(t)Racing Through Critical Theory

In Pursuit of Opening the Darkest Doors

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"The range of contemporary critical theories suggests that it is from those who have suffered the sentence of history — subjugation, domination, diaspora, displacement — that we learn our most enduring lessons for living and thinking."

- Homi K. Bhabha,
Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformations of English and American Studies

"Are there multiple forms or species of racism or simply variations of a fundamental structure? If it is the latter, what provides the model or matrix (colonialism, slavery, anti-Semitism)? Or is racism, rather, a singular history of violent conjunctures? [2] Can anti-racist politics be approached in ways that denaturalize the color line, retain the specificities of discrepant histories of racialization, and think through their relational formation?"

- Jared Sexton, "Ante-anti-Blackness: Afterthoughts"

It was a Tuesday evening in early December in Paris and, while trying to think my way through Jacques Derrida's *Echographies of Television*, I was distracted by the loud clamor outside of my apartment that seemed to be coming from the terrace situated in the middle of the complex. Stepping onto my patio on the fifth floor, I looked down to see packs of adult residents who must have recently returned home from work. When my host brother, Jonas, walked into the apartment, I asked him what had caused the disruption; The only other time I had heard noise coming from outside while in the apartment was on Saturday nights. He told me that they were heading over to a complex-wide meeting concerning new ownership. While I live in a private complex named "Le Square des Bouleaux," the new owner previously managed social housing projects in France. Jonas told me that the residents "are worried...that there will be lower unit costs...and that bad people will come in." During my three months in this complex of over two hundred homes, the only other black or brown faces I have seen have been those of maintenance workers. And, immediately outside of my complex -- being in a fairly diverse district, the nineteenth arrondissement -- there are North Africans, Sub-Saharan Africans, Indians. I could not help but think that those fears of "bad people" infiltrating the gated community were projected onto these youth of color who spend their time after school conversing outside of the complex at the Arab-owned diner across the street.

It will come as no surprise that, during my stay in Paris, the question of race, racism, and racialization propelled itself to the forefront of my mind because of experiences like the one previously detailed. I could not possibly forget the moment my host father confessed to me in his broken English, "In the beginning, I think - I thought? - you are a son of Gaddafi haha, you know, the former leader of Libya, you look like his son." Or, the other time when talking to some stranger about essentially nothing, he refused to believe that I was an American; He couldn't believe it; He absolutely refused the possibility of my colored body being American; "Tu dois venir du sud," meaning South America. And I certainly will not forget being called a "nigger" one night outside of a French club: While pointing his finger of accusation at me and staring at my face, the frail older man yelled to the public, "Look! It's a nigger! A fucking nigger!" When attending the program courses on Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Lévinas, and Jacques Derrida, I always wondered: If Critical Theory is about domination, subjugation, and oppression -- as Homi K. Bhabha would explain it -- then what do these philosophers have to say about the racism I encountered and witnessed daily just walking down the street as I headed to the metro? What do they have to offer me as an Other who is corporeally marked by the many legacies of racism?

The main objective of this paper is to see how race and histories of colonialism and colonial resistance interject into, unsettle, and/or redirect the philosophies of Heidegger, Lévinas, and Derrida. In yet another sense, this paper is an attempt to unsettle the very contents under the heading of 'Critical Theory.' In its sections, I take time thinking race through Heidegger's 'death,' the 'Jew' in the work of Lévinas, and Derridian deconstruction. Along the way, I include criticism produced by writers-of-color as a technique to shake up the traditional lineage of Critical Theory which, in twentieth century France, comes to be dominated by these

three white male philosophers (among others). When going through my critiques of their arguments, however, I tread carefully and choose to keep some of their conceptual developments. I show possible openings in their texts, give attention to doors they close, and delineate points of departure from their philosophies as I read them alongside de/colonial histories. To conclude, I reflect on my analyses and start to build a Deleuzian conceptualization of racializing assemblages in such a way that keeps open the possibility of global liberation by leaving exit strategies and lines of flight towards a decolonizing world.

Unsettling Heidegger's White Death

In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger offers a critical and negative view of the 'other'; The 'other' gets in the way of a Dasein seeking to lead an authentic life. The social Da of Dasein reveals that Dasein cares about others and experiences them with mood. Through Heidegger's phenomenological critique of the competitive habits of Dasein in company, we see that Being-with-one-another is characterized by distantiality: In response to his subjection to others and feelings of competitiveness, Dasein experiences full body anxiety and stands away at a distance (Heidegger 164). This distantiality is a result of social conformism, a consequence of letting others assign one's place. It is clear that the phenomenon of social conformism results in your Dasein being appropriated and disowned. The question which remains, though, is: By whom? Heidegger designates the 'other' as the indefinite force which produces the effect of normalization, averageness, distantiality, and leveling down. Generally, Heidegger speaks of the 'other' as the 'they' [*das Man*]. Because, as a Dasein, I am *there* and with concern while feeling bothered and subjected, I participate in social conformism in order to even out with the 'they' and disburden myself of my anxieties.

The force of the indefinite 'other' is most vicious when it tries to disburden Dasein of its anxieties around death. By participating in social conforming around death -- making light of death, speaking of death as something that just happens, *not treating death as an impending phenomenon that is mine and only mine in essence* -- the 'they' in everydayness robs me of my authenticity (Wrathall 57). Moreover, according to Heidegger, the 'they' does so by trying to disburden me of my full-body anxiety of anticipating my death; The 'they' offers itself and appears as a 'solution' to our deepest anxieties. Heidegger, with his renowned concept Being-towards-death, offers a solution to the indefinite 'other' who coerces Dasein into dangerously disburdening itself of its anxieties around death. He argues that, in order to live authentically, it is absolutely necessary to resist the force of the 'they'. The only way to do this is to confront death as a existential phenomenon, wrap your hand around your own death, and to throwback into the world. To take ownership of your death is to circumscribe your Dasein -- that which is 'not-yet' -- as a Being-towards-death. Death provides the opportunity for Dasein to take control of its life; No one else can die for me; My death is solely mine. As Dasein's ownmost possibility, death provides the opportunity for me to live an authentic life free from cultural norms and practices, contingent on my choice to confront it as it is (Wrathall 69).

But what precisely is death 'as it is,' beyond its symbolic function as 'the end'? Heidegger's conceptualization of death as Dasein's utmost possibility, perhaps, does not venture far enough into the particularities of death. Though this word -- death -- figures centrally in Heidegger's philosophy, it is strangely left out of reach of critique and portends as a full concept. Are there not many iterations of death (biological death, social death, political death, death by torture, death by mass extermination)? What does Heidegger fail to consider by privileging the phenomenon of death as mine and mine only?

