This dissertation is an exploration of the role of Euro-North American Philosophy of Education discourse in the genealogy of race struggle. I examine how the reliable narration of Philosophy of Education functions as a project of racial rule premised on moral/temporal/spatial notions of (White) civility and respectability. Tracing the history of race war from the 17th century to present day, I look at how racism has shifted from sovereign power to disciplinary power to biopower as a mode of population management, operating not only through race but through gender and class distinctions as well. I analyze the racialized narrative conventions of liberal modern Enlightenment philosophy and the role these conventions continue to play in the creation and maintenance of a violent racial state.

Drawing upon Critical Race Theory, feminist epistemologies, narrative theory, and the work of Michel Foucault, I look at what reliable narration does for philosophers, educators, and students, examining what we/they might have invested in maintaining a distinction between ‘reliability’ and ‘unreliability.’ I ask: How is reliable narration used as a tool by philosophers, educators, and ultimately, the state to distinguish between the civil and uncivil, between those worthy and unworthy of moral consideration, political engagement, and basic human rights? How do the impartiality, univocality, universality,
and dispassion of reliable narratives become tied to race and the management of racialized bodies?

My aim is to examine the ways in which race as a method of governance acts on a text, its author(s), and its audience. “How are racialized subjectivities constituted through and constitutive of language and knowledge,” I ask, “and to what effect?” I want to trace the social and civil relations mapped out by particular narrative conventions and examine the consequences of failing to adhere to such conventions. I suggest that by questioning the function of reliable narration in philosophical and pedagogical practice, educators, scholars, and students can intervene in the operation of race as a mode of discipline, creating the possibility of a more equitable society in which all have the opportunity to flourish.
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Were it not for the immense support, guidance, patience, and love of many people, this dissertation would not have been possible. The front page is somewhat deceptive, in that it bears only my name, though this project has really been a labour to which so many have contributed in various ways – financially, intellectually, administratively, and emotionally.

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fosters a healthy academic community in which new ideas have the opportunity to flourish.

To Professor Sherene Razack, whose classes led me to view the world in an entirely different way, whose insights have led me to reconceptualize what it is that I am doing and what it is that I think I should be doing in my work, and whose tireless efforts as a professor, scholar, and public intellectual are much to be admired and emulated, I extend my sincere gratitude. Your ideas and suggestions have been instrumental in shaping this dissertation, thank you very much for sharing them with me.

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**Bibliography**

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DEDICATION

To my grandparents, Elizabeth (Betty) Anderson, Marta Mikula, Jan Mikula, and Thomas Harvey Anderson. You will always be part of my story.
Chapter One: Introduction

Reading the world precedes reading the word, and the subsequent reading of the word cannot dispense with continually reading the world. Language and reality are dynamically intertwined. The understanding attained by critical reading of a text implies perceiving the relationship between text and context.¹

To Begin

This is not a Foreword, but rather an Afterword or Post-Script that just happens to come at the beginning of this dissertation out of necessity. It is the last part to be written, as I enter the final stages of revisions and anticipate submitting a final draft within the next week or two. I put it here because I have something important to tell you about that only transpired recently. I feel it would be disingenuous - deceitful even - to proceed with the body of my work without drawing attention to the fact that it has undergone drastic changes within the past month, and certainly within the past several years. These changes are primarily due to the indispensable comments of my committee members, Maureen Ford, Dwight Boyd, and Sherene Razack (and I am sure Audrey Thompson, my external examiner will also have indispensable comments, though she has not yet been brought into the process). It is only in light of their comments that my dissertation has taken the final shape it is in. The content and conceptual framework of my dissertation have been majorly overhauled from beginning to end, such that I feel as though I have slowly replaced each piece with something new, maintaining the continuity of my dissertation though few or none of the original pieces remain.

This Afterword is not simply an acknowledgement of thanks to my committee members (though I am very thankful), nor simply a matter of giving credit where credit is due (though they deserve much credit). It is a moment to note that this dissertation was not created in isolation, though it bears only my name on the first page. Nor was this dissertation written in a day, though the words sit static, frozen on the page or screen. You interact with the text on a much different level than that on which it was written. It is many, many, many conversations occurring over several years boiled down to a single stream of thought that could be read in one sitting (a long sitting, but it is possible). I imagine that I’m not telling
you anything new or with which you are unfamiliar. Yet I am troubled by how easy it is to pass all of these thoughts off as my own and mine only (references aside), when many of these thoughts only came into existence through dialogue with or at the suggestion of others (here I cannot neglect to mention the immense contribution of Karen Sihra to my work, though cited only once or twice in the endnotes, and the contribution of Francine Menashy, though only mentioned elsewhere in my Acknowledgements).

You do not get to see all the bits and pieces that have gone into this work, you only get the ‘refined’ final product (though if you as reader are one of my committee members, you have seen some of the bits and pieces along the way). Many of the impurities have been boiled off at this point. This Afterword is then a note to invite you to wonder as you read. Wonder about what theoretical impurities might be smoothed over or hidden behind a tidy (?) façade, wonder as much about what I have chosen not to say as what I have chosen to say, wonder about where my ideas have been most heavily influenced by others and where they are most original.

Re:Reading Literacy/Literacies

In recent decades, much work has been done in the field of Philosophy of Education on the importance of socially- and contextually-situated scholarship and practice, paying attention to how a larger socio-political/historical/economic context can shape one’s thoughts and experiences. However, it seems to me that little attention has been paid within this field to the narrativity of educational scholarship, research, and practice, to the ways in which knowledge and learning are storied. It is not often that I encounter Euro-North American epistemologists and pedagogues drawing attention to their/our work as narrative, to ourselves/themselves as embodied narrators performing texts embedded with presuppositions and background beliefs, choices about what to say and how to say it, about who to include and who to exclude. What choices do scholars and educators make when communicating with others? Why do they make a particular set of choices?

For example, my choice of the term “Euro-North American” is inherently problematic, though I find myself at a loss for better descriptive vocabulary. It is deceptive
to suggest that despite great historical, political, and cultural differences between and within nations, all European and North American epistemologies and pedagogies, including the epistemologies and pedagogies of indigenous groups in the geo-political areas commonly referred to as Canada, the United States, and Mexico (groups who may or may not recognize these geo-political boundaries), can be captured under one umbrella term. To what or to whom am I referring when I use the term “Euro-North American”? Though inadequate and of limited descriptive value, I use this term to refer to hegemonic, canonical texts and scholars whose theories are proliferated within North American classrooms and publications, as well as to the texts and scholars influenced by this canon/these canons. Clearly my use of the term leaves many gaps. Where are the voices that move away from canonical theory/theories? Why are they not included in a sense of “Euro-North American” epistemology and pedagogy? It is these questions and others that I wish to explore in the following chapters.

In this dissertation, I am interested in drawing attention to the narrativity of Philosophy of Education scholarship and practice, focusing specifically on the master narratives that appear to have informed much contemporary Euro-North American educational discourse. What are these master narratives and what do they communicate about race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, nationality, language, and other social identities? Furthermore, what sort of material realities do they serve to create? Taking up a concern with systemic social injustice and how educational theory can contribute to it, my dissertation focuses on exploring a practice of ‘Critical Race Literacy/Literacies’ that treats race as a text narrated by individuals and institutions, as well as a method of management that simultaneously narrates or inscribes the narrator. That is, I examine not only how race operates in a text to draw moral, metaphysical, epistemological, and spatial boundaries, but also how race operates on a text, its author(s), and its audience. How have my experiences and work as a White/Euro-Canadian, female scholar, educator, and student, been shaped by race? How have the experiences and work of all scholars, educators, and students been shaped by race? How does it shape the ways we relate to ourselves and to each other? And how are these narratives about race taken up within the larger context of state governance? What role do they play in the management of populations and geographies?
My interest is to explore how race functions within and without a text as a mode of discipline, circumscribing the subjectivities of author and audience, their relationship(s) to each other, and the material reality they experience. I examine what sorts of stories are told by and to philosophers, educators, and students about race, as well as examine the sorts of stories of which we/they already find themselves/ourselves a part. How/where is race present in Philosophy of Education discourse and practice? How is it connected to notions of civility, mastery, reason, and progress? What are the consequences of failing to attend to the significance of race and the ways in which it shapes narratives about knowledge and learning, as well as the ways in which it shapes knowers and learners? In treating race as a text, as something that is both constituted by and constitutive of language and story, I encourage scholars, educators, and students to think about how larger networks of power operate on and within their/our practices.

As Trinh T. Minh-ha asserts, with a brief reference to Roland Barthes:

Power, as unveiled by numerous contemporary writings, has always ascribed itself in language. Speaking, writing, and discoursing are not mere acts of communication; they are above all acts of compulsion. Please follow me. Trust me, for deep feeling and understanding require total commitment...A thoughtful white man observed not long ago that “there is no reality not already classified by men: to be born is nothing but to find this code ready-made and to be obliged to accommodate oneself to it.” Power therefore never dies out: tracked, pursued, wornout, or driven away here, it will always reappear there, where I expect it least. And language is one of the most complex forms of subjugation, being at the same time the locus of power and unconscious servility. With each sign that gives language its shape lies a stereotype of which I/i am both the manipulator and the manipulated.\vi

My aim in this dissertation is to trace how racism as a system of power is inscribed through language, how notions of civility, reason, and progress become intimately tied to ideas about skin colour, geography, ancestry, and culture, yet somehow move beyond the physical, beyond the body to become a method of managing the behaviour, thoughts, and actions of whole populations. Through the reliable narratives of Philosophy of Education discourse, for example, civility operates to establish a colour line tied to race, but in a way that stretches beyond the colour of one’s skin to include what one does. Race then becomes a way of being...
– the more closely one approximates ‘civility’ and ‘rationality,’ the more closely one resembles a White Euro-North American norm.

As I will discuss in further detail later, this is certainly not to imply that one simply has to act a particular way in order to reap the material benefits afforded to those identified as White or ‘white enough’\textsuperscript{vii}. While racism is not simply a matter of who has what, or about one group exercising power over another group\textsuperscript{viii}, there still exists a material reality to having ‘white’ skin or being perceived as ‘White’ or of European ancestry. For example, according to the Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change Network:

- “Ethno-racial minority (i.e. non-European) families make up 37\% of all families in Toronto, but account for 59\% of poor families”\textsuperscript{ix}
- “Between 1980 and 2000, while the poverty rate for the non-racialized (i.e. European heritage) population [of Ontario] fell by 28\%, the poverty among racialized families rose by 361\%”\textsuperscript{x}
- Despite making up over 13\% of Ontario’s population\textsuperscript{xi} (a number which has likely grown in the past four years since the report was released), ethno-racial minority group members “make up only 3\% of executives, and 1.7\% of directors on boards of organizations”\textsuperscript{xii}

To say that racism becomes tied to a way of being and a mode of management through language is not to say that skin colour, nationality, and ancestry have ceased to bear material relevance. Rather, it is to suggest that racism has become, and perhaps has always been, about more than skin colour, such that notions of civility, reason, and progress come to be raced and to be markers of race. Thus, the more one’s thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours adhere to a racialized notion of civility and reason, the more one is seen to be entitled to self-governance and the governance of others. Conversely, the less civilized or rational one appears, the more discipline and punishment are required to minimize the threat posed to society by her or his incivility.\textsuperscript{xiii}

What would happen if bodies were not disciplined for breaking social and civil rules? The rules would cease to have meaning, and thus the subjectivities inscribed by these rules would cease to have meaning: one would no longer be able to use them as a tool to come to know oneself as ‘civilized,’ as ‘rational,’ as ‘master’ of one’s domain. He or she would be lost, undefined, and thus vulnerable to consumption or invasion by one’s surroundings.
Discipline is therefore required in order to maintain the boundaries of the individual self as autonomous agent. One comes to know oneself as free, as empowered, as good, as White through the discursive and material disciplining of racialized bodies marked as unfree and disempowered. While White people participate in and have much to gain from this disciplining of ourselves/themselves and others, so too do racialized people, who may come to know themselves/yourselves as respectable and free through self-discipline and the discipline of other racialized bodies. The modern liberal democracy emerging out of the Enlightenment, and the notions of civility and rationality on which it is premised, requires racialized violence to function. It is only through this violence that one can come to experience herself or himself as free, as entitled to political participation, as safe.

Within this conceptualization of racism, race can be seen to act as a method of discipline on all bodies, though to varying degrees. Having ‘white’ skin or European ancestry does not guarantee a person the benefits afforded by a system of racial hierarchy, and thus one must constantly re-establish the legitimacy of his or her claims to self-governance and governance over others by constantly proving oneself as civil, as rational, as progressive. In this dissertation I want to examine the role of reliable narration - and particularly narrative univocality, unidirectionality, and dispassion - in creating this sense of legitimacy and illegitimacy. What does a philosopher, an educator, a student gain from reliable narration? What do we/they have invested in remaining invisible as narrators? What might be the repercussions and benefits of unreliable narration?

Drawing upon Paulo Freire and Donald Macedo’s work on critical literacy as an emancipatory project, I seek to re-conceptualize literacy as an ability to read and comprehend the ways in which race operates within, through, and on texts and institutions, as well as on an author/speaker and her or his audience. Illiteracy thus becomes a matter of the failure to notice how racialized power relations shape while being shaped by language and to what effects. This notion of literacy is not in opposition to critical literacy as conceptualized by Freire and Macedo, but rather exists in addition to and alongside other framings of literacy. Yet Critical Race Literacy/Literacies, as I wish to understand it/them, is/are not merely an additive conception of cultural literacy, that is, as a matter of simply hearing more voices and more diverse voices, but require/s a shift in the way one reads and writes, a shift in who one takes oneself to be as reader, as writer, as teacher, as student. I wish to explore the role of
narrative in upholding a system of social inequity and racialized violence, explore how some narratives about knowledge and learning might contribute to this inequity and violence, as well as explore what sorts of epistemological and pedagogical narratives or practices might make it possible to intervene in the reproduction of racism as a disciplinary measure.

Much has been written already about the need to examine and challenge White privilege and about story-telling as a tool for social change, yet it seems that it is commonly only the stories of racialized groups that are demanded, while the story of how race as a concept serves to normalize certain ways of being and to surveil and discipline all bodies is often absent from pedagogical and epistemological discourse. Within my dissertation, I turn to a notion of Critical Race Literacy/Literacies in order to frame a particular problem for anti-racism educators and scholars: that is, how might the meta-narratives of hegemonic Euro-North American philosophical and educational theories and practices function as a method of racialized discipline and serve to justify racialized violence?

In my dissertation, the following questions guide my inquiry:

- How are racialized subjectivities constituted through and constitutive of language and knowledge, and to what effect?
- What might be some of the dangers in ignoring the narrativity of theories of knowledge and learning?
- What sorts of narratives about knowledge and learning emerge within contemporary Euro-North American Philosophy of Education discourse and practice? How might these narratives function to establish racial norms, to discipline the work of scholars, educators, and students, as well as to participate in a larger system of racial rule?
- Who does one come to know oneself and others to be through reliable narration? What and how does one come to know through reliable narration?
- How might some ‘reliable’ philosophical and pedagogical narratives and practices be seen to participate in a ‘civilizing’ project to ‘tame’ the word and the world? What are some of the discursive and material effects of such ‘civilizing’ narratives?
- What are some of the dangers of uncritically embracing a story-telling approach to anti-racist scholarship and pedagogy?
- What might anti-racist epistemological and pedagogical narratives and practices look like?
Of course, my research carries with it many problems and tensions which I will need to address. Some of these issues are: Given that it is impossible to “step outside” the ways in which my own subjectivity/ies and work are shaped by the disciplinary measures that I critique, how does this dissertation participate in the same problems that I am trying to address? Conversely, what are the implications of not addressing the problems that arise from racism as a system of social management? What are some of the problems inherent in the terms I use to identify social groups or the way I use such terms? In focusing on Critical Race Literacy/Literacies, to what extent am I drawing necessary attention away from students who are lacking basic reading and writing skills? How does my own social location as a White, financially comfortable, Canadian-born of Slovak and British-Canadian descent, heterosexual, twenty- to thirty-something (I’m not trying to be coy about my age, but rather the writing of this dissertation has spanned many years of my life, so in some parts, my narrative voice is twenty-seven, in other parts, thirty-one, for example), native English speaker, Christian-raised, physically and mentally abled and healthy, urban-raised and -dwelling woman with a Master’s degree and working on a doctoral degree operate within this text? What do I fail to perceive and how does this impact the ways in which my text might be read/taken up (i.e. what social identities might I have omitted above, failing to acknowledge their relevance to my experiences and opportunities….whether or not I have children? whether or not I have military experience? my height? my weight? …?)?

Rather than seeking to resolve all of these tensions, I instead hope to use them as ways to flag my own unreliability as a narrator, as ways to expose the seams of my argument and draw attention to the limits of my authority as author. Throughout my work I wish to keep in mind the following words from Freire:

...[T]he role of critical pedagogy is not to extinguish tensions....The negation of tension amounts to the illusion of overcoming these tensions when they are really just hidden. We cannot exist outside an interplay of tensions. Even those who live passively cannot escape some measure of tensions. Frequently there is an ongoing denial of tensions, but these tensions should be understood. I believe, in fact, that one task of radical pedagogy is to clarify the nature of tensions and how best to cope with them. xvi
Key, I think, in this passage from Freire is that although tensions may be inevitable, they do need to be dealt with and understood. While I want to suggest that tension cannot always be avoided and even should not always be avoided, I do not want to suggest the tensions are unimportant or should simply be accepted for what they are.

The ideas I put forth about Critical Race Literacy/Literacies in this dissertation are not an attempt to “get it right” or an ultimate destination to arrive at in terms of social justice education, as this would require glossing over all tensions. Instead, in my dissertation I hope to offer a way of critically performing scholarship and pedagogy with an attention to how certain narrative styles and practices may be used to reproduce inequitable social relations so as to intervene in this reproduction. I want to interrupt the silence surrounding racialized violence as it is cloaked by reliable narration, and ask: What kind of knowledge production and teaching practices can reduce the amount of violence committed in the name of ‘civility’? Furthermore, what sort of reading, writing, teaching, and studying practices might dislodge the normalization of whiteness?

Though in my dissertation I focus specifically on racism as a system of rule, I seek to draw attention to the ways in which this is enmeshed with issues of gender, class, sexuality, ability, religion, age, language and other social distinctions. While my work specifically addresses discipline, normalization, and violence as they relate to race, culture, and nationality, I believe that the analyses and questions I raise here could also be used to address other forms of social violence, taking into account the specific historical and social contexts of other forms of systemic injustice and how these differ from my analysis. Further, although my dissertation is largely directed towards North-American philosophers of Education and their/our students, I hope that scholars, educators, and students in other fields may benefit as well from the critical reading and writing practices I propose.

The analysis I put forth is useful, I believe, to scholars, educators, and students of all races, as it examines how racism as a system of rule acts upon and is acted upon by all, though resulting in very different threats, risks, and material realities depending upon one’s place within that system. I raise questions about how Euro-North American scholars, educators, and students of all races and ethnicities might be invited to participate in a discourse to ‘civilize’ and discipline those seen to pose a threat to social order. It is my hope that a notion of Critical Race Literacy/Literacies will help to clarify a set of reading, writing,
and teaching practices that bring to the foreground the ways in which racism as a system of rule constructs and is constructed through text/narrative, so as to raise the possibility of reshaping or redirecting networks of power.

In this dissertation, I am not so much concerned with making authoritative assertions or seeking resolution, but rather with exploring a set of questions in order to create a discursive intervention and performance effect. My aim is not so much to arrive at a destination, but rather to open up new possibilities for discourse as well as for scholarly and pedagogical practice towards the eradication of racialized violence. This dissertation is a beginning then, rather than an end.

Re:Defining Literacies

In this project, I wish to trouble the business of reading-, writing-, and teaching-as-usual to draw attention to the “story behind the story,” to the effort that goes into making racialized violence as inconspicuous as possible to those who benefit. While there have always been and will always be scholars and educators who challenge the status quo, I want to suggest that there exist disciplinary consequences for doing so, enforcing – or attempting to enforce - a standardization of practice, the “-as-usual” practice to which I refer. Such disciplinary consequences might mean being repeatedly turned down for funding or promotion, an inability to get published, a denial of tenure, poor performance reviews from students, lack of opportunities to present at conferences, receiving threats, being reprimanded by a parent or administrator, to name only a few. These punishments and repercussions serve to keep scholars and educators in line as well as to excise any threat to current power structures. Establishing narrative expectations for the practice of scholarship and education thus not only functions to delimit the boundaries of a discipline (i.e. Philosophy, Science, Literature) in terms of what gets included, but also who gets included and who can be legitimately excluded.

Before getting too far ahead of myself though, I would first like to look at ways in which literacy has been construed in the past, as a project to either re-inforce or call into question (White, Euro-North American, middle-class, masculine) social norms. Donald Macedo critiques traditional approaches to literacy for failing to acknowledge the inherently
political nature of language use and meaning making, ultimately producing and reproducing
divisions between ‘dominant’ and ‘subordinate’ classes. While I find Macedo’s analysis of
the politics of language and literacy useful in helping me understand their role in a system of
racial rule, I think his discussion could be extended further, beyond a dichotomous
understanding of social groups towards an analysis of how subjectivities are constantly being
renegotiated through language, a project in which everyone participates. There is no
‘untainted’ or ‘innocent’ place to stand that is not part of a larger system of social violence
exercised through language and literacy. One cannot step outside of the language systems
that inscribe unjust power relations, though one can draw attention to these systems and to
what they are inscribing.

Macedo attempts to trace these power relations through what he terms the academic
approach to literacy:

The purpose assigned to reading in the academic tradition is two-fold. First, the
rationale for this approach ‘derives from classical definitions of the well-educated
man – thoroughly grounded in classics, articulate in spoken and written expression,
actively engaged in intellectual pursuits’ (Walmsley, 1981, p.78). This approach to
reading has primarily served the interests of the [male] elite classes. In this case,
reading is viewed as the acquisition of predefined forms of knowledge, and is
organized around the study of Latin and Greek and the mastery of great classical
works. Second, since it would be unrealistic to expect the vast majority of society to
meet such high standards, reading was redefined as the acquisition of reading skills,
decoding skills, vocabulary development, and so on. This second rationale served to
legitimize a dual approach to reading: one level for the ruling class and another for
the dispossessed majority.xix

As Macedo explains, in the context of a post-colonial nation such as Cape Verde, this type of
approach to literacy served to ‘purify’ the natives, saving them from their “deep-rooted
ignorance, their ‘savage’ culture, and their bastardized language.”xxx Literacy within this
conceptualization thus served as a method of discipline against racialized bodies and
language, marking the limits of civility and intelligence. The more closely one’s language
and knowledge resembled that of the European ruling class, the more civilized and intelligent
one was taken to be. Literacy in this sense was/is thus a project of ‘purification,’ of
cleansing the body politic of ‘impurities,’ from the threat of savagery. An academic approach to literacy supposedly offers a choice: one can either cleanse oneself or be cleansed, a process involving not a small amount of violence.

In the context of European imperialism, such a model of literacy operated to mark European nations and populations as distinct from and superior to other nations - given that the ‘well-educated man’ was defined in terms of his (such a conception of literacy was gendered as well as raced) familiarity with a Western/Northern classical canon. Familiarity with this canon afforded one a “toehold on respectability,” to borrow a term from Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack (more on this in later chapters), in that it allowed a person to assert his or her own civility, having mastered a particular knowledge set deemed essential for the educated person capable of governing oneself and others.

Macedo’s primary critique of an academic approach to literacy seems to be that it fails to attend to “the way in which language may either confirm or disconfirm the life histories and experiences of the people who use it,” that language can be used to give power or to take it away. My concern, however, is not just about the role of language in the distribution of goods and rights (and perhaps nor is it Macedo’s), but rather about how power already operates on language, on the reader/audience, and on the writer/speaker prior to one’s interaction with a text. It is not enough to simply hear more voices represented, particularly historically-marginalized voices, in order to create a shift in how power operates (though, like Critical Race theorists, I do believe this is an extremely important part of education for social justice, but not enough). It is not enough because it does not address how these voices are already a part of complex webs or networks of power that shape the speaker at the same time that she or he is speaking. These networks of power inculcate all speakers/readers/writers into a set of social norms that one cannot step away from.

If speaking/writing subjectivities emerge through and within this process of normalization, then hearing more voices won’t suffice to dislodge power from its many hiding places, as it is what voice is made of. What is needed, then is a radical questioning of the ways in which we/they/you/I are/am shaped by race and the ways in which race shapes our/their/your/my language, beliefs, behaviour, and interactions with others. As Macedo points out, an academic approach to literacy helps establish and reinforce identity boundaries between the ruler and the ruled, the colonizer and the colonized, the ‘educated’ and the
‗uneducated,’ the ‗respectable’ and the ‗degenerate,’ the ‗civilized’ and the ‗uncivilized.’ Such a definition of literacy thus helps individuals identify or come to know themselves and others in particular ways according to one’s ability to recite and imitate those texts determined to be ‘important,’ texts deemed to transmit cultural values essential to ‘civilization’ and ‘progress.’ This academic notion of literacy thus participates in the (racialized) creation of a knowing subject fit for governance, reinscribing violent social relations and legitimizing the exercise of force against those deemed ‘unfit’ for self-rule.

Such an approach to literacy can thereby function as a disciplining mechanism, as justification for the omission or erasure of particular voices, in that it serves to include or exclude according to one’s ability to approximate a particular cultural canon, based on very specific (‗Euro-North American’) knowledges, values, and beliefs. The student is not encouraged to ask what else might exist, but to see the classical canon as the limits of knowledge. I put the word ‘Euro-North American’ in inverted commas and parentheses here to draw attention to how a set of beliefs and practices marked as (or conveniently unmarked as) European or North-American inform institutional beliefs about what counts as important to know, though I also want to pay attention to the heterogeneity of beliefs, practices, cultures, and nationalities within Europe and North America, such that it is impossible to make a sweeping statement about what is European or North American and what is not. Even the terms ‘European’ and ‘North-American’ are hardly synonymous, such that the phrase “Euro-North American” already implies heterogeneity. But I think it is important to note how mythologies of nationhood based on systems of racial rule are dependent upon notions of intra-national homogeneity when it is convenient to reinforce differences between nations (i.e. to distinguish between “us” as a nation and “them” as another nation).

An example of this is former U.S. President George W. Bush’s use of the term “Coalition of the Willing” to refer to political allies in the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Such a phrase is used to invite entire nations to identify themselves as of one mind with the United States, effectively homogenizing incredibly diverse groups so as to unite them against a common enemy. According to a White House press release on March 27, 2003, the Coalition of the Willing had 49 member countries, representing 1.23 billion people (Canada was not one of these members, as it refused to join the Coalition unless the invasion was sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council, though it did support and continues to
support U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, beginning with Operation Apollo in 2001\textsuperscript{xxv}). All Coalition member nations are reported to “understand the threat Saddam Hussein’s weapons pose to the world and the devastation his regime has wreaked on the Iraqi people.”\textsuperscript{xxvi} The phrase “Coalition of the Willing” thus acts as a method of discipline and sanction on international politics, serving to mark nations as either friendly to the U.S. and therefore deserving of its political and economic favour, or foe, as part of the “Axis of Evil,” requiring military intervention to restore civility to the world. As Bush remarks in his State of the Union address on January 29, 2002,

\begin{quote}
Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens, leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.\textsuperscript{xxvii}
\end{quote}

Here Bush expresses the \textit{necessity of} state violence against Iraq and states like it that “constitute an axis of evil...arming to threaten the peace of the world.” World peace thus \textit{requires} waging war against enemies of the United States. To remain indifferent would mean that the U.S. could be held accountable for allowing civilization to come to an end, for allowing innocent children to die. It is \textit{they} who are barbarous, self-mutilating and cannibalistic (Iraq “murder[s] thousands of its own,”), it is \textit{they} who hate, not the “Coalition of the Willing.” It is ‘we,’ outside the “Axis of Evil,” (Europeans, North Americans, members of the “Coalition of the Willing,”) that must save the world’s women and children (cue White male knight in shining armour).

Through the homogenizing terms “Coalition of the Willing” and “Axis of Evil,” Bush attempts to divide the world into two parts, those who need to be saved from violence and those who require violent punishment. Yet they are not simply words, simply language.
They are bombs and guns and blood and economic sanctions and poverty and destruction and rape and disability and trauma and devastated infrastructure and death. Or in countries ‘at peace,’ such as on Canadian or U.S. soil (the international wars in which we/they/they/we have been involved always happen elsewhere, maintaining a sense of peace ‘at home’), phrases like “Coalition of the Willing” and “Axis of Evil” and the ideas behind them manifest in the over-incarceration of racialized populations, higher incidences of death for racialized individuals within the justice system, over-policing or under-policing of areas marked as a threat to civility, hydroelectric damming (/damning) that leads to flooding and the displacement of racialized populations, unemployment or underemployment leading to a lack of food security and thereby, poor health, economic disparity that forces racialized individuals into the violence of prostitution work, and many other examples.

Language isn’t simply about language then, but is about action as well. Language can be performative: it not only says something, but it does something. Language acts on bodies and on social relations to produce specific material effects. The term “Coalition of the Willing” serves Bush not only as a classification, to distinguish between two groups (as one might think of words like “apple” or “orange” used as classifications), but it simultaneously produces what it means to be willing or unwilling, it produces people as good or bad, civilized or uncivilized, friend or foe. Critical Race Literacy is thus not just about words, about stories, about discourse; it is literally about life and death. How does reliable narration participate in a project of biopower, as a means through which power is exercised as “making live or letting die”\textsuperscript{xxviii}? What role might the reliable narration of Euro-North American Philosophy of Education discourse play in supporting a racial state premised on the exercise of extreme violence? How might ‘reliable’ reading, writing, and teaching practices be used to ‘civilize’ and discipline racialized bodies and texts\textsuperscript{xxix},

\textbf{Context/Method}

Arising out of the context of centuries of European imperial rule throughout the world, including in parts of Asia, Africa, North America, South America, and Australasia\textsuperscript{xxx}, my analysis of how power operates within Western/Northern philosophical and pedagogical discourse requires that I pay attention to the historical specificities of multiple imperialist
projects. Living and working in English Canada, I focus mainly on the British empire and its aftermath, particularly in relation to North America, as this is the context which has had the greatest influence on my research. However, I also take into account the ways in which British and other imperialist projects elsewhere have informed North American values and knowledge. I examine how colonial, neo-colonial, and settler colony cultural productions functioned and function to conquer geographic and discursive territory through the ‘civilizing’ of discourse. That is, I examine how appeals to civility are used to exclude, or attempt to exclude, particular voices or bodies from cultural, political, economic and educational discourse and power, while also functioning to mask or naturalize these exclusions.

As particular discourses are ‘civilized’ to include only the ‘rational,’ the ‘logical,’ the ‘linear,’ the ‘coherent,’ the ‘singular’ – the ‘ruly’ or ‘rulable’ – great effort has gone into/goes into constructing racialized bodies as ‘irrational,’ ‘illogical,’ or ‘uncivilized’ in order to ‘justify’ their exclusion. Though often excluded from participation, bodies and voices marked as ‘uncivilized’ are far from absent within hegemonic Euro-North American discourses. Rather, they are everywhere present as “that which must be expelled.” I am thus interested in looking at what sort of effort goes into ‘civilizing’ discourse and at what cost.

The method I employ in this dissertation is that of a philosophical enquiry. I am interested in examining how modes of cultural production and reproduction such as Euro-North American Philosophy of Education discourse become premised on racialized violence, acting upon bodies as a system of surveillance and discipline. What sort of subjectivities does such a discourse create? Who does one come to know and experience oneself and others to be through the language of Philosophy of Education? I take a meta-narrative approach to this project, while recognizing that there is no place outside narrative from which to objectively watch a story unfold.

Meta-narrative for me, is not about getting away from a narrative and its contextual specificity, but rather about immersing oneself more fully and self-consciously in it, drawing attention to narrative as narrative, as art(ifice), as craft(ed). Perhaps intra-narrative.xxxi (amongst/within narrative), or sub-narrative (under narrative, at the foundational level), would be a better way to describe my approach. Let’s go with intra-narrative, as sub-
narrative still suggests the possibility of an outside or bottom to narrative which one can get beneath.

What I am concerned with in this dissertation is examining how narratives about epistemology, about knowing and learning, about reading, writing, and teaching are crafted, by whom they are crafted, and to what purpose. Who do such narratives allow an author/speaker to become? I seek here to try on a notion of literacy that challenges the supposed neutrality of language and of traditional literacy projects, highlighting the ways in which racial hierarchies are constructed and maintained through such projects in their attempts to teach students how to be ‘good’ philosophers, ‘good’ writers, ‘good’ readers, ‘good’ students, ‘good’ teachers, ‘good’ people. I look at how notions of civility, mastery, and reason serve within Philosophy of Education discourse to delineate hierarchical racialized identities, simultaneously necessitating and denying violence from civil society and the state to protect the public body from threats without and within.

Having established the scope and general aims of my dissertation in this chapter, in “Chapter Two: Marking the Terrain,” I outline some of the key concepts that frame my discussion, such as reliable narration, sovereign power, disciplinary power, biopower, and race struggle. Borrowing from literary theory and Audrey Thompson’s work, I define how it is that I want to think about and use the notion of reliable narration to apply to scholarly and pedagogical discourse. Then, drawing upon the work of Michel Foucault, I explore how networks of power have shifted and changed over time, from a pre-Enlightenment focus on power as a matter of distribution of goods and wealth, to a post-Enlightenment focus on power as a matter of determining who must live and who may die. Furthermore, through Foucault’s work, I look at the origins of race struggle and how this struggle has been reconceptualised over the centuries as tied to, yet much more than, a struggle about skin colour or nationality.

In “Chapter 3: Storying the World,” I lay out the basic premises of Critical Race Theory and how I see them relating to my work in order to help establish the conceptual framework through which I approach my task(s). Drawing on the work of Richard Delgado, Patricia J. Williams, Gloria Ladson-Billings, William Tate, and Charles Mills, I examine how racisms have shifted over time, shaping language and institutions to the point of becoming “structural and routine.” My aim in this chapter is to highlight how racism pervades
Northern/Western social institutions at a foundational level, such that one cannot talk about politics or education or economics or law, etc., without talking about race (whether one acknowledges this or not).

“Chapter Four: Race Critiques of Liberal Modernity” examines how racialized notions of personhood, liberty, equality, reason, progress, and civility that emerged during the Enlightenment continue to inform and structure North American society/societies today, while also continuing to justify acts of racialized violence, both discursive and material, on intra- as well as inter-national levels. Looking at the work of philosophers such as Locke, Hume, Kant, James Mill, and John Stuart Mill, I examine the extent to which race and an inherent belief in White superiority are embedded within their theories and the theories they have since influenced.

I have chosen to focus here on Enlightenment philosophers and their contemporary ideological descendants because of the influence these thinkers have had in helping to establish and maintain hegemonic philosophical, ontological, educational, social, and political ‘norms’ that keep inequitable, violent power relations in place. I highlight the work of these philosophers here in order to problematize and diffuse the power of these ‘norms,’ exposing the role they play in keeping a system of racial governance intact. In this chapter I also highlight how progress becomes associated with whiteness during the Enlightenment and how this helps to locate different nations and races on a spatial/temporal/moral timeline of progress.

In “Chapter Five: Mapping the Territory/ies of Racial Identity,” I examine White investments in ‘erasing’ race, that is, in denying the role that whiteness plays in shaping hegemonic social norms, values, beliefs, and behaviours, creating in the process a sense of ‘Universal’ experience that is co-extensive with a singular, monolithic, White (masculine) experience. Furthermore, I examine the sort of work and violence that goes into establishing the spatial, temporal, discursive, and moral boundaries of ‘civilized’ and ‘rational’ identities along racial lines. Turning to the work of W.E.B. DuBois, Gloria Anzaldúa, Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack, Daniel Coleman, Frantz Fanon, Meyda Yeğenoğlu, Achille Mbembe, and others, I seek to uncover that which must be suppressed/repressed/oppressed in order to maintain a façade of White mental and moral integrity, required to uphold the illusion of authority and reliability.
My sixth chapter, “The Race and Space of ‘Reason,’” looks at some of the myths that have held White supremacy intact, such as the myth of White ‘civility’ and how this serves to create a racialized geography of ‘civilized’ White spaces and ‘uncivilized’ spaces of a racial ‘Other.’ Building upon the work of Mills, Goldberg, and Fellows and Razack discussed in earlier chapters, here I draw upon the scholarship of Daniel Coleman, Meyda Yeğenoğlu, Albert Memmi, Achille Mbembe and others to illustrate the ways in which notions of civility and rationality can operate as a form of discipline on the body, whether marked ‘White’ or ‘non-White,’ establishing boundaries around who belongs in particular places and who does not/is forbidden.

“Chapter Seven: Troubling Reliability/The Troubles of Reliability,” looks at how ‘reliable’ narration helped/helps to justify European colonial conquest and systemic racialized violence through the production and reinforcement of ‘civilized,’ ‘rational,’ and ‘respectable’ racialized identities. Through the lens of Audrey Thompson’s work, I look at how the reliable narratives of contemporary philosophers, scholars, and educators may participate in the policing and maintenance of the borders of civility and rationality through claims to impartiality, univocality, unidirectionality, and dispassion. I examine how this operates both within scholarly discourse and within classrooms to mark particular bodies and voices as requiring exclusion and punishment.

“Chapter Eight: Racializing ‘Progress’ Through Reliable Narration” is a continuation of my discussion in Chapter Seven, examining in greater detail how whiteness becomes tied to the notion of ‘progress,’ of advancement, through reliable narration, helping to define success (of a philosopher, of a student) along racial lines. Additionally, I explore what it is that scholars, educators, and students gain from reliable narration, what it is that they/we have invested in being perceived as ‘reliable.’ Who do teachers, academics, and students come to know themselves and others to be through claims to dispassion and univocality?

Finally, “Chapter Nine: (In)Conclusion – A Call to Action,” explores what philosophers and pedagogues can do to attempt to warp the ways in which power circulates along racial lines within the classroom, within the academy, and within society in general. I look at what sort of practices might help teachers, students, and scholars intervene in institutional racialized violence. I consider some of the merits and limitations of intentional
unreliable narration as a strategy in opposition to reliable narration, as well as look at what
effects may be produced by simply noticing the dangers inherent in reliable narration.

Turning to Maureen Ford’s discussion of normalization in the classroom, I consider
the possibilities that are opened up by drawing attention to the way that reliable narration
serves to disguise or make invisible the mechanisms of power at work in naming individuals,
groups, or nations as ‘civilized’ or ‘uncivilized,’ ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful,’ ‘good’ or
‘bad.’ Like Ford, I encourage philosophers, pedagogues, and students not to take for granted
our/their identities as philosophers, pedagogues, and students, but rather to constantly subject
to critical scrutiny our understanding of what it means to be a teacher, a learner, or a scholar
of a particular sort. How it is that one becomes a knower or a learner, or conversely,
becomes a person incapable of knowing or learning - what sort of work must go into the
formation of these subjectivities? At what cost?
Chapter Two: Marking the Terrain

Reliable Narration and the Dangers of Stories

While I will be getting into reliable narration in much more detail in later chapters, I feel it is important to here give you, my readers, a clearer sense of what I mean by the term. As Harmon and Holman’s *A Handbook to Literature* explains, “A narrator may be reliable or unreliable. If the narrator is reliable, the reader accepts without serious question the statements of fact and judgment [of the narrator]. If the narrator is unreliable, the reader questions or seeks to qualify the statements of fact and judgment.”

Rather than asking the reader to passively accept a text as is, intentionally unreliable narrative asks the reader to question, to engage, to take part in establishing the truths of a text along with the author or speaker. The intentionally unreliable narrator invites dialogue, invites the reader or listener to take part in telling the story. This type of narrator consciously manipulates the conventions of narrative to call into question the trustworthiness of her or his story.

An example of this intentionally unreliable narrative in literature might be a story written in the naïve voice of a young child who doesn’t clearly understand the events he or she is narrating, or a novel with multiple, contradictory endings. Intentionally unreliable fiction may also employ elements of the magical or fantastical such as ghosts or mental telepathy as normal parts of everyday life. The purpose of the intentionally unreliable narrative is to alienate the reader from the text, to make readers aware of the narrative conventions being employed, to draw their attention to the storied-ness of the story. That is, the intentionally unreliable narrator invites the reader to ask what other ways the same story might be told, to ask if there might be a more believable or truthful version of the story. Unlike the monologic, ‘truth’-imparting nature of reliable narration, the reader of intentionally unreliable narration is asked to participate in creating the ‘truth’ of the story.

In Philosophy of Education scholarship, manipulating the conventions of narrative might look like drawing attention to oneself as a narrator whose work is inherently shaped by the particularities of one’s multiple social identities, or it might look like leaving one’s discussion open-ended, refusing the tidy closure expected of academic writing. It could also possibly involve multiple scholars writing a single paper telling different, contradictory
stories. There are many different ways for scholars and educators to intentionally call into question their authority as narrators or call into question the notion of a single, unmediated, universal truth. I will discuss some of these ways in further detail near the end of this dissertation, as my focus here is more on the problems that can arise with the use of reliable narration.

I want to draw a distinction here, though, between the intentionally versus unintentionally unreliable narrator. The unintentionally unreliable narrator is one whose story is called into question even when she or he seeks to be reliable. His or her claims to truth are not recognized as valid despite his or her assertions to their validity. In an academic context, charges that a scholar or educator is too biased, too invested in an argument, or too emotional serve to cast doubt on her or his ability to reason ‘objectively,’ and thus serve to undermine one’s reliability. Such charges are often made against scholars and educators from groups historically excluded from hegemonic Euro-North American discourse, including racialized scholars and educators; women of all races; lesbian, gay, and bisexual scholars and educators of all races; and people with disabilities or mental illnesses, for example. Voices that run counter to ‘universal’ norms established within hegemonic discourse may be dismissed as too particular, as untrustworthy. However, notions of bias and investment and emotion are themselves often constructed in such a way so as to mask their appearance in hegemonic narratives.

A white, heterosexual male, for example, is not necessarily any less biased or invested or emotionally involved in a claim than someone with a different social identity, though the former has the privilege to use reliable narration to mark others as unreliable while refusing to mark himself (and refusing to mark the benefits and emotional security he derives from establishing himself as more reliable). Thus, one may be marked as unreliable despite her or his intentions to be taken as reliable. These issues of who is taken to be reliable, by whom, and when – as well as in what circumstances someone might choose to be unreliable and to what effect – shape my inquiry in this dissertation and guide my discussion of the mechanisms that systematize and normalize racialized violence.

To fill out in further detail what I mean by reliable and unreliable narrative, I turn to Audrey Thompson’s paper “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators,” in which she identifies a
number of key features of reliable narration, including what I term “univocality,” “unidirectionality,” and what Thompson terms “dispassion.”

Univocality refers to the practice of presenting one’s claims as a representation of an unmediated reality, failing to attend to the partiality of one’s knowledge and glossing over claims to the contrary. Unidirectionality involves the assumption that rational argument must progress in a linear fashion towards a logical conclusion, while dispassion suggests a lack of personal investment in one’s arguments, adopting the narrative stance of the objective, neutral observer (thus ensuring that one’s arguments remain ‘untainted’ by bias that might undermine their validity). I argue that these narrative conventions emerge within liberal modern ideology during the Enlightenment as part of a project of racial identity formation that shaped the European democratic state ‘at home’ and the imperial state ‘abroad.’ Such conventions, I contend, continue to shape contemporary subjectivities as well as global political, economic, and social relations.

Despite the violence implicit in reliable narration, I do not dispute that it can be very important and very useful at times. Indeed, it seems that reliable narration is often required in order to be taken seriously as a scholar or educator, particularly for racialized individuals whose race may be taken (by White people and other racialized people) as a marker of one’s unreliability. Reliable narration is thus an instrument through which one legitimizes her or his claims to authority as a speaker; it is a terrain on which one’s civility and rationality – and thereby, personhood - are contested (I attach personhood to civility and rationality here because, as I explore in later chapters, civility and rationality become those markers that determine one’s humanity – it is civility and rationality that distinguish ‘Man’ from ‘beast’). Reliable narration has been an essential part of establishing a system of racial rule, I contend, whether within colonial, neo-colonial, or domestic European contexts, in that it has been necessary in order to establish the White middle-class (male) ruler or colonizer as omniscient, omnibenevolent, omnispective Subject, a subjectivity claimed by the White liberal individual as justification for colonial conquest and systemic racialized violence.

Yet while I argue that reliable narration has been used as a tool to define the limits of whiteness, so too does it demarcate the boundaries of civility and reason in a way that is tied to, yet bigger than, race as skin colour or ethnicity. Reliable narration serves to inscribe the notion of race as something beyond the biological, as a way of being and behaving.
Colonized and racialized groups are thus also hailed by these narratives\textsuperscript{vi}, invited into the maintenance of a system of rule based on distinctions between civility and incivility, respectability and degeneracy. Through reliable narration, one is invited to see oneself as omniscient, civilized, fully human, master of his or her domain, regardless of race. Yet this is only achieved through the creation of an ignorant, uncivilized, subhuman class against which one may define herself or himself. Reliable narration thereby operates to produce two distinct classes – those deserving of the rights and benefits of full personhood, and those against whom such rights and benefits must be protected.

Yet not only does reliable narration create particular authorial subjects, but also takes part in shaping the subjectivity of the reader or audience. As Catherine Belsey suggests,

> The reader [of the reliable text] is invited to perceive and judge the ‘truth’ of the text, the coherent, non-contradictory interpretation of the world as it is perceived by an author whose autonomy is the source and evidence of the truth of the interpretation. This model of intersubjective communication, of shared understanding of a text which re-presents the world, is the guarantee not only of the truth of the text but of the reader’s existence as an autonomous and knowing subject in a world of knowing subjects.\textsuperscript{vii}

Through reliable narration then, whether as author or audience, one comes to know oneself as autonomous, as extracted from social specificity, as capable of discerning objective truths and making rational judgments, skills necessary for political engagement as conceptualized within a liberal modern notion of democracy.

My concern here is not with whether or not reliable narration is ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ but rather with how it functions as a site of identity construction and as an instrument of racial rule. What sort of writing/reading/teaching/learning subjects does the reliable narration of Philosophy of Education discourse produce? I want to raise questions about and flag some of the dangers of reliable narration, in terms of how it serves to legitimize and delegitimize claims to knowledge and personhood, carving out racialized, spatialized, gendered, and temporalized discursive boundaries. As I contend throughout this dissertation, reliable narration (like Bush’s use of the terms “Coalition of the Willing” and “Axis of Evil,”) employs the conventions of univocality, unidirectionality, and dispassion to produce a world divided along a colourline, distinguishing between the civilized man (in the sense of both
human and male) and the uncivilized subperson who has forfeited his or her rights to moral consideration.

Certainly, as Bush seems to imply, a nation that “murder[s] thousands of its own citizens, leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children,” seems more monstrous than human, sociopathic in its lack of compassion and human emotion. It is beastly, requiring violent intervention to tame or subdue it (yes, Bush essentially pathologizes an entire nation and those associated with it as monstrous [but are the women and children not part of the nation? Who makes the nation?]). Violence enacted by the state against those who have forfeited their rights to moral consideration is thus not monstrous, but, on the contrary, civilized and compassionate. Through this dissertation, I want to look at how race thinking serves to mark particular bodies as inherently reliable and civilized (not needing to be questioned – such as Bush’s univocal claims to truth) or inherently unreliable and uncivilized (untrustworthy and requiring validation – such as the claims to truth of Iraqi citizens as conceptualized by Bush). I hope I am not here mistaken to be propounding moral relativism, in that “anything goes,” or taken to be denying the possibility that Iraqi citizens may have experienced violence from their own government, but rather I want to draw attention to the ways in which all claims to truth are situated within larger systems of power that take part in shaping such claims.

It is my intention to explore how reliable narration may be taken up dysconsciously by philosophers and educators in a way that perpetuates racialized discourses about rationality and irrationality, the civilized and uncivilized, knowledge and belief. While my dissertation initially focused on intentionally unreliable narration and polyvocality as a potential method of addressing these problems, it was brought to my attention by my dissertation committee members, particularly Sherene Razack, that intentionally unreliable narration and polyvocality fail to adequately address race as a system of rule, in that they benefit White scholars, educators, and students more than racialized scholars, educators, and students. Given the way that race as a system of rule already serves to undermine the reliability of racialized academics, students, and teachers, the choice and risks involved in choosing to use unreliable narration are not symmetrical across races. With regard to polyvocality, hearing more diverse perspectives does not address the power relations within which these perspectives are already embedded. It is not enough to simply practice and hear
more ways of writing, speaking, teaching, and studying; a radical questioning of how race operates to govern writing, speaking, teaching, and studying is required.

I think of my own practice as an educator and the problems inherent in literacy instruction and assessment. While some of my students create and recite profound critiques of social inequity in spoken word poetry or rap, employing intricate patterns of metre, rhythm, alliteration, sustained metaphor, and rhyme, some of these same students struggle with basic reading and writing skills. Were I, as a White/Euro-Canadian female academic, to perform spoken word poetry as philosophical argument or social critique (as I have on occasion at conferences), my work may be taken as innovative and novel (as it has by some – though it has also been dismissed as “unphilosophical” by others). My ability to employ spoken word poetry in my arguments may be taken as a sign of my literacy, of my ability to manipulate a genre of writing to serve my academic needs. However, in the case of my students, particularly students marked by race, their fluency and familiarity with spoken verse (not the sonnets of Shakespeare, but the hip hop verse of Jay-Z or Kanye West or Lil Wayne) is taken as a sign of illiteracy, as a sign of their inability to produce writing that employs the traditional conventions of grammar and rational argumentation (Valid Premise 1, Valid Premise 2, Valid Premise 3 → Sound Conclusion).

To privilege oral verse as a way of knowing and communicating knowledge thus carries with it very different risks for different people in different contexts. The ground between recognizing and excluding spoken verse as epistemology is shaky. How does a focus on oral story-telling take away from a focus on the development of essential reading and writing skills? How might it set lower expectations for students rather than holding them accountable to the demands of argumentative essay writing? Conversely, how does denying spoken verse as a way of knowing work to silence and discipline the knowledge and skills of students?

It is important to draw attention to my own subjectivity here as a White female educator in terms of the problems that may arise in my discussions of storytelling. To what extent does my example above rely upon a trope of the young racialized male (particularly young Black/Afro-Canadian/Caribbean-Canadian males/males of African descent) marginalized by a racist education system, of whom ‘alternative’ forms of literacy are expected? How might this discussion take part in constructing a trope of an illiterate young
Black male, contributing to the disproportionate placement of Black students in basic non-academic level and special education programs, to the disproportionate expulsion rates of racialized youth, and to lower high school completion rates? There is no clean, innocent position from which I can speak as a White/Euro-Canadian scholar and educator about the challenges and obstacles faced by young Black males and other racialized students within the education system, given that my identity as teacher and the identities of my students are tightly wound up already within a system of racial rule. There is no untainted place from which I can speak.

However, despite the problems inherent in my naming particular groups of students as marginalized by the school system, it is more dangerous, I believe, to fail to talk about why and how young Black males are being disproportionately pushed out of schools by the racism of teachers, administrators, and the education system as an institution (potentially resulting in systemic underemployment, in turn potentially leading to chronic low income, in turn leading to systemic food insecurity and/or poor health, in turn leading to reduced life expectancy). While remaining silent about these issues only allows these problems to continue unaddressed, I think it is important for me to also ask who my story serves and to what effect. Does using my students as an example benefit them or other racialized students? Hopefully, within a larger context of education as a whole, though it may simultaneously cause harm within a larger context as well. Does it benefit me and/or other White/Euro-Canadian scholars by allowing me/them/us to think that we/they are doing their/our part to end systemic racism? Probably. Does it benefit my reader by allowing you to get a better sense of the work I am trying to do in this dissertation? I hope so.

Sherene Razack addresses some of the dangers and limitations of story-telling in her article “Story-Telling for Social Change.” While in this dissertation I focus on the stories or meta-narratives behind Euro-North American Philosophy of Education discourse, particularly reliable narration, I also want to pay attention to the limits of the usefulness of story-telling and the violence it may reproduce. As Razack explains, “Story-telling is a theoretical attention to narrative, to the nature and consequences of this conceptual scheme.” Quoting from Scheppele she adds, “‘Those whose stories are believed have the power to create fact.’” A critical questioning of how and what stories come to be
considered fact is therefore an important part of education for social change, though as Razack cautions, it matters in important ways by whom and to whom a story is told.

While critical pedagogy has called for greater representation of historically-excluded voices within education, Razack points out the importance of paying attention to how subjectivity is constructed within a web of relationships that impact how one is able to hear these voices. She writes,

That is, the complex ways in which relations of domination are sustained, lived and resisted call for a more careful examination of how we come to know what we know as well as how we work for a more just world across our various ways of knowing. When we depend on story-telling either to reach each other across differences or to resist patriarchal and racist constructs, we must overcome at least one difficulty; the difference in position between the teller and the listener, between telling the tale and hearing it. One suspects it is the sentimental, the personal and the individual that is being sought after. To what uses will these stories be put? Will someone else take them and theorize from them?....Who will control how they are used?xv

Razack highlights the importance of asking for whose benefit a story is being told. The stories of systemically marginalized groups are often demanded to teach people in relations of dominance something about themselves. Story-telling thus carries with it different advantages and risks for different groups and should therefore not be embraced uncritically.

Though story-telling is put forth within education, the law, or other fields as an opportunity to be heard, to share one’s experiences, to have a voice, such story-telling can incur many risks, including the co-optation or appropriation of one’s story for another’s use. Will the listener be able to hear it the way it was meant? How do one’s own experiences, beliefs, and moral code shape what it is that he or she hears? Furthermore, does a call for story-telling assume/insist that everyone wants to share her or his story with a particular audience?

Though story-telling works to bring focus to experiential understanding, it is not enough to simply create space for voices that have traditionally been left out of educational discourse. As Razack points out through the work of Valerie Walkerdine, “The voices of the oppressed are not simply left out of the system. Rather, the school regulates what a child is and children of outsider groups (and all girls) respond in a number of contradictory ways.”xvi
Not only might some people choose to withhold their stories from public discourse (for fear of being misunderstood, for fear of having one’s story twisted and used against him or her, or as claim to one’s entitlement to the private rather than public sphere, etc.), but even the inclusion of such stories does not open up the possibility of stepping outside of inequitable social relations, as one’s subjectivity and voice are shaped by these relations. There is no ‘pure’ story that will tell the truth about power and domination from a position above or outside of the mess.

Furthermore, a call to privilege suppressed voices (such as ‘unreliable’ narratives in the field of Philosophy of Education) raises the problem of intersectionality: who is oppressed in what context? Though I am female and experience the effects of patriarchy on a regular basis (as do men, but in a different way and to different effect), my social location as White, heterosexual, middle-class, Canadian, English-speaker, female-identified, Christian-raised, enabled, physically and mentally healthy, university-educated, unmarried, childless, thirty-one-years-old impact my experience of sexism, gender discrimination, and male-perpetrated violence against women in many ways. For example, my financial situation or citizenship status is not a factor in whether or not I choose to remain with a male (in my case as a heterosexual woman) partner. If I needed to access emergency women’s services (shelters, rape crisis centres, doctors), I know that I would be able to communicate with the staff, would be able to physically access the services, and could easily find services that respected and followed my religious beliefs. I can find a job that will cover my expenses that does not require travel late at night. I could complain about a co-worker’s or employer’s sexual harassment without fear that I might be putting my home, my children’s well-being, or my ability to live in Canada in jeopardy if I were to lose my job.

That said, how is oppression measured when intersectionality is taken into account? Whose voice takes precedence as more authentically oppressed? And who is it that can name what the ‘authentic’ experience from a particular social location is like? As Razack remarks,

There is an assumption that the living voices (and sometimes the written texts) of the oppressed express a truth that will win out. There is little room for questioning that voice or text as the transmitter of authentic ‘human’ experience…Here the authentic
voice rests on a conception of the self as unitary and coherent. Language is seen as simply representing reality rather than constructing it. Here Razack critiques the assumption that marginalized or suppressed voices contain an unquestionable, unmediated truth. Not only does such an assumption assume the possibility of a narrator capable of stepping outside of his or her social particularity to offer an objective account of his or her experiences, but such an assumption can also mean failing to critically engage the speaker in discussion. As explained by Razack, Lynet Uttal remarks that ...

In Anglo-feminist groups, the emphasis on providing care and support leads to passive listening of diverse voices. There is seldom any heated discussion or disagreement; those who fail to fit in simply leave the group. [Uttal] describes the “blank looks of supportive listening” and the absence of critical engagement with the ideas proposed.

The failure of Anglo-feminist women to take up the ideas of women of colour in critical discussion is to fail to acknowledge the reasoning and moral deliberation behind these ideas. To disengage as an Anglo-feminist is to suggest that the arguments of women of colour exist outside the rules of rational debate and need not be held accountable to them.

Given all of the problems that can arise in calling for more stories and more diverse stories as a solution to systemic injustice, Razack suggests that “perhaps we ought not to have the expectation that a pedagogy can be devised that will help us transcend the dichotomies and the bind of partial knowledge.” Instead, she advocates for starting from “how we know what we know,” calling into question knowledge and being of both teller and listener, and struggling for ways to take this out of the realm of abstraction and into political action. It is this task of calling into question “knowledge and being,” of asking “how we know what we know” that I take up in this dissertation through an exploration of reliable narration within philosophical and pedagogical practice. In the next section, I provide a brief description of how I want to think about power and the way it shapes knowledge and being, before getting into how power circulates through reliable narration.
A Brief History of Power: Sovereign Power, Disciplinary Power, and Biopower

Can knowledge circulate without a position of mastery? Can it be conveyed without the exercise of power? No, because these is no end to understanding power relations which are rooted deep in the social nexus — not merely added to society nor easily locatable so that we can just radically do away with them. Yes, however, because in-between grounds always exist, and cracks and interstices are like gaps of fresh air that keep on being suppressed because they tend to render more visible the failures operating in every system. Perhaps mastery need not coincide with power.

– Trinh Minh-ha

While I could write volumes on it and still be unable to provide an adequate account of Michel Foucault’s conceptualization of power, it is not my project to get into a detailed discussion of his work. Rather, I introduce his ideas here briefly to set a framework for the way I want to think about power in my discussion of reliable narration and what it does for philosophy, education, and the maintenance of a system of racial rule. Drawing upon the work of Foucault, I want to trace how power has changed over time, shifting from a focus on power as that exercised by a sovereign over its subjects and the land, premised on a notion of rights and obligations (whether monarchical or democratic), towards a notion of power as a “mechanics of discipline,” a “tight grid of disciplinary coercions that actually guarantees the cohesion of [the] social body.”

But first, to lay out a set of methodological precautions with which Foucault prefaces his discussion of power, precautions which I take up in my own examination of reliable narration and how power operates in, on, and through it. Foucault begins with the precaution that “Our object is not to analyze rule-governed and legitimate forms of power which have a single centre, or to look at what their general mechanisms or its overall effects might be,” but instead to look at the extremities of power, where it “transgresses the rules of right that organize and delineate it, oversteps those rules and is invested in institutions, is embodied in techniques and acquires the material means to intervene, sometimes in violent ways.” He is not, therefore, interested in simply looking at who has what and how they got it, but instead looking at how power manifests beyond the individual or the group to become inextricably interwoven in institutions, in subjectivities, in everyday interactions.
His second precaution is that his goal, “…[W]as not to analyze power at the level of intentions or decisions, not to try to approach it from inside, and not to ask the question…So who has power? What is going on in his head? And what is he trying to do, this man who has power?” Rather, Foucault is more concerned with the effects of power: what does it do? How does it act upon and regulate bodies? For Foucault then,

…[T]he question is not: Why do some people want to be dominant? What do they want? What is their overall strategy? The question is this: What happens at the moment of, at the level of the procedure of subjugation, or in the continuous and uninterrupted processes that subjugate bodies, direct gestures, and regulate forms of behavior?

While it is of critical importance, I believe, to examine systemic inequities in society and to question how white supremacy and patriarchy and class divisions and heterosexism and ableism came about and continue to operate, I contend that prior to/in addition to such an examination, one must question what it is that these systems do. How do white supremacy or heterosexism, for example, act on all bodies simultaneously, carving out subjectivities, directing gestures, and regulating behavior, even of White and/or heterosexual people?

