From Indifference to Difference:
Theorizing Emancipation through Sylvia Wynter and Alain Badiou

Elisabeth Paquette

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Philosophy
York University
Toronto, Ontario

June 2017

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Abstract

In this project I argue that Alain Badiou's theory of emancipation fails to properly account for racial and racialized subjects as well as racial emancipation. All particularities, including race, must be subtracted from emancipatory movements and this is central to his conception of politics. On this view, racial identities are considered divisive and arise merely as the result of hierarchical structures. For these reasons, in Badiou's account, no conception of racialized subjecthood can provide the conditions for universal emancipation.

I turn to two examples in order to demonstrate several unintended consequences of Badiou's theory of emancipation: the Négritude movement (1930s-1940s) and the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804). According to Badiou, Négritude fails to be a political movement because it retains a focus on race. While he claims that it is an important cultural movement, the conditions for it to become a political movement would require that Négritude writers and artists move beyond racial identity so that they can affirm a universal subject position. I argue that Badiou's discussion of Négritude mirrors that of Jean-Paul Sartre's discussion of Négritude in "Black Orpheus" (1948) a position that has been critiqued by various critical race theorists, including Frantz Fanon, Kathryn Gines, and Robert Bernasconi. Second, I discuss how Badiou's theory of emancipation would apply to the Haitian Revolution. Within his framework, the Haitian Revolution could only be considered political if its adherents shifted their focus away from race. However, I argue that race is a central and defining feature of this revolution, and that it ought to be understood as a political emancipatory movement. As a result, the failure of Badiou's political theory to account for the Haitian Revolution in this way demonstrates a limitation of his theory of emancipation.

This project then culminates in a discussion of the decolonial project of Sylvia Wynter, and I propose that her work addresses the limitations of Badiou's political theory. In particular, I develop her view of a pluri-conceptual theory of emancipation developed from the work of C. L. R. James that argues that particular identities, such as race, need not be subtracted from a theory of emancipation.

Acknowledgements

This project is a testament to all those who have offered me unfailing support for decades. Since my introduction to Philosophy at Trent University, I have been brought up into the world of academia by many remarkable scholars. Most importantly, I would like to thank Emilia Angelova for her unending support. Also, my navigation of the ins and outs of the doctoral process at York University required the knowledge of keen academics, for whom Alice McLachlan and Kristin Andrews are most deserving of my unending thanks. My dissertation committee's support by way of reading countless drafts of my project also deserve a myriad of thanks, especially Lorraine Code for her meetings over many cups of coffee. Many thanks to my friends, Joseph Jordan, Karen Robertson, Suzanne McCullagh, and Stephanie Rivera-Berruz for their engaging conversations, and our meals shared, tears shed, and coffee drunk.

In addition to these forms of support, my sustenance has been ensured by those closest to my heart. To my partner, Andrea Pitts, who has kept me whole throughout this entire process, there is no crag higher than the one just ascended and I thank you for 'keeping the rope tight.' Thank you to my mother, Linda Paquette, who has seen me through to the end, and to my father, Michel Paquette, for being proud of me. Lastly, my philosophical soul has been nourished by those who came before me and who have opened up the world of philosophy to me: Simone de Beauvoir, Audre Lorde, Sylvia Wynter, and Monique Wittig. Thank you to those who have made it possible for me to exist in this world, and have shown me that another philosophy is possible.

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Preface

With increasing frequency, contemporary theorists are returning to texts in the history of Western Philosophy in an attempt to investigate the role that race and gender play in a given theorist's overall project. The Penn State University Press series *Feminist Interpretations of X*, for instance, offers a re-reading of various Western philosophical theorists such as G. W. F. Hegel, Jacques Derrida, Plato, and Simone de Beauvoir through the lens of feminist theory. Such engagements with the history of Western philosophy are becoming increasingly commonplace and important to critical philosophical inquiry.

The goal of the following project is to perform a similar kind of analysis regarding the role race plays in the work of Alain Badiou. To analyze the conception of race in his work, we ought first to consider how such an endeavor is possible, and the kind of approach that would be desired for such a project. In what follows, I outline three approaches that are employed in critical philosophical investigations of race, and I defend one such approach that is most suitable for my project.

The first approach begins with the question of the moral character of a given theorist. For instance, in Barbara Hall's 2005 essay "Race and Hobbes," she begins with the following statement: "In this chapter I examine the question of whether Thomas Hobbes […] was a racist" (43). This kind of investigation can take the form of looking at the actions of a theorist and then drawing a correlation between what that theorist did and what they said in their philosophical writings. For instance, it is now well-known that John Locke profited from the trans-Atlantic slave trade. How then are we to make sense of his writings on slavery in his *Two Treatises of Government* and his conception of natural and inherent human rights (Bernasconi & Mann, 2005)? The additional implication of Hall's question, whether Hobbes was a racist, extends

beyond the analysis of his texts and actions during his lifetime to say something about his character. While there might be various reasons to support such a method, this method is not employed in the following project. The justification for declining such a method is, in part, because it might offer a strong prescriptivist stance on those texts that ought to be read and those that ought not to be read. This project is not concerned with providing an answer to the question: "Is Badiou a racist?"

A second approach focuses on the language or specific comments an author uses to discuss race and gender, or racialized and gendered subjects. This kind of investigation can also explicitly address a philosopher's method of theorizing marginalized subjects. For instance, we can think here of Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (1822-1828) in which he argues that Africa as a whole is a "state of innocence […whereby] man is as yet unconscious of himself" (Hegel 1997, 128). In addition, he writes "Man is not truly a human being until he knows what goodness is, has experienced opposition, and become divided within himself" (Ibid.). As a result, as secondary readers of Hegel have argued, he appears to propose that the peoples of Africa are not truly human beings. In a similar vein, Immanuel Kant's "On the Different Races of Man" (1775) describes what he believes are four distinct races, and in his "Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime" (1764), he ascribes different moral and aesthetic sensibilities to these four distinct races (Eze 1997, 38-64). Such lines of critical philosophical investigation regarding race often shed light on texts that have been historically dismissed as peripheral writings. More often, such texts regarding race have been overlooked by a number of philosophers, seemingly for the purpose of absolving a given theorist from having made derogatory statements about groups of non-European peoples (see Eze 1997; Bernasconi & Lott 2000). This kind of investigation, however, is a more feasible approach for

theorists in the history of Western philosophy as opposed to a method of critique aimed at a given present-day theorist. Badiou, like most present-day philosophers, is far less likely to write an ethnology or philosophical anthropology that characterizes particular groups of people.

A variation on this line of investigation, however, might be useful for providing an account of a given author's racialized language or use of racialized tropes. The purpose of such a method would be to come to an understanding of what a given theorist believes to be the case about race or about racialized subjects. One could conceivably provide a critical analysis of Badiou's work on the basis of his statements regarding racialized or gendered subjects or regarding racial tropes and stereotypes. For instance, in his most recent book, titled *Black: The Brilliance of a Non-Color* (2017), one could analyze Badiou's use of i) the "dark continent" (25); ii) the "dark Phallus" (39); iii) his discussion of blackness as dirty (3); iv) blackness as subverting virginity (16); or v) blackness as connoting an impurity when juxtaposed against whiteness (a color that connotes both purity and female virginity) (38). While each of these five examples introduced by Badiou are located in the first part of this book which does not specifically discuss race but is instead focused on "color,"[1] his intentions in this instance cannot wholly dictate whether these concepts are imbued with racial significance nor whether they can be dissociated from race. For instance, the term "dark continent" used by Henry M. Stanley, a U.S. explorer, in his 1878 book *Through the Dark Continent* refers to the continent of Africa. According to Lucy Jarosz, "This metaphor identifies and incorporates an entire continent as Other in a way that reaffirms Western dominance and reveals hostile and racist valuations of Africa and Africans in travel accounts, news reports, and academic writing" (1992, 105). In

[1] It should be noted here that I am drawing a distinction between Badiou's discussion of "color" in the majority of his book *Black* and his discussion of "race" at the end of this same book. However, it is important to note that for Badiou race is only a color that has gained a series of "false 'objective' bases for oppressive classifications" (Badiou 2017, 104).

addition, examples (2) through (5) provided above all have sexual overtones that invoke historically saturated symbolic representations of white women, Black men, and the absence of Black women, all of which cannot be disassociated from histories of race and processes of racialization. For example, as noted by Barbara Smith, "black and white women were defined as polar opposites, locked together within the social context of the Jim Crow South […] Whereas elite white women in particular were constructed as chaste and pious, the symbol of virtue and civilization, black women, within the oppositional logic of the race-gender contrasts, became depravity incarnate: unclean, promiscuous, savage" (1999, 22-23). The symbol of the white female virgin also served to reinforce the justification for the lynching of "the beastial black male rapist" (Ibid., 23) reinforcing the "symbolic power of the black male as a terrifying racial signifier, whose menace rested both on blackness and on masculinity [and] conversely, the white woman stood alone in her 'pure' claim to femininity" (Ibid.). Thus, these connotations of Blackness cannot be extricated from the racialized contexts of the U.S. South, for instance.[2] That said, while I make note of Badiou's use of racialized tropes and note that such statements are worthy of additional analysis, this project is not wholly concerned with that particular aim either. Rather, as I argue below, I propose that his use of racialized tropes points to a larger and more systemic problem in his work. This second approach is thereby not entirely suitable for my project.

A third approach to philosophically studying race that is more relevant for my project is to analyze the role of race in the overall *structure* of a theorist's project. This would mean focusing on how race might function as an implicit or explicit presence or notable absence in a theorist's work. For instance, in this vein, it may be useful to consider the unintended consequences a theory can have for marginalized subjectivities. One might ask "How might the

[2] Similarly, one could also address his reference to "black gangsters" (Badiou 2011a, 292).

conception of freedom offered in this view impact someone living within a marginalized socio-political location?" or "What kind of freedom is being offered in this theorist's work and does that conception of freedom have any implications for marginalized subjects?" The following project adopts this third approach.

That said, in the realm of Badiou scholarship, there is a growing field of literature that offers analyses of Badiou on the basis of gender, sexual difference, and race. On the topic of race, various theorists have considered the implications of Badiou's project for political movements in the Caribbean (see Wright 2009, 2013; Nesbitt 2008, 2013), Latin America (see Mentinis 2006; Cerdeiras 2003), and South Africa (see Farred 2018; Neoscomos 2012, 2016). Similarly, there are theorists who develop an analysis of Badiou's work on the basis of queer theory (see Menon 2015), and French feminism and psychoanalysis (see Paquette 2015; Burchill 2017; Jöttkandt 2010).

My analysis of Badiou's work developed below is situated within the abovementioned literature by scholars working on race explicitly. My project will not offer an analysis of his project on the basis of sexual difference and gender. While an analysis of his account of sexual difference is surely important, and understanding the unintended consequences of these concepts is illuminating for his overall project, there are various reasons why I have not included a robust analysis of his use of sexual difference in the following project. Generally speaking, race and gender are distinct categories of identity: historically, socially, and philosophically. For this reason, it would be problematic to conflate the two categories (race and gender) without a proper account of each one. Furthermore, Badiou's construction of sexual difference is based upon Lacanian psychoanalysis. In order to provide an analysis of sexual difference in Badiou's project, one would need to provide a treatment of Lacanian psychoanalysis *in addition* to

offering an account of his theorization of race. While race and gender do importantly intersect as historical, social, and philosophical categories, there is insufficient space in this project to properly address both. That said, throughout this project, my analysis will reference some of the analytical efforts of theorists working on sexual difference and Badiou. However, I do so only when a given scholar's theoretical efforts offer explicit connections to an analysis of race.

This third approach to a critical analysis on the basis of race in Badiou allows us to understand how he conceives of race, and the role that race plays in his overall project. Specifically, this approach allows us to develop an analysis that extends beyond the author's explicit discussions of race, and instead affords us the opportunity to explore other concepts that are relevantly linked to systems of oppression and emancipation. This approach thus allows us to ask questions such as: is there an implicit notion of race operating within Badiou's conception of politics? And does his theory of emancipation employ a notion of emancipation for only a particular racial category? Through such questions I propose that we can come to have a better understanding of the function of race within Badiou's overarching project, and it is to this task that we now turn.

Chapter One: Alain Badiou and Race

Introduction

What is required in order to end systemic forms of oppression, and in what ways should political theorists interpret systemic forms of oppression and their solutions? This project proposes two divergent responses to these questions through the works of Alain Badiou, a 20th Century French Political Theorist, and Sylvia Wynter, a 20th Century Decolonial Theorist. Badiou, who is influenced by authors such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Karl Marx, and Jacques Lacan, seeks to provide a new and innovative approach to the concept of political revolution. His project weaves together set theory (a "branch of mathematics that deals with the properties of well-defined collections of objects, which may or may not be of a mathematical nature, such as numbers or functions" (Enderton & Stoll, 2016)) drawing from Georg Cantor, as well as a number of notable political events (such as the Maoist peasant revolt and the French Revolution) to theoretically engage the concept of revolution. Wynter, who is an Afro-Caribbean decolonial theorist, is influenced by such figures as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and C. L. R. James. Both Badiou and Wynter are concerned with systemic forms of oppression that can take place through political bodies such as a nation-state or a colonial state. Similarly, both authors offer analyses of the correlations between the structures of oppressive institutions and the formation of who counts within a state (whether nation-state or colonial state). In this sense, they agree that oppressive institutions and formations of who counts in a state are often instrumental in the maintenance of political bodies. Additionally, they both seek to address ways to remedy structural forms of oppression. However, this project argues that the means through which each author proceeds to bring about emancipation, and their respective conceptualizations of the political, are markedly distinct. Most importantly, their respective treatments of race distinguish

their projects. Notably, for Badiou, without rejecting the concrete existence of a socially constructed notion of race, a politics of emancipation ought *not* center race. Race is furthermore excluded from his account of emancipation and the political. In contrast, Wynter maintains an important role for race in her theory of emancipation and the political. A comparative analysis of their respective theories of emancipation and the political in relation to their theorizations of race is important for understanding the (unintended) consequences of their respective projects. To each theorist, we might then ask, "For whom is emancipation possible?"

1.1: Method: Project Goals and Structure

This project demonstrates that Badiou's theorization of emancipation and his political theory are limited because they cannot account for race or emancipation on the basis of race. For Badiou, all politics is emancipatory. Politics takes place when a collective of people are fighting for justice (or what he calls political emancipation) against an oppressive system. One might ask: what then is justice? Or how is it determined? Generally speaking, Badiou states that justice designates "the possible truth of a political orientation" (2005c, 53). Justice is the goal of a collective, but the content of that goal cannot be prescribed from within an oppressive system. The possible truth of politics always transcends a given oppressive framework. Justice is thus what is brought about by a collective of people against the oppressive logic of the state. Insofar as justice transcends the logic of the state, it cannot be beholden to particular interests that are inherent to the state. It is for this reason that Badiou invokes a conception of equality that refers solely to a "generic humanity," i.e. not a conception of humanity that is founded in any particular interest but one that is subtracted from all specific interests (Ibid.).

For Badiou, race is conceptualized as particular and concrete, and thus race is not included in his theorization of political emancipation premised on equality and justice. As a result, it follows that race must be overcome in order to attain universal emancipation, i.e. universal justice and equality. Given that race is excluded from his theorization of emancipation, and all politics are emancipatory, it follows that race is also excluded from politics.

A central goal of this project is to demonstrate that the conception of race located in Badiou's writings posits that race is solely a product of racism, and, as a result, race is deemed unimportant for emancipation, politics, or thought. I demonstrate that he portrays an inadequate and limited conception of race. I argue that race is not a particularity that needs to be overcome in order to achieve universal emancipation. To defend this view I turn to various readings of the Négritude movement. I also argue that race ought to be central to a politics of emancipation and furthermore ought not to be excluded from politics. To clarify this claim, I turn to the Haitian Revolution as an example of a political emancipatory movement that centralizes race. Finally, I conclude this project by demonstrating that Wynter's decolonial theory provides a possible solution to the limitations of Badiou's project. Namely, she demonstrates that it is possible to construct a theory of political emancipation that maintains the importance of particularities (such as race) alongside universality. I thereby turn to Wynter's discussion of the Négritude movement in order to demonstrate how she conceives of race. Then, I develop her analysis of James's "pluri-conceptual" framework for political emancipation to respond to the limitations of a Badiouian politics.

First, regarding the role of race in politics, I suggest that the tension I highlight between Badiou and Wynter reflects a historical debate concerning the role of race in political emancipation that took place between Sartre and Fanon. In what follows in this chapter, I focus

on the respective readings of Négritude by Sartre and Fanon to provide an analysis of the divergent roles they assign to race and race consciousness. In addition, I turn to the work of Kathryn Gines, Lewis R. Gordon, and Robert Bernasconi to develop the implications of Fanon's critique. I thus offer a justification for the inclusion of race and race consciousness for theories of emancipation. This point is echoed by Négritude poet, Aimé Césaire, who stated that race should be a central (1972, 27) and a persistent question (Ibid., 31) for a theory of emancipation. Given the influence of Sartre on Badiou, and Fanon on Wynter, the Fanon-Sartre debate provides a fruitful opening for developing an analysis of Badiou and Wynter, and provides an example that I return to throughout this project.

The remainder of this project is broken down in the following manner. Chapter Two develops an analysis of Badiou's conception of race in relation to his political theory. For instance, in *Ethics* (2001), Badiou argues that an ethics of emancipation should be structured on the basis of what he calls an "indifference to difference." As I describe in greater detail below, an "indifference to difference" is a rejection of identity categories, such as race, in order to maintain a unity or an appeal to universality that exceeds what are considered to be problematic divisions. In order to develop this account of indifference to difference, I incorporate Madhavi Menon's book *Indifference to Difference* (2015) in which she develops Badiou's ethics for the purpose of developing what she calls a queer universalism. While Badiou admits that one might have the experience of being racialized, this experience cannot inform a political truth. The juxtaposition of race and truth is premised on race being immanent to the oppressive state it seeks to upend and political truth transcending it. Furthermore, emancipation necessitates transcending the logic of the oppressive state. It is for this reason that Badiou argues that race cannot be central to political emancipation. However, I agree with Gines, Bernasconi, Fanon, and Wynter that race

should not be construed as a hindrance to emancipation and that it can be conceived of as having political import. In other words, this chapter describes Badiou's politics of indifference to difference and develops the unintended consequences of this politics for racialized subjects.

Chapter Three addresses the distinction Badiou makes between "culture" and "politics." For instance, Badiou states that the Négritude movement emanating from Paris in the 1930s is "cultural" and that it is not "political." Drawing upon the conception of the political developed in Chapter Two, and the Fanon-Sartre debate developed in Chapter One, I examine why movements that centralize race are cultural for Badiou. In particular, this chapter discusses Colin Wright's *Badiou in Jamaica* (2013), which addresses the divergent roles of culture and politics. In response to this book, I argue in agreement with Linda Martín Alcoff, Kathryn Gines, Michael Monahan, and Frantz Fanon that there are various problematic implications that emanate from this distinction. Put briefly: first, it presupposes a conception of race that forecloses the importance of race consciousness and collective memory for political movements. Second, such a view runs the risk of falling into patterns of Eurocentrism whereby the knowledge that emanates from race consciousness becomes inconsequential for emancipation. I then offer the Haitian revolution as a problem case for Badiou's theory of emancipation. Following present-day scholarship by such authors as David Geggus and George Cicariello-Maher, I argue that if his theory cannot consider the Haitian slave revolt a political movement, then his theory is severely limited.

Chapter Four introduces the work of decolonial theorist Sylvia Wynter. The chapter focuses on what she claims are problematic conceptions of the subject and the knowledge structures that serve to maintain hierarchical and oppressive structures of power. Furthermore, like Badiou, her goal is to develop a theory of emancipation that provides the conditions for

overthrowing systems of oppression. However, unlike Badiou, she argues that particular identities, such as race, are central to a theory of emancipation. This point becomes evident in her discussion of Négritude, as a movement that is both political and centered on race. The conception of race that she offers is not merely a product of an oppressive system, as it is for Badiou. Instead, she argues that the recognition and affirmation of marginalized positions are important for overturning oppressive systems. In this sense, while Badiou appeals to an indifference to difference, Wynter proposes instead that particular forms of liminality or marginal positionalities ought to maintain a pivotal role for a theory of emancipation.

1.2: The Fanon–Sartre Debate: On Why Race Should Count

The following section provides a brief outline of a debate between Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) and Frantz Fanon (1925-1961). I highlight this debate to draw out the overarching connections that I develop in this project between the conceptions of race offered by Badiou and Wynter. First, as noted by Lewis Gordon, "Jean-Paul Sartre has explored racial concerns in some of his work of the 1940s and early 1950s, such as *Anti-Semite and Jew*, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, *The Respectful Prostitute*, 'Black Orpheus,' and 'Black Presence'" (1995, 3). The debate discussed below is located most explicitly in Sartre's "Black Orpheus" (1948) and Fanon's "The Lived Experience of the Black Man," of *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). As Gordon states, in "Black Orpheus," "Sartre makes an effort to understand black particularity *from the inside*. He regards his project in that work as an attempt to explain the specificity of black writers to white readers under the concept of negritude" (1995, 3, sic.). Fanon's chapter in *Black Skin, White Masks* responds to "Black Orpheus," rejecting the role Sartre allocates to race in his theory of emancipation. He also offers an alternative conception of race to Sartre in that text.

Regarding this debate, it is important to understand what conceptions of race these theorists are utilizing. Notably, unless otherwise stated, all theorists discussed in this project generally adhere to what is consider a "social constructivist" model of race. Michael Monahan describes social constructivism in the following manner: "On this view, race exists as a real, though socially contingent and context dependent, category" (2006, 551). Within this model, race is described as a category that does exist; however, the rules of racial designation can change depending on the geo-political context. For instance, a woman who is identified and identifies as "Black" in the U.S. might be identified as "colored" and not "Black" if she were to travel to South Africa. In the context of the U.S., this is because there is a history of racialization that operates through "the one drop rule," meaning that the categories of race (specifically white and Black in this instance) are strictly marked and separate. However, in South Africa, and similarly in Haiti, a history of miscegenation has led to a distinct hierarchy whereby some people of African descent who are of mixed race-descent are racialized as "colored" and granted more rights or a higher social standing than those with darker skin tones who are racialized as "Black." Notably, the constructivist model of race is juxtaposed against a natural or biological conception of race in which it is presumed that there are biological features that determine race (such as genetics or phenotypical features). While it is the case that every theorist I discuss in this project endorses a social constructivist conception of race (at least most of the time), there continue to be numerous distinctions between how each theorist interprets the implications of this model.

The Fanon-Sartre debate focuses on their respective conceptions of the function of Négritude. Generally speaking, "Négritude" is a term coined by the Martinican poet and politician Aimé Césaire (1913-2008) in *Notebook of a Return to my Native Land* (1939). According to Nick Nesbitt, there are two competing conceptions of Négritude, one originating

from the work of Césaire and the other from Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906-2001), a Senegalese poet, politician, and cultural theorist. Nesbitt writes: "Césaire's original conception sees the specificity and unity of black existence as a historically developing phenomenon that arose through the highly contingent events of the African slave trade and the New World plantation system. [While, by contrast Senghor] argues for an unchanging core or essence to black existence" (2005, 193), the latter of whom has ultimately been critiqued for proposing a kind of Black essentialism. However, contra Nesbitt, Clevis B. Headley states that "In misconstruing Senghor's philosophical project as, among other things, […] a vulgar biological essentialism […] critics dismally fail to acknowledge the philosophical impetus by Senghor to capture the basic ontological orientation of an African mode of existence" (Headley). Headley offers an articulation of Senghor's Négritude as "among other things, a critique of colonial and scientific reason, and the imperialistic designs of modern scientific rationality" (Ibid.), which are informed by Senghor's concern with epistemology, ontology, and his reading of Henri Bergson.