Lévinas interjects vigorously into this aspect of Heideggerian philosophy by arguing against the possibility of death shaping Dasein's world. Is death non-relational, liberating and individualizing as Heidegger would have it? Lévinas, in placing being against ethics, displaces the non-relationality of death. He asks not the essential question of 'What *is* ethics?' Rather, he asks if ethics is ontologically prior to being. Cohen writes, "Ethics, in Lévinas' view, occurs 'prior' to essence and being, conditioning them" (9). As Lévinas accurately interjects, the solitude of Heidegger's 'Being-towards-death' as confronting one's death and throwing back against the 'they' is entirely contingent on mastery: I will throw back into the world by showing understanding of my being in a *there* with moods and possibilities of being. However, Lévinas disrupts the thematic of mastery in Heidegger's thought by asking the following: What about the "il y a" which you cannot control through mastery, the feelings of entrapment within being, the madness of schizophrenia which will outlast you, for example? Being-towards-death in Heidegger's thought -- as heroic solitude inasmuch as it necessitates the ability of Dasein to achieve mastery away from the 'other' -- is replaced by an ethics-driven thinking-of-the-Other in the work of Lévinas.

This critique of Lévinas most clearly emerges out of impact anti-Semitism, WWII, and the Holocaust had on its targeted victims. I will later return to a discussion of the status of the 'Jew' in Lévinasian ethics, but only after reconfiguring a critique of Heidegger's Being-towards-death. Did the Holocaust need to happen before we noticed the inherent social and political violence ignored by Heidegger's claims? We need to look no further than the histories of colonialism, modernity, and slavery to displace Heidegger's positioning of death as *my* possibility. With his thematic emphases on mastery and subjectivity, and death-as-possibility alongside the advent of modern colonialism and slavery, Heidegger looks peculiarly Cartesian.

After all, getting a hold of his death is what frees Dasein from the normalizing effects of the 'they', freeing him to master that which is around him as an individual, singular, authentic subject.

More than being a Cartesian philosopher in this regard, Heidegger's negligence of colonialism, slavery, and modernity -- all initiated prior to the political crises of the twentieth century -- means he gets to join the ranks of philosophers which constitute a Western tradition of white thought. To further draw out this argument, I bring in two texts from whiteness studies, Robin DiAngelo's "White Fragility" and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's "The Invisible Weight of Whiteness: The Racial Grammar of Everyday Life in Contemporary America," in order to explain my conceptualization of 'whiteness'. To summarize, DiAngelo refers to 'White Fragility' as "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" (54). Bonilla-Silva, in turn, argues that racial domination necessitates a racial grammar which normalizes white supremacy and dominance through sociopolitical regulatory practices (174).[1] Then, I refer to 'whiteness' as that which is made visible when the "normal" is questioned and what DiAngelo calls "[t]he insulated environment of racial protection" is shocked into White Fragility. For this conceptualization of 'whiteness' to be more comprehensive, though, we must be able to account for whiteness when it is invisible and silent. In this case, I refer to 'whiteness' as the normalization of white supremacy and white dominance, while racial grammar makes *certain* ideas intelligible in normalized spaces through a rhetoric of universalism which is intimately bound to power and hegemony.

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[1] White supremacy is an ideology rooted in the logic of racial purity and the naturalness of racial hierarchies, which position whites at the top. In a world where white dominance fundamentally coexists with non-white subordination because "'Whiteness' is a politically constructed category parasitic on 'Blackness,'" white supremacy is a fabricated justification for an oppressive and unequal world. See Cornel West, *The Cornel West Reader*, Basic Civitas Books. New York. 1999. pp. 131.

To concretize this theoretical development of whiteness, I borrow the concept "raceocracy" developed by social scientist Barnor Hesse. He uses the terms "raceocracy" to refer to the following:

> [T]he way in which race orders the political and social lives of people – without being accountable to any spoken or written discourse, simply because it's performed as a shared social and institutional orientation. In other words, it's racially performed in such a way that it sustains a broad range of people's relationships by facilitating conventional aspects of life that everybody appears to agree upon. ("Raceocracy: An Interview with Dr. Barnor Hesse – Part 1.")

Through this lens, whiteness as a racial identity is a crucial technology to the structure of race as it simultaneously marks particular bodies as white, affords them certain privileges, and uses these bodies to form and govern racially exclusive white spaces through the largely invisible and silent white gaze, performance of racial governance, and presence/absence of white privilege.[2]

In other words, my conceptualization of 'whiteness' is constituted by the ordering and governing of bodies in/and space. As such, we can inquire into whiteness not just as a form of racially exclusive society, but also as a form of racial identity. More explicitly, we can consider Heidegger's conceptualization of death as coming from a space of whiteness because of its representation as non-relational, singularizing, and its relation to mastery and subjectivity. I will not belabor this point, because the argument is quite simple and vaguely resembles Lévinas's critique. Heidegger ignores how Western colonial projects -- whether it be those which violently threw Sub-Saharan Africans across the Atlantic Ocean and enslaved them or those which dominated Muslims in French Algeria under quasi-apartheid rule -- stripped its victims of

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[2] For the sake of pragmatics, I am circumscribing the word 'race' as used in this paper to refer to its iterations during the advent of post/modernity.

their social and political freedoms and at times subjected them to deaths including lynching, torture, and mass disease.[3]

In this context, mastery and subjectivity must be seen as normalized white capabilities. Western colonial projects were driven by the desire to *master* geopolitical space through (imperial/colonial/violent) exploration and to *master* the enslaved African body (by way of race-science and plantation organization, for example). The reality of colonialism, slavery, and its relation to mastery and 'full' subjectivity reveals an iteration of death foreclosed by Heidegger's discussion: Death-as-possibility-to-be-killed-socially-and-politically-and-biologically-by-the-experience-of-slavery-and-colonial-violence. Can anyone wrap their hands around that?

To stay within Heidegger's approach, being white might be seen as a phenomenological experience. I have revealed the whiteness of Heidegger's death by situating his concept Being-towards-death alongside pre-Holocaust Western colonial projects, and unsettled 'death' in Heideggerian philosophy. Through his un/racial grammar of universality, Heidegger forecloses the possibility of a relational death. Heidegger's death becomes incredibly fragile when supplemented by one word: white. Heidegger's (white) death is social, political, historical, and philosophical violence. While Heidegger's involvement with the Nazi party may have been convoluted, his whiteness certainly was not.

Lévinas and the 'Jew': Victims Par Excellence

Critical Theory, as we know, emerges in the context of nineteenth and twentieth century crises: Modernization, urbanization, industrialization, capitalism, WWI, WWII, fascism, communism, etc. One word that must be invoked when moving from Heideggerian thought

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[3] For more on critical cultural theorists working through the political, linguistic, and bodily violence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade into America and colonialism in the Francophone Caribbean, see the following respectively:
Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, University of Michigan Press. Ann Arbor, MI. 1997.
Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of subjection: terror, slavery, and self-making in nineteenth-century America*, Oxford University Press. New York. 1997.

into that of Lévinas is nihilism, the belief that ideas and values have no basis, which reflects an understandable loss of faith in the midst of such crises. Lévinas seeks a solution to European nihilism by making language meaningful. In order to make the seemingly necessary philosophical link between signs and things, Lévinas utilizes phenomenological reduction as an approach which tries to discover the essence of things. The question I engage in this section, though, challenges the possibility of understanding the essence of a particular word which functions prominently in Lévinasian ethical philosophy: suffering. Is suffering a phenomenological experience that can be understood as such?

