who converted to Protestantism as an adult, and as an African-American who is both inspired by the utopian vision of Douglass, and brought back to earth by the sobering message of Bell, my historically formed consciousness puts my philosophical research in dialogue with all three of these traditions. So although Douglass and Augustine seek a universal human unity in diversity, my Chocolate side is further nuanced by a division between Derrick Bell's thesis of racial realism—which resists this sort of utopian view through my stance as a critical race theorist—and Douglass's racial optimism. In siding with Bell, I give way to another source of tension, as I do not think that the impossibility of a utopian racial harmony excuses us from acts of resistance. Our moral obligation to resist survives the demise of a utopian fantasy. My research reveals the connections between my historically effected consciousness and Douglass, Bell, and Augustine through two chapters in my edited volume entitled *Racism and Resistance: Essays on Derrick Bell*, and in my interest in and critique of Kristen Deede Johnson's book, *Theology, Political Theory and Pluralism* (TPTP),⁷² which I discuss here for the first time. I consider Johnson's work first, and then pivot from that work to Bell's thesis of racial realism, and his creative engagement with what he takes to be the deceptive tendencies of liberalism, in contrast to Douglass's racial optimism.

The Irish-Catholic in Me: Augustine and Pluralism

At the outset, I must point out that I am sympathetic to Johnson's project in TPTP. She wants to find a way to negotiate the problem of pluralism in Western democracy, and to do so, she claims that neither liberalism's commitment to public reason nor agonistic political theory's

commitment turn from epistemological foundationalism to a politically driven ontology of difference is an acceptable methodology. So Johnson makes a theological turn, and proposes that Augustine's Trinitarian theology of unity in diversity is the best way to deal with pluralism in Western democracy. Johnson not only has a laudable goal, but her proposed theological solution represents a refreshing, creative attempt to embrace explicit Christian theological commitments rather than shy away from them. Choosing the latter course has too often been the order of the day in political theory, resulting in a latent hostility toward all religious discourse as being inimical to the aims and purposes of Western democracy, a hostility which I think is both ill-conceived and misplaced, and reflects poorly on genuine democratic sensibilities while diluting the vital democratic energies that public religious dialogue brings to bear on matters of pressing social and political importance, as in the case of the role of the prophetic black church in the African-American struggle for civil rights. Moreover, given that previous attempts at successfully achieving pluralism have been unsuccessful, her critical theological and philosophical reflection on alternatives to prevailing political theories is important, to say the least.

According to Johnson, Rawlsian liberalism falls short because of its commitment to "toleration" such that Christians can only participate in the public square if they are willing to leave behind their "comprehensive doctrines" for a knowable notion of "public reason" rooted in an "overlapping consensus" of varying worldviews. This sort of "slippage" from religious commitments, as Johnson calls it, makes the case for toleration, but toleration, which is the upshot of Rawlsian liberalism, is, in her view, indefensible. Tracing the notion of toleration back to John Locke, Johnson argues that toleration is not affirmed as a virtue in and of itself. Its earliest defenders (like John Locke) provide no affirmative arguments for tolerance, but instead provide arguments that support tolerance to the extent that it promotes some other value, such as freedom or rationality. Doesn't toleration, given the pluralistic nature of Western democracies, require a stronger, more affirmative foundation? And if this is the case, what are the conceptual resources for the virtue of tolerance? As a virtue, tolerance is conceptually incoherent in that it implies moral disapproval. That is, by definition, tolerance implies that I may find certain conduct morally objectionable, but nevertheless must allow for such conduct to persist. Given this reality, a liberal virtue such as tolerance requires a strong justification. Perhaps tolerance is confused with indifference, not because people have no commitment to it as a virtue in and of itself, but because they do not hold their beliefs strongly enough to have any rationale for judging or suppressing the beliefs of others.

Assuming toleration can be theoretically justified, its worthiness as an ideal is still questionable. Again, the fact that tolerance connotes moral disapproval and not acceptance is problematic. For acceptance of one

another is, unlike tolerance, an affirmative moral goal. Toleration thus does not build a political community; it is a political compromise. This raises questions concerning the relationship of the “tolerator” and the “tolerated”. Does the “tolerator” view the “tolerated” with “arrogance and condescension”? Is a power relationship created to the disadvantage of the “powerless tolerated” and in favor of the “virtuous tolerator”? And does such a power relationship, in a perverse fashion, preserve “the status quo of inequality and discrimination”? Johnson concludes that perhaps toleration is simply not able to address the problems of pluralism. Initially, tolerance meant religious tolerance, but today it implies tolerance of “gender, culture, and sexuality.” The necessary expansion of tolerance to include these categories may push the concept of tolerance beyond its conceptual limits.

Given the foregoing conceptual difficulties of tolerance, and its problematic association with the Enlightenment, it is hardly surprising that the notion of tolerance has come under the intense scrutiny of political theorists, especially in terms of how political theorists approach the problem of pluralism in Western democracies.

Johnson points out that she is not the only scholar to call tolerance into question. She points to William Connolly as an example of another political theorist that has held tolerance under this type of intense scrutiny and criticized it. Connolly wants to move beyond tolerance to a notion of difference. Connolly, an agonistic political theorist, argues that tolerance does not go far enough in its attempts to accommodate pluralism in democracy. Tolerance, far from allowing acceptance of difference, begrudgingly permits it. Furthermore, the notion of tolerance facilitates power relationships that subordinate the persons tolerated to those who do the tolerating such that there is actually a less equal society. This line of political thought wants to “engage much more explicitly with questions of ontology.”

The desire of thinkers like Connolly to engage with ontology is no accident. It is part of a larger philosophical shift away from epistemology to ontology. Epistemology has been undermined by the criticism that there are no “objective” “methods of knowledge.” This lack of epistemic neutrality uncovers a more deeply embedded set of presuppositions about human nature and its relationship to the world. Within liberalism, this shift has been exemplified by Rorty and his “anti-foundationalism.” Agonistic political theory takes a more radical ontological turn than Rorty, understanding that their theories raise significant questions about human nature and about the world.

Agonistic political theory is rooted in the ontology of Nietzsche and Foucault, both of whom emphasize power, difference, conflict, and chaos to such a degree that social and political harmony is impossible. Such a view has led to the criticism of Charles T. Mathews that agonistic political theories are guilty of “refusing all imaginative possibilities for some sort

of ideal absolute harmony.”⁷³ There is thus a dichotomous approach to the resolution of this question of political coexistence in pluralistic Western democracies; an approach that opens the door for a third voice, which is theological. Specifically, Christian theology has the resources to help us expand the reservoir of our political ideas.

The shift from epistemology to ontology, in Johnson’s view, paves the way for a turn to theology. Even as agonistic political theory attempts to give an account of human beings and their complex relationship to the world and to one another—often in spite of their differences—theology addresses these exact same issues. The work of John Milbank offers a vision of “ontological peace,” which is a viable alternative to the seemingly perpetual ontological strife of agonistic political theory. In Christian theology, the ontological strife emphasized by agonistic political theory is not a permanent, endemic part of reality, but is instead a contingent event occasioned by the fall of man into sin and separation from God.

The aim of her book is, in part, to put theology into dialogue with political theory in an attempt to expand “our current political and pluralist imagination.” For political theory is inherently imaginative, insofar as it seeks to evaluate and offer fresh perspectives on the question of how people of diverse beliefs can successfully and peacefully coexist in society.

Having provided what I think is a fair assessment of Johnson’s views, I tend to disagree with her for at least two reasons. First, her resort to an Augustinian theology of the Trinity, while creative, is little more than an attempt at the abstractions that ignore the historical social and political oppression of African-Americans and thus is the same sort of abstraction that makes political theory problematic in the first place. Johnson, like Milbank virtually ignores the real world problems of African-Americans, and a glaring weakness of her proposal is that, much like Milbank’s “ontology of peace,” it “has yet to reckon with the ways” that Christian theology is performed “in continuity with Catholic and Protestant theology’s racial-colonialist past.”⁷⁴ Second—and this claim is a direct result of the first claim—the abstraction and creativity of her proposal not only ignores but likely perpetuates injustices toward African-Americans, which Milbank also ignores. Charles Mills makes this point with respect to the abstractions of political philosophers when he points out Rawls—like Milbank and Johnson—ignores the historical and state sanctioned atrocities against African-Americans. By ignoring these atrocities, Mills points out that not only are they not being addressed—likely a manifestation of an Ellisonian invisibility in the face of the white gaze—they are likely perpetuating such injustices. Johnson’s proposal is lacking a fundamental recognition of the role that Christian theology has played in maintaining structures of white domination, and in doing so, her proposal, though imaginative and creative, falls short, in my view.

Two Kinds of “Chocolate”: Douglass and Bell

The “Chocolate” portion of my “German Chocolate”-labeled, historically effected consciousness is nuanced into a tension between Douglass’s racial optimism and Derrick Bell’s racial realism. This shows itself in my work through my analysis of not only Douglass’s work as I have discussed it throughout the chapter, but also through two chapters in my edited collection entitled *Racism and Resistance: Essays on Derrick Bell*⁷⁵ (RR). In RR, there are two chapters that address Bell’s thought. In the first chapter, entitled “From Psychology to Resistance: Derrick Bell and American Legal Realism,” I explore the relationship between Derrick Bell’s Racial Realism (RR) and American Legal Realism (ALR). I claim that Bell’s notion of RR, while rooted in ALR as Brian Leiter has reconstructed ALR in his important text, *Naturalizing Jurisprudence: Essays on American Legal Realism and Naturalism in Legal Philosophy*, ultimately goes beyond ALR. In support of this claim, I argue first that Bell’s RR contemplates a critical engagement with legal formalism, and second, that RR relies heavily on empirical data from the social sciences to predict how judges will decide cases involving race relations. Bell’s RR is thus grounded in ALR. But it goes further, in that it demands resistance to injustice, while ALR is an empirical thesis that aims to predict that judges will decide cases because they are responding to the stimulus of the facts, and not because of formalist considerations such as precedent. So whereas the ‘naturalized’ jurisprudence of ALR is empirical and descriptive, equating jurisprudence with descriptive psychology, Bell’s RR is practical and normative, arguing for resistance to injustice.

In the second chapter I author in *Racism and Resistance*, titled “Liberalism, Christendom, and Narrative: Paradox and Indirect Communication in Derrick Bell and Søren Kierkegaard,” I build upon George Taylor’s insight that, at the heart of Bell’s work is a paradox which is that the resistance thesis of racial realism—Bell’s claim that racism must be resisted—is fundamentally at odds with the permanence thesis—the idea that racism is permanent. By reading Bell with Søren Kierkegaard’s *Philosophical Fragments* and *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, I argue that the tension between Bell’s notion that racism is permanent and his demands for resistance to racism is akin to what Kierkegaard calls the “paradox” and the “passion of thought,” which, for Kierkegaard, facilitates a perpetual struggle to know what is unknowable. For Bell, the paradox of permanence and resistance becomes what I call the “passion of resistance,” which is a perpetual struggle against racism. I also read Bell’s use of fiction—a central feature of Critical Race Theory—with Kierkegaard’s notion of indirect communication, arguing that, for Bell, fiction is a sort of indirect communication designed to remove a deception from those who think that liberalism can overcome racism, even as Kierkegaard uses indirect communication to remove a deception from

those who think that Christianity is easily practiced. I argue that the dialectical function of narrative—it is at once both creative and destructive—not only shatters the deceptions of liberalism, but also gives birth to an infinite moral obligation to fight against that which one cannot destroy. In the end, the two chapters in RR, taken together, portray Bell's thesis of racial realism not as a pessimistic social and political cynicism, but rather as a normative demand of hope firmly grounded in moral struggle and facilitated not only by fictional narrative's advancement of the Kierkegaardian notion of double reflection, but also by its destructive-creative dialectic. Indeed, for Bell, the Douglassonian dictum "Where there is no struggle, there is no progress" works rather well. But progress means something different for Bell than it does for Douglass. For Bell, progress is found neither in the mere symbols of black hopes and dreams of equality (for example, the election of Barack Obama) nor in the events that we misinterpret as progress that are actually those where the interests of whites just so happen to converge with the hopes and dreams of African-Americans (again, take the election of Barack Obama, for example). No. Such events are merely racial symbols that speak to what Bell sees as the reality that our nation's moral conscience has never been morally reformed from its unequal treatment of African-Americans. So whereas Douglass will conceive of progress in the form of civil rights victories, Bell will see no progress in the victories, but rather in the struggle that comes from realizing that the "victories" were not all that they appeared to be. Thus it is that a tension holds between the optimism of Douglass and the realism of Bell in my historically effected consciousness.