In asking such questions, my intention is not to create a position of innocence for heterosexual and/or White people, to suggest that they/we/we/they are all disadvantaged by and experience white supremacy and heterosexism the same way (though for Foucault, he wouldn’t care about my intentions, only what my utterance of such questions does – what effects does it produce? Does asking the questions themselves serve to reinscribe White and/or heterosexual people as ‘socially dominant’?). We must continue talking about the need to make all spaces, public and private (as in the education system, the workplace, places of business, social services, public spaces, one’s home) accessible to people with physical and intellectual disabilities. We must ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to pursue post-secondary education if desired. We must ensure that all people have the ability to support themselves and their dependents without having to put their physical or mental health and well-being at risk. We must ensure that people have no need to fear for their safety because of their sexuality or gender-identity.

These discussions and issues are necessary, of dire importance. Potentially matters of life and death. We need to talk about these matters. But we also need to talk about how and
why race and sexuality and ability and language and gender, for example, come to have 
meaning in a way that results in violence: how do these notions shape behavior, shape who 
one comes to know oneself and others to be? How does one define oneself through violence? 
How does reliable narration operate as a site through which philosophers, educators, and 
students come to know themselves and each other as “good” or “bad”?

A third methodological precaution Foucault lays out in his discussion of power and 
which is central to my discussion of reliable narration is this:

Do not regard power as a phenomenon of mass and homogenous domination – the 
domination of one individual over others; keep it clearly in mind that unless we are 
looking at it from a great height and a very great distance, power is not something 
that is divided between those who have it and hold it exclusively and those who do 
not have it and are subject to it. Power must, I think, be analyzed as something that 
circulates, or rather something that functions only when it is part of a chain. It is 
ever localized here or there, it is never in the hands of some, and it is never 
appropriated in the way that wealth or a commodity can be appropriated. Power 
functions. Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply 
circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this 
power. They are never the inert or consenting targets of power; they are always its 
relays. In other words, power passes through individuals, it is not applied to them. 

Here I think of the ways that social identities operate not as facts, but as subjectivities that are 
constantly under negotiation.

At risk of over-simplifying Foucault’s point, I think that while the categories ‘male’ 
or ‘White’ or ‘heterosexual,’ for example, may seem to have some sort of objective reality 
and power to them that is attached to the body and sex (genitalia, lineage, intercourse), these 
categories are somewhat gelatinous, slippery yet solid entities with shifting form, operating 
beyond the body to discipline actions and behavior. That is, while genitalia might be a 
marker of one’s ‘maleness,’ such ‘maleness’ is negotiated on many other levels and must be 
constantly demonstrated through one’s behaviour. A person’s ‘maleness,’ often directly 
linked to heterosexuality, can be called into question with potentially violent consequences 
for a number of reasons, such as wearing the ‘wrong’ thing (i.e. the colour pink, tight pants, 
make up, a skirt, etc. – though what is considered ‘wrong’ changes slightly over time and
context); saying the ‘wrong’ thing or expressing ‘too much’ emotion (i.e. to a male friend – “You look great in that shirt. It really brings out the brown in your eyes,”); being interested in the ‘wrong’ things (i.e. dolls, fashion, interior decorating, ballet dancing, etc.), looking the ‘wrong’ way (i.e., ‘too short,’ ‘too thin,’ etc.), having the ‘wrong’ kinds of relationships with women (i.e., egalitarian, respectful, considerate), making too little money, and so on and so on. A wrong move could potentially result in one’s exclusion from the category ‘male’ at the very least, or could potentially lead to harassment, bullying, physical violence, even death, as in the 2008 murder of Californian eighth-grader Lawrence King by his classmate, Brandon McInerney.xxx

As schoolmates of the two boys stated in an interview, “Lawrence had started wearing mascara, lipstick, and jewelry to school, prompting a group of male students to bully him.”xxx After publicly declaring that he was gay, Lawrence endured harassment from a group of schoolmates, including the boy charged with a hate crime in his death. The murder of Lawrence King is only one of many anti-gay bullying related deaths in recent years, including the suicides of 11-year-old Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover in April 2009 in Massachusetts, 15-year-old Justin Aaberg in July 2010 in Minnesota, 13-year-old Asher Brown in September 2010 in Texas, 18-year-old Rutgers University freshman Tyler Clementi in September 2010, and many others.

The categories ‘male’ and ‘heterosexual’ thus operate in very complicated and dangerous ways, requiring self-discipline and the discipline of others to keep the boundaries clearly defined. In order to avoid the consequences potentially experienced by males who find themselves excluded from the category of ‘real’ man or ‘heterosexual,’ all males, whether heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual, two-spirited, transgender, questioning, or intersex, are expected to discipline their own behavior accordingly. As musician Lance Bass, former member of the band NSYNC, remarks in an interview with MTV about the complexities of growing up as a gay teen, “I can tell you right now, when I was in high school in Mississippi, I was one of the first ones to jump on the bandwagon to make fun of a gay person.”xxii

Thus, categories like ‘male’ or ‘heterosexual’ serve to regulate behaviour rather than simply bestow a particular person or group with power. As Masen Davis, Executive Director of the Transgender Law Centre of California states of Brandon McInerney, the boy charged
with the death of Lawrence King, “‘[He] is just as much a victim as Lawrence...He’s a victim of homophobia and hate,” While I don’t know if I agree with this statement entirely, given that Brandon is still alive should be held accountable for his actions, I think the important point here is that his actions and his subjectivity are in part shaped by larger constructs of masculinity and sexuality. Demonstrating his masculinity and heterosexuality requires that he distinguish himself from a ‘feminine,’ ‘gay’ ‘other,’ as was the case with Lance Bass in high school as well, although he was gay himself. Violence against gay bodies and disciplining one’s own ‘feminine’ behaviour, whether in the case of Brandon McInerney or Lance Bass, is a means of proving one’s masculinity, of creating oneself as a masculine subject.

Drawing upon Foucault’s notion of power as something that circulates rather than as something one possesses like a commodity, I want to explore further in this dissertation how notions of ‘civility’ and ‘rationality,’ like ‘masculinity’ and ‘heterosexuality,’ operate as methods of discipline, requiring violence to establish and maintain a firm border between self and other. I want to examine how the narratives of philosophical and pedagogical practice become a site through which identities are negotiated and contested and to what effect.

The fourth methodological precaution Foucault raises is that, 
…[I]t is important not to…deduce power by beginning at the centre and trying to see how far down it goes, or to what extent it is reproduced or renewed in the most atomistic elements of society. I think that, on the contrary,…we should make an ascending analysis of power, or in other words begin with its infinitesimal mechanisms…xxxiv

Such an ascending analysis of power is what I hope to do in this dissertation, by exploring the reliable narration of Philosophy of Education discourse as one of the “infinitesimal mechanisms” of power.

It seems to me that this type of analysis is prior to an analysis of gross social inequities based on (not so) clearly defined social groups. Whiteness as a concept upon which racial rule is based must be examined first within the context of how racialized subjectivities are inscribed through networks of power. Whiteness as a skin colour and as a system of dominance has very little meaning to it without concepts of civility, rationality, individuality, progress, mastery, maturity, and respectability, amongst others.
Foucault’s fifth and final precaution is one about ideology. He states,
It is quite possible that ideological production did coexist with the great machineries of power…[But power] is much more and much less than [ideology]. It is the actual instruments that form and accumulate knowledge, the observational methods, the recording techniques, the investigative research procedures, the verification mechanisms. That is, the delicate mechanisms of power cannot function unless knowledge, or rather knowledge apparatuses, are formed, organized, and put into circulation, and those apparatuses are not ideological trimmings or edifices.xxxv

While I argue that liberal modern ideology emerging during the Enlightenment plays a role in informing philosophical and pedagogical practice, my concern is more so with how reliable narration works as a method of observation, recording, and verification of civility and rationality, how it works to form and circulate knowledge. To sum up his five points of precaution, Foucault remarks that “…I think we should orient our analysis of power toward material operations, forms of subjugation, and the connections among and the uses made of the local systems of subjugation on the one hand, and apparatuses of knowledge on the other.”xxxvi This is central to my argument in this dissertation. That is, I explore how reliable narration, as an apparatus of knowledge, can operate as a form of subjugation, as well as explore how it relates to “local systems of subjugation,” particularly to moments of racialized violence.

Having set out these methodological precautions, Foucault traces shifts in power over time, distinguishing between the sovereign power of pre-modernity and the disciplinary power that begins to emerge in the seventeenth century. Sovereign power, Foucault explains, is a juridico-political concept that arises in the Middle Ages and “is constituted around the problem of the monarch and monarchy.”xxxvii This type of power played four roles, he asserts: “First, it referred to an actual power mechanism: that of the feudal monarchy. Second, it was used as an instrument to constitute and justify the great monarchical administrations.”xxxviii During the “Wars of Religion,” Foucault argues, sovereign power then became a “weapon that was in circulation on both sides, and it was used both to restrict and to strengthen royal power,”xxxix employed by Catholic monarchists, Protestant antimonarchists, liberal Protestant monarchists, Catholics who advocated for regicide, aristocrats, representatives of royal power, and by the last feudalists.
By the time it was taken up by Rousseau and his contemporaries in the eighteenth century, sovereign power played a fourth role, “to construct an alternative model to authoritarian or absolute monarchical administration: that of the parliamentary democracies.” The ultimate concern of sovereign power, Foucault asserts, was the relationship between sovereign and subject, in terms of the rights and obligations such a relationship entailed. The theory of sovereignty, Foucault explains,  

…[I]s bound up with a form of power that is exercised over the land and the produce of the land, much more so than over bodies and what they do. [This theory] concerns power’s displacement and appropriation not of time and labor, but of goods and wealth. This make it possible to transcribe, into juridical terms, discontinuous obligations and tax records…[I]t is a theory that makes it possible to found absolute power around and on the basis of the physical existence of the sovereign.  

The theory of sovereignty then, was a theory of who had what and who was entitled to what. Here, as I understand it, is where notions of social privilege are most salient. To speak of White privilege or class privilege or heterosexual privilege or ‘Western’ privilege or enabled privilege, for example, is to speak in terms of distribution of goods and wealth.  

Though social privilege remains a critical issue to be addressed today, Foucault asserts that power has moved beyond distributive processes to manifest in more minute interactions, to manifest under the level of privilege, at the level of apparatuses that constitute whiteness and middle-/upper-classes and heterosexuality and ‘Western’-ness and ability, such that these categories do not exist as discrete, discernible entities, but as identities constantly under negotiation. My concern in this dissertation is to examine how power manifests in these more minute interactions, how it constitutes the categories used to exercise sovereign power, with the hope that by doing so, I will also be able to address the more gross manifestations of power as privilege.  

While the exercise of sovereign power continues to exist today, evident in the ways in which social categories continue to be used to ascribe systemic benefits or disadvantages based on group identity, it has come to exist alongside a concept of power as disciplinary. As Foucault explains,  

…[A]n important phenomenon occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: the appearance – one should say invention – of a new mechanism of power which had
very different procedures, completely new instruments, and very different equipment
[from sovereign power]. It was, I believe, absolutely incompatible with relations of
sovereignty. This new mechanism of power applies primarily to bodies and what
they do rather than to the land and what it produces…It was a type of power that was
exercised through constant surveillance and not in discontinuous fashion through
chronologically defined systems of taxation and obligation. It was a type of power
that presupposed a closely meshed grid of material coercions rather than the physical
existence of a sovereign, and it therefore defined a new economy of power based
upon the principle that there had to be an increase both in the subjugated forces and in
the force and efficacy of what subjugated them.\textsuperscript{xliii}

The reliable narration of Philosophy of Education discourse and practice, I argue, operates
through text as a method of social surveillance, acting on bodies as a form of coercion and
subjugation. By delineating the rules and limits of civility, rationality, and mastery while
establishing these as prerequisites for personhood, reliable philosophy and pedagogy
discipline the speaking subject’s relation to her/himself and to others.

Though disciplinary power is “radically heterogeneous and should logically have led
to the complete disappearance of the great juridical edifice of the theory of sovereignty,”
asserts Foucault, “the theory of sovereignty not only continued to exist as, if you like, an
ideology of right; it also continued to organize the juridical codes that nineteenth century
Europe adopted after the Napoleonic codes.”\textsuperscript{xlv} Thus, the notion of rights, entitlements, and
obligations did not cease to exist with the advent of disciplinary power, but rather came to
manifest on a more microscopic level, below the level of the body politic, of the sovereign
and its subjects. Disciplinary power is unconcerned with divisions of land and wealth, but is
located instead in the micro-interactions between apparatuses of knowledge and social
subjects.

While ultimately incompatible, disciplinary power is dependent upon sovereign
power, Foucault suggests, as a “critical instrument to be used against the monarchy and all
the obstacles that stood in the way of the development of the disciplinary society.”\textsuperscript{xlv}
Furthermore,

[The theory of sovereignty], and the organization of a juridical code centred upon it,
made it possible to superimpose on the mechanism of discipline a system of right that
concealed its mechanisms and erased the element of domination and the techniques of domination involved in discipline, and which, finally, guaranteed that everyone could exercise his or her own sovereign rights thanks to the sovereignty of the State. In other words, juridical systems, no matter whether they were theories or codes, allowed the democratization of sovereignty, and the establishment of a public right articulated with collective sovereignty, at the very time when, to the extent that, and because the democratization of sovereignty was heavily ballasted by the mechanisms of disciplinary coercion. xlvi

With regard to the reliable narration of philosophy and pedagogy as apparatuses of knowledge, notions of civility and rationality operate on the level of sovereign power, in terms of distinguishing between who is and who is not legitimately entitled to rule – that is, who has the right to rule (over the self and others, as in a liberal democracy), while masking the mechanisms of discipline that serve to construct bodies as civilized and rational.

In a theory of sovereign power, civility and rationality are taken for granted as objective facts, as easily-distinguishable qualities that one either possesses or does not. As in the case of monarchical rule, one is either a descendant of the monarchy and thereby entitled to the throne, or not – a classification easily made through an examination of family history. Within a framework of sovereign power, civility and rationality are also seen to be easily classified, often through an examination of bloodlines as well, as though these traits were carried through blood (hence a concern with maintaining the ‘purity’ of one’s race and the women within it, to be discussed in further detail later in this dissertation). While civility and rationality operated as concepts to move the site of rule from the monarchy to the bourgeoisie, they continued to rely upon a notion of right as something transmitted through blood.

As natural and human sciences like biology and anthropology flourished during the European Enlightenment, co-temporaneously with widespread ‘exploration’ and imperialism, categories of racial differentiation were established that placed bodies on a moral/spatial timeline of progress and civilization. xlvii White, European bodies were marked (by White Europeans) as more ‘advanced’ on this timeline than African, Asian, and Oceanic as well as American indigenous bodies, purportedly serving as proof of Europeans’ fitness and justification to rule. Maintaining the legitimacy of one’s rule established on these grounds of
racial, and thereby, moral fitness, required maintaining (the illusion of) distinct races and a ‘pure’ White race, achieved through the policing and disciplining of all women’s bodies and the bodies of racialized men. Through the notion of racial difference, science imbued civility and rationality with an objective material reality located within the body. The more ‘White’ or European one was, the further ahead he or she could be located on a timeline of progress and civilization. Civility and rationality as scientifically-measurable markers of one’s right to rule thus served as means through which to determine the distribution of material goods, as in a theory of sovereign power.

Yet these notions of civility and rationality as quantifiable facts functioned to mask the disciplinary processes inherent in the creation of civil and rational subjectivities. That is, civility and rationality are constantly re-created and re-negotiated through the policing of language and behaviour, one’s own and that of others, such that there is no solidity to these concepts outside of relationships and social interactions. This policing involves a complex system of rules and laws enforced at the micro level through multiple mechanisms, such as discourse (like that of philosophy or pedagogy) as a method of surveillance, as well as at the macro level through state laws and institutional practices, giving rise to a racial state concerned with the formation, surveillance, and governance of racialized subjects. As Foucault remarks,

…[O]nce disciplinary constraints had to both function as mechanisms of domination and be concealed to the extent that they were the mode in which power was actually exercised, the theory of sovereignty had to find expression in the juridical apparatus and had to be reactivated or complemented by judicial codes. Disciplinary power as a system of subjugation and constraint acting on subjects at the level of constitution becomes reified, codified, and disguised through the law of the sovereign.

Despite their incommensurability, disciplinary power and sovereign power work together then to shape the state and the constitution of its subjects. Foucault asserts,

From the nineteenth century until the present day, we have then in modern societies, on the one hand, a legislation, a discourse, and an organization of public right articulated around the principle of the sovereignty of the social body and the delegation of individual sovereignty to the State; and we also have a tight grid of disciplinary coercions that actually guarantees the cohesion of that social body. Now
that grid cannot in any way be transcribed in right, even though the two necessarily
go together. A right of sovereignty and a mechanics of discipline. It is, I think,
between these two limits that power is exercised. It is this understanding of the exercise of power that I wish to employ in my discussion of
how ‘reliability’ within Philosophy of Education discourse works simultaneously to both establish the limits of democracy in terms of who is fit to rule and who is fit to be ruled (as discerned through a measure of civility and rationality), while also participating in the
constitution of governing and governed subjectivities. ‘Reliable’ narration works as a mechanics of discipline, I contend, by using the concepts of civility and rationality as a method of constraint on one’s speech and actions.

Reliable narration, I assert, is taken up by philosophers, educators, and students as a means to establish disciplinary (and disciplining) norms of behaviour and thought, giving birth to oneself as an all-powerful, all-seeing, all-knowing speaking subject through the performance of reliability. For Foucault,

The discourse of disciplines is about a rule: not a juridical rule derived from sovereignty, but a discourse about a natural rule, or in others words a norm.

Disciplines will define not a code of law, but a code of normalization, and they will necessarily refer to a theoretical horizon that is not the edifice of law, but the field of human sciences. And the jurisprudence of these disciplines will be that of a clinical knowledge. 1

Reliable narration functions, then, as a method of observation, classification, and measurement of how closely one adheres to the norms of personhood, to those markers that distinguish Man from animal – His civility and rationality – as exemplified by the White Euro-North American male.

So my project within this dissertation is to:

A. Show how civility and rationality operate as mechanisms of discipline serving the maintenance of a system of racial rule, and,

B. Establish how reliable Philosophy of Education discourse operates as a site through which civil and rational identities are negotiated.
The goal of this discursive analysis is to examine the role of ‘reliable’ philosophy and pedagogy in the perpetuation of wide-spread state-sanctioned racialized violence, in the hopes of intervening in these processes to reduce the threat of harm they pose. How do these discourses participate in the marking of bodies as raced in such a way that violence against these marked bodies is not only permissible, but required for the well-being of the state?

...I remember my mother crying because there had been a school bus accident. And the ambulance refused to take the children to the nearest hospital because they were Black and the hospital was white. So some children died by the time they got them to L. Richardson. The hospital where I was born. It was years before I understood that my mother was gripped by the despairing knowledge that those children could just as easily have been her children drowning in blood and choking on vomit. And her children were just little colored children who would not be seeing the inside of that white hospital if their lives depended on it. – Kal Alston

To his notions of sovereign power and disciplinary power, Foucault also adds the concept of biopower, or power over “man-as-species,” a “‘biopolitics’ of the human race” in opposition to the more individualizing concepts of sovereignty and discipline. As Achille Mbembé explains of biopower in his article “Necropolitics,”

...[T]he ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die. Hence, to kill or to allow to live constitute the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes. To exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power.

While sovereign power is exercised through the state’s ability to “let live or make die,” biopower manifests through the ability to “make live or let die.” Not only does power function as a matter of rights and discipline then, but also functions as a matter of life and death.

Foucault explains,

Now I think we see something new emerging in the second half of the eighteenth century: a new technology of power, but this time it is not disciplinary. This technology does not exclude the former, does not exclude disciplinary technology,
but it does dovetail into it...embedding itself in existing disciplinary techniques. This new technique does not simply do away with the disciplinary technique, because it exists at a different level, on a different scale, and because it has a different bearing area, and makes use of different instruments. Unlike discipline, which is addressed to bodies, the new nondisciplinary power is applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being... lv

While disciplinary power is focused on the regulation of bodies and the establishment of behavioural norms, biopower concerns itself with the measure, study, and management of the processes of life and death, processes such as birth rate, death rate, the fertility of a population, life expectancy, etc.

An example of this is the sterilization laws put in place in the United States and Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, implemented in nearly thirty states and within two provinces. lvii In Alberta alone, between 1929 and 1972, over 2800 individuals were sterilized under the authority of the province’s Sexual Sterilization Act, entailing the creation of the Alberta Eugenics Board to coordinate the sterilization program. lviii The Act was prompted by the work of Dr. Clarence Hincks, professor of Psychiatry at the University of Toronto and General Director of the Canadian National Committee on Mental Hygiene, who determined that crime, prostitution, and unemployment resulted from “feeble-mindedness,” and that the only solution was prevention through sterilization. lvi

Under the governance of the Alberta Eugenics Board, nearly 5,000 sterilization procedures were approved and over 2,834 were actually performed. Those who were deemed “incapable of intelligent parenthood” or who were predicted to be “unstable parents” were recommended for sterilization (this also came to include people with syphilis and epilepsy “if there was evidence of mental deterioration”). lx Youth, women, Eastern Europeans, and particularly Aboriginal people “(identified as ‘Indian,’ ‘Metis’[sic], ‘half-breed,’ ‘treaty,’ and ‘Eskimo’)” were over-represented in these cases, with Aboriginal people the most likely to be diagnosed as “mentally defective” and thus not required to give consent to sterilization. lx Here is evidence of “mental stability” and intelligence being tied to, yet not directly commensurate with, race.
While one’s race or ethnicity, such as in the case of Aboriginal people, was taken by the state as an indicator of one’s sub-personhood, nullifying an individual’s sovereign rights and the state’s obligation to protect, sub-personhood was determined not solely by the colour of one’s skin or one’s ancestry, but also by a demonstration of mental capacity through ‘civil’ and ‘rational’ action. This meant that mental illness, substance dependency, intellectual and physical disabilities or disorders, ‘disreputable’ behaviour or employment, etc. came to mark individuals, including White people, as sub-person in ways similar to, though distinct from, the use of race. Under the conditions of the *Sexual Sterilization Act of Alberta*, then, the surest way to protect oneself from recommendation for sterilization was to manage one’s behaviour in accordance with social norms. Any deviation from these norms could result in one’s mental fitness, and thereby one’s claims to self-determination, being questioned by the state.

At the same time that the state concerned itself with eliminating threats to the ‘health’ of the nation through “negative eugenics,” it also focused on the proliferation of ‘healthy’ citizenry through “positive eugenics.” Citing the work of Kline, Grekul et al. remark, By the late 1940s, the occupation with “negative eugenics,” (i.e. segregation and sterilization) was beginning to share ideological space with calls for “positive eugenics” or “reproductive morality” (Kline 2001). Post-WWII increases in divorce, premarital sex, illegitimate births, and female labour force participation were seen as threats to the traditional (middle class) family. In response, proponents of “positive eugenics” advocated marital counselling to ensure that the “right kind” of couples had children. After all, a white middle class woman’s “true contribution to society lay in her potential to procreate.”

As in Foucault’s concept of biopower, the increasing concern with “negative” and “positive” eugenics projects from the late 19th century onward became part of a larger state concern with managing the health of the social body through the observation, classification, diagnosis, and statistical data collection of the medical sciences.

Gerluk et al. note that this medical/biological approach to governance was part of a larger social phenomenon occurring at the time:

The active promotion of both negative and positive eugenics programs reflected the growing influence of the medical, psychiatric, and social work professions in the
early to middle decades of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Larger and more mental health institutions, more social workers and mental health “experts,” the growing tendency to “medicalize” social problems, and the growing power of professionals were all part of a North American trend.\textsuperscript{lxii}

Citing Larson and Dowbiggin, Grekul et al. remark that “eugenics beliefs emerged during the Progressive Era in North America, a time when scientific/medical knowledge was increasingly seen as the answer to social problems.”\textsuperscript{lxiii} What biology, anthropology, and philosophy did for race and disciplinary power in the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries then, psychiatry and medical science accomplished for biopower in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries.

Though still concerned with disciplining bodies according to social norms, ensuring the civility and thus political health of the state, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the state shifted focus towards measuring and controlling the physical health of the social body. As Foucault states,

At the end of the eighteenth century, it was not epidemics that were the issue, but something else – what might broadly be called endemics, or in other words, the form, nature, extension, duration, and intensity of illnesses prevalent in a population....

Death was no longer something that suddenly swooped down on life – as in an epidemic. Death was now something permanent, something that slips into life, perpetually gnaws at it, diminishes it and weakens it. These are the phenomena that begin to be taken into account at the end of the eighteenth century, and they result in the development of a medicine whose main function will now be public hygiene, with institutions to coordinate medical care, centralize information, and normalize knowledge. And which also takes the form of campaigns to teach hygiene and to medicalize the population. So, problems of reproduction, the birth rate, and the problem of the mortality rate too.\textsuperscript{lxiv}

Biopower thus functioned to extend civility and rationality, as well as their counter-parts incivility and irrationality, beyond the realm of behaviour into the blood, as something quantifiable, classifiable, diagnosable, treatable. While civility and rationality continued to be something that one did or a way that someone was, biopower brought these traits into the realm of what one did or what one was made of. Someone who exhibited uncivilized behaviour such as criminality, substance abuse, or prostitution did so not simply as a choice,
but because they couldn’t act any other way – social ‘deviance’ was part of their physical constitution.

In this dissertation, I want to examine how all of these forms of power – a sovereign power of rights, a disciplinary power of norms, and a biopower of health – operate through the reliable narration of Philosophy of Education discourse to observe, regulate, manage, classify, purify, and constitute knowing subjects. Through the mechanisms of civility and rationality, I argue, reliable narration operates as a method of delineating rights, establishing norms, and managing the health of populations in a project of racial governance. In order to better understand the role of philosophy and pedagogy in racial rule, I first here want to lay out a brief genealogy of race struggle as conceptualized by Foucault.

**A Genealogy of Race Struggle**

In analyzing a theory of domination and dominations, Foucault seeks to move away from a theory of sovereignty which “assumes the existence of three ‘primitive’ elements: a subject who has to be subjectified, the unity of the power that has to be founded, and the legitimacy that has to be respected.”\(^{lxv}\) He suggests that,

> ...Rather than starting with the subject (or even subjects) and elements that exist prior to [a relationship of power] and that can be localized, we begin with the relationship itself, with the actual or effective relationship of domination, and see how this relationship itself determines the elements to which it is applied. We should not, therefore, be asking subjects how, why, and by what right they can agree to being subjugated, but showing how actual relations of subjugation manufacture subjects. Our second task should be to reveal relations of domination, and to allow them to assert themselves in their multiplicity, their differences, their specificity, or their reversibility; we should not be looking for a sort of sovereignty from which powers spring, but showing how the various operators of domination support one another, relate to one another, at how they converge and reinforce one another in some cases, and negate or strive to annul one another in other cases.\(^{lxvi}\)

Power cannot be analyzed from a position outside of relations of domination and subjugation, Foucault suggests, as though there were some pre-existent subject against whom power and
law are exercised from a localized source. Instead, Foucault wants to analyze power on a level prior to the existence of subject and sovereign. An analysis of power must start from within relations of domination and subjugation, he asserts, exploring how these relations shape subjects and the laws to which they are subjected. How is one created as sovereign or as subject through a complex set of interwoven mechanisms of domination?

“The manufacture of subjects rather than the genesis of the sovereign: that is our general theme,” asserts Foucault. “But,” he asks, “while it is quite clear that relations of domination provide the access road that leads to the analysis of power, how can we analyze these relations of domination?” Foucault is interested in providing an analysis of power relations as a relationship of war, exploring to what extent war can be regarded as “primary with respect to other relations (i.e. relations of inequality, dis-symmetries, divisions of labor, relations of exploitation, et cetera).” Examining how war existed prior to the formation of the State and its institutions, (“right, peace, and laws were born in the blood and mud of battles”), he asserts that, “War is the motor behind institutions and order.” From the Middle Ages onward, war became the means through which states distinguished themselves from each other and the means through which laws and rights were established.

...[A] battlefront runs through the whole of society, continuously and permanently, and it is this battlefront that puts us all on one side or the other. There is no such thing as a neutral subject. We are all inevitably someone’s adversary. A binary structure runs through society....There are two groups, two categories of individuals, or two armies, and they are opposed to each other.”

It is through this binary, this contestation, Foucault contends, that one comes to know oneself as right, as good, as possessor of truth in contrast to one’s adversary.

Furthermore, it is through this notion of society as permanently at war, structured by and structuring binary oppositions, that a link is established “between relations of force and relations of truth.” The creation of firm dichotomies is necessary for the creation of truth, as it is only in knowing what is false that one can come to know what is certain. Falsehoods and ignorance must be kept across a firm border from the truth, so as not to contaminate it. As Foucault writes,

In a discourse such as this, being on one side and not the other means that you are in a better position to speak the truth. It is the fact of being on one side – the decentred
position – that makes it possible to interpret the truth, to denounce the illusions and errors that are being used [by your adversaries]...“The more I decenter [or polarize] myself, the better I can see the truth; the more I accentuate the relationship of force, and the harder I fight, the more effectively I can deploy the truth ahead of me and use it to fight, survive, and win.” And conversely, if the relationship of force sets truth free, the truth in its turn will come into play – and will ultimately be sought – only insofar as it can indeed become a weapon within the relationship of force.\textsuperscript{lxxiii}

Within this conceptualization of relations of domination, truth is dependent upon war and war is dependent upon truth. They serve to create and reinforce each other while at the same time serving to create knowing subjectivities based on relationships of force. This permanent war, this relationship of force that undergirds the mechanisms of domination, Foucault contends, came to be based on notions of race that shifted over time.

Part of Foucault’s project is to trace these shifts in the concept of race as an overarching phenomenon that participated in shaping the State, its subjects, the laws to which they were subject, and the rights to which they were entitled (or not). He introduces three different yet overlapping theories of race: an anatomo-physiological approach to race, a historico-biological approach, and a biologic социально-social approach. Writes Foucault,

...[T]he war that undermines our society and divides it in a binary mode is, basically, a race war. At a very early stage, we find the basic elements that make the war possible, and then ensure its continuation, pursuit, and development: ethnic differences, differences between languages, different degrees of force, vigor, energy, and violence; the differences between savagery and barbarism; the conquest and subjugation of one race by another. The social body is basically articulated around two races. It is this idea that this clash between two races runs through society from top to bottom which we see being formulated as early as the seventeenth century. And it forms the matrix for all the forms beneath which we can find the face and mechanism of social warfare.\textsuperscript{lxxiv}

Foucault asserts that emerging even before the work of Darwin is a concept of race as tied to biology and bodies, an anatomo-physiological conception of race and the origins of race struggle. This theory is focused on the materiality of race, as something that exists within the body. Race here is a matter of physical composition. From this theory and
alongside it emerges in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries an historico-
biological approach to race, which ties race to the historicized political struggles of
spatialized groups, such as within “nationalist movements in Europe and with nationalists’
struggles against the great State apparatuses (essentially the Russian and the Austrian); you
will then see it articulated with European policies of colonization.‖

At this point, race continues to be something of the body, something with a scientific
‘reality,’ yet it begins to take on a geographical-historical reality as well, mapping political
affinities at the same time as biological details. Governance and biology thus become linked
through race, distinct from the hereditary monarchies of the past. One rules through the right
of race rather than through the right of the crown. This maintained a sense of heritable power
or power as passed through the blood, while doing away with a monarchical and aristocratic
notion of pedigree. Following the proliferation of this historico-biological theory of race in
the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a new theory of race began to emerge, that
which Foucault terms biologico-social. Unlike previous notions of race that served to mark
the ‘foreigner’ as he or she who existed outside the state and was in contestation for control
over the state, a biologico-social approach to race reconceptualized race struggle. Within this
framework,

...[T]he other race [of social race war] is basically not the race that came from
elsewhere or that was, for a time, triumphant and dominant, but that it is a race that is
permanently, ceaselessly infiltrating the social body, or which is, rather, constantly
being re-created in and by the social fabric. In other words, what we see as a polarity,
as a binary rift within society, is not the clash of two distinct races. It is the splitting
of a single race into a superrace and subrace. To put it a different way, it is the
reappearance, within a single race, of the past of that race. In a word, the obverse and
the underside of the race reappears within it.

When Foucault speaks of race here then, it is not so much a matter of simply Black and
White or Brown and White or a clash of colour, but as I understand him, it is rather a matter
of distinguishing between classes of persons and sub-persons - categories tied to, yet relying
upon more than, skin colour.

A biologico-social conception of race has one fundamental implication, Foucault
asserts:
The discourse of race struggle – which, when it first appeared and began to function in the seventeenth century, was essentially an instrument used in the struggles waged by decentred camps – will be recentred and will become the discourse of power itself...It will become the discourse of a battle that has to be waged not between races, but by a race that is portrayed as the one true race, the race that holds the power and is entitled to define the norm, and against those who deviate from that norm, against those who pose a threat to the biological heritage.lxxvi

My project in this dissertation is to examine how reliable narration, as taken up within Philosophy of Education discourse, is employed in drawing distinctions between a superrace and subrace, as a means of defining social norms and subduing both the enemy within and the enemy without. I want to examine how Euro-North American philosophy and pedagogy become cites of race struggle from the Enlightenment onward, drawing upon reliable narration as a method of purifying both philosophy and pedagogy as disciplines as well as purifying the state.

As Foucault remarks, race struggle has moved beyond a concern with defending oneself against one’s external enemies. Instead, race struggle becomes a matter of:

“We have to defend society against all the biological threats posed by the other race, the subrace, the counterrace that we are, despite ourselves, bringing into existence.”

At this point, the racist thematic is no longer a moment in the struggle between one social group and another; it will promote the global strategy of social conservatisms. At this point...we see the appearance of State racism: a racism that will direct against itself, against its own elements and its own products. This is the internal racism of permanent purification, and it will become one of the basic dimensions of social normalization.lxxvii

It is this sense of State racism, a racism that is enacted through multiple relations of domination to fissure the person into super-human and sub-human, seeking to purify the social body through normalization and discipline, that I wish to invoke in my discussions of the racial state and race as a system of governance. I want to explore how reliable narration functions as a means of purification, normalization, and discipline, a means through which subjectivities are legitimized or delegitimized as ‘fully human.’
While I draw upon Foucault’s notions of race struggle and State racism to frame my discussion of reliable narration within Philosophy of Education discourse and practice, I want to add, as Ann Laura Stoler, Mary Louise Fellows, and Sherene Razack have pointed out, that racial rule is *achieved through* gender-based sexual violence, such that discussions of race cannot be detached from discussion of gender and sexuality. It is through the racialized bodies and sexualities of women that a ‘pure’ State is maintained, that the (male) subject may come to know himself as alive, as healthy, as powerful, as good, as White. Whether it is through managing the chastity of the ‘respectable’ White woman of the house (guarded by anti-miscegenation laws and the practice of lynching), disciplining the sexuality of ‘degenerate’ racialized women (punishable by sexual violence), managing the fertility of racialized women through forced sterilization procedures, using widespread rape as a weapon of war (undermining the ‘purity’ of the target population and any claims based on shared ethnicity or ancestry, as well as undermining the virility and potency of the male enemy population), gendered and sexualized violence is *how* racism is done. This is something I want to keep in mind throughout my dissertation in discussions of how racial rule is effected and in discussions of the role played by Philosophy of Education discourse and practice in the negotiation of racialized identities. What sort of identities are created through reliable narration and how? What stories are being told through philosophy and pedagogy about race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability and to what effect? In the next chapter I offer a critique of liberal modern Enlightenment philosophy, tracing the contours of race within and mapping out the ways in which sovereign power, disciplinary power, biopower, and race struggle operate within Enlightenment texts to inscribe healthy, civil, rational White male subjectivities not only justified, but required, to enact racialized violence for the benefit and health of the state.
Chapter Three: Storying the World

The world isn’t just the way it is. It is how we understand it, no? And in understanding something, we bring something to it, no? Doesn’t that make life a story?¹

Often, we will not be able to ascertain the single best description or interpretation of what we have seen. We participate in creating what we see in the very act of describing it.²

I know what you want. You want a story that won’t surprise you. That will confirm what you already know. That won’t make you see higher or further or differently. You want a flat story. An immobile story. You want a dry, yeastless factuality…You want a story without animals.³

In the Beginning…⁴

I have a story for you. You probably haven’t heard this one before. Maybe you won’t like this one. It’s the one about how White Man and White Woman became White. No, no, this isn’t the one about the eggs. I’ve heard that one, it’s a good one (chuckles to herself). No, this time they don’t become White by eating too many white eggs.⁵ This is a different story. In this story, a lot of bad things happen. How old are you? Maybe you shouldn’t be listening to this story. It requires parental guidance. Or grandparental guidance. Or something like that.

In this story, White Man and White Woman didn’t just suddenly become White, no. A mischief-maker didn’t steal their other colours in the middle of the night while they were asleep. And they didn’t fall into a vat of white paint while a creator was painting the clouds because they were too busy dancing to pay attention to where they were going. Nope, nothing like that. In this story, it takes a very, very long time for White Man and White Woman to become White. So long, in fact, that if you look closely enough, you can still see it happening now. They are changing a little more each day and causing all sorts of trouble in the process. But I’m getting ahead of myself. The story begins something like this….⁶
I wrestle with my opening story. Am I simply appropriating an oral story-telling style and theme from cultures to which I do not belong? What are the dangers of this? Am I committing an act of neo-imperial violence even as I seek to interrupt/disrupt such violence? What price disruption? For whose benefit am I telling the story? In referring to “White Man” and “White Woman” as “they,” do I seek a place of innocence for myself as a White woman, set apart from the characters in my story? What sort of work are these questions doing here to establish a position for myself as “Good, Self-Reflexive White Philosopher”?

All of these questions give me reason to pause. I am uneasy. There is something I intuit about the importance of troubling philosophical-dissertation-writing-as-usual, the importance of juxtaposing Judeo-Christian creation stories against other/‘othered’ creation stories, the importance of storying race…but how? Is there a better way to do this? I am missing answers to these questions right now (and perhaps always), but I don’t want uncertainty to become immobilizing, to become an excuse for inaction. I decide that the story can stay for now, pending further review. I tread tentatively, hesitant to put my foot down firmly for fear of the ground giving way beneath. To borrow María Lugones’s concept of “tantear,” to estimate, to take measure of, to grope, to test out, or try, yo tanteo en la oscuridad, I put my hands out in front of me to feel my way in the dark.

While philosophical argument and knowledge acquisition are often thought of within Northern/Western scholarly traditions as distinct from - if not antithetical to - story, a growing body of literature suggests an intimate relationship amongst them. As Alasdair MacIntyre writes, “…[M]an [sic] is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal…I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question ‘Of what stories do I find myself a part?’” Starting from MacIntyre’s assertion that humans are inherently story-telling animals, in this dissertation I am interested in examining what sort of stories are being told about race within hegemonic Northern/Western philosophical and pedagogical practices and to what effect. How do these stories help reinscribe racialized subjectivities within relations of domination and subordination? How might contemporary Euro-North American philosophical and pedagogical practices participate in the disciplinary mechanisms that uphold a system of racial governance?
Drawing upon race critiques of Enlightenment philosophy, I want to explore how racialized narratives of modern liberal selfhood, though less apparent in the content of some contemporary scholarship and pedagogy, may continue to manifest in the structure or meta-narratives of Philosophy of Education discourse. I am interested in exploring the role of reliable narration in the making of a spatialized, universalized White European bourgeois Self and in justifying the rule of the European middle-class over racialized “Others” at home and abroad. I would like to examine what it is that the modern European bourgeois came to know about themselves through reliable narration and how these narratives continue to shape Philosophy and Education today.

What role does reliable narration play in establishing the subjectivities of sovereign and subject, marking the limits of rights and obligations? How does this focus on rights and obligations within Philosophy detract from the ways in which reliable narration is used as a disciplinary mechanism of normalization and surveillance to distinguish between the civil and uncivil, the rational and irrational? Furthermore, how does the reliable narration of philosophy and pedagogy participate in the “invention of a people,” at threat from without and within, that must be protected and made to live? That is, how are the objects of philosophical, scientific, and pedagogical study “partly constituted by the disciplines that seek to study them”? I contend that reliable narration is used to create omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent scholarly and teacherly identities, particularly White identities, that are essential to a system of racial rule. White power and privilege are dependent upon reliable narration, I assert, as it is through such mechanisms that whiteness as a concept is created and contested.

Here I am also interested in looking at the ways in which the functioning of the modern liberal democratic state is dependent upon racialized notions of personhood constructed through reliable narration. I ask, “In what ways is reliable narration used as a tool of the state to justify racialized imperial and neo-imperial violence?” That is, how is reason racialized through reliable narration in such a way as to exclude particular bodies from political discourse and civic engagement – in other words, how is it used as a tool of sovereign power to deny one the rights of full personhood, while simultaneously masking the processes of normalization, discipline, and surveillance that occur in determining what rationality and civility mean? As Ann Laura Stoler remarks, “My starting point is not the
hegemony of imperial systems of control, but their precarious vulnerabilities.”\footnote{xiii}{Here my primary focus is not on the hegemony of Euro-North American (his)stories, beliefs, and apparatuses of knowledge, but rather on how the constant repetition of certain narratives was/is necessary to mask these vulnerabilities and to justify the racial state.}

I want to ask: What might it look like to write or teach for “critical race literacy/literacies”? To what extent might Euro-North American philosophers of education participate in a process of racial identity formation premised on a neo-imperialist civilizing project? How might some of the reliable narratives of Philosophy of Education discourse and practice be seen as “harmful fictions that obscure the normative supremacy of whiteness in [North] American law and society”\footnote{xiv}? My aim is to offer a narrative disruption, an intervention, to the ways in which sovereign power, disciplinary power, and biopower operate in the formation of a system of racial governance through philosophy and pedagogy.

As I write about ‘race’ here, I do not want to suggest that there is some sort of biological reality to the term, in that people can be identified as belonging to one distinct biological category or another. I do want to insist, however, that there is a material, social reality to ‘race’ (or perceived ‘race’) that structures power relations in very significant ways. Race is thus simultaneously discursive, occurring in the interaction between text and body, delineated through multiple disciplinary measures (as in the case of disciplinary power), at the same time as it is also pathologized, made measurable, diagnosable, preventable, and treatable (as in the case of biopower), as well as concrete, coming to bear on the distribution of rights and responsibilities, goods and wealth (as in the case of sovereign power). My interest in reliable narration is primarily an interest in how race manifests at the discursive level, creating while being created by the narrating subject, one who is inextricably enmeshed within racialized relations of domination and subjugation. The discursive face of race cannot be examined, however, in isolation from its pathologization and concreteness, as all of these systems, though incompatible, serve to uphold each other.

My general aims and audience are multifold. My aim is not so much to present solutions or easy answers to the problems that I highlight, but rather to examine the effects produced by raising questions about these issues. Can the act of drawing attention to and questioning the ways in which power circulates in philosophy and pedagogy serve to warp or distort networks of power and discipline? I think here of Einstein’s General Theory of
Relativity and of how gravity functions to warp time and space in the way that a heavy mass (such as a bowling ball) placed in the middle of a sheet held taut will distort the shape of the sheet. The sheet itself does not change, there is not more or less of it, the borders or limits are not altered, but it is warped. This is how I want to think about the sort of effect I am looking to produce through this dissertation. There is no way to get outside networks of power, to alter the quantity or shape of power, but it does seem possible to warp its effects from within.

As Stephen Hawking explains in relation to relativity,

Space and time are now dynamic quantities: when a body moves, or a force acts, it affects the curvature of space and time – and in turn the structure of space-time affects the way in which bodies move and forces act. Space and time not only affect but are also affected by everything that happens in the universe. Just as one cannot talk about events in the universe without the notions of space and time, so in general relativity it became meaningless to talk about space and time outside the limits of the universe.

In the way that Hawking talks about the impact of space and time on the universe as well as the impact of the universe on space and time, I want to talk about race, subjectivity, and power. Part of my aim in this dissertation is to highlight how both race as a concept shapes networks of power and how networks of power shape race as a concept. Because there is no place to speak from ‘outside’ of race and the networks of power in which it is embedded, my discussion of “critical race literacy/literacies” is addressed to scholars, educators, and students of all races.

That is, I want to explore how notions of reliability, civility, and rationality invite all scholars, educators, and students into these networks of power and disciplinary relations. What sort of writing, teaching, and studying subjectivities does reliable narration speak into existence? What does one gain in proving his or her reliability, at what cost to the self and others? In saying that all are interpellated by the mechanisms of a racial state, my aim is not to suggest that everyone experiences these mechanisms in the same way or to the same extent, but rather to suggest that no one is untouched by these mechanisms. The systematic advantaging of people identified as White through these networks of power is of critical import to address, as is, more importantly, the systematic use of violence against people
identified as racialized, though I do not want to take these concepts of ‘White’ and ‘racialized’ for granted, as something that exists outside of webs of disciplinary social relations.

While my dissertation has a strong focus on philosophical practice, I am equally concerned with paying attention to writing practice, teaching practice, and learning practice. Additionally, while my discussion is centred primarily on issues of race, I recognize that it is impossible to address racism without simultaneously addressing other systems of oppression based on sex, gender identity, class, sexuality, language, religion, ability, age, citizenship status, nationality, and culture, amongst other social differences. Thus, I attempt to address racism as it is inextricably interwoven with other systems of domination and subjugation, so that the ideas I explore for “critical race literacy/literacies” are also applicable to other areas.

I want to understand critical race literacy/literacies as an ability to read and interpret the ways in which texts, as well as their readers and writers, are shaped by race. I also want to understand critical race literacy/literacies as the ability to read, write, and teach in ways that draw attention to how race functions through multiple disciplinary mechanisms to shape subjectivity and social relations. I want to explore how and where the racialized, spatialized, gendered, sexualized, abilitized body enters a text - what it hides behind, and when it is out in the open. By “text,” I am referring not only to written work such as scholarly articles, textbooks, etc., but to any written or verbal communication, such as a lesson delivered in the classroom, a curriculum determined by the Ministry of Education, casual conversation in a school staff room, a conference program, or lecture from a principal. My goal here is not for myself or others to be able to claim a space where we/they/l/you can finally say that one’s race has ceased to influence one’s texts, that one’s work has become ‘raceless,’ but rather to pay attention to the ways in which race inevitably influences the creation, delivery, and interpretation of texts, as well as the effect these texts produce. I explore how scholarly and pedagogical narratives may participate in the creation of categories of persons and subpersons based on race, categories used to establish the boundaries of knowledge, of rights, and of obligations. My goal is to interrupt or warp these narratives in order to hopefully intervene in the reproduction of violent social relations.

Like Charles W. Mills, Richard Delgado, and others, I explore how the racism inherent in much Enlightenment ideology has not disappeared, but has simply
The transformation I am most interested in paying attention to is how the site of racial identity formation in Philosophy of Education scholarship has shifted in part from narrative content to form, from overt to covert. How does the idea of the civilized, rational, White modern liberal self become coextensive with the idea of personhood within Enlightenment philosophy? And how do these ideas continue to haunt contemporary Euro-North American philosophy and pedagogy? What role did/does reliable narration play in the legitimization of systemic racialized violence? Through the work of Charles Mills, David T. Goldberg, Meyda Yeğenoğlu, Daniel Coleman, Edward Said, Audrey Thompson, and others, I explore how racialized meta-narratives can function to ‘civilize’ and discipline Philosophy of Education discourse and practice, attempting to establish boundaries around what can be said and by whom.

I further want to explore how these discursive boundaries map onto material boundaries, be they geographical, institutional, economic, social or otherwise. As Kathleen M. Kirby suggests, the process of delimiting the boundaries of the individual subject, the Cartesian monadic self, is co-extensive with the process of mapping physical and social boundaries. “…[T]he development of Enlightenment individualism was – and continues to be –“ writes Kirby, “inextricably tied to a specific concept of space and the technologies invented for dealing with that space.” The modern liberal self as individual Subject thus came into being with and through the marking of imperial geographies and continues to be upheld through defining space as ‘civilized’ or ‘uncivilized,’ ‘respectable’ or ‘degenerate.’

I offer an analysis of racialized ‘civilizing’ meta-narratives here in the hope of elucidating what critical race literacy/literacies might look like - that is, what sort of reading, writing, and teaching practices might allow a scholar, educator, or student to trace how race and power are in part constituted by narrative, and how narrative is in part constituted by race and power. In the way that the structure of a page defines the limits and margins of its whiteness (i.e. 1.25 inches of whiteness on the left, 1 inch of whiteness on every other side), I am interested in thinking about how the structure of some pedagogical and scholarly narratives can serve to establish the borders and boundaries of civility and rationality as tied to whiteness. Where are the marks, the lines, the boundaries of race within a text? How might white civility and rationality function within scholarly narratives to mold, to enclose, to include, to exclude?
Critical Race Theory: A Conceptual Framework

So to begin (again), I would first like to offer an account of how I want to use Critical Race Theory as a conceptual framework through which to approach my dissertation. Arising out of critical legal studies, Critical Race Theory has since been applied to many fields, including Philosophy and Education. Common to all conceptualizations of Critical Race Theory, however, seems to be the central premise that “race and racism are endemic, pervasive, widespread, and ingrained in society…From a critical race theory perspective, race and racism are so ingrained in the fabric of society that they become normalized.”xx

Rather than attributing racism to the attitudes and actions of a few individuals, positing it as a problem of the past, Critical Race Theory draws attention to the systemic nature of racism and the ways in which it continues to structure society.

As Charles W. Mills asserts, racism is “not the aberrant ideology of a few Klansmen but structural and routine, a systematic set of theories and legally sanctioned institutionalized practices deeply embedded in the American polity and endorsed at the highest levels in the land.”xxi I imagine that Mills would include other nations in this characterization of racism as well. What is central to Critical Race Theory is an understanding of race as a one of the foundations upon which North American society and its institutions have been based, including political, economic, legal, educational and social institutions (i.e., such as marriage or the family as an institution). It becomes embedded in theories and practices of governance, whether explicitly (through policies on apartheid, slavery, segregation, inter-racial marriage, or immigration, to list only a few of many examples) or implicitly (through ‘raceless,’ ‘neutral’ political language, under-policing or over-policing and over-incarceration of racialized communities, inequitable resource distribution, under-servicing of racialized communities, environmental racism, and many other examples).

Furthermore, Critical Race Theorists point out the historical silencing/marginalization of the voices and experiences of racialized people, whose stories may run counter to supposedly ‘neutral,’ ‘objective’ dominant (White) discourse. Citing Valdes et al., Geraldo R. López writes: “CRT [Critical Race Theory] posits that beliefs in neutrality, democracy, objectivity, and equality ‘are not just unattainable ideals, they are harmful fictions that obscure the normative supremacy of whiteness in American law and society.”xxxii
It is these beliefs and how they are manufactured/upheld through racialized reliable narratives that I focus on in this dissertation.

Recently I taught a course entitled “Reconsidering Race and Oppression” to a class of predominantly white, female, upper-year undergraduate students. Many of my 60 students were from small, fairly homogenous communities in Southern Ontario and were studying for a Concurrent Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Education degree. At the beginning of the semester, the majority of reflection papers I received from students focused on the importance of ignoring race, of treating everyone the same. A number of students commented that they “didn’t see” race or skin colour, that they would never make this an issue in their classrooms. Everyone should just get along, they believed. However, I tried to communicate to them that such a ‘colour-blind,’ ‘neutral’ approach was not actually solving problems with racism, as it didn’t acknowledge existing inequities. Rather, I explained, racism and inequity need to be actively addressed in the classroom, through an explicitly anti-racist approach to education. Though ‘well-intentioned,’ many of my students initially struggled to perceive the dangers inherent in striving for equality through an ‘objective,’ ‘race-neutral’ approach, valuing these ideals as important and effective approaches to multicultural education.

Questioning the import frequently attached to ‘objectivity’ and ‘neutrality,’ Critical Race Theory aims to privilege the voices and experiences of racialized people for their ability to “reveal things about the world that we ought to know.” As López writes:

CRT scholars believe there are two differing accounts of reality: the dominant reality that “looks ordinary and natural”…to most individuals, and a racial reality…that has been filtered out, suppressed, censored. The counterstories of people of color…are those stories that are not told, stories that are consciously and/or unconsciously ignored or downplayed because they do not fit socially acceptable notions of truth. By highlighting these subjugated accounts, CRT hopes to demystify the notion of a racially neutral society and tell another story of a highly racialized social order: a story where social institutions and practices serve the interest of White individuals.

However, as mentioned earlier through the work of Sherene Razack, privileging the voices of individuals and groups historically marginalized within dominant discourse does not come without its problems. Some of these problems include the issue of how such stories are
heard: can these stories be heard by White scholars and students such as myself in the way that they are intended? Furthermore, how are these stories taken up? Do listeners critically engage with these stories or are such stories not held to any truth criteria? Also, does such a call for ‘marginalized’ voices assume a certain objective truth to such stories, as though they were not also embedded and implicated in networks of power relations?

I think of my own voice as a White woman and the ways in which it is inextricably interconnected with a system of patriarchy. How have the voices of the ‘grandfathers’ of Euro-North American philosophy such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Rousseau, Locke, Hobbes, Hume, Mill, Descartes, Berkeley, Leibniz, Spinoza, etc. shaped my thoughts, my understanding of the world and myself? How has my understanding of personhood, individuality, freedom, rights, duty, the body, knowledge, learning, and experience, for example, emerged within a system of patriarchal and racial rule? How has patriarchy operated as a disciplinary mechanism on the ways in which I experience the world and the way I come to know? It seems to me that it is not so easy to neatly excise one’s own voice from the voices of others and networks of power that have influenced it.

Furthermore, might a call for the inclusion of “subjugated” voices presume an essential ‘truth’ of subjugation? Can one person speak to a universal experience of subjugation? Or is subjugation experienced differently by different people in different contexts? Additionally, it seems to me that such a call might assume everyone wants to tell his or her story and has simply been waiting for the opportunity to do so, rather than acknowledging silence as a choice, as an act of resistance within relations of domination and subjugation. I do not want to question the import of diversity in discourse here or the value of studying perspectives historically excluded from mainstream knowledge-making practices, but instead want to raise questions about what it is that one thinks she or he is hearing when listening to the “counterstories of people of color.”

Critical race literacy, as I want to understand it, focuses on the ability to read a “racial reality” between the lines of a text, to tell the story of how race shapes and disciplines “socially acceptable notions of truth.”xxvi That is, critical race literacy attends to how whiteness becomes synonymous with ‘truth,’ ‘reason,’ and ‘civility’ within hegemonic Euro-North American discourse, and to what purpose. What effects are produced through the racialized contestation of truth, reason, and civility within reliable narration? What do
people gain from it? Though I speak of how discursive norms are shaped by the idea of whiteness, it is not only White people who gain from upholding these norms. Racialized people are also invited to see themselves as civil and as rational, as holders of truth, through the approximation of these norms.

In addition to highlighting the primacy of race as a foundation upon which North American society has been built, as well as the importance of paying attention to stories and particularly the counterstories of racialized people, critical race theorists maintain a number of additional premises. Writing from within the field of legal studies, Richard Delgado explains that critical race theory scholarship is also concerned with the following themes, many of which have been taken up by and adapted to other disciplines:

1. an insistence [by scholars of colour] on “naming our own reality”;
2. the belief that knowledge and ideas are powerful;
3. a readiness to question basic premises of moderate/incremental civil rights law;
4. the borrowing of insights from social science on race and racism;
5. critical examination of the myths and stories powerful groups use to justify racial subordination;
6. a more contextualized treatment of doctrine;
7. criticism of liberal legalisms; and
8. an interest in structural determinism – the ways in which legal tools and thought-structures can impede law reform.

It is particularly themes 5 and 7 as related to philosophy and education that I am most interested in addressing in this dissertation. As mentioned earlier, I want to explore what sort of stories are being told by and to scholars, educators, and students with regard to race and racial identity formation. How do racialized liberal modernist myths of equality, individuality, rationality, and neutrality inform the subjectivities of teacher and student? How is the educational experience shaped by race? Critical race literacy, as I conceive it, is a pedagogical project to foster an ability to critically examine “the myths and stories powerful groups use to justify racial subordination” – myths and stories which to me seem dependent upon reliable narration.

As Patricia J. Williams contends in relation to legal scholarship, race is not simply a consideration one can take into account as a side issue, as external to the legal system and legal theory, but rather that must be taken into account as an issue that fundamentally shapes the law. She explains, particularly in relation to anti-Black racism in the United States:
Law and legal writing aspire to formalized, color-blind, liberal ideals. Neutrality is the standard for assuring these ideals; yet the adherence to it is often determined by reference to an aesthetic of uniformity, in which difference is simply omitted. For example, when segregation was eradicated from the American lexicon, its omission led many to actually believe that racism therefore no longer existed….Blacks are the objects of a constitutional omission which has been incorporated into a theory of neutrality. It is thus that omission is really a form of expression, as oxymoronic as that sounds: racial omission is a literal part of original intent; it is the fixed, reiterated prophecy of the Founding Fathers.xxix

I am now in the process of editing my first draft of this dissertation, months after the previous section was written. I am currently sitting in the Superior Court of Justice in Toronto, Ontario, having been summoned to jury selection. Walking through the long hallways this morning towards the jury lounge, I passed by numerous photos on the wall of all the judges who had been called to the bench in a particular year. Passing the photos of hundreds of faces, I realized that they all appeared to be White, and were almost all male. True, most of these photos were from the late 1980s, and it could be argued that much has changed since then, but my point is that as one enters the “halls of justice” in Toronto, one is visually confronted with photos of exclusively white faces as the arbiters of justice.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 15: Equality before and under law and equal benefit of law – (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national, or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.xxx

What is one to make of the supposed neutrality of Section 15 of the Charter when it is evident from the pictures in the hallway of this building that certain bodies have been systematically excluded from the process of determining what is “just”? How can the Charter promise equality when those given the charge of administering justice have often achieved such a position as a result of systemic inequality and injustice? By this I mean that systemic racism has led to barriers and obstacles that have historically kept racialized people out of the judiciary, thereby narrowing the pool of competition for White men and some White women,
further advantaged by the benefits of White privilege. However, the Canadian legal system continues to operate under the guise of objectivity and neutrality, insisting on its racelessness.

The significance of this omission, of the denial of racialized bodies within the law, is echoed by Toni Morrison in her discussion of American literature. Morrison writes: “The world does not become raceless or will not become unracialized by assertion. The act of enforcing racelessness in literary discourse is itself a racial act.” xxxi Though writing in regard to literary discourse, I believe Morrison’s point holds for legal, philosophical, and pedagogical discourse and practice as well. Insisting on the insignificance of race not only serves to deny the injustices and violence experienced by racialized people, but also to absolve White people of responsibility for challenging racial injustice, thereby keeping systems of White supremacy intact. One cannot be held responsible or accountable for something that does not exist.

The omission of racialized bodies from legal scholarship and scholarship in other disciplines may in part be because, as Delgado points out, race and racism have been woven so tightly into dominant legal and social discourse that racial privilege and subordination become difficult for those who benefit to perceive. He asserts:

…[T]he bundle of presuppositions, received wisdoms, and shared understandings against a background of which legal and political discourse takes place…are rarely focused on. They are like eyeglasses we have worn for a long time. They are nearly invisible; we use them to scan and interpret the world and only rarely examine them for themselves. Ideology – the received wisdom – makes current social arrangements seem fair and natural. Those in power sleep well at night – their conduct does not seem to them like oppression.” xxxii

Essential to challenging race as a system of rule then is to critically examine dominant stories of racial neutrality, bringing into the foreground the ways in which race operates within legal and other discourses. It requires a new way of noticing: it requires noticing what is absent from as much as noticing what is present in a picture or text. For some people or in some contexts, these absences may be glaringly obvious, and for others, may be obscured.

Like learning how to refocus one’s eyes to perceive an image in a Magic Eye picture or learning how to see both a duck and rabbit in an optical illusion, critical race literacy thus
seems to require for some a perceptual shift away from the micro level towards macro level systems of power. Bringing critical race theory into education, Gloria Ladson-Billings and William F. Tate IV assert that the “great inequities that exist between the schooling experiences of white middle-class students and those of poor African-American and Latino students [in the United States]...are a logical and predictable result of a racialized society in which discussions of race and racism continue to be muted and marginalized.”

