

We Who Must Fight in the Shade: Derrick Bell's Philosophy of Racial Realism as the basis of a Black Politics of Disempowerment.

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*A rather curious change of emphasis has caught my attention recently. Negroes are being accused of racism, that is, of unduly emphasizing racial differences and of advocating racial separation. This would be laughable if it did not have so serious a side. A shattered and almost fatally divided world now making desperate effort to envision humanity bound together in peace and at least with some approach to brotherhood is being warned that its worst victims are contemplating resurgence of race hate!*

W.E.B. DuBois—1962

## Introduction

Despite the undeniable failure of integration and multiculturalism, race theory in philosophy continues to endorse a dilapidated hope in liberal democracy that ignores the historic and systemic racism of American society.<sup>1</sup> Current theories about race focus on its socially constructed nature—its contingency rather than the actual effect(s) racism has had and continues to have on the lives of African-descended people in America. In philosophy, the tendency to privilege “race” over “racism” is particularly worrisome, as current writings on the question of race remain dedicated to fulfilling the unrealized promises of integration. Despite the work of scholars outside of philosophy like Michelle Alexander’s concrete articulation of the “New Jim Crow,” or the maintenance of America’s racial caste system through mass incarceration,<sup>2</sup> or Barbara J. Field’s interrogation of the historical complexity that emerges from the ideological limitations of the race construct in analyzing American racism, our present day philosophical engagements with race propagate a conceptually simplistic view that sees race as a problem able to be solved through dialogue and inter-racial understanding. Ignoring the various social and legal manifestations of anti-Black racism that show the regression of race relations in America, rather than progress,<sup>3</sup> this dogma calls for a peaceful coexistence between Blacks and whites in which the long denied humanity of Black people are recognized in exchange for Blacks interiorizing America’s liberal creed of (racial) equality, (Black) individuality, and (African-American) progress.

Rather than reacting against the liberal conceptualization of American race relations as gradual and naturally progressing towards the resolution of anti-Black racism, the dominant mode of Black political thought seeks to revise Black thinkers doubtful of the possibility that racial equality is possible in America into optimists who saw equal rights under racial integrationism as inevitable. Recent political works in Black philosophy and race theory like Tommie Shelby’s *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity*, Elizabeth Anderson’s *The Imperative of Integration*, and Eddie Glaude’s *In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America* follow this mode of uncritically privileging the idea that integration and racial coexistence are the *only* means of dealing with the racial inequalities that persist in the United States. By contrast, Peniel E. Joseph’s *Dark Days, Bright Nights: From Black Power to Barack Obama* and *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking Civil Rights—Black Power Era* points out the ironic, but expected popularity of such scholarship, since these theorizations, and the ideological perspectives current scholars hold vary to great degree from the reflections on American racism presented in the majority of works Black thinkers have penned from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to present. Despite the prevalence of Black Power style Nationalism, and radical (systemic) critiques of white supremacy and anti-Black racism’s permanence in these works, today, “Black philosophers primarily rely on the promises of American liberalism and the hopes of democracy in the post-Civil rights era to fundamentally change the racial context of the United States and remedy individual attachments to

racial loyalties,”<sup>4</sup> rather than seriously dealing with the seeming permanence of American racism and theorizing from this actuality.

Over two decades ago, Derrick Bell introduced a seemingly radical thesis to a white academic community convinced that the Civil Rights Movement had effectively eliminated racism. According to Bell,

Black people will never gain full equality in this country. Even those Herculean efforts we hail as successful will produce no more than temporary “peaks of progress,” short-lived victories that slide into irrelevance as racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain white dominance. This is a hard-to-accept fact that all history verifies. We must acknowledge it and move on to adopt policies based on what I call: “Racial Realism.” This mind-set or philosophy requires us to acknowledge the permanence of our subordinate status.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the seemingly nihilistic tone of Bell’s announcement, this idea—that racism is permanent—can be found in the most of the writings of the Black intellectuals (like T. Thomas Fortune and Henry McNeal Turner) and Black nationalists of the mid-1800’s (like Martin R. Delany and John E. Bruce), even W.E.B. DuBois rejects *Brown* as a signal of racial transformation in the 1950’s. Historically, the admittance of racism’s permanence has been the hallmark of Black thought in America. Despite the attention that integrationist ideas have received in contemporary works of Black political thought,<sup>6</sup> there has been a constant and more richly developed strand of Black thought that maintains the impossibility of persuading whites of Black people’s humanity and accepts the permanence of American anti-Black racism and white supremacy.

Today, however, most thinkers dealing with the race question are motivated by the Pyrrhic successes of *Brown* versus the Board of Education and the Civil Rights Era,<sup>7</sup> choosing to read into historic Black works contemporary ideas of integrationism and racial ethics, as if the insights of Black authors who wrote during slavery and Reconstruction illuminate current racial issues in America only insofar as they enrich the racial success stories of liberalism and the possibility of racial amelioration under American democracy. If Black political theory is to move beyond the current apologetic revisionism of historic Black thinkers—a revisionism set on depicting even the most adamant nationalists as closet integrationists—Black political theory must begin to exert new energies toward theorizing about the political and social inequality that Blacks currently endure, which means both creating a discussion in Black social political philosophy open to the possibility of permanent racial inequality in the United States, and engaging in a more diligent and earnest reading of Black resistance outside of the *political aims* of American liberalism and integration’s racial moralizations. It is my hope that the introduction of Derrick Bell’s work into the Black political arena hastens this detaching of decades old ideology of civil rights era integrationism.

This paper intends to convey four theoretical contributions to our current understandings of racism in the post-civil rights era. First, I want to question the mainstay tradition of Black social/political philosophy and race theory that continues to celebrate liberalism as a vehicle for racial progress. Following the work of Derrick Bell, I maintain that this is in a very real sense an unjustifiable romanticization of the Civil Rights Era, specifically the effect of *Brown v. Board* on American race relations. Second, I want to clarify Derrick’s position on liberalism and a means through which Black political theorists can distance themselves from this dogma of integrationism which I term “conceptual disengagement.” Third, I argue that this disengagement would allow Black scholars to better understand the relationship that W.E.B. DuBois points out to Black Americans in accepting minuscule political privileges when the consequence of such luxuries is the furthering of American imperialism and the capitalist exploitation of the darker races the world over. Lastly, I am interested in presenting a contrasting political theory rooted in the disempowerment of white supremacist institutions and structures of American society.

### Chastising the Idealism of *Brown v. Board of Education*: Bell's Indebtedness to Robert L. Carter's Pessimism of *Brown*.