FINAL THOUGHTS

At bottom, my mixed race background and its attendant mixed religious identity creates what are insurmountable yet healthy tensions within my own identity. Reading my work with Gadamer has exposed me to serious tensions within the *Horizontverschmelzung* that occurs between my historically effected consciousness and the philosophical texts which I interpret. These tensions are insurmountable in virtue of their sheer complexity and history of conflict with each other. The German is in conflict with the Jew, the Protestant is in conflict with the Catholic, and all are in conflict with the African-American. But I do not view such profound intra-personal conflicts, insurmountable though they are, as difficulties. As difficult as these conflicts are, they contribute to my philosophical and theological health because they provide me with a genuine philosophical humility, which is necessary if I am to attain to the Socratic maxim, "know thyself." Indeed, as soon as I reach the point of epistemic, moral, or metaphysical certainty, there is a resistant impulse from another seg-

ment of my mixed race background that cries out—as would the African-American to the German, or the Protestant to the Catholic, or Derrick Bell to Frederick Douglass—“not so fast!” So long as I hear this voice, then, I am assured that I am still fighting myself. And if I am fighting myself, if I am guarding myself against philosophical complacency, I am doing rather well, as I am thus aware that there is much more work to be done. So it is that my mixed race identity makes me a microcosm of the world: I am always in conflict, never at peace, and never at rest, which, for the philosopher, is not necessarily something to be shunned, but rather is something to be embraced and even something to be celebrated, as I pursue the career and life-long tasks of both self-interpretation and textual interpretation.

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NOTES

1. Professor Golden dedicates this chapter to the memory of his parents, James B. Golden, Sr., and Margaret Catherine Golden, "two exceptionally courageous human beings who stared the difficulties of being a mixed-race couple in the face and dared to love one another despite those difficulties, and who dared to share that love with me and my siblings to such a degree that I desire to reproduce the depth of their love for me in the lives of others. To their memory, I say 'Thank you, Mom and Dad. I love both of you beyond measure.'"
2. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave: Written by Himself* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 9.
3. John 14:6, King James Version.
4. Under Contract, Palgrave Macmillan.
5. Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by Joel Weisenheimer and Donald Marshall (London: Continuum, 2006), 341.
6. Under Contract, Lexington Books.
7. Timothy J. Golden, "From Logos to Sarx: Black Philosophy and the Philosophy of Religion," *The Black Scholar*, 43, No. 4 (2013): 94.
8. Forthcoming in *Existential Thought in African-American Literature Before 1945: Existentialism in the Flesh* (ed. Melvin Hill, Lexington Books, Under Contract).
9. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 302.
10. George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), 34.
11. Now, Kant's claim regarding the a priori nature of space and time as subjective forms of intuition carries with it a degree of philosophical legitimacy that whiteness as the condition for the possibility of humanity does not. But, if we interpret Yancy's appropriation of the Kantian lexicon correctly on this point, we might say that whiteness has inflated pretensions toward necessity and universality such that it presents itself with the force of an a priori truth.
12. George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes*, 3.
13. Yancy, 34.
14. I use the terms "whiteness" and "blackness" here not to refer to biological referents such as any race gene, but rather to refer to the social ontology of race that is quite real. Like Yancy, I "reject the disjunction that either race is biologically real or it is nonexistent. A physicalist ontology does not exhaust all the ways in which we talk about the being/reality of things. The reality of race, then, though not a natural kind, is purchased within the framework of a social ontology that recognizes the very serious persistence and implications of race beyond its ontic vacuity." Yancy, 34.
15. On countless occasions throughout my life, I have been referred to as "nigger," been told to "go hang out with the brothers," and to "go back to Africa." And none of these instances touch upon the countless ways in which Christianity constantly re-

minds me that I am black. These instances are reminders of the lengths to which whites have gone, on many occasions, to remind me that not only am I *not white*, but that *I am black*.

16. Yancy, 34.
17. Yancy, 184.
18. Here is a sales notice for Clotel, the literary figure known as the “tragic mulatto,” one of “several mulatto girls of rare personal qualities,” who, despite being “mixed race,” were sold into slavery: “Notice: Thirty-eight Negroes will be offered for sale on Monday, November 10th, at twelve o’clock, being the entire stock of the late John Graves, Esq. . . . several mulatto girls of rare personal qualities . . . ‘Fifteen hundred dollars,’ cried the auctioneer, and the maiden was struck for that sum. This was a Southern auction at which the bones, muscles, sinews, blood and nerves of a young lady of sixteen were sold for five hundred dollars; her moral character for two hundred; her improved intellect of one hundred; her Christianity for three hundred; and her chastity and virtue for four hundred dollars more. And this, too, in a city thronged with churches, whose tall spires look like so many signals pointing to heaven, and whose ministers preach that slavery is a God-ordained institution! . . . Clotel was sold for fifteen hundred dollars . . . thus closed a Negro sale, at which two daughters of Thomas Jefferson, the writer of the Declaration of American Independence, and one of the presidents of the great republic, were disposed of to the highest bidder!” See William Wells Brown, *Clotel; or The President’s Daughter* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 47, 50–51.
19. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).
20. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, 17–18.
21. Kierkegaard, 17–18.
22. See Kierkegaard’s *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments*.
23. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 341–342.
24. Gadamer, 342.
25. Gadamer, 292.
26. Gadamer, 293.
27. Gadamer, 293.
28. Gadamer, 293.
29. Gadamer, 295.
30. Gadamer, 295.
31. Gadamer, 295.
32. Gadamer, 300.
33. Gadamer, 300.
34. Gadamer, 301.
35. Gadamer, 301.
36. Gadamer, 301.
37. Gadamer, 301.
38. Gadamer, 301.
39. Under Contract, Palgrave Macmillan. “German Chocolate” is a theme that also figures prominently in my essay “From Epistemology to Ethics: Theoretical and Practical Reason in Kant and Douglass,” *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 40, No. 4 (2012): 603.
40. See Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), and “Rawls on Race/Race in Rawls,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 47 (2009): 161.
41. For a brief discussion of the dangers of Plantinga’s abstractions in the philosophy of religion, see my essay, “From Logos to Sarx,” 94. I return to this essay in a later section of this chapter.
42. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 1929), Avii.
43. For a more detailed discussion of Madison Washington and Douglass, see my essay, “From Epistemology to Ethics,” 603–628, 608–609.

44. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave: Written by Himself* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 84.
45. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass*, 84.
46. Douglass, *Narrative*, 85.
47. Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (New York: Library of America, 1996), 293.
48. Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 65.
49. Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 65.
50. Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 65.
51. Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6:199.
52. Kant, *Religion*, 6:200. Emphasis in original.
53. Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 248.
54. Gen. 1:26. King James Version.
55. Martin Heidegger, "The Onto-Theological Constitution of Metaphysics," *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 72.
56. See my discussion of Reverend Godwin's argument for Negro baptism in "From Epistemology to Ethics," 620–623.
57. William Wells Brown, *Cloetel; or, The President's Daughter*, 94.
58. See Emmanuel Levinas, "Useless Suffering," *Entre Nous: Thinking of the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 91–101, especially 91–94.
59. William R. Jones, *Is God a White Racist? A Preamble to Black Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988).
60. Anthony B. Pinn, *Why Lord? Suffering and Evil in Black Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1995).
61. This is the thesis of my forthcoming book, *Frederick Douglass and the Philosophy of Religion*.
62. See interview with George Zimmerman where he states, in response to questions about the killing of Trayvon Martin, "I feel that it was all God's plan, and for me to second guess it, or judge it, um." Viewable at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjhXwbt8E8>. Accessed on 2/26/2015.
63. For a more thorough discussion of the racial and moral dimensions of the Trayvon Martin killing, see my essay "Two Forms of Transcendence: Justice and the Problem of Knowledge" *Pursuing Trayvon Martin: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Manifestations of Racial Dynamics*, ed. George Yancy and Janine Jones (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 73–84.
64. On the Miscarriage of All Philosophical Trials in Theodicy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 8:265–267.
65. Levinas, "Useless Suffering," 97–100.
66. Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 18.
67. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 19.
68. Consider here the following textual support for the reconstruction of Aristotle's argument for slavery in his *Politics* as set forth by Peter Garnsey in his book, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Garnsey reconstructs Aristotle's argument for slavery with the following textual references to Aristotle's *Politics* at pp. 36–37 of his book: 1254a30-2-1254b-25-27, 1277a35-7, 1330a26-30, 1328a22-25, 1278a2-4, 1328b-37-1329a3, and 1328a36-38.
69. Marsilius of Padua, *Defensor Pacis*, trans. by Alan Gewirth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 196–215.
70. In my essay, "From Logos to Sarx: Black Philosophy and the Philosophy of Religion," I argue that the philosophy of religion, narrowly conceived of as the conceptual analysis of God and His attributes cannot, standing alone, be sufficient to address the moral problem of "epistemic addiction," 95. I have developed this elsewhere in my research. See my essay "Epistemic Addiction: Reading 'Sonny's Blues'

with Levinas, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche," *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 26, No. 12 (2012): 554.

71. Forthcoming in *Existential Thought in African-American Literature Before 1945: Existentialism in the Flesh* (ed. Melvin Hill, Lexington Books, Under Contract).

72. Kristen Deede Johnson, *Theology, Political Theory, and Pluralism: Beyond Tolerance and Difference* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

73. See Kristin Deede Johnston, *Theology, Political Theory, and Pluralism: Beyond Tolerance and Difference* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 138.

74. J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), 462.

75. Under Contract, SUNY Press.

Part V

Mixed Race Ethics

11

Who Is Afraid of Racial and Ethnic Self-Cleansing *In Defense of the Virtuous Cosmopolitan*

Jason D. Hill

At a talk I gave some years ago, a colleague from another university pulled me aside and said he wanted to discuss the issue of cosmopolitanism on which I had been working for almost two decades. His comments, however, were a condemnation of cosmopolitanism for its alleged complicity in the deracination of human life in the name of a universal, morally homogenized form of existence. Cosmopolitanism was a sophisticated form of cruelty, he stated, because it helped to sustain effective forms of physical subjugations in spite of favoring, as its goal, human well-being that cut a broad swath across race, gender, ethnicity and class. Cosmopolitanism was efficient in executing such goals and efficiencies; nevertheless, such goals and standardizations were created in the context of sophisticated cruelties. In the name of a universal algorithm that produced increased efficiencies such as weights, currencies, languages and religious practices, cosmopolitanism, it seems, had contributed to the complete evacuation of the material and existential content that goes into making a human life substantial.

Cosmopolitanism's contribution to this state of affairs, my colleague argued, is inherent in the very definition—contemporary and historical—of cosmopolitanism itself. Going back to the Cynics and then the ancient Stoics, the cosmopolitan is one who gives up partisanships and any form of parochial commitment to the city-states and the nation, along with ethnicity and racial and national affiliation. We are told by the Stoics that individuals belong to two worlds: the world at large; the one outside of one's local community; and the local and parochial world in which one is ensconced. If ever there were a conflict between the two worlds, the Stoics argued, then, we ought to choose the world at large, for therein lies the source of our highest commitment and greatest moral purpose. The reasoning behind this obligation to choose an abstract humanity—over and above the known flesh and blood persons in our localities—was as unsentimental as it was logical in its exhaustive ratiocination: all human beings had an equal share in moral dignity, intrinsic worth and value and

moral purpose guided by, and, above all, grounded in, reason. Human beings were distinguished and differentiated by all sorts of existential factors such as language, local culture, and national and ethno-racial differences. What enjoined us all, however, was reason—the faculty that identifies and integrates the material provided by one's senses. Conflicts of interests, therefore, were to be resolved by conjoining ourselves with members of the species who had the largest share of a universal faculty distributed equally among all persons: reason. The members of species who had that share were every human being on this earth, regardless of whether they exercised their rational faculty.

My interlocutor, however, was not satisfied with identifying what he thought were abstract references to love of actual people but ones who were devoid of a juridical personality. Part of the problem of cosmopolitanism, he pointed out, lay in the fact that it depersonalized subjects by failing to adequately affirm the material features (their racial/ethnic/national identities) from which they derived moral and personal meaning and identity in their lives. And, although he might have agreed with me that such attributes—which I shall hereafter refer to as tribal attributes—were morally neutral in that they failed to categorically or even inductively pick out traits that could be identified as constitutive of character—I was wrong to believe that such tribal traits lacked moral salience. As moral markers they may have been vacuous, but as indices for a *particular* type of life organized around tribal markers they had deep significance for people—to say nothing of the cultural modes of self-realization which were not caused by tribal identities but simply an existential concomitant of them.

Cosmopolitanism, though, is much more imbricated in a causal nexus of systemic racism, colonialism, communal and linguistic destruction goes the accusation. While it might or might not have been a causal factor in the annihilation and/or demise of traditional communities with its homogenizing universal moral system replete with immutable and objective truths, it is claimed that its totalizing logic and the inevitable terminus of that logic that leads to a radical evacuation of the self—an evacuation that is too psychologically costly for most people and, especially, for marginalized minority groups facing the evacuation named here—is a form of political death. Advocacy on behalf of group rights, it is claimed, is not possible under this alleged emancipatory enterprise. Sophisticatedly cruel cosmopolitanism, it is held, is complicitous in all types of physical subjugations. In its zeal to enforce a standardized imperialistic moral world view on cultures and individuals alike and, more importantly, its collusion with neo-liberal market economies, it has literally—if not then, by default—contributed to economic injustices, alarmingly increasing disparities in income, and a defense of out-sourcing by way of pointing to the employment advantages experienced by Third World Peoples who are the beneficiaries of such outsourcing.