While I attend to Senghor's work in some places, my project pays particular attention to Césaire's working out of Négritude. As noted by Nesbitt, Césaire "postulates Négritude as self-estrangement, a fact or quality that confronts the black subject as an object. Such a gesture initiates a movement in Césaire's poem toward a self-consciousness that breaks the bonds of subjugation through a grappling with negativity in the form of self-alienation. Négritude is not the lifeless object society has reduced it to. [...] Instead, it is active, creative, and liberatory" (2005, 196-197). Central to Césaire's project is not only the negation of racial stereotypes constructed within an anti-Black society, but additionally, the consciousness raising of the imposition of these stereotypes. In addition, his project seeks to understand how the negation of negative stereotypes can be liberatory. Négritude is thus an example of how a marginalized

group in society both recognizes their marginalization and seeks to affirm an active, creative, and liberatory conception of race. Additionally, following Nesbitt, "Négritude is thus for Césaire the self-created object that negates the very objectivity of black existence itself—where humans are reduced to pure animal-objects (slaves)—in a becoming-human […] In the concept of Négritude, Aimé Césaire produced the material, textual objectification of black self-consciousness, a program for self-understanding and liberation" (Ibid., 197).

How then does Sartre conceive of race and the Négritude movement given this general structure? The secondary literature on Sartre provides a possible framework to understand Sartre's conception of race across various works. For instance, in "Sartre and the Social Construction of Race" (2003), Donna-Dale Marcano proposes that there are two models of racialized group membership operating in Sartre's work, located specifically in *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1946) and *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, volume 1 (1960). The first model, located in *Anti-Semite and Jew*, is described as a model that "bases group constitution and identity on the gaze of the dominant Other, and the second [located in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*…] places the group as a prominent facilitator of history that produces itself in the domain of the Other" (Marcano 2003, 214). To be clear, in both of these instances Sartre is proposing a kind of social constructionist model of race. However, Marcano makes evident that between Sartre's earlier and later work there is a shift in terms of the agential capacity allocated to marginalized groups.

In *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Marcano notes that "what we have […] is a socially constructed idea of the group called the Jews, and the construction of the idea of the Jew occurs through the efforts and gaze of a community, the French community [in postwar France], which sees these 'others' as outside its bond of history and nationality" (Ibid., 218). The anti-Semite conceives of an idea of "Jew" and imposes it upon the Jewish people she/he/they meet. In such instances, the

idea of the Jew is not something that the Jew can escape or refute, instead he/she/they are said to be trapped (Ibid.). This position is nicely juxtaposed against what Marcano calls the '"democrat,' who rejects the idea of the Jew and recognizes only 'man' with universal traits, rebuking any assertion of identity that may persist beyond the individual […and furthermore that] there is no Jewish consciousness, no class consciousness, no Negro consciousness" (Ibid.). Through the work of Marcano, contra the democrat position that seeks to do away with any particular consciousness altogether, it becomes evident that Sartre maintains a role for identity and consciousness within his political theory.

According to Marcano, Sartre's earlier conception of racial identity "neglects the ways that groups play a part in the formation of their own identities as well as their agency, in some part, in constituting the group" (Ibid., 220). Doing so also neglects a long and vibrant history of resistance movements against other-imposed racial identities. Perhaps for this reason, in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, Sartre extends the conception of group identity he advanced in his earlier work to include the ability for groups to not be solely constituted by the gaze of an external and dominant group but by group members themselves (Ibid., 222). Group members are thus portrayed as able to construct their own self-image over and against a dominant group's construction of the negative group identity.

In Sartre's 1961 preface to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, the author seems to portray a conception of identity that corresponds with the second model articulated by Marcano. In this essay, Sartre describes the conditions that produced the dehumanization of Algerians under French colonial rule (Sartre 2004, xlix). French colonialism is the cause of racial inequality in Algeria. At the same time, colonialism also produces the white French identity (Ibid.). He thus speaks of the various forms of dialectical movement that seem to be operating in

the relation between the colonizer and the colonized. For instance, he states that he has written the preface to *The Wretched of the Earth* "to carry the dialectic through to its conclusion: we, too, peoples of Europe, we are being decolonized: meaning the colonist inside every one of us is surgically extracted in a bloody operation" (Ibid., lvii). Of the dialectical relation between the colonizer and the colonized, it seems that the last stage of the dialectic is for the colonizer to recognize and renounce (or be removed from) its position of power and dominance over the colonized. He writes: "This last stage of the dialectic [is where] you [white Europeans] condemn this war but you don't yet dare declare your support for the Algerian fighters" (Ibid., lxii). The last stage is subsequently sublated into a new history, which he calls the history of man, once the white Europeans join the rank of those who are fighting against the colonialists.

One of the implications of the distinction between the two forms of identity Sartre develops pertains to how one ought to think about race as a political identity. In the case of his earlier writings, it would seem that race is an inherently problematic conception. The argument that follows from this point is that because race is socially constructed and solely formed on the basis of the gaze of the dominant subject, race cannot be politically fruitful for the purpose of ending racial oppression. To this end, as Marcano states, "identities are negatively and predominantly determined from the outside and are, as such, unstable and worth dissolving" (Marcano 2003, 216). However, the second model for group membership draws a different conclusion from Sartre's reformulation of the construction of identity, i.e. that "there is a necessity for group formation and identification, the foundation of which is the basic need of the individual to interact with the environment and with others" (Ibid., 224). In other words, if it is the case that particularized group identities are formed not merely on the basis of external and

oppressive factors then it can be argued that there is something worth preserving in social constructivist conceptions of race.

"Black Orpheus" seems to be situated between these two models of group-identity formation. This text was written for a poetry anthology that was edited by Leopold Sédar-Senghor, titled *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et la malgache de langue Française* (1948) translated as *Anthology of New Black and Malagasy Poetry in the French Language*. Throughout his essay, Sartre describes Négritude as being beholden to something like a substance that is homogenous and interior to the black man (Sartre 1948, 47), something akin to a black soul (Ibid., 20). Black poetry thus is an attempt to "*reveal* the black soul" (Ibid.) that serves to awaken the consciousness of the black man (Ibid., 16). It would thus seem that the goal of Négritude is to promote the raising of consciousness of Black men as racialized subjects. For instance, he states that "the black man is a victim of [the capitalist structure of our society] *because he is a black man* and insofar as he is a colonized native or a deported African. And since he is oppressed within the confines of his race and because of it, he must first of all become conscious of his race" (Ibid., 18). Négritude becomes a means of resisting and rejecting the kinds of harms that are forced upon the Black man because he is Black, the recognition of which is central to the abolishment of racism. Furthermore, he states, "black poetry in the French language is, in our time, the only great revolutionary poetry" and is particularly well situated in order to do the work of raising consciousness of the Black man to the horrors he faces (Ibid., 16).

There are two important features to Sartre's conception of Négritude just described. First, he states that "Négritude is, in essence, poetry" (Ibid., 52) insofar as it "is a shimmer of being and of needing-to-be; it makes you and you make it" (Ibid., 48). There is thus a kind of co-constitution between the creation of Black poetry and the creation of a race conscious Black

man. But this is true only through the process of writing itself. For instance, he states that "Césaire's words do not describe negritude, they do not designate it, they do not copy it from the outside like a painter with a model: they *create* it; they compose it under our very eyes: henceforth it is a thing that can be observed and learned […] he ejects the black soul from himself at the very moment when others are trying to interiorize it" (Ibid., 35). The kind of operation that Sartre is here describing combines a subjective and an objective method. This method is objective to the extent that it pertains to the situation or circumstances that can be determined. For example, one can think of "the objective situation of the proletariat, which can be determined by the circumstances of production or of redistribution of property" (Ibid., 17) and what he elsewhere refers to as "the sociological" situation (Ibid.). At the same time, however, he claims that "poetry […] must in some way remain subjective" (Ibid.).

Sartre provides a further claim regarding what he calls the subject-objective method as it pertains to Négritude. He states:

> There are only two ways to go about forming racial concepts: either one causes certain subjective characteristics to become objective, or else one tries to interiorize objectively revealed manners of conduct; thus the black man who asserts his negritude by means of a revolutionary movement immediately places himself in the position of having to mediate, either because he wishes to recognize in himself certain objectively established traits of the African civilizations, or because he hopes to discover the Essence of blackness in the well of his heart (Ibid., 19).

In other words, it seems to be the case that the conception of "black consciousness" central to the Négritude movement, according to Sartre, presupposes the interiorization (read subjectivity) of

objectively revealed manners of conduct (read objectivity), or the enactment of revealing (and thus making objective) what is inherently subjective. Objective negritude is "expressed by the mores, arts, chants and dances of the African populaces" (Ibid., 29)—i.e. the "established traits of the African civilizations" (Ibid., 19)—or what otherwise are construed as sociological features or features determined by circumstance. Subjective negritude comes from finding oneself, from discovering the "Essence of blackness in the well" of the heart (Ibid.), i.e. it is a "relation of the self with the self" (Ibid., 20). Regarding the subjective→objective movement, for example, we can think of Sartre's description of the creative poetic writing of Césaire as the act of revealing to the world his Black soul in order that others might "find themselves" and accordingly recognize their subjectivity as racialized. Regarding the objective→subjective movement, for example, we can think of the interiorization of Césaire's Black soul by others. In light of the relation between the subjective and the objective, Sartre calls Négritude "objective poetry" (Ibid., 30) insofar as it fuses together the subjective and objective method outlined above.[3] In other words, the objective poetry of the Négritude movement provides the conditions not only for Black subjectivity to be affirmed in objective characteristics, but for objective characteristics to be internalized as Black subjectivity. It is the interplay between self and world and the affirmation of Black identity as subjective and objective that marks this movement as important to Black self-consciousness.

Before we move on to the justifications Sartre provides for why this realization of Black consciousness is necessary, one ought to keep in mind what is implied in Sartre's discussion of the Black soul. As noted above, there is a kind of homogeneity implicit in his discussion of Négritude. Most especially, he presupposes homogeneity in his description of *the* essence of

[3] It should also be noted that Sartre states the following: "I call this method 'objective poetry' *magic*, or charm" (Ibid., 30) and he juxtaposes the myths of Négritude poetry with the epic poems of Medieval French poetry.

Blackness, and *the* Black soul, as though it is a particular thing that is interior to or true for all Black people. Along these same lines, he provides his readers with an account of why the figures of the Négritude movement chose to write in the French language, stating that "having been dispersed to the four corners of the earth by the slave trade, black men have no common language" and thus they must write in French, even if they reject French culture, if they are to gain a large audience (Ibid., 23). However, we should be reminded that all Black men, or all Black people for that matter, did not speak the same language prior to the trans-Atlantic slave trade. As a result, there is a presumption of the homogeneity of all Black people without any recognition of different languages, cultures, religions, and histories existing in Africa prior to slavery.

For the purpose of this project, there are two features of Négritude that Sartre outlines in "Black Orpheus" to which we should turn our attention. I would like to first draw your attention to the manner in which he juxtaposes Négritude and the proletariat. The Black man, he claims, should shake off his Négritude and assume "his objective condition" as the proletariat in order to become part of the revolution (Ibid., 52). Despite the interplay between the subjective and the objective described above, ultimately he describes Négritude as "subjective, existential, [and] ethnic" when compared with the "objective, positive and precise" position of the proletariat (Ibid., 48). Négritude is thus too particular insofar as it is premised on an ethnicity and what he calls "comprehension" as opposed to the "intellection" of the proletariat position (Ibid., 49). Négritude can thus have a semblance of objectivity, but the proletariat is the *truly* objective position. The basis of this juxtaposition between the objective proletariat position and the particular/subjective position of Négritude is that the notion of the proletariat alone is capable of ensuring the solidarity of all oppressed persons (Ibid., 49).

Second, Sartre describes Négritude as an "anti-racist racism" (Ibid., 18). This turn of phrase is meant to imply that on the one hand, while the Négritude movement sought the emancipation of Black people through the realization of Black consciousness, on the other hand it was still mired in a conception of race that continued to be bound up with racism. The dilemma surrounding racism is not merely the manner in which race is used to oppress, but the categorization of race itself in this line of thinking serves to demarcate and differentiate where there ought not be any differentiation. In other words, within this conception of the social constructivist model of race, since race was created for the purpose of oppression, the only way in which to eliminate racism is to do away with race altogether. Or similarly, Négritude remains far too subjective for the purpose of emancipation. It is for this reason that he turns to "the one who is walking on this ridge between past particularism—which he has just climbed—and future universalism, which will be the twilight of his negritude; he is the one who looks to the end of particularism in order to find the dawn of the universal" (Ibid., 51). Sartre is quick to agree that it is important to abolish racism; however, it is only for the purpose of providing the conditions for the unity of class struggle. As noted by Gines in her critique of "Black Orpheus," "Once black consciousness is realized, a total rejection of race follows" (Gines 2003, 61). It is only through the erasure of racial differences that a unity of struggle and revolution becomes possible. Race always serves as an obstacle for class struggle.

Sartre thus claims that "Negritude is dialectical […] it represents 'going beyond' a situation defined by free consciences" (Sartre 1948, 51). Regarding the Black man, "He wishes in no way to dominate the world: he desires the abolition of *all* kinds of ethnic privileges; he asserts his solidarity with the oppressed of every color. After that, the subjective, existential, ethnic notion of *negritude* 'passes,' as Hegel says, into that which one has of the proletariat:

objective, positive, and precise" (Ibid., 48). A "moment of separation or negativity" precedes the moment in which all oppressed peoples can unite in the same struggle toward universal emancipation. Négritude marks this moment of negativity. Similarly, he states:

> [T]he notion of race does not mix with the notion of class: the former is concrete and particular; the latter, universal and abstract […] In fact, Negritude appears like the up-beat (un-accented beat) of a dialectical progression: the theoretical and practical affirmation of white supremacy is the thesis; the position of Negritude as an antithetical value is the moment of negativity. But this negative moment is not sufficient in itself and these black men who use it know this perfectly well; they know that it aims at preparing the synthesis or realization of the human being in a raceless society. Thus Negritude is for destroying itself, it is a "crossing to" and not an "arrival at," a means and not an end (Ibid., 49).

In relation to my previous discussion, Négritude is subjective to the extent that it is dependent upon a notion of race that is concrete and particular. Class struggle is objective to the extent that class is conceived as an abstract and universal category, i.e. concerned with the suffering of all. Furthermore, Négritude is constituted on the basis of a negation of white supremacy. While Négritude is antithetical to the affirmation of white supremacy, it too must be negated in order to cross over into universal emancipation. Négritude is thus a moment that precedes the revolution, i.e. a moment that is required in order to provide the conditions for it. The implication that follows here is that Négritude is not valued as a movement in and of itself but valued only because of the role that it plays for the proletariat revolution.

Fanon's critique of Sartre's conception of racialized group identity is located primarily in Chapter Five of *Black Skin, White Masks* translated as either "The Lived Experience of the Black

Man" in the 2008 Philcox translation, or "The Fact of Blackness" in the 1967 Markmann translation. In "Identity and Agency in Frantz Fanon" (2004) Bernasconi states, "one of Fanon's objections was that Sartre in "Black Orpheus" had attempted to locate the negritude movement within a dialectic whose ultimate end was a raceless and classless society" (106). Fanon's critique was not an outright rejection of Sartre's work. Instead, in various places one can see how Fanon upheld Sartre's work as a site of reference and positive influence.[4] Additionally, one might claim, as Bernasconi does, that Fanon was also advocating for a kind of raceless society at the end of *Black Skin, White Masks*. That said, there continues to exist a sizable distinction between the proposed projects and methods employed by each of these figures. Bernasconi suggests that the raceless society advocated by Fanon is "not of the same kind or arrived at in the same way as that proposed by Sartre" (2004, 106).

In the midst of his discussion of Sartre's "Black Orpheus," Fanon states the following: "So they were countering my irrationality with rationality, my rationality with the 'true rationality.' I couldn't hope to win" (Fanon 2008, 111). This statement sheds light upon two particularly important moments in his discussion of the lived experience of the Black man. The first juxtaposition, between irrationality and rationality, is made in reference to the negative racialized identity imposed upon the Black man in an anti-Black social context. The second juxtaposition, between rationality and "true" rationality, is made in explicit reference to Sartre's critique of Négritude as "anti-racist racism" (Sartre 1948, 18). Fanon provides critiques of both of these "countering" moves while affirming the fact of Blackness. Let's consider each in turn.

[4] Regarding the positive interchange between Fanon and Sartre, we can note their friendship and collegial exchanges. For instance, Fanon asked Sartre to write the Preface to *Wretched of the Earth*. Furthermore, they met up at various points in time to discuss their respective theories. Sartre also visited Fanon when he was on his death bed just after having arrived in the U.S. These are just a few examples of the continuous dialogue, support, and respect that they held for each other. Simone de Beauvoir's *Force of Circumstance* (1965) provides descriptions of their various interactions.

First, there are at least two manifestations of the juxtaposition between irrationality and rationality in *Black Skin, White Masks*. On the most general level, the chapter begins with an account of how the Black man in France is fixed as an object by the white gaze (Fanon 2008, 89); whereby he comes to "experience his being for others" (Ibid.). As noted by Fanon, "For not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man" (Ibid., 90). The white gaze imposes various negative stereotypes upon the racialized person that are meant to dehumanize him through a process of racialization. In line with the previous discussion regarding racialized identities, the idea here too is that race is constructed by the white gaze. This experience of being "an object among other objects" that Fanon so carefully describes is the process of dehumanization that occurs *through* the white gaze. One can also see the implications of this in his description of what he calls his body schema, the dialectical relation between his body and the world such that he exists as a lived body in the world (Ibid., 90-91). And yet, the white gaze imposes upon his body schema a historical-racial schema (Ibid., 91), or an epidermal racial schema (Ibid., 92), that serves to limit and significantly alter how his body's movements are possible in an anti-Black world.

In a certain sense, one can see that Fanon's articulation of the experience of the Black man corresponds to the subject/object dichotomy not uncommon to existentialists like Beauvoir and Sartre. At the same time, however, Fanon draws a further implication from the juxtaposition of the subject (who gazes) and the object (who is gazed upon). One can here think of Fanon's invocation of "*Rhythm!*" as a basic element that defines Blackness under the white gaze, or perhaps the "magical black culture" that lies on the other side of rational white culture (Ibid., 102). Herein, the reference to irrationality as juxtaposed against rationality also represents a "phase" of human development (Ibid., 108). The negative identity of irrationality imposed upon

the Black man presumes that he is closer to nature, that the Black man by way of the essence of Blackness is stronger or has better rhythm. This "natural essence" of Black people is problematic for two reasons. First and foremost, Fanon has positioned himself against theorists who might equate Blackness with qualities such as rhythm. The emphasis in this instance is that to praise Black people for having good rhythm is to uphold the dichotomy of irrational and rational, and to operate toward the exclusion of Black people from the category of those who have rationality and humanness. With this in mind, he states, "beware of rhythm, the Mother Earth bond, and that mystic, carnal marriage between man and the cosmos" (Ibid., 104). At the same time, he is quite explicit to state that "what is called the black soul is a construction by white folk" (Ibid., xvii). Second, this presupposition maintained in the juxtaposition of irrationality (and the natural caricature of the Black man) and rationality fails to recognize the rich history of Black peoples (Ibid., 109).

The second juxtaposition mentioned by Fanon in the above quote – of rationality and *true* rationality – is of particular importance for understanding Fanon's critique of Sartre. Regarding this juxtaposition, Fanon states the following: "when I tried to claim my negritude intellectually as a concept, they snatched it away from me. They proved to me that my reasoning was nothing but a phase in the dialectic" (Ibid., 111). His description of Négritude as "my negritude" is not meant to denote that Fanon has developed a robust articulation of Négritude that is distinct from the writings of Césaire or Senghor. Rather, his use of the possessive in this instance is meant to demonstrate his relation to this movement and to themes quite common to Négritude theorists, such as rhythm and poetry. For instance, in *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, Césaire states the following:

> My negritude is not a stone, its deafness hurled against the clamor of day

> my negritude is not an opaque spot of dead water over the dead eye of the earth
>
> my negritude is neither a tower nor a cathedral (2001, 35, sic).[5]

Here, Césaire affirms his possession of Négritude, but for the purposes of rejecting previous conceptions of Blackness. Likewise, Fanon has a personal stake in Négritude, and thus also a personal relation to it as a Black man given that this movement is concerned with the affirmation of the existence of Black people. However, perhaps more importantly, he recognizes and emphasizes in this instance that the Négritude movement serves to place him as a Black man in an agential capacity in relation to history.

It is perhaps in this way that we can understand the distinction between Fanon's and Sartre's articulation of Négritude. For Sartre, the Négritude movement is subjective and particular, and serves to replicate and reinforce racism through its use of racialized identity (as evidenced in his description of it as "anti-racist racism"). In order to achieve universal emancipation, Négritude must be sublated in favor of a more rational or more objective class consciousness. For Fanon, on the other hand, Négritude is not lacking rationality or objectivity. Recalling a quote above, he states that "they were countering my irrationality with rationality, my rationality with the 'true rationality'" (Fanon 2008, 111). He makes explicit that Sartre's juxtaposition of race consciousness as particular and class consciousness as universal prioritizes class over race. In this sense, only class consciousness can be truly rational.

At issue for Fanon is the manner in which Négritude is situated within a dialectic by Sartre. On this point, Bernasconi states the following: "by locating negritude within a dialectic, he [Sartre] had attempted to render the absolute density of black consciousness relative to the historical role assigned to them" (Bernasconi 2004, 107). The conscious awareness of being Black in an anti-Black society is pivotal for both Sartre and Fanon, both of whom discuss the

[5] Fanon also references these lines in *Black Skin, White Masks*. (See Fanon 2008, 103).

importance of this realization. According to Sartre, however, Black consciousness is one moment in a historical progression which will ultimately be overcome. Fanon rejects the idea that Black consciousness and Négritude "is nothing but a weak stage" that must be negated on the path to a more universal emancipation (Fanon 2008, 116). On this point he states:

> The dialectic that introduces necessity as a support for my freedom expels me from myself. It shatters my impulsive position. Still regarding consciousness, black consciousness is immanent in itself. I am not a potentiality of something; I am fully what I am. I do not have to look for the universal […] My black consciousness does not claim to be a loss. It *is*. It merges with itself (Ibid., 114).

There are various ways in which Fanon affirms Black consciousness throughout this text: "In terms of consciousness, black consciousness claims to be an absolute density, full of itself, a state pre-existent to any opening, to any abolition of the self by desire" (Ibid., 113). Thus Black consciousness is not dependent upon any other kind of consciousness in order to achieve a kind of fulfilment. Rather, Black consciousness offers a new relationality to history and to a people, and not a move away from Blackness itself. In addition, it emphasizes the nature and value of racial identity for continued political resistance to oppression but also in virtue of a long and vibrant history of resistance movements. Accordingly, the thickness or the density of this identity and history ought not be collapsed into or erased from any other form of resistance movement. The description of the fullness of Black consciousness offered above comprises some of the positive content of affirming Blackness. As noted by Gines, the presumption that class should be prioritized above race should invoke the following question: "Why must the black man strip himself of his blackness for the sake of 'joining' the class struggle?" (Gines 2003, 61).

Furthermore, why ought we to believe that "unity within the class struggle is not possible without erasing racial differences" (Ibid.)?

Contra Sartre, Fanon argues that the sublation of Black consciousness in order to achieve true rationality or universality reinforces the presumption that Négritude is irrational, or insufficiently rational, and unable to become universalizable. However, he also claims that the denigration of Black consciousness and Négritude fails to adequately understand the Négritude movement and race consciousness. In reference to Césaire in *Toward the African Revolution*, Fanon states the following: Césaire, "the faithful bard, would repeat that 'paint the tree trunk white as you will, the roots below remain black.' Then it became real that not only the color black was invested with value but black fiction, ideal black, black in the absolute, primitive black, the Negro" (Fanon 1967, 24).[6] Fanon's reference to Césaire is meant to invoke a sense that an erasure of Blackness, or a covering over of Blackness with whiteness, will ultimately fail to get rid of Blackness. Rather, for Fanon, Blackness is imbued with value. One ought not be blind to the value that is allocated to Blackness and moreso, the goal for Fanon and Césaire is to affirm a positive value associated with Blackness and have that positive value be recognized. The erasure of racial differences fails to recognize and imbue Blackness with value.