Like Mills, Delgado, and Williams, Ladson-Billings and Tate hold that race remains perilously un(der)-theorized and needs to be centred in discussions of equality and justice. As López revealingly remarks:

...[I]f I were to argue that what we study within the politics of education [the question of “who gets what, when and how,”] is entirely racist, most scholars in the field – conservative and liberal alike – would be greatly offended, finding such statements preposterous and absurd...To the contrary, most of us would tend to believe that what we study actually highlights the processes by which people of color are marginalized on a daily basis and how they can challenge and change the political spectrum...The role of CRT is to highlight the fact that such beliefs only serve to maintain racism in place – relegating racism to overt/blatant and unmistakable acts of hatred, as opposed to highlighting the ways in which our beliefs, practices, knowledge, and apparatuses reproduce a system of racial hierarchy and social inequality. Rarely do we question our own values and knowledge base and how those beliefs emerge from – and help sustain – the notion of a racially neutral and democratic social order that works for all people.

Similarly, Ladson-Billings and Tate make clear that additive conceptions of anti-racist or multicultural education, which purport to treat all groups as equal, can exacerbate rather than serve to dismantle systems of racial inequality. That is, multicultural education conceptualized as the inclusion of songs, dance, food, or stories from different cultures, or curriculum units that focus on becoming familiar with and valuing cultural differences can reproduce systemic injustices, as the power differentials between cultural groups are flattened out.

Ladson-Billings and Tate explain that within a conception of multiculturalism as a celebration of difference:
…[T]he tension between and among these differences is rarely interrogated, presuming a ‘unity of difference’ – that is, that all difference is both analogous and equivalent…[T]he current multicultural paradigm is mired in liberal ideology that offers no radical change in the current order. Thus, critical race theory in education, like its antecedent in legal scholarship, is a radical critique of both the status quo and the purported reforms. xxxvi

As María Lugones and Josh Price assert, multiculturalism must be “structural,” not simply “ornamental,” in order to effect real change. For Lugones and Price, a structurally multicultural society is one in which state institutions, “such as its courts, the different organized ways of producing material life, the practices that comprise government, and the institutions of education, must be multicultural, that is, representing and integrating multiple cultures.”xxxvii Furthermore, “the members of such a society will also be multicultural in their ways of making decisions; perceiving, valuing, and desiring will be deeply and complexly informed by several cultures.”xxxviii

Multicultural education and a pedagogy for critical race literacy cannot then be simply additive, but must be fully integrative of multiple cultures and epistemological frameworks, questioning the dominance of a particular cultural and racial norm. Scholars and educators must also make efforts to integrate multiple cultural perspectives into their decision-making, perceiving, valuing, and desiring practices. Critical race literacy requires the disruption of a status quo premised on the normalization of whiteness, an interruption to the hegemony of “White culture.” Essential to this project is first a naming of White culture as White culture, a noticing of how physical bodies shape the contours of language, of texts.

Emerging from the field of legal studies, Critical Race Theory focuses primarily on race as a matter of what Foucault would term “sovereign power,” a matter of governance, rights, obligations, and distribution of goods – a matter of who gets what. It begins from the premise that power is something an individual or group possesses and exercises over other individuals or groups. This is an essential element to understanding how race operates within contemporary European and North-American societies. Though as Foucault points out, sovereign power operates in conjunction with other, incompatible forms of power - disciplinary power and biopower. As Foucault and critical race theorists have asserted, race functions as a disciplinary mechanism premised on the establishment of racial norms. While
race as a system of sovereign rule serves to dictate distribution of rights and goods, it also serves as a system of disciplinary rule to dictate behaviour – the more closely one approximates the behaviour of ‘civilized,’ ‘rational’ White Europeans and North Americans, the more deserving of rights and goods one is seen to be. One is conditioned to behave in particular ways in accordance with social norms through a system of rewards and punishment.

To deviate from these norms is to be marked as criminal, as degenerate, as undeserving of the same moral consideration as others. This is where biopower comes in: as bodies are marked as criminal or degenerate, it becomes the responsibility of the state to protect the ‘respectable’ citizenry from such threats from within, threats to the health of the body politic, and thus it becomes the responsibility of the state to excise or ‘treat’ these threats, managing them through observation, data collection, statistical analysis, diagnostic measures, etc.

However, I here want to point out that racialized social norms serve not only to discipline and punish people according to standards of whiteness, but also to create a highly complex system of racialized codes and rules that establish multiple sets of standards and their attendant systems of reward and punishment. I think of the 1990s American television show *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* as an example of how it is not only whiteness as a notion that serves to establish a set of norms to discipline one’s behaviour, but that notions of blackness (or brownness, or any other notion of ‘authentic’ racial identity) can operate similarly.

The television show is named after the character Will (played by Will Smith), a young Black/African-American male born and raised in a ‘rough,’ ‘inner-city’ neighbourhood in West Philadelphia, who, after getting into a street fight, is sent by his mother to live with his affluent aunt and uncle, their family, and their butler (all also Black/African-American), in Bel-Air, California. Will’s guardians are his uncle Philip Banks (played by James Avery), a lawyer and later judge with an undergraduate degree from Princeton and a law degree from Harvard, and his aunt Vivian Banks (played originally by Janet Hubert-Whitten and later by Daphne Maxwell Reid), who is a professor with a Ph.D. from UCLA. Will’s main comic foils are his cousin Carlton (played by Alfonso Ribeiro), a spoiled, preppy Republican who attends the private school Bel-Air Academy and has
aspirations to attend an Ivy League university, as well as Will’s poorly-mannered and ‘unintelligent’ friend Jazz (played by Jeffrey A. Townes, also known as DJ Jazzy Jeff), who lives in the ‘inner-city’ neighbourhood of Compton.

I bring this television show in as an example here in order to examine how social norms can operate within racialized communities as a mechanism of discipline and punishment, helping to negotiate ‘authentic’ racialized identities. While Will’s family continually tries to manage and control his behaviour in order to teach him how to be more ‘respectable,’ ‘civilized,’ and ‘mature’ (i.e. less ‘inner-city’), at the same time, Will chides his family for their uptightness, for their refined manners and excessive self-discipline. In Season 4 Episode 08, entitled “Blood is Thicker Than Mud,” Will and Carlton (attending university at this point) seek to gain membership into an African-American fraternity.

While Will is accepted, Carlton is rejected. Announcing the news privately to Will, a fraternity member remarks, “Carlton is not exactly our type.” “What type is that?” Will asks. “Carlton is not like you and me,” Will is told, “Carlton doesn’t exemplify what I think a Phi Beta Gamma is. It’s not Ralph Lauren shirts and wing tip shoes in corporate America. We don’t need a brother like him in this fraternity.”

To this Will replies, “He’s exactly what you need in this fraternity. He’s a straight A student since preschool. He gives you 150 percent every time!” When Carlton finds out that he was rejected, he asks the fraternity member why, given that he did everything that was asked of him. “Everything your butler does for you,” the fraternity member replies, “We aren’t accepting no prep school Bel-Air bred sell out in our fraternity.” Carlton responds, “You think I’m a sell out? Why? Being black isn’t what I’m trying to be. It’s what I am. I’m running the same race and jumping the same hurdles you are. So why are you tripping me up? You said we need to stick together, but you don’t know what that means. If you ask me, you’re the real sell out.”

Upon returning home and explaining to his father what happened, Philip remarks, “This really irritates me. I’ve worked very hard to give my family a good life. Suddenly someone tells me there’s a penalty for success?...When are we [African-Americans/Black people] going to stop doing this to each other?”

Implicit in the events of this episode and throughout the entire series is that Carlton is somehow not ‘authentically’ Black, that he is not as Black as Will or Jazz. He is
repeatedly criticized for being “too White.” What is it that marks Carlton “too White” or “not Black enough”? Is it his appreciation of sweater vests or for the music of crooner Tom Jones? Is it his flawless grammar or Republican politics? Is it his lack of rhythm while dancing? Or is it the (very large) size of his house, his academic success, or level of material comfort? Conversely, what is it that makes one ‘authentically’ Black/African-American? ‘Polite’ manners and ‘good’ grammar (‘civility’), academic success, and material comfort appear to be coded as inherently White, whereas authentic blackness (as depicted by the characters Will and Jazz) is defined as the opposite. The notion of ‘authentic’ Black identity thus seems to have built into it the notions of struggle and discomfort. xlvii

Within the discourse of The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air then, to be comfortable, to have an easy life, is somehow seen as “less Black” than hardship. Claiming an ‘authentic’ Black identity, within this conception of it, thus requires struggle, it requires a system of White supremacy to exist. Race struggle is necessary in order for one to come to know himself or herself as Black or as White. While other racial identities such as the multitude of Aboriginal, East Asian, South Asian, Arab, or Latino/Latina identities, for example, arise out of much different historical, political, cultural, and social contexts than Black American, Canadian, African, or Carribean identities (which arise out of different contexts from each other), there seems to exist a similar sense of relationality in racial identity construction across races. That is, one comes to know oneself as a particular sort of person belonging to a particular race in relation and opposition to other races.

Race as a disciplinary mechanism is thus not only used by White people to distinguish between ourselves/themselves and racialized “Others,” but may also be taken up within racialized groups to discipline members of their own group or members of other groups, as well as within groups of White people to discipline each other. In saying that people of all races may employ the concept of race as a disciplinary mechanism, I do not want to deny the violence and inequity committed by White people in the name of preserving whiteness, excessive and extensive as it is and has been. Rather, I want to highlight race as a mechanism of discipline and governance in which all are involved to varying degrees. Racial identities are policed through the establishment of behavioural, moral, social, political, and epistemological norms, formed within relations of domination and subjugation. Racial identity is thus in many ways premised on one’s performance of these norms.
To better explain what I mean by race as a performance of social norms, I feel it would be helpful here to introduce Marilyn Frye’s notion of “whiteliness,” a concept that “is not essentially tied to color and yet has some significant relation to color.” For Frye, “whiteliness” refers to a “way of being in the world,” as opposed to the term “white,” which Frye suggests is in reference to a racial grouping in which one is placed based on the colour of her or his skin. “Whiteliness,” according to Frye, is a performance of the racial classification “white,” that is, whiteliness is a performance of the category and character of whiteness, a performance of social domination. It is conceptually akin to masculinity, in that masculinity is the performance of particular traits associated with those who possess certain biological features identified with the male sex.¹

While skin colour is not inherently tied to culture, ability, beliefs, values, or behaviour - in the same way that one’s reproductive organs do not determine one’s hobbies, preferences, interests, or behaviour - they are related, in that individuals are socialized to behave in ways expected of the groups to which they belong. In the above example from The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, Carlton is seen to be giving an unconvincing performance of blackness, he does not act ‘blackly’ enough within a conception of blackness as tied to a complex set of social expectations, including expectations about one’s clothing, music preferences, habits of speech, education, neighbourhood, dancing ability, political leanings, financial status, and so on and so on. While intimately connected to the colour of one’s skin, race is also closely linked then to one’s behaviour, interests, values, beliefs, hobbies, etc., similarly to the way in which sex is also linked to all of these things, including how a person dresses, his or her interests, how a person cuts her or his hair, a person’s sexuality, one’s body shape and size, etc.

Particular behaviours, beliefs, habits, or interests become metonyms (to use a literary term) then for social identities, in a way that “skirt-wearing” comes to stand in for “female” and “heterosexual,” for example, or “country-music listening” comes to stand in for “White.” Wearing a skirt or make-up as a male can result in being ostracized by one’s sex, potentially even leading to physical violence (as in the earlier-mentioned case of the murder of Lawrence King), or as a lesbian woman can potentially lead to ostracization by some other lesbian women (though potentially greater acceptance amongst heterosexual women and men), just as listening to country music as someone who isn’t White can result in being
ostracized by one’s race. To offer another example, the website stuffwhitepeoplelike.com (including items such as “#5 Farmer’s Markets,” “#17 Hating Their Parents,” “#23 Microbreweries,” “#27 Marathons,” “#28 Not Having a TV,” “#67 Standing Still at Concerts,” “#86 Shorts,” “#105 Unpaid Internships,” and “#128 Camping”), while tongue-in-cheek, serves as a method of discipline to delineate the boundaries between “White” and “non-White” through identifying interests and behaviours associated with whiteness. Liking too few of the list items as a White person seems to exclude one from the category of ‘authentically White,’ whereas liking too many of the items as a racialized person seems to prohibit one from legitimately claiming his or her own racial identity, one is marked as ‘too White.’

I bring up these examples here to show how the concept of race can operate beyond the level of the body, beyond skin colour, as a means of policing one’s actions, thoughts, and desires. I have occasionally heard my mother use a French phrase that means “He is good in his skin” to refer to someone being comfortable with himself, though I think it could also be taken as a phrase to refer to the ways in which one’s behaviour conforms to the social norms expected of his or her race. For a White person to like all of the items or many of the items on the list of “Stuff White People Like” is for her or him to be “good” in her or his skin; that is, one’s interests and behaviours correspond to what is expected of someone with his or her skin colour or ancestry. In this dissertation, I am interested in looking at how the reliable narration of philosophy and pedagogy can serve, like the website stuffwhitepeoplelike or the television show The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, to establish racialized norms that discipline thoughts and behaviour through systems of reward and punishment, surveillance and measurement.

Though race is often thought of as binary (a person is either this or that – which can make racial identification complicated for bi-racial or multi-racial people), I want to think of it as a vertical spectrum framed by notions of civility and incivility, rationality and irrationality, respectability and degeneracy. At the top extremity of the spectrum are civility, rationality, respectability, and personhood, while on the bottom extremity are incivility, irrationality, degeneracy, and subpersonhood. Though race plays a large role in determining one’s place on the spectrum, it is not the only factor. For example, while whiteness is often associated with civility and rationality, thus placing one closer to the top, factors such as
class, mental health, sexual activity, or employment status could result in one being pushed further to the bottom, such as in the case of a White person working as a prostitute, a White homeless person, or a White person with a mental illness - factors that all call into question one’s claims to civility, rationality, and respectability.

Furthermore, the less White (darker) or more indigenous (as associated with nature and thereby lack of industrial, scientific, and social ‘advancement,’ – discussed in greater detail shortly) a person is seen to be, the lower one is located on the spectrum, though factors such as wealth, education, employment status, or English language ability/accent, amongst others, can result in one’s placement higher up. Thus, an Aboriginal doctor might more easily claim civility and respectability than an unemployed White person with substance dependency problems, though this is not to discount the racial discrimination that Aboriginals, regardless of social status, continue to experience.

It seems to me that a person’s position on this spectrum of civility is constantly under negotiation through various mechanisms that surveille and police behaviour and thought. One such mechanism, I contend, is reliable narration. In this dissertation, I explore how philosophers, educators, and students plot themselves and others on this spectrum through reliable narration. That is, I explore how reliable narration functions as a site of identity formation and contestation. My interest here is in exploring how canonical Euro-North American philosophical and pedagogical discourse, monopolized for so long by White scholars and educators, sets an expectation of textual civility, rationality, and respectability tied to the notion of “whiteliness.”

That is, I want to look at how race shapes not only what one chooses to write about, but also how one writes, who one writes for, and whose writing is taken seriously by other scholars and educators. Furthermore, I look at how reliable narration can function as a means of policing the borders of race and civility as social identities are negotiated and contested through text. What disciplinary effects does reliable narration produce? What material effects? I want to ask: What does is look like to name a text as “whitely”? What is whiteliness in a text? Is racism/whiteliness something that can be neatly identified in or extricated from a text? Why or why not? How is my own text shaped by my whiteness? Just as discussions of race, racism, and their implications have, for the most part, been under-
theorized within the work of White educational theorists, so has race largely been excluded from discussion by canonical White philosophers.

Akin to the work of the critical race theorists discussed above, Charles W. Mills contends that discussions of race have been silenced within Euro-North American philosophy, despite the central role that race has played in shaping the basic tenets of the discipline. He writes:

The “whiteness” of academic philosophy has long been a source of wonder and complaint to minorities…The writings of the classic Euro-American authors are treated simultaneously as canonical and as raceless and universal. To the extent that race is discussed, if it is discussed at all, it is usually within the severely restricted category of debates about affirmative action, in a subsection on applied ethics. It is taken for granted that the main debates – about personal identity, existential situations, criteria for epistemic justification, moral topographies, conceptions of the polity, theories of social explanation, jurisprudential disputes, and the evolution of Western philosophy itself – are not affected by race, that race has no implications for the characteristic framings, standard scenarios, and conventional theoretical mappings in these debates. Colorless and universal, they will be able to continue in the same way whether there is a significant nonwhite presence or not; indeed, a significant nonwhite presence is not really necessary, since such concerns are supposedly already subsumed within these seemingly abstract and all-encompassing categories. Mills’s project, then, is to map the lines of race onto/within the Euro-North American philosophical tradition, requiring new ways of conceptualizing issues such as identity, personhood, subjectivity, freedom, rationality, responsibility, justice, etc.
Rather than addressing race as a side-issue in philosophy, as something that can be neatly inserted into or detached from canonical theory, Mills argues that race has always been part of the foundation of Euro-American philosophy and continues to be so in the present. Philosophical abstractions and claims to universality, Mills demonstrates, do not describe an objective, asocial reality, but are rather mired in the particularities of race and embodiment. He writes:

[White people's] experience will not seem to them to be racial in the first place – it will simply seem to be the human experience, the experience “we” all have as part of the human condition. White experience is embedded as normative, and the embedding is so deep that its normativity isn’t even identified as such…A relationship to the world that is founded on racial privilege becomes simply the relationship to the world…So the starting point [of a project to question racial hierarchies in philosophy] needs to challenge this metaphysical complacency, to show
that the white existential condition, the Cartesian predicament, is “white” to begin
with and is quite unrepresentative.\textsuperscript{lviii}

Therefore, “whiteness” in a text may in part be denial of the significance of race to
philosophy and knowledge production/acquisition. A benefit of whiteness, as Mills
identifies, is the ability to ignore the role that one’s race plays in shaping his or her
relationship to self and others, as well as shaping one’s experiences of subjectivity and the
world around her or him.

As the work of Mills suggests, a “whitely”\textsuperscript{lix} text presupposes a universal human
experience – it supposes a certain equality of existence, that everyone experiences the world
in the same way. It also supposes the ability to know the experiences of others and to make
universal generalizations about them. Thus, White scholars, educators, and students can
come to know ourselves/themselves as White through a text by ignoring the significance of
race. Furthermore, racialized students, scholars, and educators can come to know
themselves/yourselves as ‘polite,’ as ‘civilized’ by also ignoring the significance of race. To
name the incivility and violence of White authors or educators may be seen by White people
as complaining, to be creating social discord, to be adversarial and thus to be ‘impolite,’
‘uncivilized,’ ‘poorly mannered.’ Furthermore, reliable narration allows an author or speaker
to claim a universal experience, to claim a position of omniscience and thereby claim a
position of power.

While some Euro-North American philosophers have made attempts to explore the
role of race in canonical theory\textsuperscript{lx}, these attempts often seem to focus on the explicitly racist
statements or actions of particular theorists, tending to individualize or historicize racism as
something of the past from which contemporary philosophical theory has escaped. Critical
race theorists aim to challenge this belief that racism no longer exists, highlighting the ways
in which racism metamorphoses over time. To their work I would like to add an examination
of how race as a concept can also operate as a disciplinary measure, as a tool of observation,
calculation, diagnosis.

Like Mills, Ladson-Billings, Tate, López, and other theorists, in exploring a pedagogy
for critical race literacy, I am interested in examining how racism has shifted within
contemporary philosophical and pedagogical discourse from explicit manifestation in the
textual content to more latent manifestation in the form of writing and teaching practices. As
I will discuss in subsequent chapters, I want to explore how whiteness has become normalized within the meta-narratives of some contemporary philosophy and pedagogy - that is, within the formal expectations of what a ‘good’ philosophical argument or ‘good’ teaching looks like, or what gets to count as reason and progress, expectations which I want to suggest may participate in a whitely neo-imperialist civilizing project.

**Shifting Racisms**

*To be certain, racism has never waned in society; it has merely been manifested in different forms. However, the discourse on racism has shifted through time, such that overt and/or blatant acts of hate (e.g., name calling, lynching, hate crimes, etc.) have only been identified as being racist... This focus on explicit acts has ignored the subtle, hidden, and often insidious forms of racism that operate at a deeper, more systemic level. When racism becomes “invisible,” individuals begin to think that it is merely a thing of the past and/or only connected to the specific act. Rarely is racism seen as something that is always present in society and in our daily lives.*

-Geraldo López\textsuperscript{lxii}

Critical race literacy requires making race and racism visible and readable, that is, it requires being able to identify the many ways in which racism can transform over time and can manifest on both overt, explicit levels as well as structural, systemic levels. Addressing the multiple forms that racism can take, particularly in regard to legal racism, Richard Delgado introduces a distinction between what he terms substantive and procedural racism.

Substantive racism, as explained by Delgado, refers to the treatment of non-White people as inferior to White people, which can manifest within the law, media, and social imaginary, for example. Delgado remarks that throughout history, the law has “fully embraced and accommodated” substantive racism “through such means as sterilization statutes, Jim Crow laws, the separate but equal doctrine, anti-miscegenation statutes, and racist immigration laws and policies.”\textsuperscript{lxii} Furthermore, substantive racism also appears within blatant stereotypes of racialized groups in the media. For example, “During periods when substantive racism is used to subjugate blacks and manage white guilt,” Delgado writes,
“media images like Aunt Jemima are used to satisfy whites’ need to believe that blacks are happy and content to serve them.”\textsuperscript{lxiii} At other times, however, “…society disseminates images of blacks as primitive and bestial, of Mexicans as lazy, happy-go-lucky, untrustworthy or unclean, of Asians as aloof and manipulative. Although designed to serve different purposes, they all converge on the idea that nonwhites deserve inferior treatment because they are actually inferior.”\textsuperscript{lxiv}

Conversely, procedural racism moves away from explicit claims of non-White inferiority, toward less overt though just as real and pervasive forms of racism. Burying the notion of non-White inferiority, procedural racism instead involves the promulgation of “narratives and rules that invalidate or handicap black claims [and I would add here the claims of other racialized groups as well, to varying degrees].” Hiding behind assertions of equality and objectivity, procedural racism thus takes on the “invisibility” mentioned by López in the passage above. Rather than the obvious expressions of White superiority found in substantive racism, procedural racism erects obstacles to justice for racialized people while donning the guise of neutrality. As Delgado explains in relation to procedural racism within the law:

- We erect difficult-to-satisfy standing requirements for civil rights cases, demand proof of intent, and insist on tight chains of causation. We place limitations on the type and pace of relief that may be ordered. We limit attorney fees and decrease funding for agencies that litigate nonwhites’ cases. We insist that remedies not endanger white well-being; “reverse-discrimination” is given a wide berth. We elevate equality of opportunity over equality of result and reject statistical proof of lack of the former. We use the excuse of “widening the pool” to avoid hiring nonwhites now. Procedural racism puts racial-justice claims on the back burner and makes sure they stay there.\textsuperscript{lxv}

Thus while the law may not explicitly state that one racial group is inferior to another, implied within the enactment of legal procedures or social policies is that non-Whites are not entitled to the same treatment or privileges as Whites. That is, narratives and rules are constructed within the law and within society, Delgado points out, to systematically exclude racialized people from the benefits enjoyed by Whites, while claiming on the surface to be colour-blind or neutral.
In this dissertation, I am particularly interested in examining what sort of narratives and rules have been constructed within philosophical and pedagogical discourse to exclude racialized people from equal participation. That is, I wish to explore the role of whiteness in shaping these discourses and disciplining those who participate. To Delgado’s notions of substantive and procedural racism I want to add Foucault’s notions of disciplinary power and biopower, contributing to an examination of racism as a matter of who gets what by adding an examination of how racialized subjectivities come to be through mechanisms of discipline, observation, measurement, and diagnosis. That is, I believe in order to ask: What does race do?, it is important to also ask: How does race work? How does one become raced? Rather than starting from the premise that racialized identities exist as something pre-given, as fact, I want to look at how racialized identities are continually under negotiation and contestation, while recognizing that one cannot simply be any race through mere volition, though one can be more or less this way or that – one’s position on the spectrum of race and civility can shift over time.

While my aim is to examine how whiteness has crept into mainstream philosophy and pedagogy as a disciplinary norm, this is not to deny or undermine the vast contributions to philosophy and pedagogy that exist outside the box of whiteness, that tell a different story, that refuse to acknowledge or heed racialized expectations for what scholarship and education ‘should’ look like. Nor is it my intention to over-emphasize the significance of whiteness in the history of philosophy and pedagogy; certainly the contribution of White Europeans and North Americans to global thought is only one piece of a large puzzle. Yet I feel it is very important to attempt to trace the history of whiteness within these disciplines so that any shaky racist foundations may be brought into question.

However, I first wish to explore further the ways in which racism has changed shape over space and time, becoming ‘camouflaged’ in the landscape and thus less easy to discern. I put the term ‘camouflaged’ in quotation marks here because to some, particularly those who are disadvantaged by systems of White supremacy, such racism is very obvious, regardless of what shape it takes or how well it is supposedly hidden. But racism has also become so pervasive and normalized that in many ways it ‘hides’ in plain sight, blending into the background or foundations of North American society and its institutions. Failure to notice this is not a matter of ‘colour-blindness,’ I want to suggest, but rather a matter of racism-
blindness – the inability to perceive racism in its multiple forms and how it shapes, in part, local and global power relations.

For example:

To some, this may be an empty box, or a black square. To others, it may be a white square with a black outline, or a box filled with whiteness. I include this here because so often people are trained to NOT notice whiteness, to perceive it as a sort of nothingness, a neutral starting point that only becomes defined in opposition to something else. For some, including myself, the whiteness of a page may only become apparent when a black box is put around it. But then what was it before? I realize that whiteness as colour on a page and whiteness as race within a text are two very different things, but I hope the analogy holds to illustrate how easy it is to become accustomed to things being a certain way that one may fail to notice that they are a certain way and that they could be a different way.

Though racism and White supremacy may seem less visible to some now than during periods of more overt substantive racism, these problems haven’t simply vanished. I think of another graduate student telling me on our first meeting that, “We [as a society] are post-racism.” To which I responded that he may feel post-racism, but a lot of people who continue to experience it probably don’t (as a side note – I am unsure of how this student would racially self-identify or be identified by others. He may be a beneficiary of “White privilege” or he may not, or it may vary depending on context). “There is a change from one era to another,” writes Delgado, “but the net quantum of racism remains exactly the same, obeying a melancholy Law of Racial Thermodynamics: Racism is neither created nor destroyed.” Like the distinction that Delgado draws between substantive and procedural racism, my interest in this dissertation is to map the migration of racism from the content of philosophical and pedagogical narratives and practices to the form that structures these
narratives and practices, tracing how racism, operational through notions of civility, respectability, and rationality, has come to define and police the borders of mainstream Euro-North American philosophical and educational discourse and practice.

Placing race at the centre of philosophical theory, Charles Mills proposes that race be considered a political system, with its own “special norms for allocating benefits and burdens, rights and duties; its own ideology; and an internal, at least semi-autonomous logic that influences law, culture, and consciousness.” Referring to “the European domination of the planet that has left us with the racialized distributions of economic, political, and cultural power that we have today,” Mills terms this political system “global white supremacy.” He does not want to suggest that “global white supremacy” is the only way in which to frame politics, but that it may offer an account supplementary to other
conceptualizations of the political universe. “In other words,” Mills writes, “it is possible to have overlapping, interlocking, and intersecting systems of domination,” an issue to which I will attend in more detail later in my dissertation. While analyses of gender, class, sexuality, and ability, for example, are inextricably related to and have helped inform Critical Race Theory, such analyses on their own provide insufficient accounts of social violence when lacking an in-depth analysis of race. Yet racism and imperialism cannot be adequately understood without a clear understanding of how they are achieved through patriarchy and capitalism and disablement and sexual violence.

Borrowing in part from feminist articulations of patriarchy as a lens through which to view gender relations and male domination, Mills introduces a notion of global white supremacy as a lens through which to view race relations and White/First World domination since the modern period.

In the way that a political system determines the rules, regulations, and practices of a particular territory, so too has race been used to determine the rules, regulations, and practices of philosophical and pedagogical territory. It is these rules, regulations, and practices that I attempt to unpack in this dissertation. As Mills suggests, however, this system and its rules are not static but fluid, taking on different shapes in different times and places. I hope that in paying attention to how systems of race function, it will become easier to subvert and warp the ways in which power operates within them.

Like Delgado and López, Mills asserts that racism can take multiple forms, shifting across time and space. He points out:

White supremacy will take different forms in different parts of the world – expropriation and enclosure on reservations here, slavery and colonial rule there, formal segregation and antimiscegenation laws in one place, mixing and intermarriage in another….Moreover, white supremacy evolves over time, in part precisely because of the other systems to which it is articulated, in part because of nonwhites’ political struggles against it. In a detailed treatment, one would need to develop a periodization of different forms, with one obvious line of temporal demarcation being drawn between the epoch of formal white supremacy (paradigmatically represented by the legality of European colonialism and African slavery) and the present epoch of de facto white supremacy (the aftermath of slavery
and decolonization, with formal juridical equality guaranteed for whites and nonwhites). The basic point, then, is that it would be a mistake to identify one particular form of white supremacy (e.g. slavery, juridical segregation) with white supremacy as a family of forms and then argue from the nonexistence of this form that white supremacy no longer exists. The changing nature of the system implies that different racial organizations of labor, dominant cultural representations, and evolving legal standards are to be expected.

The many faces of white supremacy. Hmmm….I am still on jury duty. I have just returned from my lunch break, which I spent in the cafeteria at Toronto City Hall, across the way from the Superior Court of Justice. As I stood in line waiting to be served, suddenly I noticed a marked physical and racial divide. On one side of the counter stood the consumers, White people like me dressed in business attire. On the other side of the counter, separated by a barrier of glass and wood and food, stood the servers, Brown people dressed in food service uniforms. It was as though in the cafeteria there existed simultaneously two distinct, racially-divided worlds. It seemed that jobs were literally colour-coded in this space. City Hall. Where the rules, regulations, and practices of the city are devised and put into place. Toronto, one of the most multicultural cities in the world.

Excerpt from The City of Toronto “Vision Statement on Access, Equity, and Diversity”

The City of Toronto values the contributions made by all its people and believes that the diversity among its people has strengthened Toronto...

The City recognizes the barriers of discrimination and disadvantage faced by human rights protected groups. To address this, the City will create an environment of equality in the government and in the community for all people regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, disability, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, same sex partnership, age, marital status, family status, immigrant status, receipt of public assistance, political affiliation, religious affiliation, level of literacy, language and/or socio-economic status.

The City of Toronto will implement positive changes in its workforce and communities to achieve access and equality of outcomes for all residents and to create a harmonious environment free from discrimination, harassment and hate.
Adopted by Toronto City Council
April, 2003

Eight years before this dissertation was written)

Toronto, you make such promises for diversity and equality. You make such claims to neutrality. Yet racial segregation continues to crack and fracture the city’s major institutions, compromising the (structural) integrity of the foundations upon which they were established.

To Mills’s discussion of global white supremacy and the ways in which it is experienced differently within different geographical and historical contexts, I would like to add, as Nkiru Nzegwu points out, that a distinction needs to be drawn between what Nzegwu terms “body racism” and “colonial racism.”

In her article “Colonial Racism: Sweeping Out Africa with Mother Europe’s Broom,” Nigerian-raised Nzegwu draws attention to the dangers of equating racism in Africa or the Old World with racism in the New World. She points out that within North America, issues of race are fixated on the Black or non-White body, such that racism becomes physiognomy-based. However, in West Africa, where Black bodies are the norm, “black as a category of identification is unintelligible…In a region in which Africans are numerically dominant and in which their history and culture have remained intact, the category of difference is white: only the white man and the white woman are colored.” Instead, racism in West Africa has historically been based on the superiority of (White) European culture, rather than the superiority of the White body. As Nzegwu writes: “The basic difference between West African and U.S. racism is that in the New World the emphasis has historically been on the negation of the black body and personhood. In pre-independence West Africa, by contrast, the emphasis has been on the negation of African culture and cultural dignity.”

It seems to me that both “body racism” and “colonial racism” can simultaneously exist within nations, such that both the body and culture are sites through which racial identities are negotiated.

Recognizing that the experience of racism and colonialism has varied/varies greatly from place to place and time period to time period, in this dissertation I want to explore how the colonial discourse of modern Europe informed and continues to inform much Euro-North American philosophy and education. Adding to Mills’s discussion of “formal” and “de
facto” White supremacy, I want to look at White supremacy as a matter of disciplinary power and biopower as well, as a matter of regulating the behaviour of self and others while also a matter of observing, diagnosing, and ‘treating’ threats to the state. For example, how does the discourse of epidemiology employed in discussions of high Aboriginal suicide rates function to transform a matter of state violence and social inequities into a matter of personal health and the health of the state?

In an article from The Edmonton Journal about high Aboriginal suicide rates, Mary Simon of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Canada’s National Inuit Organization, remarks, “‘The numbers [of Aboriginal suicides] speak for the issue. It should be considered an epidemic.’” The cause of the high rate of suicide amongst Canada’s Aboriginal population is attributed within the article to “poor economy and unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, and sexual abuse.” No mention is made of the impact of colonization, the residential school system, or systemic racism on Aboriginal communities in the geopolitical landmass referred to by many as Canada. Similarly, in an article from CBC News, a high rate of suicides amongst Aboriginal youth in the province of British Columbia, labeled “an epidemic,” is attributed to a lack of employment opportunities, emergency services, and recreation centres for youth. “‘The majority [of suicide attempts], of course, are young people and the majority are involved with drugs and alcohol,” states Alf Brady, a mental health counsellor with the Gitxsan Health Society. While mental health issues, substance dependency, and unemployment may be major factors in high suicide rates amongst Canadian Aboriginal youth, the question must be asked: what leads to these factors? How does state racism play a role in these issues?

Named as “an epidemic,” suicide amongst Aboriginal youth has the potential to spread and undermine the health of the nation. Such discourse thereby serves to reinforce the power of the state to make live or let die. How will the state intervene (or fail to intervene)? Containing the spread of the “disease” of suicide thus justifies the social isolation of Aboriginal communities, continued over-policing and surveillance (to protect the non-Aboriginal public from ‘contamination’) or under-policing (to protect the police from ‘contamination’), neglect from the state (if a community is seen to be already at the brink of death, is there much the state and the non-Aboriginal population can do?), amongst many other violent actions and inactions from the government and from non-Aboriginal Canadians.
In naming Aboriginal deaths as a health risk rather than an issue of state racism, the state becomes concerned with sanitation through any means, rather than with equity and justice. There are many other examples of how discourses of health and mental illness can justify state neglect or state violence, such as in the case of gun violence amongst racialized male youth in Toronto, painted as part of a “global arms ‘epidemic’ that has circulated millions of weapons around the world, destabilizing countries and undermining cities.”

In order to prevent the further spread of this “epidemic” of violence and death, an epidemic which threatens the stability of Canada as a country and Toronto as a city, the state is compelled to react with force, to monitor the behaviour of racialized male youth and the communities in which they live, to severely punish those who ‘willingly’ spread the disease of gun violence. Gun violence must be eradicated at any cost, or else the nation itself is put at risk.

While the problems of Aboriginal suicide and racialized gun violence come to be construed as matters of health, so too are they simultaneously wrapped up in discourses of civility and rationality. To willingly harm the self or others is perceived (by the state, by philosophers, by educators, by society in general) as irrational, uncivil (though harm inflicted by the state is seen as justified, if not necessary), and thus grounds to deny individuals and communities the rights of full personhood. In the next chapter, I want to look at how liberal modern ideology served to mark bodies and cultures as ‘civil’ or ‘uncivil,’ ‘rational’ or ‘irrational’ based on behavioural, spatial, attitudinal, and moral expectations tied to race. I want to look at how liberal modern ideology served to justify European imperialism historically, as well as look at how it continues to shape the boundaries of philosophical and pedagogical discourse and practice along racial lines. Taking into account Nzegwu’s work, I want to suggest that within settler colonies such as Canada and the United States, racism takes on both a bodily and cultural dimension. That is, the White body and acting “whitely” come to function as signs of civility, while marking the nonwhite body and culture or knowledge associated with it as “uncivilized,” to the point that physiognomy and culture become inextricably intertwined.
Borrowed images
willed our skins pale
muffled our laughter
lowered our voices
let out our hems
denied our sex in gym tunics and bloomers
harnessed our voices to madrigals
and genteel airs
yoked our minds to declensions in Latin
and the language of Shakespeare

Told us nothing about ourselves
There was nothing about us at all
How those pale northern eyes and
aristocratic whispers once erased us
How our loudness, our laughter
debased us

....

Months, years, a childhood memorising
Latin declensions
(For our language
-- “bad talking” --
detentions)
Finding nothing about us there
Nothing about us at all

So, friend of my childhood years
One day we’ll talk about
How the mirror broke
Who kissed us awake
Who let Anansi from his bag

For isn’t it strange how
northern eyes
in the brighter world before us now

Pale?
Chapter Four: Race Critiques of Liberal Modernity

Bringing Race into Focus: A Philosophical Perspective

Many philosophers, pedagogues, and other theorists have begun to draw increasing attention to the ways in which race and racism have structured the fundamental concepts on which contemporary Euro-North American societies are based. Concepts such as personhood, civilization, reason, liberty, equality, and progress, amongst others, are shown to be inherently informed by hegemonic White discourse, which thus continues to inform social relations both intranationally and internationally as these concepts are called into play. Here I want to examine how liberal modernist ideology has been used historically to justify imperialism, exclusion, and racialized violence, so that I may attempt to trace the threads of this discourse within contemporary philosophical and pedagogical practice. I want to ask: How might critical race literacy help to redefine notions of personhood, liberty, reason, and progress in a more adequate, inclusive, and representative manner?

Before turning to an examination of how race functions within the discourse of liberal modernity, I first want to differentiate between race critiques offered in the vein of Critical Race Theory and critiques of liberal modernity that treat race as a side-issue of philosophical and political theorizing, as something that can be neatly separated from or added to the heart of a theory. This brings me back to the question of “What/Where is whiteliness in a text?” Is the race of the author or speaker something that can be easily extricated or distinguished from the theorizing? I want to say “no.” As Charles Mills has argued, race permeates philosophical theory to the core, with global White supremacy as a political system informing how one thinks about what one thinks about. Yet many contemporary scholars have become apologists for the racism inherent in the work of their predecessors, trying to salvage moral theories by neatly excising from them the issue of race.

For example, in his article “‘A Lousy Empirical Scientist’: Reconsidering Hume’s Racism,” Andrew Valls suggests that racist comments made by Hume are an anomaly and discordant with his theory, rather than built into Hume’s thoughts on equality. In a footnote to his essay “Of National Character,” Hume writes: “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 whites,” though Valls argues that Hume’s own ideas can be used to demonstrate that he is not racist and that he truly believes in equality for all.

With regard to the racist remarks that Hume makes in “Of National Character” and the Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, Valls asserts:

…[T]hese remarks raise the question of whether the whole of Hume’s philosophy is somehow racially coded, whether these remarks reflect something deep within his thought. In the case of Hume, I argue…there is no warrant for the conclusion that they do. Hume’s prejudiced remarks, I suggest, are not deeply rooted in his philosophy; on the contrary, Hume’s philosophical views provide the resources to explain and correct Hume’s own racialism.iii

Here Valls thus suggests that race can be tidily extricated from a theory, leaving no scar or trace once the malignant parts have been removed. He even glosses over Hume’s blatantly White supremacist comments by characterizing them as “racialism,” an attention to race that does not necessarily imply racial hierarchies in the way that the term “racism” does. Is it possible to take Hume’s moral theories seriously when built upon a fundamental belief in inequality? What is one to make of his suggestion that some groups of people are less worthy of moral consideration than White people? It seems that Valls wants to treat philosophy as an additive model, where one constructs a theory by placing building blocks on top of each other, in that if one were to remove a single block or two, the structure would remain standing.

However, as Charles Mills contends, even one’s understanding of selfhood, of what it is possible to know, of how applicable one’s theories are, depend upon one’s experiences as a racial being. From the moment of birth, one is socialized into particular social roles according to race, sex, class, sexuality, ability, religion, and nationality for example, a process which deeply informs one’s subjectivity and experience of the world. To suggest
that one can take the racism or even the race out of Hume is therefore to suggest the impossible. Unlike Valls’s additive approach to philosophical theory, I would guess that for Mills, philosophy is like so many drops in a pool, in that if one drop is poisoned, it would be impossible to isolate and separate it from the rest.

In light of the work of critical race theorists, it seems to me that Valls and other apologists for modern liberal racism are asking the wrong questions of philosophy. They seem to be asking, “If the work of philosopher X is racist, or at the very least raced, what to make of his or her theories? Are they at all salvageable?” But perhaps a more fruitful approach would be to start, as does Mills, from the premise that philosophy is inherently raced, and from this ask, “Given that philosophy is inherently raced, how to perform philosophy less racially? What can be learned from Hume and other philosophers about how to do philosophy more equitably? Where have things gone wrong and how can philosophers and educators learn from these mistakes?” Rather than trying to cover up the problem or make it more palatable, quibbling about just how racist Hume was (very racist or only a little bit racist?), more productive is to recognize, “Yes, Hume was racist. He did not really believe in equality for all. Now what?”

I am led here to ask what it is that one gains from separating race and racism from philosophy in this context. Why must Hume’s theories be innocent and pure, free from any taint of race? Is it so that White philosophers can continue to delude ourselves/themselves that despite our/their complicity in systemic racial injustice, we/they can still attain some objective level of moral “goodness”? What do we/they need from Hume? Why do some White philosophers want so badly to deny the significance of race and racism in Enlightenment philosophy and beyond, going so far as to excuse the overt racism of canonical philosophers? For to admit the significance of race is to admit that we/they are wrong: we/they know less than we/they thought, we/they are different than we/they thought, we/they are not as ‘good’ as we/they thought. And this is scary. Yet more scary, it seems to me, is the denial of racial realities and the perpetuation of untruths about the relative value of White and whitely knowledge and theory, resulting in systemic social and material inequities. While I do not hope to be able to answer all of the above questions fully in this dissertation, I do want to begin to ask and explore what it might look like to perform philosophy and pedagogy with greater attention to race.
More sympathetic to the goals of Critical Race Theory, though still seeming to treat race as a side-issue of philosophy, Robert Bernasconi and Anika Maaza Mann draw upon Locke’s involvement in the slave trade as proof of the underlying racism within his theories, suggesting, it seems, that his texts could otherwise be taken as neutral. They cite as evidence of Locke’s racism his investment in “The Company of Royal Adventurers in England Trading into Africa” and its successor, the Royal African Company, as well as his involvement as a member of the Board of Trade and Plantations. I understand their work to suggest that if Locke were not involved in such activities, his theories could be taken as objective and fair, that there is little within the theories themselves that suggests Locke might be racist. Bernasconi and Mann comment:

…[W]e are puzzled by the attempts of some scholars who argue that one could be involved with the administration of a race-based system of slavery, profit from it, and yet not be racist. The fact that Locke was not troubled by the contradiction between his political ideals and the chattel slavery from which he profited is prima facie evidence of racism, given that slavery was organized along racial lines.

Here it seems that Bernasconi and Mann focus on the ways in which Locke’s actions undermine his words of equality, rather than paying attention to the ways in which his words or theories may be considered racist or at least raced to begin with, prior to any knowledge of his actions. As Charles Mills might contend, there exists no contradiction between Locke’s political ideals and his involvement in the slave trade if whiteness is built into his ideals as a precondition of equality. What Bernasconi and Mann seem to overlook is that if Locke’s concept of equality is consistent with White supremacy (in that equality is intended for [male] whites only), then there is no logical contradiction and thus nothing for him to be troubled by.

In contrast to critiques which treat race as separable from theory, Mills draws attention to the inherently racialized nature of modernist Euro-North American philosophy, which he contends has come to greatly inform contemporary Euro-North American philosophy. Offering critiques on Kant’s notions of personhood, Rousseau’s social contract theory, as well as other canonical Enlightenment thinkers and theories, Mills seeks to highlight how race functions throughout modernist philosophy, and how supposedly ‘neutral’ accounts of identity, equality, and liberty, for example, continue to shape social institutions
and material reality today. As Mills points out, if it can be shown that racist ideas were central to the thought of “emblematic figure[s]” in the Enlightenment project, a “radical rethinking of our conventional narratives of the history and content of Western philosophy”⁸⁻⁸ is required.

This is quite a different project from Valls’s defense of Hume, for example, which leaves Hume’s theories perfectly intact after removing his explicitly racist comments. Such a desire for “colour-blind” philosophy, Mills asserts, partly results from the liberal intellectual desire to overcome biological determinist claims about race and instead focus on what is common or universal to “all” humans. He contends:

…”[I]f indeed it is a mark of one’s liberalism and sophistication to proclaim that [race doesn’t exist, at least in the sense of signifying intellectual or moral difference], one then naturally wonders as a white philosopher why blacks should think that developing a theory of race could be anything but a foredoomed enterprise…So almost overnight race goes from being in the body to being in the head, and one shows one’s liberal commitment to bringing about a color-blind society by acting as if it already exists, not seeing race at all, and congratulating oneself on one’s lack of vision.⁹⁻⁹

However, as Mills further points out, insisting on the meaninglessness of race is itself a luxury afforded only to those who have benefitted from racism, to those who do not see themselves as raced because of the normalization of whiteness.

Mills desires instead a complete revisiting of modern philosophy, smashing the two-way mirror-window that reflects only the White face back at itself, revealing the gaze from the other side. Mills asserts:

My claim is essentially that for most Enlightenment First World political theory, what seems like a neutral starting point, which begs no questions, is actually already normatively loaded, in that the population of persons has been overtly or covertly defined so as to be coextensive with the white male population…So in the period of de jure global white supremacy (European colonial rule, African slavery), the scope of European normative theories usually extended just to Europeans at home and abroad. That is, theories about the rights, liberties, and privileges of “all men” were
really intended to apply only to all white men, nonwhites being in a moral basement covered by a different set of rules.\textsuperscript{x}

Mills further argues that such inequality continues to exist in the present, although it has taken on a different form. He writes:

The present period of de facto global white supremacy is characterized by a more complicated normative arrangement, an abstract/formal extension of previously color-coded principles to the nonwhite population. But genuine equality is preempted by lack of mechanisms and resources to enforce antidiscrimination law; by the evasion of juridical proscriptions by legal maneuverings; and by the continuing educational, cultural, and financial handicaps suffered by nonwhites disadvantaged by the race and class concentrations of economic power established under the previous system, which in a capitalist economy violate no laws. Thus, even though such an extension is a real normative advance…it does not constitute a genuine challenge to white supremacy unless and until the means to correct for the effects of past racial subordination are included in the rewriting. And this requires, inter alia, a formal recognition of the white-supremacist nature of the polity.\textsuperscript{x1}

It is the project of Mills and my project here to draw attention to the ways in which White supremacy has become embedded within philosophical theory and within contemporary social institutions like the education system, despite laws mandating against racial inequality.

Critical race literacy, as I want to conceive of it, is the “radical rethinking” of “conventional narratives” that Mills calls for. As Mills seems to suggest, one’s social identity is not something that is simply created and improvised as one goes along, but rather is in many ways the performance of a script. Critical race literacy thus calls for learning how to recognize the conventions of racial scripts and developing the skills to write new scripts. Prompted by Mills, I want to ask: What sort of racial scripts are learned through modern philosophy and pedagogy? What sort of scripts need to exist to create more inclusive, diverse performances of personhood, equity, liberty, rationality, etc.?

Turning to Kant’s conception of personhood, Mills highlights the “white supremacist nature of the polity” within Kant’s theory and thus undermines Enlightenment claims of equality for all, which Mills takes to be the mark of modernity. Mills argues that “Kant is the philosophical spokesman for the Enlightenment moral and political egalitarianism that
ushered in the modern epoch.”xii “By contrast with the ancient and medieval hierarchies,” writes Mills, “the starting point [of modernity] is the freedom and equality of ‘all men.’…[T]his equality is henceforth installed as the normative ground floor of the edifice of Western political philosophy.”xiii According to Mills however, Kant’s notion of personhood, rather than applying to all humans alike, was intended to be restricted to White Europeans only, while non-Europeans were assigned the status of subpersonhood. Whiteness was thus a necessary precondition for moral consideration as a person. Citing numerous passages of explicit racism within Kant’s work, Mills argues that Kant’s ideas are fundamentally biased in a way that cannot be easily dismissed. The following passage from Kant is quoted by Mills as an example:

In the hot countries the human being matures earlier in all ways but does not reach the perfection of the temperate zones. Humanity exists in its greatest perfection in the white race. The yellow Indians have a smaller amount of Talent. The Negroes are lower and the lowest are a part of the [indigenous] American peoples.xiv

Mills includes examples of Kant’s overt racism in order to challenge the mainstream view of modern egalitarian theories, which look something like this: “T [moral/political theory] asserts egalitarianism for all p [persons], where p is race-neutral. Racist statements are then an exception, and not a part of T.”xv However, as Mills points out elsewhere, “insofar…as race is not an issue [for philosophers],” in that one’s personhood, citizenship, and freedom are uncontested, “they are already tacitly positioned as white persons, culturally and cognitively European, racially privileged members of the West.”xvi Whiteliness in a text then seems to involve at times an insistence on race-neutrality, as well as an assumption of authority and trustworthiness, the one speaking on behalf of the many.

White (male) philosophers such as Kant, Hume, and Locke can assume the position of reliable narrator speaking universal truths because of their race and gender. While such a position is often hard fought for by racialized scholars, particularly racialized female scholars, marked by both race and gender, it is often taken for granted by White scholars whose reliability and reason has never been called into question in the same way. Here is where the problem arises, I think, in the work of Valls, Bernasconi, and Mann mentioned earlier. Their discussions of racism within the texts of Hume and Locke, respectively, seem to assume the possibility of race-neutral personhood, a concept that has built into it the
privileges of one whose personhood is not negatively impacted by race. However, as Mills and Foucault would suggest, there is no subject position to speak from that has not been shaped by the mechanisms of race - race acts as a method of discipline and surveillance on all bodies.

Another problem with liberal modernity, Mills writes, is that it often treats the ideal of equality as an “accomplished reality,”xvii failing to take into account the very real differences between races. “Focusing exclusively on the lateral person-to-person relations of the ideal Kantian population,” Mills remarks, “mainstream theory misses the dense vertical network of person-to-subperson relations and also elides the ways in which even horizontal relations are structured by their positioning with respect to the vertical relations.”xviii Furthermore, Mills notes that, “If universal liberalism already accommodates everybody, if person is already race-neutral, then struggles around race, and against racial subordination, are puzzling. (What are they fighting for?) But once we recognize that personhood has been racially normed, they become transparent.”xix This is key, I believe, to a pedagogy for critical race literacy.

Such a pedagogy must start from the premise that personhood, and thus the relationships between writer and reader, speaker and listener, teacher and student, are raced (when I use the terms “teacher” and “student,” I do not mean them in a necessarily dichotomous sense, but recognize that one can be both simultaneously teaching and learning, learning and teaching, or switching between the two. Similarly, a reader plays a role in creating the meaning of a text through her or his engagement with and interpretation of it). A pedagogy for critical race literacy must recognize that the author is positioned within a particular set of racial power relations to the reader: Are they co-beneficiaries of White supremacy? Does one benefit from being considered the social “norm” while the other is disciplined to fit in or marginalized? Are they racialized individuals working together to challenge White supremacy?

Here it seems I suggest that the benefits and discipline of racism can be neatly divided along racial lines, though White people are also disciplined by the concept of whiteness (failing to meet expectations of what a ‘civilized’ White person is like can result in punishment – social ostracization, neglect from the state, violence – such as in the case of White people living in poverty, White people working as prostitutes, White people with
mental health problems, amongst many other examples). Additionally, some racialized people can benefit in some ways from the workings of racism, by differentiating oneself from others less deserving of respect and rights. To return to the example of *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, Carlton achieves a sense of his own civility and respectability, as well as legitimation from affluent White communities, by differentiating himself from the ‘incivility’ and ‘degeneracy’ of characters like Will or Jazz. Conversely, Will and Jazz earn respect and legitimation from their Black/African-American peers by differentiating themselves from the ‘civility’ and ‘respectability’ of Carlton that serves to mark him as ‘too White’ or ‘not Black enough.’

Also, racialized people can benefit from state racism on an international level, gaining a sense of one’s own ‘goodness,’ ‘moral progress,’ ‘freedom,’ and ‘civility’ by marking other nations as ‘backward,’ ‘unfree,’ ‘morally corrupt,’ or ‘uncivilized’ (this process can occur beyond Europe and North America as well, though I wouldn’t call it state racism. I am thinking of how Europe and North America are/have been marked at times as ‘hedonistic,’ ‘heathen,’ ‘morally bankrupt,’ and ‘uncaring’ by some Communist or Islamic states, providing citizens with a sense of their own moral virtue and sense of civility through self-discipline and rule over one’s desires. I wouldn’t call this state racism, I say, because if it is the case, as Mills suggests, that we live in a system of “global white supremacy,” then it is not the same for a state ruled predominantly by White people to judge nations where White people are the minority as it is for the latter to judge the former).

Though the different ways in which one benefits or is disadvantaged by White supremacy are not easy to map, obviously systemic social inequities *do* exist that serve to benefit White people as a whole more than, and at the expense of, racialized people. As I have suggested, these inequities play out in the relationships between author and reader, speaker and listener, and teacher and student. For example, in the case of the teacher/student relationship, is the knowledge of one undermined or devalued because it doesn’t fit with a White “norm”? Do both the teacher/s and student/s experience systemic discrimination and exclusion based on race? Do they both experience racial privilege, and if so, what do they do about it? A pedagogy for critical race literacy must acknowledge these systems of power and the hierarchical race relations that result. Rather than assuming equality as an “accomplished
reality,” as Mills remarks, philosophers and educators concerned with matters of justice and fairness must pay attention to and address existing inequalities.

By pointing out the explicit racial hierarchies within Kant’s work, Mills argues for a reconceptualization of egalitarian theories that take into account the reality of racial subordination. He recommends “as an alternative and superior framework” the following: “T asserts egalitarianism for all p, where whiteness is generally a necessary condition for being p. T asserts nonegalitarianism for sp [subpersons], where nonwhiteness is generally a sufficient condition for being sp. Racist statements are then part of T, not an exception.”xx If many contemporary philosophical and pedagogical theories have been built upon such a hierarchical notion of personhood, as I believe they have, such discourses will continue to perpetuate racial subordination unless this issue is addressed directly and a new foundation is created upon which to base more just and equitable systems, institutions, and practices. Race has been largely ignored within modern Euro-North American philosophy, contends Mills, because it introduces inconsistencies into theories claiming equality for all, though as Mills points out, once race is addressed and modern egalitarian theories are shown to apply to Whites only, these inconsistencies disappear – though the injustice and atrocities committed by White people are made visible, inviting moral censure and calling into question a White person’s sense of self as “good,” as “morally virtuous.”

These issues have emerged not only from the work of Kant around personhood, but as Mills points out, concepts of equality that continue to inform contemporary theories of justice have come out of problematic, supposedly objective contractarian theories such as that put forth by John Locke in his *Second Treatise of Government*. Mills argues that although modern social contractarianism was “(supposedly) committed to moral egalitarianism, the moral equality of all men, the notion that the interests of all men matter equally and [that] all men must have equal rights,”xxi like Kant’s notions of personhood, built into these theories was a notion of *inequality* between Whites and non-Whites. As Mills writes,

Enlightenment liberalism, with its proclamations of the equal rights, autonomy, and freedom of all men, thus took place simultaneously with the massacre, expropriation, and subjection to hereditary slavery of men [and women] at least apparently human. This contradiction needs to be reconciled; it is reconciled through the Racial Contract,
which essentially denies their personhood and restricts the terms of the social contract to whites.xxii

The Racial Contract, Mills explains, is the “truth of the social contract.”xxiii It is a political, moral, and epistemological contract,

…[T]hat set of formal or informal agreements or meta-agreements…between the members of one subset of humans, henceforth designated by (shifting) ‘racial’ (phenotypical/genealogical/cultural) criteria…as ‘white,’ and coextensive…with the class of full persons, to categorize the remaining subset of humans as ‘nonwhite’ and of a different and inferior moral status, subpersons, so that they have a subordinate civil standing in the white or white-ruled polities…xxiv

Thus, through the racial contract, “nonwhites” are assigned a different ontological status than Whites.

“By virtue of their complete nonrecognition, or at best inadequate, myopic recognition, of the duties of natural law,” Mills asserts, “nonwhites are appropriately relegated to a lower rung on the moral ladder (of the Great Chain of Being),”xxv or on a spectrum of civility and rationality, as I would call it. Mills continues:

[Nonwhites] are designated as born unfree and unequal. A partitioned social ontology is therefore created, a universe divided between persons and racial subpersons, Untermenschen, who may variously be black, red, brown, yellow – slaves, aborigines, colonial populations – but who are collectively appropriately known as “subject races.”xxvi

Though emerging out of the Enlightenment, this Racial Contract continues to inform contemporary moral, ontological, and epistemological theory, Mills contends. Given that race continues to be under-theorized in philosophical discussions of subjectivity, the way in which one’s race informs one’s experiences is often overlooked, assuming a subject unencumbered by the messiness of body politics, i.e. assuming a class of persons able to escape the burden of the physical in order to seek out universal truths through intellectual pursuits, versus a class of persons inevitably tied to materiality and the particular. Such a division of classes based on race has led and continues to lead to justifications for racial subordination and violence, as explored in more detail below through the work of David Theo Goldberg.
White Progress: A Justification for Expansion and Conquest

Like Mills, David Theo Goldberg reexamines the subjects of Enlightenment philosophy through the lens of race, contending that modern liberal discourse is premised on a particular notion of the White self that served to justify colonial projects. Race as a concept, Goldberg asserts, only emerges in modernity, shaping in significant ways dominant discourses on subjectivity and identity. The modern period, as identified by Goldberg, is:

…[T]hat general period emerging from the sixteenth century in the historical formation of what only relatively recently has come to be called ‘the West’. This general self-understanding becomes self-conscious in the seventeenth century, reaching intellectual and material maturity in the Enlightenment, and solidifies as Western world hegemony the following century.\textsuperscript{xxvii}

From key philosophical theories that were developed during this period, Goldberg suggests, Western societies derive many of the moral and political ideas that continue to shape contemporary institutions and social relations. In order to understand and address problems of systemic injustice, violence, and racial inequality that today still plague “Western” societies and beyond, it is thus critical to understand how and from where these problems originated.

Modernity, Goldberg puts forth,

…[E]merges as and in terms of a broad sweep of sociointellectual conditions. These include the commodification and capital accumulation of market-based society, the legal formation of private property and systems of contract, the moral and political conception of rational self-interested subjects, and the increasing replacement of God and religious doctrine by Reason and Nature as the final arbiters of justificatory appeal in epistemology, metaphysics, and science, as well as in morality, legality, and politics.\textsuperscript{xxviii}

As Goldberg and Mills point out, race came to heavily inform the developments of the modern period, being used to determine who ‘deserved’ to own property, who ‘deserved’ to be taken into moral, political, and legal consideration, and who did not. Paraphrasing the work of Zygmunt Bauman, Goldberg asserts that “at the heart of modernity lies the concern
with order,‖ a concern that came to justify racialized violence and exclusion, as well as justify imperialist ‘civilizing’ projects.

In the next few paragraphs I quote at length from Goldberg to help create a clearer picture of the connection between modern liberal ideology and the ways in which race structured, and continues to structure, conceptions of personhood, liberty, reason, equality, civility, and other such notions upon which contemporary legal, political, social, and economic institutions are based. The concern with order that is central to modernity, Goldberg writes,

…[I]s expressed through the domination of Nature by Reason; through the transparency of Nature to Reason in the Laws of Nature; through the classification of Nature in rational systems of thought; and through the mastery of Nature, physical and human, by way of ‘design, manipulation, management, engineering’. Modernity manifests itself in the fixing of the social in terms of bureaucracy, of the political in terms of the law, and of the economic in terms of the laws in the market, the hidden hand of Reason. Opacity and obscurity are supposed to give way to the light of rational transparency and precision, the chaotic limits of indeterminacy and ambiguity to the perspicuity of definition, irrationality to the intelligibility of logical regularity, and the contingency of inclination to the absolute certainty of rational (self-) determination. Thus, the spirit of modernity is to be found most centrally in its commitment to continuous progress: to material, moral, physical, and political improvement and to the promotion and development of civilization, the general standards for which the West took to be its own values universalized.