In "Useless Suffering," Lévinas retains the phenomenological and verbal approach of Heidegger and poses one question at the outset of the essay which shapes the content to come: What is the lived experience of suffering? Suffering, as Lévinas begins in the first section *Phenomenology,* is an iteration of the "il y a": A phenomenological experience that we cannot get our hands around, a madness that refuses our understanding and will certainly outlast us. For Lévinas, Dasein does not always comport itself understandingly "to be" because it cannot wrap its hands around the experience of the "il y a." Suffering, as that which rejects organization and the rejection of organization itself, has a "quasi-contradictory structure" inasmuch as it is given to us as a sensation that we cannot bear (92). For Lévinas, our own suffering is nothing more than an untheorizable "evil," an "*impasse* of life and of being," "intrinsically senseless and condemned to itself with no way out" (92, 93). Suffering is, in a word, useless.

Despite being useless in the Other, the nakedness and absurdity of suffering -- expressing itself as the evil of pain -- provides an opening in the form of the cry for aid. Lévinas writes, "Is not the evil of suffering...also the unassumable, whence the possibility of a half opening, and, more precisely, the half opening that a moan, a cry, a groan or a sigh slips through

- the original call for aid, for curative help, help from the other me whose alterity, whose exteriority promises salvation?" (93). The interhuman is the space where ethics takes on the responsibility of thinking-of-the-other by listening and attending to the cries of the Other. The interhuman is the space where the useless suffering of the Other becomes meaningful to me.

Responsibility, rather than death, provides the possibility of being an individual in the work of Lévinas. You cannot refuse responsibility; Responsibility is "un-transferable" and makes individuals irreplaceable. The "half opening" of "a moan, a cry, a groan or a sigh" will be heard; The question is: How will you attend to it, if at all? Lévinas argues that we have an ethical responsibility to attend to the suffering of the Other, and we must do so without thinking through a framework of theodicy. A fairly common belief in the Judeo-Christian tradition is that God is omnipresent, the world being under his control and following a divine plan. As such, suffering can take the role of disciplining sinners, for example. "Under the influence of the absolute goodness of God," suffering takes on meaning: the evil of suffering is explained by 'grand design.' Lévinas writes, "This is pain henceforth meaningful, subordinated in one way or another to the metaphysical finality glimpsed by faith or belief in progress. Beliefs presupposed by theodicy!" (96).

Lévinas urges us to take seriously the wretched suffering of the Other by not explaining it away through theodicy. He turns his attention to the political violence and immeasurable human suffering of the twentieth century, and marks the Holocaust of the Jewish people as the particular event with the most gratuitous human suffering of the century. Reflecting back on this moment in history, can God remain innocent and present while explaining the suffering of the Jewish people? Theodicy has become unthinkable. We must reject theodicy and take on our responsibility to think-of-the-other in a different way; a way that refuses to justify suffering

through the metaphysical presence and goodness of God, and, instead, brings goodness to the world through attending to the suffering of the Other with a metaphorical medicine that can free the Other from his own suffering.

The responsibility to think-of-the-other begs us for commitment -- "like the Jewish people to their faithfulness" -- and individualizes us (100). In order to think-of-the-other and attend to his suffering that can only manage to project a half opening of a cry, Lévinas proposes an interhuman order of politics: "The interhuman, properly speaking, lies in a non-indifference of one to another, in a responsibility of one for another, but before the reciprocity of this responsibility...It is prior to any contract" (100). The interhuman, as the I and the Other joined by ethics and not contract, provides the possibility for the other's useless suffering to be meaningful for me. For Lévinas, my death is not mine; I can only take hold of the death of the Other, and I must do so with responsibility.

In this text there is an opening which Lévinas does not seem to fully draw out: the integral yet disturbing status of the 'Jew' in his philosophy of thinking-of-the-other. In "Useless Suffering," the Jew-as-victim-of-the-Holocaust figures as the Other par excellence, though Lévinas never uses those words exactly; Needless to say, this is simply my reading of his text. Coincidently, this opening comes in a section of Emil Fackenheim's *God's Presence in History* that Lévinas quotes at length and leaves uncritically examined:

> "The Nazi Genocide of the Jewish people has no precedent within Jewish history. Nor...will one find a precedent outside Jewish history...Even actual cases of genocide, however, still differ from the Nazi holocaust in at least two respects. While peoples have been killed for 'rational' (however horrifying) ends such as power, territory, wealth...The Nazi murder...was annihilation for the sake of annihilation, murder for the sake of murder, evil for the sake of evil. Still more incontestably unique than the crime itself is the situation of the victims. The Albigensians died for their faith, believing unto death that God needs martyrs. Negro Christians have been murdered for their race, able to find comfort in a faith not at issue. The more than one million Jewish children murdered in the Nazi holocaust died neither because of their faith, nor despite their

faith, nor for reasons unrelated to the Jewish faith [but] because of the Jewish faith of their great-grandparents [who brought] up Jewish children." (98; quoting Fackenheim)

Following this almost excessive quotation, Lévinas does not engage with its content in any substantive manner. At most, the quotation seems to serve the sole purpose of justifying a claim he makes on the previous page. There, he writes, "Among these events [of the twentieth century] the Holocaust of the Jewish people under the reign of Hitler seems to me the paradigm of gratuitous human suffering, in which evil appears in its diabolical horror. *This is perhaps not a subjective feeling*" (97; my emphasis). There is a particularity of the Holocaust which does mark it as grossly gratuitous: The technological and scientific approaches of Nazi Germany to mass murder. Still, some angular questions must be posed: Was the Nazi Holocaust, in some way, tied to "rational" objectives? From the experiences of the Holocaust, can we theorize an essence of suffering, suffering *as such*? And, is Lévinas's feeling here a subjective one or not (though, I will leave this question open)?

In *Hitler's Black Victims: The Experiences of Afro-Germans, Africans, Afro-Europeans and African Americans During the Nazi Era,* political scientist Clarence Lusane excavates a necessary linkage between the development of the German eugenics movement, the systematic Nazi-sterilization of Afro-Germans, and American racial science at the turn of the twentieth century. Alfred Ploetz, the acknowledged father of German eugenics movement, "spent time in the United States where undoubtedly he solidified his admiration for the South's segregation laws and popular practice...[H]e would also be credited with coining the term *Rassenhygiene* (racial hygiene), whose deadly meaning would leave its bloodstain on the Nazi era" (81). Or, as Ella Shohat argues in *Race in Translation*, "While the Holocaust, as the paradigm for exterminationist racism, has its own horrific specificity, it also exists on a historical continuum with other forms of colonial racism. Even Nazi experiments on Jews can be viewed on a continuum with the

scientific racism that made the bodies of Africans and indigenous Americans available for experimentation and dissection" (158). Undoubtedly, the Nazist practices during the Holocaust do have relations to the same "rational" thought of anti-black racism, a relation of which Lévinas was perhaps unaware.