Fanon's critique of Sartre is also supported by the writings of Négritude poet Aimé Césaire. Césaire's 1955 essay "Discours sur le colonialism" (translated as "Discourse on Colonialism") begins with the following statement: "The fact is that the so-called European civilization—'Western' civilization—as it has been shaped by two centuries of bourgeois rule, is incapable of solving the two major problems to which its existence has given rise: the problem of the proletariat and the colonial problem" (Césaire 1972, 1). He begins this essay by marking a

[6] While Fanon does not remain an avid supporter of Négritude throughout his entire, albeit cut far too short, life, it is a significant aspect of some of his earlier writings, in particular *Black Skin, White Masks*.

distinction between the proletariat in a global capitalist system and the racialized subject in a colonial system. Furthermore, in an interview he gave with René Depestre in 1967, Césaire makes a distinction between "Communists" and his conception of Négritude. According to him, a problem that existed at the center of the communist movement is that French Communists "were not attempting disalienation" and instead bore the marks of assimilation (Ibid., 27).[7] In conversation with Depestre, Césaire makes evident that the communist movement was becoming assimilationist because it was becoming more and more abstract as a result of their failure to address the Negro question. On this point Césaire states the following:

> Question [Depestre]: At bottom what separated you from the Communist Martinican students at that time was the Negro question.
>
> Response [Césaire]: Yes, the Negro question. At that time I criticized the Communists for forgetting our Negro characteristics. They acted like Communists, which was all right, but they acted like abstract Communists. I maintained that the political question would not do away with our condition as Negroes (Ibid., 27).

In effect, Césaire already notes that the Communist movement ought not forget the lived experiences of the Black man, doing so would do away with material and concrete experiences in favor of abstract conceptions of the subject. Moreover, class struggle overlooks the importance of Black history and culture for universal emancipation. Contra Sartre who states that race and class do not mix, Césaire argues that it is important to maintain race alongside class. He thus calls for the "need to complete Marx" (Ibid.) – a claim that is similarly made by Fanon who

[7] The reference to assimilation in this sentence is about assimilation to the Communist Party. In other words, Césaire claims that one needed to assimilate to the Communist Party in order to participate in it. To assimilate in this instance is on the basis of race, i.e. that Blackness or the Negro question was not a prominent concern for the party, resulting in an erasure of the Blackness.

states “Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched when it comes to addressing the colonial issue” (Fanon 2004, 5) – and to particularize Communism (Césaire 1972, 27). For Sartre, Négritude denotes a kind of racism, albeit an anti-racist racism, because of its incorporation of “the Negro question,” a critique which was similarly brought against Césaire (Césaire 1972, 27). However, for Césaire and for Fanon, it is necessary to situate emancipation in the concrete and the particular, and to assert that Blackness ought not be relegated to a secondary position (Ibid., 30).

Alongside his attempt to mark the importance of keeping in mind the Negro question for the communist movement, Césaire is also explicit about the role and importance of maintaining race consciousness. For instance, he states:

> I have always thought that the black man was searching for his identity. And it has seemed to me that if what we want is to establish this identity, then we must have a concrete consciousness of what we are—that is of the fact of our lives: that we are black; that we were black and have a history, a history that contains certain cultural elements of great value; and that Negroes were not, as you put it, born yesterday, because there have been beautiful and important black civilizations (Ibid., 30).

In this quote, Césaire emphasizes the value of Black histories for world history and, he proposes that there is continuity between Black race consciousness and Black histories that are not wholly determined by the white gaze and white supremacy. In addition and against Sartre, it is not the case that the Négritude movement presupposes a singular or essential identity, nor a singular history. For instance, according to Césaire, “everyone has his own Négritude” (Ibid.). There is no singular or homogenous identity that pertains to all Black persons. Recalling Sartre’s discussion

of the singular Black soul and his implication that all Black people spoke the same language, it becomes apparent that Sartre is inconsistent with Césaire's conception of Négritude.

In an essay titled "Fanon and Sartre 50 Years Later: To Retain or Reject the Concept of Race" (2003), Gines takes up the tension between Sartre and Fanon (and by extension Césaire as described above) surrounding the issue of whether each author wants to reject or conserve race consciousness. Alongside Fanon, she challenges "Sartre's claim that we should reject the concept of race once an 'authentic race consciousness' is attained" (2003, 55) and she seeks to conserve Black racial consciousness. Central to this preservation of race consciousness is that combating and eliminating racism does not require the elimination of racial identities altogether (Ibid.). The implication of this statement is that one should come to think of race in (at least) two distinct ways. On the one hand, race is conceived as a negative category that was constructed and used for the purpose of oppressing a particular group. Race thought of in this way takes the form of stereotypes used for the purpose of discrimination and various forms of harm. Within this framework, ending racism would require that race must also be abolished. This view is consistent with Sartre's articulation of race consciousness and group-identity developed in "Black Orpheus." On the other hand, race can also be thought in a positive sense, as a "more positive category that encompasses a sense of membership or belonging, remembrance of struggle and overcoming, and the motivation to press forward and endeavor towards new ideals and achievements" (Gines 2003, 56). For Gines, Bernasconi, and Fanon, while it is important to abolish negative conceptions of race, this does not mean that we also need to get rid of race as a positive category. This project addresses reasons why race (and identity generally) should be thought as a more than just a negative category and that the positive conceptions of identity and race articulated by Gines and Fanon offer other ways to think about race. The conception of the

positive affirmation of race has been provided throughout this chapter via the works of Fanon, Bernasconi, Césaire, and Gines. According to these authors, race is negative if it is something that needs to be overcome for the purpose of a greater struggle or more universal emancipation. If race can be affirmed in and of itself, then it is positive and bears with it its own historical and existential import. In addition, this positive conception of race presupposes that race exceeds the colonial gaze, both historically and in terms of its content.

1.3: Debate in Négritude Studies

There continues to be debate about the Négritude movement in present-day scholarship. In what follows, I briefly introduce some of major figures and contentions surrounding this debate. It should also be noted that the manner in which I have portrayed Négritude in this project is not the dominant interpretation of this movement and, therefore, in this section I briefly situate the texts and figures that are most prominent in my work.

Regarding prominent debates internal to Négritude scholarship, there are those who claim that Négritude is necessarily essentialist. As noted by Headley, "most if not all criticisms of Négritude in one way or another chastise Négritude for an alleged embrace of essentialism" (Headley). The argument that Négritude is essentializing presupposes that the conception of race that operates within this movement can be, in a certain sense, totalizing, i.e. that one's way of being in the world (their politics, culture, for instance) is wholly determined by their race. An extension of this essentialist argument is the claim that Négritude is merely reactive to a dominant oppressive structure and therefore it cannot be useful for a theory of emancipation. For instance, according to Benetta Jules-Rosette in *Black Paris* (1998):

> Antinégritude negates the essentialist theses of négritude. Taking négritude as its point of departure, antinègritude acknowledges racism and oppression as the roots of a universal problem but denounces négritude as its solution. This antidiscourse contrasts with the complementary discourse of revolutionary writing and contradictory discourses of non-négritude (1998, 244).

In this reading, an antinégritude position can, on the one hand, maintain the importance of Négritude for the purpose of recognizing that racism does exist and yet, on the other hand, claim that Négritude does not have the tools necessary in order to upend an oppressive nation-state. Négritude is thus presented as reacting to the dominant oppressive structure but not able to get outside of it. Of the scholars that I discuss in this dissertation, several adhere to this anti-Négritude position, including Badiou's reading of Négritude (developed in Chapter Two), Jane Gordon's reading of Négritude (developed in Chapters Two and Three) and, of course, my discussion of Sartre above resonates with this interpretation of Négritude as well.

Furthermore, several scholars also locate Fanon's interpretation of Négritude as essentialist. For instance, in *Creolizing Political Theory* (2014), Jane Gordon, on the one hand, conceives of Fanon as quite dependent upon Négritude in developing his political theory. For instances, she states "Fanon emphasizes how much he needed Negritude; that as he groped after a reason that kept eluding him, it hailed him, offering a bath in the irrational" (2014, 71-72). On the other hand, Gordon argues that Fanon's call towards Négritude was momentary, that it was necessary only to the extent that "he had to move through it to face his situation" (Ibid., 93). She notes here the dialectical nature or relationality of Négritude to the conditions of oppression that it sought to upend (Ibid., 72). Similarly, drawing on the work of Pramond Nayar in *Frantz Fanon* (2013), Headley states:

> Fanon famously denounced Négritude as engaged in the worship of ancient African history, and as encouraging the folly of worshipping a mystical African past. Fanon considered this obsessive interest in ancient African history as political, economical and culturally misdirected in that this concern was not grounded in the various political, economic, and cultural exigencies of the present. [...] It is clear, however, that Fanon's reading of Négritude depended upon the act of treating Négritude as a static doctrine in search of a mysterious or nonexistent entity (Headley).

This line of reasoning is distinct from my analysis of Fanon through the works of Bernasconi and Gines. For instance, according to Bernasconi, while "Fanon is widely identified as a critic of the negritude movement [...t]his impression is at best the result of an oversimplification of his rich and complex argument" (2002, 79). It should be noted, however, that Gordon maintains, like Gines and Bernasconi, that Fanon is critiquing Sartre's analysis of Negritude in "Black Orpheus" insofar as Sartre fails to understand the necessity inherent to Négritude, and yet she also argues that Négritude is a kind of "negation that must ultimately be surpassed" (Gordon 2014, 93).

According to theorists such as Headley and Bernasconi, for instance, the argument that Négritude endorses or presupposes an essentialist platform is often done for the purpose of dismissing it as an area of research or analysis. Throughout this project, I demonstrate that an essentialist critique of Négritude results from a failure to recognize the conceptions of pluralism, dynamism, and universality that operate in the work of Césaire, for instance.[8] Likewise, for reasons that I outline in Chapter Four, section 4 titled "A Return to Gordon and Creolization," I believe that Gordon is mistaken in her claim that Négritude is a negation that must be surpassed

[8] See, for instance, Chapter One section 4, wherein I discuss the manner in which a positive conception of race is constructed in Césaire's work as well as Chapter Four section 4 wherein I discuss Césaire's response to such critiques of essentialism.

because she continues to see it as something that is necessarily static.[9] That said, my concern here is to demonstrate that Négritude should not be dismissed for these reasons. There are thus various scholars that offer critiques of these anti-Négritude arguments and, furthermore, who claim that there is more to Négritude than is being developed in these anti-Négritude arguments.

The vein of Négritude scholarship that I have introduced in this first chapter can be thought of emerging from the desire to further develop an analysis of Négritude. In addition, it often adheres to one of the following positions: 1) that Négritude is anti-essentialist and pluralistic rather than essentialist and totalizing; 2) that Négritude is a creative practice rather than a merely reactive process.

Regarding the anti-essentialist portrayal of Négritude, one can turn to Donna V. Jones's *The Racial Discourses of Life Philosophy: Négritude, Vitalism, and Modernity* (2010) in which she argues the following: "That Césaire insists on the plural form of black (*negre*) suggests already the distance from an essentialist and reductionist idea of blackness" (164). Similarly, one could turn to Souleymane Bachir Diagne's *African Art as Philosophy: Senghor, Bergson and the Idea of Negritude* (2011) and his description of Senghor as stating: "Everyone must be mixed in their own way" (Diagne 2011, 186). Gregson Davis's *Aimé Césaire* (1997) also offers a study of Césaire's *Notebook* whereby black identity is described as both an activity, and plural.

Regarding the portrayal of Négritude as a creative process, Jones states, "While negation and critique imply the determinate negation of given or inherited identities, they proceeded for Césaire only upon a prior affirmation of fundamental African selves […] fundamental in terms of the retrieval of real, living heritage against a false tradition in which social roles are given as things, and fundamentally true to lived experience beneath concepts and reason" (2010, 170).

[9] Gordon also proposes that Fanon argues for the rejection of Négritude. However, as I discuss in this project, Fanon would also be mistaken to reject Négritude on the basis of an essentialist critique. That said, more about the relation between Fanon and Négritude is located in Chapter One, section four.

Jones is emphasizing that one of the goals of Négritude is to re-center blackness, emphasizing the importance of the affirmation of positive difference first and foremost (before) negative determination (Ibid., 171).

Jones, Diagne, and Davis represent just some of the present-day Négritude scholars who coincide with my analysis of Négritude that has been developed through the works of Gines and Bernasconi.

1.4: On a Positive Conception of Race

I have incorporated this debate between Fanon and Sartre in order to demonstrate what is at stake in Fanon's critique of Sartre. Regardless of the similarities between the writings of Sartre and Fanon, Fanon's critique of Sartre's "Black Orpheus" in *Black Skin, White Masks* is well documented.[10] Without dismissing these tangible and significant connections entirely, our task becomes to discern what it is about this debate in particular that is of importance for my current analysis of Badiou.

For Kathryn Gines, this debate makes apparent the difference between what she calls a positive and a negative conception of race. Above, I have noted that Gines's description of a positive conception of race "encompasses a sense of membership or belonging, remembrance of struggle and overcoming, and the motivation to press" forward for communities of color (Gines 2003, 56). For the purpose of this argument, however, I would like to extend Gines's description in the following way. I propose that a positive conception of race/racial emancipation can be understood as maintaining (at least) the following three characteristics: a) that race is something that maintains relevance in peoples' lived experiences and in family and cultural relationships; b)

[10] See, for instance, these various texts for discussions on the correlations and disagreement between Fanon and Sartre: Kruks 1996; Bernasconi 1996; Gordon 2015.

that race ought *not* be reduced to racism; and c) that race and racial emancipation ought *not* be construed as something that is politically deficient and that subsequently needs to be fulfilled by something other than itself. This first point, that race is something that matters, is implicit in the second and third points listed above, however, it warrants an explicit statement because, in a sense, the second and third points are an attempt to provide a clarification on what it means for race to matter. The second point, that a concept of race ought not be wholly reduced to racism, is proposed because the assumption that race is a category that is reducible to racism implies a loss of efficacy for and meaningful solidarity within race-based movements. Furthermore, this assumption then results in the view that race-based emancipatory movements are lacking and thus require something (or someone) else in order to achieve a more justified or more total form of political fulfillment.

As previously noted in my discussion of Sartre's "Black Orpheus," while it might be the case that one *could* argue that Sartre would agree that (a) race matters, it is not the case that he would argue that (b) race ought not be reduced to racism. Furthermore, it is quite evident that Sartre would claim, contra (c), that racial emancipation is lacking and needs to be overcome in order to attain a more universal form of emancipation that is located in the figure of the proletariat. For instance, we can recall Sartre's articulation of Négritude, and black race consciousness, as the "up-beat […] of a dialectical progression" (Sartre 1948, 49) whereby it becomes "a means and not an end" (Ibid.) towards the truly "objective" (Ibid., 48) and "universal" (Ibid., 49) position. Therefore, Sartre does not develop a positive conception of race given the characteristics I have outlined above.

However, I have been attempting to demonstrate that within Fanon's critique of Sartre we see Fanon's adherence to these characteristics of a positive conception of race. Most explicitly, it

seems to be the case that for Fanon, and in line with (c), that racial emancipation and race ought not be considered lacking and thus requiring something else in order to be fulfilled. My presupposition of such a position is based on my discussion of Fanon above. More explicitly, drawing upon these discussions, we need only to turn to Fanon's statements regarding black consciousness wherein he states, "I am not a potentiality of something; I am fully what I am. I do not have to look for the universal (Fanon 2008, 114) and similarly, "My black consciousness does not claim to be a loss. It *is*. It merges with itself" (Ibid.) in order to recall that for him black racial consciousness, and Négritude as well, ought not be construed as lacking. Given these statements, it thus follows that he does not think it ought to be the case that (b) race and racial emancipation be reduced to racism. Furthermore, given these premises, it could also follow that, for Fanon, (a) race and racial emancipation is something that maintains relevance. However, it should also be noted that the manner in which these issues matter to Fanon and Sartre are quite distinct (given the two other characteristics located in this argument). On the basis of this description of a positive conception of race, and Fanon's critique of Sartre offered in above, it is thus conceivable that Fanon could uphold a positive conception of race.

An additional consideration for this argument might be to address the relation between Fanon and Négritude. Namely, it is important to note that Négritude is not wholly equivalent to a positive conception of race, and therefore a rejection of Négritude does not necessarily amount to a rejection of a positive conception of race.[11] My aim has rather been to demonstrate that Fanon's affirmation of race through this positive conception of race coincides with my reading of

[11] Of course, the relationship between Fanon and Césaire is quite complicated. Much has been written about the influence of Césaire on Fanon, given that Fanon was a student of Césaire and, furthermore, that Césaire was a prominent theorist during Fanon's lifetime. See Bernasconi 2002 and my discussion of this text. Similarly, Abdel-Shehid argues that Fanon and Césaire should be read on a continuum. One might also consider Sonia Kruks's claim that "It is through an examination of *négritude* that Fanon explores the dilemmas of the affirmation of black identity. *Négritude* is at once untenable and yet necessary" (Kruks 1996, 130). That said, alongside Bernasconi, I am of the opinion that the presumption that Fanon wholly rejects Négritude and the writings of Césaire to be misguided.

the Négritude movement's affirmation of race. For instance, one might recall my discussion of Césaire above on the role of "the Negro question" for the purpose of communist movements. Similarly, one can turn to Césaire's use of "acceptance" in "Notebook of a Return to the Native Land"—whereby he utters "I accept…I accept…totally, without reservation…" (1983, 73 sic.) and "I accept, I accept it all" (Ibid., 77)—as similar to the affirmation held by Fanon (i.e. "I am fully what I am" (Fanon 2008, 114)). Regarding Césaire's affirmation, his statements "I accept […] my race that no ablution of hyssop mixed with lilies could purify" and "I accept […] my race pitted with blemishes" (Ibid., 73) are meant to be an avowal and acceptance of his racial embodiment even though white supremacy attempts to assert his ugliness. Therein, according to Jones, "Césaire accepts his physical inheritance against colonial somatic prejudice, he accepts the ignominy of blacks' present condition against attempts to escape to a mythic past or transcendent future, and he accepts the childlike violence and fecundity of the natural world of which he rightfully understands himself an evanescent and fragile expression" (Jones 2010, 176). In other words, he accepts that the colonial world proposes a standard of beauty that inherently excludes him, and through such an acceptance does not react to it through an outright rejection. But in addition, he also affirms his embodiment irrespective of that standard.

Second, we might also consider Césaire's "Letter to Maurice Thorez," originally published in 1956, eight years following Sartre's "Black Orpheus." In this essay, Césaire offers various critiques of communist and socialist movements, not unlike the critique offered in his interview with Depestre discussed above. Therein, he emphasizes the singularity of the situation of men of color in the world. He states the following:

> Suffice it to say that we [men of color] are convinced that our question (or, if you prefer, the colonial question) cannot be treated as a part of a more important

> whole, a part over which others can negotiate or come to whatever compromise seems appropriate in light of a general situation, of which they alone have the right to take stock […] In any case, it is clear that our struggle – the struggle of colonial peoples against colonialism, the struggle of peoples of color against racism – is more complex, or better yet, of a completely different nature than the fight of the French worker against French capitalism, and it cannot in any way be considered a part, a fragment, of that struggle (Césaire 2010, 147).

In this statement, it becomes apparent that Césaire is very much offering a critique of Sartre's formulation of universal emancipation through the subordination of race consciousness to class consciousness. Such a formulation, Césaire argues, fails to account for the complexity and the difference in nature of colonial and racial struggles.

Césaire's critique mirrors the critique offered by Fanon, as discussed above. Once again, in line with my argument above, we see that for Césaire that (a) race matters, (b) that race ought to be affirmed and not reduced to racism, and (c) that racial emancipation ought not be found lacking and in need of something else. It thus follows, given the criteria for a positive conception of race offered above, that Césaire would argue for what I, alongside Gines, have called a positive conception of race.

As such, while I utilize various non-traditional articulations of Négritude to further my argument, Négritude serves as an example of what I argue is a positive conception of race. As such, even if one rejected Négritude as a viable final option (as many argue Fanon does at the end of *Black Skin, White Masks*) this does not imply that one also fully rejects the role of a positive conception of race. Furthermore, the central claim of my argument in this project is not the misrepresentation of Négritude by Sartre or Badiou, rather I am concerned with the

importance of a positive conception of race for a theory of emancipation. Lastly, there are various other scholars who emphasize the importance of a positive conception of race for their respective theories of politics and emancipation without depending up an account of Négritude. For instance, below I discuss W. E. B. Du Bois's argument for the conservation of races, as well as present-day discourses that have emerged from Du Bois's arguments, including the work of Lucius T. Outlaw Jr. and Chike Jeffers. The most important point to glean from this discussion is whether Badiou maintains a positive conception of race, and, as I elaborate below, this dissertation argues that he does not.

Conclusion

The debate between Fanon and Sartre, and the positive and negative conceptions of race described above are important for this project for several reasons. First, Badiou's theorization of race closely maps on to Sartre's view. Namely, I argue that Badiou proposes a theory of emancipation that attempts to sublate particular identities such as race for the purpose of universal emancipation. This correlation is evident in Badiou's discussion of Négritude as well. Moreover, I propose that this connection is most evident in the second chapter of the dissertation—through a discussion of Badiou's politics formulated as an "indifference to difference"—and by way of his rejection of race as a political category, a claim that I develop in Chapter Three. As a result of his logic of political emancipation and the continual disavowal of categories of difference, for Badiou, race is not a legitimate site for political emancipation.

The conception of race articulated by Wynter that I defend at the close of this project is an extension of the positive conception of race offered in the Gines/Bernasconi interpretation of Fanon. Specifically, in "Ethno and Socio Poetics" (1976) Wynter draws a distinction between

race as a negative category that needs to be negated and rejected, and claims that this method of overcoming negative conceptions of racial categorizations is only possible by way of a positive conception of race that is dynamic and self-constituting. She demonstrates this theorization of race in conversation with Césaire and through an articulation of the Négritude movement. Furthermore, like Césaire, she argues for a pluralistic theory of emancipation that reflects the view wherein race and class function alongside each other.

Chapter Two: "Indifference to Difference" and Badiou's Theory of Emancipation

Introduction

In *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, Badiou claims that any theory of emancipation must be premised on an "indifference to difference" (2001, 27). The goal of this chapter is to provide an account of what this statement entails and its implications for a study of race. This chapter is divided into three sections. It begins with Badiou's conception of politics and the role of his conception of indifference to difference within that political theory. In particular, I describe his attempt to develop a political theory that moves away from a state-based model of the political, i.e. a model that addresses representation. In addition, this section provides an account of Badiou's theory of emancipation as well as various other concepts that are important for a fruitful understanding of his work (concepts such as event, truth, appearance, subtractive and additive political concepts, and materialist dialectic).

Following this broader analysis, the second section of this chapter examines how what Badiou means by indifference to difference is located within what he describes as a "politics of indifference," a view that is opposed to "identity politics." This section describes how he conceives of identity politics as inherently tied to oppressive state-based conceptions of identity. A politics of indifference, in contrast, provides the means through which it is possible to reject oppressive state-based structures of identity. This section draws extensively from the work of Madhavi Menon, whose book, *Indifference to Difference: On Queer Universalism* (2015) offers a constructive and clear account of Badiou's conception of a politics of indifference.

The third section of this chapter provides a series of critiques of Badiou's conception of indifference to difference, and my critique is divided into two parts. First, I critique the concept of "identity" that is provided by Badiou through the work of Kathryn Gines, W. E. B. Du Bois, Lucius T. Outlaw Jr., and Chike Jeffers. Drawing from historic and current debates regarding the importance of the "conservation of races," I argue that the conception of identity utilized by Badiou does not allow for what Gines calls a positive account of racial identity. In addition, drawing from Outlaw's *On Race and Philosophy* (1996), I argue that a positive conception of race is necessary for a theory of emancipation that does not fall into patterns of Eurocentrism within philosophy. Second, within Badiou's politics of indifference, I argue that he frames identities such as race as unnecessary categories that need to be negated in order to create a more emancipatory political sphere. Drawing a parallel to the Fanon-Sartre debate introduced in Chapter One, I propose that Badiou's conception of identity and his politics of indifference can be problematic for racialized subjects.

2.1: Badiou's Political Theory: An Introduction

This section is divided into three sub-sections. First, I address Badiou's rejection of state-based politics. Namely, I examine why he proposes that state-based politics fail to be universal and thus fail to be emancipatory. Second, I discuss his broader sense of politics. By offering a move away from the state, he proposes that politics should be "subtractive." This conception of subtraction is his attempt to rectify a problem with state-based politics and a method to ensure a kind of universality. Third, I describe what this universality looks like according to his view, and I examine the relationship between his view of universality and his conceptions of truth and event.