What my critic wanted to point out was that in willfully discounting the metaphysical significance of location and culture centered on race and ethnicity, not only was cosmopolitanism not a plausible and viable philosophy by which to live, but that in essence, because of its predilection for sweeping generalities and proclivities for judging moral issues by a single metric, by failing to adequately support and defend pluralistic conceptions of morality, that the racial and ethnic denouement of subjects that was the best side of the cosmopolitan was the least destructive of the cosmopolitan experiment. Rather, sophisticated cruelty was a form of cultural genocide that was the fall-out of non-chosen, radical assimilationism and enforced linguistic imposition—read: English.

The Stoics were, therefore, against the non-rational and arbitrary discrimination that is exhibited against the possessors of tribal attributes which were morally neutral and told us nothing about the moral character of individuals or the specific manner in which they chose to exercise their rational faculties. If the concept of world citizenship when translated into its second incarnate—Love of Humanity—was to have any substantive and/or procedural meaning to it, then it would have to disavow any act or actions or attitudes against individuals on the basis of their location of origin and other tribal insignia that functioned as separatist delineators among human beings. Eschewing one's local identity in favor of a universal and non-arbitrary one was not a form of moral neglect or existential bi-partisanship among human beings. Quite the opposite. The moral precept was meant to unify humankind by inspiring all persons to celebrate and live by the faculty of reason that was equally distributed among all persons. That the results and consequences of the different ways human beings utilized reason would vary across persons and even cultures were, I believe, of little concern to the Stoics. Reason mediated by existential factors such as educational level, individual characterological orientations and natural abilities were not invariant like the laws off say, gravity; however, it was the actual possession of reason and the commitment to admiring one's fellow human being because he or she possessed that same faculty that was the great equalizer among human beings.

Long before the creation and ultimate ascendancy of monotheistic religion, the Stoics more than any other socio-politico-philosophical movement performed an act that was as radical as it was emancipatory: they emphatically included all persons *qua* individuals as qualified members of the *ethical domain*. If no one could be excluded from the domain of the ethical then, a fortiori, no one could be excluded from the pantheon of the human community. That all members of the human race were qualified simply by virtue of being human to be the recipients of moral sentiments, concern and even a kind of universal love was a daring and unprecedented act in the history of humanity. Indeed, both Seneca and Marcus Aurelius entreated their fellow compatriots and all human beings in general to practice love of and inclusion of all human beings.

Among the Enlightenment philosophers who were themselves cosmopolitans they advocated not just the unity of the brotherhood of man but specific measures for spreading cosmopolitan beliefs among the general public by advocating religious toleration, involvement in humanitarian reforms and propagandistic advocacy of those unable to articulate their existential plights such as slaves. Both Benjamin Franklin and Voltaire expressed profound dislike for slavery as did Montesquieu, Price, Buffon, Priestly, Condorcet, Smith, Turgot and Lessing. The idea of a world citizenry opposing the evil of slavery was voiced by Granville Sharp who believed that as abolitionists “we are absolutely bound to consider ourselves as ‘Citizens of the World.’” William Garrison included on the masthead of his antislavery journal called *The Public Liberator* one of Thomas Paine’s own mottos: “*Our country is the World, Our countrymen are Mankind.*”

RACE REALITY

I am often asked, as a mixed race person. By well-meaning people how I can both hold a cosmopolitan identity and not identify internally with a race in a country that has already racialized me by elevating a dubious one-drop-African ancestry rule as a metaphysical absolute for determining an immutable indicator of real racial identity. The question itself is psychologically understandable but, ultimately, misguided from the perspective of those who are hoping the answers to such questions will pass philosophical meanings tests; or from the perspective of those who think they have postulated a racial theorem that—not unlike God—is outside the purview of said meaning tests, or from the perspective of those who believe that the hypothetical speculations that are exactly what constitute racial identity labels and theories about “real races” are themselves proof of the meanings tests (a specious form of question begging).

The question assumes that what have historically passed as social facts (the existence of human races) need to be personalized and internalized by any person to whom the facts may be thought applicable. Social facts in Durkheim’s or Husserl’s terminology speak to something we may refer to as the Natural Attitude—those codified paradigmatic life norms, mores and protocols-turned-tradition that acquire *de facto* legitimacy because the social usefulness and political expediency that underlies their institutional application supersede and trump any one individual evaluative performance.

To be a mixed race person classified as black in America and to reject the moniker mixed race and race in general while still remaining hyper-vigilant of the ways in which the constructs of others become social facts that can and do affect one’s life is to place oneself in an existentially untenable position. There are no non-racial designators to which one can

appeal, except for one very inviolable phenomenon: the court of appeals of one one's own mind and independent rational judgment.

The concept of race is damaging in two ways. It is damaging not only because it creates arbitrary distinctions among people that assume the characteristics believed to cleave to race are indicative of a person's moral worth.¹ The concept of race is equally damaging because its performance in the lives of individuals encourages a form of moral laziness and cowardice.

Race and Moral Worth

The first moral crime regarding the practice of race and mixed race is the creation of arbitrary distinctions among people that assume the characteristics believed to cleave to race are indicative of a person's moral worth. Since the business of appraising character is an arduous and complex undertaking which takes time given the enormous contextual and circumstantial nature of judging actions, one has to be careful of cognitive shortcuts which one may be tempted to take by appraising character through racial prisms. Aside from eviscerating the dignity of others, one runs the risk of becoming a social metaphysician by relying on the arbitrary and subjective standards of others by which to come to a conclusion about another person's character. If one has ethical duties to never knowingly violate the criteria needed to determine that which is morally relevant and that which is morally neutral and, further, if one wishes to hold such criteria in one's moral consciousness at all times when making a judgment about the moral status of another person, one can in no way ever use the ascriptive racial or mixed race identity of another person as a credible prism through which to evaluate a person for any reason, particularly a reason deemed to have moral salience.

Inversely, then, one ought never, on such a reasoning, to use one's ascriptive race or mixed race identity to derive any moral meaning from it. This would be a form of moral theft since it would involve conceptually suffusing the concept of race with moral attributes that it logically and empirically cannot have. Those, therefore, who feel race pride, or derive self-esteem from race and mixed race identities are not simply guilty of mere false pride; they are concurrently engaged in the dubious practice of shortcircuiting the moral route to achieving a moral personality which is by performing moral acts over time in ways that reinforce the traits and habits that build an enduring character. The first moral crime, therefore, in morally practicing race and mixed race is epistemological. It is not an error of knowledge, but one of evasion; of willfully avoiding the moral facts one needs to make a proper assessment of oneself and others.

Race, Moral Laziness, and Cowardice

The second moral crime regarding the practice of race and mixed race is a metaphysical concomitant of the first moral crime. The concept of race follows three moral and cognitive malfeasances. First, it inappropriately permits us to act as wholesalers rather than retailers in the realm of moral epistemology. By this I mean that we take the markers of race and use them to generate a predictive and explanatory model for *who people are* and the traits they categorically possess. The moral quotient allotted to them is predicated on a nefarious ranking of what I would call *race-prestige*, that is, those races deemed to have low prestige value are also taken as viable indicators of the moral quality of life, the degree of humanity and the cognitive capabilities of those who hold low-prestige racial identities. Since mixed race black people are generally assumed to be superior to blacks assumed to possess full African ancestry, those who hold mixed race identities and those perceiving them to hold such identities run the risk, I believe, of misappraisal of themselves and of the mixed race identity.

Let me explain.

The concept of race ontologizes identity in such a way that moral ambition becomes conflated with and indistinguishable from “race competition.” Rivalries and competitions among races and ethnicities are really misguided performances by raciated actors who go beyond believing that they possess some irreducible moral property or set of properties associated with their race or mixed race into becoming a waking instantiation of that belief. We may say in the broadest of terms that racism is not a political act but is, rather, a re-translation and application of improperly constructed moral attributes one believes are possessed by raciated beings. Racism is a performance of a particular type, one that is imaginary play elevated to a metaphysical absolute. Each player knows the rules prior to engagement because each knows—whether she is an Untouchable caste victim in India, or a mixed race Afro-Chinese living in Vietnam—the presumed script and narratives that underwrite the racial imaginary and the imaginary games that spring from them.

A metaphysics of substance that pervades the racial imaginary takes on the aura of normality. Since, morally speaking, racial categories are empty sets, the racial algorithms that suffuse them are fabricated computational devices that are metaphysically false—they do not correspond to any objective feature of the purported reality they claim to be figuring out. Epistemologically they represent conceptual mayhem as they disfigure the human reality of the subjects they apply to by eviscerating some of them of their dignity, according others a greater share of dignity by virtue of the prestige value of the race or mixed race identity they hold and, in more benign terms, condemning others to defacing anonymity and psychological invisibility. At their worst such labels are crude and

elemental forms of caricature. What they name is a metaphysically terrifying and misanthropic denouement: *Humanity has come to an end and the moral agency of some human beings is a terrifying thing to behold and, therefore, a phenomenon deserving of distortion.*

Such is the nature of “race reality” out of which springs the institutional domains which uphold them and carry them into an indefinite future; and it is for these reasons that I reject the concept of race (including mixed race) as a deep cultural, metaphysical or even political identity.

MIXED RACE IDENTITY

If biological race and the classificatory taxonomies on which they are based are false as anthropological biologist and scientists have proven them to be, then the moniker “mixed race” is a misnomer and closer to an empty set than a real descriptor that picks out any real and factual racial traits or genes of a person claiming to be mixed race.

If mixed race is used as a socially constructed category that performs within the registers of an emancipatory political ontology then, I submit, such persons cannot use the term race in any descriptor of persons taken to be a combination of multiple “racial” designators. To do so, I shall argue, is to collude with the nefarious practice of classifying persons according to criteria for race that fail all sorts of philosophical meaning tests. Persons classifying themselves as mixed-race are parasitic on the socially oppressive, demeaning and empirically false enterprise of codifying non-racial genes that give rise to hair texture, eye color and skin pigmentation into non-modifiable racial designators. Mixed race persons, if they chose to question the one-drop rule or any other racially classificatory schema, cannot rely on derivative criteria drawn from common sense appeals to race to classify themselves as mixed-race individuals. Morally they would be no better off than persons claiming to believe in elves, fairies and winged horses; empirically they would be simply achieving the social prestige (if there is any to be had) from claiming to be mixed race rather than saying one has full African ancestry. If I, as a mixed race person, proclaim my mixed race identity to the world—which, in a world of white normativity, is akin to declaring one’s proximity to whiteness—then I am, I submit, playing into and desirous of occupying some hierarchical stance predicated on white supremacy. Let me be explicitly clear here. Any mixed race person who has black ancestry and features his non-black/African mixed race ancestry in any but the most non-critical non-reflexive manner is colluding in the schemata of white supremacy and is a metaphysical and existential racist. This is a hardline position to assume, but what possible motivation aside from acquiring social and moral prestige from having non-black ancestry in

one's DNA could one have for flaunting one's mixed race identity in a world that aesthetically, morally and existentially devalues "blackness," or so-called pure African ancestry? If the answer is celebration then the rejoinder is: no celebration of a morally neutral racial marker in whose very celebration lies the lowering descent of "pure black identity" in the racial imaginary could possibly be justified.

If the goal is critical presentation of one's mixed race heritage, then I would submit one is in the business of advocacy and that form of advocacy is best filled not by clinging to an identity one has no reason to be either proud or ashamed of—morally speaking, it literally stands for nothing!—but, rather, to an identity that is a moral identity and one that, paradoxically is suffused with the social racial identities of mixed race persons.

COSMOPOLITAN IDENTITY

My view is that the designation "cosmopolitan" is far healthier morally than "mixed race" identity and achieves a greater degree of veracity. A compound identity, a fluid and negotiable identity is already built into the cosmopolitan modality in ways that bring into sharper relief the ascriptive and socially composite racial identity one has. Because strong racial and ethnic and national identities are repudiated by cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitans on both moral, psychological and scientific grounds, and because I accept cosmopolitanism, I think that the cosmopolitan achieves a greater degree of moral health than those who identify as mixed race or as a particular race. Both persons who identify as mixed race and those who identify as a particular race have to navigate among the registers of racial/ethnic purity and impurity and racial/ethnic/national authenticity. Moreover, such persons also have to grapple with the conflation of terms different racial designations such as black/white/mixed-race/Latino/Native American etc.