In another sense, Nazi Germany represented a deathly logic that was not solely its own: the logic of the nation/state and über-nationalism, both of which were intimately tied to perverted and violent -- and impossible -- dreams of national purity. In "Deutsches Requiem," Argentinean writer Jorge Luis Borges is able to imaginatively articulate this point through the life of the main character, Otto Dietrich zur Linde. The story is situated following the fall of the Third Reich, and Otto relates his experiences during WWII. During the entire story, he awaits his death by firing squad after confessing to being a Nazi torturer and murderer while showing not more than a hint of repentance for his actions. From the perspective of Otto, Borges writes, "Hitler thought he was fighting for a nation, but he was fighting for all nations, even for those he attacked and abominated. It does not matter that his ego was unaware of that; his blood, his will, knew." Borges, an author who does not believe such a thing as novelty exists, writes that Hitler was guided by the invisible hand of continuous history and, as the popular saying goes, 'It was written in the stars.' Hitler may have thought WWII was a war to defend German nationhood, but he was fighting for all nations. Otto continues, "The world was dying of Judaism, of that disease of Judaism that is belief in Christ; we offered it violence and faith in the sword." The Nazi Party was destined to defend the universal idea of 'nationhood' by making its necessary discourse of race, religion and blood visible, and acting on the longing of 'nationhood' for purity. Quite simply, the old must be replaced in order to usher in a new age

with a new controlling power. Nazism, which might be reduced to belief in national purity and violence, was destined to become the new controlling power.

Did Nazism, as this religion for the new age, win? One need to look further than the Mémorial de la Shoah to see that collective memory remembers the fall of the Third Reich and the extermination of Nazism from nation/state politics.[4] Borges, however, challenges this conception. He writes, "That sword killed us, and now we are like the wizard who weaves a labyrinth and is forced to wander through it till the end of his days, or like David, who sits in judgment on a stranger and sentences him to death, and then hears to revelation: Thou art that man." The "rationality" of Nazi Germany was similar to the rationality of state-sponsored racism in the US. Looking through this lens of "rationality," Nazism was as an extreme iteration of fanatic nationalism concerned with racial purity, ruled by state violence. Indeed, Hitler did not give birth to the Nazism which would come to plague us; the history of the West -- a history intimately bound to colonialism, slavery, and state-sponsored racism -- gave birth to Nazism, and it is this Nazism which continues to haunt our world today through every anti-immigration national discourse. To do justice to these memories of racism -- many of which still haunt us -- we cannot maintain with privileged particularity that "'The Nazi murder...was annihilation for the sake of annihilation, murder for the sake of murder, evil for the sake of evil.'"

Why might Lévinas have left the words of Fackenheim's text uncritically examined? The answer may lie in Lévinas's rejection of identitarian thought while he, ironically, turns to the "Jew" in order to provide a structure of suffering and calls for the continuation of Jewish

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[4] As my analysis hints, the obsession with granting Nazism a kind of monopoly over evil and violence has all kinds of advantages for contemporary politics in the Western world. See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's ghost: a story of greed, terror, and heroism in Colonial Africa*, Houghton Mifflin. Boston. 1998.

diasporic tradition. What do we make of his preoccupation with Jewish suffering and his insistence on a colorblind ethics of singularity? I do not intend to efface the terribly personal experiences Lévinas had with the Holocaust, some of which were relayed to our class by Danielle Cohen-Lévinas, leaving many of us overwhelmed by the horrors of someone seeing their closest family members executed. Recognizing that I am treading dangerous waters, perhaps a more appropriate question would be: What does the "Jew" in the texts of Lévinas look like when he is received by his readers?

If we are to follow Lévinasian philosophy, then it is indisputable that "[t]he best way of encountering the Other is not even to notice the color of his eyes!" (85 ETHICS AND INFITITY). On this point of pursuing a colorblind ethics, I have two responses. First, the "Jew" is an overdetermined word, full of mulitiplicity, particularities, and tensions. This is precisely the main point conveyed by Ella Shohat's "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims." She writes, "The Zionist master-narrative has little place for either Palestinians or Sephardim...Distinguising the 'evil' East (the Moslem Arab) from the 'good' East (the Jewish Arab), Israel has taken upon itself to 'cleanse' the Sephardim of their Arab-ness...Israeli historiography absorbs the Jews of Asia and African into the monolithic official memory of European Jews" (7-8). The advantage of drawing out the differences that the word 'Jew' inevitably effaces -- and, Shohat's text reads like a deconstruction of 'Jew' -- is that it brings into view the necessary interaction between colonialism, racism, orientalism, the Jew-as-victim-of-the-Holocaust, and the Sephardic-Jew-as-victim-of-Israeli-political-violence. In other words, such an act of deconstructing the word 'Jew' would result in revealing how the Sephardic-Jew-as-victim-of-Israeli-political-violence bears the historical, political, and corporeal mark of anti-Arab racism throughout modern history. When different conditions of and prior to suffering

lead to different experiences of suffering, the possibility of deriving the essence of suffering seems to be lost and a dangerous journey, threatening the singularities of the events of suffering themselves.

Derridian tRACES: To Be Haunted by Race with Nowhere to Turn

To facilitate my move from the work of Lévinas to that of Derrida, I turn the attention of this paper to "Hospitality and Mortality," a chapter from Marc Crépon's *The Thought of Death and the Memory of War* which engages sections of Derrida's oeuvre that responds directly to Lévinasian thought on hospitality, the Other, and thinking-of-the-other. Crépon, in his reading of Derrida and Lévinas, shows how the act of mourning opens up the 'identity' -- that which is always already non-identitical -- to alterity, difference, otherness. He writes,

> The I can distinguish what it owes to the living from what it owes to the dead only to the extent that it is assured of what it owes to itself independently of the others, no matter the name (autonomy, sovereignty, etc.) that one might give to this assurance...this assurance must be shaken. Everything changes, everything should change, when we recognize --*what one calls deconstruction has no object if not this*-- that the I exists only as affected by the trace of the other in the I, and that this is the meaning of finitude. (154-5; emphasis mine)

As I alluded to in my previous discussion of Lévinas, what does the Other look like when we consider the historical forces of modern colonialism and anti-Black racism? Within this colonial matrix, the object of deconstruction is to reveal "the trace that the living leave behind in us, in the very place where our 'identity' is disjointed, open and disposed toward alterity" (156). But, before this act of deconstruction, one wonders: What memories do we currently have of the (racial, colonial) Other? How do we face this impossible task of remembering the singularities of people who were violently, systematically, historically, socio-politically, and linguistically marginalized simultaneously in history and discourse?