“In its first words, on the subject of citizenship, Congress in 1790 limited naturalization to ‘white persons.’ Though the requirements for naturalization changed frequently thereafter, this racial prerequisite to citizenship endured for over a century and a half, remaining in force until 1952”.<sup>8</sup> Even today, “America is at best a desegregated society,”<sup>9</sup> where desegregation is largely not true in most cities in the U.S. Though many liberal thinkers hold on to the possibility of asserting equality in the socio-legal structures of American society, the truth of the matter is that most courts, legal scholars, and institutions are explicitly rejecting the message and reformist impressions of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Despite the moral conscience that the *Brown* decision has allegedly awakened in the minds of whites, *Brown* was never meant to identify or punish whites who maintained communal segregation and social discrimination on a racial basis. Even in its second adjudication the Supreme Court reified its long standing principles that law, especially the Fourteenth amendment, should not dictate the right of whites’ association or eradicate racism.<sup>10</sup>

The Court’s reluctance to mandate desegregation against the interests of whites made Alexander Bickel’s opinions on *Brown* prophetic—as a legal precedent *Brown* was indeed slipping into irrelevance. Whites were not seen as criminals, racism was not prohibited, and the re-socialization of whites from racists to “morally competent citizens” fell on the shoulders of compulsory education.<sup>11</sup> According to Bell, “viewed from the perspective provided by four decades, the Court says now that *Brown* was basically a call for a higher morality rather than a judicial decree authorizing Congress to coerce behavior allegedly unjust to blacks...”<sup>12</sup> Despite the moralizations that now accompany discussions of race and racism in American, it must be admitted that the patterns of white supremacy and the institutions necessary for its enforcement remain unaffected by the graces of *Brown v. Board’s* racial etiquette. As Robert L. Carter remarked a decade after *Brown*,

Brown's indirect consequences, therefore, have been awesome. It has completely altered the style, the spirit, and the stance of race relations. Yet the pre-existing pattern of white superiority and black subordination remains unchanged; indeed, it is now revealed as a national rather than a regional phenomenon. Thus, *Brown* has promised more than it could give, and therefore has contributed to black alienation and bitterness, to a loss of confidence in white institutions, and to the growing racial polarization of our society...Few in the country, black or white, understood in 1954 that racial segregation was merely a symptom, not the disease; that the real sickness is that our society in all of its manifestations is geared to the maintenance of white superiority.<sup>13</sup>

Carter’s comments should come as no surprise given the political interests motivating desegregation in the 1950’s. *Brown*, rather than being an indication of America’s evolution in social conscience, was an anticommunist decision superficially “aimed at eliminating the constitutional justification of state-sponsored racial segregation”<sup>14</sup> in recognition of the “nation’s need to strengthen its argument that democratic government was superior to its communist alternative.”<sup>15</sup>

According to Mary Dudziak, both Justice William O. Douglas and Chief Justice Earl Warren were well aware of the international implications of the *Brown* decision.<sup>16</sup> The unanimous decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* was a political concession geared towards the preservation of U.S. credibility and U.S. soft power during the Cold War.

One need not look far to find vintage '50s Cold War ideology in primary historical documents relating to *Brown*. For example, the amicus brief filed in *Brown* by the U.S. Justice Department argued that desegregation was in the national interest in part due to foreign policy concerns. According to the Department, the case was important because “[t]he United States is trying to prove to the people of the world, of every nationality, race and color, that a free democracy is the most civilized and most secure form of government yet devised by man.” Following the decision,

newspapers in the United States and throughout the world celebrated *Brown* as a "blow to communism" and as a vindication of American democratic principles. As was true in so many other contexts during the Cold War era, anticommunist ideology was so pervasive that it set the terms of the debate on all sides of the civil rights issue.

In addition to its important consequences for U.S. race relations, *Brown* served U.S. foreign policy interests. The value of a clear Supreme Court statement that segregation was unconstitutional was recognized by the State Department. Federal government policy on civil rights issues during the Truman Administration was framed with the international implications of U.S. racial problems in mind. And through a series of amicus briefs detailing the effect of racial segregation on U.S. foreign policy interests, the Administration impressed upon the Supreme Court the necessity for world peace and national security of upholding black civil rights at home.<sup>17</sup>

Within one hour of the decision in *Brown*, Voice of America was sending out news casts stating that the issue was settled under democratic processes of law rather than dictatorial fiat, confirming not only the superficial nature of the decision but pointing to the interest convergence of white political appeals. Juicing *Brown* for all the propaganda it was worth, the United States Information Service had even arranged to have films showing Blacks and whites going to school together in India. According to Dudziak, "U.S. State Department files from the period are full of reports from the field that racial problems in the United States harmed U.S. relations with particular nations and compromised the nation's Cold War objectives."<sup>18</sup> Even though we may admit the introduction of new equality rhetoric in American race relations, it must nonetheless be admitted that "Cold War concerns provided a motive beyond equality itself for the federal government, including the president and the courts, to act on civil rights when it did."<sup>19</sup> This admittance fundamentally changes the status of political equality and changes the place of the measure attending to this progress. While Bell compels Blacks to recognize *Brown* as an illusion that is at best a symbolic gesture, Dudziak ultimately concludes that her work is simply a contribution to the academic historiography of the decision. Her most recent essay on *Brown* was "a long way of saying that *Brown* belongs in the Cold War chapter of American legal history...It also helps us see...an important element to look for elsewhere...other border points where the domestic and foreign become intertwined, other moments when judicial moorings in domestic affairs shifted when moved by international currents."<sup>20</sup> Though many of Dudziak's works have been championed at cutting edge in the history of jurisprudence, it is Bell's analysis of *Brown* that deserves more consideration in philosophical treatments of American racism.

For Bell, the contradictions in the agendas of American civil rights reveal the stratagems of American jurisprudence; exposing civil rights legislation for what it is—the sporadic deployment of racial symbols used to pacify Blacks. Racial symbols "have been the mainstay of blacks' faith that some day they will truly be free in this land of freedom. Not just holidays, but most of our civil rights statues and court decisions have been more symbol than enforceable law."<sup>21</sup> These laws, while praised for their racial enlightenment, are hardly enforceable and never seem to live up to their promises of social transformation. To assume then that the nature of race relations have fundamentally changed or can be challenged on the basis of democratic ideals and good faith individuals is to ignore the legacy of "racial progress" in line with practical white values and political interests in this country, and uncritically impose the gradualist narrative on a people suffering from racism as if the future of promise lies in their ability to see the moments of amelioration proleptically.