As many scholars have argued, and as I will address in more detail shortly, reason, progress, and civilization have been conceptualized within modern liberal ideology as the exclusive domain of White males, while Nature or irrationality, atemporality, and barbarism/savagery have been associated with and used to characterize the non-White and/or female “other.”

Thus, the ideals of liberal modernity are defined in contrast to or against a female or feminized non-White “other”. In order for progress to be achieved, that which is deemed unruly, irrational, or unpredictable must be brought under control, thereby justifying patriarchal White supremacist domination. For example, adopting this distinction between
between immobility/stultification and progress, John Dewey writes in *Democracy and Education*:

A savage tribe manages to live on a desert plain. It adapts itself. But its adaptation involves a maximum of accepting, tolerating, putting up with things as they are, a maximum of passive acquiescence, and a minimum of active control, of subjection to use. A civilized people enters upon the scene. It also adapts itself. It introduces irrigation; it searches the world for plants and animals that will flourish under such conditions; it improves, by careful selection, those which are growing there. As a consequence, the wilderness blossoms as a rose. The savage is merely habituated; the civilized man has habits that transform the environment.

In this passage, Dewey draws a distinction between ‘savage’ tribes who are passively at the mercy of the land and the environment, failing to put Reason to use to dominate Nature, and ‘civilized’ people who manipulate the environment to their benefit. The passage implies that ‘civilized’ people (White Europeans) are able to liberate ‘savages’ who are held hostage by the unpredictable environment. Through the manipulation of Nature by reason and science, ‘civilized’ people are able to make the wilderness ‘blossom as a rose.’

In Dewey we see a connection being drawn between race, space, behaviour, and mobility, attaching to one’s ethnicity or skin colour a set of mental and behavioural capacities and characteristics. As Radhika Mohanram points out, this same distinction that Dewey draws between the native as immobile and chained to nature versus the settler as mobile and innovative is often repeated, closely echoed decades later in Claude Lévi-Strauss’ “The Science of the Concrete” (1966) as well as Alfred Crosby’s *Ecological Imperialism* (1986). Mohanram argues that through the work of writers like Lévi-Strauss, Crosby, and I would add Dewey, racial difference comes to signify not only difference based on the colour of one’s skin, but also signifies temporal, spatial, epistemological, and metaphysical differences as well.

For Lévi-Strauss, while the metropolitan White settler is able to move freely between spaces and reinvent his environment to his liking, the Black native is forever tied to and at the mercy of his natural surroundings. As Mohanram explains:

Lévi-Strauss distinguishes between the bricoleur and the engineer, who employ two different modes of scientific thought... The bricoleur is the indigenous ‘scientist’ who
uses intuition, imagination and signs. In contrast, the engineer uses abstract thoughts, concepts and scientific knowledge. The engineer is located within a metropolitan modernity which appears to result in an abstraction and removal from the ‘natural’ environment, the plants, trees, insects, birds and beasts. Lévi-Strauss’ conceptualization of “the engineer,” as explained by Mohanram, sounds very similar to Dewey’s notion of “civilized people” as those who are detached from and thus capable of manipulating one’s physical surroundings.

Furthermore, like Dewey’s understanding of “savages,” Lévi-Strauss’ “bricoleur” is, …[E]ntrapped in a web of nature, fauna and flora, and the magical world….the difference between the bricoleur and engineer starts functioning within a discourse of development rather than one of difference – the bricoleur’s intuitive knowledge and mythological thought is primitive in comparison to the engineer’s ability to think in the abstract.

Thus, seemingly “springing out of the soil,” not only is the Black native bricoleur chained to his (or her) environment in a way that the White settler is not, but also chained to the past, unable to advance in the same way as the Europeans. In the words of Mohanram, “The bricoleur envisaged in his [sic] classificatory relationship with nature is seen as pre-capitalistic, in contrast to the engineer who is located within modernity and capitalism.”

The result of such discourse, Mohanram asserts, is multi-fold: not only does it function to define the White settler as disembodied and mobile, but it also functions to define the Black native as incarcerated and embodied (incarnate). Within a Cartesian dualistic approach to metaphysics, the embodied native thus comes to stand in as the body, as that which is bound by the physical, while the disembodied settler occupies the place of the mind – that which is free to explore and invent. Similarly, within Alfred Crosby’s account of European imperialism and the creation of what he terms the Neo-Europes, “Once again the indigene and his [sic] environment are held immobile against the repeated onslaught of the settler, who alone has the ability and freedom to move and change his landscape.” While the Black native is bound by the particular, by the specifics of his (or her) situation, the White European settler is granted by Crosby a certain universality, an ability to move and adapt to any environment.
As Mohanram remarks (I quote at length because of the richness of text I feel I would lose in a paraphrase),

Here we see that the ecological immobility of the indigenous person as a discursive botanical construct functions to locate the settler as mobile, free, taking his environment with him in ships, boats, planes, and on the soles of his shoes. While the indigene’s body comes into being and is shaped by native bioregions, the settler as exotica spreads like a weed but becomes disembodied not only because he is not in his native bioregion, but also because the Europeanization of the Neo-Europes makes the European the Universal Subject. The very term ‘universal’ suggests a subject who is able to take anyone’s place, to occupy any place, a process that occurred in the transformation of the Neo-Europes. The Caucasian is disembodied, mobile, absent of the marks that physically immobilize the native.xxxviii

It is only within such discourse, I want to assert, that White people can come to know themselves as White and thereby as free.

That is, within a binary construction of the universe, it is only through Black or racialized incarnation and incarceration (on the land – whether through discourse or through slavery, in prisons, performing menial physical labour, in homes performing domestic labour), that White people can define and experience ourselves/themselves as liberated. The accounts of Dewey, Lévi-Strauss, and Crosby are all remarkably (or perhaps unremarkably) similar, emerging out of (and changing little from) earlier Enlightenment thought, with much social, political and economic investment behind them. Not only do they serve to inscribe and re-inscribe White people as ‘free,’ but also as ‘productive’ and ‘civilized’ (and thereby moral), justified in colonial expansion and territorial invasion.

According to John Locke’s influential theory on private property in his Second Treatise on Governmentxxxix, which asserts that one is entitled to ownership of that with which one mixes his [or her] labour, the work of Dewey, Lévi-Strauss, and Crosby offers justification for colonial conquest and violence on the premise that ‘civilized’ people can put to better use resources that are otherwise being wasted by ‘savages.’ By transforming the environment, one thus becomes entitled to the land and its products. The ideology of liberal modernity, which insists upon the prevalence of Reason over Nature, thereby serves to excuse – not just excuse, but promote – White European domination over non-White people
and cultures perceived as less civilized, under the pretense that such domination is for the benefit of all. Although Locke was writing in the late 17th century and Dewey in the early 20th century, the discourse of liberal modernity continues to permeate present-day educational discourse.

For example, a 2008 magazine advertisement for a private school for girls in Toronto, Canada, portrays a young, seemingly White girl in a school uniform superimposed in front of what appears to be the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, above the caption “Some women are affected by the world around them. Others affect the world.” Below this is a picture of the school crest and the slogan, “Preparing young women to make a difference.” To me, this sounds eerily close to the above passage from Dewey about the habituation of ‘savages’ versus the transformational habits of ‘civilized’ people, as well as to the above-mentioned work of Lévi-Strauss and Crosby. It appears to imply that girls like the one in the advertisement, a young, seemingly White girl living in Canada, whose parents can afford the high tuition costs of a private school, possess the agency and mobility (the school is in Toronto, Canada but the photo is an image of Spain) to bring change to the world, unlike other females who are held as passive hostages to their environments.

Beneath this advertisement in the magazine is another for a different private school for girls in Toronto. The second advertisement depicts the lower half of the body of a Brown girl in nearly-bare feet, wearing a thin pair of sandals, pushing down the lever of a well pump in the midst of tall grasses, suggesting a landscape much different from that of Canada. From the tap of the pump flow the words, “Send your daughter to B.S.S. [the Bishop Strachan School]. The world needs her,” while the corner of the advertisement reads, “With the right education, girls who want to change the world become women who do.” Implied by the advertisement is that an education at B.S.S. is a life-giving force, much like the water it replaces in the picture. The proper education becomes vital to both personal and global development, the advertisement suggests. It can save lives, or rather, it is necessary in order to save lives.

As the advertisement suggests, a proper education will allow women to bring under control those forces (the environment, other people) around them that would otherwise negatively impact their development. They become empowered agents rather than ‘helpless victims’ like the racialized, spatialized girl in the picture. Again, a certain mobility is
implied, the ability of graduates to go anywhere and do anything with the right education, unlike the faceless, depersonalized young woman depicted who is constrained by the forces of nature, too preoccupied with meeting basic human needs such as food and water to contemplate international travel. Furthermore, the phrase “girls who want to change the world” suggests the dichotomous existence of girls who don’t want to change the world, creating a (classed, raced, and geographic) contrast between the supposedly ambitious, highly-motivated students at B.S.S. versus the passivity and acceptance of girls who apparently don’t want to or can’t change the world, as is suggested about the young girl in the picture.

What are likely intended to appear as advertisements for women’s empowerment are revealed to be classed and raced attempts to buy empowerment at the expense of other/othered women when read in relation to liberal modern ideology. Implicit in these advertisements is the idea that the rest of the world is dependent upon the help of well-educated Westerners to ‘save’ them, a narrative very similar to paternalistic justifications for colonial expansion, in that European imperial powers would bring civilization to less ‘advanced’ countries, helping them to achieve the perfection of the West.

The discourse of progress as dominance or control over that which is unpredictable and unruly, inherent in the work of Locke and Dewey as well as in these advertisements, is often present within contemporary North American classrooms and scholarship as well. Teacherly authority is ‘justifiably’ exercised against students or against factors in the classroom which are seen to jeopardize student ‘progress.’ That which is unpredictable or unruly (students or ideas) must be brought under control through discipline in order to keep the learning process moving forward.

Furthermore, the progress of students must be carefully observed, calculated, evaluated, and diagnosed through multiple assessment measures so that the teacher may respond accordingly to any threats posed to the well-being of the class: students diagnosed with learning disabilities are often separated from the group through special programs or placed in ‘basic’ level classes in high school (isolating them from the supposedly university-bound students in the academic stream), disruptive students are literally removed from the classroom – told to sit in the hallway or go to the principal’s office, students marked as violent are suspended or expelled from school, etc. All of this is to avoid impeding the
learning of students who fit within the norms and expectations of the classroom and school – they must be spared from those who threaten their advancement, order must be maintained.

But how does power circulate in the creation of ‘basic’ or ‘advanced’ student subjectivities, in the creation of the teacher as knowledgeable and of the students as requiring knowledge, of ‘disruptive’ or ‘docile’ student bodies? In a discussion of the problems of gun violence in Toronto and globally, Wendy Cukier, professor of Justice Studies at Ryerson University, explains that teachers can tell from an early age which students will end up participating in violent crime if the teacher does not intervene:

Whether it's Toronto, Rio or Soweto, you have groups of disenfranchised young men without many opportunities, and a lack of support facilities in the community for kids at risk. Primary school teachers anywhere in the world know the kids who will be in trouble in the future. They will be the dropouts, and eventually the gang members, if there is no intervention.xlii

Degeneracy and violence are thus marked on the bodies of children - through class, through gender, through race, through social environment - requiring diagnosis and treatment from teachers: it is the teacher’s duty to the state to intervene and ‘civilize’ through discipline, to ensure the security and prosperity of the state. According to this discourse, if a teacher recognizes ‘degeneracy’ in her or his students and fails to intervene, she or he can be held responsible for the resultant criminality and violence – the teacher knew what was going to happen and did nothing to stop it. The teacher therefore becomes compelled to act, to discipline and ‘civilize’ her or his students as a matter of the health of the state.

Just as (racialized) notions of progress can serve within the classroom as a means of discipline and surveillance, so too can they operate within scholarly writing. Academics often discipline (and are disciplined by) the narratives of scholarly writing, insisting on ‘reliability’ as proof of the soundness and validity of one’s argument. Reliable narration works to ‘civilize’ the discourses of Philosophy and Education, setting the limits of coherence, knowledge, and intelligibility. A ‘reliable’ narrative presents a univocal, unidirectional, dispassionate argument that moves fluidly from a beginning and middle to a logical conclusion, that is free from internal inconsistencies, and that avoids personal investment in the outcome of the argument – it is free from bias.
Such practices suppress resistance or contradictory ideas, denying the possibility of multiple valid perspectives in order to maintain control over the situation for the sake of growth and development. Voices of groups marked as less ‘rational’ or less ‘objective’ (i.e., racialized groups, women of any race, people with mental or physical disabilities, people without a formal post-secondary education, etc.) are excluded based on the threat they may pose to the rule of reason and order, and to the smooth functioning of the machinery of civilization. To include these voices is to call into question what gets to count as reason, what gets to count as knowledge, which in turn calls into question one’s own rationality and knowledge – voices that contradict the reliable narratives of White male Enlightenment philosophers make vulnerable one’s claims to reason, truth, and personhood based upon these narratives. Including contradictory voices in one’s work or recognizing the legitimacy of such voices means that scholars can no longer claim to know themselves as rational, as civilized, as just, as good, as entitled to certain rights and freedoms – our/their subjectivities become threatened.

Okay, so to back track for a moment or to sum up Goldberg’s argument –

**Premise 1:**
“Central to modernity is the domination of Reason over Nature, where obscurity, indeterminacy, irrationality, and contingency are forced to give way to transparency, definition, regularity, and certainty.”

**Premise 2:**
Basic to modernity’s self-conception…is a notion not of social subjects but of a Subject that is abstract and atomistic, general and universal, divorced from the contingencies of historicity as it is from the particularities of social and political relations and identities. This abstracted, universal Subject commanded only by Reason, precisely because of its purported impartiality, is supposed to mediate the differences and tensions between particular social subjects in the domains of market and morality, polity and legality.
As Goldberg points out, the problem with this notion of the subject is that during a time of colonial violence, slavery, and patriarchy, there was not a universal experience of subjectivity, but rather, subjectivity was experienced differently according to race, gender, class, religion, sexuality, age, ability, and language, amongst other distinctions. The atomistic, ‘universal’ Subject capable of abstraction from historical particularity was thus only intended to refer to White male subjects, to those who had the luxury of detaching the self from the particularities of one’s body. And even then, it was only intended to refer to White male subjects who met particular social expectations and norms of class, ability, education, sexuality, and religion, amongst other distinctions.

While race was central to the framing of modern liberal subjectivity, it was simultaneously made ‘invisible,’ in that the abstract ‘universal’ Subject purportedly lacked particularity, such that race was not recognized as partially constitutive of the self and of personhood. There were no raced selves or persons then; only impartial, objective, rational Subjects, divorced from the biases or experiences of one’s specific social location. As Goldberg writes,

...[T]he irony of modernity, the liberal paradox comes down to this: As modernity commits itself progressively to idealized principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity, as it increasingly insists upon the moral irrelevance of race, there is a multiplication of racial identities and the sets of exclusions they prompt and rationalize, enable and sustain. Race is irrelevant, but all is race. The more abstract modernity’s universal identity, the more it has to be insisted upon, the more it needs to be imposed. The more ideologically hegemonic liberal values seem and the more open to difference liberal modernity declares itself, the more dismissive of difference it becomes and the more closed it seeks to make the circle of acceptability.

In order for the modern liberal ideals of universal liberty, equality, and fraternity to be achieved, differences needed to be flattened out. If this was not possible in reality, it was possible discursively, by denying the significance of difference and thus denying the racism inherent in society and the theories which informed moral and political relations – difference was thus ‘removed’ from philosophical discourse through the erasure and exclusion of racialized, gendered, classed, enabled, sexualized bodies that might threaten the liberty, equality, and fraternity of White males.
“As modernity’s definitive doctrine of self and society, morality and politics,” Goldberg argues, liberalism is “key in establishing racialized reasoning and its racist implications as central to modernity’s common moral and sociopolitical sense.” Though purportedly committed to equality, Goldberg demonstrates how the fundamental tenets of liberalism serve instead to exacerbate racial differences. As identified by Goldberg, these tenets are: a belief in the primacy of the individual, such that liberalism “takes as basic the moral, political, and legal claims of the individual over and against those of the collective,” the establishment of “universal principles applicable to all human beings or rational agents in virtue of their humanity or rationality,” a notion of human nature as the “(potential) capacity to be moved by Reason,” and “[i]n keeping with this commitment to the force of reason, liberalism presupposes that all social arrangements may be ameliorated by rational reform. Moral, political, economic and cultural progress is to be brought about by and reflected in carefully planned institutional improvement.”

The ability to reason was thus central not only to modern liberal conceptions of personhood, but also to the right to self-governance and governance over others.

Furthermore, as Goldberg points out, another key tenet of modern liberalism is “the recognition of a common moral standing, no matter individual differences. From the liberal point of view, particular differences between individuals have no bearing on their moral value, and by extension should make no difference concerning the political or legal status of individuals.” These basic premises of liberalism have a number of significant implications in regard to race, as well as in regard to the contemporary performance of pedagogy and scholarship.

As the ability to reason became the mark of one’s humanity during the Enlightenment, it also became the mark of one’s capacity for self-governance and of one’s worthiness of moral consideration. Science was replacing religion as the source of truth, and as imperialism flourished, so too did race science. Differences perceived between cultures were attributed to biology and thus a complex taxonomy of races was developed. Particular cultural values, beliefs, and practices that were deemed unintelligible within a Western, European framework were taken as proof of the inferior reasoning capabilities of non-European groups. Without the same reasoning abilities, non-Europeans were therefore denied a common humanity and common moral standing with the ‘rationally superior’ White
colonizers. In the way that the notion of reason was used to distinguish between the colonizer and the colonized, between those capable versus incapable of rule, so too was the notion used in the European metropole to distinguish between respectable and degenerate populations, of those worthy of and requiring protection from the state versus those deserving of and requiring punishment. Reason thus became a matter of policing and disciplining one’s own behaviour and the behaviour of others. It was only through demonstrating rationality and civility that one could make a claim to sovereignty, and so rationality became carefully measured, evaluated, and assessed.

Such conceptions of reason and race science were used to justify colonial and sovereign rule on a paternalistic basis, and I argue throughout this dissertation that such conceptions of rationality continue to permeate much pedagogy and philosophical scholarship. Whose voice(s) is/(are) privileged as the voice of reason? Whose knowledge is considered valuable? What impact does this have in the classroom? In the academy? According to Goldberg, liberal modernity “fixed as universal” European and Western values, while allowing that “in issuing moral commands autonomous agents [could] impose upon others their own principles and impose them in the name of universality and objectivity. Cloaking themselves in the name of the natural, the certain, and the timeless, racial discrimination and exclusion imprinted themselves as naturally given and so as inoffensive and tolerable.”49 Furthermore, with the individual at the centre of liberal theorizing, it becomes difficult to articulate claims based on group categories such as race, in that rights and subjectivity are framed in terms of the individual, such that racism is also framed in terms of the isolated attitudes or actions of individuals, rather than a systemic problem or a problem visited by one group upon another.

Additionally, the ‘universality’ of human nature and the principles derived from this liberal notion assume a common experience across race which, as I have discussed earlier, is illusory. Given that the capacity for reason is a precondition for (morally relevant) personhood and progress, and that racialized groups were commonly conceptualized as lacking reason (as I will address in more detail momentarily), liberal ideology was used to justify the unequal and subhuman treatment of racialized people. Goldberg asserts, “it is a basic implication of Locke’s account [of government] that anyone behaving irrationally is to that degree a brute and should be treated as an animal or machine…Rational capacity, in
other words, sets the limits upon the natural equality of all those beings ordinarily taken to be human.” Not only, do I want to argue, is the primacy of reason a White construction emerging out of the Enlightenment, but so too is the way that reason itself is conceptualized within liberal modern ideology. Just as I have been exploring and will explore further what whiteliness looks like in a text, how it can come to invade a text, I also want to explore how whiteliness invades or permeates certain conceptions of what reason is and what is considered rational.

Through the whitely construction of reason, the egalitarianism of liberal democracy becomes perfectly compatible with racism, in that equal treatment need only be guaranteed to those deemed capable of reason. Racing reason thus serves to justify inequity and exclusion based on race, making it compatible with a liberal conception of morality and virtue. Yet not only does the racing of reason serve to justify racialized violence, but even compels it: irrationality allowed to go unchecked becomes the downfall of democracy, of the safety of the state – the threat of arbitrary rule and punishment requires non-arbitrary rule and punishment, made non-arbitrary through the notions of reason, civility, and personhood. One who is able to demonstrate control over the self, control over one’s mind and body, is seen as having earned the right of self-sovereignty. He or she becomes ruler rather than ruled.

But how and why did rational capacity become “a crucial differentia of racial groups” in the modern period, and in turn, a crucial differentia of which races were considered fully human? Goldberg remarks that in the 17th century,

Imperatives of European empire and expansion entailed territorial penetration, population regulation, and labor exploitation. The institution of racialized slave labor…seemed necessary for exploiting natural resources offered by the new territories….While slavery may be explained largely (though not nearly exhaustively) in economic terms, one must insist on asking why it was at this time that racial difference came to define fitness for enslavement and why some kinds of racial difference rather than others. Goldberg explains that at this time, “The emergence of independent scientific domains of anthropology and biology in the Enlightenment defined a classificatory order of racial groupings – subspecies of Homo sapiens – along correlated physical and cultural matrices.”

As the premodern authority of religion was replaced by the modern authority of Reason,
science was used to map the world, to make knowable and classifiable that which had previously been a mystery. Focused on progress, the Enlightenment drew upon science as a tool of civilization, as a tool for advancing knowledge and technology towards greater freedom for the [White] individual (at the cost of the enslavement and exploitation of many racialized groups).

As Goldberg contends, “Enlightenment thinkers were concerned to map the physical and cultural transformations from prehistorical savagery in the state of nature to their present state of civilization of which they took themselves to be the highest representatives.” The sciences of biology and anthropology flourished at the time, concerned with understanding, explaining, and categorizing human physical and cultural differences. Writes Goldberg:

Biology set out in part to delineate the natural causes of human difference in terms primarily of climactic variation. Anthropology was initially concerned to catalog the otherness of cultural practices. However, as it became increasingly identified as ‘the science of peoples without history’, anthropology turned primarily to establishing the physical grounds of racial difference. Thus general categories like ‘exotic’, ‘oriental’, and ‘East’ emerged, but also more specific ones like ‘Negro’, ‘Indian’, and ‘Jew’ (as racial and not merely religious other)….Where the exotic of the medieval order had been placed in times past or future, the exotic of the Enlightenment occupied another geography, namely, the East or South, places indicative of times gone.

While biology and anthropology functioned to create particular European subjects through science, so too did an emerging cartography that contributed to a liberal modern conceptualization of the self as autonomous individual. As Kathleen Kirby asserts, “Mapping acted to distinguish ‘self’ from ‘other’: in early America, cartography was the measure between human and non-human, civilized and savage.”

Like the human sciences that were beginning to flourish, European cartography served to establish and justify White dominance over the people that explorers and settlers were encountering in other parts of the world. “Cartography selectively emphasizes boundaries over sites,” writes Kirby, and citing J. B. Harley, asserts that “such a choice of emphasis indicates the primacy in European mapping of ownership.” Mapping thus not only allowed Europeans to claim ownership over the lands that they were ‘discovering,’ recording, and naming, but also allowed them to make sense of, to order, to know new (to
them) territory. The ‘coherent, consistent, rational’ (White European) individual of liberal modernity was reinforced through cartography, through the “consistent, stable” organization of space. Kirby contends, “The externalization and control of space [that explorers such as Samuel de Champlain and Cabeza de Vaca sought] to propagate goes hand in hand with their attempt to formulate a safely encapsulated subject; cartography seems the ideal method for establishing both.”

Like Mohanram suggests, while the native is perceived as part of the landscape, the cartographic European subject establishes himself as a rational, empowered individual by distancing himself from his environment, by assuming a disembodied stance from which to observe his surroundings. As Kirby writes:

The cartographer removes himself from the actual landscape. Though relation there must be for perception to occur, he describes it as much as possible as if he were not there, as if no one is there, as if the island he details exists wholly outside of any act of perception….Part of the function of mapping, it would seem, is to ensure that the relationship between knower and known remains unidirectional. The mapper should be able to ‘master’ his environment, occupy a secure and superior position in relation to it, without it affecting him in return.

In describing his environment from this perspective, the cartographer creates for himself the possibility of an all-seeing, all-knowing subject position, the position of one who can know the landscape while remaining separate from it.

However, as Kirby highlights, such a universalizing subjectivity is not intended to be accessible to all. She writes,

The solid lines that cartography draws between the subject and the land also reinforce the lines drawn between European white subjects and Others. Mapping becomes a technology advancing, and the very hallmark of, a larger cultural order premised on cleanly distinguishing between entities in the natural environment, the psychic environment and, finally, the social environment.

Like the settler as understood by Dewey, Lévi-Strauss, and Crosby, the European cartographer exists as a disembodied entity with unrestricted mobility, set apart from and above his environment. Conversely, the native remains embedded within physicality, racially embodied and tied to the land as mapped by Europeans.
Yet this notion of map-making as subject-making is applicable not only in the colonial context, but also in the context of the European metropole. As I will discuss in further detail later, spaces become marked as respectable or degenerate depending upon the people who occupy them. While the respectable White, middle-class bourgeoisie citizen is able to mark spaces as public or private, to retreat into the private space of the home from which he or she can observe without being observed, the degenerate and/or non-White and/or lower-classes are denied land ownership, thrust into the public space of the street to socialize or to make money. Within the public sphere, bodies marked as degenerate can be monitored, surveilled, regulated, their mobility limited. Though the respectable White male citizen can travel where he wants when he wants, the mapping and naming of spaces as respectable and degenerate serves to justify punishment of those who attempt to enter respectable space without permission.

I think here of the July 16, 2009 arrest of Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr., professor of African and African American Studies at Harvard, and “one of [the United States’] pre-eminent African-American scholars” for “disorderly conduct” by a (White) police officer investigating a possible break-in. After arriving home from a trip to China to find his front door jammed, Professor Gates, with the help of his cab driver, forced the door open. Shortly after that, a police officer arrived at the home, following up on a call from a “white female caller” who reported seeing “two black men on the porch of the home,” one of whom was “‘wedging his shoulder into the door as if he was trying to force entry.’” When asked by Sergeant James Crowley to step outside, Professor Gates refused to do so. In the police report, Sergeant Crowley said that as he told Professor Gates he was investigating a possible break-in, Professor Gates exclaimed, “Why, because I’m a black man in America?” and accused the sergeant of racism. “While I was led to believe that Gates was lawfully in the residence,” Sergeant Crowley wrote in the report, “I was quite surprised and confused by the behavior he exhibited toward me.” Professor Gates followed him outside, the report said, and yelled at him despite the sergeant’s warning “that he was becoming disorderly.” Sergeant Crowley then arrested and handcuffed him. Professor Gates was held at police headquarters for hours before being released on his recognizance.
Professor Gates’s behavior appeared “disorderly” and “confusing” to the Sergeant Crowley because he was unable to perceive the racism implicit in his actions and the actions of the White female caller who notified police.

As a Black/African-American man, Dr. Henry Louis Gates Jr. was identified by the White caller and by police as trespassing in a space of respectability, requiring removal and detention. Treating him as a criminal for trying to enter his own home, Professor Gates’s neighbour and police were reinforcing the boundaries of respectability and degeneracy, sending a clear message about who it is that is considered to be of respectable space. I am reminded of a conversation I had with a young man on a public bus on the outskirts of Phoenix, Arizona. We somehow began chatting, and I explained to him that I was a student in town from Canada for a conference. He made a few recommendations of places I might want to see while I’m in the area, but he cautioned me to stay away from the neighbourhood of Scottsdale. If I were to go there, I would be hassled by the police, he said. He is always hassled by the police any time he goes to Scottsdale, he told me, because it is a rich area and the police think he doesn’t belong there and is only looking to cause trouble. In my head, I doubted whether I, as a White, female, graduate student tourist would have the same experience as the young Black/African-American male with whom I was speaking. I assumed that my race and gender would allow me to blend into the neighbourhood more easily. I was confused by why he would assume we would have a similar experience.

But I think I missed an important part of this exchange at the time: we were both riding on public transit, which, in my experiences taking public transit in the United States (outside some of the major urban centres like New York City), is generally not something one does out of choice, but out of financial necessity. Unlike Toronto, where affluent people living close to the subway line often choose to commute by public transit to avoid rush hour traffic and high parking costs, it seemed that in Phoenix, one took public transit because one could not afford the private transportation of a car. Taking the bus then marked me as of a particular class, a class that was unwelcome in certain neighbourhoods like Scottsdale.

My mode of transportation could thus be taken as a sign of my degeneracy, a sign of my inability to afford private property – I was of the public, not of the private sphere. I was surveillable. Though my race and my gender might allow me to blend into an affluent area like Scottsdale more easily than the young man with whom I was conversing, my mode of
transportation would still mark my respectability as questionable, and therefore requiring
observation and monitoring – what was someone without enough money to afford a car doing
in an affluent area? I then understood that my whiteness was not necessarily enough to
ensure my immunity to surveillance (though it could ensure my immunity, it didn’t
necessarily) – I also had to prove that I had the right amount of money and/or education
and/or civility to travel freely in spaces like Scottsdale, that I would not pose a threat to the
community.

I took it for granted that one could ‘tell’ I was civilized and respectable enough to go
where I wanted when I wanted, though this wasn’t necessarily the case. I might be called to
prove, at the expense of others, that I was unlike degenerate people, that I was worthy of
freedom and respect because of my level of education, because of my ability to travel easily
to another country, etc. (which has the effect of marking people with less education or
mobility as less deserving of freedom and respect). I include these stories here to
demonstrate that racialized, classed, gendered, sexualized, and abilitized notions of civility
and respectability that emerged during the Enlightenment continue to inform how space and
social identities are demarcated and policed today, continue to inform ideas of who belongs
where (in the academy, at the head of the class, in financial institutions, in the judiciary, in
the prisons, on the street, etc.).

While physical and cultural differences were mapped spatially/geographically in the
Enlightenment, so too were they being mapped temporally on a moral-historical vertical
timeline of civilization, with European peoples and culture at the top. “Those of the East,”
asserts Goldberg, “were acknowledged to have civilization, language, and culture. But,
generically, the East was a place of violence and lascivious sensuality, the rape of which was
thus invited literally as much as it was metaphorically.”

Goldberg’s use of the term ‘rape’ here is both interesting and disturbing. He equates
colonial conquest with sexual violence, highlighting the relationship between patriarchy,
heterosexuality, capitalism, and racism. The exploitation of a country’s goods, resources,
and labour was discursively effected by the feminization of a nation and its inhabitants,
thereby seen to ‘require’ penetration and domination by the White European male in order to
be made productive and fertile. It was also often materially effected through attempts to
seize control over the ‘Eastern’ or ‘native’ woman’s body, through rape, anti-miscegenation laws, and/or intermarriage.

As Andrea Smith asserts in her book *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, “the project of colonial sexual violence establishes the ideology that Native bodies are inherently violable – and by extension, that Native lands are also inherently violable.” While Enlightenment philosophy, biology, anthropology, cartography and other pursuits served to construct the European colonizer as civilized and rational, so too did it serve to construct the colonized native as uncivilized and irrational. While the disembodied (masculinized) colonizer was seen as capable of subduing and distancing oneself/(himself) from nature and the physical, even one’s own natural impulses (ha!), the (feminized) native was portrayed as unable to detach oneself/(herself) from the body and the land, unable to control one’s passions and sexual desires. As highlighted by Mohanram and Kirby, the colonizer was depicted as being of the mind, above material reality, while the native was depicted as being of the flesh, emerging out of the soil.

The result of such a conceptualization is that the native body, conflated with the land, became/becomes marked as inherently feminized and rapable. In the words of Smith, “…Native peoples, in the eyes of the colonizers, are marked by their sexual perversity…Because Indian bodies are ‘dirty,’ they are considered sexually violable and ‘rapable,’ and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count.” It is through the rape and forced sterilization of Native women that colonial conquest was enforced and achieved, Smith argues. Native bodies were metaphorically transformed, contends Smith, “into a pollution of which the colonial body must constantly purify itself.” Attempted cultural genocide through sexual violence as a weapon of conquest thus became justified on the basis of a paternalistic desire to ‘civilize’ and ‘purify’ the body politic.

As the colonized male was feminized and the traditional (heterosexual) family unit of the colonized was undermined through rape or forced sterilization, for example, the male colonizer assumed the role of beneficent, omnipotent father, giving birth to civilization where civilization was ‘absent.’ However, not only was patriarchy used as a means to solidify racial rule abroad, but was also critical to delineating racialized spaces of respectability and degeneracy within Europe and North America. Control over the White middle-class female
body was seen as central to maintaining the health and civility of the White race. It was/is through classed and gendered bodies that racial identity was/is negotiated: ensuring the purity and chastity of the White middle-class female body is required in order to ensure the purity of White identity.

If the respectable White female body is not monitored and kept under control, she could be violated or tempted into degeneracy, undermining the racial stock of the middle-class and thereby undermining one’s claims to power and autonomy based on the notion of a ‘pure’ lineage, unsullied by the incivility, irrationality, and moral ‘deviance’ of other races. The purity of the respectable woman of the house was also maintained through the bodies of racialized women, expected to take on/take in the dirt of the White bourgeois home, whether as domestic workers to perform the ‘dirty’ tasks of the household such as cleaning, cooking, or laundry, or as prostitutes to perform ‘dirty’ sexual tasks ‘required’ as a release by White men, thereby shielding the lady of the house from the dirt. Control over the means of reproduction through control over the female body, both White and racialized, was thus seen as necessary in order to ensure the proliferation of a civilized, rational, respectable White populace while undermining the health and security of the non-White populace.

Given that White Europeans were supposedly at the top of a moral-historical vertical timeline of civilization, geographies and peoples falling below White Europeans on this bio/anthro/ethico/temporal timeline were thus ‘justifiably’ ruled by more ‘advanced’ nations that were purportedly able to control themselves and their environments more successfully. White ‘reason’ and ‘civility’ were thus seen to establish Europeans as the most suitable rulers, justifying in the mind of the colonizer the violence and exploitation of imperialism and justifying racialized violence within Europe and North America.

Goldberg sketches for his readers a brief history of the racing of reason within canonical modern European philosophy, beginning with Lockean empiricism. “Empiricism,” he writes, “encouraged the tabulation of perceivable differences between peoples and from this it deduced their natural differences.” Locke considered skin colour to be a “nominally essential property” of humans because “it was taken on grounds of empirical observation to be correlated with rational capacity.” Within Locke’s taxonomy of difference then, race was taken to be indicative of inherent mental ability, and thus indicative of the sort of treatment or moral standing that one deserved. As it was seen that only with the capacity to
reason did one become a full moral agent, those perceived to be lacking in this capacity (supposedly discernible by the colour of one’s skin) were denied full moral personhood.

By contrast to the *a posteriori* accounts of race offered within the empiricist theories of Locke, rationalism “proposed initial innate distinctions (especially mental ones) to explain the perceived behavioral disparities,*lxxvii* of humans, which included innate mental and moral differences between races. For example, in making an argument for rationalism, Leibniz draws upon these racial distinctions, writing: “…[T]he greater and better part of humanity gives testimony to these instincts [of conscience]…one would have to be as brutish as the American savages to approve their customs which are more cruel than those of wild animals.”*lxxviii* These racial taxonomies are further developed in the work of Hume and Kant a half century later.

As Goldberg points out, Hume differentiates between national differences and racial differences, the former being a product of “moral causes” and the latter as inherent. Citing the quotation from Hume addressed by Valls, Goldberg writes that for Hume,

All ‘species of men’ other than whites (and especially the ‘Negro’) were ‘naturally inferior to the whites’. Hume’s justification of this footnoted claim was empirical: Only whites had produced anything notable and ingenious in the arts or sciences…‘Negroes’, even those living in Europe, had no accomplishments they could cite. Like Locke, the only probable explanation of this ‘fact’ Hume could find was an original natural difference between ‘the breeds.’*lxxix*

The notion of an inherent difference in the morals and reason of different ‘races’ (as identified based on physical attributes such as skin colour as well as nationality at times), was continually reproduced within the canonical texts of the Enlightenment, texts which continue to shape moral and political thought to this day.

Similarly to Hume, Leibniz, and Locke, Kant also established a causal connection between race and character, proceeding to categorize the qualities of different races and nationalities. According to Kant, Germans were superior to all other groups, synthesizing “the English intuition for the sublime and the French feeling for the beautiful,” while avoiding the excesses of either.*lxxx* Furthermore,

Of the peoples of the Orient…the Arabs were deemed most noble (‘hospitable, generous, and truthful; but troubled by an ‘inflamed imagination’ that tends to
distort), followed by the Persians (good poets, courteous, with fine taste), and the Japanese (resolute but stubborn). Indians and Chinese, by contrast, were dominated in their taste by the grotesque and monstrous…Nevertheless, compared to Negroes, Oriental races fared relatively well in Kant’s scheme…[For Kant, ‘savages’] are wanting in ‘moral understanding’, and Negroes in Kant’s view are the most lacking of all ‘savages’. lxxx

Thus, within the ontologies of Locke, Leibniz, Hume, and Kant, races clearly existed as distinct entities with distinct inherent characteristics. Utilitarians such as Jeremy Bentham, as well as James and John Stuart Mill, also subscribed to this belief.

“Though rejecting the polygenist conception of races,” Goldberg asserts, “Bentham and his followers admitted racial differences as having at least secondary influence on utility. ‘Race’ or ‘lineage’ was treated in Humean fashion not as climatically determined but as ‘operating chiefly through the medium of moral, religious, sympathetic and antipathetic biases.” lxxxi As race was correlated with morality and culture, colonial rule was justified within utilitarianism on the basis that colonial powers could bring the “benefits” of civilization to colonized peoples, “so as to broaden the scope of the latter’s liberty.” lxxxii Inherent in this notion of utilitarianism is a paternalism that served to excuse, if not compel, colonialism. It was seen as the duty of colonial administrators to bring about the greatest good for the greatest number of people by helping other nations and races reach the same level of achievement and civilization as ‘liberated’ Europeans.

James Mill, an influential administrator in India as Assistant Examiner, then Examiner, of the East Indies Company, criticized what he perceived as the complete lack of morality of the Indians and the Chinese. He deplored the “‘hideous state’ of ‘Hindu and Muslim civilization’ that prevailed in India.” lxxxiii According to the senior Mill, Like the Chinese, Indians were found to be ‘tainted with the vices of insincerity, dissembling, treacherous…disposed to excessive exaggeration…cowardly and unfeeling…in the highest degree conceited…and full of affected contempt for others. Both are, in the physical sense, disgustingly unclean in their persons and houses.’…This state of affairs Mill ascribed to underlying political causes, namely, the shortcomings of ‘oriental despotism’. Incapable of representative democracy,
Mill recommended that the Indian government should thus submit to the benevolent direction of the British Parliament.\textsuperscript{lx xv}

Like his father, John Stuart Mill also held important positions within the colonial service in India, and also held the view that colonialism was for the betterment of the people of India, who needed to be led towards progress.

As Goldberg writes, “Echoing his father, John Stuart insisted that India required direction by colonial government – recall that he deemed the principles of On Liberty applicable only where civilized conditions ensured the settling of disputes by rational discussion.”\textsuperscript{l xxxvi} In order for India to achieve the sort of liberty that the younger Mill proposed, it would first need to be brought to the level of political sophistication of the British. Asserts Goldberg:

Both James and John Stuart Mill thus viewed natives as children or childlike, to be directed in their development by rational, mature administrators concerned with maximizing the well-being of all. Natives ought not to be brutalized, to be sure, nor enslaved but directed – administratively, legislatively, pedagogically, and socially. Paternalistic colonial administration was required in their view until the governed sufficiently mature and throw off the shackles of their feudal condition and thinking and are then to assume the civilized model of reasoned self-government.\textsuperscript{l xxxvii}

Thus, as Goldberg points out, “Utilitarianism rationalized nineteenth-century racial rule in two related senses, then: It laid claim to a justification of racialized colonialism, and it systematized its institution.”\textsuperscript{l xxxviii}

This brief history of the racing of reason in Enlightenment thought brings me back to the work of Charles Mills and his argument that race is inextricably built into liberal modern philosophy, despite assertions to the contrary. Figures such as Locke, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Bentham, James and John Stuart Mill, responsible for establishing many of the notions of equality, freedom, and reason drawn upon in liberal democracies today, had as a central part of their philosophical projects the establishment of a distinction between Whites and other ‘races’ in terms of morality and rational capacity. Given the above taxonomy of race found within the work of figures central to the Enlightenment, it becomes increasingly clear that many of the ideas that philosophers hold so dear not only have dubious origins, but continue to carry with them today the marks of White supremacy.
For example, as Goldberg highlights, the discourse of rights, which has greatly informed and continues to inform political and legal decision-making processes, has been premised upon hierarchical notions of race from the beginning. He writes:

Subjects assume value, then, only in so far as they are bearers of rights; and they are properly vested with rights only in so far as they are imbued with value. The rights others as a matter of course enjoy are yet denied people of color because black, brown, red, and yellow subjectivities continue to be disvalued; and the devaluation of these subjectivities delimits at least the applicability of rights or restricts their scope of application that people of colour might otherwise properly claim.\textsuperscript{lxxxix}

As I discussed earlier, Charles Mills remarks that although we now have formal legal structures in place assuring equal rights for all, there are systemic obstacles in place that ensure unequal access to these rights. Furthermore, as rights are primarily conceptualized in terms of the individual, it becomes difficult to make a claim based on group rights, particularly if these are seen to infringe upon the liberties of other individuals (i.e. “affirmative action” or “equal opportunity” hiring practices).

Modern notions of personhood, equality, liberty, rights, reason, etc. that have permeated current philosophical, political, and educational discourse are thus seen to be steeped in the discourse of race. Goldberg notes,

Modernist moralism is concerned principally with a complete, rationally derived system of self-justifying moral reasons logically constructed from a single basic principle. But in ignoring the social fabric and concrete identities in virtue of which moral judgment and reason are individually effective, in terms of which the very content of the moral categories acquires its sense and force, moral modernity fails to recognize the series of exclusions upon which the state of modernity is constituted.\textsuperscript{xc}

The supposed neutrality, universality, and objectivity of modern liberal theory that held the promise of equality and justice for all is shown then to instead create racially-based moral divisions. The moral universe emerging out of the Enlightenment is one that is bounded by race. Reason, and thus full moral consideration, is reserved for White Europeans, whose experiences, beliefs, and values are intelligible enough to each other to be able to engage in moral deliberation about ‘universal truths.’ Conversely, experiences, beliefs, and values
rendered unintelligible due to cultural or racial differences are thus seen to be outside the realm of rational debate.

Having explored in this chapter some of the ways in which race has shaped mainstream First World political, social, legal, moral, and economic thought since the Enlightenment, in the next chapter I would like to look at how ‘civilization’ came to be a central line along which race was divided. How did ‘reason’ and ‘progress’ come to be seen as the exclusive domain of White Europeans? How did a supposed White monopoly on ‘civility’ justify the brutality of imperialism? Building upon the work of Goldberg and Mills, in the next chapter I examine how notions of ‘civility’ prevalent in justifications of colonial violence continue to operate today as a White cultural practice and mode of social management.

As Daniel Coleman and Meyda Yeşenoğlu contend, the concept of “civilization” emerged out of Enlightenment thought as a White ideal and method of control over racialized people. Arising out of modern concerns with scientific and technological advancement, economic growth, and the triumph of reason, notions of progress and civilization aided the White supremacist project as a disciplinary tool. Later in my dissertation I explore how discourses on civility have shifted in part from explicit claims to more subtly manifest in philosophical and pedagogical meta-narratives and practices. That is, I examine how expectations of what counts as ‘civilized’ pedagogical and philosophical discourse and practice may stem from racialized liberal ideals of universality, objectivity, progress, freedom, and reason, for example, that serve as mechanisms of discipline, surveillance, and social control necessitating racialized violence to protect the health of the state.
Chapter Five: Mapping the Territory/ies of Racial Identity

Racializing Ontology

Before delving further into an analysis of modern liberal narratives and their role in the justification of racialized violence, I want first to offer a discussion of how racialized identities are negotiated through notions of civility and rationality. How does the White subject come into being as civilized, rational, and free through the normalization of particular stories, beliefs, and behaviours? That is, I want to suggest that there exists a peculiar White logic that serves to render as rational and ethical the existence of racial hierarchies at which Whites place themselves/ourselves at the top.

Building upon the work of Mills and Goldberg mentioned in the previous chapter, I insert this section here in order to:

1. Frame modern liberal theory as an over-arching narrative that contributes to White identity formation
2. Emphasize how particular ideas or beliefs may be naturalized to the point of being adopted and exercised dysconsciously, such that racialized violence ceases to appear to be about race at all
3. Emphasize how these ideas and beliefs serve to render intelligible and non-contradictory the morality of White supremacy

Understanding the ways in which whiteness as civility and respectability becomes normalized through reliable narration, in which it becomes so pervasive and magnified that many have difficulty recognizing or identifying it, is central to critical race literacy.

In discussing racial identity formation, here I am not suggesting a static, singular conception of race, but rather I want to refer to a process of becoming. That is, I want to refer to the process through which one comes to know oneself as more fully human, as more entitled to rights, respect, and autonomy than others by proving one’s own civility and rationality at others’ expense. That is, I explore how one can only come to know oneself as White or as free or as respectable by establishing a firm border between the self and an
opposite other: I can know myself as White only through determining what it means to be ‘not White’ and labeling others as such, as distinct from me. Or I can know myself as ‘free’ only by being able to label others as ‘unfree,’ though this process of labeling in itself participates in the creation of ‘not White’ or ‘unfree’ subjectivities. The only way that I can prove I am not a threat to an affluent community like Scottsdale, Arizona is to compare myself to people who might be threats and show that I am not them – No, no, officer, you are mistaken. I could afford to rent a car, I just don’t have a license [or didn’t at the time]. I am not like the other people on the bus. I am trustworthy.

But inherent in my ability to establish myself as trustworthy, as someone who follows the rule of law, as someone who is well-mannered and civilized, predictable and controllable, who is able to control my impulses and to think rationally, is the ability to establish others as the opposite and to separate myself from them across a very clear border. So what role did Enlightenment ideology come to play in establishing racialized border between civility and incivility, rationality and irrationality? As Mills and Goldberg assert, the Enlightenment brought about a reconceptualization of personhood, a reconceptualization of the subject as ruled by reason rather than religion. Liberal notions of equality implied a certain sameness or unitary nature of humanity, while reason allowed for the discovery of supposedly universally-applicable laws.

The Enlightenment saw a shift away from reliance on religious, faith-based metanarratives to explain the rules of the universe towards meta-narratives of science and reason. Reason was privileged because it served as a justification for democracy as opposed to a theocracy or aristocracy: if all humans are capable of reason, then they are similarly all capable of engaging in the deliberative processes required for political involvement. It was thought that reason allowed humans to determine the best course of action and to progress forward on a moral/ethical timeline of civilization. Rather than obeying the rules of [a Christian] God or the aristocracy, reason held the promise that the people as autonomous individuals could determine for themselves the best rules of governance.

As thinkers such as Locke, Hume, Kant, and Mill contemplated the meaning of liberal democracy and explored important concepts such as consciousness, liberty, free will, and morality, they seemed to take for granted the possibility of a singular human experience and a unified sense of self. Yet as many have suggested, this sense of psychic
integrity or wholeness, of a ‘universal’ human experience, was an illusion, a White fantasy. Imagining a singular, whole sense of self to be both possible and desirable, White liberal thinkers sought certainty and universality in their theorizing, creating a system of White logic that served to justify social inequity as well as racialized (and) classed (and) gendered (and) sexualized violence.

As W. E. B. Dubois, Gloría Anzaldúa, and María Lugones have written in different times and in different contexts, within a system of White supremacy, an integrated sense of self can be very difficult and/or perhaps undesirable or dangerous for racialized individuals to strive to achieve. For example, in 1903, Dubois writes in *The Souls of Black Folk* of the “double-consciousness” of the “American Negro,” that is, of the inherently divided sense of self experienced by African-Americans. However, Dubois, like Anzaldúa and Lugones, sees this dividedness/multiplicity not as a drawback, but as an epistemic advantage, allowing for greater perspective and insight on the world. Dubois asserts:

…[T]he Negro is…born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, - a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his [sic] two-ness, - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.¹

Here Dubois undermines the claims of White Enlightenment philosophers that identity is necessarily singular or a matter of sameness to the self and difference from others.

As Fellows and Razack note, “Identity, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is derived from the Latin word *idem*, meaning the same. Its various dictionary meanings focus on sameness.”² Moving away from such a notion of identity, Dubois proposes an alternate ontology based on his experiences as an African-American in a White-dominated society.

As he further explains:

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, - this longing to attain self-conscious manhood [sic], to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In
this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.iii

As Dubois points out, identity is necessarily raced, and that for him and other African-Americans, identity/identities is/are multiple and overlapping.

A multiplicity and overlapping of identities exists for White people as well, though in a different way. Multiplicity exists in the sense that whiteness will be experienced and negotiated differently based on gender and class and ability and sexuality and language, for example. But also, it exists in the sense that the White self is ever fractured by being required to assert one’s civility to prove one’s whiteness, though only being able to prove this civility through a racialized violence that undermines one’s civility. In order to maintain a sense of logical coherence, of moral virtue, and psychic integrity, the White self must deny her or his participation in racialized violence.

To admit to this violence is to admit to incivility, to admit to incivility is to admit to one’s subpersonhood, to admit to subpersonhood is to admit to one’s non-whiteness. A person can only know herself or himself as truly White then by knowing herself or himself as innocent, as good, as unimplicated in the machinery of racism. ‘Guilty’ White identities are located lower down on the spectrum of civility, marked as criminal or degenerate, and so one must deny the benefits of “White privilege” or let go of the need to perceive oneself as ‘good,’ as ‘right,’ as ‘free.’ While the possibility of a singular, integrated White identity is an illusion upheld by much violence, Dubois seems to highlight that White people are seldom forced to confront the multiplicity of their identities as frequently as African-Americans.

It seems that who one is taken to be based on the colour of one’s skin or one’s ancestry can impact how one interprets and interacts with the world. In the words of Charles Mills, “Race is not ‘metaphysical’ in the deep sense of being eternal, unchanging, necessary, part of the basic furniture of the universe. But race is a contingently deep reality that structures our particular social universe, having a social objectivity and causal significance that arise out of our particular history.iv
Furthermore, though race may not have the scientific reality that many people once attributed to it, Dubois and Mills suggest that race does bear significance as some sort of ontological property. “Because people come to think of themselves as ‘raced,’ as black and white, for example, these categories, which correspond to no natural kinds, attain a social reality. Intersubjectivity creates a certain kind of objectivity.” The significance of a racialized ontology as proposed by Mills and Dubois is huge, in that by altering who or what the subject or self is thought to be, one simultaneously alters what and how the subject or self is thought to understand. The project of reason is thus transformed from dichotomous thinking (i.e. $A \rightarrow \neg B$: if A, then not B) to multiplicitous thinking (i.e. $A \land B$: A and B).

Gloria Anzaldúa explains this difference in her discussion of la conciencia de la mestiza, or a mestiza consciousness – that is, the consciousness of one who, like Anzaldúa, straddles borders, be they physical, psychological, sexual, or spiritual. “I am a border woman,” she writes. “I grew up between two cultures, the Mexican (with a heavy Indian [indigenous] influence) and the Anglo (as a member of a colonized people in our own territory). I have been straddling that tejas-Mexican border, and others, all my life. It’s not a comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions.” Writing in English, Castillian Spanish, North Mexican dialect, Tex-Mex dialect, and Nahuatl at various points throughout her book Borderlands/La Frontera, Anzaldúa focuses on embracing the multiple, contradictory parts of herself as a source of strength and resilience, rather than trying to make a home on one side of a border or the other.

Like Dubois, Anzaldúa recognizes the inherent plurality of existence for racialized people living in a system of global White supremacy, being forced to make sense of and live within seemingly irreconcilable ideas, values, beliefs, and actions. As she writes,

Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war. Like all people, we perceive the version of reality that our culture communicates. Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference causes un choque, a cultural collision. Made clear in the work of Dubois and Anzaldúa is that colonization and systemic racism have resulted for many racialized people in the necessity of embracing multiple identities at
once, of entertaining apparent logical contradictions and finding a way to reconcile them. Conversely, part of the privilege of being White within a White supremacist system is the privilege of denying or ignoring one’s contradictions, as in the case of White Enlightenment philosophers simultaneously arguing equality for all while establishing and reinforcing racial hierarchies.

Unlike the White supremacist need for a ‘coherent,’ unified, unidirectional sense of self, Anzaldúa calls for developing a “tolerance for ambiguity,” which she sees as a necessary part of life for *la mestiza*. She explains (and I quote at length because of the depth and richness of her words that I feel cannot be adequately paraphrased, yet are critical to my larger argument):

> In perceiving conflicting information and points of view, *[la mestiza]* is subjected to a swamping of her psychological borders. She has discovered that she can’t hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries. The borders and walls that are supposed to keep the undesirable ideas out are entrenched habits and patterns of behavior; these habits and patterns are the enemy within. Rigidity means death. Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically. *La mestiza* constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by a move away from set patterns and goals toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes.

Here Anzaldúa points out the ways in which reasoning and rationality can be raced in such a way as to exclude those who are not part of a dominant culture, who have been denied the luxury of claiming one’s own experiences as ‘universal’ and are instead marked by social specificity. She continues,

> The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode – nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns the ambivalence into something else.
Whereas singularity, integrity, and coherence are essential to the construction of ‘dominant’ White identities, Anzaldúa makes clear how such a project simultaneously negates the possibility of singular, integrated, coherent other-than-White or other-than-Anglo identities.

Yet while singularity and coherence are essential to coming to know oneself as a White liberal individual, entitled to participation in democratic rule and the freedom that comes with it, they are unattainable for White people as well, though mechanisms like reliable narration perpetuate the illusion of univocality, of integrity. Philosophers and educators therefore need reliable narration to know ourselves/themselves as whole, as unambiguous, as White. But reliable narration can also function as a means through which racialized scholars and educators also gain a sense of wholeness, of certainty, of civility as well. As I have suggested before, racial identities seem to be negotiated on a spectrum of civility and respectability, so that race is not a quality one possesses for certain, but that he or she has to varying degrees, always under contestation.

One is more or less White, one is more or less Brown, one is more or less Asian, one is more or less Native, for example, depending on one’s beliefs and behaviour. These categories and identities function simultaneously as both a means of reward and of punishment in different contexts. For example, being sufficiently brownly amongst other Brown people is required for social acceptance (speaking the right language, wearing the right clothing, understanding the right cultural references, being of the right religion, liking the right food, living in the right place, liking the right music, participating in the right traditions, etc.), though this might mean being ‘too’ brownly amongst other races and lead to social exclusion in that context. Conversely, being ‘less’ brownly may lead to acceptance amongst other races, but lead to rejection from one’s own race. Even then, one’s racial identity is never static in that one is always ‘too much’ this or ‘too little’ that, but is always shifting within the confines of a race (such that seldom can a White person be Brown or a Brown person be White, though a White person can be ‘too brownly’ or a Brown person ‘too whitely’ as these adjectives are attached to behaviour, interests, and beliefs rather than skin colour. I say “seldom” because in cases of albinism, for example, a Black person could have very pale skin and be mistaken for and treated as a White person, or in cases in which one’s racial identity is ambiguous, one’s heritage might be mistaken).
Seeking to highlight rather than deny the ambiguity of identity/identities, Anzaldúa proposes a new way of being and of thinking, a new way of understanding the self in relation to others that moves away from a binary understanding of racial identity. She writes,

….The future depends on the breaking down of paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos – that is, a change in the way we perceive reality, the way we see ourselves, and the ways we behave – la *mestiza* creates a new consciousness….The answer to the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our languages, our thoughts. A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war.

Anzaldúa calls for a move away from convergent, dichotomous thinking towards a tolerance for ambiguity, such that less violence is required in naming one’s own identity and the identity of others. She asserts that identity needn’t be at the cost of erecting and policing firm borders between self and other, advocating instead for greater social fluidity.

Ambiguity is incompatible with White supremacy because it calls into question the moral and philosophical validity of systemic White privilege and power. White supremacy is built upon and maintained by dualistic, convergent thinking. Slavery, colonization, and the systemic benefits currently enjoyed by Whites at the expense of racialized groups become very difficult to justify if the lines between civilized and uncivilized, rational and irrational, mature and immature, sophisticated and savage become ambiguous or blurry. However, while a tolerance for ambiguity may help shift the way that power circulates at some points, it also raises the issue of *who* has the luxury to tolerate ambiguity, to dismantle borders between self and other. For the people who are shot or detained trying to get from one country to another in the hope of greater stability and safety, their tolerance for ambiguity would likely be of little assistance to them. It is the border guards that may tolerate or be intolerant in a way that means the life or freedom of another.

While moving away from convergent, binary thinking may be a part of shifting the way networks of power operate and reducing the violence they produce (does intolerance for ambiguity contribute to the occurrence of racialized violence? Yes, I think so.), such a call
for ambiguity is not without its problems. To suggest that a tolerance for ambiguity is the answer to systemic violence is to reinstate power in the hands of those with the choice of whether to tolerate or not tolerate, with the power to step outside of dichotomies rather than be named by them (i.e. not-Canadian, not-American, not-White, not-permitted, trespasser). Also, Anzaldúa’s call for a mestiza consciousness may fail to take into account the different ways that power operates at microscopic and macroscopic levels, how it doesn’t always require binaries to function, but can thrive on ambiguity. It is through ill-defined edges that power often seems to function. That is, discipline and punishment occur because one can never name oneself for certain as 100% authentically this or that. There is no ‘perfect’ amount of civility that will guarantee only advantages to a person. One can be simultaneously not civil enough and too civil, depending on the context. It is through this ambiguity, through this amorphous sense of identity that power proliferates.

Like Anzaldúa, Patricia Hill Collins also advocates for a move away from “either/or” dichotomous thinking towards what she terms “both/and” thinking. Conceptualizing systems of oppression as interlocking, Hill Collins explains:

Additive models of oppression are firmly rooted in the either/or dichotomous thinking of European, masculinist thought…This emphasis on quantification and categorization occurs in conjunction with the belief that either/or categories must be ranked. The search for certainty of this sort requires that one side of a dichotomy be privileged while its other is denigrated. Privilege becomes defined in relation to its other.

Replacing additive models of oppression with interlocking ones creates possibilities for new paradigms….Placing African-American women and other excluded groups in the center of analysis opens up possibilities for a both/and conceptual stance, one in which all groups possess varying amounts of penalty and privilege in one historically created system….Embracing a both/and conceptual stance moves us from additive, separate systems approaches to oppression and toward what I now see as the more fundamental issue of the social relations of domination. xi

Understanding social identities as multiple and interlocking is key to understanding how social domination is effected. It is important to recognize how one’s intersecting social identities
impact her or his material reality. For example, why is it that the 13 “Priority Areas” identified by the city of Toronto have a higher incidence of low-income, visible minority, recent immigrant, and lone-parent [I would guess mostly female-led] households than the rest of the city?\textsuperscript{xii} How do these factors relate to each other? At the same time, it is also important to consider how power operates beyond the level of distribution of goods and wealth, in minute ways (“No chewing gum in class”) as well as massive ways (“We are waging war”), through discipline, surveillance, measurement, diagnosis, and ‘treatment.’ That is, what might an analysis of disciplinary power and biopower lend to Hill Collins’s work on “both/and” thinking, and vice versa?

Adopting a sense of power as disciplinary and/or as biopower, one comes to see that it is through sexuality, gender, and class that White supremacy is enacted. As Andrea Smith points out in Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide,\textsuperscript{xiii} Ann Laura Stoler in Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things,\textsuperscript{xiv} and Sherene Razack in Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society,\textsuperscript{xv} a person comes to know oneself as White, as male, as powerful, as good, in opposition to and at the expense of a racialized, feminized, hypersexualized, purportedly disempowered not-Self. Sherene Razack explores how this occurs using as an example the sexualized murder of Aboriginal woman Pamela George by two young White men, Steven Kummerfield and Alex Ternowetsky.