2.1a: A Rejection of State-Based Politics

In a 1998 interview with Peter Hallward, Badiou states the following:

> Up to the end of the 1970s, my friends and I defended the idea that an emancipatory politics presumed some kind of political party. Today we are developing a completely different idea, which we call "politics without party." This doesn't mean "unorganised politics." All politics is collective, and so organised one way or another. "Politics without party" means that politics does not spring from or originate in the party. It does not stem from that synthesis of theory and practice that represented, for Lenin, the Party. Politics springs from real situations, from what we can say and do in these situations (Badiou & Hallward 1998, 113).

In this quote, Badiou notes a turn in his own political thinking in which he no longer conceives of politics as found in localized state practices such as elections and political parties. This stance refers in part to his rejection of the Communist Party following the events of May '68 in France. Notably, he also refers to the Maoist Revolution as the last historical instance where party politics could have had a significant impact on the realization of a given set of political aims. However, as he argues, the Maoist Revolution ultimately rejected party politics as a means for progressive or emancipatory politics (Badiou 2011a, 292).

Much of Badiou's critique of party politics is premised on his conception of the state and the manner in which it operates. His conception of the state requires first an understanding of what he means by a "world." According to Badiou, a world "is nothing but a logic of being-there, and it is identified with the singularity of this logic. A world articulates the cohesion of multiples around a structured operator (the transcendental)" (Badiou 2009a, 102). At its most

basic level, a world is defined as the way in which "objects" are organized or ordered in relation to one another, and furthermore, a world provides the conditions through which these objects can appear in virtue of this order. For instance, an example of a world might be a political demonstration. A political demonstration could be composed of union members who are on strike, and there may be police officers and bystanders present as well, two groups that are observing the strike. It might also be apparent to bystanders that the union members can be distinguished from the police officers. Within this example, it is possible to conceive of these groups (protestors, police officers, and bystanders) as objects that appear in the world of the political demonstration in different ways. Namely, the appearance of each group is dependent upon a certain logic. Badiou states "that every world possesses a singular transcendental organization means that, since the thinking of being cannot of its own account for the world's manifestations, the intelligibility of this manifestation must be made possible by immanent operations. 'Transcendental' is the name of these operations" (Badiou 2011b, 101). The transcendental operator, or the logic of a particular world, is immanent to it, which means that a given logic would be, in our example above, specific to the given political demonstration (within a specific space and time). Thus, for every world there is a transcendental operator that orders every network of relations and that provides the cohesion that is necessary for objects to appear at all.[12]

Additionally, for the participants in the demonstration mentioned above, it is not the experience of the political demonstration that determines the logic of this particular world. Badiou is clear that the organization of any particular world is not dependent upon human or transcendental subjective consciousness, and he draws a distinction between his conception of

[12] According to Badiou, "'logic' and 'appearing' are […] one and the same thing. 'Transcendental' names the crucial operators of this second identity" (Badiou 2009a, 99).

the transcendental and Immanuel Kant's for instance (Corcoran 2015, 363). Rather, for Badiou, there are ways in which "various groupings of elements appear more or less distinctly and more or less compatibly according to the criteria that come to govern the logic of this demonstration" (Hallward 2003, 299). Accordingly, we can ask, in what way does a given group appear, such as a group of union members who are on strike, and how is their appearance distinct from other groups? According to Badiou, a world is "a local site of the identification of beings" (Badiou 2009a, 113). Appearance in a world is dependent upon two things: first the transcendental index, as described above, that provides the logic according to which objects appear; second, "(at least) one other being" (Ibid.). Appearances are thus dependent upon the relation between at least two objects in a world. Appearance and existence in this instance are thought of, or conceived through, the differences between objects that are always in relation. Identity too is dependent upon differences between at least two objects. Appearing "measures the identity of appearance of two beings in a world" (Ibid., 200). In this sense, identity is dependent not only upon the logic of a particular world, but also on a given identity's relation to another identity.

Regarding the measuring of identity and differences of objects in a given world, we might consider how a union member, a police officer, and a bystander appear in the world of the political demonstration offered above. First, given what we have just outlined, Badiou might propose that there is a degree of identity or similarity in appearance between all the union members who are on strike. For instance, they might be collectively walking in a circle or forming a picket line. Similarly, there is likely to be a significant degree of difference in appearance between union members who are picketing and police officers who are observing the demonstration. Police officers, for instance, might be wearing police uniforms that would serve to mark them as having a different role in that world. For example, they might be wearing riot

gear or be openly armed with firearms. In addition to modes of dress, the choices and actions of each particular group could also serve to differentiate these groups. The identities of, and differences between, bodies in the world of this political demonstration are organized according to the logic of this demonstration and appear in virtue of this logic.

Objects also appear in a world to different degrees, either maximally or minimally. For instance, police officers who are in full riot gear might appear maximally, demonstrating a show of force and power. Otherwise, if a police officer were to infiltrate the union workers collective acting as an undercover officer, then she might appear minimally as a police officer insofar as she aims to dress and act like the picketers. Despite this relatively discreet presence, her choices and actions would subvert the efforts of the picketers.

There are three additional implications for Badiou's conception of worlds that are particularly important to my analysis in this project. First, the invocation of the transcendental index means that the order of any given world is capable of change. In other words, there is nothing necessary about the transcendental index of any particular world; rather the transcendental operator pertains only to the world that it orders. For instance, the world of the political demonstration takes place in a particular space and time. At another moment in time, the objects that appear, and the manner in which they appear, might be radically different. The contingency of the transcendental index has additional implications for Badiou's account of the state, which will be developed below.

Second, according to Badiou, there is no totality or universe, i.e. there is no singular overarching world and no conception of wholeness. This point serves to situate Badiou's conception of world against, for instance, Hegel. According to Adriel M. Trott, "For Badiou, Hegel's whole is not only morally and politically unjust [but additionally …] the whole is not"

(2015, 59). In other words, "any claim to have achieved totality is false and irretrievably so because a totality of all that exists is impossible to maintain" (Ibid., 59-60). In this sense, contra Hegel, Badiou affirms the multiplicity of worlds.

One can think of multiple worlds in the following way: As a woman, I exist in a world that determines my having a specific gender, and that conception of gender inscribes my body with a particular set or cluster of meanings. The logic or network of relations that inscribe my body with meaning may be differently constituted in some other world. For example, when I travel between countries, or between cities, my gendered body can appear differently in different spaces. More specifically, being a femme-identified queer woman, my gender appears very differently if I am in a straight bar or a gay bar. These are distinct worlds that are ordered according to different transcendental operators, the former of which is heteronormative and the latter of which is not (or at least not entirely).

In addition, for Badiou worlds are not mutually exclusive. Consider the worlds of "Québec" and "Canada." There is a world that is Canada, and this world includes Québec if we are considering the nation of Canada and the provinces and territories that compose it. However, we can also distinguish between these worlds. Québec can appear as distinct from the nation-world of Canada. For example, one need only to turn to language laws, structures of education and employment, or to the sovereigntist movements of the 1990s to demonstrate this. The implication is not that there is a formed and static identity that is Québec. Rather, worlds can be sites of conflict and tension. For instance, we can say of Québec in the year 2016, there are conflicts between pro-separatists and anti-separatists groups, and these conflicts are pertinent to the political organizing principles that make up this world (Badiou 2009a, 304).

Badiou is also particularly interested in conveying and understanding the role of contradiction for the construction of worlds in a manner that is distinguishable from that of Hegel. For instance, Hegel's dialectic aims to "resolve [a] contradiction into a whole" (Trott 2015, 60) whereby all identity is resolved into an absolute identity or completeness. However, for Badiou, completeness can never be achieved (Ibid., 61). Unlike Hegel, Badiou is not concerned with the resolution of contradictions, and, as a result, he maintains that there will always be a position that is beyond the whole that cannot be incorporated within it. For the purpose of this project, it is also important to keep in mind that these tensions or contradictions can be sites of violence.

According to Badiou, the "state" is not equivalent to his conception of "worlds." However, there is a kind of consistency or continuum between them. One can think of the state as something like the reification of worlds. Similar to a world, a state is organized according to a particular logic, however, instead of a degree of *appearance* (which he also calls "presentation") in a world the state determines what is *represented* in it. As noted above, an object appears in a world (that is organized by a particular logic, or the transcendental operator) and is always in relation to other objects. This also means that objects cannot be thought of abstractly but are always situated in a particular location. Appearance is the situated existence of an object. That said, "the state does not present things, nor does it merely copy their presentation, but instead, 'through an entirely new counting operation, re-presents them,' and re-presents them in a way that groups them in relatively fixed, clearly identifiable, categories" (Hallward 2003, 96). The entirely new counting operation of the state serves a particular goal, namely, objects are fixed or regulated by the state to ensure a particular order that subsequently reinforces the position of a dominant group. Or, as described by Hallward, "the state is always the state of the ruling class

means that it re-presents, or arranges, the existing elements [or parts of the state, grouping them…] in various ways to keep them [i.e. including but not limited to the ruling class], ultimately, in their proper, established places" (Ibid.). Furthermore, along with the state comes the force of law, or the imposition of power, that serves to maintain a particular order. To be represented within the state, as a result, is to be fixed by the logic or the law of the state.

Consider the following example: Julia has eight family members living with her in her house. Each person belongs to the family; within the family-world all members *appear* as a member of the family. At the same time, however, members of that family might be *represented* differently by the state. One can think here of the Canadian long-form census where all those who appear to belong to the family are counted, albeit it in a different manner. For instance, if a family member living within Julia's house is undocumented, then they might *appear* in the logic of the family or household but not be *represented* in the state (long-form census). In other words, insofar as an object is *present* or appears in a world, it need not be *represented* by the state. For instance, if Julia's Uncle Juan is undocumented but living in the state, he will have what has been described as a minimal appearance in the eyes of the state. Insofar as one can appear in a world, but at the same time not be counted by and represented by a state that contains that world (Julia's family living in Canada, for instance), it becomes evident that there is an incongruity between the operation of worlds and that of a state.

The incongruity between the operations of world and state – and thus appearance and representation – lies at the heart of the problem regarding the state for Badiou. Specifically, as Jeff Love and Todd May claim, for Badiou, "whatever is not counted by the state […] *does not exist*, in the sense that it cannot be recognized by those inhabiting the situation" (Love & May 2008, 53, my italics). The operation of the count mentioned here is in reference to what is

represented by the state, in other words what is counted by the state is also what is represented by the state. Recalling the example above, even though Julia's Uncle Juan appears in the world of the family and thus exists in that world, because he is undocumented he is not represented by the state, and thus does not exist according to the state.

In addition, it is important to recall that the state is the manifestation of a particular kind of order and furthermore that the state exerts power over its parts. For instance, the political nation-state is responsible for the enforcement of laws and the protection of rights. However, "the state defines itself by virtue of what it excludes while what is excluded is given no other recourse than the state for its protection" (Trott 2011, 82). The protection of rights does not extend to those who do not exist, according to the state. Along these lines, Badiou considers the operation of the state problematic for the following reason:

> In a world structured by exploitation and oppression masses of people have, strictly speaking, no existence. They count for nothing. In today's world nearly all Africans, for example, count for nothing. And even in our affluent lands the majority of the people, the mass of ordinary workers, basically decide absolutely nothing, have only a fictional voice in the matter of the decisions that decide their fate […] Let us call these people, who are present in the world but absent from its meaning and decisions about its future, the *inexistent* of the world (Badiou 2012b, 56).

There are two inherent problems with the operation of this state. First, drawing from Badiou's claim that "There is one world," Trott states the following:

> If the problem is that an uncounted is always at work within a community and the state works to close off the dispute over the count, the solution is not to institute a

> community that always counts all the uncounted, leaving itself open to similar critiques, but to develop a notion of politics that keeps this concern at the fore, a notion that Badiou develops in his account of the confrontation between the state and the politics of one world (Trott 2011, 83).

There is always an excess that cannot be accounted for by the state. As noted by Hallward, "Like all states, the liberal-capitalist state defends itself against any attack on its way of arranging parts, that is, it is designed to foreclose the possibility of an uprising against property," insofar as property is an organizing principle of the liberal-capitalist state (Hallward 2003, 98). For Badiou, the state is thus organized in such a way as to foreclose the possibility that it could be ordered otherwise. This reinforces the mistaken assumption that the state as it is ordered is *necessary,* which serves to ensure that the state maintains the functioning of its power. An implication of this force of the law of the state is that there is always necessarily an excess of the state.[13]

Historically there have existed and continue to exist systems of disenfranchisement that take place through the operation of the state insofar as it determines who counts and who does not count, and by implication who exists and who does not exist. In addition, the inability of the state to represent all that are present in the state, and thus the existence of the excess or inexistent in every count, "explodes the liberal myth of an organic isomorphism between 'the people', their 'representative' and the State" (Wright 2009, 80). Furthermore, part of the operation of the state is that it attempts to continually cover over the existence of any excess. The assumption here is thus that the state is both universal and totalizing. The state assumes that it can represent all that are present in the situation. However, the state is blinded by its own structure to the extent that it

[13] Further evidence of why this is the case would require that I develop two points from Badiou's use of set theory, namely, the succession of ordinals and Gödel's incompleteness theory. Given that I have omitted a discussion of set-theory in this project, it would not be helpful to introduce these concepts here.

fails to recognize that what it does not count is also inherent to its structure and its maintenance of power.

Given the inability of a state to represent all that are present within it, Badiou aims to transform the way in which emancipation and inclusion can be thought and performed at the political level (Ibid., 80). Specifically, Badiou proposes a theory of the event that is capable of doing such work. According to Trott, an event "performs the unity of the world as a disruption to the totalizing and excluding effort of the State" (2011, 83). The event, a concept that I describe in further detail below, provides the conditions for disrupting the operation of the state and also changing the way in which the state is ordered.

2.1b: Subtraction from State-Based Politics

As a result of the dilemma inherent to state-based politics—whereby there is always an excess that the state cannot account for—Badiou offers what he calls a *subtractive* theory of politics. For him, politics means "subtracting truth from the communitarian grasp, be it that of a people, a city, an empire, a territory, or a social class" (Badiou 2003, 5). Put another way, he is concerned with a conception of politics that exists independent of the logic that organizes how objects appear within a given state; rather politics must turn to something that exists outside of the current logic or law of the state.

This subtractive theory of politics is juxtaposed with an additive theory of politics, the latter of which is consistent with state-based politics and can be thought of as "amenable to parliamentary ratification" (Wright 2009, 87). An additive conception of politics can take the form of an already existing state's recognition of a particular group identity or culture. For example, recent legislation in the U.S. (and elsewhere) ensures that same-sex couples can attain a

legally recognized marriage throughout the nation-state. The right to be married has been extended to a group of people who had previously been denied this legal possibility. This is an example of an additive theory of politics because it maintains the power of the state (insofar as it determines who can be married) and extends its power to include more/other individuals.

A subtractive theory of politics, on the other hand, is distinct from the logic or law of the state and is not concerned with expanding state power. In order to facilitate this distinction from state-based politics, Badiou's subtractive politics is dependent upon principles that exceed the logic of the state, and furthermore provide the conditions for a new or alternative logic or transcendental operator (Badiou 2003, 27). As noted by Wright:

> [T]here is no sense here of pre-existing marginalized groups empowered to demand a greater slice of the social pie through the rhetoric of democracy. This would merely be to expand the parliamentary model beyond its institutional, bricks-and-mortar manifestations: *society* as parliament. Badiou utterly refuses this vision. True politics must be subtracted from the State and its debilitating parliamentarisation of social difference (2009, 80).

True politics, therefore, are not located in the state. Rather one must turn to what exceeds the state in order to offer a politics that is universal, i.e. a politics for all. According to Badiou, that which exceeds the state, and thus the foundation for his subtractive politics, is truth.

2.1c: Truth Procedures, Truth, and Politics

In the *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, Badiou states that he is foremost concerned with "'things,' endowed with a transworldly and universal value [… or] what I name *truths*. The whole point […] is that *truths exist* just as do bodies and languages" (Badiou 2011b, 22). Bodies

are objects that appear in a world, and their appearance is made possible through the transcendental operator. Likewise, languages belong to a world. As I demonstrate below, however, while truths exist like bodies and languages in a world, at the same time (and unlike bodies and languages) truths are transworldly (i.e. as that which does not belong to the situation) and are universal (i.e. what is for all and subtracted from a situation). He calls his theory a materialist dialectic which can be summarized in the following manner: "There are only bodies and languages, *except that* there are truths" (Badiou 2009a, 45). What then is involved in this exception by which truths become possible? Wright considers five central elements of a political truth procedure, each of which will be discussed below: (1) An event; (2) A truth unleashed by that event; (3) An evental name catalyzing the truth's transformative implications; (4) A faithful "subject-body" to force change onto the situation; and (5) A "subject-language" with which to articulate the truth *against* its situation (Wright 2009, 84-85). In addition, I describe what Badiou calls the "evental site." Let us consider each of these aspects of a political truth procedure in turn.

Recalling the discussion of worlds above, objects (such as bodies and languages) appear in a world as ordered by a transcendental operator and always in a relation with objects. In addition, there are degrees to which any object might appear (i.e. minimally or maximally). Regarding a state, it similarly organizes objects on the basis of what it represents. Furthermore, a state through the process of representation and because of its rigid structure, will always fail to represent some objects. There are always objects that "inexist" in a state, a term that serves to designate (for instance) people that are not represented by a state and therefore whose existence is not recognized by the state. For instance, we can think of Julia's Uncle Juan who is undocumented and thus not represented by the state. He does not have access to various rights

afforded to those who are represented by, and exist in, the state. Additionally, as noted by Badiou above, African-American people in the U.S. arguably also occupy the position of inexistent in the U.S. insofar as they are generally excluded from many decision-making processes in U.S. politics.

For Badiou, an event is of particular importance for political emancipation because it provides the condition necessary to attend to the tension between the order or law of the state and what this order excludes, i.e. the inexistent. An event itself is described as what surges forth and yet does not adhere to or belong in the transcendental index that orders the state in which it appears. Furthermore, "an event [is] something that doesn't enter into the immediate order of things" (Badiou 2012a, 28). An event is what exceeds the order or law of the state. As a result, given that events exist outside the law and the language of the state, events are initially unintelligible and illegal. However, it is this quality of not belonging to the law of the state that is necessary for the event to produce the conditions through which the inexistent can become apparent. The event exceeds the logic of the world, i.e. it is not produced out of a world, and instead is manifest as a radical break from the state that excludes the inexistent. Furthermore, an event can reveal the way in which a state is ordered. Such a form of revealing can make it possible to re-evaluate the foundations guiding that world or state. For example, during the Algerian Revolution masses of people took to the streets to demand an overturning of the colonial state. In this act, among others, people who had previously been deemed inexistent by the Algerian state demanded that they be recognized and represented. Such political statements serve to demonstrate how the state is structured—i.e. that it excluded a given group of people—in order for the state (and those who are represented) to change radically.

That an event has taken place is a necessary although insufficient condition for radical change. Rather, an event must also produce a truth. For Badiou, truths can only be produced from an event, and are therefore the product of an evental situation (Badiou 2001, 42). As noted above, truths are necessarily transwordly and universal. As a result, truths cannot arise from the logic or law of a particular state.

How then is it possible for a truth to appear in a state without having arisen from it? According to Badiou, truths can appear in a state by way of an event because an event is an immanent break: "'Immanent' because a truth proceeds *in* the situation, and nowhere else—there is no heaven of truths. 'Break' because what enables the truth-process—the event—meant nothing according to the prevailing language and established knowledge of the situation" (Ibid., 42-43). There are two implications of this description of truth as a product of the event. First, truths exist in a world or a state, and for this reason they exist like bodies and languages. There is no other realm in which truths can exist for Badiou. And yet, because truths are products of an event, i.e. that which breaks with the ordering of the state, the manner in which they appear will be very different from how objects are represented by the state.

One of the foremost examples of a political truth is justice.[14] One might ask, what is justice and in what way is it determined? Furthermore, one might ask, to what extent is a particular state just? And on what basis can the justness of a state be determined? For Badiou, the justification of whether a state can be deemed just ought not emanate from the organization of a state itself, nor its own conception of justice. Instead, justice, like all truths for Badiou, is necessarily transworldly and universal and thus must exceed the logic and power of any given

[14] There are four distinct truth-procedures for Badiou which, as a result, produce four distinct kinds of truths. For the purpose of this project, given that my concern is political emancipation, I am focusing on political truth procedures and thus political truths. The three other forms of truth procedures include love, art (or poetry), and science (or mathematics).

state. At the same time, however, we might ask in what way a transworldly and universal truth like justice appears in a state. A truth can appear in a state given the following three features of a truth procedure: naming the event, the subject of the event, and language.

As noted by Wright, "no evental truth can get underway without a name: it is an element with the event itself" (Wright 2009, 86). As previously discussed, languages, like bodies, are organized by the logic of a state. Because an evental truth is that which exceeds the logic of a state, a truth cannot employ the language of an already existing state that it seeks to disrupt. Rather, an event must constitute its own language. Furthermore, an event requires the creation of a name that cannot be reduced to the logic or law of the state.

There are thus two kinds of naming being employed in this view. The first kind of naming serves to "generate a shared consciousness and militancy" (Ibid., 86). For instance, in Wright's articulation of the Rastafari movement in Jamaica, he describes "Haile Selassie" as the name that marks the Rastafari event. Haile Selassie is the proper name of an "anti-Fascist leader in exile [and once] quasi-dictator of Ethiopia" (Ibid., 86). However, for the political event of the Rastafari movement this name takes on a significantly different meaning for those who utter it. Similarly, for Badiou the instantiation of "the people," enacted by way of masses of people taking to the streets demanding recognition, can also be construed as a kind of naming that generates a shared consciousness and militancy. Second, naming serves to demarcate when an event has taken place. For instance, the French Revolution is a name that refers to a series of moments (or points in time) that resulted in the overthrow of one state and, ultimately, the creation of a new state. For Badiou, the French Revolution is an example of a political event.

Who performs the act of naming? A "body," or more specifically a "subjectivated-body," can perform the act of naming. According to Badiou, "a body is really nothing but that which,

bearing a subject form, confers upon a truth, in a world, a phenomenal status of its objectivity" (Badiou 2009a, 36). Bearing in mind his conception of materialist dialectic provided above (that there are only bodies and languages, except that there are truths), certain bodies are situated in such a way as to perform a specific kind of function. He draws a correlation between certain bodies and truths in the following manner: "if a body avers itself capable of producing effects that exceed the bodies-languages system (and such effects are called truths), this body will be said to be subjectivated" (Ibid., 45). There are several implications in this statement regarding the difference between bodies generally and subjects, or the process of subjectivation. First, it should be noted that not all bodies, or individuals, are subjects. On the one hand, "bodies" are those objects that appear in a world. "Individuals," on the other hand, map onto a theory of consciousness or personhood. For instance, it is the individual that has a particular experience of the world, such as a gendered or a racialized experience. A "subject" is a body that has undergone the process of subjectivation, in other words, a subject is the product of an event (Ibid.). A subject is "the local status of a procedure, a configuration in excess of the situation" or world (Badiou 2005a, 392). The subject of an event thus does not map onto an individual and their experiences. Rather, the subject of the event is militant and is also collective. For instance, the subject of the Algerian Revolution is the Algerian people.

Badiou's invocation of "the people" is not new and, to a certain extent, can be understood as an extension of a great deal of European political philosophy. For instance, as noted by Ernesto Laclau in *On Populist Reason* "the political operation *par excellence* is always going to be the construction of a 'people'" (Laclau 2005, 153). Similarly, as noted by Bruno Bosteels, Jean-Jacques Rousseau "is the eighteenth-century philosopher who, no doubt more than anyone, has given center stage to the coming into being of a people as the modern political act par

excellence" (Bosteels 2016, 4-5). In "Twenty-Four Notes on the Uses of the Word 'People'" (2016b) Badiou provides various examples of his intended use of "the people" as well as several problematic uses of the term. Regarding his intended use of "the people," it is meant to signify a shared consciousness, and a militant and collective organization that seeks to uphold principles that exceed the logic of the state. Regarding problematic uses of "the people," he states the following: "we distrust the word 'people' when it is accompanied by an adjective of identity or nationality" (Badiou 2016b, 22). In other words, the conception of the people (and similarly the subject of the event) must be divorced from any *particular* conception of a people. In this sense, the ability of a people to demarcate an event requires that all particularity be subtracted from that notion of "the people." The justification that Badiou provides for the scission between the people and particularity is thus an attempt to safeguard politics from fascist and exclusionary conceptions of the people, such as those used in Nazi Germany.