Recognizing the illusion of *Brown v. Board* and the delusional content of integrationism is necessary to make genuine attempts at political and social transformation from the position of Blacks in the United States. Despite popular proclamations, "racism and liberalism are as intertwined in American history as they are antithetical."<sup>22</sup> Whereas many Black scholars still believe in the anomaly thesis or the idea that "American are all good people; whites are slowly changing their ways, and Negroes are slowly coming into full possession of their liberal democratic heritage,"<sup>23</sup> Critical Race Theorists urge Black thinkers to reconsider the naiveté held in failing to acknowledge the normalness of American racism.

Because the Brown decision is celebrated as the triumph of legal liberalism and unjustifiably framed the foundations many Black political philosophers take as “necessary” to our thought, our theorizations about the actual conditions of racism continue to be dependent on the idea that courts can lead social change, and that Black civil rights struggles for civil rights translates into a societal effort towards anti-discrimination. According to legal historian Dr. Kenneth W. Mack,

The *Brown* litigation has become the lodestar for a "legal liberal" interpretation of civil rights history. Its core elements have become familiar: courts as the primary engines of social transformation; formal conceptual categories such as rights and formal remedies such as school desegregation decrees, as the principal mechanisms for accomplishing that change; and a focus on reforming public institutions (or, in some versions, public and private institutions without much distinction) as a means of transforming the larger society. Legal liberalism, of course, is an ideal type, and scholars have given varying emphases to its core elements in their accounts of civil rights law and politics. Nonetheless, the legal history of civil rights has been written with the *Brown* decision at its centerpiece, telling the story, in effect, of the antecedents and consequences of *Brown*. Civil rights history remains, at its core, the story of how African-American communities, and the lawyers and organizations that supported them, struggled to overturn *Plessy v. Ferguson*,<sup>4</sup> attack de jure segregation, produce the triumph of legal liberalism in *Brown*, and effectively implement *Brown's* antidiscrimination mandate.<sup>24</sup>

While many readers may decide the historical evidence given here differently, Bell’s exposure of interest convergence in *Brown v. Board* challenges the basis of how Black social political philosophy operates, since it is on the celebrated interpretation of racial transformation and the triumphalism of the civil rights movement that most of our contemporary works are based. Despite being ignored by Black political philosophy, Bell’s thinking is a profound formulation of the ideas articulated by W.E.B. DuBois during the civil rights era.

### **If I Could Turn Back the Hands of Time: DuBois on the Political Economics of U.S Imperialism and Cold War Tactics.**

It is the common practice of white disciplines to distance (sanitize) Black figures like W.E.B. DuBois from Black intellectual traditions taken to be “overly ideological.”<sup>25</sup> The academic narrative where radical Black attacks against the foundations of American society are described as opposed to and inconsistent with the popular perceptions of cherished Black icons like DuBois, Martin Luther King, and Fredrick Douglass gives the illusion of institutional legitimacy to this censoring dynamic. Despite the rise of nationalist political philosophies rooted in the rejection of civil rights era integrationism amongst once moderate Black thinkers, like Ralphe Bunche, who developed the theory of Black-ism,<sup>26</sup> and Martin Luther King Jr., who called for a “revolution of values,” amidst the spread of white supremacy globally, or Black social scientists like E. Franklin Frazier, Harold Cruse, and W.E.B. DuBois, Derrick Bell’s assaults upon *Brown v. Board of Education* jurisprudence and America’s myth of racial triumphalism is cast off as an ideological pessimism and delusional extremism by most scholars. Rather than extremism or ideology, Bell’s position mirrors the concerns of W.E.B. DuBois during desegregation and what we now refer to as the post-civil rights era.

In the “Postlude” to DuBois’s *Soliloquy*, DuBois rejects the plausibility of America’s democratic project saying that “democracy is for us to a large extent unworkable.”<sup>27</sup> For DuBois, the failure of American democracy was rooted in its commodification of all aspects of life as imperial capital. Freedom, love, justice, all became bought and sold in an economy dedicated to the preservation of white supremacy through war, and the ownership of dark lands and the bodies (labor) that occupied them. Acquiescence to this capitalist drive was the over-arching danger of desegregation and the myth of racial equality. In a short editorial entitled, “American Negroes and Africa’s Rise to Freedom,” DuBois argued, as “negroes therefore slowly turned to a new ideal: to strive for equality as American citizens...[they]learned from

their environment to think less and less of their fatherland and its folk. They learned little of its history or its present conditions. They began to despise the colored races along with white Americans and to acquiesce in color prejudice.”<sup>28</sup> Equality, the sacred ideal offered to Blacks as a reward for their loyalty to the American state, was a Pyrrhic victory. On the one hand, Blacks became citizens, but on the other they became capitalists—duty bound exploiters—hoping that the political designation of citizenship would fundamentally change their modernist designation as laborer.

DuBois understood the superficiality of desegregation, and recognized that *Brown vs. Board* was the result of international geopolitical pressures, rather than a change in the moral conscience of whites. In short, “no such decision would have been possible without the world pressure of communism led by the Soviet Union.”<sup>29</sup> DuBois is even more adamant as to the dangers of *Brown v. Board*. In “[w]hites in Africa after Negro Autonomy,” DuBois warns,

We may not delude ourselves into silence based on undoubted progress in American race relations during the last 50 years culminating in a Supreme Court decision which is not yet enforced, or on favors to Negroes in return for acquiescence in national policies which continue to spell ruin for the colored peoples of the world.<sup>30</sup>

The danger of citizenship was that it gave to Blacks a freedom, not from the tyranny of racism, but to be servants in America’s colonial imperialist drive towards empire. DuBois indicts the paradigm of contemporary Black political theory’s focus on the Black American condition over colonialism and its international consequences. While Jim Crow was certainly a terror filled evil, we must not formulate the value of integrationism as the end of this state sponsored ill to the detriment of the oppressed darker races the world over. The end of segregation was key to the United States’ triumph over its ideological communist enemies. It is this soft power victory that DuBois comments upon in his 1961 piece entitled “American Negroes and Africa’s Rise to Freedom,” not only legitimized the expansion of America’s colonialism, but took from Blacks their connection with Africa and the oppressed of the world.<sup>31</sup> Black theorists, philosophers, and social scientists alike must hold their cherished idea of equality to its consequence. Desegregation may have helped some elite Blacks, but it failed to improve the conditions of the revolutionary working class, and the oppressed dark laborers the world over. The triumph of American colonial imperialism under the banner of racial equality is still racist inequality.