Strong or radical cosmopolitanism in this paper which calls for—on ethical grounds—the repudiation of all personal associations with racial and strong ethnic identities will mean, among other things, adopting neologisms that complicate the received wisdom behind the allegedly real markers of race. Adopting these neologisms is more revolutionary than simply applying the term "mixed race" to oneself. The virtuous "mixed race cosmopolitan" who playfully classifies as white or Indian, or European or black when in fact the person may be regarded as purely black, white or European by the mainstream society does more to complicate and subvert the still reified notions of race than do mixed race or particular raced persons.

Standing above concerns of holding identities with high or low prestige value, the post-human radical cosmopolitan (and her concomitant

moral psychology) is a social disruptor who, over time, I argue, can achieve a society in which race as a personal (as opposed to a political tool of advocacy) disappears from the moral and social consciousness of persons regardless of their externally defined racial designation. How other people regard them simply ceases to have any effect or significance in how they create a personal identity.

A PERSONAL NOTE

Born and raised in Jamaica and hailing from a mixed race heritage which included one white grandparent, another who was part Jewish, East Indian and black, and a mestizo grandfather from Panama by way of Spain, it was not race that mattered, but pigmentocracy, that is, the perceived moral, social and economic capital one was perceived to possess by virtue of having a particular skin tone. I was, therefore, never raised, in the twenty years I lived in Jamaica, with a racial identity and had no idea I was "black" until I came to America in 1985. I was literally regarded as a "brownas," which meant someone whose skin color was literally light brown with no racial insignia affixed to it. Still, to have had the privilege of not having a racial identity because I was not racialized by a society that had formal criteria for determining race made it possible for me to reject all notions of race and the attendant communities associated with them in favor of a more inclusive and egalitarian identity marker; a domain from which no one could be ever excluded from the pantheon of the ethical and, a fortiori, the human community.

Rejecting all notions of race is accomplished via two interrelated measures. The first is by means of advocacy. The cosmopolitan can never wield personal identity in a way that exercises racial superiority or prestige over others since cosmopolitans know that racial identity even if it came with a script as some are wont to claim, is not one that can "stick" by logical or social necessity to any one simply by virtue of holding a racial or a compound of racial identities. The script is a free-floating abstraction since it cannot hold designated persons as its intended referent. In the absence of exercising racial superiority or appealing to the social prestige factor in the minds of others, the cosmopolitan advocates the irrationalism of race pride *simpliciter* and instead extols the intrinsic moral dignity that resides in people regardless of their racial identities. The cosmopolitan argues that racial pride is an irrational response to racial oppression because the source of that pride resides in a nefarious ruling principle known as *biological collectivism*, or *polylogism* which are all forms of racial subjectivism.

Racial subjectivism is the view that an individual's inborn racial constitution determines his mental processes, his intellectual outlook, his thought patterns, his feelings, his conclusions—and that these conclu-

sions, however well established, are valid only for members of a given race who share the same underlying constitution. Knowledge and truth are peculiarities that originate in specific forms of consciousness and are therefore attuned exclusively to the specific essence of their mother consciousness. Each race, therefore, creates its own truth and is in its own universe. Human beings of different races are separated by an unbridgeable epistemological gulf according to this subjectivist logic. This makes it impossible for them to communicate or resolve disputes peacefully. Carl Schmitt, a leading Nazi theorist noted that an alien may be as critical as she wants to be; she may be intelligent in her endeavor, she may read books and write them, but she thinks and understands things differently because she belongs to a *different kind*, and she remains within the existential conditions of her own kind in every decisive thought.

Polylogism is the ruling principle of the racial subjectivist. That is, the idea that each group—Aryan, British and Jew—has its own truth and logic and distinct method of reasoning. Each group has a unique mental structure that is valid for its own group and invalid for other groups. According to this way of thinking, persons from the same race will ask similar questions and seek answers and solutions in the exact same direction.

If such is the predominant ideology underlying all racial identities, then cosmopolitanism is the moral philosophy that counters that ideology. It provides a transitional space within which a multiplicity of identities that emerge out of the inter-subjective encounters between human beings can take place. Under the logic of racial subjectivism, personal encounters among others cannot change the moral contours, the personal sensibilities nor the alleged standpoint epistemology or racial ways of knowing advocated by polylogists. The racial narrative that underwrites racial identity is ensconced in an immutable and unalterable paradigm that is not only impervious to change over time—it inoculates one against the organic ways in which humane and personal encounters with our fellow human beings widen the configurations of our human identities beyond ways that cannot be captured or exhausted by race.

Mixed race identities are identities parasitic on the logic of race *simplificiter*. As a compound identity it seems unlikely to grant one the freedom to modify the inherent “racial logic” that undergirds any identity associated with race. In this respect mixed race identity seems to imply a mixed logic or a problematized logic that governs the racialized script regulating how one could make sense of race and the attendant agency affixed to bearers of racial identities.

In other words, from a radical cosmopolitan point of view, the moral psychology of the person who identifies as mixed race, if held consciously and philosophically, is at best one still tethered to the need for benign racial affirmation. This makes the holder of a mixed race identity a kind of social metaphysician and biological collectivist; that is, some sem-

blance of meaningful personal identity is being derived from holding on to a set of genetic traits that have been racialized and codified into a closed-ended taxonomy. This taxonomy is left non-modifiable by any creative exercise of the individual's agency. This state of affairs is one that must induce moral trauma in the mixed race identity because it undermines one's ability to align one's actions towards others (and one's experiences with them) in accordance with one's own organically evolving and willed human identity. In other words, all racial identities, including mixed race identities, are dehumanizing experiences because, among other things, the imagined autonomy one has over one's life is a fictitious psychological construct. At the same time (again, from the radical cosmopolitan point of view), one is trying to create a moral identity predicated on lived virtues that have absolutely no relation to anything associated with the kind of racial virtue that populates the collective racial imaginary.

Perhaps the best antidote to the challenges of racial identity of any sport (including mixed race identity) is the competing psychology of one who lives beyond and above race, that is, the virtuous cosmopolitan.

THE MORAL PSYCHOLOGY OF VIRTUOUS COSMOPOLITANS

Virtuous cosmopolitans have no historical or biological identity. Rather, they are orphans forged in the crucibles of their own moral imagination and an apocalyptic vision of life's most exalted possibilities that will give rise to a tumultuous and binding moral revolution.

Virtuous cosmopolitans have given birth to themselves and have chosen to be born. The accidents of birth—bloodline, parents and family—are journalistic minutiae, incidentals of history and largely irrelevant in the face of what lies ahead: the future and the attendant emergent new moral beings that are possible.

Virtuous cosmopolitans have renounced heirship, legacy and heritage. They never chose them and since they were bequeathed to them without their permission, virtuous cosmopolitans cannot lay claim to a love of them for they cannot love anything that they never consciously chose. That which was foisted upon them—race, ethnicity, national identity, and religion—have to be appraised and evaluated against the backdrop of their emergent value schema. Contextually they mean nothing to them. Around their own kind, virtuous cosmopolitans feel boredom and the soul killing sense of a deadening ubiquitous, sycophantic haunting monotony. Monotony deadens sensory perception, and they know that sensory deprivation makes them immune to the acquisition of values, of the burgeoning innovative drive that lies in their own soul—to the creation of a new way and of the establishment of their enterprises as the paradigmatic foundation upon which a new emergent being can come

into existence. If they could annihilate “their own kind” they would, along with their superstitious customs, traditions, mores and protocols which are believed to function as the foundational bedrock of culture and society. If they hear the terms “social cohesion,” and “civic trust” in relation to racial pride and unity once more they will inflict a joyful cruelty on those who utter such conceptual inanities.

This boredom of the soul that they feel around those of their own kind causes them no shortage of existential angst and loneliness.

They have no ancestors—recognize none who lay claim to them for they are the tribal property of no person and would weep no more for the demise of their blood-kind as they would for a stranger who shares their values, their vision and their crusade for a moral future. They have no offspring—neither brothers nor sisters except those with whom they have made an ethical alliance to shape a new universe, those who like the fourth angel will pour their vials upon the sun and scorch men with a life giving fire. They do not worship the family, the tribe, the race or the state or the nation. They hold no higher value than the naked, tribally unadorned self that presents itself to him in its indubitable singularity. Some may say to them that theirs is a highly evacuated self that is devoid of its historicity. But they invert the dictum: *You can't know where you are heading unless you know your history* with their own mantra: *You can't arrive at the place you are creating unless you forget your history*. The world, virtuous cosmopolitans believe, is dying from an orgy of overly historicized personalities that exist on a temporal continuum. They want to annihilate the continuum and begin the historical record anew. Their story starts with a new being, a post-human being that has transcended the constraints of blood, race, ethnicity and national identity. They want to infuse the modern imagination with possibilities dismissed as evacuations of the soul—impractical and psychologically untenable.

They want to empty history; wring it of the soaking, seeping blood of its ghastly hangings killed by tribal radiation. Humanity looks to them like withered white orchids on purple branches. Rigor mortis forecloses any resurrection; a stiffened history has congealed into an indisputable record that is beyond mis-interpretation: there is blood everywhere. Only when identity is beyond blood will they see the unfolding of a new creation.

As hard as they have tried, virtuous cosmopolitans have never been able (nor were they ever truly interested) to subject history—their own or others—to critical scrutiny and to hermeneutical re-interpretation. They knew that behind that enterprise lies a distortion of reality on the order of: one is the product of one's environment. They rejected that bromide—uttered like a metaphysical absolute or law of nature with cool disregard and simply adduced themselves as evidence of its utter falsity. They showed that some burning vision and relentless drive had inspired them to make themselves superior to circumstance. They aspire to transcend

the vicissitudes and opacities of those phenomena that populate the social landscape of epochs past and present, those subtle and socially sanctioned mores by which human beings are categorized and promoted and demoted according to the prestige of the tribal identity the mores shore up. They see a jarring ubiquity in all the tribal squabbles—the greatest ecological disaster of all times. Trivia, personal angst about tribal identity and assumed superiority in the pride one feels in being a member of a superior people are all elevated to the level of “social facts.” For virtuous cosmopolitans, the contretemps of tribalism and the harm they do are proper studies for the field of science. The lowest denominator to which people can sink—holding strong tribal identities and upholding the psychotic framework that sustains it—has been elevated to a status that makes it worthy of metaphysical speculation. They mourn this state of affairs and use their creative agency to re-fashion a new existence.

Virtuous cosmopolitans, the new post-human individuals, have, from the time they remembered themselves, regarded race and ethnicity and cultural national identity as *anachronistic*. These cultural artifacts were dated in their souls which refused to be bound down by the accompanying scripts that came with them.

To be bound down by the soul-killing minutiae of history is an affront to the dignity of the virtuous cosmopolitan and her self-transcending and self-surpassing aspirational nature. Race and ethnicity and their authenticating protocols are balls and chains on her shoulders. She had wanted to fly, not fly away from anything in particular for she never granted the minutiae the significance it cried out for; rather, she wanted to fly to some future of her own—a place of regeneration and re-birth where she could conjoin herself in a beautiful and well-earned love with others. She had thought that race, ethnicity and cultural national identity had expelled others from the pantheon of the community. She had felt righteous indignation and moral anger at the expurgators. Now she realized that it was they who had never earned the proper title of human being, that it was they who had never belonged anywhere and had sought in the name of blood to uproot those who had found a home somewhere here on earth.

And what is to become of the scorched men and women and the scorched earth of those who breathe the fire of life? They and she will deracinate the *raciated*, the nationalized, the effigies who parade as ethnics and walking balkanized automatons. In her world, the cosmopolitan world, race has been eradicated, ethnicity abolished, cultural nationalism has become a moral and political crime. Those who cling to them in psychic infantilism eventually atrophy and die from natural extinction.

If others use the term “cosmopolitan” as a coinage designating indiscriminate love of humanity and world citizenship, then, she has become a reactionary and moral revisionist. For hers is a normative love. She is congenitally and institutionally incapable of loving the world and its mediocre representatives unconditionally, causelessly and irrationally.

To love mankind indiscriminately is to love a compound noun. Her love is an inspiring one, predicated on a theme of moral ambitiousness and aspiring perfection. She, the individual, loves humanity as it might be and ought to be, not as it is—mired in the shallow present, its denizens suffering from a paucity imagination and bereft of the capacity for continued becoming. Her love is a command to rise to a glorious height that humankind has never imagined and failed to believe is realizable: the post-racial and post-ethnic world. The command to rise is embedded in the timorous decorum of tribal low-culture, in the unsoulful demotic camps of the tribal animal with his snout to the ground, sniffing for ancestral traces to lift him up in this world—give him a sense of belonging and historical anchorage in a clannish universe—the same tribal primordial primitivism driving him deeper to sniff out the odor of ethnic and racial authenticity in every passer-by—like some porcine forager—who suggests himself as a plausible candidate in a world where blood and belonging are believed to insulate one from death.