There is, however, an exception to this rule that "the people" ought not be accompanied by an adjective of identity. Namely, it is possible for "the people" to be accompanied by an adjective of identity or nationality (such as Algerian) when this particular name locates a position of revolt against a shared oppressive structure (such as colonial rule). In other words, when the name generates a shared consciousness and militancy around which a revolution is organized, a particular name can be used.

In this sense, "the people" is an example of the subject of a political event. However, there are three variations of subject positions in Badiou's political theory: "the faithful subject organizes its *production,* the reactive subject its *denial* (in the guise of its deletion) and the obscure subject its *occultation* (the passage under the bar)" (Badiou 2009a, 62). The reactionary subject "consists in the active denial of the event" (Hallward 2003, 146), for instance, by stating

that the Algerian Revolution never took place. The obscure subject "refuses to recognize the possibility of a truth *en acte*" (Ibid.) and thus fails to recognize that an event is taking place by choosing to reinforce the previous order of the state in an attempt to maintain the law of the previous state. Both the obscure and the reactionary subjects are produced from the event and thus have a kind of relation to the event; however, they both have a negative relation to the event. The third subject, the faithful subject, has a positive relation to the event. The faithful subject, "rather than existing solely by virtue of its linguistic position, instead 'in-exists,' thereby opening the space for it to construct a truth that necessarily evades knowledge" (Srnicek 2008, 111). In line with our previous discussion regarding the inexistent and the state, the faithful subject is what inexists in a state that is produced or appears through the event.

The faithful subject also enacts the truth of the event, and produces this truth through a series of actions. In other words, truths exist only insofar as there are subjects to bring them about: "the 'except that' [invoked in the statement made by the materialist dialectic] *exists* qua subject" (Badiou 2003, 45). The faithful subject must force the truth against the power of the logic of the state that seeks to maintain itself.

Furthermore, the faithful subject is inaugurated in a particular location. Badiou describes it in the following manner:

> [The particular location is the] 'aside from', the 'except that', the 'but for' […or] 'what has no place to be' [taken in two possible senses]: as that which, according to the transcendental law of the world (or the appearing of beings), should not be; but also that which subtracts itself (out of place) from the worldly localization of multiplicities, from the place of being, in other words, from being-there (Badiou 2009a, 45).

The two senses of "no place" can be thought of as follows. The particular location of the subject of the event cannot be located within an already-ordered logic or law of the state because the subject is the appearing of what inexists in a state, or what does not immediately enter into the order of the state. Likewise, what "distinguishes this [the event] from pure transcendence is the fact that an event *must* be localizable within a particular situation" or world (Srnicek 2008, 114). If an event is conceived as that which exceeds or inexists in a world or a state, as something that cannot be determined by the logic of that state, then what binds it or localizes it in the state? In response, Srnicek states that an event for Badiou "must employ the local beings in a situation to give it is minimal embodiment" (Ibid.). An "evental site" is thus the term used to designate when an event is localized, and for Badiou all events must be situated within a particular state.

The particular location of an event is not abstracted from the logic or order of the state, rather an event is a militant action against the state. And yet, an event transcends the state by creating new universal principles. For example, the truth of a political event can be justice, and justice is what "the people" or the subject of the event are attempting to bring about. However, the conception of justice that they employ (or are faithful to) is not the enactment of justice performed by the existing state. Rather they are faithful to a conception of justice that seeks to overthrow the existing logic of the state and institute a new logic that recognizes and represents those who had previously been excluded from the state. For example, the anti-apartheid struggle of South Africa (1950-1994) can be construed as "the people" attempting to enact justice for all against the oppressive state of the white South Africans who determine the law. Here, justice cannot be sought through the apartheid state but it must exceed the state and require that the apartheid state be overthrown.

In *The Rebirth of History*, Badiou describes this localization of the event as "people who rally in sites that have become impregnable—Squares, universities, boulevards, factories, and so on" (Badiou 2012b, 58). For example, one might here think of the people who rallied in a Cairene square in Egypt under the banner of Egyptian people (Ibid., 56-59). Similarly, he describes the localization of the event as "the necessity of constructing symbolically significant sites where people's capacity to dictate their own destiny is visible" (Ibid., 68). Elsewhere he describes this as "a particular popular market, an African workers' hostel, a factory, a tower block on some housing estate, and so on" (Ibid., 65). Regardless, it is particularly important to note that the localization of the event in a site serves to ground or make immanent Badiou's theory of the event. It is in this way that the event can be singular, in so far as it is taking place in a particular space and time.

The emergence of the event is predicated on the subject's fidelity of this event in the evental site. As previously discussed, the subject comes into existence out of the event. This means that the subject inexists prior to the event. He states: "We shall then say that a *change of world* is real when an inexistent of the world starts to exist in this same world with maximum intensity" (Ibid., 56). An event is thus what makes possible the "restitution of the existence of the inexistent" (Ibid.). This is only possible through a proclamation, i.e. a naming of the event.

Additionally, it is important to keep in mind "that the event is strictly *nothing* without its subsequent consequences" (Srnicek 2008, 115). Thus, for Badiou, an event is dependent upon not only its universal and transcendental features, but it must also be localized through the production of the subject of the event, the act of naming, and the creation of a new language. As noted by Srnicek:

> An event, therefore, is not transcendent to its situation, but is instead localizable within the immanence of the situation. There is no radical disjunction between truth and knowledge, but instead a subtle, *dialectical* interplay carried out by the aleatory path of a truth procedure […] In this regard, Badiou has rightfully highlighted the continuance of the old within the new, and has developed an ontological theory capable of transversally crossing the division between the leftist wish for a pure flux of revolutionary change and the rightist affirmation of universal stasis and continuity (Ibid., 116-117, my italics).

Srnicek has rightly pointed out in this instance that the universal and the singularity of the event—that it is both transcendent and immanent to the situation (i.e. the evental site)—carries with it the implication that there is a minimal continuity between the old situation and the new.

And yet, in *The Rebirth of History*, Badiou states "Localization is the idea of asserting in the world the visibility of universal justice in the form of restitution of the inexistent" (Badiou 2012b, 69). Justice is thus necessarily universal. In fact, the structure of the event as rupturing with the state provides the conditions for this universal truth. It is the condition for universality by way of his politics of indifference that is the focus of the following section.

2.2: A Politics of Indifference

Importantly for Badiou, "only a truth is […] *indifferent to differences* […A] truth is *the same for all*" (Badiou 2001, 27). Within the political context, "differences" can be synonymous with "identities." In this sense, there are two distinct yet overlapping conceptions of identity that operate in Badiou's political theory. In *St. Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (2003) he provides an account of identity bound up with a capitalist system. In *Logics of Worlds* (2009) he

provides an account of identity that is formed through state-sanctioned enforcement. While I describe these two conceptions of identity independently of each other for the purpose of clarity, it is important to note that, for Badiou, there is a strong connection between capitalism and the state. Accordingly, these two conceptions of identity are intertwined.

Regarding identity as bound up with a capitalist system, he states the following: "each identification (the creation or cobbling together of identity) creates a figure that provides a material for its investment by the market" (Badiou 2003, 10). While his discussion of identity may change slightly depending on the text and the context to which he is referring, his text on St. Paul describes identity in a specifically political context. The kind of investment that he is here referring to is utilized for the purpose of "commercial investment" (Ibid.). For example, we can think about how Pride in Canada and the U.S. has become sites for capitalist expansion and, furthermore, has created new kinds of markets (gay cruises, gay bars, for example). Additionally, he states:

> [With each combination of predicative traits, such as] Black homosexuals, disabled Serbs, Catholic pedophiles, moderate Muslims, married priests, ecologist yuppies, the submissive unemployed, prematurely aged youth […] a social image authorizes new products, specialized magazines, improved shopping malls, "free" radio stations, targeted advertising networks, and finally, heady "public debates" at peak viewing times (Ibid.).

Interestingly, he claims that "the capitalist logic of the general equivalent and the identitarian and cultural logic of communities or minorities form an articulated whole" (Ibid., 11). There is thus some sort of symbiotic relation, it would seem, between the creation or formation of minority identities and a capitalist structure.

How are we to understand the relation between identity and the state? Badiou writes: "the consideration of identitarian traits provides the basis for determination, be it the State's or the protestor's, and finally it is a matter of stipulating, through law or brute force, an authoritarian management of these traits (national, religious, sexual, and so on) considered as dominant political operators" (Ibid., 12-13). In the broadest sense, identity is organized by the logic of the state. For instance, the U.S. has attempted to regulate homosexuality either by suppressing it through medical or legal means, or more recently through the incorporation, or addition, of same-sex marriage into its legal structure. Both suppression and incorporation/addition in this instance serve to re-center the power and logic of the state. Similarly, the position of a group of protesters can also reinforce the logic and power of the state if the protesters's demands are able to be recognized by the existing state.

That said, I am particularly interested in where Badiou asks whether racial or gender identities can operate progressively: "when I hear people say, 'We are oppressed as blacks, as women,' I have only one problem: what exactly is meant by 'black' or 'women'? ... Can this identity, in itself, function in a progressive fashion, that is, other than as a property invented by the oppressors themselves?" (Hallward 2003, 229).[15] In response to this question, Badiou states that racial identities are *not* progressive because they serve to resituate or re-center the logic of the state. In other words, to take up a Black identity, for instance, is to reinforce or re-center the logic of a state (like white supremacy) since the process of racialization emanates from this state in the first place.

Along this line, Menon, as an interpreter of Badiou, defines identity in the following manner: "Identity is the demand made by power – tell us who you are so we can tell you what

[15] The entirety of this quote is a statement made by Badiou. Badiou has been cited at length by Peter Hallward in the above cited text.

you can do" (Menon 2015, 2). Additionally, "by complying with that demand, by parsing endlessly the particulars that make our identity different from one another's, we are slotting into a power structure, not dismantling it" (Ibid.). According to both Badiou and Menon, identity is thought of in a manner that is similar to the description of "representation" offered above. Namely, identity is the manner in which the state can represent a particular group of people. However, as previously discussed, the state will always fail to represent all persons, and there is always an inexistent of a state. As noted by Wright, "ultimately, the terms 'race', 'class', 'gender', 'sexuality', 'nationality', 'religion' and their various cognates remain State-based ways of counting the elements of a situation [or organizing the parts of a state], and are consequently incompatible" with Badiou's goal for political emancipation (Wright 2013, 271). Identity generally operates as a category that has been created by the state itself that serves to represent "its people" according to a particular logic. For example, the Canadian long-form census as well as various job applications list a number of state recognized "races" by which one can choose to identify. In Canada and the U.S., for example, this list of "races" has changed over time. Of course, the purpose of including "races" on job applications, for instance, could be an attempt to ensure that an institution that had previously been discriminatory becomes more "diverse" and "inclusive." However, diversity and inclusion are demonstrated within the terms of a current state logic. Badiou's rejection of identity is prefaced in part on how identities are constructed and organized by the state in order to maintain the power of the state. Recall the example above regarding the expansion of the power of the state to include same-sex couples within the category of those who have a right to marry.

Menon extends Badiou's critique of identity advanced in *Ethics* to queer theory. She states that her own project is "against the investment in difference that marks our current

iterations of identity politics [… and takes] seriously the politics of indifference. Invested as it is with all the explosiveness of a signifier that lives in difference, indifference argues for a radical break with the identity that undergirds liberal and conservative politics alike" (2015, 1-2). Menon juxtaposes identity politics (difference) with a politics of indifference, the latter of which she argues possesses a capacity for true emancipation. The juxtaposition between these two positions does not exist along party lines (liberal and conservative politics, for example). Rather Menon claims that identity politics undergird both liberal and conservative politics alike. She states: "By investing in somatic difference as the *truth* of one's particularity, identity politics counterintuitively reifies the frame of oppression it claims to be undermining" (Ibid., 4).[16] With this description in mind, one should understand that identity is meant to signify something that operates within and perpetuates an oppressive state. On this view, a politics of identity, therefore, would serve to perpetuate systems of oppression rather than seek to resolve problematic systems of hierarchization. Dismantling these oppressive power structures thus requires an alternative method in order to seek emancipation. Emancipation requires a radical break with a politics of identity. For Menon, a politics of indifference offers such a radical break.

Menon provides us with an example of crossing the border of a nation state in order to demonstrate how identity can operate in this problematic way. As many of us know, what might seem like a casual conversation with a border guard upon entering a country that is not one's own, the conversation can turn quickly to specific questions about one's area of work, and, if one is an academic, one's specific area of research. During one of these interchanges the border

[16] There is a significant difference between Menon and Badiou and their respective critiques of identity politics. Menon focuses on the "truth of one's particularity" and the way in which identity and identity politics fails to properly account for this truth. Badiou, on the other hand, is not concerned with one's particularity or experience of the world in relation to identity. Rather, as previously noted he rejects a kind of individuality and self-consciousness in his political theory and instead concentrates on collectivity as a site for political action. That said, both Menon and Badiou problematize the relation between identity and state power and it is this relation that I am attempting to highlight in this instance.

patrol guard questions why Menon, a woman of Indian-descent, was studying Shakespeare as opposed to Indian literature. The frustration experienced by Menon is that her Indian identity ought not prescribe for her a certain profession or field of study, a point with which I agree. As a result, Menon argues that identities can be imposing when they emanate from a power structure – power that, in this example, is manifest in the border patrol guards.

Contra Menon, Badiou's rejection of identity politics does not pertain to the inability of identities to account for the truth of who you are. Rather, he is concerned with the manner in which identities are constructed through state power. Emancipation does not come through the expansion of the power of the state (adding identities, and thus categories of representation) rather emancipation is when the logic of the state is interrupted and overturned such that the inexistent can become apparent. Identity and emancipation, the former emanating from the state and the latter emanating from the dissolution of the state, are necessarily at odds with one another. For this reason, identity is of no interest to Badiou's conception of political emancipation. For instance, Badiou states, "we must recognize […] that these [identitarian or cultural] differences hold no interest for *thought*, that they amount to nothing more than the infinite and self-evident multiplicity of humankind, as obvious in the difference between me and my cousin from Lyon as it is between the Shi'ite 'community' of Iraq and the fat cowboys of Texas" (Badiou 2001, 26). What then is a politics of indifference such that these kinds of difference are of no interest to it? And what reasons does Badiou offer, or could one offer, for such a politics of indifference?

Even though "Badiou […] rejects identity as a real possibility" for politics, he recognizes that identities like race and gender do exist (Calcagno 2015, 186). Identities are, in some sense, real for him. He is not proposing a kind of rejection of identity *tout court*, nor would I argue that

he is proposing a version of racial eliminativism. Alcoff describes racial eliminativism (or nominalism) in the following manner:

> Race is not real, meaning that racial terms do not refer to anything ‘‘really real,’’ principally because recent science has invalidated race as a salient or even meaningful biological category. It is the biological meaning of racial concepts that have led to racism, but racial concepts are necessarily biological claims (as opposed to ethnic or cultural concepts, for example). Therefore, the use of racial concepts should be avoided in order to be metaphysically accurate as well as to further an antiracist agenda (Alcoff 2006, 182).

Racial eliminativism, here described by Alcoff, assumes an inherent connection between biology and race, whereby if biology can demonstrate that there is no coherent conception of race that can be developed through biological terms, then it is impossible to say that there is a thing called "race" in the world. But, of course, this is not the conception of race Badiou is using. Instead, he draws from a social constructivist model of race, as discussed in Chapter One. That said, he does problematize the role particularities like race can play in any progressive or emancipatory movement, and furthermore whether race can be political.

The first point of justification that we can offer for Badiou's politics of indifference is that his politics calls for a revolutionary change as opposed to a reformist change, and it is for this reason that he argues that identity cannot be progressive and political. For him, identities are immanent to a particular logic and state, and thus identities can only result in change that reforms the existing state rather that actually calling for a new state on the basis of new ordering principles. For Badiou, the goal of politics is emancipation. Emancipation results when the inexistant in a state gains existence through a change in the logic of the state, i.e. a revolutionary

change. In order to achieve a revolutionary change, it becomes necessary to base revolutionary ideas on something that exceeds the logic of the state and thus is not determined by the state., i.e. political truths.

As noted by Menon, Badiou's "universalism does not mandate sameness nor does it use difference as the basis for identity. Rather, it involves the recognition that difference itself is universal and therefore unremarkable" (Menon 2015, 14-15). It is on the basis of this conception of the political that Badiou states "a truth procedure [cannot] take root in the element of identity. For it is true that every truth erupts as singular, its singularity is immediately universalizable. Universalizable singularity necessarily breaks with identitarian singularity" (Badiou 2003, 11). Categorically, there is an inconsistency between truth, which is both universal (to the extent that all particularity is subtracted from it) and singular (to the extent that every truth is located in a particular evental site), and identity (that is immanent to a state logic). Notably, "a truth, political or otherwise, recognizes itself in [the] fact that the principle of which it is a particular instance does not, as far as the principle is concerned, have anything particular about it. It is something that holds absolutely, for whomever enters into the situation about which this instance is stated" (Badiou 2011a, 107). As a result, identity can never be the site or the source of truth or justice for his political theory because the categories of identity and truth are categorically opposed. It is for this reason that he states the following: "It is a question of knowing what identitarian and communitarian categories have to do with truth procedures, with political procedures for example. We reply: these categories must be absented from the process, failing which no truth has the slightest chance of establishing its persistence and accruing its immanent infinity" (Badiou 2003, 11).

Likewise, drawing from Badiou's *St. Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (2003), Menon states that "identity is no longer an additive process that increases its potency by adjectival enhancement. It becomes the minus one—that which has to be subtracted from all substance in order to qualify for the universal" (Menon 2015, 5). Here we see a semblance of Badiou's critique of state-based politics discussed above. What is required is no longer adding new identities, an endless task that does not change the existing state of the situation rather it only amends it for the time being.

The second justification we could offer for Badiou's politics of indifference is that he attempts to move away from a method of abstraction—whereby abstract concepts become the foundation for a theory of politics—and instead offers a method which he calls "subtraction." The primary difference between these two modes of approach is that subtraction is not wholly dissociated from actual singular events in space and time. Events are always both universal, and thus not reducible to a particular location, and singular, thus situated within the specific actions and choices of a collective of people, i.e. in an evental site. The effect is then to universalize what takes place in a particular site or place and what occurs for a particular group of people.

The third justification we can offer for Badiou's politics of indifference is that it seems in part to suggest that the structure of a revolutionary change must be able to transcend any particular group of people and thus must be made on the basis of what he calls a "generic humanity." Generic humanity entails that all particularity is subtracted from humanity in order to offer a universal humanism. Therefore, contra racial eliminativism, it is not the case that race does not exist or that it is not real, rather particularities such as race cannot serve as the foundation for political truths that exceed the logic of the state—given that racial particularities are determined by the state—and not a generic humanity—a position that subtracts particularities

from its constitution. For example, as noted by Nesbitt, "the generic prescription of universal justice as equality, premised upon the destruction of slavery, appeared as fully formed as immanent critique from the first moments of the Haitian Revolution" (Nesbitt 2013, 1). Similarly:

> From its very first iterations, Caribbean Critique appears concerned not with individuals or with classes but with a series of abstract universal concepts of relevance to *all human beings* and not to any specifically regional, racial, or gendered experience. Yet these universal concepts – rights, freedom, equality, justice – are formulated by enslaved, Caribbean subjects in ways that would have been unavailable or unimaginable for the white French subjects of 1789 (Ibid., my italics).

All this is to say that in Badiou's politics of indifference, identity is not done away with altogether. But instead, identities do not aid in political movements towards emancipation. Identity is subtracted when it rises to the level of the universal or truth. Or, as Menon states: "the specific difference of negritude can rise to the level of the universal by demanding universal human rights for all. In doing so, negritude would tap into the disenfranchisement experienced by women, homosexuals, and other minorities, and *stand in for them all*" (Menon 2015, 5). Most obviously, the subtractive move is one that passes from a position of particularity to one of universality.

There are three implications that follow from the conception of generic humanity that Badiou claims are central aspects of his politics of indifference. First, the struggle for recognition of the inexistent is not particular to any space and time but is, rather, a universal struggle because of the function of states generally. Second, particularity cannot determine who can participate or

benefit from a given political event. For instance, as a white person I can participate in the emancipation of people of color. Third, for the purpose of political emancipation, there is little to be gained from being epistemically situated within a particular identity. Badiou states that typology, identitarian or minoritarian logic (consistent with identity politics) becomes additionally problematic, for instance, when it "does not hesitate to posit that this culture's constitutive elements are only fully comprehensible on the condition that one belongs to the subset in questions" (Badiou 2003, 12). For instance, according to the identitarian or minoritarian logic, one can only *fully* understand what it means to be queer, racialized as Black in a U.S. context, or a woman unless one is queer, racialized as Black in a U.S. context, or a woman respectively. He considers such pronouncements "genuinely *barbaric*" because they are situated in a kind of singularity (homosexuality for instance) and fail to attain a kind of universal position. Such claims thus fail to rise to the level of truth (Ibid., 12).

At stake for this project in particular is the manner in which Badiou juxtaposes particularity and universality. Furthermore, it is important to examine the role he allocates to identity for political emancipation and the unintended consequences of his political theory. For instance, in "Twenty-Four Notes" he states that the subject of the event, or "the people" must abandon expressions like "the French people" that invoke a particular identity (Badiou 2016b, 23). The justification for "the people" to abandon a particular identity, such as identifying as "French," is because in this case identity can serve to delimit who the designation of "the people" applies to (in this instance it applies to those who are French). Furthermore, this conception of "the people" also maintains a category of people who are excluded from that particular identity. As such, it fails to be universal.

There is one exception to his rule of the subtractive necessity of the subject (such as "the people") from predicates: "We will accept this yoking only in cases where that identity is in reality a political process under way, as with 'the Algerian people' during the French war in Algeria, or the 'Chinese people' when the expression is pronounced from the communist base of Yan'an" (Ibid., 24). What distinguishes these two examples, the latter in which "the people" can be yoked with a predicate such as "Algerian," from the former whereby the "the French people" cannot? First, a predicate can be attributed to "the people" when "that identity is in reality a political process under way." The political process he is referring to in this instance is a political event, or a process towards political emancipation. For instance, during the Algerian Revolution, "the people" took to the street in revolt against a colonial regime that sought to oppress them. The implication in this instance is that the use of "the Algerian people" of the revolution is quite distinct from "the Algerian people" of the colonial state. In the case of the former, the people of the Algerian revolution use the name "the Algerian people" to designate or name the rejection of the oppressive colonial logic and to bring into existence the inexistent. In other words, in instances of war and "so-called national liberation" the predicate can take on political significance (Ibid.). However, in instances in which there is no so-called national liberation underway, it becomes problematic to use such particular names and designations.

An additional characteristic that designates when a political process is underway for Badiou is violence. For instance, in "Twenty-Four Notes," he states a reality of a political process refers to "violent opposition to another 'adjective + people'" (Ibid.). Badiou here seems to echo the words not only of Sartre in the preface to Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, but also Fanon's writings on violence in the same text. For instance, Sartre states that "it is through this mad rage, this bile and venom, their constant desire to kill us […] that they become men. It is

through the *colonist*, who wants to turn them into beasts of burden, and against him" (Sartre 2004, lii). Or, put more succinctly, "decolonization is always a violent event" (Fanon 2004, 1).

Second, the people must not only *be* the people (rather than *represent* the people) but also they must be "*what the official people, in the guise of the state, regards as nonexistent*" (Badiou 2016b, 28). Thus, the people must name those who are refused legal status or legal recognition, and those who are not represented within the state. Third, "it is *in the retrospective effect of the nonexistence of a state* that the 'people' can be part of the naming of a political process and thus become a political category" (Ibid., 25). For example, the Algerian people sought the dissolution of the French colonial Algerian state through the Algerian Revolution. This conception of national liberation requires the dissolution of the previous state such that a new state that is based upon different principles and that is organized according to a different logic eventually becomes possible. As soon as a state, like the Algerian state, is established by the people who sought national liberation, then "Algerian people" can no longer be a political category, in the sense invoked by Badiou above. In other words, if "the people" are no longer seeking national liberation then "the people" no longer designates a political subject but rather is representative of the logic of the state. In a sense, during the revolution or national liberation the people designate what exceeds the logic of the oppressive state and thus what transcends the logic of the state. As a result, "we see that 'people' here takes on a meaning that implies the disappearance of the existing state" (Ibid., 27). The validation of whether "the people" are a true political entity is confirmed through the disappearance of the existing state. However, following national liberation "the people" becomes imminent to the logic of the state.