Another point Crépon articulates that must be planted here is the link between injustice, violence, and the right of a collective. He writes, "And yet, as surely as we share the memory of wars, deportations, genocides, organized or tolerated famine, terror, and all the anonymous deaths in mass graves and on the killing fields, we know that there is no injustice, no violence, that is not accompanied by the claim to just such a right [of the collective]" (158-9). Derrida calls for us to deconstruct the binary us/they and the live by an ethics of the unrestricted, indiscriminate "double yes": the "yes" to the Other before we even see him, and the "yes" of the Other to me (160). Though, what do we do when the acceptation of the Other does not happen prior to the arrival? If we reflect on anti- and decolonial resistance movements, many of these struggles -- such as that in French Algeria -- did not bear the "double-yes." If peace requires a prior non-hostility, then what does a colonized peoples do when hostility appears necessary to make colonizers alter their movements? In other words, does peace and harmony get in the way of sociopolitical change?

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon draws our attention crucially to the violence of colonial France in Algeria. He describes violence in Algeria as atmospheric, weaving its way into all spaces. It was a political violence, with the French state appropriating land which was not theirs and dispossessing the colonized, racial, and religious others of what was previously theirs. It was a clinical violence, using psychological and medico-scientific methods to strip its victims of personhood in the face of the law, linking the North African Algerian to criminality and madness. The psychic and dehumanizing effects of colonialism -- stripping the (racial) (colonial) Other of his dignity -- accompanied the material realities of the French colonial adventure. Fanon argues that any decolonial revolution, wishing to throw off the colonial yolk, must repair the damage done by material, political violence and the psycho-social violence of

colonial psychology.[5] A politics derived from an Derridian ethics of singularity against collectivity seems to ignore the reality of unequal power relations and does not make positive room for the at times violence politics of decolonial movements of the twentieth century. What of Derrida, in the context of post/colonial Europe, do we retain?

What *is* deconstruction? In order to move towards a conceptualization through a reading of "Différance," we must recall that, in this article, Derrida is responding to Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of language and signification. Saussure argued that language is a communal system of linguistic differences in which all participating members must follow all the rules of the linguistic system. As a subject, you become a speaker through your inscription in language and the speaking subject is a function of language. The premise of this essay, in particular, asks the following: What did Saussure mean when he wrote about meaning being derived from "presence without positive difference"? Derrida finds a far more radical interpretation that even Saussure missed in his own semiotic theory: that Saussure's conceptualization of difference deconstructs itself.

In "Différance," Derrida uses différance in order to pinpoint how language works to produce meaning. He writes, "[W]e will designate as *différance* the movement according to which language, or any code, any system of referral in general, is constituted 'historically' as a weave of differences" (65). In this passage, we see that différance is the movement which produces and governs language as a weave of differences.[6] It becomes readily apparent that différance as spatialization is the necessary creation of an interval which separates a word from what it is not. Further, he explains difference as not just spatialization but also temporalization. He writes, "It is because of *différance* that the movement of signification is possible only if each

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[6] Through the remainder of the paper, I will write "différance" as "Derridian difference" in an attempt to retain how this linguistic creation of plays between literary and oral sameness and difference.

so-called present element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element" (65). Difference as temporalization clarifies how language and meaning unfolds through time. Any act of enunciating, writing or reading part of a word only gathers meaning in relation to its previous parts and its parts to come. Because difference as spatialization and temporalization occur simultaneously and Derridian textuality suggests a potentially infinite context, the detour through which meaning is made is infinite; The concept is never fully present to the mind, only difference.

In "Plato's Pharmacy," Derrida articulates how difference affects our utilization of and colonization by language by way of critiquing -- or, deconstructing -- an argument Plato puts forth about rhetoric, writing, and the pharmakon in his dialogue *The Phaedrus*. In this dialogue, Plato argues that writing is a pharmakon: "Writing is no more valuable, says Plato, as a remedy than as a poison...The *pharmakon* can never be simply beneficial" (128). Plato is trying to convince us that writing is a pharmakon because it is an aid for memory that can only resemble truth as it lacks a living presence (namely, speaking-subjects who can approach truth through *dialogos*, dialogue). However, while writing is a pharmakon - indeed all the more so because we do not have an infinite memory and need writing - language, too, is a pharmakon. Words are transmitted to us as signifying a full and totalized concept that is defined in-and-of-itself. Considering Derridian difference, however, we learn that the meaning of a word is always already marked by previous words, future words, and its supposedly absolute opposite. On the one hand, we need language -- oral and/or written -- to communicate. Language effectively delivers the world to us in the form of clean, sensible, organized structures of meanings and

concepts. On the other hand, language hides the world from us as it tries to refuse to acknowledge how meaning is made *through* différance. In other words, language is a pharmakon as it gives us the world and simultaneously tries to close off possibilities of another world.

Derridian deconstruction reveals *how* a text or the un/stable meaning of a word is produced according to difference. And, such a practice enables us to see how certain ideas are manufactured, packed, and sent to the public so that we come to see that the idea itself resists its packaging. To wit, by tracing the trace we can unsettle ideas, disrupt the hierarchical way-of-things, and imagine more liberating ways of thinking. To deconstruct a word, for example, is to reveal *how* said word appears to us as a full and totalized concept that is defined in-and-of-itself. To deconstruct a word one might: i) show how said word only receives its meaning through an intricate web of hierarchical and differential relations with other words, ii) see that said word is unstable and lacking as it marked deeply by other words, including other contextual words and that which it is supposedly absolutely not, and iii) overturn the hierarchies which violently organize meaning in search of an escape from structured thought.

Derrida opens the door to theorizing about race by way of deconstructing it in relation to the "I" as a speech-act, the West, colonialism, homohegemony, Eurocentricism, Post-Westphalian state model, etc. He is, in fact, able to do so while rarely explicitly naming race or racism. Two texts stick out in my mind which exemplify Derrida's commitment to and facilitation of deconstructing race: "Racism's Last Word" and *Monolingualism of the Other; Or, The Prosthesis of Origin*. In the first text he writes explicitly about the apartheid of South Africa, configuring "apartheid" as "racism's last word," the world's ultimate racism "like a racism par excellence, the most racist of racisms" (291). On this word "apartheid," he writes,

> At every point, like all racisms, it tends to pass segregation off as natural-and as the very law of the origin. Such is the monstrosity of this political idiom. Surely, an idiom should

never incline toward racism. It often does, however, and this is not al-together fortuitous: there's no racism without a language. The point is not that acts of racial violence are only words but rather that they have to have a word. Even though it offers the excuse of blood, color, birth-or, rather, because it uses this naturalist and sometimes creationist dis-course-racism always betrays the perversion of a man, the "talking animal." It institutes, declares, writes, inscribes, prescribes. A system of marks, it outlines space in order to assign forced residence or to close off borders. It does not discern, it discriminates. (292)

Words are never just words. Or, perhaps the perplexity is that *words are just words*, because racial violence does not only manifest itself through racist language. "Apartheid" is more than the word itself, but it exists within a weave of linguistic differences propelled in a way by political desires, histories, markings. And, the language of racism, though always in the movement of being manufactured, differed, and deferred, speaks; the language of racism says something. Racism has to have a language, it has to speak to make itself known. This paradox of racist language -- being at once just linguistic violence and more than linguistic violence -- underscores the precarious nature of racist language.