Razack remarks that through creating classed, racialized spaces of ‘degeneracy’ in which the bodies of Aboriginal women are commodified and made ‘publicly available,’ heterosexual White men create spaces in which violence against Aboriginal women becomes acceptable. As Razack points out, at the trial of Kummerfield and Ternowetsky,

…the murder scene and the Stroll [a particular area of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada] were described as spaces somehow innately given to illicit and sexual activity. The bodies of Charlene Rosebluff, Pamela George, and a number of Aboriginal men were represented variously as bodies that naturally belonged to these spaces of prostitution, crime, sex, and violence. This degenerate space, into which Kummerfield and Ternowetsky ventured temporarily, was juxtaposed to the spaces of respectability. Each space required a different legal response. In racialized space, violence may occur with
impunity. Bodies from respectable spaces may also violate with impunity, particularly if
the violence takes place in the racialized space of prostitution.\textsuperscript{xvi}

In racialized, sexualized space such as the Stroll, the bodies inhabiting these spaces are made
public, and as such, privileged White men may see themselves as free to do what they want in
these spaces and to these bodies. As Razack argues, transgressing the boundaries of respectable
White space into racialized degenerate space is how White men come to learn who they are. She
asserts,

\begin{quote}
Moving from respectable space to degenerate space and back again is an adventure that
confirms that they are indeed white men in control who can survive a dangerous
encounter with the racial Other and who have an unquestioned right to go anywhere and
do anything.\textsuperscript{xvii}
\end{quote}

As Razack highlights, notions of masculinity, respectability, and whiteness become reinforced
and intertwined through the marking of classed, sexualized, racialized, spatialized bodies as
feminine, degenerate, and non-white. It is in drawing and maintaining distinct boundaries
between Self and Other based on gender, race, class, and sexuality that White men come to
understand themselves as dominant and powerful.

Shifting the way power circulates requires paying attention to the ways in which
individuals are situated within many different groups at once, the boundaries of each group
not entirely clear, as Dubois, Anzaldúa, and Hill Collins suggest. My aim here is not to
exacerbate dichotomies by drawing a distinction between a racialized “double” or “mestiza
consciousness” and the supposed singularity of White identity. Instead, I want to claim that a
conception of the self as fragmented and multiple provides a more accurate account of
identity than does a conception of the self as an atomistic whole, though calling for a
tolerance for ambiguity is not without its problems.

As the previous chapter highlights, key figures in Enlightenment philosophy such as
Locke, Hume, and Kant struggled with the contradictions inherent in espousing equality for
all while supporting slavery or a belief in White superiority. Such inner conflict does not
suggest to me a consciousness/conscience at peace, but a self constantly in turmoil, torn,
disintegrating, ever trying to reconcile one’s participation in systems of oppression and
racialized violence with one’s estimation of oneself as a moral person, ever trying to
reconcile multiple selves.
As Audrey Thompson explains in a critique of theories of White identity development, coming to feel like a ‘good’ White person despite the benefits derived from systemic racism involves self-deception and the suppression of suggestions to the contrary. Thompson writes:

Although in principle the person at the highest stage of white development is self-actualizing and no longer concerns herself with how others see her, the entire white identity model is organized around individuals getting to feel good about being white in nonracist ways. The insistence that the person who reaches the highest stage of white development is indifferent to her status as an exceptional white person is disingenuous. A moral/political framework that is organized around white feelings of integrity and self-respect but denies that this is what the framework is "about" may appear to valorize the political and social realm. Nevertheless, functionally, the most important value is being and feeling like a good white person; political action takes second place to personal integrity. Since feeling good about yourself looks a little self-centered compared to fighting for social justice, the dual categorization of value — and thus the dissonance between them — is suppressed. The person at the highest stages of white racial development reaps the benefits of feeling good about her whiteness but must remain ignorant of the raison d’être of the theory that defines her as fully self-actualized, for otherwise she would count as self-centered rather than problem-centered and be relegated to stage five. Self-deception and sentimentality thus are built into the ideal itself. xviii

As Thompson suggests, the ‘coherence’ of White identity simply relies upon the denial of any contradictory elements, though these contradictions continue to exist, having only been swept under the rug.

Like Dubois, Anzaldúa, and Hill Collins seem to suggest about racialized identities, the ideal of a psychically-integrated, morally-actualized White self is also illusory, though in a different way. Albert Memmi makes this clear in his book The Colonizer and The Colonized.xix Although he is referring to European colonization of North Africa and more specifically to his homeland of Tunisia, ruled by the French from 1881-1956, I think Memmi’s argument is also applicable to Whites who derive benefit not just from colonization but also from systemic racism within Europe and North America, particularly in
settler colonies such as Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. As Foucault remarks,

‘It should not be forgotten that colonization with its techniques and juridical and political weapons transported European models to other continents, but that this same colonization had an effect on the mechanisms of power in the Occident...There had been a whole series of colonial models that had been brought back to the Occident and that made it so that the Occident could traffic in something like colonization, an internal colonialism.’

Thus, while Memmi was writing particularly about the context of Tunisia as a French territory, as Foucault points out, colonial “mechanisms of power” were often brought back to be exercised in the colonizing country as well, just as European mechanisms of sovereign, disciplinary, and biopower were exported to the colonies from the European state.

Memmi discusses the situation of the colonizer as one of inherent contradiction, in that the colonizer attempting to be a ‘good’ person will also always be a person deriving advantages at the expense of others. Memmi writes of the colonizer, and I would add the beneficiary of racism in general,

He [sic] finds himself on one side of a scale, the other side of which bears the colonized man [sic]. If [the colonizer’s] living standards are high, it is because those of the colonized are low; if he can benefit from plentiful and undemanding labor and servants, it is because the colonized can be exploited at will and are not protected by the laws of the colony; if he can easily obtain administrative positions, it is because they are reserved for him and the colonized are excluded from them; the more freely he breathes, the more the colonized are choked....It is impossible for him not to be aware of the constant illegitimacy of his status.

This awareness of one’s own illegitimacy causes mental discord, Memmi notes. Even if a colonizer/White/European person were to reject in principle the systems that afford him or her such advantages, he or she would continue to benefit from these systems. It is not a matter of whether or not one agrees with or accepts the system.

Thus, despite attempts to repress or deny inconsistencies, the beneficiaries of colonization and racism lack a coherent sense of self as well. It is therefore not only racialized groups and individuals who may experience a fractured consciousness, a sense of
one’s own subjectivity/ies as multiple, but also she or he who identifies and is identified as part of ‘dominant’ White Northern/Western culture(s). As Memmi writes,

It is not easy to escape mentally from a concrete situation, to refuse its ideology while continuing to live with its actual relationships. From now on, [the colonizer] lives his life under the sign of a contradiction that looms at every step, depriving him of all coherence and tranquility. What he is actually renouncing is part of himself, and what he slowly becomes as soon as he accepts life in a colony. He participates in and benefits from those privileges which he half-heartedly denounces. Does he receive less favourable treatment than his fellow citizens? Doesn’t he enjoy the same facilities for travel? How could he help figuring, unconsciously, that he can afford a car, a refrigerator, perhaps a house? How can he go about freeing himself of this halo of prestige which crowns him and at which he would like to take offense?xxii

Identity for those who benefit from systemic injustice is not a simple matter then, despite what attempts may be made to rationalize away such contradictions and assert a unitary, independent, logically coherent sense of self.

While conquest, imperialism, and racialized violence flourished in the Enlightenment, so too did modern liberal ideology that espoused the equality of all. Premised on the ability of humans to arrive at universal truths through ‘objective’ and ‘neutral’ reason, liberal democracy emerged in Europe as a move toward self-governance, or, the rule of the people. So how are these beliefs about equality reconciled with colonial rule and with racial rule within the ‘Western’ state? In part, through the creation of a ‘universal’ human subject, free of any particularities. Thus, one is not a “colonizer” or “White,” ‘burdened’ psychologically by the benefits she or he receives from injustice, but rather, one is simply an individual ‘human,’ detached from association or membership with particular groups (i.e. a colonizing human, a White human, a male human, etc.).

A person demonstrated his (or her) humanity and fitness for self-governance through his (or her) ability to reason (Man is a rational animal). However, reason was conceived of (through Biology, through Philosophy, through Anthropology, through Cartography, through Psychology, etc.) in such a way as to deem particular individuals and groups incapable of reason (i.e. colonized men and women, racialized men and women, all children, the mentally ill, White European women, homosexuals, the disabled, the lower classes, etc. – often
overlapping categories). Such a conception of reason not only justified a system of global White (patriarchal, capitalist, abilitized) supremacy, but deemed it necessary. Those with ‘poorly developed’ reasoning skills were seen as requiring the guidance and leadership of those with more ‘advanced’ reasoning skills – the ‘civilized’ Europeans. Given that incoherence, unreliable narration, or a fragmented sense of identity could call into question one’s ability to reason, coherence and reliability were sought at great cost. The consequences of unpredictability or unreliability could mean forfeiting one’s claims to self-sovereignty. And so, as I will explore in the next section, the illusion of the universal human subject was created by White Europeans during the Enlightenment as a tool to undermine the rule of the aristocracy and the (Christian) church, yet deny sovereignty to those marked by particularities of race, gender, sexuality, and class - in effect creating not a democracy, but an aristocracy based on race and gender rather than wealth and nobility. These distinctions then in turn served to evoke mechanisms of disciplinary power and biopower, which participate in a system of racial rule based on monitoring, diagnosing, and ‘treating’ degeneracy.

White Identity Formation: Erasing Race

Excerpts from Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, “The White Man’s Burden”

I

burden – something

burden – something
carried, a load, heavy
carried, a load, heavy
responsibility or anxiety
responsibility or anxiety

the white man’s burden
the white man’s burden
(as he sees it)
as he sees it)
to spread culture
to spread culture
among the primitive
among the primitive
(indigenous)
(indigenous)
peoples of the world
peoples of the world

the white man’s burden
the white man’s burden
(as we know it)
as we know it)
a heavy load
a heavy load
that he does not
that he does not
have to carry
have to carry
II
the white man’s solution
to the white man’s burden
No.1
(as he sees it)

WHITE OUT
to lose visibility
because of snow or fog;
to create
or leave white
white spaces in
the white man’s solution
to the white man’s burden
No.2
(as he sees it)

WHITE OUT
an atmospheric con-
condition con-
consisting of
lack of visibility
visibility and sense
sense (less
less humour sense
less humour)
ha ha ha
lack of sense
sense of dis-
tance, sense of
distance and di-
direct
direction

“...[A] member of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation, which is ‘situated on unceded territory surrounded by the province of Ontario’ on the Bruce Peninsula, commonly known as the Cape Croker Reserve,”xxxiv Lenore Keeshi-Tobias writes from within the context of Canada as a settler state. From the 1500s, French and later British traders moved to the area now referred to by many as Canada to take advantage of the area’s rich natural resources. These European traders were followed shortly by settlers, government representatives, and missionaries. After much contestation with the First Nations and the
French, in 1763 England claimed title to the land. In 1867, Canada became a self-governing nation.\textsuperscript{xxv} Citing the work of Olive Dickason, Vic Satzewich and Nikolaos Liodakis point out that,

\begin{quote}
The assumption underlying European incursions into North America was that since the existing inhabitants were not organized into states, they could not have legal title to the land. Furthermore, racism was pervasive in early Canada and took a variety of individual and institutional forms. The early explorers, merchants, military officials, government representatives, police, and members of the wider public construed Aboriginal peoples as non-Christian savages who would benefit from the guidance of superior people. Institutional forms of racism also resulted in the unequal treatment of Aboriginal peoples; government policies and practices regulated their activities and shaped their life chances in ways that prevented their full participation in society.\textsuperscript{xxvi}
\end{quote}

The 1857 Act for the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes of Canada, for example, “clearly suggested that Indian [sic] people were in need of careful guidance to transform them from their uncivilized state,”\textsuperscript{xxxvii} a belief leading to the establishment of a residential school system for indigenous children in place from the 1880s until the 1960s.

Though some people may think these facts are buried in Canada’s past, as Satzewich and Liodakis remark, the “treaties, the strategies, policies, and practices that the government adopted in the past in an attempt to civilize and assimilate Aboriginal people continue to reverberate today.”\textsuperscript{xxviii} However, the colonial history of Canada isn’t even always recognized, evident in the comments made by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper at a G20 press conference in Pittsburgh in 2009, where he claimed,

\begin{quote}
“We [contemporary Canada] are one of the most stable regimes in history…We are unique in that regard,” he added, noting Canada had enjoyed more than 150 years of untroubled Parliamentary democracy….“We also have no history of colonialism. So we have all of the things that many people admire about the great powers but none of the things that threaten or bother them,” he said.\textsuperscript{xxix}
\end{quote}

Because of oversights like Harper’s here, that deny centuries of state-sanctioned violence against particular groups of people based on place of origin, I felt it was critical to include at least a brief history of Canadian imperialism above (discussed in greater detail later through the work of scholars like Daniel Coleman), as well as to situate Keeshig-Tobias’s work
within a larger socio-historical context. As I have been contending throughout this dissertation, to assume that a text can be neatly extricated from a political, geographic, economic, cultural, and social context is dangerous – one risks whiting out the ways in which a text (and the repetition of that text) can undermine or uphold existing inequitable power relations, while also re-circulating power through the same channels.

What I want to suggest in this section is that the internalization and normalization of particular deliberative structures as part of White identity formation are not necessarily consciously intentional acts, but in the terms of Joyce E. King, can be “dysconscious.” Harper may not have ‘consciously’ intended to deny the violence enacted against First Nations people on this geo-political landmass often identified as Canada, but he has come to take for granted European/White rule over this land, to the point that it has become part of the backdrop of his understanding of the nation, rather than as an issue still under contestation. Harper assumes for himself an essential and ‘universal’ experience of Canadian identity, one that is free from the taint of colonization. He ‘dysconsciously’ (or perhaps consciously) whitewashes the history of Canada to remove the stains of historical and contemporary racialized violence. Like Keeshig-Tobias’s discussion of losing visibility because of snow or fog, dysconsciousness is not a matter of lack of vision (as perhaps is unconsciousness), but lack of clarity. In a snowstorm or in a dysconscious state of mind, one has the capacity for vision, but one’s view is obstructed. Clearing away the snow or moving closer to one’s object of attention will help improve one’s ability to perceive.

I feel it is important to include the work of Joyce King here in order to better explain the ways in which White privilege and racialized notions of civility may operate beyond the level of the explicit, though still remain accessible to consciousness. I think this will later help to elucidate how racialized liberal ideas may be taken up within some philosophy and pedagogy as unproblematic. King introduces the concept of “dysconscious racism,” which seems to be a very helpful way of thinking about how whiteness and notions of White superiority may function as meta-narrative, as the story that one is not fully conscious of telling, though to which one could learn to attend better. As King explains:

Dysconsciousness is an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions, attitudes, assumptions and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the existing order of things as given….Dysconscious racism is a form of racism that
tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges. It is not the absence of consciousness (that is, not unconsciousness), but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness. Uncritical ways of thinking about racial inequity accept certain culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths, and beliefs that justify the social and economic advantages White people have as a result of subordinating diverse others. Any serious challenge to the status quo that calls racial privilege into question inevitably challenges the self-identity of White people who have internalized these ideological justifications.

In accepting White/Euro-North American beliefs, values, and privileges as the norm, the experience of Whites thus becomes seen by many as universal experience. Dysconscious racism is a matter of ignoring the ways in which race shapes one’s social identities, one’s beliefs, one’s thought processes, one’s experiences, and society’s institutions.

Critical race literacy thus involves learning to read texts, actions, social situations, and institutions for the implicit messages they contain about race, for the ways in which the assumptions that progressive white teachers—call us Dr. Lincolns—make about race shapes the over-arching framework in addition to the content. In the way that one correct anti-racism smack of much the same idealism as does the […] insistence on being acknowledged learns how to read poetry with a critical eye, searching for underlying meanings and as good whites. To the extent Dr. Lincolns become complacent that we, at least, are doing it right—that patterns, so too, I believe, must one learn to examine philosophy and pedagogy for the we really do get it—we buy into the notion that, secretly, we are ‘the friends of people of color.’ Regarding stories about race written between the lines.

ourselves as authoritatively anti-racist, we keep whiteness at the center of anti-racism.***

As evidenced in the previous chapter, Charles Mills, for example, challenges the dysconscious uptake of supposedly neutral philosophical premises in his book Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race.*** Like the title of his book suggests, Mills wants to bring race to the foreground of philosophy, to make it a matter that must be considered consciously. Similarly, I want to focus on the importance for philosophers, educators, students, and scholars to bring to the foreground the narrative norms and ontologies implicit in our/their discipline/s and practices, exploring the ways in which these narratives may be
shaped by race and may participate in shaping the racial identities of ourselves/themselves and others. That said, as I will address in further detail later, there is greater risk involved for racialized people than for White people in challenging the norms and conventions of a systemically racist educational system and academy, as there is greater risk that one’s claims may not be taken seriously or may be dismissed.

Despite the problems that arise from reliable narration, I am hesitant to simply recommend a move towards intentionally unreliable narrative as a solution, given some of the difficulties inherent in a call for intentionally unreliable narrative (who has the luxury of choosing to be unreliable? Whose narratives are unintentionally unreliable? What might be some of the negative consequences of unreliable narrative, particularly for racialized scholars already marked by racist discourse as less reliable [difficulty getting published, difficulty finding a job, not being taken seriously by one’s students, difficulty getting tenure or a promotion]). Furthermore, reliable narration does carry with it many benefits, such as allowing scholars, educators, and students from groups historically marginalized or excluded from hegemonic discourse to make claims to authority and expertise, to make claims to truth in a way that is intelligible within canonical Euro-North American theory.

Though I feel that unreliable narration can at times be used by scholars, educators, and students to produce shifts in the way that race as a system of governance operates (more on this topic later), a call for unreliable narration on its own is inadequate, I believe, to undo systems of racialized violence held in place by mechanisms like reliable narration. My recommendation here is not so much an eschewal of reliable narration then, but rather a call for a critical questioning of what reliable narration does for philosophers, for pedagogues, for students: Who does it allow us/them to come to see ourselves/themselves and others to be? What sort of social relations does it inscribe? How does it allow them/us to come to know ourselves/themselves as innocent, as undeserving of the violence inflicted on others, violence justified through the mechanism of reliable narration.

Essential to disrupting the ways in which race operates on a meta-level within philosophy and education is that one take a critically conscious approach to one’s practice and the practices of others. What are the values, beliefs, and stories that inform a text or a lesson? Questions such as the following are all important to consider when writing or teaching for critical race literacy: “What gets to count as knowledge? As philosophy? Who
gets to count as a knower? As a philosopher? As a teacher? What gets to count as a good argument? What is learning? Who is one writing for? What makes someone a good student? How are the answers to these questions shaped, in part, by race?” To whom these questions are asked and how they are answered may vary according to one’s social location.

White scholars, educators, and students need to think about these questions self-reflexively, in terms of how their own racial privilege might inform their answers. They also need to ask these questions of their readers, colleagues, students, and/or teachers, as well as of the texts and lessons with which they engage. These questions are intended to explore both what one was taught to believe and what one comes to believe after critical reflection. Is there a difference in these beliefs? If so, what might be the consequences of these differences? What actions need one take to address these differences?

For racialized scholars, educators, and students, defining for oneself the answers to these questions presents an opportunity to challenge systemic racism and the historical alienation of racialized people from the education system and academy. These questions may also be put to the texts of others or to colleagues, readers, teachers, and/or students. How is it that the answers to these questions are being determined? By whom are they being determined? How does the nature of education and scholarship change depending on who is answering these questions and who is asking them? These questions present an active disruption to unequal power relations and to the dysconscious practice of scholarship and pedagogy.

In asking what sort of racialized knowledge apparatuses does a person find her/himself a part, and asking what role he or she plays in maintaining these apparatuses, new possibilities for knowledge and action are opened up. What sort of choices does a person make that may reinforce race as a system of governance? Can he or she make different choices? How does one participate in the discipline, surveillance, measurement, diagnosis, and ‘cure’ of the self and others? What different actions can one take? What might one be missing in failing to ask these sorts of questions? What might be the consequences (materially/socially, epistemologically, ethically, and discursively) of failing to ask such questions? I contend that the way in which a text is narrated is itself a proposition or statement of belief, and that the claims implicit in such statements must be carefully analyzed rather than accepted without questioning. Yet not only do texts say, they also do –
they can produce effects beyond the level of language. In naming someone’s argument as irrational or incoherent, one is simultaneously circumscribing the limits of rationality and coherence – an argument is irrational because it is not X, Y, and Z, where X, Y, and Z come to be the defining criteria of rationality. As I mentioned earlier, the website stuffwhitepeoplelike operates in this way, to establish criteria of what it means to be White as well as what it means to be Not-Black or Not-Brown or Not-Indigenous or Not-East Asian or Not-Arab or Not-Latina/Latino, for example.

Interestingly, I noticed while writing my first chapter that I wasn’t allowing myself to work on the art and poetry included in my dissertation during the regular 9-5 working hours I was trying to keep, as though it were an “extra-curricular” activity. Nor was I counting the art and poetry towards the daily page minimum I had set for myself. Only essay-style prose writing counted toward my page count. It made me think about what sort of writing or work I’ve been taught to consider serious and important. How have certain modes of expressing thought come to be marked as Other, as other-than-knowledge, other-than-philosophy, other-than-rigorous? What harm might this lead to? I include Lenore Keeshig-Tobias’s poem earlier in this chapter not as an addition to philosophical argument, but as part of philosophical argument. Omitting Keeshig-Tobias’s lyrical social critique and analysis of White supremacy would be to the detriment of this chapter, as it lends insight that could not be expressed the same in prose. I am sitting here thinking about this.

What is it specifically that Keeshig-Tobias’s work or other works of poetry, literature, art, or music, for example, can lend to philosophical argument? I am thinking and thinking. I have re-read her poem over and over to try and put my finger on it. There seems to be something happening beyond the usual arguments about how art appeals to our emotions and how emotions can be a source of knowledge, or that art can inspire us in ways that logic cannot. While I agree with these ideas, what lingers as I mull over Keeshig-Tobias’s poem is a sense of playfulness and ambiguity, an ambiguity that invites the reader to use his or her imagination to create possibilities for the text. It is a collaborative work. Of course, any text is always open to the interpretation of the reader, though scholarly essays or classroom textbooks seem to have a more clearly defined purpose.

From the French essayer, to try, to attempt, or to test, the essay is necessarily teleological, moving towards a specific goal, attempting to persuade the reader of a particular
point. The argumentative essay begins with a conclusion, a thesis, and attempts to coax the reader, by providing sufficiently convincing evidence, to adopt the same thesis. Like a scientist, the reliable Euro-North American scholar distills a single coherent theory from a series of observations and experiences. Poetry can, however, allow for open-endedness, for a move away from what Anzaldúa refers to as “convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode),” towards “divergent thinking, characterized by a move away from set patterns and goals toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes.”xxxiii Yes, I realize that I am repeating myself and Anzaldúa here, having used this quotation earlier, but I also realize that repetition is a great rhetorical device to give emphasis to a particular point. Think of it as a musical refrain, a chorus, tying the piece together, rather than as sloppy editing.

As Anzaldúa would argue, I imagine, poetry is not the antithesis of logical reasoning, but can contribute to or be a part of philosophical theory. My claim is not one of aesthetic or epistemological relativism that all poetry is equally philosophically important, nor do I want to claim that the form of poetry makes it inherently philosophically significant. Instead, I want to suggest that poetry should not be ruled out as philosophically and pedagogically significant simply because of the form it takes. To rule poetry out of philosophy and pedagogy entirely is to limit how it is and what it is that one can come to know. Religious parables, fables, and fairytales have long been accepted as ways of transmitting moral lessons. Furthermore, for example, in the writings of Lao Tsu or Chuang Tzu,xxxiv the fundamental tenets of Taoism are expressed through anecdote and poetry. Even Plato’s works on Socrates have been handed down as dialogues.xxxv Additionally, Enlightenment poet Alexander Pope wrote his famous philosophical tract on the primacy of reason, An Essay on Man, entirely in heroic couplets:

Take Nature’s path, and mad Opinion’s leave;
All states can reach it, and all heads conceive;
Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell;
There needs but right thinking and meaning well.xxxvi

In this excerpt, taken within the context of the larger work, Pope uses poetry to make an argument about the universal human capacity for reason and the ability of humans to use reason to discover the inherent laws of nature. Furthermore, Pope appears to be making
claims about the primacy of reason or thought over feeling, as well as claims about the value and virtue of moderation over extremity.

While in its entirety, Pope’s poem and the beliefs it contains about progress and nature may have been used to justify colonial conquest, such as in his portrayal of indigenous peoples as less ‘advanced’ or ‘civilized’ (“Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor’d mind/Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind/His soul proud Science never taught to stray/Far as the solar walk or milky way’”xxxvii), Keeshig-Tobias’s poem presents a much different view of imperialism. I include Keeshig-Tobias’s poem in this chapter for the truth claims about colonization which I take to be discernible in her work:

1. Imperialist projects and colonial violence have been justified, in part, on the basis of the perceived ‘duty’ of Whites or Europeans to help others less ‘advanced’ reach the same level of progress
2. Colonized nations did not/do not need European/White ‘help’
3. The third premise is more ambiguous, which could be interpreted as: In order to fulfill their perceived duties, White Europeans attempt/attempted to turn everything white, to impose whiteness/European culture on others, resulting from or leading to an inability to see beyond whiteness/European culture.

The ambiguity of Keeshig-Tobias’s poem invites the reader to question “the white man’s burden,” forcing the reader to actively engage with the ideas being put forth, rather than being led to a particular conclusion. I am concerned that an insistence on convergent thinking, leading towards a single, fixed point, may be an attempt to “white out” philosophy and education, failing to take into account the reality of the multiplicity, ambiguity, and contradiction experienced and discussed by Dubois, Anzaldúa, Thompson, and Memmi, for example.

As I discuss in greater detail throughout this dissertation, I assert that how one learns to do philosophy in North America, how one learns to do education, is often shaped by expectations that arise from White supremacist liberal modernity, expectations that often seem to function dysconsciously within scholarly and pedagogical discourse. To clarify, I do not want to reinforce binaries between White people as logical, rational, and scientific versus illogical, irrational, emotional racialized people, but rather to point out that much of what gets to count, in a public sphere, as rational, logical, and scientific has been tainted by the
workings of White supremacy – that is, there exists a certain White logic or White reason that serves to justify racialized violence and exclusion, I contend.

As I have suggested earlier, race seems to be plotted along a vertical spectrum of civility and respectability, such that the more rational and civilized a person is, the more White he or she is taken to be. This arises, in part, out of Foucault’s notion of race struggle as biologico-social, in that race is in part tied to the body and inherent in one’s blood, though also tied to and discernible through one’s behaviour and social interactions. While one’s heritage and skin colour are taken as a comment on one’s behaviour, so is one’s behaviour taken as a comment on one’s skin colour (“too Asian,” “not White enough,” “too White,” “not Black enough,” etc.).

As Sherene Razack highlights, the modern world is structured according to what Hannah Arendt termed ‘race thinking,’ “a structure of thought that divides up the world between the deserving and the undeserving according to descent.” Such thinking has been reflected in a “long-standing imperial belief that Northern peoples possessed an innate ability to govern themselves and were by nature more rational.” These beliefs become systematized and institutionalized, argues Razack, as they are attached to political projects, such as in the case of imperialism or, very recently, the “war against terror” waged by the United States and its allies. As Razack demonstrates, race thinking functions to change the rules of reason, so that Whites are not held to the same standards of logic and evidence as racialized people. Razack writes:

Captured in the phrase ‘they are not like us,’ and also necessarily in the idea that ‘they’ must be killed so that ‘we’ can live, race thinking becomes embedded in law and bureaucracy, so that the suspension of rights appears not as a violence but as the law itself. Violence against the racialized Other comes to be understood as necessary in order for civilization to flourish, something the state must do to preserve itself.

Race thinking, Silverblatt reminds us in her study of the Spanish Inquisition, usually comes clothed in an ‘aura of rationality and civilization.’ Thus, it is in the name of preserving one’s right to life and preserving the civility of Northern/Western nations that the state which understands itself as White is justified, if not mandated, to disregard the rights of racialized ‘Others’ and inflict uncivilized violence upon them.
Such is the sort of reasoning that I want to think of as ‘White logic’ or ‘White reason,’ where racial privilege is consciously or dysconsciously used as a fundamental premise to uphold what would otherwise be an inherently contradictory argument. Like Charles Mills, David Goldberg, and others, I want to assert that since the Enlightenment, race thinking has permeated White Northern/Western philosophy and pedagogy to the point of structuring how reason, knowledge, and learning are understood, structuring what gets to count as rational, as logical, as knowledge. Writing with particular reference to Muslims post-September 11, 2001, Sherene Razack asserts,

Although race thinking varies, for Muslims and Arabs it is underpinned by the idea that modern enlightened, secular peoples must protect themselves from pre-modern, religious peoples whose loyalty to tribe and community reigns over their commitment to the rule of law. The marking of belonging to the realm of culture and religion, as opposed to the realm of law and reason, has devastating consequences. There is a disturbing spatializing of morality that occurs in the story of pre-modern peoples versus modern ones…Significantly, because they have not advanced as we have, it is our moral obligation to correct, discipline, and keep them in line and to defend ourselves against their irrational excesses. In doing all of these things, the West has often denied the benefits of modernity to those it considers to be outside of it.

\textit{Evicted from the universal, and thus from civilization and progress, the non-West occupies a zone outside the law. Violence may be directed at it [and those associated with the non-West] with impunity.}^{xlii}

Race (especially as it is interwoven with gender, class, sexuality, and other aspects of one’s identity) thereby functions as a border across which reason and morality are contested, logic and ‘civility’ not being required by White (especially male, heterosexual, affluent) bodies to lay claim to reason and morality.

In highlighting how reason has been and can come to be raced through the race thinking that structures global White supremacy, my aim is not to do away with the project of reason. I am not looking to question the importance of logical argument to philosophy, but to suggest that what is deemed rational or irrational by certain criteria may appear otherwise when new evidence, or the influence of race thinking, is brought to light. I want to \textit{story} reason, moving away from strict distinctions between narrative as culture, as fictitious, and
reason as science or law, as that which can be used systematically to discover universal truths.

I want to suggest, like Charles Mills, that philosophical arguments emerging out of the European Enlightenment about personhood, rights, knowledge, reason, equality, and governance, for example, may have been built upon a false premise of White superiority, undermining the validity and soundness of one’s argument. To fail to take race into consideration in the formulation of such arguments is to ignore a major factor in one’s experience of personhood, rights, reason, equality, and governance, and thus to ignore a critical premise or piece of evidence, to omit a critical part of the story. Whiteness, I argue, significantly helped to shape many of the Northern/Western philosophical contentions with which scholars, educators, and students are now familiar. As White Europeans became increasingly concerned with science and progress in the Enlightenment, much effort was dedicated to discovering natural laws and universal maxims about the world, though the evidence used to arrive at these truths was in many ways limited by one’s experiences and perceptions.

The science of the Enlightenment was very much a science of observation, such that hypotheses and conclusions were drawn based on one’s experiences in the world, leading to many new and important discoveries. John Locke, one of the central figures in modern liberal thought, was a proponent of empiricism, the belief that knowledge is acquired through sensory experience. This ‘scientific’ approach to knowledge acquisition, Locke’s philosophical position that knowledge is gained through reasoning from sensation, maintained popularity in the nineteenth century, much after Locke was writing in the seventeenth century. As Arthur Haberman explains:

…[P]eople in the nineteenth century continued the quest of Enlightenment thinkers, who had searched for truths about the universe and human beings that could be confirmed by observation and deduction. Above all, they continued to believe in Newton’s vision of a harmonious machine-like universe, working according to laws that could be expressed in mathematical formulae. This approach to science seemed to offer hope for an ever-increasing understanding of nature, and the fact that it was successful in the physical sciences convinced many people that the same method could be applied in other areas, for example, in investigations of society and even of
the nature of beauty and of the meaning of good and evil. Hence we have social philosophers in the nineteenth century who claimed to have discovered “scientific” socialism, artists who proclaimed the rise of the new “realist” school of art and literature, and scholars who developed the “social sciences.” By the end of the century the very word “science” had become synonymous with the idea of truth.

In the Enlightenment the advance of science was associated with faith in progress. Enlightenment thinkers believed that people by the use of their intellect had advanced from barbarism to civilization, and that this process would continue indefinitely. This belief in continuing progress through the application of science and reason persisted in the nineteenth century, and people saw everywhere around them evidence that seemed to confirm their faith.

As European contact with other cultures and ‘races’ increased, so too did ‘scientific’ musings on the basis of racial and cultural differences. Anthropology and other social sciences gained in popularity as reasons were sought to explain the differences in physical appearance and customs of people from different geographic regions. However, unlike analytic propositions, reasoning from observation does not afford certainty, given that there may exist evidence to the contrary that has not yet been observed or taken into consideration. For example, one may have only ever seen white swans, and so may infer that all swans are white, without cognizance of the existence of black swans.

To deny the relevance of race to philosophical considerations of personhood, liberty, rights, and equality, for example, is for White European and North American philosophers to draw an inference from a limited set of experiences and suppose that such a set of experiences is exhaustive. I do not wish to draw into question here the value or necessity of reason, but instead examine the evidence upon which some Euro-North American philosophical assertions about ontology, epistemology, and pedagogy have been based. I want to suggest that particular racialized norms have come to inform what is considered relevant to philosophical and pedagogical discussion and practice, such that power and privilege hide behind a cloak of ‘neutrality,’ keeping from view evidence that may run counter to one’s argument.

To help illuminate how certain racialized expectations can be normalized within a discipline, and to help illuminate the importance of marking philosophy of education
discourse as *racialized narrative*, I turn to the work of Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack. In their article “The Race to Innocence: Confronting Hierarchical Relations Among Women,” they offer an analysis of how certain identities are naturalized as the norm, whereas identities against which the norm is defined become marked as “other.” They write,

White people need not and do not define themselves as members of a race; heterosexual people do not define themselves as having a sexual orientation. Thus identity comes to bear an intrinsic relationship to subordination. Identity boxes contain those excluded from the dominant group. Conversely, to be unmarked or unnamed is to belong to the dominant group. The marking of subordinate groups and the unmarking of dominant groups leaves the actual processes of domination obscured, thus intact. Subordinate groups simply *are* the way they are; their *condition* is naturalized. To be unmarked or unnamed is also simply to *embody* the norm and not to have actively produced and sustained it. To be the norm, yet to have the norm unnamed, is to be innocent of the domination of others.

I am interested in taking up this idea of White identity as a ‘norm’ unmarked by social location in my discussion of how White philosophy of education remains, for the most part, unmarked as White philosophy of education, and how this can create an illusion of neutrality or innocence.

For example, while Charles Mills is marked as one who discusses African-American and Black philosophy, and while collections of work by racialized scholars are put together (such as *Women of Color and Philosophy: A Critical Reader*), seldom is White European philosophy and pedagogy identified as White European philosophy and pedagogy. Instead, it falls under the category of Philosophy and Pedagogy with a capital P, in that it purports to be a general, universalizable approach to philosophy, rather than philosophy marked by the specifics of race.

In her book *Woman, Native, Other*, Trinh T. Minh-ha points out the “triple bind” that Third World women writers find themselves in, faced with the choice of either negating the broader significance and applicability of their writing by identifying it as specifically “women’s writing” or “Third World writing,” or denying the relevance of their identities as women of color in the Third World to their writing. She explains,
Being merely “a writer” without doubt ensures one a status of far greater weight than being a “woman of color who writes” ever does. Imputing race or sex to the creative act has long been a means by which the literary establishment cheapens and discredits the achievements of non-mainstream women writers. She who “happens to be” a (non-white) Third World member, a woman, and a writer is bound to go through the ordeal of exposing her work to the abuse of praises and criticisms that either ignore, dispense with, or overemphasize her racial and sexual attributes.\textsuperscript{xlvii}

While the White male author and scholar can remain unmarked, disembodied, the further one gets from such a norm, the more particular and less ‘objective’ one is seen to be.

Even in the above examples, Charles Mills’s work is not sexed in the way that the work of racialized women is sexed. He talks of African-American and Black philosophy, but he need not talk about his work as African-American male philosophy the way that racialized women are often marked by both race and sex. Mills himself assumes, to some extent, a common experience of blackness or African-Americanness, as though men and women experience it in the same way. However, as Minh-ha points out,

…”[N]o matter what position [the Third World woman writer] decides to take, she will sooner or later find herself driven into situations where she is made to feel she must choose from among three conflicting identities. Writer of color? Woman writer? Or woman of color? Which comes first? Where does she place her loyalties? On the other hand, she often finds herself at odds with language, which partakes in the white-male-is-norm ideology and is used predominantly as a vehicle to circulate established power relations.\textsuperscript{xlviii}

In the same way that “imputing race or sex to the creative act” has been a method by which the literary establishment cheapens the work of those not fitting the “white-male-is-norm ideology,” denying the significance of race and sex to a creative or scholarly pursuit has at the same time functioned as a means through which White males have asserted their supposed ‘superiority,’ their ability to remain ‘objective’ and ‘neutral’ in contrast to the ‘partiality,’ ‘particularity,’ and ‘bias’ of those outside the norm.

It is my project here thus to generate discussion around the racing of philosophy and education, to invite discussion around the establishment of hierarchies of knowledge consciously or dysconsciously premised on race, to examine what it looks like to read, write,
teach, and learn whitely, as well as to examine what it might look like to move away from these practices towards more effective anti-racist philosophy and pedagogy. In order to begin to explore ways to stop racialized violence, I think it is critical to first examine how whiteness and racial privilege are acted out, to study the scripts of White supremacy, so that new roles can be created, new characters developed, new scripts written and performed.

To return to Marilyn Frye, whiteness can be thought of as something one does, rather than something one has or is. Frye writes:

Being white is not a biological condition. It is being a member of a certain social/political category, a category that is persistently maintained by those people who are, in their own and each others’ perceptions, most unquestionably in it…If one is white one is a member of a continuously and politically constituted group which holds itself together by rituals of unity and exclusion, which develops in its members certain styles and attitudes useful in the exploitation of others, which demands and rewards fraternal loyalty, which defines itself as the paradigm of humanity, and which rationalizes (and naturalizes) its existence and its practices of exclusion, colonization, slavery and genocide (when it bothers to) in terms of a mythology of blood and skin. If you were born to people who are members of that club, you are socialized and inducted into that club. Your membership in it is in a way, or to a degree, compulsory – nobody gave you any choice in the matter – but it is contingent and, in the Aristotelian sense, accidental.

Acting whitely then, as I understand it, means in part to participate in rituals of racial unity and exclusion, to hold certain attitudes “useful in the exploitation of others,” to hold whiteness and White people up as the paradigm of humanity (whether consciously or dysconsciously), and to justify and compel racialized violence. It is only through racialized violence, whether intra-nationally or inter-nationally, that White people come to know ourselves/themselves as White. Like Richard Delgado, Frye highlights the performative and mythological nature of whiteness, as a set of stories and practices one learns through repetition that have created a very violent social reality purportedly premised on biology.

Akin to Frye’s notions of whiteliness and masculinity, Judith Butler proposes a performative notion of gender identity that seems applicable to racial identity as well. What Fellows and Razack, Delgado, Frye, and Butler appear to be asserting is that social identities
are constantly in the process of negotiation, never fixed, but relationally-defined as part of a larger discourse. As Butler writes:

…[G]ender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceede [sic]; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. This formulation moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of a constituted social temporality. Significantly, if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and perform in the mode of belief. If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style.\textsuperscript{li}

I want to assert that White identity is similarly codified and solidified through a stylized repetition of acts and stories, acts and stories that have been repeated so many times that one may cease to notice or pay attention to one’s own performance of them, or to one’s performance of race. It is these acts and stories, the ones that constitute a performance of dominant White identity, that I am interested in critically examining and analyzing in the hope of developing a new meta-narrative of race, one that isn’t premised on subordination and violence. In the words of Butler, I am interested in exploring “a different sort of repeating,” a different sort of performance.

In the next section, I examine what sort of stories and acts are repeated within White Euro-North American philosophy and pedagogy as part of the identity construction process of “philosopher,” “teacher,” and “student.” I examine liberal modernist ideology and discourses on civility to make clear some of the ways in which one learns to be whitely, as
well as some of the ways in which White privilege and race thinking continues to be re-enacted through scholarship and education regardless of one’s intentions.
Chapter Six: The Race and Space of ‘Reason’

 Liberal Modernist Ideology and ‘Civilized’ White Spaces

So civility rests – necessarily? – on a certain hypocrisy. It has served – but need it, must it? – as a mask for the conniving egoism and violence of men with a reputation for refined manners.¹

Before entering further into a discussion of how some seemingly ‘neutral’ philosophical and pedagogical narratives may participate in racialized violence, I think it is important to first examine some of the myths that have held White supremacy intact, such as the myth of White ‘civility’ and how this serves to create a racialized geography of ‘civilized’ White spaces and ‘uncivilized’ spaces of a racial ‘Other.’ Building upon the work of Mills and Goldberg as outlined in the first chapter, and the work of Fellows and Razack outlined above, here I draw upon the scholarship of Daniel Coleman, Meyda Yeğenoğlu, Albert Memmi, Achille Mbembe, and others to illustrate the ways in which notions of civility can operate as a form of discipline on the body, whether marked ‘White’ or ‘non-White,’ establishing boundaries around who belongs in particular places and who does not/is forbidden – thereby justifying and necessitating surveillance and punishment. I later tie this discussion of civility into my discussion of how philosophical and pedagogical narratives can function, whether explicitly or implicitly, to create spaces in which people are included or excluded based on race.

As Fellows and Razack explain, civility, or in their terms ‘respectability,’ is both a moral and spatial concept arising out of liberal Enlightenment ideology that functions in such a way as to create particular racialized geographies. Write Fellows and Razack:

The problem for the Enlightenment man, the European bourgeois male, is how to reconcile the exclusion of those who are not equal – all people with disabilities; lesbians, gays, and bisexuals; women; racial minorities; nonprotestants; and people who are poor – within a framework of the fundamental equality of all human beings. The solution, as [Linda] Alcoff observes, is that “[w]here rights require sameness,
difference must either be trivialized or contained in the Other across a firm and visible border."ii

As Alcoff and Fellows and Razack suggest, in order to reconcile material inequality with the theoretical equality of all humans, and in order to justify granting privileges to some at the expense of others, there needed to be boundaries drawn between those who were deserving of equal consideration and those who were not. Hence the unspoken premise of race thinking, that certain bodies were/are more worthy of moral consideration than others.

Along the lines of social contract theory, in a democracy the state and its citizens are seen to have certain duties to fulfill to each other. If a citizen is unable to uphold one’s duties, such as in the case of children or people with intellectual disabilities or mental illness, they are protected by the state, yet are often not granted the same moral and political status as others (i.e. diminished moral culpability within the judicial system based on a perceived inability to reason adequately). Equal treatment, the promise of liberal democracy, may in this case be perceived as irrelevant or unnecessary (i.e. while an adult may have a right to bear arms in the United States, it does not make sense to speak of a three year old child’s right to bear arms).

Furthermore, if a citizen fails to uphold one’s duties to the state, it is often held that he or she forfeits the protection of some of his or her rights (i.e. prison sentences justified based on the idea that a person forfeits his or her right to freedom through the commission or alleged commission of a crime). Material inequality could thus be justified on the basis that ‘criminal’ or ‘uncivilized’ behavior leads to the forfeiture of one’s claim to equal treatment. Instead, punishment is required to ensure the safety of the populace, to prevent the re-commission of the same crime, and to act as a deterrent to other criminals.

While this relationship of duties and obligations exists within states, so too does it exist across states, in that there are certain expectations set for international relations. If a country is to violate this relationship, this unspoken agreement made between states, punishment is not only justified, but necessary. Without violent sanctions for uncooperative behaviour, the world would supposedly descend into depravity and chaos. We would all blow each other up – humanity would cease to exist. This is implied in the picture George W. Bush paints of Iraq and other “Axis of Evil” nations discussed at the very beginning of this dissertation.
Through such discourse, it thus becomes the duty of ‘civilized’ nations to blow up (literally – as in to drop bombs on) nations that threaten to blow up other nations. Preventative war in the name of peace. THIS is whitely Euro-North American logic, espoused not only by White people, but also by racialized people who adopt a European or North American identity premised on racialized distinctions between nations as ‘civilized’ or ‘uncivilized,’ ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ ‘peaceful’ or ‘warring.’ It is the binary of “you are either with us or you are against us. If you are with us, you are good and deserve reward, if you are against us, you are bad and require punishment.”

Part of the project of the modern liberal European male was thus to demarcate the limits of a liberal democracy, the limits of rights and equality. Who deserved or had a right to what? The creation of the respectable bourgeois home, argue Fellows and Razack, helped establish these limits at the same time as establishing spaces of degeneracy outside the home. According to Fellows and Razack, “The home came to mean much more than a place where a family resided. It marked the site where a class was produced and reproduced and where the life of the individual was connected to the making of a liberal democratic social order that replaced feudalism.” The walls of the respectable bourgeois home, suggest Fellows and Razack, helped to establish some of the boundaries of rights and equality.

In nineteenth century Europe, as the power of the monarchy was being replaced by the power of the (White, male-dominated) middle class, the latter sought to justify its right to rule by engaging in “activities that would distinguish it from both the aristocracy (the ruling class in feudalism) and the lower social orders. These activities, involving the discipline of individuals and a close regulation of social life, consolidated the right of the bourgeoisie to hold political and social power.” As Fellows and Razack continue:

The middle-class home, the middle class, and ultimately the nation all had to be protected from the contamination of the lower orders. Society had to be cleansed of degeneracy, abnormalcy, excess – in short, all the “internal enemies,” to use Foucault’s terms, that would weaken the vigorous bourgeois individual and by extension, the state.

Ensuring the health of the individual, the family, and the nation thus required establishing borders around spaces of respectability and degeneracy, so as to prevent ‘contamination.’ The middle class home was seen as the natural source or incubator of liberal democracy,
ruled by ‘temperate’ reason and distinguished from the ‘excesses’ of the palace and the slum. While the middle class family man justified his claims to power by the discipline and order exercised over his family and his home, spaces outside of this home were marked as degenerate.

Argue Fellows and Razack, the respectability of the White middle-class home, as distinct from the slum, was secured primarily through the bodies of the women who could and could not share that space, such that “[r]espectability and degeneracy marked not only class distinctions, but also gendered and raced social arrangements.” Such a notion of respectability consequently served to create hierarchies amongst women, in addition to exacerbating hierarchies between sexes, classes, and races. While the White middle class family remained ‘unmarked’ as the social ‘norm,’ this was only achieved by drawing a clear border around those who were deemed unfit to hold power due to their ‘degeneracy,’ ‘lack’ of discipline, and ‘lack’ of reason. By marking others as unfit to rule, the middle class family assumed what they considered to be a ‘rightful,’ inherited position of power.

Writing about the middle-class in nineteenth century America rather than Europe, Shawn Smith supports this point that a ‘rightful,’ inherited position of power was achieved through the racialized, classed bodies of women. She asserts that over the course of the century,

…the [American] middle classes re-envisioned the heart of the middle-class family. The “private” “domestic sphere” of the “true” interiorized middle-class woman gave way to a genealogical architecture of bloodlines that transformed the sentimental bonds of the middle-class family into a web of racialized hereditary relations and converted the “true” middle-class woman into the stock of racialized character.

Here I understand Shawn Smith to be arguing that the White American middle-class woman came to be seen not only as keeper of the ‘respectable’ White home, but also as keeper of the White ‘way’ through maintaining ‘pure’ bloodlines. The chastity and purity of the middle-class woman was essential to the maintenance of middle-class respectability and thus essential to the maintenance of a racialized liberal democracy.

Ann Laura Stoler, exploring a nineteenth century colonial context rather than a European or American context, comments further on this connection between patriarchy and racial rule in her book *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality*
Writing in regard to European imperialism in general but with specific reference to Dutch “colonial projects in the nineteenth century Dutch East Indies” (modern-day Indonesia), Stoler draws upon the work of Michel Foucault to further emphasize the significance of blood and disciplined sexuality to the justification of White bourgeois power. According to biological accounts of race common at the time, which attributed both physical and behavioural characteristics to one’s genetics (Foucault’s biologico-social concept of race), the respectability of the ruling class (which ‘justified’ their ‘right’ to rule) required strict discipline of the bourgeois female body. It was only through her body and blood that the ‘health’ and ‘civility’ of the state could be ensured. Writes Foucault:

> Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, the thematic of blood was sometimes called on to lend its entire historical weight toward revitalizing the type of political power that was exercised through the devices of sexuality. Racism took shape at this point (racism in its modern, “biologizing” statist form): it was then that a whole politics of settlement (peuplement), family, marriage, education, social hierarchization, and property, accompanied by a long series of permanent interventions at the level of the body, conduct, health, and everyday life, received their color and their justification from the mythical concern with protecting the purity of the blood and ensuring the triumph of the race.

To which Stoler echoes,

Late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century discourses on miscegenation combined notions of tainted, flawed, and pure blood with those of degeneration and racial purity in countless ways. Although French and Dutch liberal reformers often insisted that cultural “suitability” and not race was the basis on which access to colonial education opportunities and welfare entitlements rest, designation of those Europeans who were “full-blooded” and “pur sang” was repeatedly invoked to identify how the lines between the deserving and undeserving poor were to be drawn. Thus Dutch and French colonial commentators shared the notion that mixed-blood children, no matter what their educational achievements, might always revert to their native affiliations because of the “blood that flowed in their veins.”
As it was through the body of the middle-class European woman that the purity and therefore power of the bourgeois was maintained, her body had to be policed and disciplined to prevent the genetic contamination of middle-class Europeans by ‘degenerate’ Others.

THE WHITE WOMAN’S BURDEN
(my attempt at a complement or addition to Keeshig-Tobias’s poem)

the white woman’s solution
to the white woman’s burden
No.1
(as I – Helen – see it)

OUT WHITE
to be more white
to be fairer
the fairest
One
of All
(w)resting one’s fairness
a fair (w)rest
a     rest
rest
a fair arrest
arrest the un-fair
unfairly wresting the fair from her rest

the white woman’s solution
to the white woman’s burden
No.2
(as I see it)

OUT WHITE
to be better
at wiping out
whiting out
wiping away
dirt
dirtiness
dirty work
to be cleaner

clean enough for Prince Charming

who paid for another woman
the cleaner
to keep the house
the bedroom
clean
[watch out, other(ed) woman -
Prince Charming is very charming]

saved
from the cinders
pure
purified

cleaner
to have clean hands
to have cleaned one’s hands
to have cleaned one’s hands on someone else
someone else to clean up

the white woman’s solution
to the white woman’s burden
    No.3
(as I see it)

OUT WHITE
to be whiter
shinier
reflecting light
to outshine
shiniest
brighter
blindingly bright
blindly
bindingly
blind
to be blinded, bound
by the glare
from one’s own reflection

In order for the bourgeois lady of the house to maintain her own purity and
cleanliness, Fellows and Razack suggest, she relied upon other/Other women to take the dirt
upon themselves, women such as prostitutes and domestic workers. Quoting from Leonore
Davidoff, Fellows and Razack point out, “Defenders of prostitution saw it as a necessary
institution which acted as a giant sewer, drawing away distasteful but inevitable waste products of male lustfulness, leaving the middle-class household and middle-class ladies pure and unsullied.”xii In addition to prostitutes,

[D]omestic workers were another class of women used to distinguish the lady and her home from the slum. Bourgeois households could not be maintained as the clean, ordered spaces of respectability without Others to do the work. Domestic workers absorbed “dirt and lowliness into their own bodies; and thus made it possible to mark the distinction between the classes.”xiii

Premised on gender hierarchies and an imperialist economy, the marking of spaces and bodies as either respectable or degenerate was a critical part of bourgeois identity formation and thus a critical part of modern liberal democracy.

While notions of degeneracy and respectability served to further bourgeois interests in the Occident, so too did they function as an essential element of imperial projects beyond Europe and its settler colonies. Central to the development of empire was the ability to exploit the resources and labour of colonized or enslaved peoples, more easily justified when explained as a matter of introducing discipline and order to a ‘degenerate’ and ‘unruly’ population and landscape. Writing with regard to the French colonization of Tunisia and other parts of North Africa, Albert Memmi explains, “Just as the bourgeoisie proposes an image of the proletariat, the existence of the colonizer requires that an image of the colonized be suggested. These images become excuses without which the presence and conduct of a colonizer, and that of a bourgeois, would seem shocking.”xiv In order to justify the existence of economic systems that caused and perpetuated inequality, the bourgeois and the colonizer had to create a mythology of their social “others” that marked the colonized or the impoverished as undeserving of equal treatment.

Memmi writes:

Nothing could better justify the colonizer’s privileged position than his [sic] industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized’s destitution than his [sic] indolence. The mythical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness, and that of the colonizer, a virtuous taste for action. At the same time the colonizer suggests that employing the colonized is not very profitable, thereby authorizing his unreasonable wages.
It may seem that colonization would profit by employing experienced personnel. Nothing is less true. A qualified worker existing among the colonizers earns three or four times more than does the colonized, while he does not produce three or four times as much, either in quantity or in quality. It is more advantageous to use three of the colonized than one European.\textsuperscript{xv}

It was necessary then, in order for European imperialism to flourish, for the colonized to be degenerate and lazy or be perceived as degenerate and lazy, to justify the extraction of more money from their labour.

The colonizer, like the bourgeois in Europe and its settler colonies, needed to create a degenerate underclass, an underclass that required governance and discipline, in order to justify the colonizer’s privilege, wealth, and power:

Thanks to a double reconstruction of the colonized and himself, [the colonizer] is able to both justify and reassure himself. Custodian of the values of civilization and history, he accomplishes a mission; he has the immense merit of bringing light to the colonized’s ignominious darkness. The fact that this role brings him privileges and respect is only justice; colonization is legitimate in every sense and with all its consequences.\textsuperscript{xvi}

Excerpts from “The White Man’s Burden” – Rudyard Kipling (1899)

\begin{quote}
Take up the White Man's burden--
Send forth the best ye breed--
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild--
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.
....
Take up the White Man's burden--
The savage wars of peace--
\end{quote}
Fill full the mouth of famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden--
Ye dare not stoop to less--
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your gods and you…

This myth of the White savior, as he/she who is capable of bringing racialized ‘others’ out of their supposed darkness, from savagery to civilization, has proliferated since its emergence as a justification for colonial ventures. Evident in the advertisements for private schools described earlier, such a myth continues to shape educational discourse (more on that later in this dissertation) and inform local and global social relations in many ways. Writing with regard to Canadian peacekeeping violence, Sherene Razack highlights the pervasiveness and danger the myth of the White/Euro-North American savior.

Analyzing the events that transpired on a Canadian peacekeeping mission to Somalia in 1993, resulting in the deaths of at least two Somalis, including Ahmad Aruush and 16-year-old Shidane Abukar Arone (preventative war in the name of peace, as mentioned earlier), Sherene Razack remarks,

…[T]he legal transformation of peacekeeping violence into a story of Northern goodness and heroism tells us a great deal about how violence directed against bodies of colour becomes normalized as a necessary part of the civilizing process. National and international mythologies of heroic white people obliged to make the world safe
for democracy and needing to employ violence to do so flood our airwaves…We see, for example, how the notion that Somalis possessed different values from ourselves enabled the court to understand that violence in such a setting was both normal and necessary. Such assumptions, racist in their origin and impact, enable us to know ourselves as superior. Examining legal narratives for the ways in which they organize how we come to know ourselves is a valuable undertaking if we are to dismantle those deeply internalized myths about our civilizing mission.xviii

The metanarratives of White, ‘Western’ supremacy and civility inherent in Kipling’s poem and Razack’s examination of contemporary peacekeeping violence emerged in Europe during the Enlightenment as a means of justifying colonial rule abroad and democracy at ‘home.’

Drawing a distinction between ‘civilized/respectable’ and ‘uncivilized/degenerate’ bodies and spaces was crucial to the imperialist project and to the project of liberal democracy. As authority shifted from religion to reason during the Enlightenment, one’s capacity for governance was premised on one’s capacity for rational deliberation and the ability to act according to such deliberations. Determining who was fit to engage in political discourse and governance thus became a matter of distinguishing between the ‘rational’ and ‘disciplined’ versus the ‘irrational’ and ‘undisciplined.’ Making a claim to self-governance and equality required proving one’s respectability and civility, accomplished by erecting a border between self and degenerate, uncivilized others. As Fellows and Razack assert in their discussion of the middle-class bourgeois home, this border was built upon a foundation of class, gender, and racial binaries.

Drawing upon the work of Ann Laura Stoler and Anne McClintock, Fellows and Razack write,

One could know a healthy bourgeois person only in contrast to that person’s racial opposite, first encountered in colonization and later projected onto the working class at home. In Imperial Leather, Anne McClintock has convincingly shown the crucial relation between middle-class domesticity and empire. In contrast to bourgeois males, women were featured as primitive and archaic; the female body itself was thought to inhabit anachronistic space, space inherently out of time with modernity. Women who transgressed the boundaries of Victorian respectability “became increasingly stigmatized as specimens of racial transgression.”xix
The modern liberal project, as a project of establishing democratic rule - that is, establishing the ability and the right of the middle class man to make political decisions – required drawing hierarchical racialized, gendered, and classed distinctions.

One claimed authority and was deemed fit to rule, either in the colony or the metropole, by identifying those who were ‘unfit’ and establishing oneself as different from them. Reason, and the resultant ‘civility,’ were marks of one’s ability to participate in political discourse, to contemplate and weigh what is best for the state. In this dissertation, I assert that the reliable narration of contemporary Philosophy of Education discourse and practice contributes to this modern liberal project, continuing to draw social distinctions between ‘rationality’ and ‘irrationality’ that justify systems of racial rule and racialized violence. One’s ‘civility’ and ‘rationality,’ as marks of one’s fitness to determine right from wrong, good from bad, can only be demonstrated through contrast against an ‘irrational’ and ‘uncivil’ Other, relying upon distinctions between genders, races, classes, and cultures. Borders that are erected between spaces of ‘respectability’ and ‘degeneracy,’ the public and the private, continue to map onto gender, race, sexual, and class divisions as well.

As the public world of politics became reserved by and for White men during the Enlightenment, the respectable White woman was relegated to the private space of the home, free from ‘contamination’ by the lower classes who were forced into the public sphere to work. The transgressive European body thus became racialized as it was equated with the perceived degeneracy of the colonized. As quoted by Fellows and Razack, McClintock points out that:

By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the analogy between race and gender degeneration came to serve a specifically modern form of social domination, as an intricate dialectic emerged – between the domestication of the colonies and the racializing of the metropolis. In the metropolis, the idea of racial deviance was evoked to police the “degenerate” classes – the militant working class, the Irish, Jews, feminists, gays and lesbians, prostitutes, criminals, alcoholics and the insane – who were collectively figured as racial deviants, atavistic throwbacks to a primitive moment in human prehistory, surviving ominously in the heart of the modern, imperial metropolis.
Respectability, as the practice of discipline and self-control served, simultaneously, to spatialize and racialize morality, while also temporalizing degeneracy as primitive, prehistoric, incapable of forward movement.

Similar to Fellows’s and Razack’s discussion of respectability in Europe and North America, Daniel Coleman examines how the notion of civility, a concept central to legitimizing colonial rule, served to spatialize, racialize, and temporalize morality in a manner that, I argue, continues to influence scholarship and pedagogy today. I take up this lengthy discussion of respectability and civility here because I later want to trace how these notions come to inform the meta-narratives of contemporary Philosophy and Education. I want to examine how the ideas of respectability and civility have shaped Euro-North American epistemology and pedagogy in such a way as to create racialized, spatio-temporal boundaries around knowledge production and acquisition, boundaries that normalize particular kinds of knowledge and knowers while insisting that others are kept out. In order to be able to read the textual mappings of race so as to be able to navigate the terrain, I believe it is important to first learn to identify and make meaning of signs of respectability and civility.