2.3 Critique of Politics of Indifference on the Basis of Identity

In this section, I argue that the conception of identity and identity politics advanced by Badiou is problematic for two reasons. First, in light of the analysis of identity offered above, and his rejection of identity politics, I argue that his political theory risks falling into patterns of Eurocentrism. My argument is based largely upon an analysis of Badiou's conception of race. Namely, I propose that his notion of race is limited to what I describe as negative that excludes a positive notion of race. Both of these conceptions of race will be elaborated below. Second, drawing upon the Fanon-Sartre debate offered in Chapter One, I maintain that like Sartre, Badiou proposes that identities such as race are conceived as a means towards another end. Contra Badiou, and alongside Fanon, I argue that it is problematic to designate race as a position that needs to be overcome in order to achieve universal emancipation.

2.3a: Conceptions of Identity: Negative and Positive

As previously noted, in "Fanon and Sartre 50 Years Later" Gines states the following:

> Race is not just a negative category used for the purpose of oppression and exploitation or for the purpose of establishing a sense of supremacy over others. Race has also come to represent a more positive category that encompasses a sense of membership or belonging, remembrance of struggle and overcoming, and the motivation to press forward and endeavor towards new ideas and achievement (2003, 56).

The distinction Gines draws between a positive conception of race and a negative one is an important distinction to address and develop within present-day discussions of race. Also, importantly, her view is historically situated. Namely, W. E. B. Du Bois's "The Conservation of

Races" (1897) gestured toward this distinction between positive and negative conceptions of race, and his work continues to be relevant for current research in critical race theory. My primary concern in this project is the manner in which a negative conception of race is emphasized to the exclusion of a positive conception of race for Badiou. Furthermore, I argue that a positive conception of race is significant for a theory of emancipation. In what follows, I provide a brief overview of several important moments and figures in historical and current discussions of race.

First, what is a negative conception of race? In *Race: A Philosophical Introduction*, Paul C. Taylor describes race as follows:

> [O]ur Western races are social constructs. They are things that we humans create in the transactions that define social life. Specifically, they are the probabilistically defined populations that result from the white supremacist determination to link appearance and ancestry to social location and life chances (2004, 86).

Similarly, in Charles Mills's *The Racial Contract* (1997), he states that the goal of the creation of racial categories should be understood as "creating not merely racial exploitation, but race itself as a group identity" (63). Within a social constructivist model of race, it is generally accepted that the origin of the process of racialization was for the purpose of the creation of a social hierarchy that benefited some populations and dehumanized others.

The conception of race offered by Badiou fits squarely within this negative conception of race. For instance, we might recall the following question posed by Badiou: "Can this identity [Black or women], in itself, function in a progressive fashion, that is, other than as a property invented by the oppressors themselves?" (Hallward 2003, 229). The implication that we can

draw from his statement is that racial and gender identities are a product, and property, of an oppressive structure.

It is not my intention to argue against the existence of a negative conception of race. I take it as evident that there are negative conceptions of races through which the dehumanization of racialized peoples takes place that results in social and political hierarchies. However, the question which should follow such a statement is: Is a negative conception of race *all* that there is? In other words, is it possible to conceive of race in a way that exceeds, or is distinct from, this negative conception?

I offer two possible answers to these questions. W. E. B. Du Bois in "The Conservation of Race" asks "what then is race? It is a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life" (Du Bois 2000, 110). While Du Bois engages in a project that aims to end racism, he also argues for the continuation of race categories, as the title of his essay suggests. Anthony Appiah, in "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race" argues the following: "The truth is that there are no races: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask 'race' to do for us" (2000, 134). Appiah's argument falls within an anti-realist or eliminativist approach to race whereby he argues that race is not real because there is no unifying trait or essence that can be attributed to any particular race. I would not go so far as to argue that Badiou's description of race overlaps with Appiah's given that previously I have suggested that Badiou's is more akin to a social constructivist model. However, Badiou does not suggest that there is anything more to race than this negative conception and he does not seek to conserve a place for a more positive conception of race within his political theory of emancipation.

What then is the positive conception of race indicated by Du Bois? And what purpose does a positive conception of race serve for a theory of emancipation? Drawing from the work of Du Bois, various authors have argued for the conservation of race categories for the purpose of dismantling racism. For instance, in the inaugural issue of *Critical Philosophy of Race*, Bernasconi, Gines, and Taylor state "Critical philosophy of race is a critical enterprise in three respects: it opposes racism in all its forms; it rejects the pseudoscience of old-fashioned biological realism; and it denies that antiracism and anti-racialism summarily eliminate race as a meaningful category of analysis" (Bernasconi et. al. 2013, iv). According to Bernasconi, Gines, and Taylor, the preservation of race is so important that it qualifies as one of the three main characteristics of critical race theory insofar as these theorists stress the importance of maintaining race as a meaningful category of analysis. While they express the importance of a positive conception of race, it becomes much more difficult to define it. Chike Jeffers articulates a positive conception of race as follows:

> What it means to be a black person, for many of us, including myself, can never be exhausted through reference to problems of stigmatization, discrimination, marginalization, and disadvantage, as real and as large-looming as these factors are in the racial landscape as we know it. There is also joy in blackness, a joy shaped by culturally distinctive situations, expressions, and interactions, by stylizations of the distinctive features of the black body, by forms of linguistic and extralinguistic communication, by artistic traditions, by religious and secular rituals, and by any other number of modes of cultural existence. There is also pride in the way black people have helped shape Western culture, not merely by means of the free labor and extraction of resources that economically supported

> this culture but also directly through cultural contributions, most prominently in music and dance. These contributions are racial in character – that is to say, they are cultural contributions whose significance can only be fully understood when they are placed in proper context as emerging from a racialized people. It does not seem necessary, however, to assume that the oppressive nature of this process of racialization must necessarily problematize the continued existence of the culture that emerged from it. There is, in fact, reason to think that the historical memory of creating beauty in the midst of struggling to survive oppression can and should persist as a thing of value in black culture long after that oppression has truly and finally been relegated to the past (2013, 422).

This passage begins with Jeffers drawing a distinction between problems of stigmatization, for example, that accompany being racialized and the joy and pride that is associated with being a particular race. Drawing from Du Bois's "Conservation" Jeffers argues for the importance of a sociohistorical racial identity that is additionally expressed in various cultures. Jeffers thus argues, alongside Du Bois, for the conservation not only of cultures but also historical memory (Jeffers 2013, 426).

At the same time, however, a positive conception of race is more than the joy that accompanies being a particular race. First, as noted by Gines, the negative conception of race "does not take into account the historical significance of race" (2003, 56). Alongside the cultural (and positive) conception of race offered by Jeffers, there is a political (and positive) conception of race offered by Lucius T. Outlaw Jr. For both Jeffers and Outlaw, if one focuses merely on a negative conception of race, then one fails to adequately respond to the requirements of emancipation. Furthermore, it is important to conserve races in order to avoid falling into

patterns of Eurocentrism. As evidenced by Outlaw, it is imperative to emphasize a political resistance to sameness by affirming both universality and equality, on the one hand, and difference, on the other. By way of his theory of political resistance, Outlaw offers a political (and positive) conception of race. Each of these points is considered in turn below.

In "The Cultural Theory of Race" Jeffers states the following: "that racism works and must be addressed both in terms of the way it creates difference and the way it suppresses difference" (2013, 419). There are two modes of racism at work in his statement. First, one ought to address the manner in which racism is enacted through the creation of race for the purpose of oppression and discrimination. This is what I have previously called the negative conception of race. Second, there is that form of racism that works through the suppression of differences. It is this enactment of racism that is pertinent my project. What does this second enactment look like? According to Jeffers, "insofar as racist discourse sets up the ways and values of white people as the standard by which black people are judged to be deficient, thus degrading black cultural traditions and creativity, black people ought to resist the pressure for sameness" (Ibid.).

Jeffers's words echo those of Du Bois who states "as a race, we must strive by race organization, by race solidarity, by race unity to the realization of that broader humanity which freely recognizes differences in men, but sternly deprecates inequality in their opportunities of development" (Du Bois 2000, 114). The imposition that Jeffers draws in his reading of Du Bois's "Conservation of the Races" is the importance of unity and diversity. In contrast to this second enactment of racism is what I have been calling a positive conception of race. Namely, "What Du Bois articulates in 'Conservation,' then, is a sharp critique of Eurocentrism: he claims that the liberation of black people requires that they demand equal rights and fair treatment but that they simultaneously affirm that 'their destiny is not a servile imitation of Anglo-Saxon

culture, but a stalwart originality which shall unswervingly follow Negro ideals'" (Jeffers 2013, 419).

In what way can this positive conception of race exceed a kind of cultural dimension and serve as a political category instead? In *On Race And Philosophy*, Outlaw states the following: "I argue the need to conserve 'race' and 'ethnie' (and 'ethnicity') as vital components of a philosophical anthropology, and of a social and political philosophy, more adequate in the present and near future to the exigencies of life in racially and ethnically complex societies" (1996, 136). Outlaw returns to Du Bois's "Conservation of Races" in order to develop what he calls a politics of differences that emphasizes the role of race and ethnicity for addressing the problems of modernity. According to Outlaw:

> Du Bois' reconsideration of 'race,' then, is not simply an effort in taxonomy. Rather, it is part of a decidedly *political* project that involves prescribing norms for the social construction of reality and identity, for self-appropriation and world making." In his [Du Bois] words, 'the history of the world is the history, not of individuals, but of groups, not of nations, but of races' (Ibid., 154).

Outlaw is here citing Du Bois. The entirety of Du Bois's statement is as follows:

> At all times, however, they have divided human beings into races, which, while they perhaps transcend scientific definition, nevertheless, are clearly defined to the eye of the Historian and Sociologist. If this be true, then the history of the world is the history not of individuals, but of groups, not of nations, but of races, and he who ignores or seeks to override the race idea in human history ignores and overrides the central thought of all history (Du Bois 2000, 110).

Two points in particular should be evident from Outlaw's reading of Du Bois. First, Outlaw is concerned with race as a political category, and as a category that should remain politically salient. Second, Outlaw is not primarily concerned with individuals and nations, but instead with the relation between race and history. In this sense, he emphasizes the importance of race for the *thought* of all historical change.

Similarly, "'Difference,' rather than similarity, has become a significant basis of political mobilization. But, not for the purposes of exclusion. Rather, 'difference' is now a highly valued preference that many persons and groups would have accommodated and recognized as the basis for their participation in civic, political, and economic life" (Outlaw 1996, 140). As observed by Jeffers:

> People like Outlaw […] have rightfully drawn our attention to the prescriptive, political dimension of Du Bois' project, that is, the sense in which he sets out not merely to define race for the sake of conceptual or empirical accuracy but, rather or also, to promote a conception of race that will ground and encourage collective action among his people in the face of their oppression (2013, 412, sic).

Jeffers argues for the conservation of race even in a postracial society, given that he invokes a conception of race that exceeds a racist structure. In order to combat a kind of Eurocentrsim it is important to emphasize the universal equality of all persons while also simultaneously emphasizing the importance of differences like race (as positively conceived). Furthermore, Outlaw emphasizes the importance of recognizing a prescriptive and political dimension of a positive conception of race insofar as it grounds and encourages collective action and additionally emphasizes the importance of race for thought.

One might ask how Badiou's critique of identity politics relates to the discussion of "the Algerian people" offered above. Additionally, one might ask: Is "the Algerian people" an example of a positive identity? While this example does provide an interesting caveat to the subtraction of identity and particularity from the politics, this example is consistent with his critique of identity politics and does not assuage my concern regarding a lack of inclusion of identity. "The Algerian people" is consistent with his critique of identity politics for two reasons. First, it gains political legitimacy only because it is part of a political process, and second, it is not dependent upon the historical and epistemic situatedness of any particular group. As noted above, the predicate only receives political legitimacy if the state is overcome. Furthermore, once the state is overcome, the predicate can no longer hold any political import. In other words, "the Algerian people" operates as a generic category, serving to name an evental site. Second, "the Algerian people" operates in name only and any particularity is subtracted from the predicate.

Badiou's politics of indifference is premised upon his critique of identity politics. As previously noted, he claims that identity is immanent to the logic of a particular state and serves to reproduce the power of that state. Identity cannot have any political or emancipatory import because emancipation and politics must transcend the logic and power of the state. As a result, he argues that identity must be subtracted from politics, and must be subtracted from a theory of emancipation insofar as it fails to be progressive. However, identities need not be thought of as merely negative, i.e. as replicating an oppressive power structure. Badiou in his politics of indifference thus fails to address that a positive conception of identity is possible.

2.3b: Identity Politics and the Failure to Rise to Universality

In *Indifference to Difference* Menon states the following: "differences are way stations but never destinations; indeed, universalism is a movement across these way stations that does not arrive at an ontological resting place" (2015, 15). In other words, differences like racial identities are never ends in themselves but instead are a means to something else. This statement should immediately remind us of the Fanon-Sartre debate discussed in the first chapter for the following reasons. For Sartre, one must overcome their identity for the purpose of emancipation, i.e. identities such as race explicitly become a means to some other end. However, for Fanon identity ought not be reduced to a means, and thus subordinate to some other purpose. As noted by Bernasconi, "it is clear that Fanon was concerned to show that Sartre, by locating negritude within a dialectic, had attempted to render the absolute density of black consciousness relative to the historical role assigned to them" (2004, 107). At stake in Fanon's critique of Sartre is the reduction of the absolute density of Black consciousness. My critique of Badiou echoes Fanon's concern, that Badiou reduces race to a means to serve another end, thus failing to recognize the fullness of Black consciousness.

At this point, one ought to ask how race is conceptualized in Badiou's own work, and what correlation can be drawn to the Fanon-Sartre debate given in Chapter One. There are various texts in which Badiou invokes racialized subjectivities. For instance, in "'Anti-Semitism Everywhere' in France Today" (2013) Badiou and Hazen make reference to Jews in an articulation of various constructions of Anti-Semitism that exist in France and globally. Similarly, in "*La Frustration d'un désir d'Occident ouvre un espace à l'instinct de mort*" (2016), an interview that can be roughly translated as "The Frustration with Western desire opens up space for the instinct towards death," Badiou discusses what he conceives of as the conditions

that serve to produce "jihadists." However, in these texts, it is not clear how Badiou conceives of race in particular, i.e. race as distinct from religion, for example. It is for this reason that I turn my attention to Badiou's most recent book *Black* (2017) in which he provides a more explicit conception of race.

First, invoking the question Jean Genet poses in *The Blacks*—"What is a Black? And first of all, what color is he?"—Badiou provides his account of his conceptualization of race and a discussion of the Négritude movement (Badiou 2017, 91). He states the following: "we so-called Whites of Western Europe had to invent the fact that the majority of Africa's inhabitants clearly constituted an inferior 'race,' condemned to slavery and then to forced labor of colonial occupation simply because this enormous population was 'black'" (Ibid.). First and foremost, it seems that for Badiou race is socially constructed, and that it is constructed by "so-called Whites of Western Europe." Generally, the presumption in this case is that race was created for the purpose of racism, i.e. that race was an invention that served to benefit one group of people at the peril of another. This statement can be understood in two ways. The stronger claim presupposes that race can solely be thought of as being imposed through a hierarchical power structure by the dominant group for the purpose of the continued oppression of the marginalized group. The weaker claim assumes that while race was originally created for the purpose of subordination, it need not continue to be conceptualized that way. Which of these two claims best exemplifies Badiou's conceptualization of race? Recalling my discussion of above of Badiou's statement that race cannot function in a progressive fashion, it would seem that he is proposing the stronger claim of the social construction of race, namely that race can *only* be thought of as *emanating* from systems of hierarchy of oppression.

Second, in *Black*, Badiou intimates that there is no true or real "black." This point, which is made evident in a chapter titled "Confusion" (Badiou 2017, 22-24), is made in reference to the color black as it might be applied to a "black" cloud or a "black" pencil. These statements taken by themselves might appear meaningless; however, they take on significant meaning within his discussion of humanity as a whole. For instance, in answer to the question proposed by Genet (mentioned above) he answers "as far as humanity as a whole is concerned, there are actually no colors" (Ibid., 102). Additionally, in *Black*, he states "Try to *really* decide what someone's color is" (Ibid., sic). This is unlike the black panther (the animal not the activist) which is "*really* black, because his fur, which covers his body from head to toe, is black" (Ibid., 103).

Grant Farred sheds some light on why Badiou would say that "as far as humanity as a whole is concerned, there are actually no colors." In "Wretchedness" (2011), a Badiouian analysis of Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, Farred attempts to deal with what he calls a "hesitation, equivocation, about how race functions as an element of the political [… and a] distrust about how race is deployed as an essentialist political category" (2011, 161). This quick account of Fanon by Farred already provides a clear account of the intended relation between race and the political. According to Farred, for Badiou race might appear within a given situation but it cannot be a uniting feature of a revolution. Similarly, Farred draws upon what he called the anticolonial/decolonial dialectic in Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*. Farred states, "The political allure—and power—of the [Black versus white, Arab versus Infidel] binary must be dispensed with in order to map the trajectory of the peoples through from popular, racially specific (or, indiscriminate) opposition to finer, ideologically rather than racially based political distinctions" (Ibid., 169). The claim that he makes here reasserts the juxtaposition of racially specific political movements on the one hand, and the "finer" ideological movements, subtracted from racially

based identifications on the other. In other words, the implication is that Fanon is calling for a rejection of the role of a group-identity for Black people and Black racial consciousness in anticolonial or decolonial struggles in favour of a movement that maintains ideological unifying features, such as liberty, equality, and brotherhood ("for all," as in the French Revolution). Towards this end, Farred makes a compelling argument by presenting the following statement by Fanon in order to support his point:

> The people who in the early days of the struggle had adopted the primitive Manicheanism of the colonizer—Black versus White, Arab versus Infidel—realize en route that some blacks can be whiter than whites, and the prospect of a national flag of independence does not automatically result in certain segments of the population giving up their privileges and their interests (Fanon 2004, 93).

It would thus seem as though, alongside Farred's analysis, that Fanon is demonstrating a shift that ought to take place regarding the role race can play in the struggle for Algerian independence. Specifically, insofar as "some blacks can be whiter than whites" in the Algerian Revolution, perhaps one ought to question the role that race can actually play in such an instance. However, Fanon's quote is quickly followed up with the following statement: "The people discover that the iniquitous phenomenon of exploitation can assume a black or an Arab face" (Ibid., 94). The point that Fanon is drawing our attention to is that within any group identity there can be the need for self-critique, and much of *The Wretched of the Earth* provides a critique of the Black bourgeoisie and the role they play in the anticolonial struggle (or lack of a role, one might say). Similarly, one might also state that just because one is Black or a woman does not mean that they cannot perpetuate racist and sexist oppression. Intersectional feminism is one area of research that attempts to make evident that one's inclusion within a marginalized group does

not preclude one from perpetuating any number of forms of prejudice (see hooks 2015; Crenshaw 1993). In addition, the presence of such critique need not negate the relevance or importance of racialized group identities for political movements.

Given Badiou's conception of race offered above, in which race is a product of white supremacy, one might ask what role race plays in processes of emancipation? There are three points to consider in responding to such a question. First, in *Black* (2017) Badiou states that in both the Négritude movement and the Black Panther Party, "blacks, vis-à-vis whites, assume total pride in their blackness and can lay claim to their natural superiority" (98-99). But why is it the case that pride in being Black comes only in relation to whites? The reason, for Badiou, is because racialized identity is thought within a structure of hierarchy and within a dialectic. In this same book, he utilizes two notions of dialectic. In a section of *Black* titled "The Dialectics of Black" in his discussion of the blackness of the soul, he states that a) "black *connotes impurity*," b) "through negation of the negation […] white connotes purity, including in its most physical form, namely female virginity", c) whiteness is "secondary to the blackness of which it is the conspicuous negation" (Ibid., 38). While in this instance he is referring explicitly to what he claims is the "blackness" of the soul where dark and fatal feelings reside, it ought not be lost that there is already a dialectic between black (impure) and white (pure) whereby black is the negation. The negation of this dialectic results not only in whiteness, but also in purity.[17] Instead, this structure of the dialectic is useful for understanding his discussion of racial identities drawing upon Négritude and the Black Panther Party. Regarding the reclaiming of Black identity in a colonial context by the Négritude movement, he states the following:

[17] Of course, one could also attend to his discussion of the black soul in relation to Senghor's discussion of the black soul, but that is not the foremost concern in this project.

> [S]ince the whites have called us blacks, why shouldn't we turn this name against their power? The dialectic of colors is very dense here. Black, a stigmatized category internal to white domination, is reappropriated by its victims as the banner of their revolt. The blacks are thus between two whites: the whites who invented the blacks in order to enslave and segregate them, and the whites who are the target of the blacks' insurgent independence (Ibid., 99).

Of importance to note here is that Négritude is thus forever located in relation to whites.

This brings us to the second point, which is comprised of the "gradual dissolution of the whole black-white dialectic […] in favor of political universalism" (Ibid., 100). Of course, it comes as no surprise that Badiou is offering a political universalism as the solution to political emancipation. That said, it is the structure for universal emancipation, as well as his conception of universality, that is of concern. He summarizes the transition as follows: "the first revolutionary approach, proud negritude, prepared the ground for the second, namely that, while there are of course different communities, and the black community in particular, they must all have strictly the same rights" (Ibid., 101). In other words, Black power and Black liberation movements were necessary for universal emancipation. We may recall here the work of Sartre, who also stated that Black race consciousness is necessary for universal emancipation of the proletariat. That said, we must consider the justification for such a claim.

At this point, Badiou offers a maxim: "to put an end to any use of so-called colors in all forms of deliberation and collective action. We need to establish once and for all that a politics of emancipation has nothing to do with colors—in terms of norms and hierarchies, of course, but also in terms of objectivity" (Ibid., 102). This move to universality is to take cultural differences "one step further" (Ibid., 101). Similar to Sartre before him, Badiou claims that race does exist

and that it impacts people's lived experiences. However, race has no political import for Badiou. Rather, emancipation requires an indifference to difference, such that particularity is subtracted from the situation in favor of what is universal. Thus, we see again that race is a moment in the dialectic or the process towards emancipation, but a moment that will ultimately fail to provide the conditions to achieve emancipation. Instead, we must take *one step further* towards the universal in order to achieve emancipation.

A question that might arise at this point is the following: If it is the case that Black pride or racial identity is needed in order to achieve universal emancipation, then doesn't this mean that Badiou is in fact offering us a positive conception of race? In response to such a critique, I maintain that Badiou has not. Insofar as he delimits race as a means towards another end (or for some other purpose) namely universal emancipation, it follows that he has subjugated race to a secondary position. Such an act of subjugation fails to promote a positive conception of race. In addition, his emphasis on universality (over and against difference) fails to address the political prescriptive aspect of Outlaw's positive conception of race. If the function or goal of a positive conception of race is to maintain the importance of race for thought and grounding political action, and furthermore maintaining difference in order to avoid patterns of Eurocentrism, Badiou has not succeeded in offering a notion that does so. I argue that he does not, in fact, offer a positive conception of race as described in Chapter One, insofar as, contra (b), he does not wholly distinguish between racial identity and racism and, contra (c), he argues that racial emancipation is found lacking.

In *Creolizing Political Theory* (2014), Jane Gordon offers an alternative method for political theory that advocates not only for a kind of universalism but which also emphasizes the importance of a marginalized positions, the latter of which (presumably) allows her to avoid

patterns of Eurocentrism. My use of Jane Gordon's conception of creolizing is helpful for this project in order to demonstrate various differences between the motivations for her work and Badiou's work. However, it should be noted that there are also significant similarities between their respective projects. In what follows, I outline a few of the most important connections and differences between these two authors.