### **Racial Realism as Conceptual Disengagement: Embracing the Reality of Inequality**

To the extent that Blacks acknowledge the racism of whites, we also earnestly perceive their inhumanity. This reality, while harsh, is the pedagogy of history, and despite our emotional disdain for its lessons, we are nonetheless subject to its truths. An honest recognition of the racial dynamics of the United States is not simply the intellectualization of the political theories or social forces that support the practices of racism. It is also the acceptance of the participation of these aforementioned dynamics in the identities and cultural perpetuations of the individuals that comprise the white race. If we just be “real” about it, then there is no escaping the inevitable tension that arises from our desire to be American and our lives as American citizens. The challenge laid before Blacks, then, is to consider the possibility of an America birthed in the shade of our Blackness. Unlike various “soul-making” techniques that aim for a creative engagement with the raw materials of individualism and Americanism, I suggest a conceptual disengagement with the practices that have solidified the American dream in the imaginations of Blacks. In short, we must stop thinking of ourselves as equal to and envious of the social privileges of whites. We must accept whites as they are and how history has demonstrated them to be and work from there.

As a philosophical perspective, racial realism points to the need of a continuing struggle and a deep-seated dissatisfaction with both the illusory progress given under the liberalist integration fantasy, and the reality of anti- Black racism, Black poverty and Black vulnerability to white interests. According to Derrick Bell, resistance must be grounded in struggle: “the realization, as our slave forebears, that the struggle for freedom is, at the bottom, a manifestation of our humanity that survives and grows stronger

through resistance to oppression, even if that oppression is never overcome.”<sup>32</sup> But does Bell’s insistence truly free us to imagine a world not confined to the limitations of our oppression? Can we actually conceptualize political theory under the burden of permanent inequality? The tools required to activate the imagination under this permanent inequality are not as radical as one may think; it simply requires an intellectually rigorous commitment to the common phrase uttered at many Black Sunday dinners, “*Blacks, as a people, need to...*” African-descended people (ADP) must begin a process of nation-al construction beyond the rhetoric that seeks to persuade whites of the importance had in acknowledging their mistakes. Struggle must move beyond the contestation of western modernity toward the concretization of the reality African-descended people seek to build from their understandings of the American context, and reject whites as the standard both of humanity and the sought after American dream. Of central concern in this disengagement is the rejection of equality.

Liberalism assumes that an equal moral worth and a basic rational capacity ground each individual’s claim to social equality and political agency.<sup>33</sup> This illusion is largely a product of Enlightenment thinking, which assumes a universal anthropology determined by reason. Contemporary liberals, in privileging the individual over the collective social contexts like culture or race that produce individuals, reinforce the illusion that a strong, rational individuality can overcome and should not be intimately subsumed within the historical contexts that produce their reality. What is most peculiar about the persistence of liberalism in the age of social constructionist analysis is that liberal political thinkers are willing to claim that individuals are rationally determined, but are not willing to see how the rational creations of the liberal individual result in the social constructs African-descended people confront daily. It pretends that the creations of race, poverty, and the numerous theories of cultural deprivation exist as a product of ignorance, and not the systemization of structures that perpetuate the myth of European superiority. “Liberalism will not acknowledge, and yet is perpetually fascinated by its creations. Liberalism makes a fetish of its abstract equalities and pays no attention to the material inequalities that give them the power to make their fantasies about us [Blacks] a reality.”<sup>34</sup> Our potential to rupture this liberal grasp on African descended people can only be achieved through the rejection of the Enlightenment commitment to a rationalist anthropology, which places the reasoning individual at the center of Black theorizations. Black resistance and national development does not rest on the moralization of how Blacks speak about themselves. Our resistance resides in struggle and the reality birthed from it.

Equality, in creating both the measure of humanity and the desire of Blacks to be included into that humanity, can only be unveiled through African-descended people’s surrender of their historical and culture orientation—their peoplehood. As Bell writes, “In our anxiety to identify [with whites], we are attracted to the obvious and the superficial, the least worthy characteristics of the dominant group.”<sup>35</sup> In this moment of mystification, African-descended people replace the reality of racial distinction with a paradoxical contemplation, in which we (ADP) seek to remedy our confrontation with the racial reality of the U.S by negating the validity of our reality that speaks from and articulates our experience of American racism. As such, identifying with the oppressor is an ontological act. It replaces the existence of a people with the caricatures of that people embraced by the imagination of whites. The danger in the idea of equality is that it seduces the Black imagination into believing in the possibility of extinguishing its own existence. As Anthony Paul Farley tells us, “there is no outside of the color-line,”

Everybody at some level believes in it. It’s a deeply seductive image. The image that we all want as oppressed people is an image of our master finally loving us and recognizing our humanity. It is this image that keeps prostitutes with their pimps, colonized with their colonizers and battered women with their batterers. Everyone dreams of one day being safe.<sup>36</sup>

Equality only serves as an imaginative allure—a fantasy—and this is the reality that must be conceptually disengaged. The demand for equality is a request to be recognized by whites as the rational, as the individual, as the ahistorical, and, of course, the un-Blackened. The longing for equality forces Blacks to mistake humanity as an analytic truth, in which we mistakenly assume that our birth as a human necessarily gives us our “humanity.” But this is an errant basis to begin theorizations of Black resistance;

genuine Black resistance is not based in the analytics of humanity; it is not a purely intellectual activity. Regardless of Black people's appeal to the genetic similarity of all humanity, or our religious appeals to the infamous theme that "God created all men equal," race (the identity assigned to us on the basis of our skin) and racism (the organization of the world so that our position in it demonstrates our supposed inferiority) will continue to reference the non-humanity of Blacks. Instead of trying to meet the criterion whites have placed on humanity, genuine Black resistance must be rooted in the right to develop and assert a new cultural world.