Derrida draws out this paradox of language in relation to colonialism, the Holocaust, and the French nation/state in *Monolingualism of the Other; Or, The Prosthesis of Origin*. Though the word 'race' evades the text, it finds its way into the text and is unsettled by Derrida's different arguments concerning cultural identity, monolingualism, and nationalism. For example, he writes about the juridical relation between cultural identity as articulated through language (being documented as an Algerian Jew in Vichy France) and political violence (having his French citizenship stripped). He also expressively communicates how humans -- driven to master language -- are colonized by a language that is absolutely mad; This is the same (mad) language that is used to solidify and stabilize law, with its madness and maddening effects slipping into the very law it wishes to settle. Indeed, the madness of language is always already everywhere. Not only is the relation between citizenship, nationality, culture, and law mediated through a mad

language, but that language bears the mark of history as words are only ever borrowed. As the singularity of the event of French colonialism escapes through our borrowing of language, for example, so does the possibility of justice.

In Derrida's work, race seems to be inescapable as it seeps into our language and is bounded by the logic of difference. Actually, the conference "tRACEs: Race, Deconstruction, and Critical Theory" at University of California-Irvine in 2003 evolved, evidently, around the Derridian understanding of race as a trace. 'Trace' is the word Derrida uses to articulate that which remains at the origin of words we use in a language governed by difference: origins which are never stable or fully present, and are forever shifting. The trace is the disappearance of an origin while giving structure by way of constituting a nonorigin. The argument showing race as a trace is simple: After thinking-one's-time through a deconstruction of 'race,' it becomes clear that 'race' -- under the governance of difference -- has no originary foundation and prevailing metaphysical structure, yet it still exists as a word that bears the mark of former political violence and the possibility of more to come.

If race is but a trace, then these questions remain: What does race look like? How does it move? How do we account for its political violence? How does it settle, unsettle, and resettle in different ways and to difference effects? Derrida's discussion of "tRACES" during the "Race, Deconstruction, and Critical Theory" UCHR conference is unable to account for these. He says, at one point, "Deconstruction is through, and through, and through -- and, I wouldn't say this artificially -- the deconstruction of racism...I will argue that deconstruction, first of all, tries to analyze...the general conditions for racism...and then, in the same historical way, to articulate this general layer with its narrow specification in the form of a modern strictly-speaking racism" (11:00). But, how do we move from a deconstruction of racism to fighting the peculiar and

vicious lives of racism?[7] Derrida's ethics of singularity and politics of justice do not appear to be of any use in a sociopolitical world where meaningful discussions of race, racism, and racialization is foreclosed; there is no "double yes." To talk of race primarily as a trace, though leading to an ethical and just political engagement, does not seem pragmatic. The ghostliness of race, as a trace haunting our discourse, renders anti-racist political action precarious. Anti-colonial and decolonial activists of the twentieth century could not wait for the "double yes" with high hopes; In the work of Fanon, waiting for the "double yes," for example, would have been akin to political inactivity and passivity. On this point, he writes lucidly,

> A fine sight they are too, the believers in nonviolence, saying that they are neither executioners nor victims. Very well then; if you're not victims when the government which you've voted for, when the army in which your younger brothers are serving without hesitation or remorse have undertaken race murder, you are, without a shadow of doubt, executioners. And if you choose to be victims and to risk being put in prison for a day or two, you are simply choosing to pull your irons out of the fire. But you will not be able to pull them out; they'll have to stay there till the end. Try to understand this at any rate: if violence began this very evening and if exploitation and oppression had never existed on the earth, perhaps the slogans of non-violence might end the quarrel. But if the whole regime, even your non-violent ideas, are conditioned by a thousand-year-old oppression, your passivity serves only to place you in the ranks of the oppressors.

Reading Fanon's formulation here alongside Derrida's philosophy, there is a sort of hopelessness of Derrida's proposed ethics of singularity in the face of colonialism and racism where the "double yes" is closed off as an impossibility, where the "double yes" to the racial Other would entail the fragile French nation/state uprooting itself. How do we move from a deconstruction of race as trace to anti-racist political action, without falling into political passivity?

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[7] Derrida does draw out the relation between racism and anti-Semitism, explicating how a discussion of one always brings about the other, yet they never fall neatly onto one another.

What I am arguing here is not that violence must be *the* tool throw off the colonial yoke, or *the* tool to resist domination and subjugation. But, the anti- and de-colonial history of Algeria reminds us that violence was a tool of resistance to shake, dismantle, displace colonial structures. I recall another passage from *The Wretched of the Earth* on the atmosphere of violence created by French colonialism in Algeria, and Fanon's legitimate concern for non-violent approaches to anti-colonial resistance:

> Non-violence is an attempt to settle the colonial problem around a green baize table, before any regrettable act has been performed or irreparable gesture made, before any blood has been shed. But if the masses, without waiting for the chairs to be arranged around the baize table, listen to their own voice and begin committing outrages and setting fire to buildings, the elite and the nationalist bourgeois parties will be seen rushing to the colonialists to exclaim, "This is very serious! We do not know how it will end; we must find a solution—some sort of compromise." (61-2)

The violent resistance of Algerians against colonial France did something to racism and colonial structures. What do you do when violence appears as your last and only choice to wage resistance? We need to make room to at least conceptualize violence beyond the negative; that is, we need to be able to conceptualize violent resistance.

Towards a Conceptualization of Racializing Assemblages with Decolonial Openings

At "tRACEs: Race, Deconstruction, and Critical Theory," Barnor Hesse responded in part to Derrida's presentation by investigating the relationship between deconstruction and decolonization. In his remarks, Hesse articulates why deconstruction must be *always already* involved in decolonization, without arguing that it already is: "Deconstruction...needs to be involved in a double gesture, needs to be involved with some kind of intervention which is marked by decolonization. And I say decolonization because, like deconstruction, it has as its focus in life the attempt to mark some kind of...hegemonic foundation and...to unravel it in such a way as to open up a field...of undecidability where we can then begin to make interventions

around notions of an alternative" (3:00). Moving from this relation between deconstruction and decolonization, Hesse explores the concepts of race, racism, and racialization, and asks a question of imminent sociopolitical and philosophical importance: Does conceptualizing racism demand a thinking of heritage or one of inheritance? If the former were true, in our postcolonial world of Eurocentric histories, then we would be inclined to think of anti-racism as the resistance against *formal* colonial racism and anti-Semitism in response to the tension between fascist Europe, liberal democracies, and desires of global capitalism during the twentieth century.