First, unlike some of the theorists I have discussed thus far (Gines, Bernasconi), Gordon does not advocate for a positive conception of race through Négritude, and in fact offers a critique of Negritude in her discussion of Fanon. This point is developed in Chapter One.

Gordon's reading of Négritude and Fanon positions her political project somewhat closer to Badiou and against various other theorists I discuss throughout this project, namely Outlaw, Jeffers, Du Bois and their articulations of the importance of the conservation of races (something which I also attribute to Fanon in my alternative reading of him in Chapter One). One example of the similarity between Gordon and Badiou is located in her articulation of the "general will" and revolutionary politics which she develops through Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Fanon. For instance, she states:

> The boundaries of the emergent nation, as I have emphasized, are not based on racial, ethnic, or religious membership but on a particular brand of committed, decisive, and divisive action in which anyone could in theory engage. (Indeed, Fanon emphasizes that there are French men and women who join the anticolonial cause while there are Algerians who resist it bitterly) (Gordon 2014, 134).

Or, similarly:

> For Fanon, doing justice to the risks taken and lives lost in revolutionary battle required ongoing, dialectical constructive work of cultivating a unique scope of

> political identity, that of the nation, which could alone mediate among class, regional, tribal, ethnic, and racial differences, by articulating a past and future in which all were mutually implicated (Ibid., 132).

Using the language that is offered to us by Badiou, and that I have been developing in this chapter, one could note here a similarity between what Gordon calls a national political identity that is not determined by class or racial differences and instead mediates between them, and Badiou's articulation of the political subject in the form of "the people" that is not beholden to any particular identity (such as race and class) as its determining feature.

Furthermore, like Badiou's political project as outlined above—whereby a political event takes place in a particular location, and, presumably, the truth of the political event takes on a meaning in that local site—Gordon claims the following: "any abstract rule, however noble, must be made locally meaningful or indigenous in ways that reflect the changing makeup of the polity" (Ibid., 167).

Despite this similarity that does exist between Badiou and Gordon, I argue that there are significant differences that ought to be noted. One such difference is that Gordon is offering a method for changing the ways in which political theory and philosophy is done. Her "approach to politics" (Ibid., 3) is one that is also mindful of the manner in which Third World writings are positioned in academia, and also the manner in which they are used in relation to First World theory. For instance, "To creolize political theory necessarily expands who is involved in the theoretical dimensions of such discussion and as such the structure of what functions as evidential" (Ibid., 15).

Towards this end, Gordon calls for the explicit re-centering of marginalized theorists for any creolized political project. For instance, she draws upon Paget Henry's *Caliban's Reason*

(2000) in which he discusses the work of Frantz Fanon, C. L. R. James, and Sylvia Wynter. According to Gordon, Henry argues the following:

> [I]ntellectuals needed to undertake a project of reenfranchising African and Afro-Caribbean philosophies, recentering long-concealed areas of the imagination and re-establishing their ability to accumulate authority. Rejecting "negative evaluations that block African and European elements from creatively coming together", creolization, in this context, involved the act of deliberately indigenizing theoretical endeavors, of drawing on local resources of reason and reflection to illuminate local aspirations and assuming that the fruit of these particular endeavors could, as had proved true of their European counterparts, be valuable in themselves and to projects elsewhere (Gordon 2014, 12-13).

As such, for Gordon it becomes imperative to be conscientious of how theories are constituted and by whom theories are constituted. However, as discussed in Chapters Two and Three, Badiou individually seeks to be able to designate whether something counts as political, or whether it counts as emancipation and, by correlation, when something does not count as emancipation or politics. Furthermore, Badiou neglects to incorporate the work of critical theorists of race and decolonial theorists, thus failing to expand who is involved in the formation of political theory. Contra this position, Gordon attempts to be mindful of the manner in which her political theory is enacted, offering a methodological analysis of the task of doing political theory itself. Badiou, instead, seems more concerned with being able to determine the conditions through which one could name something "political" or "emancipatory." As such, this position is far more problematic because it assumes that a political theory can incorporate or discern what is true of all political emancipatory movements, while being firmly couched within a specific

discipline (namely European philosophy). In other words, Badiou does not offer such a recentering of his own political theory through African, Afro-Caribbean, or Indigenous theory.

Moreover, Gordon states that there are at least four preliminary components for creolizing political theory (Ibid., 13). First, it requires "a particular orientation toward historical work in political thought […] in which we repeatedly ask if we are paying due attention to the geographies within which we situate our subjects" (Ibid.). A genuine attempt at creolizing political theory requires that one attempt to properly portray the subjects of politics, attempting to avoid negative and harmful characterizations. In addition, it also requires due recognition of historic moments which is often dependent upon "a different way of narrating the situations" (Ibid.). Second, "creolizing political theory […] involves conceptualizing the task of theorizing in such a way that we create conversations among thinkers and ideas that may at first appear incapable of actually taking place" (Ibid., 14). For instance, Gordon develops a conversation between Rousseau and Fanon, both of whom are developed as having a significant impact upon her reading of the other. Third, she cautions against a political theory that proposes what is called a conception of the "native informant" whereby the experiences of intellectuals in the Global South are used solely to further the theories of Western European theorists and theories. Intellectuals of the Global South are appropriated for their experiences, and incorporated into an already existing theoretical framework. In other words, "to creolize political theory necessarily expands who is involved in the theoretical dimensions of such discussion and as such the structure of what functions as evidential" (Ibid., 15). Fourth, she states that "the implications of creolization extend beyond political theory to political science more generally" (Ibid.).

Badiou's analysis of Black emancipatory movements does not seem to adhere to the four components of creolizing political theory outlined by Gordon. In particular, at issue seems to be,

like Sartre, his emphasis on the role of racial emancipation as a moment that is subsumed into a more universal emancipation and that seems to foreclose a space for mutual transformation.

Conclusion

As this project moves forward, it is important to make note of the kinds of identities that are possible as well as the kinds of identities that are desirable for a discussion of race and of emancipation. Badiou maintains a negative conception of identity, whereas Gines, Jeffers, Du Bois, and Outlaw emphasize the importance of positive racial identities. It is important to note, however, that a positive conception of race need not be essentializing. In fact, there is a body of literature in critical race theory that addresses this critique (including those referenced in Chapters One and Two). Second, Gines argues that positive conceptions of identity are important for the formulation of collective memory (Gines 2003, 58) and collective memory is "a source of heritage and even resistance and empowerment" (Ibid., 66). The importance of these two points is developed in Chapter Three. Specifically, I address the correlation between identity (and the Négritude movement), politics, and emancipation. In addition to the critiques that I have offered above in this section, I hold that Badiou's politics of indifference has further implications. Namely, it serves to demarcate what counts as politically efficacious in bringing about emancipation. Thus, I propose that drawing a correlation between his rejection of identity in his politics of indifference, and his rejection of certain historical movements as political or emancipatory, serves to illustrate the limitations of his project for understanding race.

Chapter Three: Race and Class within a Culture/Politics Division

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is, first, to discern what is at stake in the distinction Badiou draws between culture and politics. The discussion of politics below draws in part from the previous chapter and the account of the political event as a procedure for the production of truth. We can also call to mind Calcagno's explanation of Badiou's account of the notion of a political event. He states:

> [T]he political event arises when three specific conditions have been met: 1) the state has to exert incredible pressure on a situation in order to preserve a certain *status quo*—one can measure the power of the state in relation to the force of the event; 2) political events are collective; 3) political events bring about the destruction of an old form of politics and launch a new regime or form of politics. Here, we are not talking about a routine change of government or leadership; rather, we are talking about a new way of thinking and doing politics (2015, 183).

Politics, as conceived by Badiou, is predicated upon being bound up with an event, i.e. a rupture with the immediate logic or law (that is structured by the transcendental index). An event brings about the appearing of what inexists. By revealing what inexists or what has minimal existence within a state, the political event can not only demonstrate the structure and the function of the state (and what it excludes) but can also provide conditions for the emergence of truth. For the purpose of a political event, such truths include justice and equality, which provide the conditions for new ways of thinking. As discussed in the previous chapter, this process requires the naming of the event, the subject who both names the event and is a product of the event, and a new language from which to articulate a new politics.

In summation, "politics" refers to a sequence of actions that emanate from an event that is guided by a subject that is subsequently guided by principles that *transcend* the logic of an oppressive or problematic state, principles such as justice and equality. "Culture" refers to practices that are *immanent* to the logic of a state. Furthermore, on the topic of cultural politics, which attempts to broach the distinction between culture and politics, Badiou states the following: "comic, purely comic, is the theme of cultural politics, as is the theme of a political culture" (2008, 175).

My second goal of this chapter is to describe what is lost in Badiou's exclusion of "cultural movements" from the political realm. In particular, I am concerned with the manner in which "cultural" is often used to designate movements that address liberation on the basis of race and that for a movement to be considered political it must subtract particularities such as race from its organization. An example of a cultural movement for Badiou that focuses on liberation on the basis of race is the Négritude movement (1930s-1970s). He describes Négritude as failing to be political insofar as it fails to become universal or "intelligible for all," a failure that the Négritude movement could rectify if race was no longer an organizing principle of its operation. Similarly, Nesbitt, in an extension of Badiou's work, describes how the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804) is upheld as a political movement rather than a cultural one because it is not focused on race and thus succeeds at being universal. While Badiou's reference to the Haitian Revolution is minimal, one prominent Badiou scholar in particular uses his framework in order to develop his political theory by extending it to world historical events. Most notably, Nick Nesbitt's *Caribbean Critique* (2013) and *Universal Emancipation* (2008) employ Badiou's conception of the political to the Haitian Revolution and Caribbean literary theory in order to develop Badiou's project productively by extending it to the Caribbean.

This chapter is divided up into three sections. The first section addresses the distinction Badiou draws between "culture" and "politics." I offer a robust analysis of the Haitian Revolution and Négritude in order to demonstrate what is at stake in the distinction he makes. This initial section draws from Badiou's and Gines's discussions of Négritude, Nesbitt's discussion of the Haitian Revolution, and more generally on the work of Sartre, Wright, and Menon.

In the second section of this chapter, I address Badiou's juxtaposition between the universal and the particular enacted through his politics/culture distinction. In particular, I demonstrate that his distinction between the universal and particular, as a strict distinction, is situated within a post-Marxist political vein. I also argue that a strict distinction between the universal and particular can be problematic. I turn to Linda Martín Alcoff's essay "The Political Critique of Identity" (2016) which offers a critique of a number of post-Marxist theorists who discuss race as an identity category but who also uphold a conception of universality that forecloses any political role for race. Furthermore, I draw from Jane Gordon's *Creolizing Political Theory* in order to further my critique.

The third and final section of this chapter addresses the following question: why must politics be emancipatory? In response, I propose that Badiou's political theory is simply too narrow to interpret versions of political emancipation prefaced on race categories such as Blackness.

3.1: On Culture and Politics

Putting aside the work of Négritude scholars for the moment, the primary concern in this section is Badiou's conception of Négritude. In his 1998 interview with Hallward, Badiou states the following:

> 'Négritude,' for example, as incarnated by Césaire and Senghor, consisted essentially of reworking […] traditional predicates once used to designate black people: as intuitive, as natural, as primitive, as living by rhythm rather than by concepts, etc. It's no accident that it was a primarily poetic operation, a matter of turning these predicates upside down, of claiming them as affirmative and liberating. I understand why this kind of movement took place, why it was necessary. It was a strong and beautiful, and very necessary movement. But having said that, it is not something that can be inscribed as such in politics. I think it is a matter of poetics, of culture, of turning the subjective situation upside down. It doesn't provide a possible framework for political initiative (Badiou & Hallward 1998, 118).

There are two discreet points made in this statement regarding Négritude. First, Badiou describes part of this movement as involving a re-shaping or re-appropriation of language. As previously noted, Badiou conceives of race through the negative identities that were imposed upon colonial racialized subjects. Négritude, according to this view, aims to invert these negative identities, turning these predicates upside down. In its generality, this is an accurate way of describing part of the movement. This is similar to Gines's discussion of Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew* who "in the spirit of Negritude […] is taking traits that were considered negative for Blacks and rethinking them as positive attributes" (Gines 2003, 59). This movement was in part an attempt

to affirm black identity. The writings of Césaire, for instance, celebrate Black culture and furthermore provide the conditions for what became the "Black is Beautiful" campaign in the 1970s. While Badiou recognizes the importance of the re-articulation of what it means to be Black as something that is affirming and liberating, he also contends that the Négritude movement was not political and was instead a cultural movement. The second point that I want to highlight from this quote is that for Badiou Négritude fails to be political because of its emphasis on the re-articulation of what it means to be Black. The designation of cultural in this instance assumes that the attempt to re-articulate or re-appropriate Blackness from something that is negative into something affirmative is still mired in the logic through which its negativity was first instantiated. In a sense, then, Négritude fails to transcend the logic of racial oppression and instead offers merely an alteration.

His description of the Négritude movement as something that is cultural is further elaborated in his most recent book *Black* (2017). In this book, he states "the revolt against the hierarchical stigmatization of part of humanity on account of its so-called color—black, in this case—can take two forms" (Badiou 2017, 95). The first form of revolt against racialized oppression is described as follows:

> [It] consists in confirming the role of colors. It will be said that part of humanity is indeed black, but the hierarchy of values will be eliminated, or even reversed: blacks are strictly equal to whites, or anyone else, or even: blacks are more attractive, stronger, smarter, more in tune with nature, sexier, have more rhythm, are more graceful, more ancient, have a more complex symbolic order, are more poetic, more this or more that, than white. In a nutshell: 'Black is beautiful' (Ibid., 95-96).

The first form of revolt against racialized oppression takes the form of an affirmation of Blackness. The affirmation of Blackness furthermore entails what he calls a confirmation of the role of colors which means that "colors" continue to serve a role of designation, whether it be a positive or a negative one. According to Badiou, the more radical form of this approach is manifest in the Négritude movement. He states that the movement highlighted "the positive assertion of blackness, which was considered the soul of both African humanity and the portion of it that had been deported to America" (Ibid., 96-97).[18]

There are two implications of his description of the Négritude movement that I would like to highlight for the purpose of this project. First, for Badiou, Négritude represents that affirmation of "part of humanity," which he goes on to specify is an "African humanity." In other words, because of its emphasis on race (or its confirmation of "colors") Négritude is limited insofar as it only applies to, or is concerned with, part of humanity. Second, and by extension, to the extent that the Négritude movement is confined to the realm of "color confirmation" it seems to exist as only a reaction to the hierarchical structure that it is attempting to address. What, then, is meant by "culture" and in what way are we to understand the Négritude movement as cultural? Regarding culture, Wright observes the following:

> [Badiou] implicitly prefixes the word "culture" with the word "mere" in order to indicate its interchangeability with the given, the quotidian, the banal. In his polemical deployments of the concept, particularly in the short book on St. Paul, what is offered is a deliberately anthropological version of culture as a ritualized way of life mired in dumb repetitiveness (a version of anthropology which has of

[18] It should be noted here that Négritude was not an American phenomenon. There seems to be a bit of confusion between the Négritude movement (that was prevalent in the Caribbean and France) and the trans-Atlantic slave trade that specifically ended in the continent to America (to the exclusion of the Caribbean as noted by Badiou in this quote).

> course long been challenged from within anthropology itself). Culture is ordinary for Badiou then, not at all in Raymond Williams' democratizing sense, but rather in its lifeless indifference to truth. Whereas Williams was diagnosing an historical moment of deep social change in which high culture was escaping the confines of the galleries and museums and being disseminated within a mass mediated and commodified public sphere, the "ordinariness" of culture for Badiou is simply a pejorative condemning its inert fixity. Evental novelty must be fiercely acultural if culture is understood in this reductive way, as simply an honorific name for "what is" (2013, 270).

There are a number of ways in which we can begin to characterize Badiou's conception of culture given Wright's description. For instance, culture becomes synonymous with a kind of immanence. We are here reminded of our discussion of the transcendental index in the previous chapter, the logic or law according to which objects appear in a world as well as the manner in which the state represents objects in the state. Recall my example in the previous chapter about same-sex marriage. For Badiou, same-sex marriage could be constituted as a cultural movement because it operates as an extension of state power. For instance, a state that already recognizes opposite-sex marriage merely extends that recognition to include (or add, in the language used in Chapter Two) same-sex marriage. Culture exists in accordance with a given transcendental index, it is immanent to it and in a certain sense it perpetuates the logic of the state thereby reifying the authority of it. This characterization of culture as immanent (or additive) is juxtaposed with his conception of politics as transcendent (or subtractive). Unlike culture, politics is defined by its ability to transcend the logic of a particular state. Politics must subtract particularity from its truth thus distancing itself from the logic ordering a given world.

As previously noted, for Badiou, Négritude is a cultural movement rather than a political one. The affirmation or re-appropriation of Blackness, a central feature of this movement maintains the authority of the logic that created the concept of race in the first place. In other words, racial division or categories continue to exist, they have merely been codified in a different way. As a result, for him, Négritude fails to transcend the logic of the state and instead it merely adds Blackness as a category that should be recognized by the state. Négritude serves to alter the logic of the state, and extend the authority of the state, rather than offering any radical change to the way in which the state should be structured.

Furthermore, the very structure of identity as particular—i.e. in reference to part of humanity—means that it cannot be shared by all persons, open to all, or intelligible to all. Recall also our discussion regarding Badiou's indifference to differences, whereby Menon states the following:

> [T]he specific thrust of indifference for Badiou is that identity cannot be used as the basis on which to formulate universalism. Rather than elevating one's particular difference as the one that matters, indifference treats as infinitely transversable the boundaries among peoples, places, and things, and does not prescribe which belongs to whom or what (Menon 2015, 14).

There is an incongruity between identity (as particular) and universality for Badiou. Given his description of Négritude, this movement fails to encapsulate the kind of universality that is required of a political movement.[19]

[19] There is a third point that I address briefly here because it is relevant to his articulation of Négritude, however it detracts from the argument in this section of the dissertation. Namely, a third point of contention pertains to his description of Black people as "more in tune with nature," as having "more rhythm," and as "more poetic" in particular. One might ask why Badiou has chosen to describe the Négritude movement according to these terms. Such a question should be answered while reading Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, paying special attention to pages 102, 104, and 108. In this text, Fanon problematizes such conceptualizations of Black people (as more natural, having more rhythm) insofar as it serves to resituate Black people and communities of colour within a

As noted in Chapter Two, something can be political only a) if it transcends the logic of the state thus bringing about a radical change, b) if it is universal or has "a meaning that is intelligible to all" (Badiou & Hallward 1998, 119), and c) if it is based upon (political) truths. Given that Négritude is a mere alteration of racial categorization, it fails to transcend the logic of the state and bring about radical change. Second, given that the Négritude movement is only for "part of humanity" it fails to be intelligible for all or universal. Third, by extension of the immanence and particularity of Négritude, it fails to encapsulate a universal truth that transcends the logic of the state. It is for these reasons that Badiou claims Négritude fails to take on a progressive meaning and thus fails to be political.

The solution Badiou develops in response to what he considers to be the failure of Négritude (and the second form of revolt against racialized oppression) is something like the following. Whereby the first form of revolt seeks the re-appropriation of negative identities thereby confirming the role of "colors," the second form of revolt seeks to eliminate the role of "colors" altogether. In other words, this latter sense of revolt can be thought of in the following manner:

> [It] consists in denying that color has any relationship whatsoever with any system of valorization or disparagement. This means that any overall judgment, whether positive or negative, of a supposed "community" of color is rationally impossible. Color is of course an objective determination, but it must have no symbolic extension (Badiou 2017, 96).

While objectively it is the case that people's skin color can have different pigmentation, for Badiou pigmentation needs to be dissociated from any system of valorization regardless of

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position of being less rational in relation to white people who are more rational. As noted in the previous chapter, this was also Fanon's critique of Sartre.

whether it is a positive or negative valorization. This denial of valorization on the basis of what he calls "colors," it seems, is the only (or most) rational possibility. In *Black*, he claims that this second form of revolt is not only the solution to the failures of Négritude and this second form of revolt is also consistent with his political theory.

Badiou describes the second form of revolt in both a moderate and a radical fashion. The moderate position "consists in denying that color has any relationship whatsoever with any system of valorization or disparagement. This means that any overall judgment, whether positive or negative, of a supposed 'community' of color is rationally impossible. Color is of course an objective determination, but it must have no symbolic extension" (Ibid.). As previously noted, this position exemplifies the juxtaposition between identity, racial identity for instance, and his universal politics which requires the denial of any symbolic value associated with "color." At the same time, this "moderate" position is insufficient, and instead he offers a second more "radical" position:

> Naturally, I accept its [the moderate version] universalist consequences, but I go further: there is not even any objectivity to the judgment of color. In reality no color can be assigned to a given human being, not black, of course, but not white or yellow of any color identity whatsoever either. An individual can be predicated as black and classified in the "Black people" category only through the use of a very rough and pointless approximation (Ibid.).

Consistent with my discussion of truth as indifferent to difference in Chapter Two, Badiou is here asserting that no color can be objectively applied to any human being. In this instance, he seems to be saying that there is no objective method through which a person could be classified as Black, whether biological or any other "objective" standard. In Chapter Two, I describe

Badiou's conception of race as a constructionist conception of race. However, in *Black* (2017) his conception of race seems to shift rather significantly. Recalling my discussion of Du Bois's "The Conservation of Races" in Chapter Two, Badiou's later writings seem to be moving closer to Anthony Appiah's non-realist conception of race. As previously noted, Appiah claims that given that there is no biological or genetic foundation for race, therefore there is no "thing" that race is that ought to be conserved. Notably, Badiou's requirement for objectivity to the judgment of "color" seems to be leaning towards Appiah's non-realist conception of race. For Badiou, the implication that follows from the lack of objective determination for race is that it cannot be political. He discusses a similar point in *Polemics*:

> The only problem concerning these "cultural differences" and these "communities" is certainly not their social existence, habitat, work, family life, or school. It's that their names are vain as soon as what is in question is a truth, be it artistic, scientific, amorous, or, especially, political. That one's life as a human animal is forged from particularities, well, such is a law of things. When the categories of this particularity profess to be universal, thereby taking upon themselves the seriousness of the subject, then things regularly become disastrous. What matters is a *separation of predicates* (2011a, 107).

For Badiou, the truth of politics must be subtracted from cultural differences and identities. The disastrousness he is referring to here is something like the Holocaust, whereby the Aryan race professed their particular culture to be universal, which resulted in the massacre of Jews, Gypsies, and homosexuals during the Second World War. This argument is in line with my discussion of his politics of indifference articulated in Chapter Two. That said, there is an additional point that we need to consider. In *Black*, Badiou makes the following statement:

> I can do mathematics in yellow underwear, and I can actively pursue a politics subtracted from electoral "democracy" with rasta deadlocks. This does not mean that the theorem is yellow (or not yellow) any more than it says that the directive under which we convene is dreadlocked. Nor, for that matter, does it lack dreadlocks (2017, 107).

The presumption in this case is that the particularity, namely yellow underwear and rasta dreadlocks, ought not determine the thing that has taken place, namely the theorem and the directive. These cultural particularities are contingent and thus cannot be thought of as important to or imposing upon the thing that has taken place. Predicates, cultural particularities, it would seem, are merely incidental for Badiou and while they might seem to be valuable or important within a particular state, it is only the logic of the state that makes them seem valuable. In other words, there is nothing essential, transcendent, or enduring about these particularities or identities and furthermore they ought not be the basis for an emancipatory political theory that aims to change the logic of a state. As a result, cultural identities (such as race, gender, or religion) ought not impose upon nor inform a political truth and a political process and such identities do not inform emancipation that aims to be universal. Rather, such positions are contingent and pertain only to that situation.[20]

This brings us back to the distinction Marcano makes in the writings of Sartre, namely between *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1946) and *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960) discussed in Chapter One. Briefly, she states that his earlier conception of race developed in *Anti-Semite and*

[20] It is also important to note, however, that it is problematic to draw a correlation between the color yellow (as is in the color of his underwear when we writes a mathematical theorem) and color that is racialized, such as being Black. Badiou, however, seems to argue that there is no difference between a racialized color (such as Blackness) and a non-racialized color (such as purple) because no "color" can be political; i.e. neither a racialized "color" such as Blackness nor the color purple. For further discussion of the practice of correlating race and "color" see Michael Monahan's "Race, Colorblindness, and Continental Philosophy" (2006) and Kelly Oliver's *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (2001).