This revelation brings about the only actualizable means of Black empowerment, since Blacks, in recognizing the "matrix" of racial complacency maintained by the allure of equality, reject this mystification in favor of experiential and empirical evidence on American race relations. Following Bell, Blacks must recognize whites and whites' choice to maintain their racial dominance for what they are. Embracing Bell's racial realism frees Blacks to

think and plan within a context of reality rather than idealism. The reality is that blacks still suffer disproportionately higher rates of poverty, joblessness, and insufficient health care than other ethnic populations in the United States. The ideal is that law through racial equality, can lift them out of this trap...Casting off the burden of equality ideology will lift the sights, providing a bird's eye view of situations that are distorted by race. From this broadened perspective on events and problems, we can better appreciate and cope with racial subordination.<sup>37</sup>

In leaving behind the illusory reality mandated by whites' need to explain away racism, Blacks' disengagement from the narratives that sustain white dominance throws Blacks upon their own devices—it forces Blacks to engage reality and produce narratives that are focused on their experience of oppression, absent the censoring eyes of white America. We can only delegitimize racism to the extent that we can accurately pinpoint and acknowledge its presence—to the extent that we acknowledge Derrick Bell's lesson—where racism "lies at the center not the periphery; in the permanent, not in the fleeting; in the real lives of black and white people, not the sentimental caverns of the mind."<sup>38</sup>

### **Disempowerment as Political Theory: Understanding Bell's Call for Struggle against white Supremacy.**

Despite our critical rhetoric(s) which highlight the problematic existence of racism, classism, and sexism, our strategies of Black empowerment (be they Black Nationalist, Black Feminist, or Integrationist) —our political aims, no less than our conceptual frames, intending the amelioration of these Black deprivations— continue to accept as necessary the economic viability of capitalism, the political organizations of American liberal democracy, and the racial positionality of Black Americans over and against the interests and experiences of Blacks throughout the diaspora. The continuing appeals of Black Americans to "multiracial coalitions," education, and hard work as differing forms of Black empowerment by which Blacks and other marginalized groups can attain more freedoms, rights, property, and social recognition by whites, at a very real level accept that the political, jurisprudential and governmental organization of our contemporary racial landscape are in fact the best structures for safeguarding the possessions of racial struggle. This landscape, which has remained unmoved by the calls for reform by oppressed Blacks, predetermines the viability of Black politics since what is determined to be Black politics is little more than the rehearsed disdain expressed through cyclical waves of Blacks reacting towards the at large white consensus (agreement) of the day.

If Blacks are to develop and conceptually sustain an alternative and liberating vision of the world, we must embrace a concrete paradigm which holds that the elements that form the historical aggregate of white supremacy are in fact incompatible with the reality birthed from our paradigm shift. We cannot accept profit in the hands of Black Americans, if this profit, as W.E.B. DuBois warns, is grasped by the very hands squeezing the life and natural resources out of Africa, or accept calls for gender equity and same sex marriage when its dyadic bias of American Puritanism continues to demonize the polygamist

and poly-amorous sexuality of non-Western societies. If Black Americans continue to define freedom and progress as the condition of inclusion, whereby we are not the targeted group of our oppressors but their allies in oppression, Black empowerment will remain the fickle and unrealized chimera of long gone eras. Under this white supremacist regime, a regime A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. argues is based on the precept of inferiority, which aims to: “presume, protect, and defend the ideal of superiority of whites and the inferiority of Blacks,”<sup>39</sup> all Black political movements that are in conflict with this racial détente of the status quo are deemed dangerous and corrupting.

Consider that actual racial integration is resisted until it occurs on a basis that ensures white dominance and control. Derrick Bell argues that the celebrated notion of racial progress and integration cannot be “understood without some consideration of the decision’s value to whites, not simply those concerned about the immortality of racial inequality, but also those whites in policymaking positions able to see the economic and political advances at home and abroad.”<sup>40</sup> Looking beyond the propagandist dogma that a-historically suggests that desegregation occurred as an outgrowth of white popular support (it is important to remember here the resistance (gradualism) of white liberals and white Southerners alike shared to genuine integration in his 1968 work *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community*),<sup>41</sup> we can see how concrete political agendas like 1) maintaining U.S. credibility against Communist nations during the Cold War, 2) arresting the anger of Black military veterans, and 3) the industrialization of the rural South, formulated the calculus that Robert L. Carter’s “Warren Court and Desegregation,” and Derrick Bell’s historical analysis in “Racial Remediation,”<sup>42</sup> argument runs throughout the various manipulations of Black calls for civil rights throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When Blacks turn their energies away from the integrationist logic that maintains white dominance toward the establishment of strong and visible Black institutions, they incur opposition and hostility that increases in direct proportion to the success they are able to obtain. When these ventures fail, as many do under these pressures, the society in general, including all too many Blacks breathe a sigh of relief, knowing that the symbolic gestures that have come to represent their civil rights uplift remains preserved. Once again the society can relax and indulge itself in the subtle satisfaction of Black subordination. Thus, white dominance over Blacks is not only profitable, it is also comfortable, and because of whites’ ancestral fears of Black inundation, essential.

While it is certainly true that we have developed all sorts of intersectional discourses emphasizing the categories of race, class, and gender, this rhetorical gesture towards complexity, does little to explain the actual complexity of the racist nexus of the American empire. Under the contemporary mode that continues to privilege the discursive over the actual, we are anxious to announce the arrival of conceptual complexity, but are met without the tools to meaningfully conduct the engagement with the material conditions, institutions, and actors that give content and enforcement to our discursive descriptions. Unfortunately, white racist domination is amongst these routinely announced but inadequately understood fathoms. Domestically, the cycle of progress and regress whereby Black rights are negotiated within the nexus of white interests makes those symbols or brief moments of relief amidst the storm that has become American race relations mere illusions. Even integration, what is now touted to be the long awaited arrival of deliverance for Blacks continues to preserve the foundation of white superiority. Pushing this domestic colonization analysis forward, Charles Mills’ “The Racial Polity,” argues that race finds its coherence amongst the axioms of American liberalism. He continues, “instead of counter-posing an abstract liberalism to a deviant racism, one conceptualizes them as interpenetrating and transforming each other, generating a racial liberalism. The result is a universe of white right, white *Recht*, white moral and legal equality that is reciprocally linked to a nonwhite inequality.”<sup>43</sup> Racism is not the motivation of American society that runs counter to its respect for individuality, freedom, and property, rather it is the *ideal* of white superiority operating within every structure, every institution, and every value in America whose ultimate end is the legitimation of white individuality, white freedom, and white property and the creation of a geopolitical entity capable of sustaining the life of these entities. The preservation of this *ideal* through various ideological machinations allow the various political ideas of the time (be it equality, colorblindness, racial discrimination, etc.) to be used to serve the interests of whites, and make them the victims of the categories their claims to racial superiority adamantly enforced. In the final analysis, an

understanding of the political structures, upon which empowerment depends, lies not in the psychical shift of individuals towards racially progressive (discursive) motifs, but the acceptance of Mills' claim that "perceived group interests (not self-interest), "racial interests, become the prime determinants of sociopolitical attitudes and behavior."<sup>44</sup> Mills continues that "the dynamic role of white group interests need to be recognized and acknowledged as a central causal factor in generating and sustaining white ignorance."<sup>45</sup> For Mills, white ignorance is an epistemic obstacle blocking the rational individuality of a virtuous white character from seeing the horrors of anti-Black racism—an unfortunate consequence of racism that "protects" the white psyche from acknowledging the suffering of the racially oppressed. Mills frames the discussion in this way:

White ignorance has been able to flourish all of these years because a white epistemology of ignorance has safeguarded it against the dangers of an illuminating blackness or redness, protecting those who for "racial" reasons have needed not to know. Only by starting to break these rules and meta-rules can we begin the long process that will lead to the eventual overcoming of this white darkness and the achievement of an enlightenment that is genuinely multiracial.<sup>46</sup>

Contrary to Mills, it would be a mistake to conclude that the structural influences on white individuals act as a deterministic alibi, where whites are simply indoctrinated into the erroneous belief in their racial superiority. As a group, whites are responsible for their deliberate perpetuation of anti-Black racism, and as individuals, these white individuals deliberately accept the historical narrative and contemporary rationalizations that protect white social superiority. In all actuality, these individuals aspire towards it. This position would seem to naturally follow the radical analysis suggested by W.E.B. DuBois, and developed as the racial realist thesis by Derrick Bell. Under a racial realist perspective, white dominance comes about from a systematic propagation of white superiority that legitimizes institutions by the extent to which they protect this white legacy, and socializes white allegiance for this heritage by reflecting the white individuals' triumph over savagery through civilization. Within this racial dynamic, individual values are mirrored by social institutions and organize America's racist history into an epistemological lens that appears natural and valid, since it verifies the ontological status of what white individuals believe they have collectively created—a democratic multi-cultural and multi-racial society. The courts, the police force, university education, capitalism, individualism, the civil rights movement, racial equality, Martin Luther King, become signs, symbols for characters in a story that ultimately justify the apotheosis of desegregation—what is held to be the dawning inevitability of America's victory over racism. Rather than overcoming the rules and meta-rules of anti-Black racism, Mill's theory of white ignorance has empowered whites to act in prolepsis of actual fact, whereby the acknowledgement of their ignorance, not their emergence from it, is utilized authoritatively.

By identifying an obstacle to an "enlightened whiteness," Mills prescribes a discursive formulation by which racism can be ameliorated by an adjustment of cognitive frame. While Mills has taken great care to explain the structural, historical, and economic situated-ness of American racism and anti-Black ideology in the West, his suggestion that white ignorance can be overcome makes ignorance itself a deliberate, but misguided, interest of white people, rather than a structural facet of whiteness. It must be remembered that the narrative of white supremacy is not simply stereotypes of Black people that mistake them for monkeys, apes, or errant beliefs in Black men's penis size. This alleged ignorance lays claim to civilization itself, and is bolstered by the intentional and programmatic assertion by history, economics, law, politics, common knowledge and the stories of philosophy itself. These "ignorant" whites have history books, political leaders, institutions like Harvard, Yale, etc. that assert contrary to Mills, that this "ignorance," is in fact knowledge. A knowledge that not only explains the rise of America but the liberation of Black people through a genealogy of the symbols to some extent embraced as a common language of discussion with whites. A knowledge which is and has been so taken to be knowledge rises to the level of capital (T)—Truth.

So as one could have expected, since Mills introduced the term “epistemology of ignorance,” it has been used to explain everything from the (white) female orgasm to animal rights.<sup>47</sup> All interestingly creative ventures but ventures nonetheless which separate the theory from its specificity to white acceptance of the white polity to a ubiquitous and equal opportunity ignorance of the world itself. Such a slippery concept that not only empowers whites to trust their own sentiment about racism, but rewards whites who confess their racism to profess themselves as practitioners of anti-racism eliminates the centrality of the social and structural consequences of white supremacy, since now the white racist is armed with a moralism which demands that they as whites speak about racism despite what they actually know or how they actually materially and financially benefit from anti-racist discourse. In a white supremacist society, racism must be dealt with as a matter of white existence, not their pontifications about how they think about themselves amidst conditions that make their social privilege and power a certainty. The persistence of white supremacy is not some accident perpetuated by the mistaken moral codes of truly good white folks that have been led astray. Bell emphasizes an acknowledgement by Black folks that “racism translates into a societal vulnerability,”<sup>48</sup> a vulnerability seized upon by white structures and white racial interest that ensures the continuance of white superiority, and assures its white constituency of their superior social standing. The failure of Mills framing is not in its descriptive rendering of oppression, but its normative decree—its axiomatic endorsement of an enlightened whiteness—an assertion that whiteness could *be* without this ignorance and white people could survive in a world that did not deliberately condemn all that was blessed to lack the white stain.

This actual demonstration of white dominance is what mortally cripples the discourse and practice of Black empowerment. Politics is the social means by which dreams come true. Since politics is a societal articulation of the forces that determine the aspirational course of nations, the power or the ability to concretize these aspirational visions will always be denied to those held to be subordinate. This aspirational drive of political currents is what must be dealt with if we are to escape the grasping undercurrents of Black subordination and the delusions of post-civil rights progress. Oppressed peoples must come to realize that they can and will never triumph over racism if they simply demand to obtain the same power and material status endowed to their oppressors by white supremacy. To remedy oppression is not only the elimination of the actual conditions that sustain oppression and enforce racism, but also the rejection and casting away of the desire, the want, to exercise control over one’s world as the white racist does within a white supremacist society. In short, liberation, and the political ideals that accompany the struggle towards this goal, is the abandonment of the freedom offered by the political. Overcoming oppression is simultaneously the rejection of the desire to imitate the inhumanity of the oppressor.

Disempowerment, as a philosophical outlook and catalyst towards political action, assaults the aspirational normalcy of white supremacist narrations of Black existence. The political manifestation of this has to be the intentional assault on institutionalized mechanism of white sustenance, white histories, white theories, and most importantly white life. Disempowerment is not some theoretical abstraction that makes politics a moral choice as is usually the case in our attempts to deal with the realities of racism. Bell, and by extension, racial realism is not an effort to create virtuous white character, or educate whites out of their anti-Black racism. In accepting the permanence of American racism, disempowerment attempts to act out against the institutions and dogmas that sustain those institutions. Instead embracing a politics that inevitably appeals to the moral imperative of integration and a more just distribution of power, resources, and capital to the oppressed and marginalized, a politics of disempowerment finds its realization in the conscious struggle against the daily institutional practices and rationalizations that justify both the gradualism of American race relations and the discursive etiquette that distracts Black scholars from dealing with the actual expressions of white superiority in all spheres of American society.