Offering an explanation of the term ‘civility,’ Coleman writes:

The meanings of the word ‘civility’ in the Oxford English Dictionary extend from ‘a community of citizens collectively,’ ‘good polity; orderly state,’ and ‘conformity to the principles of social order’ to ‘the state of being civilized; freedom from barbarity’ and ‘polite or liberal education…good breeding.’ Taken together, these various meanings show that the English language’s concept of civility combines both the temporal notion of civilization as progress that was central to the idea of modernity and the colonial mission with the moral-ethical concept of a (relatively) peaceful order – that is to say, the orderly regulation between individual liberty and collective equality that has been fundamental to the politics of the modern nation state.

Borrowing from Coleman as well as from Fellows and Razack, I wish to draw parallels between discourses on civility and the civilizing tendencies of North-Western philosophical and pedagogical scholarship and practice. That is, I wish to make clear what I perceive to be connections between empire, liberal modern ideology, and the ‘reliability’ of much contemporary scholarly and pedagogical practice.
As Edward Said suggests in *Culture and Imperialism*, imperialist projects were reinforced through European cultural production, ‘reliable’ narration being one of the ways in which the values and beliefs that justified colonial conquest were transmitted. Not just transmitted, however, but established and upheld. The characteristic third-person omniscient ‘reliable’ narrator invites the reader to adopt a bird’s-eye view of the landscape, removing oneself from a local specificity to gain a view from nowhere, one who sees without being seen. Such narrative is how the modern liberal White male comes to know himself as one who is free to go anywhere, unhindered by the world of the material, one who has the power to universalize his experience. ‘Reliable’ narrative helps to create an omnipotent, omniscient Subject.

However, it is not just the White male who can claim such a subjectivity through ‘reliable’ narration, but as Trinh Minh-ha points out, even she, herself, as a Third World woman writer can claim a position of domination through uncritical writing practices: “…[A]s holder of speech, [the woman writer of color] usually writes from a position of power, creating as an ‘author,’ situating herself *above* her work and existing *before* it, rarely simultaneously *with* it.” Through one’s text, the author – especially, though not exclusively, the modern liberal White male author - can write himself/herself into being as an unfettered, disembodied individual free from historical and social context, capable of assuming a neutral position from which to reason ‘objectively.’ Thus, it was/is through ‘reliable’ narration that White people give birth to themselves as the Universal Subject.

Intimately connected to notions of civility and respectability, the ‘reliability’ of a text functions not only to create particular dominant White identities, but also to help circumscribe the boundaries of who it is that gets to be included within the ‘universal’ human experience, who it is that gets to speak omniscient, objective ‘truths’ about the universe, as well as who is excluded from ‘dominant’ discourse. ‘Reliable’ narration, I argue later, can function within a text or within the classroom as a demonstration and practice of civility, used to discipline philosophers, educators, and students by imposing order of a particular sort, akin to the order of imperialism, on scholarship and teaching practice.

Like Fellows and Razack on respectability, Coleman describes civility as a matter of creating and policing borders that distinguish between who is to be granted the freedom and
equality promised by liberal modernity and who is not. Echoing Fellows’s and Razack’s words cited above, Coleman asserts:

The ambivalence or contradiction of civility, then, can be seen as a central paradox of liberal modernity, for the civil sphere or stage of advancement in which all participants are guaranteed liberty and equality must be protected from those belated or primitive elements or identities, within and without, which may threaten, intentionally or not, that freedom and equality. As a result, the borders of civility must be policed in order to protect this vulnerable civil space of the advanced from those who, in the words of Johannes Fabian, can be denied as coeval, as inhabiting the same time. As Henry Louis Gates Jr., Cornell West, and David Theo Goldberg have shown in their separate studies, in the very period of the Enlightenment, when concepts of democratic rule, egalitarianism, and individual liberty were emerging social ideals, there also arose the most nefarious and complex system the world has ever seen for classifying and stratifying humans into a hierarchy of racial types.

Civility thus functioned as a method by which to ensure the freedom and equality of some by denying the coevality of ‘uncivilized’ racialized others – that is, by denying that the ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized’ could exist during the same time period. White logic dictated that in order for democracy to be espoused at the same time as imperialism and class hierarchies, distinctions needed to be drawn that justified the denial of equality and sovereignty to particular groups and nations based on ‘inherent’ differences. Freedom and equality were granted to individuals and populations in their maturity, once a capacity for reason had developed, while ‘uncivilized’ individuals and populations were seen to be unready for liberal democracy, having yet to emerge from their infancy.

In his 1784 essay “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” Immanuel Kant draws a clear connection between the modern liberal project of self-governance and the demonstration of one’s maturity, establishing borders between those deemed fit to govern and those who supposedly require the guidance of others. Kant writes:

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of understanding, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. Sapere Aude!
[dare to know] "Have courage to use your own understanding!"--that is the motto of enlightenment.xxv

This notion of maturity thus serves to mark particular people or groups as more advanced than others, while civility—using one’s understanding to guide one’s actions (rather than following one’s impulses or emotions)—serves as an indicator of one’s maturity.

As Coleman explains, the concept of civility relies upon a single racialized timeline along which can be plotted the advancement of nations and cultures (like the hierarchical spectrum of civility and rationality, to which I have referred earlier). Colonial rule could thus be justified on the basis of helping ‘less advanced’ nations reach the same level of maturity as Europeans. Writing within a Canadian context, Coleman remarks:

Combining as it does the temporal notion of progress with the ethical-moral concept of peaceful order, civility purveys the time-space metaphor of the race of civilizations. Departing from previous understandings of race as an eternally fixed and immutable destiny, liberal Canadians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries believed that all people had the potential to be civil, but some societies were farther ahead on the single timeline of civilization, while others were ‘backward’ or delayed.xxvi

Race thus became associated with forms of conduct in addition to an association with the body. Predominantly White nations perceived/perceive themselves to have made further progress along the timeline of civilization, while the notion of progress itself was premised on “a central value of whiteness that Richard Dyer calls ‘spirit’ or ‘enterprise.’”xxvii Predominantly White nations became an unmarked behavioural ‘norm’ against which other nations were measured. Behaviour or beliefs that differed from the order and goals of Europeans were marked as ‘uncivilized.’ Modes of conduct became raced, as progress, maturity, and civility were associated with Whiteness and Europeanness.

Paraphrasing from Dyer, Coleman explains that enterprise “is often presented as the sign of White spirit – that is, to a valuation of energy, will, discovery, science, progress, the building of nations, the organization of labour, and especially leadership.”xxviii Through the narrative of White spirit, that is, the narrative that Whites are predisposed to development and improvement, “white people [are understood naturally to] lead humanity forward because of their temperamental qualities of leadership: will power, far-sightedness,
energy”

Imperialism is thus justified on the basis that it is for the benefit of the colonized nations, to help them reach the same level of civilization as ‘White’ nations. With such race thinking as a foundational premise, imperialism is thus not logically inconsistent with a belief in equality for all. Instead, imperialism may be seen as a means to ‘help’ other races come to realize the freedom and democracy enjoyed by more ‘mature,’ ‘civilized’ nations. The moral theories of liberal philosophers like John Locke or John Stuart Mill are thereby rendered perfectly compatible with their complicity in empire.

As Coleman remarks with regard to the work of Imre Szeman, such an understanding of White ambitiousness as justification for colonization relies upon, while it reinforces, a very particular conception of time: “…[T]his dense interweaving of White enterprise and civility as progress insists upon an isochronous temporality (i.e., a single timeline): it does not consider the possibilities of ‘allochrony,’ that different civilizations might operate on different temporal scales of progress, ingress, or regress.” Further, such a notion of progress and enterprise does not allow for the possibility of rational backward movement, or rational a-civilty.

If the improvement of a society requires forward momentum on a timeline of civilization, to do otherwise would mean to devolve or worsen over time. The narrative of White enterprise excludes the possibility of demonstrating rationality and maturity through backward or sideways or non-linear movement. Yet if one were to make a mistake and take the wrong path to one’s destination, is it more rational to continue in the wrong direction or backtrack to a different path? Or cut sideways through the bushes to meet up with a different path? Or should one deny the mistake and claim this path has been the best path all along?

I want to argue that Euro-North American scholarship and pedagogy has been and continues to be informed to a great extent by the interwoven notions of civility, rationality, and White enterprise. I want to suggest that how academics and educators have come to understand what it means to progress through a rational argument, what it means to learn, to progress as a student, is premised, similarly, on an isochronous timeline that allows for no alternate vision of improvement, no alternate vision of forward movement. I want to suggest that civility as a “white cultural practice” continues to serve as a method of discipline in
the production and acquisition of knowledge, establishing borders between who is, and who
is not, a knower, as well as borders between what is and what is not knowledge. I further
argue that these borders around knowledge and knowledge-making can serve to justify
racialized violence by marking bodies and nations as either capable or incapable of speaking
truth.

In discussing civility as a method of discipline, I mean that “civility became more
than something a person or culture simply had; it became something that a person or culture
did.” Civility thus became a means through which to justify control over others, those
perceived as ‘uncivil.’ While policing one’s own civility was essential to maintaining an
orderly state, so too was policing the civility of others. As Coleman writes, “The idea of
civility as a (White) cultural practice not only made it a mode of internal management and
self-definition, because it distinguished the civil from the uncivil, but it also made it a mode
of external management, because it gave civil subjects a mandate for managing the
circumstances of those perceived as uncivil.”

As Achille Mbembe ironically points out, maintaining a civil society requires incivility
on the part of the state, such that those who have determined themselves to be civil,
and therefore the rightful guardians of the state, ‘must’ use violence to ensure the state’s
civility:

“[T]he origin of civil society is violence – or…the necessity of managing it to avoid
situations where just anyone may be able to make war and raise taxes, arrogate to
himself ownership of public authority, and exercise a relation of domination based on
the pure law of arbitrariness.”

While White Europeans/North Americans enforced/enforce ‘civility’ through uncivilized
violence, any resistance or complaints of incivility from those subject to such violence
were/dismissed or subdued, “characterized as not belonging because outside the [social]
compact, rowdy because already unfitting and unfitted.”

Such violence is deemed necessary to protect the state from barbaric invasion from
without or degeneracy from within. “The social commitments of civility thus become the
evasion – indeed, the refusal – of civil equality and social justice. For which the dominated
are supposed to be grateful.” The enforcement of European ‘civility’ therefore became
how large-scale state-sanctioned racialized violence was justified or normalized, or, in the
words of Goldberg, “Civility, in short, becomes a – the – mode for monopolizing the means of public violence while expressing disinterest in it.”

Like respectability, civility operates as a method of self-surveillance as well as a method of establishing and policing borders between races, borders that continue to be maintained within much Euro-North American scholarship and pedagogy, I argue. In this dissertation, I want to explore the narrativity of Northern/Western Philosophy of Education practice, examining how ‘reliability’ serves as a marker of ‘civilized speech’ and can function as a White cultural practice to manage the borders of civility and to discipline bodies accordingly. That is, I want to look at how ‘civilized’ White identities are negotiated through ‘reliable’ North-American/Western epistemology and pedagogy, justifying one’s fitness for self-governance and governance over others less ‘civilized.’ As David Theo Goldberg states with reference to the work of Achille Mbembe, “civility is considered a key condition of citizenship, of belonging to (and being at ease with and within) a society, formally and informally.” Conversely, I argue, racialized ‘unreliable’ narratives become marked as irrational, unpredictable, uncivil – forfeiting one’s claims to full citizenship or self-sovereignty.

I want to suggest that the practices of Northern/Western philosophy and pedagogy can be acts, and can contribute to acts, of racialized violence if distinctions between what gets to count as ‘civilized,’ relevant, progressive, intelligible and/or rational are demonstrated to be based upon a racialized liberal ideology. In order to highlight how a racialized notion of civility that emerged in the Enlightenment continues to operate as a disciplinary measure shaping contemporary scholarly and pedagogical narratives, I feel it is important to further explicate how racialized notions of rationality and individuality, as tied to civility and respectability, shaped colonial race relations.

From Lenore Keeshig-Tobias:

the white man’s solution
to the white man’s burden
   No.4
(as he sees it)

WHITE WASH
to white(n)  
with white(wash)

--a little soap,  
a little water and a  
good scrubbing will make  
things clear, whiter  
My poor cousin Betsy became  
a ward  
(award?)  
of the Children’s Aid.  
Her foster mother insisted  
on bathing her every day and  
scrubbed her with a brush.

Hallelujah!  
Praise the Lord!  
Clorox bleach gets whites whiter.  
Aye men.  
....

the white man’s solution  
to the white man’s burden  
No.6  
(as we know it)

PUT DOWN THE LOAD, STUPID\textsuperscript{xl}

\textbf{Racializing the Rational Individual}

\textit{Respect for rules, censorship of feelings, and control of spontaneous impulses marked dominant Enlightenment conceptions of rationality (or at least one of its dominant strains). As Norbert Elias has long pointed out, Enlightenment rationality thus constituted – and took itself to be constituting – a dramatic shift from the affective states promoted first by religious and then by absolutist states. Civility, Elias emphasizes, is inseparable from, really a complex product of, the transformation of warrior (and I would add church-dominated) into court society with the attendant shifts and persisting postulations in morals and manners, sensitivities and sensibilities.}\textsuperscript{xli}
The personality of the state ennobles or disables certain sorts of persons and actions, orders “proper” or “improper” social relations, provides the landscape and the contours of being and longing, horizons of possibility and impermissibility in more or less acceptable or adjustable modes of belonging. In contemporary states, in those states where civility has been so much in contest, the landscape and contours of state personality have been deeply defined and refined in racial terms, figuring a racial character to state personality. \textsuperscript{xlii}

As Frantz Fanon remarks, “The colonial world is a Manichean world.” \textsuperscript{xliii} That is, colonialism is premised upon dichotomous relationships, requiring a clear demarcation between good and evil, light and dark, for example. “Colonized society is not merely portrayed as a society without values,” writes Fanon, “…The ‘native’ is declared impervious to ethics, representing not only the absence of value but also the negation of values.” \textsuperscript{xliv} During the Enlightenment, morality and civility were seen to be the exclusive domains of the Europeans, justifying colonial rule on the premise of ‘improving’ colonized nations (a belief, I argue, that continues to exist today within intra- and inter-national relations). Fanon asserts:

The ‘native’ sector is not complementary to the European sector…Governed by a purely Aristotelian logic, they follow the dictates of mutual exclusion: There is no conciliation possible, one is superfluous…The colonized’s sector, or at least the ‘native’ quarters, the shanty town, the Medina, the reservation, is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people. \textsuperscript{xlv} It was thus seen/is thus seen as the role of the Europeans to bring reputability and respectability to the rest of the world, to bring ‘light’ to the ‘darkness.’

Whiteness needs civility to exist: it is only through notions like civility, respectability, and reliability that White people and White-rulled states come to know themselves/ourselves as good, as different from and superior to others, as justified in enjoying the benefits that one is afforded based on one’s race or one’s nationality. It is only through these notions that White power is maintained. To do away with these distinctions is to do away with racial hierarchies. Like Fellows and Razack, Fanon points out how morality becomes spatialized
and racialized within colonial discourse, “The ruling species is first and foremost the outsider from elsewhere, different from the indigenous population, ‘the others.’”

Inextricably intertwined with the notion of civility and the right to participate in the public political sphere is the notion of the free and rational individual, which further serves as a mark of whiteness, or rather, as another way of ‘unmarking’ or cloaking whiteness as a universal norm. Given that ‘all’ men were considered to be inherently rational individuals and as such, free, if one were deemed irrational, dependent upon, or under the control of others - such as the ‘immature’ and ‘uncivilized’ native of the colonies - one was not considered a man in the same sense and was therefore not entitled to the same rights.

While indigenous populations in the colonies were perceived by the colonizer as aggregates of people dependent on colonial rule, Enlightenment philosophers in Europe and North-America were writing into existence the modern liberal individual subject, creating further racialized, spatialized dichotomies between the One versus the Many, between the Individual versus the Multitudes. Though philosophy is often purported to be a reflection on the nature of reality, in this dissertation I want to suggest that scholarship can serve a much more performative function, creating new realities in the process of observation. The rational, free individual capable of self-sovereignty comes into being at the same time as, and through, the ‘irrational,’ ‘unfree’ masses – the ‘savage’ natives of the colonial state or the ‘degenerate’ classes of the European or North American state.

While the modern man of Europe and North America was afforded moral and political agency as a being capable of rational debate, colonized populations and racialized populations within Europe and North America were frequently denied the individuality and reasoning capacity required for recognition as a human being worthy of moral consideration. As Albert Memmi explains, “[A] sign of the colonized’s depersonalization is what one might call the mark of the plural. The colonized is never characterized in an individual manner; he is entitled only to drown in an anonymous collectivity (‘They are this.’ ‘They are all the same.’)”

This depersonalization, Fanon suggests, leads to a dehumanization of the colonized, to a reduction of the colonized “to the state of an animal, existing only as an indifferentiable mass. He writes:
…[W]hen the colonist speaks of the colonized he uses zoological terms. Allusion is made to the slithery movements of the yellow race, the odors from the “native” quarters, to the hordes, the stink, the swarming, the seething, and the gesticulations…This explosive population growth, those hysterical masses, those blank faces, those shapeless, obese bodies, this headless, tailless cohort, these children who seem not to belong to anyone, this indolence sprawling under the sun, this vegetating existence, all this is part of the colonial vocabulary.

These combined tactics of dis-individuation and de-humanization serve to absolve colonizers from taking responsibility towards the colonized, releasing the colonizer from his/her obligation to ensure freedom and equality as promised to the modern liberal individual. As Memmi explains, “One does not have a serious obligation toward an animal or an object. It is then understood that the colonizer can indulge in […] shocking attitudes and opinions.” The colonial masses were thus considered an entirely different political and ontological entity from the autonomous individual, an entity not guaranteed the same rights and freedoms as the citizen.

Further, as Meyda Yeğenoğlu remarks, the autonomy, individuality, and freedom of the colonizer required the existence of repressed masses against which the colonizer could define him/herself. The singular and universal, that is, The One as a sign of Western civility, reason, and progress, could exist only in the presence of its opposite – uncivilized, irrational plurality, multiplicity, the masses. It is only in the creation of a multitudinous Other that the Western individual could come to know himself/herself as free, as unique, as capable of the independent, objective thought that would lead to universal truths. The One, the abstract individual who partakes in a singular human experience, who stands outside particularity to identify universal laws, becomes the namer of Truth, the determiner of validity.

Within the dichotomous framework of colonialism, the collective Other stands then as the opposite of truth and validity, as a plurality incapable of free, abstracted thought like the mature Western man, a plurality deferring to external authority, misled into false belief. Like civility, individuality seems to be placed on an isochronous timeline as a sign of progress towards maturity, away from deference to religious authority towards faith in one’s own reason – such that man replaces God at the centre of the universe, moving from theocentrism to anthropocentrism. Yeğenoğlu writes that the transformation from Middle Ages feudalism,
premised on the authority of God, towards Enlightenment democracy, premised on the authority of reason,

…[P]roduced the secular notion of an individual “I” as an abstract and universal consciousness free of all embodiment and locality. At once a legal, philosophical, and psychic conceptual unity, the ego or subject finds its full meaning in this assumption of autonomy. It is the assumption of autonomy which gives the subject a universal status. Such a universal status is produced in a complex discursive strategy. The construction of the subject requires another term or condition from which the subject distinguishes itself. This “other” term remains repressed, and its “forgotten” or repressed presence is the very condition of the autonomy and universality of the subject. This is why a critique of the subject can only be conducted from the point of view of this other term.

Like Fanon, Yeğenoğlu suggests that the identity of the colonizer is built upon a dichotomous relationship with the colonized, such that the independence, individuality, and sovereignty of the colonizer is premised on the dependence, plurality, and mastery of the colonized.

Additionally, like the work of Fellows and Razack on respectability, as well as Coleman’s work on civility, Yeğenoğlu’s work suggests that individuality, the figure of the universal One, is spatialized, racialized, gendered, and temporalized in such a way as to create geographical and temporal borders between White Europeans and the rest of the world, while simultaneously ‘legitimizing’ White (predominantly male) supremacy. Yeğenoğlu comments on the affinity

…between the imperialist subject and the subject of humanism, as both share the sovereign subject status of authorship, authority, and legitimacy. Thus, to set up its boundaries as human, civilized, and universal, the Western subject inscribed the history of its others as backward and traditional, and thereby placed cultures of different kinds in a teleological and chronological ordering of history. It is this ordering which enabled the West to construe and affirm its difference from its others as temporal distance. This temporalizing gesture, therefore, has enabled the West not only to invent itself as the universal subject of history, but also to assert its cultural domination and superiority by assuming one true story of human history. What lies
at the core of this “worlding of worlds” is the West’s stabilization of its project of global domination by defining a universally applicable norm of development and progress.\textsuperscript{lii}

The consequences of such “worlding” are not merely discursive, but material as well.

Notions of White respectability, civility, and individuality that helped justify European colonial expansion continue to lie behind moments of racialized violence and social injustices today. One example of this is the over-policing or under-policing of particular areas or groups, such as the hypervisibility and over-policing of young Black males or of Muslims of both sexes, as compared to the lack of police response to the disappearance of Aboriginal women from Vancouver’s lower east side. These racialized notions of respectability, civility, and individuality also manifest in a disproportionately higher rate of conviction and incarceration of non-White people than White people accused of a crime; racialized ghettoization; over-representation of particular groups in the sex trade; under-representation of particular groups in higher education; environmental injustice, discriminatory immigration practices; and the list goes on. That is, as particular bodies and areas are discursively marked as degenerate or uncivilized, they are marked as requiring discipline, to either be assimilated into “civil” society or be kept separate from it across a firm border.

While civility/respectability and individuality/singularity function to create spatial, temporal, raced and gendered borders, both material and discursive, so too does the modern liberal notion of reason. In my discussion of how civility, progress, universality/singularity, and reason come to be racialized, it is not my intention to imply that such characteristics are the exclusive domain of Whites (and particularly, heterosexual, affluent, Christian, English-speaking, able-bodied, males), but rather to examine how these notions have been constructed as whitely within modern liberal discourse. That is, I want to explore how Civility is often constructed as White civility, Universality as White universality, Progress as White progress, and Reason as White reason.
I’m calling for treason
Against the sovereignty of Reason
That really isn’t so reasonable
But rather, full
Of contradiction.
One’s claims to universality an affliction
Not easy to remedy.
Quick! Call the metaphysician
To cure this Cartesian dualist condition.
Or rather, call the epistemologist
To find the truth for all of us.
It’s out there somewhere, I’m told,
To seek and behold,
To be held over others
Like a carrot on a stick.
Same old trick.
“Just reach a bit higher,”
They natter
As they pull out the ladder
From under your theory.
Makes one weary,
This quest for Truth.
Every argument must be partiality-proof,
Or else cast to the realm of the Irrational,
The Relative,
That no-[white]man’s land
Where embodied “Others” live.
Something’s gotta give.
A new way to say, to sway, to play.
New steps to this dance.
Curtain’s up on the performance.
How to deliver my lines this time?
Play it safe or take a chance?
Involve the audience?
Or remain entranced,
Enthralled,
By the voice of reason?
A Siren’s call.
Jump ship
Or face the cliffs?
There must be a different way to do this.

In *Colonial Fantasies*, Yeğenoğlu offers an explanation of how reason is claimed as the property of the Western subject. She writes,

Enlightenment reason, resting on the belief of the irreconcilability of non-modern ways of life with Western models of progress, serves as the connecting tissue between colonial and modernist discourses. The signifiers of the project of Enlightenment and humanism such as progress, modernization, and universalism have also functioned as legitimizing categories in the civilizing mission of colonial power. As Sartre notes, this relationship was more than a mere historical or conjunctural coincidence: the formation of universal humanism’s ideal is predicated upon a racist gesture, for, in order to be able to proclaim one’s humanity, the West needed to create its others as slaves and monsters.

As Yeğenoğlu suggests, the modern liberal subject’s authority to govern (oneself, one’s nation, and other nations) was derived from his [usually male] capacity to reason, a capacity necessarily denied to those who were ruled.

Achille Mbembe echoes this in *On the Postcolony*, asserting that:

…[M]odernity itself as a phenomenon has been primarily understood in the perspective of Western rationalism. In other words, from Max Weber to the deconstructionists, the link between modernity, rationalism, and Westernism was seen as more than merely contingent; it was seen as constitutive of all three, so that it is precisely this interlinking that is the ‘distinctive feature of the West,’ distinguishes it
from the rest of the world, means its developments have not happened anywhere else…[Non-Western] societies are primitive, simple, or traditional in that, in them, the weight of the past predetermines individual behaviour and limits the areas of choice – as it were, a priori. The formulation of norms in these latter societies has nothing to do with reasoned public deliberation, since the setting of norms by a process of argument is a specific invention of modern Europe.

I would add here, as I’ve suggested earlier, that what is seen to count as rational deliberation or logical argumentation is also an invention of modern Europe, premised on race thinking that assumes the inferiority of arguments of non-Europeans. Building upon the work of Yeğenoğlu and Mbembe, my argument is that reason, modernity, and Westernism have become inextricably intertwined in such a way that allows for no fundamentally different view of the world. Ways of being in the world that are contrary to the modern liberal pursuit of individual autonomy, linearity, certainty, universality, ‘progress,’ freedom from nature and authority are rendered unintelligible, thereby validating Western values (and supremacy) as the one right way of being in the world. That is, Western values become co-extensive with reason, so that anything that falls outside of a Western framework is thus marked as irrational, rather than calling into question the validity of the Western framework to begin with. Global White supremacy is dependent upon this White logic to function. To allow for multiple valid conceptual frameworks, to allow for uncertainty, for interdependency, would destroy European imperialist and Euro-North American neo-imperialist claims to power.

I want to suggest that similar to the ways in which racialized notions of civility, respectability, rationality, universality, certainty, and progress functioned to justify the creation of imperial geographies, so too do these notions continue to operate within and shape philosophical and pedagogical discourses and practice. The conceptualization of reason used to justify colonial White supremacy continues to emerge within some contemporary philosophy and education, I contend, tied up with racialized dichotomies between the civil/uncivil, the cerebral/emotional. As Marilyn Frye and Uma Narayan explain, emotional acts of resistance to systemic oppression by those who do not fit White Western masculine norms may often be perceived as crazy, out of control, inappropriate, or uncivil. However, when viewed from outside of a White supremacist framework, such
responses appear as rational responses to injustice and conversely, the expectation of a ‘disembodied,’ ‘objective’ response appears irrational.

Citing Frye, Maureen Ford and Katherine Pepper-Smith offer an example of the ways in which emotional responses to oppression may be seen as nonsensical or irrational. Ford and Pepper-Smith relate an example of when Frye

...had spoken [to a racialized female colleague] of antiracist work she was doing with a group of white women. The woman “exploded with rage,” objecting angrily to the news that the group had met for a period of time to “identify and explore the racism in [their] lives with a view to dismantling barriers that blocked [their] understanding...” Frye writes of her response to the woman’s anger: .... “We began to lose hope; we felt bewildered and trapped. It seemed that what our critic was saying must be right, but what she was saying didn’t seem to make any sense. She seemed crazy to me.”

Frye continues, “‘I paused and touched and weighed that seeming. It was familiar. I know it as deceptive, defensive. I know it from both sides; I have been thought crazy by others too righteous, too timid and too defended to grasp the enormity of our difference and the significance of their offenses.’” White reason, reliability, and race thinking serve to obscure the intelligibility of statements, beliefs, and actions that call White power into question. Here Frye recognizes that her perception of her interlocutor as crazy, as senseless, may have been more an indication of Frye’s own defensiveness and inability to understand the situation than an indication of the other woman’s irrationality. How might similar situations arise within Philosophy of Education scholarship? Within the classroom?

What comes to mind here is how a student’s act of resistance may be interpreted as unintelligible to a teacher, for example. I recall delivering a lecture on peace education and Mohandas K. (Mahatma) Gandhi’s work to a class of undergraduate students and being shocked when I received a reflection paper the following week from a Sikh student criticizing my celebration of Gandhi as a peace activist and accusing me of bias in my teaching. My initial reaction was one of dismissal, I felt that I didn’t need to take my student seriously because I could not make sense of what she was saying.

While I like to think that I am open to criticism of my teaching skills, I could not understand her criticism of Gandhi. It ran counter to everything I had heard before. Wasn’t
he supposed to have been a beloved champion of justice and peace? I was familiar with criticisms of his treatment of women and treatment of his family, but I didn’t think that could account for my student’s outrage. I assumed she must be wrong, she must be missing something, but I was still left feeling uneasy. I attributed the error to her understanding rather than to mine. I didn’t know how to hear her anger. It wasn’t until inquiring into the matter further that I learned that many people held Gandhi responsible for the large numbers of people displaced and/or murdered when India and Pakistan were partitioned in 1947, splitting the Punjab province in two and forcing many Sikhs to leave their homes or risk death. While I didn’t automatically adopt my student’s point of view, this experience did make me question my assumptions about what it is that I know and what others know, as well as how I judge the intelligibility of a claim to truth.

As Uma Narayan discusses, outsiders to a form of oppression often lack the knowledge and experience required to understand emotional responses to injustice as rational. She explains,

An outsider, when told about or present at an incident that is racist, sexist, etc. most often does feel anger at the perpetrator and sympathy with the victim…[However, the] outsider, not having been at the receiving end of the oppression, may fail to wholly grasp its effects on its victims and his understanding may, therefore, fail to do justice to the costs of that experience.

The result of this misunderstanding is that,

The outsider [to oppression] often reacts to the insider’s emotional response over a disagreement in one (or both!) of two ways: a) the outsider…may ‘dismiss’ the emotional response as just one of those silly and irrational responses that insiders are prone to; and/or b) the outsider may accuse the insider of ‘using’ the emotional response as a manipulative measure…If the outsider takes both tacks (and they often do), the insider is in a strange double-bind over her emotions. If her response is authentic and natural, it is also pathetic and a symptom of her weakness, irrationality and lack of self-control. If her response is not a symptom of weakness and irrationality, it is a calculated, manipulative and inauthentic strategic move on her part.
Here Frye and Narayan point out some of the ways that race or other social identities can operate within a system of sovereign power, used by one group over another in determining the validity of one’s claims.

I think it is important to also add a notion of disciplinary power and biopower, to think about how race circulates through knowledge apparatuses to discipline what it is that one can claim intelligibly, as well as to surveille one’s civility and rationality: what must be included in a discourse, and what can be left out? How does race play into Frye’s ability to dismiss her critic as irrational, impolite, uncivilized? Frye’s perception of her critic as “crazy” may have been drawn from something like the following argument:

**P1.** My White colleagues and I have recognized and taken on the responsibility to meet to do antiracist work together.

**P2.** It is morally good to do antiracist work as a White woman.

Therefore, Conclusion 1: My colleagues and I are doing morally good work.

**P3.** Censure is appropriate when one does something morally wrong.

**P4.** Censure is inappropriate when one does something morally good.

**P5.** Praise is appropriate when one does something morally good.

Therefore, Conclusion 2: Censuring my White colleagues and me for our antiracist work is inappropriate. Praising my colleagues and me is appropriate.

Therefore, Conclusion 3: The woman who criticized my anti-racist work was acting inappropriately. Either she didn’t understand that our work was morally good (indicating a lack of reasoning ability), or she did understand that our work was morally good, but chose to censure us anyway (also indicating a lack of reasoning ability due to incoherent actions, as well as a lack of civility).

While I am perhaps unfairly putting words into Frye’s mouth, what I want to demonstrate is that judgments about the appropriateness or rationality of one’s behaviour may be based on false assumptions. In P1, the assumption is made that what is occurring is antiracist work, as opposed to work that might be perpetuating racism or might be harmful in some ways. However, it could be the case that the work Frye and her colleagues are doing might *not* be considered antiracist work. Furthermore, P2 assumes that antiracist work is
inherently good and unproblematic. Additionally, the whole argument takes for granted that the arguer knows what is good and what is not in a particular case. In the situation outlined by Frye, she appears to assume that she reliably knows what is good [for racialized women], while Frye’s critic is perceived to confuse something that is good [for her] with something that is bad, leading Frye to draw the conclusion that her interlocutor is acting irrationally and that her criticism is unreliable as a claim to truth. Frye’s critic appears to her as ungrateful, a seemingly inappropriate response to an act of (what is intended to be) benevolence.

Thus, assuming a universal experience based on (particular) White Euro-North American experience(s) can not only lead philosophers and educators to faulty conclusions, but can also lead to the exclusion of racialized individuals and groups from the realm of logic, from the categories of rational and civil. Within a White logic that assumes the possibility of a common, universal experience, it is impossible for the claims of people with different experiences to be heard as intelligible. For example, if I were to assert: All the swans I have ever seen are white, therefore, all swans are white, the conclusion would at least be intelligible, even if it were not particularly sound.

Yet if I were to assert: All the swans I have ever seen are white, therefore, some swans are black, this would not follow logically and would not make sense. However, if I were to have seen both white and black swans, it would make perfect sense to infer that swans can be both white and black. Based on a limited set of experiences, it would seem irrational to assume that some swans might be black. When White Euro-North Americans draw conclusions based on our/their experiences, they/we are like the person who claims that all swans are white and cannot understand the claim that some swans are black.

White, middle-class, heterosexual, Christian, enabled people, particularly males, whose social particularities such as their/our race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, or ability need not be noticed by them/us, may assume that their/our experiences - “unmarked” by specifics - are universal experiences. The conclusions about right belief and action that a person reaches from these experiences are thus assumed to be universally held. If she or he were to reach a different conclusion, this might be seen as the result of faulty reasoning. If it is true of all humans that they have only ever seen white swans, why would someone reach the conclusion that black swans exist? While induction can never lead one to certain knowledge, danger arises when one confuses induction for deduction.
To return to Frye’s example from above, within a White supremacist framework and from her experiences as a White woman, Frye’s actions may have seemed to her to be “the right thing to do.” However, when further evidence is introduced, such as the problems that arise in keeping whiteness at the centre of anti-racism work or in assuming that a group of White women know what it means to do anti-racist work, the harm that could result from a meeting of White women to discuss how they could better understand White privilege starts to become clearer. Yet when confronted by the anger of a racialized interlocutor, Frye is initially quick to dismiss the claims of her critic as nonsensical rather than examine the rationality of her own perspective or the limits of her knowledge in this situation.

Further, not only may the anger and frustration of those who have experienced injustice be interpreted as irrational, but also uncivil, as an upset to the balance established by liberal democracy premised on objective rational debate. In her article “Civility and Its Discontents: Sexuality, Race, and the Lure of Beautiful Manners,” Cris Mayo asserts in regard to multicultural education that “…some forms of multiculturalism are closely bound up with efforts to minimize intergroup conflict by improving interpersonal relationships….A new form of civility is thus upon us, explicitly more intent on curing social ills through mannered response than political challenge.”

Within such a liberal framework of mutual tolerance and acceptance, there is no room for the emotional responses that racialized violence and social injustice often evoke. Instead, calm, polite discussion is demanded by teachers, by scholars, by administrators, by the state, putting those who experience systemic injustice in a position of obligation to conform to expectations of ‘civilized’ conversation. For Frye, if she holds the expectation that one’s help should elicit thanks and appreciation from others, and if she holds the belief that she is helping racialized women, then her critic’s response appears unfounded.

Anne C. Berlak highlights some of the problems that can arise from such expectations in her article “Confrontation and Pedagogy: Cultural Secrets, Trauma, and Emotion in Antioppressive Pedagogies.” Here Berlak examines and analyzes the responses of her students to a challenging class on anti-racism led by a visiting African-American instructor named Sekani. As one White student, Kathy, wrote in her course journal after class:

I believe we have built a community based on our shared and differing experiences…and are respectful of what we have learned from each other and open to
civil discussions of differing opinions. I found S…to be hostile, condemning and close minded…I found her attitude extremely condescending…I felt she completely dismissed our experiences…

Like Frye’s example, this student was unable to make sense of the instructor’s anger, rendering it inappropriate and unintelligible in a context built around sharing different experiences and “civil discussions of differing opinions.” Kathy lacked the comprehension and personal experience of racism that would make Sekani’s approach understandable as appropriate and rational.

As Isaiah, the only African-American student in the class points out, the belief that the class has “built a community” based on sharing and openness to discussion is illusory. He writes to his teacher, “I know you would like me to speak up more when we have open discussions, but I don’t believe our classmates can even hear ME…I feel totally shut out sometimes in our class and that may be ME trippin’. This is how I feel right now. ANGRY.” While the White student confidently offers an opinion of the errors of the visiting instructor without questioning her own perspective, the African-American student is forced to examine the validity of his feelings of being shut out from the class, wondering whether it might just be him “trippin’” and imagining things that aren’t really occurring.

The contrast between the responses of Kathy and Isaiah seems to highlight the continued pervasiveness of colonial dichotomies that draw racialized boundaries around reason. While Kathy questions the legitimacy of Sekani’s approach to anti-racism education without questioning her own beliefs, Isaiah calls into doubt his own feelings of being marginalized and excluded (is it my classmates that are uncivil, or me? Are they excluding me, or am I being paranoid and accusing them of malice?). The false universalization of White experience, through the assumption of an ‘unmarked,’ ‘reliable’ narrative voice such as Kathy’s (that is, the voice of the One who can speak for all), renders unfamiliar experiences as unintelligible or ‘abnormal.’

Within a White supremacist system, claims that go against the logic of White supremacy (such as Sekani’s or Isaiah’s) are deemed incorrect or irrational and must be expunged from the classroom. Such voices pose a threat to the health and safety of the community the class has built based on sharing and openness. It is Sekani and Isaiah who destroy the trust in the classroom, not the White students who refuse to hear what Sekani and
Isaiah have to say. Because of their incivility, because of their desire to destroy the community and the trust of the classroom, Sekani and Isaiah forfeit their rights to freedom of speech. “It is they (the racialized bodies in the classroom) who are hostile and hating,” Kathy and other White students in the class might think, “It is not we (the caring White students). They must learn and demonstrate love, or else be prevented from impeding our growth.”

What may seem irrational or inappropriate to Marilyn Frye or Kathy or myself as White women might appear perfectly rational if they/we had personally experienced the negative effects of racism. This issue of the racialization of reason is very important when discussing philosophy and pedagogy, amongst other matters, as it plays a large role in determining whose evidence gets to count in an argument, what gets to count as knowledge, and who gets to count as a knower. What is necessary then is an examination of how reliable narration operates as a site of racial identity negotiation, as well as a mechanism through which sovereign power, disciplinary power, and biopower circulate.

In the next chapter I turn to narrative theory to explore how the same modern liberal ideologies used to justify colonial venture and racialized violence emerge in the meta-narratives of much philosophical and pedagogical discourse and practice. That is, I explore how racialized notions of civility, rationality, linearity, certainty, and universality continue to operate within education and philosophy to establish the limits of knowledge and to define the borders of “knower” as a category. I employ narrative theory to help explicate what a concept of critical race literacy might look like, in the sense of learning to read and comprehend the ways in which race is performed within texts and institutions, so that new scripts can be created.
Chapter Seven: Troubling Reliability/The Troubles of Reliability

We see that it can be as false to create a politics-free fictional universe as to create one in which nobody needs to work or eat or hate or love or sleep...Outside the whale the writer is obliged to accept that he (or she) is part of the crowd, part of the ocean, part of the storm, so that objectivity becomes a great dream, like perfection, an unattainable goal for which one must struggle in spite of the impossibility of success. Outside the whale is the world of Samuel Beckett’s famous formula: I can’t go on, I’ll go on.¹

Clarity is a means of subjection, a quality both of official, taught language and of correct writing, two old mates of power: together they flow, together they flower, vertically, to impose an order. Let us not forget that writers who advocate the instrumentality of language are often those who cannot or choose not to see the suchness of things – a language as language – and therefore, continue to preach conformity to the norms of well-behaved writing: principles of composition, style, genre, correction, and improvement. To write “clearly,” one must incessantly prune, eliminate, forbid, purge, purify; in other words, practice what may be called an “ablution of language.”²

Storying Knowledge

In this chapter, I hope to accomplish three main tasks: (1) to distinguish between ‘reliable’ and ‘unreliable’ narration; (2) to explore how the reliable narration of philosophy and pedagogy may serve to “eliminate, forbid, purge, purify,” particular bodies and perspectives from scholarship, from the institutions of knowledge production, from the classroom; as well as (3) building upon previous chapters, to explore how the reliable narration of philosophy and pedagogy may at times participate in a larger project of racial rule premised on disciplinary power and biopower. Drawing upon Paulo Freire and Donald Macedo’s work on critical literacy,³ I want to reconceptualize literacy as an ability to read, comprehend, and intervene in the ways in which race operates within and through texts and institutions.

Given the role of race in shaping socio-historical conditions and the role of socio-historical conditions in shaping the writing and interpretation of texts, it is impossible to have a text that does not contain race. As the quotation from Rushdie at the beginning of this
chapter suggests, attempting to create a politics-free universe through narrative, or in this case, a race-free universe, is akin to denying the necessity of eating and sleeping and loving and working, akin to denying that authors and readers have bodies and that those bodies are socially significant in particular ways. Critical race literacy thus involves paying attention to the ways in which race can shape narrative and narrators, as well as the ways in which narrative and narrators can shape race, also paying attention to the potential material consequences of these discursive moves.

I want to explore how discursive form, in addition to content, can participate, at times, in the maintenance or disruption of systems of oppression based on race. Expanding upon critical race theory, I want to examine the importance of not just what one says as a philosopher or educator, but also the importance of how one says it. That is, I want to look at how ‘reliable’ narration – in other words, the denial of a text as narrative, as a set of choices made by the author - is necessary to a system of racial governance based on disciplinary power and biopower. I want to suggest that ‘reliable’ narration, denying a text’s narrativity in favour of an illusory ‘objectivity,’ is critical to the making of the bourgeois subject as omniscient, omnipotent, and omnispective and must be constantly repeated and reinforced.

My interest is not so much in looking at how reliable narration can be a manifestation of White sovereign power, but rather in looking at how White supremacy requires ‘reliability’ – it cannot function otherwise. How does reliable narration participate in the making of race and racial identities? In this chapter, I want to highlight the relationship between racial rule and ‘reliable’ narration based on liberal modernist ideology. In Culture and Imperialism, Edward W. Said writes:

In our time, direct colonialism has largely ended; imperialism, as we shall see, lingers where it has always been, in a kind of general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic, and social practices. Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination…

It is my project here to attempt to uncover not only where imperialism lingers within philosophy and education discourse, but also to explore how justifications for racialized
violence and White domination are discursively reproduced. I examine how reliable narration functions as a site through which racialized civility, rationality, and personhood are contested.

As Robert Fulford explains, a master narrative (such as that of liberal modernism, which imbues the notions of civility, rationality, and personhood with a racial character), …always speaks with the confidence of unalterable and unassailable truth – and yet paradoxically, it is always in the process of being altered….A master narrative that we find convincing and persuasive differs from other stories in an important way: it swallows us. It is not a play we can see performed, or a painting we can view, or a city we can visit. A master narrative is a dwelling place. We are intended to live in it.

In this way, a master narrative, like the narrative of White superiority, becomes in Fellows and Razack’s terms normalized, unmarked; or in the terms of Delgado, it can function as a lens through which one sees the world. Just as one seldom thinks about the camera and its operator while watching a movie, master narratives like those inherent in race thinking can easily disappear from sight.

In order for a philosopher or educator to make claims to ‘objective,’ ‘universal’ truths, these master narratives must be denied, hidden through reliable narration. In the way that a bug crawling across a camera lens draws the viewer out of the illusion that she or he is watching an unmediated representation of reality, so too does a narrative that draws attention to itself as narrative. Philosophical and pedagogical narratives thus needed to be disguised in the language of science as a means of legitimating one’s claims to truth. This is because, as Jean-François Lyotard points out, a clear distinction between science and narrative was created during the Enlightenment by the modern scientist, serving to mark narrative as less valid, less civilized, more suspicious, while relying on it at the same time. A temporal hierarchy was created in which narrative was deemed less advanced than scientific knowledge. Explains Lyotard:

The scientist questions the validity of narrative statements and concludes that they are never subject to argumentation or proof. He [sic] classifies them as belonging to a different mentality: savage, primitive, underdeveloped, backward, alienated, composed of opinions, customs, authority, prejudice, ignorance, ideology. Narratives
are fables, myths, legends, fit only for women and children. At best, attempts are made to throw some rays of light into this obscurantism, to civilize, educate, develop. This unequal relationship is an intrinsic effect of the rules specific to each game. We all know its symptoms.\textsuperscript{vii}

As Lyotard points out, this is the same discourse used to justify colonial rule, in that it creates hierarchical dichotomies between civility and savagery, progressive and primitive, rational and irrational, etc. The scientific and philosophical achievements of modernity, which replaced religious parables and faith-based explanations of the universe, led to narrative being located further back on the spatial-ethical-temporal timeline of civilization, seen as less sophisticated or advanced than scientific reports or philosophical treatises.

The unequal relationship constructed between science and narrative is, Lyotard contends,

\ldots\textit{The entire history of cultural imperialism from the dawn of Western civilization. It is important to recognize its special tenor, which sets it apart from all other forms of imperialism: it is governed by the demand for legitimation.\ldots} Scientific knowledge cannot know and make known that it is the true knowledge without resorting to the other, narrative, kind of knowledge, which from its point of view is no knowledge at all. Without such recourse it would be in the position of presupposing its own validity and would be stooping to what it condemns: begging the question, proceeding on prejudice. But does it not fall into the same trap by using narrative as its authority?\textsuperscript{viii}

The role of the reliable narrator is thus to make one’s narrative and the choices, values, and assumptions laden within it invisible. This serves to create the illusion of an ‘objective,’ ‘unbiased’ speaking subject, one who can report on a truth that exists beyond the realm of social specificity.

However, as Lyotard remarks, scientific or philosophical claims to pure reason still rely upon narrative for their legitimation, while using these narratives to discredit the legitimacy of narrative. “As resolute a philosophy as that of Descartes,” writes Lyotard, “can only demonstrate the legitimacy of science through what Valéry called the story of a mind.”\textsuperscript{ix}

Furthermore, as discussed in earlier chapters, the moral theories espoused by philosophers such as Locke, Hume, Kant, James Mill, and John Stuart Mill relied for their coherence upon
metanarratives (and narratives explicit in the text) of the inherent inferiority of non-Europeans to Europeans. If race thinking were to be absent as a fundamental premise of these theories, the moral theories of these philosophers would be seen as logically inconsistent, supporting simultaneously universal equality and inequality. However, their theories also relied upon creating the illusion of ‘objectivity,’ of the ability to separate one’s work from one’s biases, and so the denial of the narrativity of philosophy became central to the legitimation of one’s assertions.

Like Lyotard, I want to draw attention to the narratives that are often ignored as narrative — that is, those stories about race, about civility, about rationality, about personhood that help to shape how we understand what it means to do philosophy or science or education or politics well. I want to pay attention to stories about what philosophy or science or education is, as well as stories about the ‘right’ way to do them. For example, how is student progress conceptualized and measured in the classroom? To what extent do these assessments and measurements assume a linear, synchronous notion of progress? Who determines the level of a student’s success? To what extent is a student’s ability to pay attention or “behave well” seen as indicative of his or her desire to do well in school? How is a student’s ability to “act civilized” in the classroom (no hats, no gum chewing, no speaking without being called upon, no getting out of one’s seat unless for a specific purpose or when given permission) tied to her or his ability to progress, to succeed?

Over and over again I have seen teachers kick students out of class for being disruptive, for talking to other students or walking around the room. These are students who have expressed a desire to do well in school, to achieve success and to avoid “getting into trouble.” But these students have also expressed difficulty paying attention within the disciplinary confines of the classroom, having to sit still and listen for hours at a time, and are often denied the opportunity to use their existing knowledge and resources to participate in the learning process. I am fascinated and perplexed and disturbed as I observe (like a scientist) the same pedagogical scripts being re-enacted again and again and again by teachers, myself included.

Of course, I have also had the pleasure of witnessing teachers challenge traditional power structures within the classroom to much positive response, though I have often heard the same old story: a student’s failure is frequently equated with some sort of moral failure,
the student who performs poorly is the (academically and morally) “bad” student, the student who doesn’t care enough to succeed, who doesn’t care enough to respect the teacher’s orders. A student’s failure might also be blamed on “bad” or “neglectful” parenting, attributed to a parent’s lack of concern for her or his child and an unwillingness to help. Or yet another explanation might be a learning disorder.

However, in all of these tellings, in all of these explanations, what stories or accounts are then left out, silenced? Where are the stories of student disengagement and alienation from an inequitable education system? Where are the stories about student resistance to the disciplinary measures they experience in the classroom (“You may only sit here.” “You may only go to the bathroom with permission.” “You may only speak with permission.” “You may only eat during certain times,” etc.)? Where are the stories of the teacher, rather than the student, who has failed? Where are the stories about the knowledge the students bring to the classroom? What are the stories, I am curious, that are circulated or not circulated about education? About knowledge? About philosophy? I hope that in paying attention to the narrativity of epistemological and pedagogical theory and practice, scholars, educators, and students might gain a better sense of how student, teacher, and academic identities are created as “good” or “bad,” “successful” or “unsuccessful,” and to what effect. How are bodies disciplined and self-disciplining to fit into these categories?

**Doing Philosophy of/and Education ‘Reliably’**

In her essay “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators,” Audrey Thompson reflects on the role that narrative can play in circumscribing the limits of knowledge. Thompson’s interest lies primarily in exploring what it might look like to become an unreliable narrator, though for the time being I am interested in analyzing her characterization of the reliable narrator. Using Charles Taylor’s work “The Politics of Recognition” as an example, Thompson identifies a number of features of ‘reliable’ narration, which I would like to refer to as impartiality, univocality, unidirectionality, and dispassion. These narrative features, I argue, participate in the creation of omniscient, omnibenevolent, and omnispective speaking subjects, a subjectivity often claimed by the modern liberal White (middle class, male, able bodied, heterosexual) individual as part of a larger project justifying a system of racial rule.
My choice to examine the reliable narratives of philosophers and educators such as Charles Taylor is certainly not to vilify him or to undermine the contributions he has made to the fields of philosophy and education. Though nor is it to suggest that his work is entirely representative of all philosophical and pedagogical discourse. My choice was in one sense arbitrary, in that reliable narration is so pervasive within philosophical and pedagogical scholarship and practice that I could have chosen examples from almost anyone, including my own work. For the most part, reliable narration is how North-American academic study is done, it is the norm against which anything that varies is marked as ‘other.’

So in some ways, the theorists I discuss here are specific examples of a general concept. It is not simply in Taylor’s work that one encounters reliable narration. Reliable narratives are, to repeat the words of Delgado, “like eyeglasses we have worn for a long time. They are nearly invisible; we use them to scan and interpret the world and only rarely examine them for themselves.”xii The scholars I discuss here are thus in some ways no different than many other, if not most, scholars within the field.

Caveats aside, my choice is not entirely arbitrary. I have chosen these scholars partly because of how closely they resemble hegemonic norms (tenured, ‘seasoned’ White male professors) that remain unmarked while marking ‘abnormality,’ and also because of their influence within the disciplines of philosophy and education. I could have chosen to analyze the work of a graduate student classmate, for example, though my argument would have likely carried much less weight. Charles Taylor is a professor emeritus from McGill University, one of Canada’s largest universities (which happens to be located in the French-speaking province of Québec, though the main language of instruction at McGill is English), He has received many illustrious honours for his work, including the Templeton Prize, the Kyoto Prize, appointment to Companion of the Order of Canada, as well as appointment to Grand Officer of the National Order of Quebec.

The Templeton Prize, worth £800,000 or approximately $1.5 million USD, is awarded annually to a “living person who has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life’s spiritual dimension.”xiii Charles Taylor received the prize in 2007, having been recognized as “one of the most profound thinkers of our time on spirituality and secularism, as the first Canadian to receive the Templeton Prize, which outweighs the Nobel as the world’s largest annual monetary award for an individual.”xiv Such a prize serves to establish
Taylor as an expert in his field and to set expectations about what ‘important’ and ‘valuable’ scholarship looks like. (As a side note – from the Templeton Prize website, it appears that of the 40 award recipients since 1973, only three have been women, with no female recipients in any of the past 30 years, and only seven, all male, appearing to be of descent other than White European or American. xv I say appearing as I could be mistaken and could have misjudged the identities of the recipients).

In 2008, Taylor received the The Kyoto Prize, Japan’s equivalent of the Nobel Prize, in the category of arts and philosophy for “his development of a social philosophy designed to help people from diverse backgrounds coexist peacefully.”xvi At the request of the Premier of Québec, Taylor also co-presided “a public commission on accommodation of cultural diversity in Québec in order to help Québécois respond to one of the most critical issues facing our society.”xvii Furthermore, he was also invited to deliver the Massey lecture series, “carried nationally by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which was both a popular and critical success in our country.”xviii

I include all of this information here to contextualize the role that Taylor has played as a national figure both within Canada and globally, setting precedents for what Canadian philosophy and social policy should look like. It is work like Taylor’s, which is rewarded in both a national and international context, that establishes a model for other scholars, educators, and political theorists. It is his voice that is regarded as reliable, as rational, as revealing truths that other Canadians had previously been unable to reveal. Within the “politics of recognition,” it is Taylor’s voice that is recognized internationally, recognized as the voice capable of speaking the truth of a nation, the truth of cultural diversity and accommodation, capable of speaking on behalf of those who are silent/silenced.

It is because of the canonization and influence of Taylor’s work that I feel it is important to examine just what sort of work is oft-cited and esteemed within the fields of philosophy and education, and just what sort of scholarship earns one international honours and millions of dollars. Furthermore, how might Taylor’s work help shape disciplinary expectations? I hope that through the work of Taylor and other White North American scholars and pedagogues, I may open up a larger conversation about scholarly narrative and practice, and so see them as my co-investigators in this study rather than as adversaries.
Unfortunately [or fortunately for me and the coherence of my argument], the nature of dissertation writing makes actual dialogue very difficult, and so you are stuck with my interpretation of the work of other scholars. True, it may not be fair, but that is my point exactly – “univocality,” or singularity of perspective, can be misleading when presented as the only story to be told. So I ask you to keep in mind, dear reader, the potential objections of Taylor and other scholars to my use and characterization of their work. What might they be shouting from the margins? Would Taylor agree with Thompson’s and my assessment of his work as impartial, univocal, unidrectional, and dispassionate?

By the term “impartiality,” I refer to the way in which a ‘reliable’ philosopher or educator presents his or her claims as balanced, disembodied, uninvested, and neutral. As Thompson explains of Taylor, “His is not an embodied philosophical stance, dwelling within a particular world, nor a relational stance in which the other is expected to give a return.” Instead, given his privileged social location, Taylor can afford the luxury of detaching (or upholding the illusion of detaching) his argument from a broader social and historical context. Taylor would likely disagree with such a characterization of impartiality however, perhaps arguing that paying too much attention to one’s social particularity can perpetuate problematic dichotomies (i.e. to suggest that there is such a thing as “women’s writing” or “Native writing” that somehow differs from “men’s writing” or “White writing,” is to encounter the problem of essentialism, for example). Taylor may also be seeking to avoid appropriating, essentializing, or tokenizing voices that differ from his, and so chooses instead to exclude them.

Or, Taylor may feel that scholarship should be valued according to the merit of an individual scholar, not according to the scholar’s group membership. To take social group membership into consideration as a reason for inclusion would perhaps be seen by Taylor as tokenism or paternalism. I don’t know. Whatever his reasons, I want to suggest that Taylor’s omission of voices that stray from a White male heterosexual norm can be seen to perpetuate such norms and the power relations they reproduce. While it is dangerous to essentialize, it can also be dangerous to approach one’s work from a disembodied perspective. Taylor’s ‘colour-blind’ approach to philosophy assumes an equality amongst different social groups that does not yet exist. To say that we should all be treated as individuals, regardless of group membership, or to suggest that one can speak for another’s
experience without living it is to ignore the reality of social injustice and to deny the validity of one’s claims about oppression. While Taylor may be able to argue for ‘neutrality’ and ‘objectivity’ in one’s scholarship, it is not as easy for others to extricate themselves from a particular social position.

Taylor, instead, is able to take a perspective “outside” the story, removed from a particular social context. For example, as Co-Chair of the Québec Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences and as co-author of the report Building The Future: A Time for Reconciliation, a report commissioned in 2007 by Québec Premier Jean Charest to address requests for cultural accommodation in the province of Québec, xx Taylor is able to take up the voice of objective scientist, of uninvested reporter. It is not his religion or culture or gender or language or beliefs that must be accommodated. Taylor is therefore able to take on the role of social scientist, observing, calculating, reporting, measuring, analyzing the best solution to requests for accommodation.

He and Bouchard write,

As was readily apparent in the fall of 2007, Quebecers are divided [about cultural accommodation]. This is the very first observation arising from the public and private consultations that we conducted. It is also apparent from the findings of surveys conducted in recent years…. As we have also seen, emotion has entered the picture, creating tensions that we must now resolve.xxi

Unlike those who are directly impacted by the results of his report, Taylor is removed from the scene, the neutral collector and reporter of data. He is not of the Quebecers who are divided, but above them, speaking of them in the third person. He and Bouchard are the rational, calm scientists who are called upon to resolve the emotional tensions that have arisen between two warring factions. It is this cool, collected, scientific approach to racial and cultural pluralism that I refer to as evidence of Taylor’s impartiality. Faith becomes in many ways a question of utility then – how many people will be inconvenienced by a particular accommodation? Taylor can remain ‘objective’ and ‘impartial’ here because it is not he who is being asked to change.

As I have suggested earlier through the work of philosophers like Charles Mills and David Goldberg, however, there is no position outside of race and culture from which Taylor can speak. Instead, how do his race, language, gender, culture, and faith inform what it is
that he takes to be important? What he sees as requiring accommodation? For example,
Taylor and Bouchard lament the lack of job opportunities for and poor treatment of male
healthcare professionals that are being pushed out of their jobs due to women’s requests to be
tended to by female healthcare professionals. Bouchard and Taylor write,

In senior citizens’ homes, it is assumed the female staff will provide intimate care in
respect of female residents. However, the converse is not true for male residents. As
a result, more women than men are hired. This is an example of the sexualisation of
jobs, but one that runs counter to the usual cases. A similar situation appears to arise
in the gynaecology and obstetrics services of certain hospitals, where male healthcare
personnel is increasingly unfavourably treated because a number of women request
the services of a female gynaecologist at the time of delivery.xxii

Accommodation has gone overboard, suggest Bouchard and Taylor, to the point that the
rights of men are being infringed upon. It is the women seeking accommodation (often on
the grounds of religious – particularly Muslim - beliefs) who are being biased, not Taylor and
Bouchard as writers of the report. Muslim women are thus imperiling the livelihoods of
Québec’s men.

Because of this threat posed to (Christian) male healthcare professionals by (Muslim)
women seeking religious accommodation, in 2007 the Fédération de Médecins Spécialistes
du Québec (or Federation of Medical Specialists of Québec) submitted a brief to the
Commission des Affaires Sociales concerning Bill 63, an Act to amend the Québec Charter
of Rights and Freedoms. Bill 63 urges that the Charter be amended to expressly state the
“equality of women and men” rather than simply the equality of “every person” (the Charter
has since been amended). The FMSQ urged members of the Quebec National Assembly to
pay greater attention to the importance of gender equity:

Rejecting any form of discrimination by a physician towards a patient or by a patient
towards a physician, the FMSQ believes that reciprocity should be the basic rule
governing behaviour and relationships in a nonreligious civil society such as
[Québec’s], particularly when it is a question of health.xxiii

The language of neutrality and equality was thus used as a means through which to deny
women the right to request a female physician.

As the brief states,
Although giant steps have been made in recognizing the equality of men and women over the past few decades, women are still subject to discrimination in our society. Very fortunately, this phenomenon is now tending to become marginalized and disappear. The paradox, however, is that a new form of discrimination is becoming increasingly evident in certain circumstances, affecting men as well as women and giving rise to excessive behaviour which is both unacceptable and intolerable.

The discrimination we are talking about specifically affects male practitioners in certain medical specialties. A prime example of this is Obstetrics-Gynecology. The discrimination takes various forms and has become commonplace in some Montreal hospitals. It is directly attributable to the values and beliefs subscribed to by different communities. It involves undue pressure and requirements that go far beyond simple requests for rational, reasonable accommodation. It is contrary to the very foundation of medicine, the Code of Ethics that governs the medical profession and the Hippocratic Oath that is binding on all physicians at all times and in all circumstances.