In the evolving world of porous borders, increasing immigration and fluid social identities, those who will not grow to accommodate the evolving spaces in which human beings matriculate will simply devolve and eventually die off. As they reach back into the atavistic registers of their being for some primordial phylogenetic ancestral domain that connects them with their kith and kin and blood-kind, they will descend into an abysmal void. The domain was never there; it was, instead, the product of human mythological narratives that they created to earn a false prestige from race, ethnicity and the valorized local geographical spaces in which they were born. Unable to place themselves in all possible places and in just one possible world—this earth, they shrink, their range of vision unable to extend beyond the false prestige manufactured to demonize others and glorify and elevate them in their rottenness, their mediocrity, their paltry attempts to wring social and ethical prestige from their morally arbitrary and neutral ethnic and racial and regional identities.

Therefore, witnessing the comi-tragic spectacle of people attempting to ride on the social and moral prestige of identities that never had and can never have a moral dimension to them (after all, being German or Indian or Asian can neither make one immoral or moral and can never function as predictors for moral behavior), the virtuous cosmopolitan ethically mandates racial and ethnic self-cleansing. Smiling like the Buddha after witnessing the grotesqueries, the charnel houses and other house of horrors—the racial and ethnic horror houses that masquerade as natural features of human identification—the Virtuous Cosmopolitan in a spirit of compassion and contempt, foists a new philosophy upon the suffocating human race. A benevolent iconoclast, he, as an individual, undermines the spirit of seriousness that undergirds the tribalist's schema for the world. The recurring motifs are tedious and boring and con-

ventional —cracker-barrel folk wisdom passed on by so-called wise elders but which are nothing more than sentimental bromides, pseudo-incantations and rhetorical plinths, recast and dressed-up in a contemporary idiom: racial and ethnic solidarity; cultural authenticity and respectful multiculturalism. It is all a contemporary repertory of conceptual inanities and orgiastic self-oblation legitimized by appeals to tradition and history and the historical record that is invoked from time to time like moral axioms.

The virtuous cosmopolitan believes, like Charles Dickens, that the relief of human misery lies not in social revolution but in a transformation of the individual heart. The first transformative move is simply an initial iteration among several to follow. It is a propitious gesture meant to ameliorate—if not abolish—the internecine warfare of tribalism.

The virtuous cosmopolitan has never had the capacity to understand the pull of blood and of unchosen values in general. The attachment to ethnic/racial kinship and blood relations has always seemed like a form of delayed weaning from a protracted relationship to parents. Thinking about it, he realizes that the attachment is shrouded in a blanket of unresolved familial conflicts transferred unto the *volk*, the race and the *ethnos*. Behind that pull is the demand for unconditional love, for a love that does not have to be earned and maintained but derived from mere membership in a bloody pool of ancestral relations. He has always loved the aspirational impulse in others, that which they are on the road to becoming by meaningful engagements with others, by a process of sacred social intercourse with the best among the species. He thought that only infants could legitimately demand unconditional love and that the demand in adults was nothing more than a neurotic cry for them to remain rooted in their rottenness, a desire never to venture outside their own solipsistic confines and perspectival situatedness.

The virtuous cosmopolitan has never been able to, in reason, understand the automatic “knowing” of others allegedly drawn from his kind. All his life he has been unable to comprehend the ethnic and or racial knowledge that comes from membership in a tribe. Until he has been perceived correctly and has perceived others through observation, experience and intimacy, he has never known what it means to simply “get one of his own.” Receptive to all—the foreign and the familiar alike—the virtuous cosmopolitan has no special epistemological kinship with kith or kin for they are as strange and as alien to him as are those from whom he is separated by language, religion, race, ethnicity and nationality. He is indubitably, *sui generis* and unalterably individuated. Such associations as he may make shall come from value affinities with those whom he has chosen regardless of their tribal status.

She incurs no special obligations or loyalties to those who lay claim to her efforts by means of his membership in their tribe or clan. In having no biology, no ancestors, no parents and no kin and in always maintaining a

tenuous and provisional relationship to his descendants and ancestors, he removes himself from the lingering haunts of memory and nostalgia; only the latter is not quite correct. He is never sentimentally nostalgic for an irretrievable or a lost and golden era. He mourns for no lost traditions, no buried customs and norms that informed a better way of life that is inaccessible to a bevy of paralyzed dreamers that vie for place of membership in his memory. But she is nostalgic in another way, and he does mourn the fate of a future he will usher in by means of his own post-human humanity. She is nostalgic for a future that has not yet come, a prognostic and yet-to-be-born future whose death he foresees before it has yet to arrive. He wants to belong but cannot belong because his home and his kind of world have yet to be created. A past that has been obliterated and forgotten, a future that may arrive after his death, the virtuous cosmopolitan lives both agonistically and hopefully. Living in a habitual state of expectancy leaves him vigilant, creative and susceptible to remissions into states of metaphysical blues. Each day, the world perishes more and more in a miasmic orgy of tribal mores applied to daily living. Each day thousands die for no other reason than for the color of their skin, their ethnicity and lineage. And their deaths ought to dispel the lies centered on raciated bodies: bodies rot and smell and disintegrate in the same ways—regardless of tribal status. Mostly though, he takes existential alienation as an inevitable consequence of living and creating outside the botched configurations that demarcate borders and regions, countries and states. The existential alienation is inevitable in one who has seen farther than others, dreamed longer than others and spends more time than most in actively using his humanity to usher in the change his soul aspires to formulate. He ideates and then he creates. She dreams and then he fulfills those dreams. But in all his subcutaneous modes of transcendence of this world he has left behind he is forced physically to live in *this* world, the one he has psychologically and ontologically departed from. The alienation is not metaphysical; that is, it is not to be treated like an invariant law of nature. She can and will use his agency and uncompromising efforts to usher in a new kind of universe.

The world of the tribes are worlds lived under collective psychosis and are granted legitimacy by the imprimatur of all the self-appointed officiates who function as vanguards and sentinels of more than culture or society, of nations and states. They have assumed the temerity of stylizing lives for people under the holy rubric of the tribes and its cognate phenomena: race, ethnicity and national identity. They have mythologized what they term the essence of human beings and spawned a narrative that anchored it within the matrices of the tribal logos—the *sui generis*, indubitable, irrevocable insignia of authenticity. They have waged wars, perverted science and fabricated so called biological markers that locate racial differences among the one species that contains many different character types but all subsumable under the compound noun: man.

His becoming and transcendence are infinite in their capacity to take him to ever increasing new levels of growth and evolution; but they are not set against his nature; hence her existential alienation is not metaphysical because the universe is not and cannot be against the efforts he executes to simply get reality right. She knows human beings will continue to perish from the orgy of tribalism it has been playing in like animals who have never lifted their snouts beyond the foot of a tree to behold the sky above and to envision a new world and a new way of living. But the virtuous cosmopolitan is never alienated from his values and from the knowledge obtained from his observations and perceptions of the world: they correspond to reality, to an object reality that cannot be twisted like a piece of putty to fit any private evasions, and public omissions nor any culturally sanctioned perversions committed against each other in the name of some higher good such as race, the tribe, the ethnos and the nation to which one must sacrifice one's life and one's authentic truth which corresponds to reality.

Self-inflicted psychosis can only be maintained by two means: the sanction of those who spares one the consequences of living a lie and executing distortions in the world—we shall call such persons the *moral enablers*—and second, by the strategic manner in which those who perform as willed psychotics navigate among the registers of convenient lucidity and self-indulgent fantasy, fantasy buoyed up by the same gestures of the other game players. That is, they act as if the fictive tropes of race and ethnicity do designate something substantially real about others (characterologically speaking) only to the extent when the compelling evidence to the contrary makes them conceptual revisionists. Failure to become such will jeopardize some goal or project or experience they are forced to pursue, embark on or have respectively. Shifting their cognitive gears to meet the challenges of the sensory deprivation tanks they inhabit, they adhere to the dictates of reality intermittently, just long enough to gain the oxygen needed to live in the real world—the world that exists beyond markers of the tribes.

For the virtuous cosmopolitan, those who have created such markers—any tribal marker—are rapists. Tribal markers are tools of rape because they invade the humanity of persons with fictive and ultimately dehumanizing narratives. No race or group of persons has ever been uplifted by having others label them as racial types! The post-humanist sees the dignitarian assault they have waged against human well-being. They have systemically and systematically eviscerated people of their dignity and experiential identities; they have “Othered” broad swaths of humanity and disambiguated them from the complex psychic infra-structures that make them complex human beings.

Tribal markers nationalize the souls of human beings by the sheer force of the ubiquity and totalizing narratives that reduces all members of a tribe to a one-size-fits-all metric of measurement. No matter how your

becoming or experiences manifest themselves within your lives, no matter how your own growth has changed who you are and migrated you beyond the party lines of tribal rhetoric, regardless of how you may have disregarded the faltering bromides, clichés, incantations and platitudes that inform the sensibilities of tribal members and give their governing narratives their legitimacy—your indubitable nature as an individual is rapaciously de-privatized. It is robbed of its luminous singularity. Imposed on it is a generic agency devised from a one-size-fits-all script that is the repository of stereotypes, caricatures and untold myths that purports to predict your future actions, interpret your past, and deny you the full reality of your present experience. This script authenticates you by virtue of how closely you adhere to the consensus among its adherents whose numeric preponderance constitutes evidence of the truth or falsity of your behavior and actions vis-à-vis the sacred script.

The script robs one of one's glory and democratizes it by appropriating one's achievements and tuning them into collective tribal property. One's glory belongs to them because one's selfhood belongs to them: you are one of them—their kind. The psychic-sequestration of the individual by the tribe not only leaves him evacuated of his personal attributes and the radical freedom to interpret them and accord them value significance in her life as she sees fit, it leaves him bereft of the capacity to jettison the interpretation and judgments others have rendered against his life. The generic agency he is assumed to normatively hold becomes ontologized as invariant laws of nature. She becomes an over-determined automaton who is expected to live in the make-believe world of the tribalist. When her generic agency becomes codified in the minds of others as an unsailable social fact, reappraisal, modification and revision of the systems of identity and value that accrue to his agency become daunting feats of courage—courage to exercise one's humanity against the backdrop of all human types outside the tribe; courage to embrace and celebrate the expansion of personal identity that results from a fearless and appetitive self-inclusion in the nuclear lives of Others: strangers, foreigners and all those outside his kith and ken. Seeking to enter the world of others without the protective barriers of tribal prestige, or with an ethnic and/or racial interface to broker such encounters, the *laissez-faire* existentialist cosmopolitan sheds the old skin of his past lives and rapturously lives a life in the present with the varied and complex experiential, personality and value accoutrements of the so-called radical Others to inspire him. He lives beyond and outside the tribal narratives that regulate the moral, personal and existential lives of others. By this means, he knows, he can truly love humanity.

Cosmopolitanism, the virtuous post-human knows, is a restoration of privacy and glory back to the individual where it properly belongs.

The virtuous cosmopolitan's post-humanity is the insignia of ontological veracity: it can be done not by living on the peripheries or the mar-

gins; not even as a decentralized subject, for that would make him an outsider to a world he still aspires to. Her post-humanity positions him in a new realm in which life beyond the historical accoutrements of race and tribal markers have ceased to exist because the world that fetishizes such markers and grants them their moral and metaphysical potency has ceased to exist largely because psychosis when protracted and when it undergirds a life world eventually becomes monotonous. Monotony leads to sensory deprivation as it deadens imagination, creative drive and perception. Obstructed perception deeply compromises how one navigates oneself in the world. To perceive reality incorrectly is to risk psychological and physical injury and even death.

In this new space the assumed correlates among skin pigmentation, ethnicity and moral agency have disappeared—beyond respectable debate. Again, he adduces himself as evidence of the irrelevancy of respectable conversations about tribal markers. He has peeled himself down to a thin core, abstracted from all the meaningful moments in his life, the ones that filled his body with vitality and his soul with exuberance were racially and ethnically irrelevant. Given his sensibilities he could have supplanted them anywhere on earth and retained the spontaneity and vitality that are his corporeal trademarks.

This is because the development of a cosmopolitan ethos can be a symbiotic two-pronged project: engaging in dialogue with its historical architects; and allowing the dialogue and the attendant refinement of one's ethical sensibilities to organically unfold in the world where human beings meet and live. To hold this position while convincing individuals that cosmopolitanism is not an elitist lifestyle that only educated privileged people can embrace is to play one more role in the division of labor on behalf of cosmopolitan work. The task is to find ways to socialize non-intellectuals by means of cosmopolitan virtues and values. This is not the creation of morality. I am thinking of something more like a dance, an interaction among strangers where the rules of engagements are intuited by signals accessed in the moment and where each step is determined by reciprocity of exchanges.