Much like the agitationist ethics embraced by Blacks thinkers like T. Thomas Fortune and Ida B. Wells in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, disempowerment necessitates struggle and the refusal of complacency in the nexus of racist oppression. It is as Derrick Bell suggests in his narrative of Mrs. Biona MacDonald. Mrs. MacDonald was a civil rights organizer in Harmony, Mississippi in 1964. Given the harsh resistance by whites against school desegregation, Derrick asked Mrs. MacDonald, “where she found the courage to continue working for civil rights in the face of intimidation that included her son losing his job in town,

the local bank trying to foreclose her mortgage, and shots fired through her living room window.”<sup>49</sup> Her answer was as profound as it was flippant, “Derrick, I am an old woman. I live to harass white folks.”<sup>50</sup> This story has been a common tale, a celebrated symbolic gesture of Black fortitude against white supremacy, shared by many. What has been missed by our symbolic conveyance is the dedication, the defining of Black life—Black existence itself—as incongruent with the social iterations of oppression. Remember, “Mrs. MacDonald did not say she risked everything because she hoped or expected to win out over whites...[or] hint that her harassment would topple whites’ well entrenched power. Rather he goal was defiance and its harassing effect was more potent precisely because she placed herself in confrontation with her oppressors with full knowledge of their power and willingness to use it.”<sup>51</sup> Bell suggests to us more than protest. He advocates living life as defiance. He hopes not for the deliverance of our oppressors, but the revelation of the oppressed that their lives, their exhaustion takes something—be it the comfort the white mind has in its belief of superiority, or the effortlessness of the white body to strike Black people—from those have drawn breath from the souls of the dominated. Bell strives to communicate to the reader the superficiality of the civil rights movement that has settled for equality founded upon the mimicry of white tyranny. A racial realist life demands struggle, not as a symbolic gesture, but struggl(ing), which itself emerges from the confrontation between the machinations of oppression and the actual existing of the Black oppressed.

## Conclusion

In stark contrast to the ideal theories of integration and ethical theories that ask the oppressed to assume, despite historical reason or contemporary consciousness, that their racial oppressors will freely surrender their power and position, disempowerment divests the normative expectations and ameliorative possibilities of a political system that has preserved, perpetuated, and propagates white supremacy. Bell’s racial realism demystifies the illusion and rhetorical stratagem of the Civil Rights era moralism. As a political theory, disempowerment, building on the realism conveyed by DuBois and elaborated upon by Bell, indicts the political structures, the courts, the political economics, and the public consciousness that sustains white dominance despite the alleged opening up of American society through desegregation. How can Black scholars, race theorists, and social justice theorists continue to demand allegiance to the structures that have continued to subjugate, when it is the political repression—the erasure of the racial and economic inequality that has resulted from America’s civil rights epoch—that continues present itself as an obstacle to the awareness of America’s racist social stratifications. Is this the task of Black political theory, to criticize only in vain hope of inclusion? Is it the task of the Black political theorist to reinvent and give their oppressors a language, a lexicon, to describe subjugated racial peoples deemed irrelevant? Or is it the task of the Black political theorist to use those deaths, the murders of young Black boys, like Trayvon Martin, as the catalyst for conversations with whites who ignore, rationalize, or eulogize this injustice? Racial realism and its outgrowth of disempowerment is not a radical theorization of political advocacy, rather it is simply the articulation of Black experiences that have sought to “take away” from their oppressors the means and subservience that denies and leaves unchallenged the actual (real) instruments of racist oppression.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> White on black oppression is systemic and has persisted over several centuries without the broad and foundational racial transformations that many social analysts suggest should have happened. While some significant changes have certainly taken place, systemic racism today retains the numerous basic features that perpetuate the racial views, proclivities, actions and intentions of many earlier white generations, including white founders like Thomas Jefferson. Because of its power and centrality in this still racially hierarchical society, white-on-black oppression has shaped considerably all other types of racial oppression that whites later developed within this still white controlled society... In addition, white-on-black oppression is an independent social reality that cannot be reduced to other social realities such as class stratification, though all major forms of oppression do interact and intersect with it historically (Joe R. Feagin, *Systemic Racism*. New York: Routledge, 2006:7).

For an historical explanation of racial development in the United States, see Joe R. Feagin, *Racist America* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> The murder of Black men in the United States continues to be seen as normal. Black men are identified as thugs, and their death it is seen to be a justifiable consequence of the thug life (Newsweek, "The Search for Thugs," November 10, 2007). For a discussion of the continuing murder of Black men, see Cyril Josh Barker, "Oct 22 Coalition Holds Anti-Police Brutality Rally," *New York Amsterdam News*, Oct 25-27, 2007, 3; Alton H. Maddox Jr., "The Sean Bell fiasco in Black and White," *New York Amsterdam News*, March 8, 2007, 12-28. For a discussion of the racial inequality involved in the Jena Six case, see Micheal Eric Dyson, "Its Not only the Jena Six, You Could Be Next," *Ebony*, December 2007, 58. For a discussion of the tragedy that befell Megan Williams, see Francie Latour, "Hell on Earth," *Essence*, November 2007, 210,214,242.

The dereliction of the United States government during Hurricane Katrina is also an indication of the continuing colonial condition in America. For a discussion of this relationship, see Ahati N.N. Toure, "Reflection on Paradigms in Power: Imperial and Americanization as a Modal Relationship Explaining the Treatment of Afrikans in the United States During and After Hurricane Katrina," *Thurgood Marshall Law Review* 31 (2006) and Tommy J. Curry, "Please Don't Make Touch Em: Towards a Critical Race Fanonianism as a Possible Justification for Violence against Whiteness," *Radical Philosophy Today* 5 (2007).

<sup>4</sup> Tommy J. Curry, "Who K (new): The Nation-ist Contour of Racial Identity in the Thought of Martin R. Delany and John E. Bruce," *Journal of Pan-African Studies* 1 (2007), 43.

<sup>5</sup> Derrick Bell, "Racial Realism," *Connecticut Law Review* 24 (1992): 373-374.

<sup>6</sup> In recent years, there has been a new interest in the issue of Black solidarity. Eddie Glaude Jr.'s, *Exodus: Religion, Race, and Nation in Early Nineteenth Century Black America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), as well as Eddie Glaude Jr.'s, *Is it Nation Time: Contemporary Essays in Black Power and Nationalism*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). Unfortunately however, these works aim to extend the ideas of pragmatism and liberalism to the original concepts of Black racial solidarity, thus criticizing the Black Nationalism for its narrow racial essentialism rather than attacking the continuing conditions that have historically justified nationalist thought.