To return to Foucault’s notion of biopower, here “different communities” (i.e. Muslims) seeking religious accommodation by healthcare professionals are literally undermining the health of the city of Montreal and the province of Québec: their requests are “contrary to the very foundation of medicine.” To grant accommodation would mean to agree to let die, rather than to make live. The “unacceptable,” “intolerable,” and “excessive” behaviour of those communities go “far beyond” what is “rational” and “reasonable.” Those who seek accommodation based on faith (Muslims) are out of control. Their requests pose a grave threat to the health and order of the province. To repeat again, “…[R]eciprocity should be the basic rule governing behaviour and relationships in a nonreligious civil society such as ours,” but those “different” communities are not reciprocating the civility they are shown. They are out of line and thus require discipline and punishment.

Though I have in some ways traveled far from the Bouchard/Taylor report at this point, and even further from Taylor’s philosophy, I think the issue of what is happening in the nation’s hospitals is a very real example of the influence that philosophy and reliable narration can have on the exercise of state (sovereign) power. It is through the language of
impartiality and neutrality that particular groups of people are denied rights, ironically under the guise of protecting their rights. It is in order to ensure that women are treated equally to men, to ensure that male power is not exercised against them, that they are denied the right to request a female physician. Here the paternalistic discourse of imperialism arises again: it is for their own good that women are denied accommodation. If they were to be accommodated, it would be a slippery slope backwards to a time when women were denied basic freedoms. The language of impartiality used in the Bouchard/Taylor report and in the FMSQ brief serves to deny rights, freedoms, full personhood, civility, and rationality to groups marked as “different,” in this case, Muslim, under the guise of granting rights, freedoms, and personhood. It is because a Muslim woman’s right to equality is recognized that her actions must be restricted, she must be denied the right to choose who attends to her.

Taylor, as prominent Canadian philosopher, internationally-recognized man of Reason, and Co-Chair of the Québec Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences, is put in a position to decide who is granted what rights, who is it that must be fully recognized and taken into consideration by the state, versus who can be disregarded. The Commission itself was created to make recommendations to the provincial government pertaining to the regulation of healthcare, education, language, recreation, and clothing, amongst other issues.

Through the impartiality of reliable narration, scholars like Taylor come to know themselves as capable of reasoning free from bias, thereby proving oneself to be more rational than the cultural, religious, or linguistic minorities who may have great investment in the outcome of Taylor’s work. Taylor comes to know himself as White, as entitled to the full rights of the citizen, as the cultural norm, through establishing accommodation as something that is required by others. It is he, and others like him, who have the power to choose to accommodate or not accommodate, while others remain at the mercy of his decisions. Thus, he also comes to know himself as free and as powerful in his naming of who should be recognized and accommodated and who should not.

The privilege of impartiality exercised by Taylor is tied to another feature of reliable philosophical narrative, univocality. I use the term “univocality” to refer to the way in which a reliable narrator tells a universal, singular story as he or she erases differences between
voices and leaves only his or her own voice in place. On this issue, Thompson remarks of Taylor’s article “The Politics of Recognition,”:

No doubt creeps into the text as to whether Taylor is an adequate spokesperson for indigenous or colonized peoples, blacks, and women…. [P]aradoxically, given the enormous weight he attributes to being heard and known on one’s own terms – he subsumes all subaltern voices under his own. Although we hear from Jean-Jacques Rousseau often, and in the original French, there is not a single quotation from a gay or lesbian scholar, a feminist, and/or a scholar of color. xxv

Through the feature of univocality, the reliable narrator, like Taylor, comes to establish herself or himself as the unitary voice, the individual speaking on behalf of the multitudes. Taylor takes up this same univocality in his report on cultural accommodation practices in Québec, in which almost none of the hundreds of community members with whom Taylor and Bouchard consulted are given credit for their input, beyond a few token footnotes. Instead, Bouchard and Taylor are given sole credit for co-authoring the report, based on the contributions of hundreds of Quebeccers. Thus, Taylor and Bouchard put themselves in the position of being able to subsume the many contradictory and multilingual voices of Québec under their own. The messiness of contrasting voices is neatly computed and categorized into manageable pieces of data. Taylor and Bouchard are given the task of speaking the truth of the province.

This authoritative, impartial voice adopted by Taylor and Bouchard in their ethical and political theorizing (yes, even in the sense of the two men sharing a singular voice in their report) is often adopted by many teachers in the classroom as well, exacerbating power hierarchies between teacher and student as well as circumscribing the limits of ‘knowledge’ and ‘knower.’ As Tim McCaskell points out in his article “Anti-Racist Education and Practice in the Public School System,” the practice of assuming an impartial, univocal narrative as a teacher can frequently lead to the alienation of racialized students in the classroom and to the reproduction of existing inequitable social relations. Like the ‘impartial,’ ‘univocal’ philosopher, the ‘reliable’ teacher speaks for and in place of a multitude of students, imposing her or his view as universal truth. The classroom’s activities, McCaskell remarks,
…[T]ake place behind closed doors. Each teacher then enjoys relative autonomy concerning what goes on in his or her classroom…This organization also produces differences in the way knowledge and ‘truth’ are generated. While in the university the free market of ideas determines the value of any intellectual commodity [I’m not entirely convinced of this point], truth and knowledge in the public school system are more likely to be declared by fiat. They eminate [sic] from the authority of the teacher, the department, or the ministry-approved textbook. As far as the student is concerned, the face of power is the teacher…It is they who decide what is to be learned and what the correct answers are.xxvi

The reliable teacher thus negates the possibility of students as knowledge producers, taking control of the story and relegating students to the position of knowledge consumer while claiming a monopoly on truth. Like the teacher who privileges one or few particular stories to the exclusion or marginalization of others, so too does the univocal philosopher privilege a particular point of view without seriously taking into account other voices. Taylor becomes he who is given the authority to determine the limits of recognition, the limits of accommodation. His impartiality and univocality are, in part, what qualify him for this task: it is through his ability to remain ‘objective,’ to speak a singular, universal truth uncovered through the use of reason, untainted by bias or uncertainty, that he is able to prove his worth as philosopher and political theorist.

Like ‘impartiality’ and ‘univocality,’ ‘unidirectionality’ is another method through which a scholar’s or educator’s ‘reliability’ is achieved. In terms of ‘unidirectionality,’ I refer to expectations of a reliable narration to take up a singular vision or project, with an argument progressing linearly through a beginning, middle, and end towards an unambiguous conclusion. This unidirectionality is evident in Taylor’s work, Thompson suggests, by the way in which,

Taylor enlists disciplinary expectations of philosophical coherence and intelligibility to suppress competing frameworks. The seamlessness of Taylor’s analysis means that readers are not positioned to read between the lines or against the grain, or to wonder if another narrator might tell the story differently. Ignoring arguments and analyses by feminists, lesbians, gays, and people of color that would muddy the clarity of his claims, Taylor’s smooth summary never hints that many members of
marginalized and oppressed groups create spaces specifically to escape from gestures of ‘recognition’ by members of the dominant group.xxvii In the way that a notion of linear progress was used within imperialist discourse to signify civility and thus justify domination and exclusion, so too does narrative unidirectionality function within philosophy and education to impose a sense of order and control.

In their report, Taylor and Bouchard neatly extricate from their text the matter of accommodating Aboriginal claims to sovereignty within the province of Québec. Though explained away as the result of many factors, this omission also serves to avoid the ‘messiness’ or disorder that addressing such an issue might create (to recognize that Aboriginal groups may have claims to sovereignty and to land within the province of Québec is to undermine the claims of non-Aboriginal Québécois to this land, and thus to undermine their rights and entitlement to determine who is allowed on the land and under what restrictions. Could it be that non-Aboriginal Canadians, whether in Québec or other provinces or territories, are really the ones who must ask for accommodation? Who must ask to be permitted to be on the land? Who is obligated to adapt to the beliefs, practices, and languages of whom? To recognize Aboriginal land claims or even to recognize Aboriginals as Canada’s first inhabitants is to undermine one’s own authority as border patrol: what happens when colonial violence is brought up? What happens to White civility? If Euro/White Canadians cannot claim civility, how can they deny rights or accommodations to others based on the other’s incivility? One of the projects of reliable narration is to present a unified, coherent story, to smooth over any wrinkles in an argument and to stitch together any tears.

Taylor and Bouchard thus quickly dismiss Aboriginals and Aboriginality as a side issue, as something beyond the scope (and direction) of the text, to be returned to at another point in time:

It is with regret that we had to remove from out [sic] mandate the aboriginal question. [What is “the aboriginal question”? I want to know. It is never specified]. Since this decision was criticized, it is important to review the reasons that justified it. First, we feared that we would compromise our mandate by appending to it such a vast, complex question [the nature of this question is still unclear]. We also wished to avoid needlessly overlapping the deliberations under way in tripartite negotiations
between Québec, Ottawa, and the aboriginal peoples. Another reason is that aboriginal affairs must be discussed “nation to nation,” pursuant to two resolutions adopted by the National Assembly of Québec in 1985 and 1989. Finally, for us to have assumed this responsibility, we would have had to receive a proper mandate from the Québec government and the First Nations and Inuit. xxviii

The “aboriginal question” is thus determined to be outside the scope of the report. Such a unidirectional narrative thus serves to inscribe the limits of accommodation required in Québec, excluding aboriginal peoples from consideration.

Through their report, Bouchard and Taylor name what it means to accommodate and who it is that must be accommodated. Furthermore, in maintaining a sense of linearity and seamlessness in their report, Bouchard and Taylor are able to demonstrate their ability to stay on task, to follow the rules laid out to them in their mandate, to behave with civility. It would be rude to step beyond the boundaries established for the report to consider accommodation of aboriginal claims to sovereignty. Demonstrating one’s unidirectionality through reliable narration is key to demonstrating one’s ability to progress on a temporal spectrum of civility: one is ever moving onward and upward. Without unidirectionality, one could be accused of a lack of progress or of regress.

In the same way that linearity can serve to signify one’s civility and ability to progress, so too can the ability to subordinate emotion to reason, approaching argumentation coolly and dispassionately. This same ‘dispassion’ that was used to distinguish the respectable bourgeois or civilized colonizer from the degenerate racialized ‘other’ is another central feature of reliable narration. By ‘dispassion’ I mean to refer to a lack of emotion in the reliable scholarly narrative, of an appeal to pure reason as the basis and proof of one’s argument. Audrey Thompson writes,

Whereas Gloria Anzaldúa or María Lugones might not so much betray or even express passion as specifically call it into play (for it may require courage, deliberation, and discipline to sustain a voice that will be dismissed as subjective or unintelligible), Taylor can wield a highly invested performance of dispassionate argumentation as aesthetic proof of his trustworthiness as a guide through the intricacies of his argument. xxix
Here we are brought back to Frye’s and Narayan’s work discussed in the previous chapter on how emotional responses to injustice are often perceived as irrational or self-interested, rather than objective and universal.

‘Dispassionate’ reliable narration, whether present in philosophical scholarship or at the front of a classroom, fosters the illusion that one is telling the truth about the world, simply relating scientific facts, ‘untainted’ by the particularities of emotion and personal attachment. If one is ‘detached’ from the outcome of one’s argument, it creates the impression that such an argument is more truthful than one influenced by personal bias, as one apparently has less invested in the outcome (here accusations of the “hypersensitive” woman [of colour] come to mind – in that one’s claims may be invalidated or ignored if the she is seen to have a stake in the outcome).

As disembodied narrators situated above the ‘facts’ of their report, Taylor and Bouchard can adopt a dispassionate perspective, one that is uninvested in the outcomes of their findings. It is not they, White Canadian-born men who are at risk of being denied respect and rights – their rights are established by the laws of the land. Therefore, self-interest supposedly does not influence or bias their recommendations (or lack thereof) for accommodation. Because Taylor and Bouchard supposedly have nothing to gain or lose from the outcome of their report, their recommendations may be seen as more legitimate, more rational, than recommendations made by someone who has much to lose if not accommodated. However, ‘dispassionate’ narration seldom lacks personal investment. Rather, what the narrator is invested in is convincing the reader or listener of her/his dispassion, so that the audience is more willing to buy what the narrator is selling – his or her own civility and rationality.

As Minh-ha explains, how truthful one’s writing is taken to be is often closely connected to an author’s ability to remove himself or herself from the text. For many authors who do not fit hegemonic norms about the ‘universal’ experience, this can often lead to a sense of alienation from one’s own work. Making claims to “humble-calm-clear-good-truth,” Minh-ha contends, requires that:

…[O]ne must learn to forget oneself…Achieve distance, they keep on saying, as much distance from your own voice as possible. Don’t direct the reader’s attention to yourself, don’t fiddle with words just to show off. For a woman, such a distance
easily takes on the face of Alienation. She must learn not only to impersonalize the voice she stole or borrowed, but also to internalize gradually the impersonal generic of masculine pronouns and nouns. She must learn to paint her world with colors chosen more often than not by men for men to suit their realities. *She-her* has always conveyed the idea of a personal and gender-specific voice. In order to be taken more seriously, she is therefore bound to dye this voice universal, a tint that can only be obtained through words like *man, mankind, he-him.*

To which she adds that a self-effacing narrator is perceived as critical to “Good Writing as the means through which knowledge reaches abstraction and is ideally freed from its existential roots.”

As Minh-ha’s work suggests, Charles Taylor’s use of univocality, impartiality, unidirectionality, and dispassion to claim authority in his writing is not an exception but, rather, the norm. These characteristics or qualities are often what one is taught to expect from a text, as well as how one is taught to write, to philosophize, to teach, to study. Even in attempting to move away from these liberal modern narrative traditions, one often still gets caught up in the task of establishing his or her trustworthiness and truthfulness through appeals to reliability, solidified only through proof of one’s civility and rationality. An example of this is Clive Beck’s 1993 presidential address to the Philosophy of Education Society. Granted, this essay was written quite a number of years before my dissertation, though I think it is instructive here, especially given his position at the time as President of an organization that helps define the limits and scope of Philosophy of Education discourse within North-America.

Writing on “Postmodernism, Pedagogy, and Philosophy of Education,” Beck addresses himself to the need for “pluralistic scholarship” that takes into account the work of traditionally marginalized scholars, so that “people of different categories [may] learn from each other’s scholarship.” However, the very few women he cites are named only in footnotes, remaining nameless in the main text, and he cites few or no racialized scholars, male or female, at the same time as asserting that “Terms such as ‘Eurocentric’ and ‘patriarchal’ are bandied about too much…” Like Taylor, he subsumes all marginalized voices under his own, discussing the need for pluralism through the work of other White male scholars. When he addresses counter-hegemonic discourses at all, he is
dismissive of them, asserting that it is not his project to deal with them in his essay (as in Taylor and Bouchard’s dismissal of “the aboriginal question”).

Yet Beck, unlike Taylor, is trying to move away from conventional philosophical narration, taking a post-modern approach to Philosophy of Education discourse. What Beck’s work helps to highlight, I believe, is the trickiness of moving away from reliable philosophical and pedagogical narrative. While Beck may have chosen a different path than Taylor, they are both still looking at the same map of philosophy: the people occupying the territory look the same, the boundaries are drawn similarly, space is divided in much the same way. Beck, like Taylor, defines a discursive space peopled predominantly by White men, despite his attempt to venture into (and overtake?) “new” territory.

In calling for greater representation of historically-marginalized voices within the field of hegemonic North-American Philosophy of Education, Beck is in some ways defining how those voices can be heard: historically-marginalized voices have been invited – not just invited, but required by White male philosophers such as Beck to help them become better philosophers. Yet as seems evident in what appears to be a lack of diversity amongst the scholars which Beck cites is his deferral of responsibility for “pluralist scholarship” onto someone else. Though plurality is required by Philosophers of Education, it is not required by him. Here Beck places himself in the role of supervisor of the discipline: he may dictate the rules to others, but needn’t follow them himself (and isn’t that the power of the racial state? The state may demand civility from others, but needn’t act ‘civilly’ itself).

From Robert Frost’s “The Road Not Taken”

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same...

From M. Nourbese Philip’s “Somewhere in the Dark Continent”

“Now see here, Stanley – this is my expedition – you can’t just horn in on it like that, you know. I want all the glory for myself, my God and my Queen. Those falls were worthy of her name, now, weren’t they?”

“Dr. Livingstone, I only wanted a piece of the action – there’s a whole damn continent out there for the taking. You don’t have to be so selfish.”

“You call me selfish – after all I have done for God, my country, and for the natives – after I risked my life to bring them to the one God, the true God, the only God – materialism! – you call me selfish? Go and discover something you can call your own – give your name to a new race, a river, a mountain – whatever – conquer a piece of history you can call your own…”

As Beck reassuringly maps out for the reader the linear path of his argument, he is simultaneously mapping out the territory of postmodernism and defining the inhabitants of the discourse. He writes:

…I will not here provide a general exposition of postmodernism but rather, after the brief statement of a particular theme, will go straight into an integration of it (usually in a modified form) into my own proposed approach. I hope, however, that such a treatment will, incidentally, help clarify the nature of postmodernism. The understanding of postmodernism I will assume here is a rough composite of ideas from [Richard] Rorty (especially) and Lyotard, Derrida, and Foucault. It should be stressed, however, that many of these ideas have appeared in other schools of thought, both historical and contemporary, e.g. Marxism, feminism, critical pedagogy. I have chosen to focus on these particular writers because they provide a convenient point of departure; and also because discussing them helps us come to terms with the dominant philosophical tradition, which we have some responsibility to influence."
Here the reader is given a clear sense of where Beck wants to go and how he plans to get there, moving along a teleological timeline towards a purposeful conclusion. In performing the role of reliable narrator marching forward in a singular direction, Beck simultaneously creates and claims for himself an identity as rational and civilized, reinscribing norms that dictate the rules of intelligibility. Were he to wander off on multiple tangents, Beck would run the risk of being labeled incoherent and having his claims dismissed.

While Beck very briefly mentions Marxism, feminism, and critical pedagogy as an aside, he fails to engage with these in any meaningful way, sticking to his course. But how is one to “influence” the “dominant philosophical tradition” - which he claims is our (?) responsibility to influence as philosophers of education - if no alternative is presented, if there is no other way to do philosophy? As mentioned earlier, Beck may choose the path of postmodernism, but he is still following a map created by White European and North-American males that helps to define class, race, and gender boundaries, subsuming (like Taylor) all voices under a single, universal (White male) perspective.

Beck dismisses counter-hegemonic claims by appealing to liberal modernist notions of the equality of all human beings and the autonomy of the individual. He begins with a brief synopsis of postmodernism then offers a critique of its claims regarding Euro- and phallo-centrism. Beck writes,

One of the slogans of postmodernism is that “there is no center,” and in particular there is no central tradition of scholarship (namely Eurocentric, middle-class, predominantly male) of which other traditions – Native American, Afro-American, Islamic, feminist, working class, for example – are mere colonies. [According to postmodernism.] Insofar as we study traditional Western scholarship, we should be wary of its white, middle-class, male bias; and we should (if we belong to one or more other categories) approach it as equals, expecting to contribute as much as we learn.  

While Beck is in partial agreement with this perspective, he feels that such bias has been over-emphasized, detracting from the merits of white, middle-class, male scholarship. He contends: “…[W]e should not exaggerate the extent of the bias (great though it undoubtedly is) in traditional Western scholarship [I – Helen Anderson – do not know who ‘we’ are – postmodernists? White, middle-class males? Philosophy of Education scholars?]
Native Americans? Afro-Americans? Muslims? Feminists? Working class people? It would seem that Beck himself does not actually belong to this category of ‘we,’ as he doesn’t appear to be ‘exaggerating the extent of the bias.’ But I digress. I have interrupted Beck in the middle of a thought. I apologize.]xlii

Beck continues,

There is much we can learn from such scholarship (although also much we must reject). This is because the writers in question, though white, middle- or upper-class, and male, were also human beings, struggling with basic issues of how humans are to survive, flourish, and find meaning in life [note the appeal to a universal human experience here, and the appeal to treat White, middle-class, male scholars as equal human beings, a discourse used to justify the exclusion and inhumane treatment of others for centuries]. The bias in favor of particular ethnic, class, and gender interests is only part of the picture. Terms such as “Eurocentric” and “patriarchal” are bandied about too much, as though they described everything that an individual or group does, and as if every error that is made is due to the bias in question. As noted earlier, people of different races, genders, religions, or whatever may have a great deal in common. There is enormous scope for people of different categories to learn from each other’s scholarship.

Some of this sounds eerily similar to the claims of Taylor, Bouchard, and the Federation of Medical Specialists of Quebec (FMSQ) used to deny (Muslim) women’s requests for a female physician: the social pendulum has swung too far in the opposite direction – those who were once ‘oppressed’ are now the ‘oppressor’xliii and vice versa. Because of ‘great advances’ in human rights (through, for example, movements for civil rights, women’s rights, gay rights, Aboriginal rights, the rights of people who are disabled), White men are now discriminated against, denied the right to equality.

I am sympathetic to Beck’s assertion that scholarship shouldn’t be discarded simply because it was written by a White, middle-class male (or female – in which case, I have wasted years of my time writing this dissertation), though I don’t think this is what postmodernism is about. Instead, I think postmodernism is about paying attention to the fact that who is writing is going to shape what is written. It seems to be about paying attention to the
dangers of claiming a universal human experience, yet also about paying attention to the larger significance and general applicability of partial perspectives.

Beck, however, seems to think that centuries-old racial, gender, and class hierarchies, amongst others, can be easily flattened out so that everyone contributes equally to a discourse as an “individual.” He asserts,

…None of this means, however, that we should regard the Western scholarly tradition as the central one to which others merely contribute or add footnotes. Rather, white, middle-class males should just contribute along with everyone else, and any new, common tradition should be pluralistic scholarship, not simply a modification of the “mainstream.”

A key point…is that in addition to anti-racist, feminist, anti-agist, etc. scholarship we need individual scholarship: Jane Doe scholarship, José Sanchez scholarship, Shiu Chun Leung scholarship, etc. We have not taken the personal quest of individuals seriously enough: every human being is constantly questioning, observing, theorizing, trying to understand life and make the most of it in his or her own very distinctive situation. The radical democracy of postmodernism leads in this direction, but it gets waylaid because of its excessive preoccupation with cultures and speech communities. Every individual should be seen as the center of a scholarship – her or his own – comparing notes on equal terms with other individuals, groups, and traditions.  

Here Beck seems to falsely assume that all humans are treated equally, that there is no commonality between the experiences of individuals inhabiting the same social categories. This makes it very difficult to articulate group-based claims such as racism, sexism, ableism, or heterosexism, amongst others. Though he writes that “white, middle-class males should just contribute along with everyone else,” he fails to bring into his work the contributions of anyone else, thus the only people contributing are White, middle-class, males, which is hardly a matter of “comparing notes on equal terms with other individuals, groups, and traditions.” Like the early cartography of European ‘explorers,’ Beck maps, through reliable narration, the limits of Philosophy of Education discourse, dictating who it is that belongs where when.
There is something to be said though, I think, to the point that one cannot essentialize the voices of scholars historically marginalized from hegemonic Euro-North American Philosophy of Education discourse. One cannot assume that the scholarship of “Jane Doe” or “José Sanchez,” or “Shiu Chun Leung” will represent the voices and experiences of everyone of their gender and/or ethnicity and/or race and/or nationality and/or sexuality and/or ability and/or language and/or age and/or religion and/or socio-economic status, for example. But to suggest that there is no experience (of sexism, of racism, of ablism, of classism, of Anglo-centrism, of heterosexism, of agism, of Western/Northern-centrism, of Christian-centrism, etc.) that is shared by members of a particular group is to deny the subtle or extreme violence committed against people based on social identities (besides, doesn’t Beck claim – in not so many words – that White men now share the experience of discrimination?). Despite his argument for seeming inclusivity and heterogeneity, the meta-narrative of Beck’s work suggests a different story, revealing discursive territory populated by rather homogenous inhabitants.

I quote Beck at such length above because I want the reader to hear/see his argument in Beck’s own words. While it is impossible for me to write free of bias either way, I feel that to paraphrase Beck here would be an unfair manipulation of the reader. I would put Beck’s words into my own, shaped by my own lenses, without allowing him to speak for himself. Though I have chosen and set up the quotations in such a way that I expect the reader will draw from them conclusions similar to my own, I feel it is somehow less deceptive or manipulative than re-creating his argument in my own words and asking the reader to take it on my authority that I have portrayed his argument accurately. Then I would simply be appealing to the same univocality I want to trouble in the work of Taylor and Beck.

In a response to Beck addressed to the members of the Philosophy of Education Society, Walter Feinberg runs into many of the same contradictions as Beck and Taylor, arguing the need to pay attention to marginalized voices and to open up space for counter-hegemonic interpretations of Philosophy of Education, while referring almost exclusively to the work of White scholars. An exception to Feinberg’s apparent narrative myopia is a brief reference to Franz Fanon, though Fanon’s work is not cited in the footnotes. Feinberg writes:
The problem with colonialism is not that it rendered wrong interpretations, as if there were some essential, hidden self which blows a horn and rings a bell when we don’t get the “right” interpretation. *The problem is that it silences alternative interpretations and therefore curtails the first and third person dialogue. And the problem with silenced dialogue is that it destroys the very diversity that is required for the epistemic and ontological development of both oppressed and oppressor….One does expect that any scholar operating in the postmodern world will be sensitive to dimensions of racism, sexism, agesm [sic], classism, and will be alert for new and unnamed forms of discrimination. One expects too that scholars will seek to hear the voice of the other and seek to accept responsibility for the effects of the gazing that we do. But in the long run, the solution to any malady brought on by gazing in the way we experts gaze is to find ways that engage the object as subject, to see self as other, to help the healing process and reduce the need for oppressed cultures to build fortresses to protect their identities.*

Yet in assuming the authoritative, universal voice of the reliable narrator (“we experts”), how can Feinberg achieve the “first and third person dialogue” of which he speaks? With whom is he dialoguing? Further, in creating a hierarchy of discourses in which all other voices are subsumed under his own, how can he “engage the object as subject”? Where and when do other voices get to speak for themselves?

For Feinberg, “oppressed cultures” have built “fortresses to protect their identities,” shutting the oppressor out (an action perceived to be hostile and uncivil?) and stunting the “epistemic and ontological development of both oppressed and oppressor.” Though colonialism is in seen by Feinberg as in part responsible for “silencing” the voices of the “oppressed,” it seems he is also suggesting that it is an unwillingness on the part of “oppressed” people to share their voices that is keeping everyone from progressing (*they*, the oppressed, are trying to drag *we*, the free, into their backwardness. *They* do not want *us* to grow, to move forward. It is *their* lack of ‘civility’ and ‘reciprocity’ that is holding *us* back. *If they* will not share willingly, *they* must be forced to share, for the sake and growth of all humanity). Despite Beck’s and Feinberg’s self-stated attempts to get outside of philosophy-practice-as-usual, they are unable to avoid the pitfalls of reliable narration and are therefore unable to avoid participation in the inequitable power relations that such narrative dictates.
Like the reliable philosopher of education, the reliable educator also often seeks to validate his or her claims to authority and truth by adopting the position of ‘neutral’ scientific observer, of the disembodied [White] subject who sees without being seen, who gazes on and articulates the condition of those excluded from hegemonic discourse. I think of my own practice writing this dissertation. I want to make claims, observations from my experiences as an educator. Yet at the same time, I realize the problems inherent in this. I realize that my students then become Objects of study, rather than active knowledge-making Subjects. It is I who is now making the knowledge about them. I draw conclusions from my observations, I infer what ‘good’ teaching practice must be through trial and error – that is, through assessing, measuring, and judging the responses of my students. I present my findings like a research report, as ‘facts’ about my students, untainted by my own biases.

‘Reliability’ in the Classroom

In her book *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*[^xlvii], Deborah Britzman explores the cultural myths that teachers often learn about what it means to be a ‘good’ teacher. Such myths, Britzman suggests, inculcate teachers to become ‘reliable’ imparters of knowledge, conceptualizing the subject who teaches as a universal subject, capable of remaining objective, impartial, whole, and coherent. That is, these myths help shape the teacher to conform to and reproduce a modern liberal worldview. As Britzman explains[^xlvii]

...[C]ultural myths provide a set of ideal images, definitions, justifications and measures for thought, feelings and agency that work to render as unitary and certain the reality it [*sic*] seeks to produce. Myths provide a semblance of order, control, and certainty in the face of the uncertainty and vulnerability of the teacher’s world...Cultural myths are persuasive because they recognize contradictory elements of authoritative and internally persuasive discourse. They perform the work of discourse: communities are counted and discounted; particular orientations to authority, power, and knowledge are offered; discursive practices are made available; and persons are constructed or “interpellated” as non-contradictory subjects.
The three cultural myths about teaching that Britzman discusses are “Everything Depends on the Teacher,” “The Teacher as Expert,” and “Teachers are Self-Made,” all of which authorize,

...a discourse on power, knowledge and the self that works to promote the impossible desire of assuming the self to be capable of embodying noncontradictory subjectivity and capable of asserting a form of control that depends upon the individual’s unambiguous acceptance of authoritative discourse. Such a desire makes no room for the complications we live. xlix

Implicit in these myths is the same call for univocality, unidirectionality, impartiality, and dispassion present in reliable philosophical scholarship that serves to mark bodies as ‘civilized’ or ‘uncivilized,’ ‘rational’ or ‘irrational.’

The myth that “Everything Depends on the Teacher,” as Britzman conceives it, is the belief that “unless the teacher establishes control [in the classroom], there will be no learning; and if the teacher does not control the students, the students will control the teacher. This power struggle, predicated upon the institutional expectation that teachers individually control their classes, constructs learning as synonymous with control.”l Thus, teaching becomes as much a matter of being able to manage the students effectively as it is a matter of helping them to think and learn. Here, to some extent, we revisit the paternalism of colonial discourse, in which the colonized are controlled for their own benefit, so as to raise them to the same level of civility as the colonizer, or in the case of the classroom, the teacher. From such a perspective, in order for students to gain mastery over a subject, the teacher must gain mastery over the students. This myth suggests that it is only through obedience to the teacher that the student can come to possess what it is that the teacher possesses: knowledge.

The costs associated with this purported ‘gain’ in mastery, however, are significant. Britzman points out, “The problem is that within the push to control learning, the student teacher must devalue her or his own power to explore with students the dangerous territory of the unknown.”li The learning process is therefore not a matter of collaborative creation, of uncovering something new together, but rather a matter of propagating and re-entrenching that which has already been established as knowledge. Students must pay attention to the teacher, or else they will miss the important lesson. This myth of control suggests that it is possible for the teacher to possess certain knowledge, and that it is his or her role to impart
this to students. But as Britzman asserts, “Such a construct positions uncertainty as both a character flaw and a problem of management that can be solved by what inheres in the person. In either case, there is an attempt to evade the complicated uncertainty that realizes learning in the first place.” One does not learn, Britzman objects, by simple obedience, but rather by thinking through complicated problems oneself and with others.

Further, Britzman argues, the “Everything Depends on the Teacher” approach to teaching fails to take into account external social forces that influence knowledge and learning. She writes:

The pressure to control learning, however, affects more than the student teacher’s practices. It also constructs views about knowledge and the knower. When the double pressures of isolation and institutional mandates to control force teachers to equate learning with social control, pedagogy is reduced to instilling knowledge rather than coming to terms with the practices that produce both knowledge and our relationships to it. Such pressures deny the webs of mutual dependency and the power relations that shape classroom life...Implicit in this stance is a mimetic theory of learning and of knowledge; students absorb the singular meanings of a work. Intertextuality, or the knowledge of other contexts and texts one brings to any new understanding, is unaccounted.

The myth that “Everything Depends on the Teacher” then precludes the possibility of a notion of “critical race literacy.” Maintaining control over a classroom requires that a teacher adhere to what is present and known, rather than exploring what exists between the lines or outside of a text, exploring what might be there when considered in relation to other works or to a larger social context.

This is much like the univocality and unidirectionality of reliable narration as found within academic scholarship. No room is created to ask questions about why particular people or subjects are studied, to explore curricular and pedagogical Euro-centricity, to question whose knowledge has been valued historically within North America and why. How have social relations such as race relations, colonial relations, gender relations, and class relations shaped what is being communicated in the classroom and how?

Yet it is not only this myth which prevents the development of critical race literacy in the classroom. Britzman also discusses the myth of the “Teacher as Expert,” which she
explains as the belief that teachers must know how to teach and must know “everything there is to know about the material.” The fear and anxiety rooted in not knowing what to do,” she writes, “force the student teacher to look to teaching methods as the source rather than the effect of pedagogy.” Thus, instead of shaping one’s teaching methods to achieve one’s pedagogical goals, discovering effective teaching methods can become one’s goal. That is, as Britzman contends,

There is the socialized expectation that methods can be applied like recipes and somehow remain unencumbered by the specificity of the pedagogical act. The anxiety born from authoritative discourse pushes one to take up such meanings in unitary terms. However, this approach to practice cannot accommodate the fact that methodology always means more than mere application; there are effects – both intentional and unintentional – that require consideration of how something partially, contradictorily, and incompletely works.

Here Britzman points out that how one teaches can be as important as what one teaches – that the methods used by teachers are not innocent frameworks one can simply plug information into, but rather that these methods can teach a lesson in themselves, a meta-lesson, whether intended by a teacher or not.

The classroom narratives of teachers are hardly impartial and dispassionate, but communicate particular messages about social relations through professing one’s impartiality and dispassion – who is it that gets to be impartial and dispassionate? Who gets to stand at the front of the class as expert? What sort of power dynamics enable some people to claim authority and expertise, to enter into the profession of teaching, and not others? A danger that can arise in this situation is that a reliance upon teaching methods that have ‘worked in the past’ will likely reproduce the same patterns of success and achievement as in the past, continuing to exclude students alienated from a system built upon a belief in the superiority of White Euro-North American knowledge, languages, and cultures.

Britzman draws the readers’ attention to the need for educators to think about the ways in which the method of their/our teaching informs the message. Teaching strategies are themselves shaped by a background set of beliefs about who the learners are as well as how knowledge is created and transmitted. Failure to question the assumptions underlying particular teaching strategies can potentially undermine or contradict what it is that a teacher
hopes to communicate or achieve. Britzman writes that student teachers need ways to "understand how methodology can work against itself." This is similar to my discussion of reliable narration in philosophical scholarship, in that the failure to question how one narrates knowledge or a lesson can result in one’s story being overshadowed by an over-arching meta-narrative.

The myth that “Teachers Are Self-Made” encourages teachers to take up the position of autonomous, omniscient educator, much like the reliable narrator of literature or philosophy. They are seen to possess a view from nowhere, rather than from an embodied, socially-specific location. Like some sort of deity, teachers are seen to bring themselves into existence out of nothing. The problem with such a notion is that it fails to acknowledge the social and pedagogical processes through which teachers come to acquire the knowledge and beliefs they hold, through which teachers are constructed as teachers. As Britzman asserts, this myth that “Teachers Are Self-Made” is:

...a highly individualistic explanation that produces the construct of ‘the natural teacher.’ This natural teacher somehow possesses talent, intuition, and common sense, all essential features that combine to construct a knower as subjectivist. The valorization of these qualities diminishes reflection on how we come to know and on what it is we draw upon and shut out in the practice of pedagogy. In such an essentialist discourse, the historical forces and institutional structures that naturalize this particular brand of subjectivity are denied.

This myth about teachers seems to situate them within the pyramidal shape described by Bao Bean, where there is room for only one (one knower, one truth, one speaker) at the top, unlike conceptualizing teachers within a web shape, as part of an intricate, interdependent web of relationships.

If the teacher is self-made, then what he or she teaches is thus purportedly removed from social and historical specificity. The ways in which power operates within the education system, other social institutions, and within society in general are obscured. Britzman writes:

In reality, every pedagogy is influenced by the complex social relations between teachers, students, school culture, and the larger social world...Teaching style, then, turns out to be not so much an individually determined product as a dialogic
movement between the teacher, students, the curriculum, the knowledge produced in exchange, and the discursive practices that make pedagogy intelligible. Thus the myth that teachers are self-made serves to cloak the social relationships and the context of school structure by exaggerating personal autonomy.

Like the reliable philosopher, the reliable teacher as autonomous, self-producing agent assumes the ability to control students and to control what gets to count as knowledge by adopting an unambiguous, univocal, unidirectional, “impartial” approach to teaching.

In a manner similar to the way that Britzman wants to draw attention to educational myths and practices so entrenched that they become ‘invisible’ to many teachers, Cris Mayo examines how racialized, sexualized myths about ‘civility’ become entrenched in classroom practice as a means of disciplining students’ behaviour, marking students as either deserving of reward or requiring punishment. Mayo argues that, “...[C]ivility can be seen as a central activity of discrimination,” in that:

...[T]eachers, students and administration [are expected] to be kind, respectful and tolerant of everyone without having to specify to whom they are being kind, respectful, and tolerant. This practice serves to neglect issues that appear to be in and of themselves uncivil or distasteful. If civility requires leaving unspoken things that would disturb placid social interactions, the practice of civility will necessarily leave out those whose practice disrupts the bias that presumes their absence.

Mayo asserts that expectations of civility can function to silence discussions of institutional homophobia and racism because such discussions may be seen as impolite, as uncivil complaining or criticism.

In the way that cultural myths function for Britzman, for Mayo, civility serves as a way to erase all the social, cultural, and historical specificity of educational experiences, turning teachers and students into disembodied, impartial beings with a view from nowhere. Talking about bodies, about material differences, becomes uncivilized, as those whose bodies are marked by social “difference” (i.e. marked as other than a White, heterosexual “norm”) are excluded or ignored. Furthermore, Mayo writes, civility in relations across difference entails a sense of reciprocity and obligation that can put the recipient “into an uncomfortable form of debt,” as civil attempts at friendliness become demands “for further knowledge brought on by those whose social power is essentially responsible for the divide that needs to
be crossed.\textsuperscript{lxii} The expectation of reciprocal civility thus “covers over the social divide by acting personally across a structural boundary,” as well as “by making a demand on a subordinate person to engage in a personal relationship.”\textsuperscript{lxiii}

As the work of Britzman and Mayo highlights, like ‘reliable’ narratives about what it means to be a ‘good’ philosopher, ‘reliable’ narratives about teaching employ univocality, unidirectionality, impartiality, and dispassion to inscribe teacher and student subjectivities, one’s own and that of others, as ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ ‘civilized’ or ‘uncivilized.’ In the next chapter, I explore in more detail how reliable narration comes to be tied to racialized ideas of progress, of rationality, of knowledge. What does reliable narration do for educators, students, and academics? What does one achieve by convincing the reader or listener of her or his trustworthiness as speaker? At what cost? I explore these questions here in order to hopefully shed some light on (ah ha, to enlighten) what sort of teaching and research practices least and best lend themselves to inclusive, collaborative, knowledge-making communities.
Chapter Eight: Racializing ‘Progress’ Through Reliable Narration

In this chapter, I explore further how mastery over a story is tied to, if not essential to, power. I look at how reliable narration links knowledge to racialized ideas of progress, operating as a disciplinary mechanism to determine what can be said by whom and when. Furthermore, I examine the rules of ‘good’ writing and ‘valuable’ knowledge production for the markings of race, analyzing how these rules might play a role in maintaining and justifying systemic racialized violence. I also look at the role played by univocality and dispassion in the formation of empowered narrating identities.

Reliability and White ‘Progress’

Part of the univocality and unidirectionality of reliable narrative involves convincing the reader that nothing exists beyond the narrative, that it is an entity complete unto itself. In the passages from their work cited in the previous chapter, Beck and Feinberg deny the possibility of alternative interpretations by silencing or denying the existence of oppositional voices. What I hope to accomplish by outlining the impartiality, univocality, unidirectionality, and dispassion of reliable narrative is to draw parallels between the ways these function within texts and the ways that liberal modernist ideals of personhood, reason, civilization, universality, freedom and equality function within colonial discourse and moments of racialized violence, both historical and contemporary. Returning to the ideas I discussed in chapters 2 and 3, I want to explore how the features of reliable philosophical and pedagogical narration can participate in the construction and policing of racialized borders of civility and intelligibility.

For example, the unidirectionality of reliable narratives necessitates an erasure of alternate projects and seems to imply a modernist notion of civilization that places progress on a single, linear timeline – a timeline used to determine the level of society’s advancement as human beings. Upholding one’s reliability as a narrator often means that one cannot go off on tangents, cannot stray from his or her course, cannot admit to the possibility of multiple projects in conflict with each other. In my experiences as a philosopher and
educator, particularly as an academic writing instructor, this often takes the following form (in essays, in arguments, in lesson planning…):

Main Point/Learning Objective:

{smooth transition into…..}

Supporting Argument/Concept #1
- sub-point/example/statistic
- sub-point
- sub-point

{smooth transition into…..}

Supporting Argument/Concept #2
- sub-point/example/statistic
- sub-point
- sub-point

{smooth transition into…..}

Supporting Argument/Concept #3
- sub-point/example/statistic
- sub-point
- sub-point

{smooth transition into…..}

Conclusion/Summary

There is a systematic process, much like a scientific process of experimentation (hypothesis, data/observations, conclusion) that structures and guides my practice as a philosopher, writer, and educator. I cannot infer that my experiences are universal, though I learned these practices from my teachers, who learned them from their teachers, who learned from their teachers, etc. While the practices of individual scholars, educators, and students may vary, I have observed [here I am playing scientist again] in my many years as a student and educator that a particular narrative structure (of essay, of argument, of lesson plan) is validated, rewarded, and reproduced time and time again, just as variations from this structure are disciplined and/or invalidated.
I have mastered this structure to the point of being paid (rewarded financially) to teach it to others, who are in turn rewarded with good marks, perhaps even scholarships, when they have mastered it sufficiently. Were I to teach something different, to teach students how to stray from expectations, I would be censured. If their marks were not improving, I was not doing what I was supposed to do. I would potentially lose my job, or at least receive a poor performance review, a reprimand. Just as I discipline my students to study and master the confines of academic writing, so too am I disciplined by these confines (though I still maintain the authority and legitimacy of instructor – for now, at least). And so the cycle goes, progress marches on…..

Failure to master these concepts, these structures, results in poor grades or in more extreme cases, being held back (I had to re-do my final year of high school English because I hadn’t yet grasped the above essay structure and couldn’t articulate a clear thesis statement. I wouldn’t be accepted into university unless I improved my grades, so I needed to go back, get extra help, before I could move forward. But I showed them. I learned how to write as well as or better than many of my teachers – I say this tongue in cheek, with attention to how being marked as an ‘unreliable’ writer provoked me to learn how to be even more reliable than reliable writers. I then ended up receiving an entrance scholarship to university, once I had learned how to master language, how to master the story).

The linear, teleological single-timeline idea of progress that students, academics, and educators are expected to move along is reminiscent of the discourses used to justify colonial expansion as characterized by Robert Coleman. Rationality and intelligibility (whether in the contemporary North American classroom or in the political and philosophical treatises of the Enlightenment) are/were premised upon such an idea of linear progression. I want to suggest that despite the proliferation of discourses on rights and equality, contemporary notions of reliable philosophy and education have not moved away from racialized discourses of civility and respectability that once served as tools of imperial domination.

As Stephen Nathan Haymes writes, “The Enlightenment provided a scientific and philosophical vocabulary--race, progress, civilization, savagery, nature, and so on--that belongs to and reveals a larger world of analytical categories that exists as a universe of discourse that in turn determines not only how studies are done, but also appropriate objects of study.” It is this vocabulary, Haymes suggests, that gave rise to the reliable narration of
European philosophy, which he asserts “…‘naturalizes’ nonwhites as always and forever incapable of having a perspective of their own in the world, at best only able to imitate the narrative form of whiteliness.”

Citing as examples Amélie Oskenberg Rorty’s edited collection of papers entitled *Philosophers on Education: New Historical Perspectives*, as well as the text *A Companion to Philosophy of Education*, edited by Randall Curren, Haymes argues that, “Eighteenth-century Africana thinkers’ philosophical reflections on education are conspicuously absent from the historiography of Enlightenment educational philosophy.” Writes Haymes:

The exemplars [Rorty] includes are Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Rene Descartes, John Locke, David Hume, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, John Stuart Mill, John Dewey, and Sigmund Freud—all of European descent, except for the North African Augustine. This Western European bias similarly defines Rorty's selection of significant issues--epistemology, metaphysics, morality and ethics, ontology, and social and political theory. Rorty states: "A vital and robust philosophy of education inevitably incorporates virtually the whole of philosophy; and the study of the history of philosophy mandates reflection on its implications for education." Because in fact philosophy gets conceived as the exclusive province of European thinkers, and philosophy of education as emanating from this foundation, counter perspectives are eclipsed.

Here Haymes calls into question the reliability of Rorty’s assertions to have compiled a “comprehensive” history of philosophy of education, one that covers the diversity of such a history. He suggests that instead, “counter perspectives” which might interrupt the seamless, linear narrative of White [male] dominance have simply been excluded, allowing Rorty to present a neat package as the totality of the history of Philosophy of Education. Haymes calls into question the insinuation that only White philosophers are capable of great thought, highlighting contributions to philosophy made by Africana thinkers who called into doubt modern liberal ideals such as “civility” and “progress.”

As Haymes explains:

Rorty and Curren (as well as others) fail to recognize that eighteenth-century Africana thought also emerged as part of the Enlightenment, encompassing theoretical questions raised by the historical project of conquest and colonization that began in
1492 and the subsequent struggles for emancipation. These questions reflect the "underside of modernity," rooted in how it was lived on the periphery by enslaved Africans and African-descended people in the New World.\textsuperscript{v}

From their texts on the history of Philosophy of Education, Rorty and Curren omit voices that would expose as illusion the notions of equality, freedom, personhood, civility, and progress embraced by European Enlightenment philosophers. Eighteenth-century Africana philosophers, “former transatlantic slaves who learned to read and write while in bondage,”\textsuperscript{vi} spoke instead of inequality, enslavement, subpersonhood, incivility (that of White Euro-North Americans), and torture. “The literature they produced,” writes Haymes, included spiritual autobiographies, captivity narratives, travel narratives, public letters, sea adventures, and economic success stories--a literature of diasporic movement and cultural encounter. These writings reflect multiple layers of influence, suggesting the peculiar way that Western Africa, Western Europe, and the Americas were incorporated through transatlantic slavery into the thought of authors such as Olaudah Equiano, Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, Phillis Wheatley, James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, Ignatius Sancho, John Marrant and John Jea.

Autobiographical writing was the dominant style they used to articulate questions that were characteristically philosophical and moral and ethical in concern, regarding the self-formative processes involved in the transformation of Africans into "black people."\textsuperscript{vii}

Unlike the ‘reliable,’ universalizing narratives of European philosophers such as those included by Rorty and Curren, eighteenth-century Africana philosophers often spoke from the particular, from personal experiences that undermined the ‘universality’ and ‘reliability’ of philosophical claims made by Europeans. Failing to adhere to the unspoken ‘rules’ of European philosophical narration which include impartiality, unidirectionality, and dispassion, the autobiographical writing of Africana philosophers did not fit into North-Western philosophical and pedagogical canons.

I pause here, to either question or explain or both. Am I simply repeating Rorty’s and Curren’s history of Philosophy of Education? Have I fallen into the same trap to which Taylor and Beck and Feinberg seem to have succumbed? In my critique of Enlightenment philosophers, I have focused exclusively on White European philosophers, which may make
me susceptible to the same critiques faced by Rorty and Curren, though my intention has been to undermine the authority granted to philosophers such as the ones included in their books. I wish to question who it is that is being taught to students, why these particular thinkers were chosen instead of others, as well as how their work is being taught.

Why is it that Euro-North American students are expected to learn and mimic some particular thinkers and not others? How to address the dangers and harms of White supremacy without constantly centering the conversation on whiteness? I am still caught in the muck of this question, trying to wade through the problems and avoid immobilization. I try to approach these problems by straddling two paths simultaneously (unidirectionality can be over-rated): both by questioning the authority of philosophers who have traditionally been centralized within Western/Northern philosophical and pedagogical discourse (which requires highlighting their work for a time), as well as by focusing on the contributions to philosophy and education made by those historically excluded from the canon of Western/Northern philosophical and pedagogical discourse.

Emerging from a very White, European canon, the narrative unidirectionality of much North-Western philosophy and pedagogical practice I want to argue, can be premised on a racialized idea of progress which posits White civilizations as further advanced along a single, forward-moving timeline. Moving along multiple trajectories, in multiple directions, or in a circular motion is seen as less civilized, I want to suggest, and therefore, less White. The success of a philosophical argument is measured by how well the premises lead to the conclusion, the success of a student measured by how high he or she scores on a scale of 100. Learning and arguing are frequently conceived of as forward-moving, of getting further ahead, rather than expanding sideways, moving laterally. As Gloria Anzaldúa and Cathy Bao Bean suggest, and as I discuss at the end of this chapter, mainstream Euro-American notions of progress are often teleological - that is, such notions involve moving closer and closer toward a fixed point or goal. They involve convergent rather than divergent thinking.

However, such notions of progress fail to acknowledge the benefits of lateral movement or divergence, and fail to acknowledge that sometimes the only way to go is back or sideways or under. Even Socrates, seemingly considered one of the most important philosophers of Western tradition, didn’t give answers to his interlocuters or draw conclusions for them, but instead simply posed questions, broadening the scope of possible
answers rather than narrowing or limiting them, more likely uncovering what one didn’t
know than what one did. It seems foolish (irrational, even) to assert that one must always
continue on the path he or she is walking despite discovering that one has made a wrong turn
or that one’s destination has changed. It is even more foolish to try to cover up one’s
mistakes and continue on a road that will only lead to further mistakes.

Euro-North American philosophy seldom tolerates circularity, paradox, or uncertainty
like the kind found in ‘unreliable’ narratives, yet seldom is one capable of moving forward
with certainty and clarity without reference to the past. As Thompson asserts, “…in our
studies we expect to hear from a distinctive writing persona, someone calmer, more reliable,
more open-minded than most of us ordinarily are. As philosophers, we are supposed to
aspire to a higher writing self.” I think Thompson can here be taken to mean not only that
one aspires to come across as a more ethical person in one’s writing, but also that one aspires
to come across as a better philosopher, free of the insecurity, uncertainty, and confusion that
may plague one’s inner thoughts.

In writing or delivering a lesson, one chooses to take up a particular narrative voice,
whether consciously or not, a choice that can speak as loudly as the words on a page.
However, as Minh-ha points, the reliable narrator has much invested in denying the
narrativity of one’s text, denying one’s manipulation of language to create the impression
that one has accurately reflected an objective reality, thus increasing the trustworthiness of
his or her account. Minh-ha asserts that the hegemonic male, predominantly White reliable
narrator wishes to render his language transparent,

…[B]elieving he could erase himself in his writing while clinging to the author’s
mastership. The claim to objectivity subjects words to a willed meaning-intention.
Do I make sense? Meaningful language is confined to “expression” and what appears
significant to him is its reduction to pure instrumentality; a minimum presence and
yet an effective defensive weapon. Words are solicited only for their effacement
from the page. Their materiality, their glaring bodies must somehow sink and
disappear from the field of visibility, to yield ground to the “pure presence: or that
which he attempts to capture and retain, which, however, always lies outside of
words.
The danger of this ‘invisibility’ of language and ‘invisibility’ of the reliable narrator is that it often serves to mark as less trustworthy those who are rendered hypervisible narrators based on race, gender, sexuality, class, geography, or other distinctions (as in Minh-ha’s discussions of how the term “writer” or “literature” is reserved for a White male norm, while all other writing is marked by qualifiers, i.e. Third World writing, women’s writing, Native writing, writing by racialized authors/authors of colour, writing by gay or lesbian authors, writing by authors who are disabled, etc.).

In order to challenge the inequitable power relations held in place by such attempts to efface the hegemonic (predominantly White male) author as narrator, my interest here is to look at what sort of narrative choices philosophers and educators are making, how they/we are making these choices, and what might be the repercussions of such choices. My aim is not to essentialize ‘reliable,’ linear narrative as the exclusive domain of Whites, but rather to examine racialized investments in meta-narratives of reliability and linearity. In order to claim for oneself an identity as ‘civilized,’ as ‘rational,’ (in contrast to those who are marked as ‘degenerate’ or ‘uncivilized’), one must behave according to the rules of colonial narrative, one must repeat the stories – and thereby maintain the distinctions – of what it means to progress, of how one achieves progress.

In her poem “Circle the Wagons,” Marilyn Dumont (Cree/Métis) highlights some of the dangers associated with the restrictions imposed by narrative expectation, in this case, commenting on the expectation that ‘authentically’ ‘native’ authors avoid linear movement. What also becomes clear through her poem is the way in which different narrative structures become associated with different social groups, limiting what can and cannot be said by a particular group. While the circle has come to represent or symbolize indigeneity, Dumont suggests, the straight line has come to represent the European colonizer. This relates back (circles back?) to my point about White European progress: within imperialist and neo-imperialist discourse, distinctions are drawn between those who move forward towards greater civilization and those who move backward or in circles on a spatial/ethical timeline of progress.

It is through the straight line, marching ever onward and upward towards betterment, closer to the Heavens and more ‘godly’ in one’s ways, that Whites come to know themselves/ourselves as White, as civilized and justified in their/our domination, exclusion,
and violence. At the same time, associating the ‘non-White’ ‘Other’ with circularity or regression reinforces the idea of ‘non-Whites’ as ‘backward,’ ‘sinful,’ ‘immature,’ ‘immoral,’ ‘uncivilized,’ ‘lacking progress,’ ‘archaic,’ ‘frozen in time,’ etc. [Middle- and upper-class, heterosexual, Christian, able-bodied, middle-aged, male] Whites move forward most easily within this framework, while everyone else supposedly moves backward or in circles. I quote Dumont’s poem at length here so as not to lose any of her argument:

There it is again, the circle, that goddamned circle, as if we thought in circles, judged things on the merit of their circularity….‘we are’ the circle, the medicine wheel, the moon, the womb, and sacred hoops, you’d think we were one big tribe, is there nothing more than the circle in the deep structure of native literature?....Yet I feel compelled to incorporate something circular into the text, plot, or narrative structure because if it’s linear then that proves that I’m a ghost and that native culture really has vanished and what is all this fuss about appropriation anyway?....There are times when I feel that if I don’t have a circle or the number four or legend in my poetry, I am lost, just a fading urban Indian caught in all the trappings of Doc Martens, cappuccinos and foreign films but there it is again orbiting, lunar, hoops encompassing your thoughts and canonizing mine, there it is again, circle the wagons….xii

Here I think Dumont clearly articulates the problems that can arise when narrative expectations become raced or specific to culture, particularly when the expectations are established within a context of domination and subordination. One can become constrained by these expectations, forced to choose between taking the position of non-linear, historical, ‘non-White’ ‘Other,’ or to be seen as abandoning one’s own culture in order to ‘imitate’ the linearity of ‘White ways.’

Narrative structure can thus become disciplinary, as I have been arguing; restricting what can be said by whom, even discursively shaping the identity of the speaker and of those spoken about. I argue for a critical examination of these borders, a radical questioning of how they are constructed and by whom. I want to look for cracks in the wall that keeps linearity and Whiteness on one side, // separated from // non-linearity and ‘non-whiteness’ on the other. I think Dumont’s poem exposes the complexity and paradox of liberal modernist logic, undermining the supposed rationality and objectivity upon which colonial empires
were built. As Dumont illustrates, within a White supremacist system, movement for the person of colour is construed (by Whites) as impossible, yet it is the same lack of movement (i.e. ‘laziness,’ ‘tradition,’ etc.) for which racialized groups are criticized. A White supremacist system can restrict the movement of people of colour (literally, through immigration policies and services, inequitable distribution of wealth, over-policing, etc.), then criticize racialized groups and individuals for not moving, in turn using this lack of movement or lack of ‘progress’ as justification for domination and violence.

Dumont’s poem “Circle the Wagons” describes how an indigenous author is essentialized and stereotyped if she or he writes with circular movement: his or her work is delegitimized as Literature with a capital L because of its specificity to ‘native culture(s),’ because of its lack of timeless ‘universality’ (here I also think of Minh-ha’s concerns about how to identify as a writer: as a woman writer? As a writer of colour? As a woman of colour? Or as “just” a writer?). However, if one writes with linear movement, she or he is seen to have abandoned one’s traditions, to have left one’s culture to vanish. Dumont is then put in a very difficult position, required to be sufficiently native enough to be taken seriously as a native writer, but simultaneously required to be universal enough to be taken seriously as a native writer.

Excerpt from “The Devil’s Language” by Marilyn Dumont

I have since reconsidered Eliot
and the Great White way of writing English
standard that is
the great white way
has measured, judged and assessed me all my life
by its
lily white words
its picket fence sentences
and manicured paragraphs
one wrong sound and you’re shelved in the Native Literature section
resistance writing
a mad Indian
unpredictable
on the war path
native ethnic protest
the Great White way could silence us all
if we let it
its had its hand over my mouth since my first day of school
since Dick and Jane, ABC’s and fingernail checks
syntactic laws: use the wrong order or
register and you’re a dumb Indian
dumb, drunk or violent
my father doesn’t read or write
the King’s English says he’s
dumb but he speaks Cree
how many of you speak Cree?
correct Cree not correct English
grammatically correct Cree
is there one?

As the work of Dumont suggests, while circularity, inconsistency, and ‘unreliability’ are often expected of racialized writers within a White supremacist system, White Euro-North American philosophers and educators often hold our/their work to be free from paradox, rejecting or excluding that which seems logically incoherent or circular, though really simply expecting our/their audience to overlook logical inconsistencies for the sake of preserving White power. As Albert Memmi explains in regard to colonial discourse,

...[T]he traits ascribed to the colonized are incompatible with one another, though this does not bother his [sic] prosecutor. He [the colonized] is depicted as frugal, sober, without many desires and, at the same time, he consumes disgusting quantities of meat, fat, alcohol, anything; as a coward who is afraid of suffering and as a brute who is not checked by any inhibitions of civilization, etc. It is additional proof that it is useless to seek this consistency anywhere except in the colonizer himself. At the basis of the entire construction, one finally finds a common motive; the colonizer’s economic and basic needs, which he substitutes for logic, and which shape and explain each of the traits he assigns to the colonized.

When one belongs to a dominant social group, as Fellows and Razack noted, one has the privilege of remaining unmarked by social specificity, such that one’s own social location is not seen to bear relevance to the validity of one’s claims. One is not being pulled in two directions at once, and can therefore easily travel along a ‘logical,’ unidirectional path.
For example, in the case of Taylor or Beck, they need only take into consideration the work of other White male scholars to establish their work as ‘legitimate’ philosophical inquiry. They needn’t explore or include accounts that may run contrary to their opinions for their work to be taken seriously. They are not put in a position, like Dumont, of being expected to choose between their culture or race and their inclusion in mainstream discourse. Those who construct the borders of a territory, build the walls, needn’t straddle them.

Racialized Investments in Dispassion and Univocality

Like unidirectionality and linearity, dispassion is another element of reliable philosophical and pedagogical narrative that seems tied to racialized liberal modernist ideals. This is related to my discussion of Narayan’s and Frye’s work on rationality and emotion in the previous chapter. White civility and progress is dependent upon one’s demonstration of dispassion, upon one’s ability to control his or her appetites and emotions or to control those who are supposedly incapable of controlling themselves. The paternalism of many colonial projects was premised in part on just such dispassion, on the ability of the colonizer to think and act with reason according to what is ‘best’ for the nation.

Patricia J. Williams makes these racialized investments in dispassion clear in her book The Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a Law Professor, a highly personal account of her experiences as a Black female commercial lawyer and teacher of contract and property law, in which she uses story, humour, poetry, and parable to interrupt expectations of legal-scholarship-as-usual. She asserts, “‘Legal writing presumes a methodology that is highly stylized, precedential, and based on deductive reasoning. Most scholarship in law is rather like the ‘old math’: static, stable, formal – rationalism walled against chaos. My writing is an intentional departure from that.’”xxxvi

In a discussion of legal writing and private property, Williams relates to the reader a story about being refused entrance to a Benetton clothing store by the White teenage sales clerk inside. While shopping for a Christmas gift for her mother early one Saturday afternoon, Williams rang the buzzer to gain admittance into the store, only to have the sales clerk mouth in response, “We’re closed.” I should explain here that the door was kept locked
at all times, and that potential customers needed to be buzzed in by the staff, much like in an apartment building. Williams was enraged by the young man’s refusal to permit her entry to the store, a decision seemingly based solely on her appearance. She first recorded her passionate, emotionally-charged account of the events in her journal, which later turned into an essay for a symposium on Excluded Voices sponsored by a law review. Upon receiving the first edit of her essay, however, Williams realized that her passion had been silenced:

> From the first page to the last, my fury had been completely cut out. My rushing, run-on-rage had been reduced to simple declarative sentences. The active personal had been inverted in favor of the passive impersonal. My words were different; they spoke to me upsidedown. I was afraid to read too much of it at a time – meanings rose up at me oddly, stolen and strange. xvii

Here Williams offers an example of how her impassioned, angry response to explicit racism was completely stripped of its emotional import by the editors, her rage ‘brought under control’ for the readers. However, a dispassionate re-telling of the story not only undermines the immensity of the offence, but also invalidates her initial response. Though the law review was calling for the inclusion of “Excluded Voices,” such voices were to be included only within certain parameters, shaped by the voices of the editors with their readers in mind (who were presumably the usual contributors, the “Included Voices,” participants in dominant [White?] discourse). This calling for the recognition and inclusion of “Excluded Voices” seems similar to what Taylor, Beck, and Feinberg are up to in their work as well.