Cosmopolitan virtues of this type are born from an attitude where radical inter-subjectivity is neither abhorred nor embraced as a form of exoticism or patronization—the latter dehumanizes. Rather, radical inter-subjectivity is freedom to be deeply touched by another and to allow the spontaneous gestures and responses that blossom from the encounter to shape a new identity. It might resist the terminologies and labels of the social world. Still, it corresponds to the psychological and moral terrain of one's inner life. This is the gift giving feature of our humanity that is precisely in our control and need not depend on the political machineries of the state or other institutions that effect changes in our social lives. I want to investigate in a more reverential manner the act of organically interacting with our fellow human beings. I would refer to this cosmopol-

itan virtue as, *The Art of Moral Genuflection*. Protracted genuflection—as a way of life—would be a form of radical inter-subjectivity. Without discounting the place that inter-subjectivity has had and continues to have in the history of philosophy, for the sake of simplicity I'll refer to it as the willingness to grant oneself permission to be deeply penetrated by the humanity of another person—where that humanity can call into question the very core of one's identity, where it forces one to make that identity negotiable. It is the willingness to hand over your continued socialization to others (good judgments prevailing of course, we're not talking about serial killers and rapists). It means that we see socialization as an ongoing process that does not stop at legal adulthood. It is a humbling and gift giving aspect of human living. It is the freedom granted to oneself to be deeply touched by another, and to allow the spontaneous gestures and responses from the encounter to shape a new identity, or, to transform an ongoing one in a rigorous and morally enduring manner. This is the gift giving feature of our humanity that we own and the deepest source of love we can offer those we call strangers. It is, in effect, one way of making the world more lovable in a two-fold manner: first as value-makers and valuers who love in the world and thereby make the world more lovable; and second by loving in the world because there is much in the world that is lovable and ought to be loved. This dialectical relation of loving in the world is another way of also achieving and practicing creative moral agency simultaneously. Radical inter-subjectivity is not passive submission, neither is it a form of inactive spectatorship. This gift-giving feature of our humanity—anathema to the spirit of every variant of tribalism, whether it takes the form of cultural nationalism or racial particularity—is the humble capacity to genuflect before the other in a spirit of reciprocity, in respectful brotherhood and sisterhood, and say: *I am not so complete that I can resist handing over to you some part of my continued socialization and identity formation as a human being. With you, my friend, my humanity, regardless of its origins, continues to expand and will take me to places I could never have imagined.*

I regard this gift-giving impulse as part of how we organically make cosmopolitan values as human beings. One says further in the genuflection: *We share a common humanity, and in the spaces of that sacred humanity something of the Divine is achieved. I open myself as a canvass on which you may inscribe your wisdom, teachings, and generosity—or whatever seeds of it you may have discovered in your own soul.*

This is the gift-giving nature of the virtuous cosmopolitan who disarms the holders of the racial Natural Attitude and grants to those struggling to get beyond the soul killing narratives of its ubiquitous racial scripts a patina of hope that a life beyond psychological race and mixed race is possible.

NOTE

1. The characteristics themselves are uncontroversially neutral. Only die-hard racists would hold the view that a person's race provides us not just interesting sociological facts but also morally salient information about a person's moral character, status and continued behavioral patterns.

Afterword

Mixed Race, Forces, and a Center

Naomi Zack

Centrifugal force (Latin for “center fleeing”) describes the tendency of an object following a curved path to fly outwards, away from the center of the curve. It’s not really a force; it results from inertia—the tendency of an object to resist any change in its state of rest or motion. **Centripetal force** is a real force that counteracts the centrifugal force and prevents the object from “flying out,” keeping it moving instead with a uniform speed along a circular path.¹

Using the analogy of centrifugal versus centripetal force, the object is mixed race, the inertia is the curve of “pure” racial categories, which is a curve due to external forces provided by history. When mixed race is subject to centrifugal force, it flies out from the center of the curve into alienation, rebellion, and scattered identities. Mixed race as subject to centrifugal force is what happens without deliberate intervention. When mixed race is subject to centripetal force, which is a real force, that is, when it is gathered together toward a center, well, then we could have a theory of mixed race. Tina Botts has tried to begin that process of gathering together with this anthology. It’s a first-time project and it has working rules, which I will get to in a second. Right now it is important to note that she promises a theory, in the future.

One can read an anthology as a collection of writings that each merits distinct reading but don’t necessarily relate to one another. Or one can read an anthology as a holistic collection, with integrity as a collection. I prefer the second approach and it is here facilitated by the ground rules, related in the introduction, namely that the contributors are both mixed-race and academic philosophers and that they pay some attention to how their identities are related to their philosophical work, or show and tell their best work—the rules are somewhat open-ended, as befits the changeover from centrifugal to centripetal force. So we have here the beginning of a gathering together of mixed-race philosophers, toward some eventual theory of mixed race, or perhaps philosophy from a mixed-race perspective, which is to say, mixed-race philosophy. And why not? It is being increasingly recognized by racially white as well as

black philosophers that the discipline of philosophy has been racially white all along. That is, philosophy has been white not only in the racial identities of its dominant practitioners, but in its subject matter and normative concerns, as shaped by the dominance of whites in the world, their interests, and their value system as white racials.² To keep this simple, if philosophy is already white and blacks want, or have already created, black philosophy, then why can't there be mixed-race philosophy, too?

Botts evidently thinks there already is mixed-race philosophy, in writing the following in her own contribution to this volume:

Anthony Appiah and Naomi Zack brought this fact into philosophical discussion in the 1980s and 1990s, but at the time the fact that both of these philosophers were mixed race was not thematized and examined much in the literature. It was certainly well enough known (by their own admissions), of course, that Zack and Appiah both had parents of different races, but the link between this common heritage and their similar philosophical positions stressing that race was not a natural kind was not made. However, for me, the link between the mixed racial heritage of these philosophers and their insistence that race was not biologically real was glaringly obvious.

Wowie Zowie!!! Let me just point out that the lack of scientific foundation for racial categories that I used as the foundation for my work, was not based on research by mixed-race anthropologists and population geneticists.³ As far as I know, those folk were all white. (Some may have been Jewish, however. I don't mind if the connection between intellectual work and identity is followed into Jewish identities—because my mother was Jewish—but maybe that would not be a good place to go. The reason is that Jews, in the United States at least, have succeeded in disambiguating their previously racialized identities from their religious and cultural identities. After the Holocaust, Jews came to consider reference to themselves as a racial group to be a form of anti-Semitism.⁴)

Have we reached or gone back to a time in intellectual history when a thinker's racial identity is an explanation of what is expressed? How is that different from Immanuel Kant famously saying the following? "This fellow was quite black . . . a clear proof that what he said was stupid." While I don't think it's inevitable to read advocacy for a relation between a philosopher's racial identity and her philosophy in quite the extreme way I have interpreted Botts's insistence on what she takes to be "glaringly obvious," I do think it's something to be vigilant about.

Returning to the centrifugal-centripetal distinction, we have the two forces and can posit a curve (shaped by history) but it's not clear what the center is in the case of mixed race. The center could be race as an "unbound variable" to be filled in with specific mixed race identities, or the center could be philosophy, or the center could be something else. Taken

altogether, the foregoing writers give us a collage of the subject of mixed race as professional philosophers view it, in 2015, in the United States. Of course, mixed race is neither confined to the United States, nor to this particular time, nor to black and white mixed race (the most fraught "mix"). The collection also includes perspectives inflected by British, Caribbean, Asian, Native American, German, and Latin American, as well as generic American, experience. History is also often in mind and so is the future. But this anthology is being published in the United States and most who read it will read it against an American background that is outlined in black and white. So the American flavor of this anthology is part of the holistic mixed-race experience it relates and generates. I will return to this American flavor at the very end and say why I think it is the center, while proposing a different center.

In reflecting on what themes and views are expressed in these writings, as a whole, borrowing from Nietzsche, I want to proceed aphoristically, putting together passages from the chapters as follows, but—and with all due respect to the editor and publisher—under a slightly different title.

PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS OF THE MIXED-RACE EXPERIENCE

1. [You are invited to reconceptualize] multiracial identity as an identity and a movement that are called to repair (i.e., to act responsibly in the face of racism, to remember the history of race and the American family, and to engage in restorative justice in a society damaged by racism). Multiracial persons, and the movement that claims to look after their interests, have special obligations that are rooted in the very experience that leads individuals to claim this identity: their obligation to memory. The demands of memory lead us to seek repair, yet they also demand that multiracialism contribute to the repair of the damage wrought by racism.
2. "Night of Wonder," the *Guardian* declared on its front page the following day (July 28, 2012). Even responses that spoke of confusion, were interpreted in a positive light—'quirky,' 'wacky,' 'eccentric.' The prevailing sentiment to the mishmash celebration of culture, history and comedy seemed to be that director Danny Boyle put on a show that was quintessentially British. But something in that spectacular 2012 Opening Ceremony didn't sit well with me. Recall the portion of the ceremony in which two young women step out of their family home for a night out, leaving their white mother and black father waving goodbye at the door. One of the sisters, as we learn through texts which narrate this sequence, is single and becomes the focal point as she and the cast dance their way through contemporary British pop music and culture. Some-

thing about this picture of British multiculturalism seemed contrived and incongruent.

3. I have gone from firmly believing myself to have found an intellectual abode in the study and the practice of philosophy to being less confident of this belief, from experiencing the terrain as *terra firma* to *terra infirma*. In short, I have traveled from a place where it simply did not occur to me that philosophy was something to which I did not rightly belong, to a schizophrenic sense of wondering what I am doing here. I am increasingly conscious of my difference as a minority, a mixed race woman who defies pigeonholing by my colleagues, the administration, my students, other faculty of color, and so on. I am an anomaly on too many levels.
4. The not knowing that most people have about the existence of Mixed people is not a simple lack of knowledge. It is an intentional not knowing. It is not ignorance that can be fixed with information. Rather, it is a *hostile refusal* to know. It is a *repudiation of knowledge* rather than a lack of knowledge.

"There is no such thing as Mixed people!"

"We are all Mixed."

"Mixed doesn't mean anything."

"You are not Mixed, you are really X."

"Well, most people see you as Y, so it doesn't matter what you say you are!"

"You don't look Mixed."

"What is Mixed anyway? It's not a thing."

"Mixed? Mixed what with what? How much? How far back?"

"What are your parents?"

"Pick a race. You are just trying to avoid picking a race."

"Face reality."

5. I think I have always felt the way that many mixed race persons describe feeling; that is, like a perpetual stranger, always on the outside looking into the world, rather than being immersed in it; never feeling fully integrated into any particular frame of reference, or into what I like to call a particular system of intelligibility. To some extent, it seems to me that this feeling can be attributed to the philosopher's natural disposition, but in my case, I believe my mixed race identity has significantly contributed to that feeling. I want to say very clearly that this is an all-encompassing feeling, permeating all aspects of my life and who I am, including how I think, what my priorities are, how I choose to live, and how I interact or do not interact with others; and that this aspect of my mixed race experience is one that many mixed race persons have indicated to me that they share.
6. Whites are probably not comfortable with mixed black and whites, as such, but they are more comfortable with blacks who appear to

be "light-skinned blacks" than with blacks who have relatively dark skin. Mixed black and white people do now experience strong social and political pressure to identify as black, which is what most of them do. That pressure is probably as much the result of whites' felt needs to be racially "pure," both individually and as members of a "pure" race, as it expresses a white desire to keep mixed black and whites in the black group (with the lower status thereby implied). And the desire of those who are mixed black and white to live in solidarity with their black family members should also be kept in mind. The thin notion of race has not taken the place of the thick one, if only because someone who looks white, but has recent known black ancestry, would not be considered white by many whites. But the thin, skin-color notion of race is easier to use in sorting people, and it has the advantage of transnationality, which genealogy and group history, tied as they are to specific places, lack.

7. In North America, then, assimilationism and its heir apparent, cultural appreciation, have not led to a true mixing of races of cultures, or to an end to the relations of domination among cultures. However, interestingly, both the concept and practice of assimilation resonate very differently in South and Central America. . . . For Mexican philosophers such as Samuel Ramos and Leopoldo Zea, assimilation did not require conformity to a dominant norm; instead, assimilation was associated with an anti-xenophobic cosmopolitanism that sought to integrate diverse elements into a new formation.
8. Shared or unshared experiences, rooted in social classification or otherwise caused, only serve as occasions and opportunities to reflect, understand, and appreciate. This is far from conceding what we might call the "identitarian" claim that someone's membership in a (disadvantaged) race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or whatever ought to have pride of place in shaping her moral reasoning, opinions, feelings, and commitments. Still less does it lend support to the view that conforming to the opinions, preferences, and agenda of others in the group is a desideratum, let alone, a proper goal of action.
9. Since its beginning, my relationship with philosophy has been very personal, problem-centered, and exploratory. The abstraction and puzzles have never been the pull for me. While I originally came to philosophy expecting answers, I stayed for the expansive resources and deep personal insights. Researching Du Bois has provided me with permission to articulate my experience, even (and perhaps especially) when it is most uncertain, important, and personal. Researching Du Bois made my isolation bloom, gave me access to many borderlands, and helped me learn my limits. There is no

longer the search for the net, the resting place. As I stand now, there is only the promise of flux and the particularities that enable both difference and connection. Philosophy gave me the tools to listen and the courage to speak. Doing this very human, fragile work has given me the painful knowledge that I exist in a professional world with other *people*, that we make mistakes, that theories and arguments sometimes need to be mediated and healed over in order to be productive.