However, if we take racism as an inheritance -- as Hesse suggests we should -- then we would be able to trace a different conceptual history that accounts for more than a particular Eurocentric heritage of anti-Semitism which is discursively configured at the apex of Western racism. To be clear, thinking of racism as an inheritance enables us to talk about colonial matrices that do not get spoken of in the dominant narrative of modernity. Race, then, is conceptualized as more than a trace during the advent of modernity: "Race is the institute and trace of a series of assemblages which produced it...Racialization is the institution of a set of assemblages around a particular kind of intervention which we will mark as race" (14:00). Through this understanding of race as a process of institution and racism as an inheritance of in/complete de/colonial projects, to speak of racialization is to speak not just of bodies with traces; To speak of racialization is to speak of forms of embodiment, assemblages, production, and transformations. Alas, Deleuzian assemblage thought makes its grand entrance.

French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, in his thought of the assemblage, offers an approach to thinking about how race lives in the positive as a creation or a becoming always in flux and open to manipulation. This final comprehensive section is guided by a series of questions: How

does Deleuzian assemblage theory alter the mode of critically thinking through the relations between race, colonialism, suffering, the Holocaust, and violent resistance? How does assemblage thinking facilitate unique ways of moving through and against these relations, in addition to offering a way to move away from them? Is there room in assemblage thinking to envision different modes of political resistance?

To launch my explorative movements through Deleuzian philosophy, I begin by putting forth a conceptualization of Deleuzian assemblage theory. In common usage, this word 'assemblage' has several functional definitions. An 'assemblage' can signify a collection of things or people. In another usage, an 'assemblage' can signify a verb, as in the act of assembling something. The third connotation, however, is perhaps the closest to Deleuze's assemblage; It describes an artistic composition made of miscellaneous parts. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari describe an assemblage through the example of a nomad.[8] In this primary assemblage, which consists of a horse, warrior, and weapon, the different segments interact to create the nomad assemblage. To be a nomad, as Deleuze explains, the warrior needs a horse to move across large masses of land and a weapon to hunt for food and to defend himself. In other words, the whole of the nomad -- an assemblage consisting of a warrior, horse, and weapon -- is not reducible to its parts because the parts interact with one another, producing something else that has properties of its own: the nomad assemblage. In a word, the nomad as a prototypical assemblage is irreducible; It is not just a collection of things. Rather, the 'parts' amplify one another. In example, the nomad is not just a warrior, horse, and weapon. It is a warrior with a horse he can ride and a weapon he can utilize while riding the horse. Because of this, the nomad is more than a sum of its parts.

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[8] Deleuze and Guattari co-wrote this volume of texts, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, as an artistic philosophical experiment. In it, they retained their differences in order to multiply their thoughts. Moving forward, I am guided by Manuel DeLanda and will be building a particularly Deleuzian conceptualization of assemblage theory.

In addition to being irreducible because it is determined by relations, an assemblage is decomposable. In the nomad assemblage, the nomad and its relations can be disassembled: The warrior can lose his weapon or part with his horse. An assemblage is decomposable because there is no fusion, the parts are never lost within it, and the exercise of capacity can change. If any of these did happen -- as they inevitably do -- then the assemblage would transform. An assemblage is a heterogeneous totality which arises through the interaction between component parts, while the properties of the parts are not defined by their relations. Yet another illustration of an assemblage that Deleuze puts forth is the human body. In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Georg Hegel argued that the body with its seemingly necessary organs was an example of totality. We now know, however, that you can take the heart out of a human, freeze it, and attach said human to a pump. The human body, after centuries of medico-technological innovations, is decomposable.

An assemblage is defined on two axes. One side is composed of material and expressive components that can be considered segments or parts. On the other side of an assemblage, there are lines of territorialization and deterritorialization between these segments. The conceptualization of de/territorialization as a machinic process always at work in an assemblage is, perhaps, one of Deleuze's greatest contributions to the tradition of Critical Theory. Deleuze describes deterritorialization as the immanent sphere of flux and disorganized movement which *accompanies* territorialization as the segmentation and organization of an assemblage. The two are truly inseparable and live shared lives: Whenever there is deterritorialization, there is (re)territorialization. A key note here is that the world refuses and resists coding, constantly trying to deterritorialize only to be (re)territorialized. Assemblage theory is a theory of possibilities, one that emphasizes the possibilities of difference over permanent capture. On the

one hand, the assemblage is always changing, and there are always lines of flight to escape. On the other hand, the assemblage is always redefining itself as something different with different territorialities. We no longer have to be prisoners to stratification.

One common academic mistake made when interpreting de/territorialization is the assumption that deterritorialization is a strictly and always positive movement away from structure, organization, and segmentation. Many academics positively associate deterritorialization with freedom of creation and possibilities. However, Deleuze attaches no such absolute positivity or negativity to deterritorialization or territorialization. De/territorialization is just that which happens all the time, producing effects sometimes desirable and other times less so. For an illustration of the precarious nature of de/territorialization, consider global capitalism: It creates desires, organization, and order while always changing, recreating, and shifting its segments and the relations between them. The deterritorialization is, in fact, what makes global capitalism such a confounding, dangerous, and slippery force in the material world.

Subsequently, the next line of inquiry must ask: How defined and fuzzy are the boundaries? Where are the areas of indetermination and lines of flight? These are all questions of coding in assemblage theory, and lead to a discussion about the role of language in coding. Coding is the ordering of parts within an assemblage, and it at once identifies strata -- lines of organization -- and lines of flight which escape such organization. As Manuel DeLanda explains in "Assemblage Theory, Society, and Deleuze," assemblages are machines with two adjustable knobs, one controlling territorialization and the other controlling the level of coding. If both knobs are turned up to high degrees, then we have an assemblage that looks more like a stratum: Things well differentiated and highly ordered, like a classroom of students lined up

from youngest to oldest. If there is high territorialization and low coding, then we have a normal assemblage with lines of segmentation differentiating its parts which are still in motion. If there is low territorialization and low coding, then the assemblage is deterritorialized, as if a body without organs (BwO).

Of importance, though, Deleuze reminds us that these knobs can be adjusted and there are critical points where the quality of the assemblage changes.[9] There are transformative possibilities as the segments are produced. Through our use of language, choices in organization, and forms of movement, we produce the segmentations. For example, the earth can be thought of as an open field of relations which the geologist comes along to organize in his notes. At other times, the assemblage de/territorializes on its own, such as in the case of evolution: genes territorialize to produce organized and structured species while also deterritorializing through mutation. In brief, an assemblage is always in flux, shifting around and always re-creating itself anew.