While the editors of the journal to which Williams submitted her article may have wanted to include historically marginalized voices in their review, they did not want to marginalize or alienate historically ‘centred’ voices. In addition to forbidding Williams to refer to Benetton by name in her essay, two days after her essay was sent to press, she received copies of the final proofs, in which all references to her race had been eliminated, as it was “against ‘editorial policy’ to permit descriptions of physiognomy” (again, this is the language of equality taken up by Taylor and Bouchard to invalidate the claims of Muslim women, and by Beck to imply discrimination against White men). Williams writes:

> “I realize,” wrote one editor, “that this was a very personal experience, but any reader will know what you must have looked like when standing at the window.” In a telephone conversation to them, I ranted wildly about the significance of such an
omission. “It’s irrelevant,” another editor explained in a voice gummy with soothing and patience; “It’s nice and poetic,” but it doesn’t advance the discussion of any principle…This is a law review, after all.” Frustrated, I accused him of censorship; calmly he assured me it was not. “This is just a matter of style,” he said with firmness and finality. xviii

As Williams makes clear in her text, the dispassion and ‘racelessness’ insisted upon by the editors of the law review, both in their edits and in their approach to Williams’s anger, was hardly a matter of neutrality, but rather a racialized strategy used to silence dissent to White supremacy.

By erasing race and passion in Williams’ essay, the editors manage to uphold the illusion of law as ‘neutral’ and ‘objective,’ the illusion that justice is equally and universally accessible and applicable to all. They want to suggest that this situation could have happened to anyone – that this example can be used to make an abstract point about property law in general. But the point of Williams’ essay is that such a situation could not have happened to just anyone – that such a situation is race-specific. The journal editors, however, deny the significance of race in this scenario for the ‘benefit’ of their readers who seek a disembodied, abstracted account of the law. Though as Toni Morrison suggests, “The world does not become raceless or will not become unracialized by assertion. The act of enforcing racelessness in literary discourse [or legal discourse, in Williams’s case] is itself a racial act.” xix

The dispassionate narrative insisted upon by Williams’ editors operates as a moment of racialized violence, as Williams’s story is appropriated by the law review and her experience of racialized oppression is erased. Williams remarks, “What was most interesting to me in this experience was how the blind application of principles of neutrality, through the device of omission, acted either to make me look crazy or to make the reader participate in old habits of cultural bias.” xx The editors’ account of her experience as a moment of racism was negated by the law review, rendering her anger ‘inappropriate’ and ‘uncivil’ (it could have happened to anyone – why was she being so ‘hypersensitive’? Maybe she is just another ‘angry Black woman’ unable to approach these situations ‘calmly’ and with ‘reason.’ Why is she so quick to accuse White people of malevolence?), while also rendering her interpretation as a ‘mistake’ (she obviously didn’t understand what was happening, the sales
clerk’s actions had nothing to do with her being Black, she just didn’t get it – she couldn’t think it through ‘rationally’).

Like Dumont, Williams becomes trapped by expectations regarding “style” for a law review: if she wants to talk about law, she can’t talk about being Black. If she wants to talk about being Black, she is not talking about law. Up until fairly recently, the same could also be said of much Euro-North American philosophy it seems. To bring in the personal or the specific meant that one could not reason in abstraction, and therefore supposedly could not reach a conclusion that would be applicable as a general principle. While philosophers such as Kant or J.S. Mill sought universal moral maxims, Williams here highlights that the same action can bear a much different moral significance depending one’s particular social identities such as race. Had Williams been a White, middle-/upper middle-class professor denied access to the Benetton store, the moral import of the situation would be much different: the situation could not be seen as an act of systemic discrimination. Discourses of ‘objectivity,’ ‘neutrality,’ and ‘dispassion,’ can thus serve to mask hierarchical social relations and the injustices that result.

In addition to dispassionate narrative, the univocality of reliable narration can also participate in racialized violence, as suggested in the work of Toni Morrison and Achille Mbembe. To help explain more fully how univocality serves to establish a (racial) hierarchy of discourses, I turn to Cathy Bao Bean’s discussion of “cultural shapes.” Born in China and moving to the United States at a young age, Bao Bean contrasts her American identity with her Confucian identity in her essay, “Figuring the Cultural Shape We’re In.”xxi Here she discusses how Euro-North American society is generally premised on a pyramidal shape, in that it is organized according to hierarchies with one or few at the top (one president, one god/God, one winner, a board of directors, a panel of experts, etc.). Individuals are taught to strive ever upward and onward, aiming to be the one in charge of the many. She explains how North American organizations and institutions such as businesses, schools, religion, etc. are structured in such a way that the pinnacle of success is autonomy and freedom from the governance of others.

“In this hierarchy,” she writes, “individualized power over self, others, information, intelligence, and objects is concentrated and we rank and rate relative merit by measuring the scope and nature of domination.”xxii This hierarchy is present in liberal Enlightenment ideals
of ‘civilized’ individuals and nations, ever striving upwards and onwards. As Bao Bean explains, in this pyramidal shape, “Progress is linear and upward so we ‘climb the ladder of success...The most desirable [position, the one at the top] is primarily a matter of exclusion, and choosing only one [person, identity, idea, value] is the first method of expressing our opinions and, thereby, describing our individuality.” The goal of this pyramidal shape is for an individual to rise above the pluralities at the bottom to reach a singular point or apex at the top. This is akin to discussions offered by Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi, and Meyda Yeğenoğlu of the liberal modernist project to separate the White, Euro-North American self from the ‘indistinguishable masses’ of the colonies, as addressed earlier in this dissertation.

For Bao Bean, it seems that the pyramid shape represents not only the shape of North American institutions and cultural structures, but also perceptions of the self – that is, the pyramid represents autonomy, freedom from constraint and self-actualization as the ultimate good (at the top of the pyramid, away from the plurality of others). She remarks:

The upper levels of the North American (socioeconomic and political) pyramid are overwhelmingly occupied by white people, who consider the...values, norms, and practices [of the pyramid shape] “basic.” To be accepted into the upper echelons of this pyramid, you must, philosophically and practically, embrace the dominant cultural values, norms, and practices. There is no contradiction between the facts that so many of us begin our journeys from diverse starting points. The dominant culture devalues alternative cultures and represses diversity since the latter makes “no sense” to or for human beings living and striving in a pyramidal world.

Bao Bean’s notion of cultural shapes helps to flesh out Daniel Coleman’s explanation of how Enlightenment ideology mapped physical and cultural differences on a moral-historical vertical timeline.

While Coleman asserts that this single, isochronous (moral/spatial/temporal) timeline of progress involves a sense of progress as moving up and moving forward, having height and length, Bao Bean’s cultural pyramid adds the dimension of depth (or lack thereof at the top). What Bao Bean’s pyramid emphasizes in a way that Coleman’s timeline does not, is the necessary singularity, the necessary exclusion involved in moving closer toward an ideal. She contrasts this pyramid with what she characterizes as the web shape of her Confucian self, which takes into account the complex interdependent relationships that
human beings have with each other. Though running the risk of reinforcing West versus East cultural dichotomies (the pyramid versus the web), I think Bao Bean’s conception of North American culture as pyramidal is helpful in thinking about how univocality helps establish a hierarchy of discourses, in that within the hierarchy of the pyramid, there is ultimately only one at the top. Thus, within reliable scholarship and pedagogy, discourses are ranked in a hierarchy, though there is only one voice represented as the true voice, much like in Bao Bean’s cultural pyramid.

Toni Morrison seeks to trouble this univocality of White Americans as the pinnacle of the discursive pyramid in her book Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination, troubling the knowledge reflected in much American literary history and criticism which “holds that traditional, canonical American literature is free of, uninformed, and unshaped by the four-hundred-year-old presence of, first, Africans and then African-Americans in the United States.” Morrison exposes reading and writing as processes of decision making, processes of deciding what/who gets to be represented and what/who can be excluded. She draws particular attention to what has been left out of the story, giving meaning to the social relationships previously denied significance. As Morrison highlights, a seamless text that is apparently free from disruption, free from contrary voices, is an illusion, like a magician who claims to make a ball disappear, but really just hides it up her/his sleeve while distracting the audience.

Like Salman Rushdie asserts in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, to deny partiality, to deny the politics and contradiction inherent in the performance of philosophy and education, is akin to denying that one has to eat or sleep; it is an attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of another. Edward Said offers a helpful explanation of the dangers of univocality using Joseph Conrad’s novella Heart of Darkness as an example. Said writes:

…[I]f we cannot truly understand someone else’s experience and if we must therefore depend upon the assertive authority of the sort of power that Kurtz wields as a white man in the jungle or that Marlow, another white man, wields as narrator, there is no looking for other, non-imperialist alternatives; the system has simply eliminated them and made them unthinkable. The circularity, the perfect closure of the whole thing is not only aesthetically but also mentally unassailable.
Reliable narration, which often provides the reader or the student with no possible alternative story, can dangerously assert a singular dominant perspective, shutting out and erasing the voices and bodies of those who do not fit neatly into the narrative.

However, as I have mentioned earlier, reliable narration can at times be useful, perhaps even necessary, as a means of warping the circulation of power, as a method of making authoritative claims about social injustice and racialized violence (such as I attempt in this dissertation). Also, even consciously unreliable narration can easily slip into unconscious or dysconscious reliable narration, such that a text is neither cleanly one nor the other. My point is not that reliable narration is always harmful or should be rejected or that it can even be avoided, but rather that it is important to take notice of how one chooses to narrate a text and to contemplate what sort of larger implications such choices might have.

Like Morrison, Achille Mbembe also draws attention to problems with the univocality of reliable narration, suggesting that univocality is used to “take possession, not of a particular individual, but of a collective subject,” in order to “circumscribe this collective subject’s connections with itself and with the world.” In Mbembe’s terms, the reliable narrator assumes a position of a monotheistic divinity who is capable of speaking (or desires to speak) others, and him/herself, into existence. That is, in the case of Taylor, while he seeks to speak in place of, on top of, and on behalf of historically marginalized groups, he seeks to speak them into being—in the sense that through his speech he attempts to define the limits of their existence—at the same time that he negates the possibility of their existence, or the possibility of an existence outside of the parameters he constructs. Similarly, it is through Beck’s call for pluralist scholarship that he ‘gives’ voice to the voiceless, that he represents the un(der)-represented. Thus, the reliable narrator attempts to create a world in which he/she is the sole referent, defining the limits and inhabitants of that world. The danger here is that reliable narration, when used by White scholars, has the potential to perpetuate systemic racialized violence by negating the existence of counter-hegemonic claims, by negating the subjectivity of marginalized individuals and groups by assuming authority over the story.

Paul C. Taylor offers a helpful example of this in his discussion of the film *The Last King of Scotland*. He writes,

*The Last King of Scotland* seems to be about former Ugandan dictator Idi Amin,
who once declared, in jest, that he was the last king of Scotland (to insert himself into the royal lineage of the United Kingdom). But the film is really about a Scotsman named Nicholas Garrigan, who becomes Amin’s personal physician…][T]he film is not a portrait of Amin. It is a portrait of Garrigan coming to terms with Amin, or with his investment in Amin, or with the blowback from the colonial enterprise as represented by Amin. The Ugandan dictator becomes part of the backdrop, as is so often the case in the tradition of cinematic narrative that I call the drama of moral gentrification.xxxi

Here Paul Taylor demonstrates how univocality/a hierarchy of discourses can be used to transform a narrative about a Ugandan dictator into the story of a Scottish physician and his thoughts on/relationship to Uganda.

The story is thus ‘universalized,’ as it is shown to apply not just to Ugandans, but to Europeans as well. Paul Taylor further explains:

In moral gentrification films, like Mississippi Burning or Dances with Wolves, modernity’s “race problems” appear as real problems for people of all colors. But the narratives of these films explore these problems principally as challenges to the self-understanding and self-respect of essentially blameless whites, who have to find some way to justify themselves on a problematic moral landscape. The darker peoples who also occupy this landscape, and struggle with its problems, recede into the background, becoming an undifferentiated mass, or a few bit players on the broader stage of white redemption…White characters effectively gentrify these worlds and moments, making them palatable as cinematic and narrative phenomena by importing and working out their own problems on this colonized terrain.xxxii

While Paul Taylor is referring to cinematic narratives, I think his argument holds for scholarly and pedagogical narratives as well. Though Charles Taylor and Clive Beck attempt to open up a discussion on the importance of including diverse voices in scholarship, in effect they seem to be largely speaking of and to themselves, turning a story about under-represented voices back again into a story about over-represented voices, as they seek to “justify themselves on a problematic moral landscape.xxxiii

Similarly, there are countless narratives of the White-teacher-as-inner-city-school-hero, who must come to grips with the social pressures that negatively impact their students’
academic performance and ultimately win the community’s respect and admiration. See for example, Dangerous Minds starring Michelle Pfeiffer, Music of the Heart starring Meryl Streep, Freedom Writers starring Hilary Swank, The Ron Clark Story starring Matthew Perry, and The Principal starring Jim Belushi. However, while these stories and others like them not only serve as a White co-optation of narratives supposedly about low-income racialized youth, but also function to perpetuate imperialist myths about the White educator as ‘saviour.’ In these stories, the White educator is portrayed as transforming ‘tough,’ ‘degenerate,’ (raced and classed) adolescents into ‘successful,’ ‘civilized’ students through tireless effort and dedication, for which her or his students are effusively grateful. It is through these narratives that White educators come to know themselves as ‘justified’ in their mission, as heroes doing the right thing. Rather than being stories about the systemic obstacles that racialized youth encounter in the education system, these narratives end up being about the great success (and progress) of White educators (as contrasted against the ‘failure’ and ‘lack of progress’ in the racialized communities in which they work).

THE WHITE TEACHER’S BURDEN

the white teacher’s solution
to the white teachers’s burden
   No.1
   (as I – Helen – see it)

TO ENLIGHTEN:
“To make understand, give spiritual insight to;
To make free from confusion or ambiguity

To supply with light; illuminate; as, the sun enlightens the earth;
To shed the light of truth and knowledge upon;”

ENLIGHTENING
“Tending to increase knowledge or dissipate ignorance;
Uplifting so as to encourage intellectual or moral improvement.”

To Enlighten
To make lighter
Shed light upon darkness
To make bright
Brighter
More intelligent
To dispel ignorance
(from our class
room
from our class
to make room
for more en-lightened classes

To shine on
Shining beacon of hope
Hope in the darkness
Leading out of darkness
into light
Lightness

As Gloria Ladson-Billings writes, “The hegemony of the dominant [Euro-American epistemological] paradigm makes it more than just another way to view the world – it claims to be the only legitimate way to view the world.”xxxvii What I want to get at here is not that reliable narration as a narrative strategy is always harmful, but rather that when reliable narration is used, whether consciously or dysconsciously, to establish whiteness as a norm and to establish the modern liberal views of White Euro-Americans as the only legitimate way to view the world, reliable narration becomes very dangerous. If approached as a particular point of view located in a particular historical, social, and cultural context, reliable narration seems to be an effective way to challenge injustice.

It is important, I think, to be able to make certain universal claims and to privilege particular discourses at times, such as the claim that racism exists, for example, and that something might be an instance of racism (i.e. in Williams’ story about her experience at Benetton and the reaction of her editors to the story, it is essential to the story that she be able to write from a position of authority that yes, this was a moment of racism, and that yes, the reaction of the editors was reflective of the way in which racism operates on a systemic level, and that yes, her interpretation of the event should be privileged over the more ‘neutral’ interpretation offered by the editors. Here it is important that Williams’ account be taken as a reliable account of the events). The problem arises, I believe, when reliable narration is used, whether consciously or dysconsciously, to uphold inequitable power relations by
erasing, undermining, or disciplining alternate voices. In his work, Charles Taylor’s voice becomes the One Voice, the one who speaks for the many, who circumscribes the existence of others, as Mbembe would argue.

My concern is how reliable philosophical and pedagogical narratives are used as a means through which to reinforce White ‘superiority’ and how the features of unidirectionality, univocality, dispassion, and impartiality can serve to eclipse and/or discipline voices of dissent. Such a concern is not merely discursive however, but can also have material consequences. As Paul Taylor writes of European colonial powers and their former colonies, as well as of settler or “master race” societies like Canada and the U.S.,

We pledge in these places to do better, to come to grips with our histories and transcend them, and to make ourselves into viable multiracial democracies. But we can pursue this aspiration responsibly only if we excavate the legacies of the past, unearthing the deposits that the past has left on our economies, cultures, and psyches. This means, among other things, attending to the specific perceptual lenses and models to which our colonial legacies predispose us in our attempts to interpret and navigate the social world around us.xxxviii

“Viable multiracial democracies” can thus only be realized by critically examining the construction of values that served to justify colonial expansion, values such as civility and forward-moving ‘progress’ (unidirectionality), ‘objective,’ ‘rational,’ discourse (dispassion, impartiality), and a notion of human equality that assumed the possibility of universal principles and the ability of the One to speak for the many (univocality). I am not suggesting here that reason or equality or forward-movement are fundamentally bad and should be done away with, but I want to question how they are constructed as values in terms of who gets to be rational, equal, or progressive and how.
Chapter Nine: (In)Conclusion – A Call to Action

The truth about stories is that that's all we are.¹

- Thomas King

The Limitations of Unreliability

My aim in this dissertation has not been to put forward an easy solution to the problems that arise from reliable narration. Nor has it been to provide an easy answer as to how to end widespread systemic racialized violence. Instead, I advocate for critical reflection on how reliable narration can serve as a disciplinary measure to construct particular subjectivities as ‘civilized’ or ‘uncivilized,’ ‘rational’ or ‘irrational,’ ‘respectable’ or ‘degenerate,’ ‘person’ or ‘subperson,’ to severe material effect. I invite the reader to reflect on what it is that a person/we/they/I/you gains through narrative impartiality, univocality, unidirectionality, and dispassion, and to what result. What role does reliable narration serve in the circulation of sovereign power, disciplinary power, and biopower? It is this attention to narrative and the role that race plays in shaping narratives, narrators, and audiences that is the basis of critical race literacy, as I want to understand it.

But my aim is not simply to offer a theoretical analysis of philosophical and pedagogical discourses – it is a call to action. It is a call to educators, academics, and students to examine the ways that we/they/you/I write, read, teach, and learn, to examine what sort of ‘civilizing’ practices they/we/I/you might be participating in. In what ways does my/your/their/our work function to discipline yourself/myself/ourselves/themselves and others through a negotiation of the boundaries of respectability, civility, and intelligibility? What changes can we/they/I/you make in the way we practice philosophy and pedagogy to warp the way power circulates in the racial state?

Initially, I thought the solution was to adopt an intentionally unreliable narrative voice. I structured my entire dissertation around this idea. While I still want to suggest, following the work of Audrey Thompson and Patricia J. Williamsii, that intentional unreliable narration (calling into question one’s authority or trustworthiness as a narrator) can be an important strategy for warping how power operates in a text, I do not want to adopt this as
the ultimate solution to ending social violence. As Sherene Razack very helpfully pointed out to me, a call for unreliable narration can carry with it many limitations and dangers. For whom is it desirable and why? Assuming the possibility of choice in whether or not one writes reliably or unreliably assumes a narrator who can claim a reliable, trustworthy voice—that is, it assumes a narrator who is not already marked as unreliable regardless of choice.iii For example, for those youth I’ve worked with who are deemed by their teachers to have insufficient knowledge or skill, it would be very dangerous to further, intentionally, undermine their authority as narrators and knowers. They would be taken even less seriously and receive poorer marks. Their intentionally unreliable narrative would likely be taken as proof of their incapability.

Thus, in calling for unreliable narrative as a solution to social injustice, to whom would I be speaking? For whose benefit? Would it simply be a matter of speaking to other White, heterosexual, university-educated, middle-class, enabled, Christian, English-speaking, North American scholars like myself about what we/they can do to become better White, heterosexual, university-educated, middle-class, enabled, Christian, English-speaking, North American people? Would it simply provide White people with an opportunity for us/them to feel good about themselves/ourselves as anti-racist scholars and educators (like in Marilyn Frye’s example of getting together with other White colleagues to discuss what they can do about racism—an act that invited anger from a racialized colleague)?

Furthermore, can a call for partiality, polyvocality, multidirectionality, and passion (in opposition to the features of reliable narration) lead to the essentialization and fetishization of voices historically under-represented within hegemonic Euro-North American discourses? That is, does a call for plurality lead to the problem discussed by Lynet Uttal (as cited in Razack) about Anglo-feminist groups, as I mentioned earlier, of “passive listening to diverse voices,” in which there is “seldom any heated discussion or disagreement,” but only “‘blank looks of supportive listening’ and the absence of critical engagement with the ideas proposed”iv? Might a call for plurality and polyvocality lead to the valuation of voices for their “difference” rather than for their claims to truth?

Though intentional unreliable narration has its limitations as a tool for challenging systemic injustice and for intervening in networks of disciplinary power and biopower, as Patricia J. Williams demonstrates in her book The Alchemy of Race and Rights: Diary of a
Law Professor”, it can at times be a very effective means of disrupting how power operates within scholarship and within the classroom. Kal Alston similarly highlights the need for scholars to pay attention to their/our assumptions and narrative strategies in her essay “Race Consciousness and Philosophy of Education,” vi presented at the 2005 meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society. She writes,

There is room both for asking new questions in old forms, for example, questioning assumptions about race, who is raced in particular contexts, what sort of category race is, whether its status is singular or multiple, how particular American histories have led to its idiosyncratic paranoias about race -- especially between black and white. At the same time, the opportunity arises to question the practices of philosophy itself, the comfort of its language, privileges, and strategies and how being a philosopher can itself evade the question of race by falling back on history and custom. Philosophers can begin by questioning their own presumed racelessness. vii

Alston calls for philosophers to take a metanarrative approach to their/our work, examining what assumptions about race lie behind our/their words.

Such an approach, she suggests, requires questioning how we do what we do as philosophers. It requires paying attention to the sort of narrative strategies we use to communicate our ideas. Alston recommends that philosophers,

…[S]hould consider broadening their rhetorical and logical strategies of communication and understanding -- beyond pure linguistic argumentation -- to include other forms of intellectual engagement -- performance, narrative, visual texts -- which nevertheless engage the philosophically critical imagination...[T]hey should submit to the scrutiny of a prophetic, embodied, pragmatic practice -- which interrogates experience, allows for the catalytic expression of affect, and challenges the intellectual niches in which we hide from ourselves and from the other. viii

Like Williams and Thompson, Alston recognizes the potential benefits that unreliable narration can bring to the field of Philosophy of Education and to the practice of anti-racist philosophy.

Unreliable narration as a narrative strategy, like reliable narration, is thus neither wholly ‘good’ nor ‘bad,’ but produces complicated effects that can be simultaneously beneficial and harmful. As Thompson states:
There is, of course, no perfect solution to our limitations as academic narrators. Any new innovation may introduce some new form of flattening out, seductive clarity, comforting intelligibility. The unreliable narrator is only one device for engaging in more complex reader-writer relationships; it is scarcely an unproblematic option, particularly for those with relatively little professional or political power.… Nonetheless, it is worth thinking about our collective assumptions both that we as readers know when to trust a writer’s voice and that we as writers should try to earn our reader’s trust.ix

Thus, moving away from the dangers inherent in reliable narration is not simply a matter of moving towards unreliable narration. This is neither always desirable nor even always possible.

Students, scholars, and educators are inevitably part of the machinery of reliable narration, being both inscribed as subjects as well as inscribing subjectivity (their/our own and that of others) through the disciplinary mechanisms of impartiality, univocality, unidirectionality, and dispassion. Reliable narration operates as a knowledge apparatus that helps circulate power along lines of civility, rationality, and respectability. It operates as a tool of sovereign power, helping to distinguish who deserves what by establishing the limits of rational discourse and thereby the limits of moral consideration, helping to define what reason looks like, who has it, and thus who is worthy of the rights of full personhood (if Man is a rational animal, one must be defined as rational to be defined as fully human).

Furthermore, reliable narration also operates as a tool of disciplinary power, as a method of policing and altering the behaviour of both self and others. What must one do or how must one act to be considered civilized, rational, and respectable enough to be granted full moral status as a human being? How must one write? How must one teach? How must one study? To what extent is one’s moral status negotiated through a comparison between self and other (I am/We are more civilized, more rational, more respectable than others)? How is this comparison achieved through reliable narration (my/our voice is more trustworthy, more objective, less invested, less biased)? And how do the identities negotiated through reliable narration translate into racialized violence?

As I hope to have shown through the work of Charles Mills, Daniel Coleman, Achille Mbembe, David Theo Goldberg, Meyda Yeğenoğlu, and others, it is only through much
violence that autonomous, individual, free, rational, progressive, civilized, respectable, and moral White Euro-North American identities are formed. As European Enlightenment philosophers and scientists took part in articulating racial hierarchies that became linked to a vertical spatial/temporal/moral timeline of progress, they helped establish the limits of civility in such a way that violence was permitted, if not required, against racialized groups and individuals marked as further down/back on the timeline. Here I don’t think it is important to determine which came first, racialized violence or the formation of civilized identities through reliable narration, as they both seem to be dependent upon each other. That is, racialized violence is justified through the establishment of ‘innocent,’ ‘civilized’ identities that are required to censure or ‘educate’ those people marked as ‘bad’ and ‘uncivilized,’ while ‘innocent,’ ‘civilized’ identities are formed through creating clear, distinct boundaries between self and other through violence.

Yet not only is reliable narration a tool of sovereign power and disciplinary power, but also a tool of biopower - a tool of measurement, assessment, diagnosis, and ‘treatment.’ For example, within an educational context, a student is determined to be ‘normal’ or ‘abnormal,’ ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’ through a complicated set of processes (tests, report cards, standardized tests such as those administered by Ontario’s Education Quality and Accountability Office [EQAO], curriculum documents that establish learning objectives for each grade, measures to diagnose learning disabilities, etc) used to measure how closely one approximates a ‘reliable’ (Euro-North American White) norm.

Once a student’s abilities have been diagnosed through observation and assessment, a suitable treatment is recommended – remedial reading classes, medication for problems such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), placement in ‘basic’/non-academic stream classes, the creation of an Individualized Education Program (IEP), suspension from school, expulsion from school, psychiatric treatment, amongst many other examples. All of this to ensure that certain learning standards – standards of what it means to be an educated person – are met. Those who threaten the success of other students, who threaten the health of the classroom and education system, who threaten the productivity of the state because they fail to fit a White Euro-North American norm of ‘rationality’ and ‘civility,’ are pushed out – out of class into the hallway, the principal’s office, or ‘special’ classes; out of school
through suspension, expulsion, or failing grades; out of the system by being pushed towards the ‘alternative’ school system or schools for students with learning disabilities.

Not only does reliable narration, as a means of establishing rationality and civility, function as a tool of biopower within the classroom, but also in society in general as well, serving to justify both intra-national and inter-national racialized violence. I contend that the reliable narration of philosophy and education participates in a larger discourse that marks bodies as ‘rational’ or ‘irrational,’ ‘healthy’ or ‘unhealthy,’ as ‘threatening’ or ‘unthreatening’ to the health of the state. This is the discourse that operates, for example, in Bush’s marking of nations as part of a “Coalition of the Willing” or an “Axis of Evil,” justifying war against the nation of Iraq. Within this framework, nations are depicted as either moral, rational, and civilized, or mentally unsound, barbaric, evil. Similarly, Canadian peacekeeping violence in Somalia is justified on the basis of preserving the security of the peacekeepers and the security of the state, as Sherene Razack has highlighted in *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping and the New Imperialism*. Furthermore, it is also the same or similar discourse at work in marking high suicide rates amongst Aboriginal youth in Canada and high rates of gun violence amongst racialized youth in Toronto as ‘epidemics,’ threatening the health of the nation and requiring monitoring and intervention by the state.

Where to go from here then, given that there is nowhere ‘outside’ of these discourses of racialized civility and rationality, in that even if one were to try not to participate in proliferating these discourses (through unreliable narration, for example) we all continue to be marked by them? I do not think that there is any one, or only one, way of “getting it right.” To suggest the possibility of a definitive solution would be to perpetuate the violence of reliable narration discussed earlier, I think, in that it suggests the possibility of arriving at a point of certainty or closure, a point of final universal Truth on a teleological timeline of progress.
What Now?

As Audrey Thompson remarks in her essay “Tiffany, Friend of People of Color: White Investments in Antiracism,”:

[White] scholars need to trouble the expectation that we can know exactly what will count as antiracist in every situation and thus can always act blamelessly. When we insist, in advance, on an outcome that guarantees that we will feel good about ourselves – that guarantees that we will feel growth without loss – we refuse the possibility of a response....Knowing the right answers in advance confines morality and politics to a narrow place.\textsuperscript{xi}

Paradoxically, it seems that the most generative solution to the civilizing tendencies of reliable narration lies in recognizing the impossibility of there being a singular approach to anti-racist scholarship and pedagogy. This chapter is not an end then, but a beginning.

Part of the project of critical race literacy, I believe, is learning to read claims to certainty, to linear progress, to universality, as central to the circulation of power within a racial state. In drawing attention to philosophical and pedagogical discourses and practices as narrative, I hope to have decoded for my readers some of the ways in which systemic racism and inequitable power relations are upheld through reliable narration. That is, I hope to have illustrated how race thinking and imperialist discourses of civility versus savagery and respectability versus degeneracy can appear in the metanarrative of a text to discipline what can be said and by whom, as well as to determine the legitimacy of one’s claims to full personhood. I contend that the univocality, unidirectionality, impartiality, and dispassion of some reliable narration, though seemingly proof of a scholar’s or educator’s ‘objectivity’ and ‘neutrality,’ are actually central to the establishment and maintenance of racial hierarchies, with an unmarked, ‘universal,’ ‘all-seeing’ White individual at the top.

Through an analysis of the investments of scholars, teachers, and students in reliable narration, including investments in the ‘invisibility’ of the narrator behind one’s philosophy or pedagogy, I hope to have offered the reader a critical evaluation of the ways in which dominance and subordination, disciplinary power and biopower may be played out and reinforced at a meta-narrative level, beyond the explicit content of the text yet still apparent in its form. As Maureen Ford suggests in her article “Situating Knowledges as Coalition
Work™, it is critical to pay attention to the ways in which one’s social situatedness impacts what and how one perceives – one’s narratives will inevitably be shaped by and shaping of her or his social subjectivity. Being a responsible “epistemic agent,” Ford remarks, requires a reconceptualization of how knowledge is made and by whom, so that knowledge-making communities come to be seen as “multiple,” “interactive,” “performative,” and “layered.” This means that what one can claim to know about a story is shaped by and shapes how and by whom it is told.

Dwight Boyd takes up a similar concern with the importance of paying attention to how one’s work is shaped by and shapes his or her social identities in his essay “The Place of Locating Oneself(Ves)/Myself(Ves) in Doing Philosophy of Education.” Here he asserts that in approaching education as an inherently moral endeavour, “I can no longer look at issues from the outside, bracketing myself from the picture. I am part of the picture. And the picture frames me from the point of view of real others who are an unavoidable and interactive part of the picture.” Though he may not term it as such, here Boyd appears to be concerned with the invisibility that reliable narration affords a philosopher, particularly a White male philosopher such as himself. He highlights the need for philosophers of education to contemplate how their/our own social identities inscribe how we/they understand knowledge and what it means to be educated, as well as who we/they take ourselves/themselves and others to be.

Further, Boyd highlights the importance for philosophers of education, such as himself,

...[T]o accept that the cultural meanings which identify my certainty are nothing more than my certainty, and always suspect as such. My views about education - as that which facilitates the development of fully human persons - are apprehended as part of me in Gadamer's sense of "prejudices." However, this notion of prejudices should not be seen as a tool-box for meaning-making that I can pick up or leave behind at will. Rather, the tool-box is me; there is no "I" that can be so conveniently separated from its prejudices. Thus, as Ford and Boyd highlight, there is no innocent place outside of complex networks of social power dynamics from which to speak about how to get philosophy of education ‘right.’
Given the complex web of social relationships in which a student, teacher, or scholar inevitably finds oneself, there is no easy escape from the processes and mechanisms of sovereign power, disciplinary power, and biopower that circumscribe these relationships. Perhaps the best that we/they as scholars, educators, and students can do is to pay attention to how we are formed by and participate in forming the processes and mechanisms through which power circulates. In her essay “Unveiling Technologies of Power in Classroom Organization Practice,” Maureen Ford invites scholars and teachers to,

...[N]otice the extent to which our work involves us in the production, performance, policing and play of discourses (vocabularies as well as frames of reference, practice and order). The discourses that are most typically dangerous, because they are most typically normalized, include those of function, identity, assessment, and organization. The practices by which we divide groups of participants, the practices by which we identify behaviours or people as normal and others as special or deviant, the practices by which we identify success are all as risky as they are pedagogically useful. We must visualize the schemes that organize and shape our responsibility to invite, cajole, sometimes coerce and otherwise induce students, our audience, to internalize and become skilled practitioners of educational discourse. xvii

As I have been suggesting throughout this dissertation, this process of normalization, assessment, and organization serves not only to differentiate between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ students or ‘good’ and ‘bad’ philosophers, but also to mark raced, classed, gendered, and sexualized bodies as belonging to one category or another, as either the ‘norm’ or ‘other than the norm,’ as ‘rational’ and ‘intelligible’ or ‘irrational’ and ‘unintelligible.’

‘Reliable’ narratives about what constitutes ‘good’ or ‘successful’ philosophy, teaching, and learning thus instil educators, academics, and students with the responsibility to make others rational and intelligible through a process of reward and punishment.

Intervening in the ways that power circulates in the classroom, in the academy, and in society thus requires an examination of the myths and beliefs that underlie our/their philosophical and pedagogical practices, to intentionally foreground the structures and mechanisms that have helped to shape their/our work and performance as educators, as academics, and as students. Like Fellows and Razack in their discussion of White identity formation,xviii Ford highlights the need to mark processes of social dominance and subordination which
previously remained unmarked, that is, to pay attention to the ways in which ideology and power operate within classrooms and within society.

Ford illuminates some of the problems with the ‘reliable’ performance of education in order to consider possible alternatives or solutions. She writes, “When teachers recognize our participation in competing discourses, we can reconsider classroom norms,” to which she later adds,

We can ask ourselves to notice where our organizational practices draw lines in the sand. We can imagine and actualize aims of education other than social utility. We can contest assessment and reporting practices that reduce complex phenomena to simple hierarchies. We can trouble evaluations of students’ behaviour that isolate schools from the events and constraints of the community at large. And we can resist (if not escape), simply by noticing, the normalizing force of educational decisions hidden in the structures of report cards, standardized testing, and school accountability measures.\textsuperscript{xix}

Thus, as Ford seems to suggest, noticing the ways in which power operates through our practices as teachers, as scholars, and as students is a significant action in itself. Drawing attention to the ways in which we/they are implicated in larger systems of discipline and punishment, of sovereign power and biopower, seems to be an important part of shifting how reliable narration works to reinforce the boundaries of civility and rationality, how racialized violence is justified and proliferated through philosophical and pedagogical practices.

Critical race literacy, then, as I want to understand it, is not so much about definitive answers or solutions it seems, but in part about learning what questions are important to ask. Based on my arguments throughout this dissertation and borrowing from the Centre for Media Literacy’s “Five Core Concepts of Media Literacy,”\textsuperscript{xx} as well as from George Sefa Dei’s “10 Principles of Anti-Racism Education,”\textsuperscript{xxi} I here propose a set of “Eight Premises of Critical Race Literacy” that may help guide one’s work and one’s actions as educators, as students, and as academics. These premises, wrapped up as they are within claims I am making to reliability and authority as a narrator, are not intended as an exhaustive list or as the only list that could be created. Rather, they are intended as only one possible way of thinking about what it is that teachers, academics, and students are doing when we/they practice philosophy and pedagogy.
Eight Premises of Critical Race Literacy

1. Race exists as a social reality despite a lack of scientific basis
2. One is unable to understand the full social effects of race without understanding the ways in which it intersects with other social identities
3. All knowledge is situated within particular social, historical, cultural, and political contexts.
4. Knowledge is constructed within these contexts through sets of rules about what it means to know, to learn, to fail, about what makes someone a ‘good’ or ‘bad,’ ‘civilized’ or ‘uncivilized,’ ‘rational’ or ‘irrational’ student, philosopher, or educator.
5. Race thinking is inherent in hegemonic Euro-North American definitions of ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ ‘civilized’ and ‘uncivilized,’ ‘rational’ and ‘irrational.’
6. Different people experience the same message or knowledge claims differently.
7. Educators, scholars, and students have socially-embedded values and points of view.
8. The narratives of scholars, students, and educators are all situated within struggles for power and dominance.

These premises, I hope, will help academics, teachers, and students question the reliability of ‘reliable’ narration and the ‘unreliability’ of ‘unreliable’ narration in our/their practices. How is it that one comes to know what one knows? How does one come to know herself/himself as certain, as possessing the truth? What/Who does untruth or falsehood look like? Furthermore, I hope these premises might be useful in questioning racialized notions of ‘civility’ and ‘rationality’ upheld through reliable narration, notions that are used to justify systemic, widespread violence. Picking apart reliable narration at its seams, revealing the race thinking required to hold it together, exposes holes, tears, openings. It exposes new ways to act, new ways to be, that warp the circulation of power through, in, and on bodies marked, and unmarked, by race.
Chapter One Endnotes


2 I use the double meaning of this title (“re” as in “about regarding literacy” and “read” as in “to read literacy again”) to draw attention to reading as an active, creative process performed by the reader, rather than as merely an act of passive absorption. As I suggest in my Foreword/Afterword, I invite the reader to wonder as you read, to pay attention to what you bring to the text as reader and how you play a role in shaping what all of this means. I want to move away from the notion of text as authority and reader as learner towards a dialogical sense of reading.


4 There are certainly many exceptions to this, Kal Alston’s previously mentioned piece, “Race Consciousness and the Philosophy of Education,” being one of them, though such exceptions seem to be on the margins of mainstream Philosophy of Education discourse.

5 I have decided to capitalize the names of races throughout my dissertation not to give them special credence, but rather to question their normalization, to draw attention to race as a social construction with a material reality. I am cautious about using terms like “Black” or “White” or “Brown” to describe one’s race, as such terms do not accurately describe one’s skin colour and have been fraught with problems throughout history (What does it mean to be classified one way or the other? Who gets to identify one’s race? How does one come to count as one category or another?). I stick with traditional references to race to highlight the process through which race came to signify not only skin colour, but moral and intellectual properties as well. Though such terms as White or Brown or Black are so gross and inaccurate as to actually signify very little in one sense (Where are the lines drawn? What qualities or features indicate one’s membership in a particular race? What about albinism within a ‘Black’ family? Multi- or bi-raciality? How is ethnicity tied to race?), I feel it is necessary to use these terms to pay attention to the political, economic, and social import they have had and the great social injustices upheld by the categorizations to which White, Black, and Brown refer.

6 Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other*, 52.


8 Thank you to Sherene Razack for pointing me towards Ladelle McWhorter’s essay “Where Do White People Come From? A Foucaultian Critique of Whiteness Studies,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 31, no.5-6 (2005): 533-556 for a clear articulation of this.


10 Colour of Poverty, *Fact Sheet #1*, 1.

11 Colour of Poverty, *Fact Sheet #1*, 1.


I use the term “racialized” here not to describe some objective state of being, i.e. that some groups have a ‘race’ while others do not, but instead to refer to the racialization of particular bodies, that is, the social and discursive processes through which certain bodies are marked as possessing ‘race’ while other bodies, ‘White’ bodies, are marked as ‘race-free.’

I use the term ‘abled’ rather than ‘able’ here to suggest that physical and mental ability are structured in part by one’s surrounding environment, in that one is often made able or unable to perform certain tasks by the accessibility of their environment, in that a wheelchair ramp enables a wheelchair user to enter a building with ease, while stairs are disabling. I use the terms ‘abled’ and ‘disabled’ then as verbs, in the sense of one being enabled or disabled by her or his surrounding environment, rather than as an adjective to describe one’s physical or mental characteristics.

Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1987), 49.

Many thanks to Maureen Ford for helping me articulate this aim.

I include these terms here to make reference to their role in shaping social norms, yet put them in parentheses due to the ways in which everyone, regardless of social identity, is interpellated by and invited into the disciplinary apparatuses of these norms, whether it be discipline exercised over the self or others. I borrow this notion of “interpellation” from Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. B. Brewster (London: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127-186.


For a further discussion of this, see, for example, Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 2002).

See CNN, “Bush: Join Coalition of the Willing.”


See The White House: President George W. Bush, “Who are the current coalition members?”

See CNN, “Bush State of the Union Address,”

Eduardo Mendieta, “‘To Make Live and to Let Die’ – Foucault on Racism,” presented at the Meeting of the Foucault Circle. APA Central Division Meeting, Chicago, April 25th 2002.

I use the term ‘racialized’ here not to denote some objective truth or fact about bodies as a particular race or about texts written by particular authors, but as an action word, as a process directed towards bodies and texts. While this process may be tied to one’s heritage or the colour of one’s skin, it is not necessarily directly connected. That is, a ‘White’ person’s body or text might be excluded from the realm of ‘respectable’ ‘White’ discourse because of its failure to meet traditional Western/Northern expectations of ‘civility.’ Conversely, in the case of Macedo’s example of the indigenous inhabitants of Cape Verde, the more closely one approximates the language, practices, and knowledge of the Portuguese colonizers, the more ‘European’ and less ‘African’ one is taken to be – though achieving full European status would likely be impossible, regardless of how well one might come to know European culture(s). I use the term ‘racialized’ to explore how one becomes/is marked/marks oneself a particular race, that is, to explore how certain physiological characteristics such as skin colour come to be associated with differences in capacity, ability, and morality. I also want to explore what sort
of work goes into attempts to ‘deracialize’ bodies and texts – to what benefit and at what cost is the significance of race denied?

xxx I use these names here for lack of better referents, yet need to keep in mind the power implicit in naming and mapping land according to colonial conquest.

xxxi I owe thanks to Kim McKeown for suggesting this term.


Chapter Two Endnotes

1 I use this title facetiously and as an intentional appropriation of the language of exploration and colonization to mark exploration and colonization as racialized violence, rather than as a ‘well-intentioned’ project of ‘moral betterment.’


iv For further discussion of this, see Himani Bannerji, “But Who Speaks for Us? Experience and Agency in Conventional Feminist Paradigms,” *Unsettling Relations: The University as a Site of Feminist Struggles* (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1991), in which she talks about her experiences as a racialized student, scholar, and educator in the Canadian educational system. She remarks that,

As a racialized woman who grew up in Pakistan and India, now living in Canada, I am an exception in the universities, not the rule. As a body type I am meant for another kind of work – but nonetheless I am in the classroom. And what is more, I am authority. I grade and therefore am a gatekeeper of an institution which only marginally tolerates people like us in scarcity rather than in plenty. What I speak, even when not addressing gender, race and class, does not easily produce suspension of disbelief. (72-73, emphasis added)

v I put “male” in parentheses here, because although these narratives are gendered as masculine, this has not precluded their adoption by White women as a claim to freedom and dominance.

vi I here again draw upon Althusser’s notion of “interpellation” or being hailed as discussed in his work “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses.”


viii *CNN*, “Bush State of the Union Address.”

ix I run into problems with labels here. As with the term “White,” the term “Black” is hardly adequate to capture the complexities of racial, ethnic, and cultural identity (To what extent do these terms accurately reflect skin colour? How are they tied or not tied to nationality? Country of birth? i.e. Could a White person born and raised in Kenya but now residing in Canada identify/be identified as Afro-Canadian or Kenyan-Canadian? Would a multi-generational Black Canadian necessarily identity as being of African descent? How do these terms apply to multi-racial identities?). Further, my definition of a person or a group may not match one’s own self-definition. Given the limits of language, I don’t think this is a problem that can be easily resolved within this dissertation. But I do think it is important to flag it as a problem, so that it may generate discussion about what sort of terminology might be more adequate.


Here I am not suggesting that all systemic barriers and forms of social inequity are equivalent, but rather that someone who is disadvantaged by a particular social location in one context may be advantaged by a different social location in another context (for example, while I may face systemic barriers because of my gender as compared to my brothers, my level of education may provide me with professional opportunities inaccessible to others).


Foucault, “Society Must be Defended,” 37.


Foucault, “Society Must be Defended,” 29.


Rebecca Cathcart, “Boy’s Killing, Labeled a Hate Crime, Stuns a Town.”


Rebecca Cathcart, “Boy’s Killing, Labeled a Hate Crime, Stuns a Town.”

I use the term “enabled” rather than “able-bodied” to move away from the idea of “disability” as less-able, towards an understanding of bodies as en-abled or dis-abled by the structures and environment around them, rather than as something inherent in the body itself.

Foucault, “Society Must be Defended,” 35-36.

Foucault, “Society Must be Defended,” 36.

Foucault, “Society Must be Defended,” 36.

See, for example, Daniel Coleman, White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

Foucault, “Society Must be Defended,” 37.

Foucault, “Society Must be Defended,” 37.

Foucault, “Society Must be Defended,” 38.


Mendieta, “‘To Make Live and to Let Die,’” 6-7.

Chapter Three Endnotes

1 Yann Martel, Life of Pi (Toronto: Random House, 2001), 405.
3 Martel, 406.
4 The Holy Bible, King James version (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company) contains this phrase at least twice, the first in the Old Testament at the beginning of “The First Book of Moses, called Genesis,” which opens with the line, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The second occurrence is in the New Testament, at the beginning of “The Gospel According to John,” which reads, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).
5 I would like to thank India Sihra-Sehmi and Karen Sihra for sharing this story with me, which has been adapted slightly here.
6 I owe credit here to the storytelling style of Thomas King in his work The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003) as well as One Good Story, That One (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1993).
8 María Lugones, Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 1, footnote.
9 For further discussion of the relationship between theory, knowledge, and narrative, see for example the following texts which I will address in greater detail later in my dissertation: Jean-François Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), Audrey Thompson, “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators,” in


Mendieta, “‘To Make Live and to Let Die,'” 5.

Mendieta, “‘To Make Live and to Let Die,'” 6.


By the term “our,” Delgado is referring to feminists and scholars of colour (and I imagine also the spaces of overlap between the categories).

Ladson-Billings and Tate, “Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education,” Teachers College Record 97, no.1 (Fall 1995): 47.


Lugones and Price, “Dominant Culture.”


The Fresh Prince of Bel-Aire, created by Andy Borowitz and Susan Borowitz, performed by Will Smith, Alfonso Ribeiro, James Avery, et al. (1990-1996; Burbank, CA: NBC Studios), Television.

Thank you to Karen Sihra for drawing my attention to this episode and for talking through some of the themes that emerge.

“Blood is Thicker Than Mud,” The Fresh Prince of Bel-Aire, directed by Chuck Vinson, performed by Will Smith, Alfonso Ribeiro, James Avery, et al., Season 4, Episode 08 (November 1, 1993; Burbank, CA: NBC Studios), Television.
Here rises again the problem of the limitations of language, as though there were some sort of distinct Black identity, encompassing a multitude of African nations and identities, Carribean identities, Black Canadian and American identities, bi-racial or multi-racial identities, and so on. While “blackness” is always shifting, never static, I use it here to denote an identity tied to both skin colour and heritage, as an inadequate term used to apply to the multitude of identities listed above.

My thanks to Jason Kun for raising this issue and working through it with me.


I realize that sex and gender are not so easily defined, given the myriad of ways in which individuals may self-identify and the many diverse types of bodies and reproductive organs humans can possess (such as transsexual or intersex), though I hope this very brief definition suffices here to clarify how I want to use the term “whiteness.”

My thanks to C.K. for bringing this point to my attention.

For a further discussion of the connection drawn between country music and whiteness, see the conversation between the characters Peter Waters (played by Larenz Tate) and Anthony (played by Chris “Ludacris” Bridges) on the topic in the movie Crash, DVD, directed by Paul Haggis, performed by Don Cheadle, Sandra Bullock, Thandie Newton, et al. (original release 2004; Los Angeles, CA: Lions Gate Films, video release 2005), DVD.


Thanks Mom — Mary Anderson!

Thank you to Sherene Razack for helping me articulate this question.

Mills, Blackness Visible, xii-xiii.


Mills, Blackness Visible, 10.

Frye, “White Woman Feminist.”


Delgado, “When a Story is Just a Story,” 105.

Delgado, “When a Story is Just a Story,” 105.

Delgado, “When a Story is Just a Story,” 105.

Delgado, “When a Story is Just a Story,” 106.

Delgado, “When a Story is Just a Story,” 106.


Mills, Blackness Visible, 98.

Mills, Blackness Visible, 98.

Mills, Blackness Visible, 100.

I use the word ‘disability’ to refer to the process through which people with certain abilities, such as the ability to use a wheelchair, the ability to navigate through touch and sound, the ability to use prosthetic limbs, or the ability to communicate through sign language, for example, are marked as “different” or “unable” when required to use these abilities. I also use the word to refer to the process through which social institutions as well as public and private spaces are made inaccessible or difficult to access by people with particular abilities through architectural and design decisions, decisions about service delivery, hiring decisions, decisions about lesson planning, and through many other decisions. It is not the abilities of one’s body or mind that make a person “enabled” or “disabled,” I believe, but rather it is a set of social practices and norms that enable or disable a person.
Chapter Four Endnotes


2 As cited in Valls, “‘A Lousy Empirical Scientist,’” 128.

3 Valls, “‘A Lousy Empirical Scientist,’” 127.


5 Bernasconi and Mann, “The Contradictions of Racism,” 101.


10 Mills, *Blackness Visible*, 107, emphasis added.


13 Mills, “Kant’s *Untermenschen,*” 173. What sort of violence might one be committing [one? Might I be committing] by repeating the racist words of Hume and Kant? Can the same point be made without these passages? Are some things unrepeatable, regardless of the intention with which they are repeated? I don’t know. With reference to the title character in J. M. Coetzee’s novel *Elizabeth Costello,* Sherene Razack discusses the potential dangers and pleasures of reading and writing about acts of evil. As Razack writes, the character Costello asserts, “…we cannot write or read of evil and remain unscathed….some things are better left unsaid” (Coetzee as cited in Razack “Stealing the Pain of Others,” *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (2007): 388). The danger, Costello contends, is the danger of feeling excitement at witnessing evil, the excitement of feeling “the flap of Satan’s leathery wing.” (Coetzee as cited in Razack “Stealing the Pain of Others,” 388). Like Costello, French resistance fighter Charlotte Delbo, interned at Auschwitz, asks us “not to sentimentalize
suffering, not to use other people’s pain and suffering to say or believe something about ourselves, not, in sum, to take any pleasure from it, especially – to use the late Susan Sontag’s phrase – ‘the pleasure of flinching.’” (as cited in Razack, “Stealing the Pain of Others,” 389). This here relates back to Razack’s points about the dangers of storytelling and of calling upon historically ‘marginalized’ voices to speak. What do White people gain in calling for greater inclusion of the perspectives of racialized people, or in ‘witnessing’ the atrocities and violence that have been committed in the name of ‘preserving’ the White race?

xv Mills, “Kant’s Untermenschen,” 171.

xvi Mills, Blackness Visible, xv.

xvii Mills, “Kant’s Untermenschen,” 170, emphasis in original.

xxiv Mills, Blackness Visible, 110.

xix Mills, “Kant’s Untermenschen,” 172.


xxviii Goldberg, Racist Culture, 3.

xxix Goldberg, Racist Culture, 3.

xxx Goldberg, Racist Culture, 3-4, emphasis added.


xxxvi As cited in Radhika Mohanram, Black Body: Women, Colonialism and Space (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

xxxvii As cited in Mohanram, Black Body, 8.

xxxviii As cited in Mohanram, Black Body, 9.

xxxix As cited in Mohanram, Black Body, 3.

xl As cited in Mohanram, Black Body, 11.

xlii Goldberg, Racist Culture, 15 (emphasis added).


Kirby, “Re: Mapping Subjectivity,” 49.
I put the word “White” in parentheses here, because the race of the officer is not actually mentioned in either of the articles I cite here, though he appears to be White in the photographs. I think this is very important to point out, because if the arresting officer were Black/African-American, the incident would take on a much different significance. While it could still possibly be seen as racial profiling, in that Black/African-American police officers may be caught up in the same discourse of racialized ‘civility’ and ‘respectability’ that mark Black/African-American bodies as requiring extra policing, a White police officer and a Black/African-American officer would likely gain different things from the arrest of Professor Gates. A White officer would potentially gain a sense of protecting ‘law-abiding’ White people (like the White woman who called in the incident) from ‘uncivilized’ Black/African-American people, while a Black/African-American officer would potentially gain a sense of his own civility in comparison to the behaviour of Professor Gates.
Goodnough, “Harvard Professor Jailed; Officer Accused of Bias.”
Goodnough, “Harvard Professor Jailed; Officer Accused of Bias.”
Goldberg, Racist Culture, 29.
For a discussion of the feminization of the “East,” see, for example, Meyda Yeğenoğlu, Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
Smith, Conquest, 10.
Smith, Conquest, 9.
Goldberg, 28.
Goldberg, 28.
As cited in Goldberg, 28.
Goldberg, 31.
Goldberg, 32.
Goldberg, 32.
Goldberg, 34.
Goldberg, 34.
Goldberg, 35.
As cited in Goldberg, 35.
As cited in Goldberg, 35, emphasis added.
Chapter Five Endnotes


7 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 100.


14 Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*.

15 Sherene Razack, “Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice.”


23 Lenore Keeshig-Tobias, “The White Man’s Burden,” in *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, eds. Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), 258-263. Here I would point out that white women are also implicated in taking up “The White Man’s Burden,” which is not intended to undermine the significance of sexism across races, but to make note of how white women can come to claim subjectivity through the exercise of racial privilege.

24 *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English*, 507.


26 As cited in Satzewich and Liodakis, ‘Race’ and Ethnicity in Canada,” 34.

27 Satzewich and Liodakis, ‘Race’ and Ethnicity, 40.

28 Satzewich and Liodakis, ‘Race’ and Ethnicity, 41.


33 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 101.


Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack, “The Race to Innocence: Confronting Hierarchical Relations Among Women.”


See Mills, *Blackness Visible*.


Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack, “The Race to Innocence: Confronting Hierarchical Relations Among Women.”


See Mills, *Blackness Visible*.


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**Chapter Six Endnotes**


As cited in Fellows and Razack, “The Race to Innocence,” 342.


Fellows and Razack, “The Race to Innocence,” 347.


Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 79.


Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 75.


As cited in Fellows and Razack, “The Race to Innocence,” 347.


Thank you to Maureen Ford for pointing this out.


As cited in Goldberg, *The Threat of Race*, 41.


Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 6.

Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 4.

Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 5.


Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 7.

Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 7.

Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 86.


Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies*, 95.


Thank you to Karen Sihra for bringing this to my attention.


Chapter Seven Endnotes


ii Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other, 17.

iii See Paulo Freire and Donald Macedo, Literacy: Reading the Word and the World.


vii Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, 27.

viii Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, 28-29, emphasis added.

ix Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition, 29.

x Audrey Thompson, “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators.”


xii Delgado, “Storytelling for Oppositionists and Others,” 2413.


xix Thompson, “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators,” 63.


xxi Bouchard and Taylor, Building the Future, 25.

xxii Bouchard and Taylor, Building the Future, 89.


xxiv “Current Affairs,” Le Spécialiste, 11, emphasis added.

xxv Thompson, “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators,” 63.


xxvii Thompson, “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators,” 63.

xxviii Bouchard and Taylor, Building the Future, 34.

xxix Thompson, “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators,” 63.

xxx Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other, 27 (emphasis in original).

xxxi Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other, 27.


xxxiii Beck, “Postmodernism, Pedagogy, and Philosophy of Education.”
Here an important issue arises for me with regard to scholarly identity: a reader cannot tell simply from the text what race or sexuality or class or even gender a scholar may be. One cannot assume that a racialized scholar would necessarily address race or that a lesbian or gay scholar would necessarily address sexuality in their work, for example. But my point is not that Taylor or Beck should include voices different from their own simply because they are different. My point is rather that I am concerned that Taylor and Beck may not have sufficiently attended to the significance of race, gender, and sexuality as it informs their own work and the work of others.

Thank you to Jason Kun for highlighting this for me.


I put these terms in inverted commas because I feel that they fail to attend to the multiple social identities a person holds at once: while a person may be systemically disadvantaged based on race, for example, he or she may be systemically advantaged based on ability or sexuality or class or nationality, for example. As well, I feel these terms fix identities in a binary as either ‘empowered’ or ‘disempowered,’ disallowing the possibility of possessing power while in a position of disadvantage.


Mayo, “Civility and its Discontents,” 82.

Chapter Eight Endnotes


5 Haymes, “Thoughts About the Absence of Africana Philosophy,” 154.

6 Haymes, “Thoughts About the Absence of Africana Philosophy,” 154.

7 Haymes, “Thoughts About the Absence of Africana Philosophy,” 154.

8 See Anzaldúa, Borderlands/La Frontera, and Cathy Bao Bean, “Figuring the Cultural Shape We’re In,” in Undoing Whiteness in the Classroom: Critical Educultural Teaching Approaches for Social Justice Activism, eds. Virginia Lea and Erma Jean Sims (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 203-221.

9 See, for example, Plato, The Dialogues of Plato.

10 Thompson, “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators,” 60.

11 Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other, 53.


14 I say “seems” here because within a dichotomous either/or framework, it may seem logically incoherent to be both one way and its opposite, though within a framework that allows for multiplicity, being both one way and its apparent opposite is logically possible (i.e. one can be both simultaneously helpful and harmful)

15 Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized, 83 (emphasis added).


17 Williams, Alchemy of Race, 47.

18 Williams, Alchemy of Race, 47-48.


20 Williams, Alchemy of Race, 48 (emphasis added).

21 Cathy Bao Bean, “Figuring the Cultural Shape We’re In,” in Undoing Whiteness in the Classroom: Critical Educultural Teaching Approaches for Social Justice Activism, eds. Virginia Lea and Erma Jean Sims (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 203-221.

22 Bao Bean, “Figuring the Cultural Shape,” 211.

23 Bao Bean, “Figuring the Cultural Shape,” 211.


25 Bao Bean, “Figuring the Cultural Shape,” 211.

26 As cited in Daniel Coleman, White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

27 Morrison, Playing in the Dark, 4-5.

28 Said, Culture and Imperialism, 24.

29 Mbembe, On the Postcolony, 213.


32 Paul Taylor, “Art, Education, and Witness,” 32 (emphasis in original). See also Sherene Razack’s “Stealing the Pain of Others” and Dark Threats and White Knights for a further discussion of this phenomenon.


Google, ―Definitions of enlighten on the web.”


Chapter Nine Endnotes


3 A similar point is made by Thompson in “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators.”


5 Williams, The Alchemy of Race and Rights.

6 Alston, “Race Consciousness and Philosophy of Education.”

7 Alston, “Race Consciousness and Philosophy of Education.”

8 Alston, “Race Consciousness and Philosophy of Education.”

9 Thompson, “Philosophers as Unreliable Narrators,” 67.

10 Razack, Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping and the New Imperialism.


15 Boyd, “The Place of Locating Oneself(Ves)/Myself(Ves) in Doing Philosophy of Education.”

16 Boyd, “The Place of Locating Oneself(Ves)/Myself(Ves) in Doing Philosophy of Education.”


18 See Fellows and Razack, “The Race to Innocence.”


xxii Dei, Anti-Racism Education.