10. I conclude that, viewed in light of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, my own work seeks understanding rather than truth. My attempts to understand philosophical texts in my own research is a fusion of the horizon of my mixed race and multi-religious background that interacts with the horizon of the philosophical text itself to form a fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*) that is, in turn, a "truth" of sorts: the kind of truth that demands a perpetual struggle for justice between the interpreter and the text rather than some sort of certainty about what "truth" really is in itself. I thus attempt to reveal the ethical dimension of my research as a sort of epistemic humility in my approach to texts that fundamentally destabilizes the notion of a fixed, unitary subject with unmediated access to original meaning.
11. To be a mixed race person classified as black in America and to reject the moniker mixed race and race in general while still remaining hyper-vigilant of the ways in which the constructs of others become social facts that can and do affect one's life is to place oneself in an existentially untenable position. There are no non-racial designators to which one can appeal, except for one very inviolable phenomenon: the court of appeals of one's own mind and independent rational judgment. The concept of race is damaging in two ways. It is damaging not only because it creates arbitrary distinctions among people that assume the characteristics believed to cleave to race are indicative of a person's moral worth.⁵ The concept of race is equally damaging because its performance in the lives of individuals encourages a form of moral laziness and cowardice.

Here is what we have as the result of this initial centripetal effort, thus aphorized, but with the order rearranged:

Multiracialism should contribute to the memory and repair of racism. But we need to steer clear of superficial celebrations of mixed race people in popular culture. People in general exhibit a willful and hateful ignorance about the very existence of mixed-race individuals. The North American insistence that assimilation be conformity to dominant group norms does not exist in South American societies that allow for greater pluralities of identity. No matter what is known about human genealogy,

people generally come back to a system of skin color for sorting one another into hierarchical racial groups and treating them accordingly. The alienation accompanying mixed race experience is a form of withdrawal from human sociality that may be mirrored in the detachment of philosophy. But, philosophy and academic culture may at the same time include and alienate mixed-race people. However, racial identities and group membership cannot be the primary source of moral reasoning, feelings, opinions, or motives for action. While those with troubled mixed race identities may be drawn to philosophy for answers, philosophy does not provide settled or final truths. Still, philosophical truth relevant to mixed race may be found in a fusion of racial identity, religion, and certain texts. One's own mind and rational judgement should take ultimate precedence over pre-assigned social racial identities and programs associated with them.

Thus distilled, the final result of this volume is recognition of the difficulties of mixed race experience in life, philosophical ambivalence about the potential of philosophical work to ameliorate these difficulties, and a reassertion of enlightenment values of individual rationality and moral judgment. No one calls for support of mixed race identities as strong competitors to "pure" race identities. For that reason, I do not think that a grand theory of mixed race is either possible or desirable on the basis of the foregoing collection. There is no reason to think that the likely audience will accept it: those of "pure" race won't like it and those of mixed race will argue about it. But what is possible and doable, and which I do eagerly anticipate, is a theory of mixed-race as a philosophical subject. Only as a philosophical subject can such continuing debate be held together. However, a theory of mixed race as a philosophical subject will not provide the kind of solution to the difficulties of mixed-race real life experience that may be needed at this time in the United States.

Returning now to my promised end remarks about the American flavor and the center of the centrifugal and centripetal forces regarding mixed race. The center is now social racial hatred. It is a center of struggle, subject to its own centrifugal forces. That is the American flavor. Anti-black racism in the United States, from 2012 to 2015 has emerged as murderous white supremacist extermination, carried out by local police officers with legal impunity.⁶ The situation is so intense and extreme that only a mass murder, as in the June church killings in Charleston, by a youth whose mind was poisoned by white supremacist discourse, only something as obscenely destructive as that, is considered a "hate crime." And, officials and the majority of white Americans, who do not see "race" as the broad, institutional, deeply structured set of problems that it is, believe that such hate crimes are anomalous. Mixed race philosophers, as people, now react to that situation, centrifugally. Gathering their views together does not centripetal force make, because there is no positive center pertaining to race that could possibly hold them in.

What we need is a new center, neither of race nor agonistic philosophy, but of *humanism*. Without succumbing to a color-blind façade over continuing racism, we need a set of core values that everyone can agree upon and discuss, in a lower key than present discussions of any subject concerning race, either in philosophy or the real world. We need a balm that is more than a pain killer. I'm not saying that mixed-race people are uniquely privileged to provide it, because that would be too great a burden to place on any one racial or aspiring to-become-racial group. It just has to be there, for people of all races and non-races to quietly acknowledge and it might already be present, as follows: all anyone has on the closest level of experience is their own individual human life; an individual human life is finite; love is the most important theme in a life; the internal work of one's life has to be done, regardless of the external difficulties. I highly recommend, in this regard, Kazuo Ishiguro's 2005 novel, *Never Let Me Go*. It's about clones who have objectively tragic lives, because they are bred to donate their vital organs as young adults, until they "complete," then donate more body parts in a twilight zone of technical death, and are "turned off." Despite the sadness and cruel violence in this curve of their lives, the main characters of the novel gather together around a center of what is most important to them personally, subjectively, and intimately. You see, these clones have souls that love and remember, and that is their center. I am not advising withdrawal or quietude as a strategy for political or social change, but rather as a human center for any theory of race that might inspire work toward such change and also provide real security and meaning to individual human beings. I am suggesting that any theory of race that could provide human peace and solace, including a theory of mixed race, cannot rely on philosophy alone, or maybe even at all.

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NOTES

1. "Centrifugal Force v. Centripetal Force," Diffen-Compare Anything, accessed July 3, 2015, www.diffen.com/difference/Centrifugal_Force_vs_Centripetal_Force.

2. See, for instance, George Yancy's interview with John Caputo in the *New York Times*, "Looking White in the Face," The Stone, the Opinionator, *NYTimes*, July 2, 2015. opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/07/02/looking-white-in-the-face/?_r=0.

3. On the lack of independent scientific foundation for social racial categories, See Albert Atkin, *The Philosophy of Race* (Oxford, UK: Acumen, 2012); Nina G. Jablonski, *Living Color: The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2012); John Relethford, *The Human Species: An Introduction to Biological Anthropology* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009–2012); Naomi Zack, *Philosophy of Science and Race* (New York: Routledge, 2002). And for some more recent work see Rosenberg Lab at Stanford University, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.stanford.edu/group/rosenberglab/research.html>.

4. Naomi Zack, "On Being and Not Being Black and Jewish," in *The Multiracial Experience*, ed. Maria P. P. Root (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1996), 140–152.

5. The characteristics themselves are uncontroversially neutral. Only die-hard racists would hold the view that a person's race provides us not just interesting sociological facts but also morally salient information about a person's moral character, status and continued behavioral patterns.

6. Naomi Zack, *White Privilege and Black Rights: The Injustice of US Police Racial Profiling and Homicide* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).

Epilogue

Tina Fernandes Botts

When I first proposed to some of my mixed race colleagues that I thought there were themes in our work, and that I wanted to write about those themes, they had reactions ranging from intrigue to skepticism. Although we had an affinity based, in part, on our mixed race experiences, and on how those experiences shaped our experience of the profession of academic philosophy, each philosopher felt that his or her own work was unique and not reflective, necessarily, of any sort of mixed race *Weltanschauung* or worldview. But, I insisted that we explore this matter further, and arranged for a few of us to have a meeting at the 2011 Central APA. We met there and discussed the idea of an anthology that would include the work of mixed race philosophers. We developed a list of contributors that included ourselves, but also the mixed race philosophers who came before us, such as Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. DuBois, Adrian Piper, Kwame Anthony Appiah, and Lewis Gordon, among others. As we began to discuss the beginnings of what might become a mixed race theory, we also discussed including theorists who were more novelists and poets than philosophers, as well as theoretically-inclined social scientists. This larger list included Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, Nella Larsen, Anatole Broyard, and Michelle Elam. At the close of the meeting, there was no consensus on whether anything on the order of a mixed race theory could be developed from our work (and the work of other mixed race theorists of our time), nor on whether we should pursue an anthology designed around such a theory. After our meeting, and after discussing the matter with trusted colleagues and mentors, I decided to table the idea of an anthology collecting the work of mixed race philosophers for a while.

But, then, the idea came to me that I could put together an anthology of the work of mixed race philosophers without stating definitively that anything on the order of a mixed race theory could be developed. I could simply collect the work together and let it speak for itself. I decided that, at this early stage of developing what might become a mixed race theory, it was not as important that the theory was well worked out, as it was important to just collect the work together. A reviewer of my book proposal then recommended that each contributor be urged (but not required)

to reflect specifically upon how the contributor's mixed race experience might have affected the contributor's philosophical workproduct. One result of this urging was my own chapter 5 of this volume. Then, as I read through the contributions of my colleagues, my initial instinct that there was something unique and philosophically interesting about what mixed race philosophers had to say resurfaced. I thought it important to record my initial thoughts on this topic, even if these thoughts never develop into something more substantial. The result was the editor's introduction to this volume: my fledgling attempt at beginning to think about what might be a mixed race theory.

And so, I leave the readers of this volume to their own thoughts. Given the essays in this volume, and any thoughts that may have arisen as you read them, is there anything on the order of a (coherent or not so coherent) mixed race vantage point coming out of the experiences of mixed black and white persons within the black-white binary in the United States? And if so, does this vantage point set the stage for a broader theory based on that vantage point? I encourage you not only to think about this question, but also to discuss it with each other, and to think about and discuss, as well, what that vantage point (if it exists)—and any content that might be generated from that vantage point—might have to tell us about various classical and contemporary philosophical questions and/or the way we go about examining or addressing those questions.

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Contributor Biographies

Linda Martín Alcoff is professor of philosophy at Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center. Martín Alcoff has degrees from Georgia State University and Brown University, and has held positions at Syracuse University, SUNY Stony Brook, and Kalamazoo College, and visiting appointments at Cornell, Brown, Florida Atlantic University, and the University of Aarhus. Her writings have focused on social identity and race, epistemology and politics, sexual violence, Foucault, Dussel, and Latino issues in philosophy. She has written two books: *Visible Identities: Race, Gender and the Self* (Oxford, 2006), *Real Knowing: New Versions of the Coherence Theory* (Cornell, 1996); and she has edited ten, including *Feminist Epistemologies* co-edited with Elizabeth Potter (Routledge, 1993); *Thinking from the Underside of History* co-edited with Eduardo Mendieta (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000); *Epistemology: The Big Questions* (Blackwell, 1998); *Identities* co-edited with Eduardo Mendieta (Blackwell, 2002); *Singing in the Fire: Tales of Women in Philosophy* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); *The Blackwell Guide to Feminist Philosophy* co-edited with Eva Feder Kittay (Blackwell, 2006); *Identity Politics Reconsidered* co-edited with Michael Hames-Garcia, Satya Mohanty, and Paula Moya (Palgrave, 2006); *Constructing the Nation: A Race and Nationalism Reader* co-edited with Mariana Ortega (SUNY, 2009); *Saint Paul among the Philosophers* co-edited with Jack Caputo (Indiana, 2009); *Feminism, Sexuality, and the Return of Religion* co-edited with Jack Caputo (Indiana, 2011). She is currently at work on two new books: a book on sexual violence, and an account of future of white identity. She is a co-editor of *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*. She has held an ACLS fellowship, a Society for the Humanities at Cornell University fellowship, and she was named one of Syracuse University's first Meredith Professors for Teaching Excellence. She was president of the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division, for 2012–2013, and has also served on its Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, Program Committee, Committee on the Status of Women, and as chair of the Committee on Hispanics/Latinos. She also served as co-director of SPEP (the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy). She was named the Distinguished Woman in Philosophy for 2005 by the Society for Women in Philosophy, and in 2006 she was named one of the 100 Most Influential Hispanics in the United States by *Hispanic Business* magazine. In September 2011 she was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Oslo. Her book *Visible*

Identities won the Frantz Fanon Award in 2009. She is originally from Panama, but lives today happily in Brooklyn. For more information, go to www.alcoff.com.

Gabriella Beckles-Raymond received her M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Memphis. She is currently a lecturer in the Theology and Religious Studies Department at Canterbury Christ Church University. Drawing on her multidisciplinary background, her research aims to broaden philosophical discussions of race and gender in Britain. She is working on a book about the politics of mixedness in Britain and will soon begin a project co-editing a women of color anthology for a feminist philosophy series for Pickering & Chatto Publishers. Dr. Beckles-Raymond is from northwest London, and currently resides there with her family. She earned a B.S. in psychology (2000) and M.A. in sociology (2004) from Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland, where she also served as an administrator, developing and managing campus-wide support services for undergraduate students. Gabriella also has a P.G.C.E. in secondary education (2001) from the Institute of Education, University of London.