With this understanding of a Deleuzian assemblage, we can look to develop an understanding of racializing assemblages. The effectiveness of assemblage theory lies not in its abstraction, but in its applicability, movement, and productivity. Before meeting this final task, though, I pause to sketch an outline of the meaning of the word 'race' in contemporary France. In an uncritical fashion, race appears to interject into contemporary French politics as a problem of historical scientific racism tied to and left in the past. In France, race *is* scientific racism, or the prejudicial pseudo-scientific thought which produced a taxonomic ordering of races and was used to justify centuries of colonialism, slavery, state violence, subjugation, and dehumanization. Because of this -- so the argument goes -- race is fundamentally anti-

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[9] As an analogy for the changing quality of an assemblage, consider how water compacts and solidifies into ice, and ice melts into water at particular temperatures.

republican; It harms the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity in France. Any discussion of race beyond the history of scientific racism is discursively constrained by the French state and the collective memory of the Nazi Holocaust in Western Europe. As I highlighted at the outset of this section, this conceptualization of race reflects an approach Hesse warns us against: Approaching the question of race and racism as a problem of heritage. The collective memory of the Nazi Holocaust -- such as the memory of German occupation in France -- overpowers the memories of French colonialism in Algeria, for example, where France ironically 'occupied' Algiers.

This conceptualization of race in France is produced by a racializing assemblage that is highly territorialized and highly coded: It is a stratum. This is what the primary racializing assemblage looks like in contemporary France and, needless to say, this assemblage stifles discussions around the legacy of colonialism, the reality of racial inequalities and disparities, and the strikingly Islamophobic and racist anti-immigration political discourses. We must look for lines of escape that lead us out of this terrifyingly rigid and incomprehensive understanding of race. As Deleuze urges, when we feel trapped inside an assemblage, we must look for escape routes and run away.

In a crafty and patient way, the film *Cache* poignantly portrays the problematics of such a conceptualization of race and racialization. The plot of the film is driven the a series of anonymous tapes which appear in the mailbox of a (white) French family living in Paris, each tape documenting the movements of the family during the day. Though neither the family nor the viewers find out who it is that is pranking them, a story unfolds in which Georges -- the father of the house -- begins to believe the person terrorizing his family is Majid, a darker skinned Muslim Algerian childhood friend who he wronged when they were childhood friends.

As he comes to suspect it is Majid, while the evidence for such an accusation is clearly

insufficient, Georges begins to have flashbacks about his mistreatment of Majid. However, the

memory which comes to torment Georges is that of the death of Majid's father which he had

tucked away far back in his memory. Majid's father, a worker for Georges's family, was

murdered during the Paris Massacre of 1961 in the midst of the Algerian War. This once

suppressed memory of the Algerian War haunts Georges and pushes him to leave Paris with his

family.

Still, race must be thought of as more than a collection of separate historical moments

and actions, because together these have made race what it is as an irreducible, though

decomposable, assemblage always open to transformation. Even if we were to enlarge to

historical understanding of race to include the events of slavery, colonialism, and state racism

along with the Holocaust, we would be left with an insufficiently static conceptualization. We

have to draw out relations between these events, deconstruct the segmentarity of the events in

collective memory, and reject any coding scheme that marks the Nazi Holocaust as the peak

moment of scientific racism. Indeed, my previous engagement with Lévinas attempted to do

precisely that. As Hesse points out, race has to do with machinic processes, institutions of

racial formations, the production of relations between its contents, organization of its parts,

and forms of embodiment. To further develop this point, I borrow Arun Saldanha's

conceptualization of race as a machine assemblage from "Reontologising race: the machinic

geography of phenotype." Saldanha provides the following conceptualization of race:

> Race must be conceived as a chain of contingency, in which the connections between its
> constituent components are not given, but are made viscous through local
> attractions...Race's spatiality is emphatically *not* about discrete separations between
> "races". Nobody "has" a race, but bodies are racialised...The concept of race is not for
> taxonomic ordering but for studying the *movements between* human bodies, things, and
> their changing environment. (18)

I refine this conceptualization of racializing assemblages by adding that colonialism (French-style included), the nation/state, global capitalism, and hegemony are four particularly strong forces at play in and around this machine assemblage of race, as they inserted the colonized and dominated into formidable and asymmetrical political, economic and social relations with others.

Deleuzian embodiment assists in understanding how race becomes a form of embodiment. For him, embodiment refers to forms of organization and stratification. Racializing assemblages seek to racially code bodies, to organize them into different groups, and draw lines of relations and stratification between them. Sedimentation, as the process of settling and rooting, is the ultimate goal of territorialization; Territorialization wishes to sediment certain articulations of organization and stratification, and fix things/forces/memories/ideas/words in a particular position within a web of relations. We can imagine how racial ideology and its desires facilitate an effect of getting-stuck-ness, an effect of feeling trapped. However, the movement of deterritorialization -- as movement towards a body without organs, towards an open field without organization -- provides escape routes out of the feeling of getting-stuck-ness produced by stratification and racialization. Racializing assemblages, too, have their striated *and* smooth sides. Racialization, in its stratification and organization, must be considered as a material, machinic process. Yet, racializing assemblages have their smooth sides, where their parts are ceaselessly in flux. It is this smooth side that provokes us into any discussion of race, and leaves us feeling confounded by the age-old question: What exactly *is* race?

De/territorializing racializing assemblages open us up to the possibilities of other worlds. The process of de/territorialization serves us vitally in conceptualizing racializing assemblages as a machine that dominates and subjugates certain humans, frequently in such a way that benefits

some over others. It is true that racializing assemblages -- producing the effect which we call race and racism -- work to organize the movements between "bodies, things, and their changing environment" (18). Nevertheless or all-the-more-so, we must constantly be on the lookout for deterritorialized passageways and lines of flight. As Michel Foucault urges in his preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophernia*, "Develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization... Use political practice as an intensifier of thought, and analysis as a multiplier of the forms and domains for the intervention of political action" (xiii). We must disassemble racializing assemblages and their "pyramidal hierarchization" by running away from them in search of a different world that does not subject bodies to discrimination, subjugation, or domination. The anti- and decolonial movements of the twentieth century did exactly that. They looked for lines of escape into a different, better world. In the case of Algeria, as Fanon so lucidly conveys, violence against colonial France was that line of flight. Use analysis to find lines of flight for political practice. Retaining the asubjective aspect of Deleuzian philosophy, we must find lines out flight to escape dominating assemblages and runaway from them; The assemblage, needing you to be what it is, will have to (re)territorialize into something different and try to suck you back in; Resist by opening those darkest, hidden doors; Follow the lines of flight.

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