<sup>7</sup> Integration has failed on several fronts. The historical work in this area has convincingly demonstrated that *Brown v. Board* (1954) was nothing more than a political agenda pushed to increase American soft power during the Cold War Era, see Mary Dudziak, "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative," *Stanford Law Review* FSD241 (1988): 61; Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002). The idea of racial equality is fundamentally bankrupt, see Derrick Bell, *And We Are Not Saved: The Elusive Quest for Racial Justice* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Derrick Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* (New York: Basic Books, 1992). And desegregation worsened the education and economic viability of Black communities, see Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (New York: Oxford, 2004).

For a discussion on the errant belief that education and multicultural associations through education are the barometer of racial progress, see Tommy J. Curry, "Saved by the Bell: Racial Realism as Pedagogy," *Philosophical Studies in Education* 39 (2008): 35-46.

<sup>8</sup> Ian Haney Lopez, *White by Law* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Wallace, "John Bingham and the Meaning of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment Ideology v. Reality: The Myth of Equal Opportunity in a Color-Blind Society," *Akron Law Review* 36 (2003): 693

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of these issues, see *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), and *Brown v. Board of Education II*, 349 U.S. 294 (1955). In *Brown II*, the reader is given a subtle reminder of *Plessy v. Ferguson* 163 U.S. 537 (1896) where Justice Brown giving the opinion of the court said

If the two races are to meet upon terms of social equality, it must be the result of natural affinities, a mutual appreciation of each other's merits and a voluntary consent of individuals. As was said by the Court of Appeals of New York in *People v. Gallagher*, 93 N.Y. 438, 448, "this end can neither be accomplished nor promoted by laws which conflict with the general sentiment of the community upon whom they are designed to operate. When the government, therefore, has secured to each of its citizens equal rights before the law and equal opportunities for improvement and progress, it has accomplished the end for which it was organized and performed all of the functions respecting social advantages with which it is endowed." Legislation is powerless to eradicate racial instincts or to abolish distinctions based upon physical differences, and the attempt to do so can only result in accentuating the difficulties of the present situation. If the civil and political rights of both races be equal one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of these opinions, see Alexander Bickel, *The Supreme Court and the Idea of Progress* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), and Alexander Bickel, *The Least Dangerous Branch: The Supreme Court at the Bar of Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986)

<sup>12</sup> Derrick Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 51.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Carter, "The Warren Court and Desegregation," *Michigan Law Review* 67 (1968): 237-248, 243.

<sup>14</sup> Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 59.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> See Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 104-106.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Dudziak, "Desegregation as Cold War Imperative," *Stanford Law Review* 41 (1988): 61-120, 64-65.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Dudziak, "Brown as Cold War Case," *Journal of American History* 1 (2004): 32-42, 34.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>21</sup> Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, 23.

<sup>22</sup> Jennifer L. Hirsch, *The New American Dilemma: Liberal Democracy and School Desegregation* (New York: Yale University Press, 1984), 1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>24</sup> Kenneth W. Mack, "Rethinking Civil Rights Lawyering and Politics in the Era Before Brown," *The Yale Law Journal* 115 (2006): 256-351, 258.

<sup>25</sup> I have remarked upon the tendency of philosophy to deradicalize Black nationalist and other radical Black thinking to fit in academic disciplines in several articles, for example see Tommy J. Curry, "On Derelict and Method: The Methodological Crisis of Africana Philosophy's Study of African Descended People under an Integrationist Mileu," *Radical Philosophy Review* 14.2 (2011): 139-164; "The Derelictical Crisis of African American Philosophy: How African American Philosophy Fails to Contribute to the Study of African Descended People," *Journal of Black Studies* 42.3 (2011): 314-333; and Concerning the Under-specialization of Race Theory in American Philosophy: An Essay Outlining Ignored Bibliographic Sources Addressing the Aforementioned Problem," *The Pluralist* 5, no. 1 (2010): 44-64.

<sup>26</sup> See Charles P. Henry (ed.), "The Black Revolution," in *Ralph J. Bunche: Selected Speeches and Writings* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 297-304.

<sup>27</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, W.E.B. DuBois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* (New York: International Publishers, 1968), 418.

<sup>28</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "American Negroes and Africa's Rise to Freedom," in *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the part which Africa has played in World History* (New York: International Publishers, 1965).

<sup>29</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois*, 333.

<sup>30</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "Whites in Africa after Negro Autonomy," in in the *Oxford W.E.B. DuBois Reader*, ed. Eric Sundquist (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 674.

<sup>31</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, "American Negroes and Africa's Rise to Freedom," in *The World and Africa: An Inquiry into the Part which Africa has played in World History* (New York: International Publishers, 1965), 334-338.

<sup>32</sup> Derrick Bell, "Racial Realism," 378.

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- <sup>33</sup> David Carroll Cochran, *The Color of Freedom: Race and Contemporary American Liberalism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 5-6.
- <sup>34</sup> Anthony Paul Farley, "Thirteen Stories," *Touro Law Review* 15 (1998-1999): 620.
- <sup>35</sup> Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 200.
- <sup>36</sup> Anthony Paul Farley, "Thirteen Stories," *Touro Law Review* 15, (1998-1999): 621.
- <sup>37</sup> Bell, "Racial Realism," 377-378.
- <sup>38</sup> Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*, 198.
- <sup>39</sup> A. Leon Higgingbotham, Jr., *Shades of Freedom: Racial Politics and Presumptions of the American Legal Process* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), xxv.
- <sup>40</sup> Derrick Bell, "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma," *Harvard Law Review* 93.3 (1980): 518-533, 524.
- <sup>41</sup> See Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community* (New York: Beacon Press, 1968).
- <sup>42</sup> Derrick Bell, "Racial Remediation: A Historical Perspective on Current Conditions," *Notre Dame Lawyer* 52 (1976-77): 5-29.
- <sup>43</sup> Charles Mills, "The Racial Polity," in *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 119-137, 134.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>45</sup> Charles Mills, "White Ignorance," in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, eds. Shannon Sullivan and Nancy Tuana (New York: SUNY Press, 2007), 13-38, 16.
- <sup>46</sup> Mills, "White Ignorance," 35.
- <sup>47</sup> Nancy Tuana, "Coming to Understanding: Orgasm and the Epistemology of Ignorance," *Hypatia* 19.1 (2004): 194-232, and Robert Kahn, "Towards an Animal Standpoint: Vegan Education and the Epistemology of Ignorance," in *Epistemologies of Ignorance in Education*, Eric Malewski and Nathalia Jaramillo, eds. (Charlotte: Information Age Publishing, 2011), 53-70.
- <sup>48</sup> Bell, "Racial Realism," 377.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 378.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.