Tina Fernandes Botts received a Ph.D. in philosophy (and a graduate certificate in gender studies) from the University of Memphis, a J.D. from Rutgers University Law School, Camden, and a B.A. in philosophy from the University of Maryland, College Park. She is visiting assistant professor of philosophy and Consortium for Faculty Diversity in Liberal Arts Colleges Postdoctoral Fellow at Oberlin College. In 2014–2015, she was fellow in law and philosophy at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Professor Botts's scholarship centers on using the tools of philosophical hermeneutics to reexamine and reinterpret laws and other social, political, metaphysical, and epistemological paradigms in ways that fairly account for the marginalized and oppressed, particularly racialized minority groups. In addition to editing the current volume, Botts's publications include, "Antidiscrimination Law and the Multiracial Experience: A Reply to Nancy Leong," *10 Hastings Poverty Law Journal* 191, Summer 2013; "Hermeneutics, Race, and Gender," in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, Jeff Malpas and Hans-Helmuth Gander, eds., London: Taylor and Francis, 2014; "Multiracial Americans and Racial Discrimination," in *Race Policy and Multiracial Americans*, Kathleen Korgen, ed., Bristol, UK: Policy Press, January 13, 2016; and "Women of Color Feminisms," with Rosemarie Tong in the fourth edition of Westview's *Feminist Thought*, 2013. She is currently at work on a monograph, *The Concept of Race, Aristotle's Proportional Equality, and Equal Protection Law*, a philosophical inquiry into the simultaneous erosion of equal protection of the laws for African Americans and the rise of the concept of biological

race in equal protection jurisprudence, as well as co-authorship, with Rosemarie Tong, of the fifth edition of *Feminist Thought*.

J. L. A. Garcia is professor in Boston College's Philosophy Department. After earning a doctorate at Yale (1980), he was associate professor in the philosophy departments of Notre Dame and Georgetown, professor in Rutgers's (New Brunswick), senior research scholar in Georgetown's Kennedy Institute of Ethics, and, in 2007, visiting professor in MIT's Department of Linguistics & Philosophy. His work earned postdoctoral fellowships from Ford Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Harvard's professional ethics program (now its Safran Center for Ethics), and Boston University, and he was nonresident fellow in Harvard's DuBois Institute for African-American Research. Garcia's research—on virtues-based and intention-sensitive ethical theory, moral law and obligation, euthanasia and artificial nutrition, deserving, the nature and morality of racism, the ethics of social identity, and other topics in moral and social philosophy—has appeared internationally in such journals as *Philosophy & Phenomenological Research*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Erkenntnis*, *Mind*, *Philosophical Studies*, *Synthese*, *Critica*, *Dialogos*, *Philosophical Papers*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, and *Faith and Philosophy*; in edited topical collections from university presses including those at Oxford, Cambridge, Cornell, Georgetown, and Notre Dame; as well as in *Encyclopedia of Ethics*, *Encyclopedia of Bioethics*, *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, and other reference works. His article "The Heart of Racism" has been reprinted in several books and is being translated into French for inclusion in a Parisian volume. His writing reached wider readership in *Logos*, *Books & Culture*, *Society*, *New Oxford Review*, and *First Things*. Garcia has given invited talks at Cambridge, Columbia, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and other universities, and consulted for NEH, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Education, Smithsonian Institution, National Science Foundation, National Research Council, American Council of Learned Societies, and the European Research Council. Past member of the executive boards of the Society of Christian Philosophers (SCP), University Faculty for Life, and the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association (APA), he has served on APA's Committee on Hispanics and chaired its Committee on Philosophy & Black Experience. He has sat on advisory boards for the journal Logos and Notre Dame's Center for Ethics and Culture, was vice president of the Society for the Study of Africana Philosophy in NYC, and participated in the Dulles, Erasmus, and Ramsey colloquia held there by the late Fr. Neuhaus's Institute on Religion & Public Life. He is lifetime member of American Maritain Association, Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, and American Catholic Philosophical Association (ACPA). In 2015, he also serves ACPA on its Executive Committee and Executive Council, and as its president.

Timothy J. Golden is professor of philosophy at Walla Walla University, where he also serves as director of the Pre-Law Program. He holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Memphis, and a J.D. from the Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law, where he served on the editorial board of the *Thurgood Marshall Law Review*. His areas of specialization are nineteenth- and twentieth-century continental philosophy, philosophy of religion/philosophical theology, and African-American philosophy/Critical Race Theory. He is the author of *Frederick Douglass and the Philosophy of Religion* (Lexington Books, Under Contract), *Subjectivity, Transcendence, and the Problem of Onto-Theology* (Palgrave Macmillan, Under Contract), and he is the editor of both *Racism and Resistance: Essays on Derrick Bell* (SUNY Press, Under Contract), and *Solidarity, Striving, and Struggle: The Moral, Political, and Religious Thought of Frederick Douglass* (co-edited with Cynthia Nielsen) (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Under Contract). His book chapters include "Two Forms of Transcendence: Justice and the Problem of Knowledge," in *Pursuing Trayvon Martin: Historical Contexts and Contemporary Manifestations of Racial Dynamics* (Lexington Books, 2012), and "Morality, Art, and the Self: Existentialism in Frederick Douglass and Søren Kierkegaard," in *Existential Thought in African-American Literature Before 1940: Existentialism in the Flesh* (ed. Melvin Hill) (Lexington Books, Under Contract). Among his journal essays are "Epistemic Addiction: Reading 'Sonny's Blues' with Levinas, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche," in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (2012), and "From Epistemology to Ethics: Theoretical and Practical Reason in Kant and Douglass," in the *Journal of Religious Ethics* (2012).

Jason D. Hill was educated at Purdue University. His areas of specialization are ethics, social and political philosophy, cosmopolitanism, philosophical psychology, philosophy of education, and race theory. Areas of competence are: twentieth-century analytic philosophy, comparative literature. Professor Hill is a pioneer in the field of strong cosmopolitanism known widely as post-human or species cosmopolitanism. He has lectured and taught extensively on the subject in the United States, Europe, and Asia. From 2010 to 2012, a consortium of four universities in England held a series of conferences devoted to Professor Hill's post-human cosmopolitanism and adopted the moral vision contained therein as part of their mission statements. Professor Hill is the author of three books: *Becoming a Cosmopolitan: What It Means to be a Human Being in the New Millennium* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000; Paperback Edition, 2011); *Beyond Blood Identities: Post Humanity in the 21st Century* (Lexington Books, 2009), <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=20028>; and *Civil Disobedience and the Politics of Identity: When We Should Not Get Along* (Palgrave MacMillan, May 2013). He was a 1999–2000 Society for the Humanities Fellow at Cornell University, and the Wicklander Fellow in Business and Profes-

sional Ethics, DePaul University, 2007–2008. He is the author of a forthcoming novel called *Jamaica Boy in Search of America*. His poetry has also been published in sundry literary journals. His scholarly articles have been published in anthologies and journals in Germany, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands. In addition, he has written for various magazines and newspapers in which he has brought the tenets of cosmopolitanism to a wide audience. He has been interviewed regularly in various media outlets from NBC's *Today Show*, to Wisconsin, Chicago, Toronto, Atlanta, San Francisco, and New York public radio. He is deeply committed to moral foundationalism, moral universalism, and the absolutism of reason. Professor Hill is currently working on two new books: *Goddesses of Death: Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton and the Moral Meaning of Suicide* and *The Cosmopolitan Morality and What It Requires of Us: A Philosophy of Friendship and Harmonious Living*. Other books in progress are: *Towards a Neo-Liberal Cosmopolitan Business Ethics* and *Fatalism and Alienation in the Victorian Novel*.

Marina Oshana is professor of philosophy at the University of California, Davis. Professor Oshana was born and raised in Philadelphia. A first-generation college student, she put herself through school, earning a B.A. and M.A. in philosophy at San Francisco State University and a Ph.D. at the University of California, Davis. Professor Oshana's research focuses on issues in personal autonomy, responsible agency, and self-identity. She teaches classes in normative ethics, moral psychology, philosophy of law, and feminism. At Davis, she has devoted her time to mentoring undergraduate students, and particularly women, in philosophy. Her publications include *Personal Autonomy in Society* (Ashgate, 2006) and *The Importance of How We See Ourselves: Self-Identity and Responsible Agency* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2010). Professor Oshana integrates her teaching interests into her research projects. Recent papers, including "Autonomy and the Partial Birth Abortion Act" (*Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol. 42, No. 1, Spring 2011, pp. 46–60), "Secondhand (Moral) Responsibility in Law," in *Free Will and Moral Responsibility*, ed. Ishtiyaque Haji and Justin Caouette (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), and "Trust and Autonomous Agency" (*Res Philosophica*, July 2014) grew out of work done in philosophy of law classes. Her publications on self-identity developed from seminars on responsible agency and on the self. Professor Oshana's work has been widely hailed as furthering the dialogue about personal autonomy as a social and relational phenomenon. Recently, Professor Oshana has been delving more closely into the possibility of autonomy under conditions of oppression. She is editor of *Personal Autonomy and Social Oppression: Philosophical Perspectives* (forthcoming, Routledge, 2014).

Celena Simpson is currently working toward her Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Oregon. While her broader interests include feminist, indigenous, and Asian philosophies, her work primarily focuses on philosophical issues regarding mixed race, politics, and identity in late nineteenth- and twentieth-century African American philosophy. She has given several conference presentations on Du Bois, mixed race, feminism, and indigenous philosophy, and has published "Du Bois's Dubious Feminism: Evaluating through the Black Flame" in the *Pluralist*. Under the guidance of Naomi Zack, her dissertation project aims to provide a re-reading of W. E. B. Du Bois as a mixed-race intellectual, and to use the resources of this reading to better understand and navigate contemporary issues in mixed race identities and politics. She plans to complete her degree by 2016.

Ronald Robles Sundstrom is a professor of philosophy at the University of San Francisco; additionally, he is a member of the university's African American Studies program and has taught in the Master of Public Affairs program for the Leo T. McCarthy Center of Public Service and the Common Good. In 2009 he was given the Ignatian Service Award for his service to the university, and in 2010 he was the co-winner of the USF Distinguished Teaching Award. His areas of research include race theory, political and social theory, and African American philosophy. He published several essays and a book in these areas, including *The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice* (SUNY, 2008). His work related to multiracial identity includes "Being & Being Mixed Race" (*Social Theory and Practice*, 2001), "Responsible Mixed-Race Politics" (*The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice*, 2008), "Mixed-Looks" (*Contemporary Aesthetics*, 2009), and "Fevered Desires and Interracial Intimacies in Jungle Fever" (*The Philosophy of Spike Lee*, 2011). His current work is on egalitarianism and democracy, and concentrates on segregation and housing policy.

Jennifer Lisa Vest received her Ph.D. in ethnic studies and philosophy from the University of California, Berkeley, her M.A. in history from Howard University, and her B.A. in physics from Hampshire College. Following the receipt of her doctorate, she was awarded a two-year post-doctoral Fellowship at UCLA at the Center for the Study of Women. Dr. Vest is currently an archivist at Sovereign Wisdom Consulting Services as well as a performing artist and lecturer at Mixed Messages Productions. She was an associate professor of philosophy and humanities at the University of Central Florida in academic year 2011–2012 and was an assistant professor there from 2004 to 2010. Prior to these appointments, she was an assistant professor at Seattle University, a film archivist at the American Indian Film Institute, and an archives manager at the African American Cultural Center. Her areas of specialization are Native

American philosophy and history, African philosophy, feminist studies, and a unique blend of philosophy and poetry she calls *philopoetics*.

Naomi Zack received her Ph.D. in philosophy from Columbia University. Zack has taught at the University at Albany, SUNY, and has been professor of philosophy at the University of Oregon since 2001. Her latest book is *The Ethics and Mores of Race: Equality after the History of Philosophy* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2011). Zack's recent books are *Ethics for Disaster* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2009 and 2010), *Inclusive Feminism: A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality*, and *The Handy Answer Philosophy Book* (Visible Ink Press, 2010). Zack's earlier books include: *Race and Mixed Race* (Temple, 1993); *Bachelors of Science* (Temple, 1996); *Philosophy of Science and Race* (Routledge, 2002), and the short textbook *Thinking about Race* (Thomson Wadsworth, 2nd edition, 2006). Zack has also published numerous articles and book chapters and spoken widely about race and feminism. Her work on disaster ethics has been received internationally, including at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in 2011 and the United Nations University in Tokyo in 2012. She was invited to present a keynote address at a conference on disaster justice at the Faculty of Law and COST, University of Copenhagen, in February 2014. Zack's book in progress is *A Theory of Applicative Justice*. On behalf of the Community Philosophy Institute of the UO Philosophy Department, Zack is organizing a project on home and homelessness, which includes the multimedia website: <http://homelessness.philosophy.uoregon.edu/>.