Jew proposes that race only emanates from the dominant gaze, or what Gines describes as a negative identity. In his later work, however, Sartre attempts to provide a space for the self-naming practices of groups in a political sphere. That said, Badiou seems to favor Sartre's first conception of race, rather than the latter conception of race outlined by Marcano, to the extent that he claims that his aim is to "put an end to any use of so-called colors in all forms of deliberation and collective action" (Badiou 2017, 102). Consistent with my description of his politics of indifference in Chapter Two, this second form of revolt, and in particular its radical formulation, must preclude any reference to race and any other form of particularity insofar as particularity is bound up with the logic of the state toward which any emancipatory politics is attempting to upend. For Badiou, race is in no way political.

The first and second forms of revolt can also be thought of in a dialectical relation, whereby the first form of revolt while important in its own right needs to be sublated in order to achieve a more universal form of emancipation. This line of argument is consistent with Sartre's description of Négritude in relation to universal emancipation, as developed in Chapter One. Furthermore, it is also consistent with my articulation of Badiou's conception of Négritude. Thus we continue to see that Négritude is held in a kind of tension with universal emancipation, whereby the affirmation of identities in the Négritude movement is juxtaposed with the subtraction of identity for a movement to achieve universal emancipation. As previously noted, Négritude could have achieved universal emancipation only if it had substituted its affirmation and re-appropriation of race for a principle that could be extended to all. An example of a movement that does achieve universal emancipation and thus corresponds to the second form of revolt outlined above is the Haitian Revolution.

The Haitian Revolution has garnered considerable interest by Badiou scholars. According to Nesbitt, "on January 1, 1804 […] the former slaves of the French colony of Saint Domingue took the decisive step of universally abolishing slavery unconditionally and immediately upon achieving independence as the new nation of Haiti" (2008, 1). The pertinent question for this project is: What is it about the Haitian Revolution that makes it political? In what follows, I provide an analysis of the Haitian Revolution through the Badiouian framework employed by Nesbitt and I offer a timeline of the revolution to respond to his analysis as well.

In the late 18th century, Saint Domingue was a colony of France and had "the Americas' strongest export economy" in cotton, cacao, and indigo, and also had an important French military base (Geggus 2014, xi). As noted by Geggus:

> By the late 1780s Saint Domingue had become the single main destination of the Atlantic slave trade. Its enslaved population was almost as large as that of the United States south of the Potomac […] When the French Revolution broke out, Saint Domingue was home to about 30,000 white colonists, a roughly equal number of free people of color, and almost half a million slaves (Ibid., xii).

The middle tier of Saint Domingue society was made up primarily of free people of color, two-thirds of whom "were of mixed racial descent; some had both whites and slaves for relatives" and "were more numerous than in most Caribbean colonies and notably more wealthy" (Ibid., xiii). Despite its being a French colony, according to the historian David Geggus:

> Historians disagree whether Saint Domingue would have undergone revolution without being destabilized by the French Revolution of 1789 [… Notably, t]he American Revolutionary War also boosted the ambitions of the fast-growing free colored population; having contributed two battalions of soldiers to overseas

> expeditions, its leaders began to lobby the government for more equal treatment, albeit very discreetly (Ibid., xiii).

Generally speaking, we know that a colonial and racist state (in this case France) sought to maintain its power and the status quo through the disenfranchisement of the enslaved population of Saint Domingue. Furthermore, we know that the Haitian Revolution sought to upend this power of the colonial state and that it simultaneously sought the emancipation of the enslaved population. On Badiou's terms this would mean that the inexistent of the state aimed to become existent. However, my concerns in this project are the motivations or terms through which the Haitian Revolution came about. Nesbitt's Badiouian framework focuses his analysis on the Haitian Revolution, and he describes the revolution's aims in the following manner: (1) "acting decades in advance of the North Atlantic powers, they turned the abstract assertion of a human right to freedom for all citizens into historical fact and created a slavery-free society, without discrimination other than that one be human and present within the borders of the new state" (Nesbitt 2008, 1); (2) he claims that the unique contribution of the Haitian Revolution to humanity was "The construction of a society without slavery, one of a *universal* and *unqualified* human right to freedom" (Ibid., 2); (3) "the agent of this process [is] one whose 'sufferings are universal' [and] one that has experienced no particular wrongs (against a class, gender, or race) but the denial of humanity itself, a class whose emancipation necessarily implies the emancipation of humanity as a whole" (Nesbitt 2013, 7). Each of these three statements offers some clarity regarding Nesbitt's framing of the Haitian Revolution.

First, the Haitian Revolution sought to destroy the racist colonial state, and to bring about a politics that was anti-colonial and anti-racist. It sought to create a state that would not be exclusionary but instead would be open to all persons. Second, the Haitian Revolution was

founded upon principles that were universal and unqualified, such as the political truths of equality and justice. Third, the motivations for the Haitian Revolution were not based on any particular identity (such as race) but instead were motivated by sufferings that could be universalized, e.g. the denial of humanity itself. For this reason, the revolution sought the emancipation of all humanity. Furthermore, Nesbitt claims that the Haitian Revolution "fundamentally transformed this transnational, world-systemic historical process" (2008, 2). As a result, the Haitian Revolution exceeded mere national and civil rights—those rights bound up within a state—and made universal claims of the rights of Man (Ibid., 11).[21]

Nesbitt locates these principles of the Haitian Revolution in the following way: "The universal prescription announced by the signatories of June 1792 is not the negation of specificity in some abstract universal sense, but rather the recognition that there is no possible politics of identity […and furthermore that] the realm of identity—specifically, racial identity—is purely negative" (2013, 2). First, Nesbitt cites a letter written to the General Assembly of Saint Domingue by Toussaint L'Ouverture, among others, in July of 1792 as the most explicit exemplification of the universal principles motivating the Haitian Revolution.[22] The universality to which Nesbitt makes reference in this history of the Haitian Revolution is reflective of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in France following the French Revolution (1789-1794). In *Universal Emancipation*, Nesbitt outlines the manner in which the Haitian Revolution was "inspired by Radical Enlightenment ideas" including the French Revolution (2008, 2). Indeed, if one is to read the 1801 Constitution of the colony of Saint Domingue written

[21] In *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Sartre notes a similar move. He states the following: "This universalism, this critical rationalism, is what one normally finds in the democrat. In his abstract liberalism, he affirms that Jews, Chinese, Negroes ought to have the same rights as other members of society, but he demands these rights for them as men, not as concrete individual products of history" (Sartre 1976, 117).

[22] Throughout this document, you will notice references to Toussaint, Toussaint L'Ouverture, and Toussaint Louverture. All are accepted names for the same person. I have chosen Tousaint L'Ouverture, in keeping with C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins*, but will also use Toussaint when appropriate. Toussaint Louverture appears in several quotes, which I have chosen not to alter.

by Toussaint L'Ouverture and members of his army, it is apparent that this constitution draws heavily upon the language of both the French Revolution and the American Revolution. Second, consistent with Badiou's critique of identity politics, Nesbitt claims that identities, and specifically racial identity in this context, operate as merely negative identities that cannot be progressive in character. Furthermore, as Nesbitt states, "a *politics* […] can take place only under the proposition of undivided universality" (Nesbitt 2013, 2-3). In other words, the Haitian Revolution can only be considered "political" if it adheres to the principles of universality and seeks justice and equality for all. The political is conceived as "something that, in the categories, the slogans, the statements it puts forward, is less the demand of a social fraction or community to be integrated into the existing order, than something which touches on a transformation of that order as a whole" (Badiou & Hallward 1998, 119). Unlike cultural movements that seek integration into the existing logic of the state, to be progressive (and political) implies some kind of transformation of the logic of the state.

Before I can take this discussion of the Haitian Revolution any further, consider its general timeline, as outlined in David Geggus's *The Haitian Revolution* (2014). I have also included events that did not take place in Saint Domingue but that are pertinent for our discussion of the revolution.

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1789: The French revolution began and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* was signed in France.

1791: People who were enslaved in the Northern regions of Saint Domingue and free colored people in the central region began to revolt.[23]

[23] I use free "colored" people in order to designate the people of color that are afforded different rights than Black people, i.e. those who were (recently) enslaved.

1792: The slave rebellion began in the South. In April, free colored people were given full rights, the justification for which was to gain the support of free colored people against rebellious slaves (Geggus 2014, xx). In September, the monarchy was overthrown in France and two commissars arrive in Saint Domingue to enforce racial equality (Ibid., xxi), one of whom was Léger-Félicité Sonthonax. Rebellions continue in Saint Domingue and "conservative officers considered disloyal to the new regime, and then autonomist Patriots who opposed their actions" were deported from the island (Ibid., xxi).

1793: Slavery was declared abolished in Saint Domingue by Sonthonax. The justification for the abolition of slavery was primarily because the British-Spanish War made it very difficult for France to send troops to Saint Domingue and, additionally, for the purpose of defending Saint Domingue from foreign invasion. White and free colored people (i.e. the middle class and not the (recently) formerly enslaved) reject the abolition of slavery declared by Sonothonax and surrender large portions of land to the British and the Spanish in protest (Ibid., xxii). Northern insurgents (composed of primarily of free colored people) decide to fight against France and with the Spanish, alongside Jean-François and Biassou (Ibid., xxii) who show no concern for the abolition of slavery. They were soon joined by Toussaint L'Ouverture (Ibid., xxii), who was "born in slavery to African parents, [and who…] had been free for about twenty years" (Ibid., xxiii).

1794: The Jacobin government abolishes slavery in all French colonies and declared the formerly enslaved to be citizens (Ibid., xxii). That said, in actuality, "most former slaves remained subject to forced labor, as Sonthonax envisioned, and few were able to exercise political rights" (Ibid., xxii). However, this declaration was useful for convincing various insurgent leaders to join the French against the Spanish, including Toussaint (Ibid., xxii).

In addition, by the end of this year, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, who was creole and an ex-slave, joined Toussaint's army.

1795: Spain withdrew from the war in Saint Domingue (Ibid., xxiii) and Jean-François and Biassou were exiled to parts of the Spanish Empire (Ibid., xxiv-xxv).

1797: Toussaint was named commander-in-chief of the Saint Domingue colonial army by Sonthonax (Ibid., xxiv), and then orders the expulsion of Sonthonax. Also, due to the shifting of politics in France, many in French politics "regretted the abolition of slavery and criticized the new colonial regime" (Ibid., xxv).

1798: British troops who remained in Saint Domingue and had been fighting against the French colonial troops were defeated this year and were evacuated from May to October, and 60,000 to 70,000 slaves who were in the British occupied area of Saint Domingue are finally free (Ibid., xxv). Toussaint controls "all northern and central Saint Domingue" (Ibid., xxv).

1799: Napoleon Bonaparte comes to power in France (Ibid., xxvii).

1800: By August, "the whole of Saint Domingue was under Toussaint's control. He could now extend the forced labor system Sonthonax had created in 1793 […] Toussaint remained committed to the plantation system […] because only the export of cash crops would generate the revenue that funded his army and administration. This policy alienated much of the ex-slave population" (Ibid., xxvi).

1801: Bonaparte sought the re-institution of slavery in Saint Domingue and the capture of Toussaint. In August, he "quietly canceled Toussaint's promotion to Captain-General and removed his name from the French army register" (Ibid., xxvii). In July, Toussaint wrote his own colonial constitution, hereafter referred to as the 1801 Constitution of Saint

Domingue. As Geggus writes: "Remarkably bold, the constitution made Louverture governor for life, with the right to name his successor" (Ibid., sic).

1802: Bonaparte sends Victoire Leclerc to Saint Domingue to "win over where possible the black generals, then disarm their soldiers, and eventually deport all black officers" (Ibid., xxix) with the support of Britain, the United States, Spain, the Netherlands, and Cuba (Ibid.). Toussaint surrendered in May of this year and was deported to France (Ibid.). Other Black generals were incorporated into the French army and used these generals to disarm rural masses (Ibid.). It becomes apparent, at this point, "that French policy was to reimpose slavery" (Ibid.) and racial discrimination (Ibid., xxx). At this point, many of the Black generals and the formerly enslaved masses broke with the French and decided that "to maintain freedom and equality, they had to unite in a war for independence" (Ibid.). Dessalines becomes the leader of the independence movement (Ibid.).

1803: The last of the French troops withdraw from Haiti.

1804: Haiti was declared an independent nation by Jean Jacques Dessalines. The massacre of remaining white colonists began (Ibid.).

1805: The constitution of the free state of Hayti was written by Dessalines.

1806: The Republic of Haiti was founded after the assassination of Dessalines (Ibid., xxxii).

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The account of the Haitian revolution provided by Geggus raises several concerns about Nesbitt's use of a Badiouian framework for understanding this revolution, and it raises concerns about Badiou's politics of indifference. Ciccariello-Maher's "'So Much the Worse for the Whites': Dialectics of the Haitian Revolution" (2014) provides a useful framework for understanding these concerns. In this essay, Ciccariello-Maher speaks to the fraught relationship

between dialectics and decolonization most evident at the intersection of dialectical thought and the Haitian Revolution (2014, 19). Generally, he is concerned with whether it is possible to conceive of a dialectics that is decolonial and he turns to the Haitian Revolution in order to do so. In his essay, he draws from Susan Buck-Morss's essay "Hegel and Haiti" (2000) as well as her book titled *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (2009) in an attempt to "draw upon both the contours of the revolutionary process, but more importantly the meaning and interpretations of those contours, in an attempt to rethink the relationship between identity, dialectics, and the universal" (Ciccariello-Maher 2014, 38). Ciccariello-Maher is concerned with the interplay and representation of universality and particularity within the framework of the Haitian Revolution, as well as Buck-Morss's use of such categories.

There are a number of critiques of Buck-Morss's articulation of the Haitian Revolution that Ciccariello-Maher offers that can also be applied to Nesbitt's articulation of the Haitian Revolution as well. He critiques the means through which Buck-Morss claims that the Haitian Revolution was universal by addressing a) her use of the 1801 Constitution, b) the figure Toussaint L'Ouverture, and c) her re-centering of whites in the Haitian Revolution. First, regarding the 1801 Constitution, "Buck-Morss seems strangely unconcerned with the precise wording of this ostensibly universal statement—which declares all Haitian men 'free *and French*'—[…] in which the very notion of freedom is bound as if by synonymy to the mother country. How universal could colonial rule possibly be, especially given the constant threat of re-enslavement?" (Ciccariello-Maher 2014, 23) If it is the case that the goal of the Haitian Revolution was the emancipation of those who were enslaved, then to what extent can the 1801 Constitution be considered exemplary of the revolution if it continued to be bound up with the colonial rule that continued to threaten to re-enslavement?

Similarly, as mentioned above, for Nesbitt it was Toussaint's 1792 document in which he invokes the Rights of Man that serves to frame the politicality of the Haitian Revolution. However, the rendition of the Haitian revolution offered by Nesbitt seems to overlook various important moments. For instance, as noted in the timeline provided above, until 1804 Saint Domingue was still a French colony. Prior to independence of Haiti, Saint Domingue was thus still subject to French rule. In addition, in 1801 Napoleon Bonaparte attempted to re-instate slavery in Saint Domingue. Why, then, are the documents of 1792 and 1801 exemplary of the Haitian Revolution and demonstrative of the emancipation of those who were enslaved? In actual practice, it would seem as though we should, as Ciccariello-Maher does, maintain "skepticism toward the formalism with which Toussaint embraced the Rights of Man and a suspicion that, beneath the formal equality of emancipation, white supremacy continued to operate in a manner that threatened even formal freedom" (Ibid., 34).

Second, regarding the figure of Toussaint, Buck-Morss is described by Ciccariello-Maher as celebrating Toussaint's uncritical embrace "that led [him] to oppose not only discrimination, but any form of racial identity that interfered with the establishment of formal equality in the here and now" (Ibid., 25). In other words, the political emancipation of slaves in Saint Domingue was not made on the basis of any particular race, rather, it was the case that any form of racial identity had to be subtracted from the Haitian Revolution. However, Ciccariello-Maher critiques this position by stating that "It was *this* [his uncritical embrace of the universal] that led to Toussaint's favoring of the whites, [and] his concomitant distancing from the Black masses" (Ibid.). Unlike various other figures of the Haitian Revolution (such as Dessalines and Moïse) Ciccariello-Maher argues that Toussaint's push toward the subtraction of racial identity in the

Haitian Revolution in favor of a "universal" was for the purpose of reassuring whites who still lived in Saint Domingue (Ibid., 27).

Furthermore, one ought to be careful not to attribute too much to Toussaint. It is important to remember that Toussaint, Jean-François, and Biassou were fighting for the Spanish against the French in an attempt to maintain the rights of free colored people while maintaining slavery in 1792 (the year of the document Nesbitt that upholds as exemplary of the universal principles of the Haitian Revolution). Furthermore, during Toussaint's tenure as Governor of Saint Domingue, he upheld a system of forced labor until the time he surrendered to the French to ensure that the plantations on the island were productive. It is thus surprising that Nesbitt would turn to the 1792 document written by Toussaint, Jean-François, and Biassou as exemplary of the ideals of the Haitian Revolution. Similarly, in *Logics of Worlds*, Badiou chooses to emphasize 1796 in the Haitian revolution. He describes it as the "peaceful organization […] under Toussaint's dictatorship, of the first interracial egalitarian society that humanity has ever known" (Badiou 2009a, 524). However, as a number of historians have pointed out, Saint Domingue at this time was a society that was still entrenched in the alienation of former slaves due to the implementation of forced labor.

Third, "whereas Buck-Morss, however inadvertently, centers the biologically-white colonists in her determination of what period of the Haitian Revolution matters, [C. L. R.] James [in the *Black Jacobins*] instead explicitly decenters the politically-white colonists as a measure of progress and instead insists that they stood as little more than a barrier to the universal" (Ciccariello-Maher 2014, 27-28).[24] Progress is thus determined on the basis of, for instance, the

[24] Ciccariello-Maher refers to "biologically-white" and "politically-white" in this quote, a distinction that is worthy of a bit of clarification. First, it is important to note that he associates biologically-white with Buck-Morss's account of the Haitian Revolution, and "politically-white" with C. L. R. James's. Second, he argues that Buck-Morss centers whiteness and James decenters whiteness. While Ciccariello-Maher does not offer an explicit explication of what is

ability of Toussaint to employ the language of the French Revolution in the 1801 Constitution for Buck-Morss, and the 1792 letter written by Toussaint for Nesbitt. Therefore, "notions of formal freedom and universal equality are worse than empty words, but even constitute an active barrier to the universal by foreclosing […] on struggles that might be deemed too particular" (Ibid., 32). In this case, as I demonstrate below, the analysis of the Haitian Revolution offered by Buck-Morss and Nesbitt fails to adequately represent the motivations of the Haitian Revolution due to the conception of universality that they both employ.

There are two implications that follow from the dilemma of framing the Haitian Revolution through the universal principles of equality and liberty enacted through the Rights of Man. First, the emancipation of those who were enslaved, given that this is the goal of the Haitian Revolution, requires the independence of Saint Domingue from colonial rule (Geggus 2014, xv). Second, it is pertinent to analyze documents other than those discussed by Buck-Morss and Nesbitt which in practice did not actually aim toward the emancipation of those who were enslaved. It is for these reasons that I suggest that instead of turning to the 1801 Constitution, or to the 1792 document written by Toussaint, we should turn instead to the 1804 Declaration of Independence of Hayti:

> The 1804 Declaration constitutes a riposte to Toussaint's errors and the abstract universalism of the 1801 Constitution. The document openly critiques the formalism of the Rights of Man, going a step further to argue that not only were

inherent to these two conceptions of race, implicitly I believe that this distinction is dependent upon how they are conceived of operating in (or outside of) the political sphere. For instance, he uses "biologically-white" in reference to Buck-Morss because she presumes that race is not a political category but is instead something biological. Furthermore, as noted in this project, James's argues that race is political (even whiteness) which justifies why Ciccariello-Maher uses "politically-white" in reference to him. In summation, Ciccariello-Maher is noting not only that James's and Buck-Morss's objects of analysis (race or whiteness) are distinct, but also their respective approaches to their objects of analysis (to center or to decenter) are also distinct.

> words like "liberty," "equality," and "fraternity" insufficient, but such abstract principles had proven positively dangerous (Ciccariello-Maher 2014, 28).[25]

Or similarly, one should turn to the 1805 Constitution that was drafted by the free nation of Hayti and by Dessalines, who declared Hayti free from colonial rule and thus also from slavery. Such a document is importantly distinct from the 1792 and 1796 documents that Nesbitt and Badiou use respectively.

There are a number of reasons why the 1805 Constitution is excluded from, in particular, Nesbitt's analysis of the Haitian Revolution. Namely, "The 1805 Constitution […] fills that identitarian opposition with a new racial content by declaring all Haitians to be Black" (Ibid., 29). Thus, unlike the 1801 Constitution and the 1792 letter written by Toussaint, the 1805 Constitution does not purport to end slavery through the elimination of racial categories altogether, rather it upends slavery by centering Black people and by constituting the racial category of Blackness *as political*. Of particular importance are Articles 12-14 which state the following:

> Article 12: No whiteman [sic] of whatever nation he may be, shall put his foot on this territory with the title of master or proprietor, neither shall he in future acquire any property therein.
>
> Article 13: The preceding article cannot in the smallest degree affect white women who have been naturalized Haytians by Government, nor does it extend to children already born, or that may be born of said women. The German and

[25] At various points, you might notice that I make reference to Hayti and Haiti. The difference in spelling is intentional, each one corresponding to a particular moment in the history of Haiti. Notably, the 1805 Constitution names the former French colony Saint Domingue as "Hayti." Following the death of Dessalines, the state becomes The Republic of Haiti. Thus, I use the "Hayti" spelling only in reference to the 1805 Constitution and the Declaration of Independence of that state in 1804.

> Polanders naturalized by government are also comprised in the dispositions of the present article [sic].
>
> Article 14: All acception [sic] of colour among the children of one and the same family, of whom the chief magistrate is the father, being necessarily to cease, the Haytians shall hence forward be known only by the generic appellation of Blacks.

Thus, within the 1805 Constitution, Blackness is a condition for citizenship. That said, while one might argue that the use of the "generic" in Article 14 denotes that Blackness is a category that is open to all persons, Articles 12 and 13 make evident that this is not the case. Article 12 denotes the importance of ensuring that there are no longer slaves and white slave holders in Saint Domingue (in reference to the use of "masters" therein), and that the goal of the constitution is, in this sense, to upend slavery. In addition, white men, with a few exceptions clearly noted in Article 13, were explicitly refused citizenship. As stated by Gulick regarding Articles 12-14, the "three-part negotiation of Haitian citizenship first transforms whiteness from the only legible political identity to the only identity that will henceforth be *illegible* to the new nation-state" (Gulick 2006, 808). Thus with the invocation of the new nation state, not only does whiteness become illegible and thus exist outside the possibility of citizenship, but arguably within Badiou's framework, whiteness could be said to be *illegal* insofar as white men are expressly excluded from citizenship. Furthermore, as noted by Gulick, "Articles 12 through 14 announce that Haiti, perceived already by the rest of the world as black, has the same claim to political legibility as the French Republic or the United States of America—not in spite of, or even without reference to, but *because* of its blackness" (Ibid.). Thus racial particularity is central to the Haitian Revolution.

Similarly, Gulick writes, "This text contains what in today's lexicon would be called a set of radical postcolonial aspirations, a community imagined, through a legal narrative, as capable of doing something none of its models had done before: identifying both blackness and humanity as the basic signifiers of citizenship" (Ibid., 802). Importantly, Fanon's identification of the "zone of nonbeing" confirms this reading of the 1805 Constitution: "rather than enforced uniformity […] the declaration that all Haitians would henceforth be Black constituted a promotion to Being of those who had previously been condemned (damnés) to nonbeing" (Ciccariello-Maher 2014, 34).

For James, "In his 1963 appendix to the revised edition of *The Black Jacobins*, […] Haiti became the birthplace of negritude long before Haitians themselves (along with The 1805 Haitian Constitution African diasporics on multiple shores of the Atlantic) identified and defined a transcontinental resistant political identity predicated upon blackness" (Gulick 2006, 812-813). In other words, there is not only a consistency between the Négritude movement and the Haitian Revolution, according to C. L. R. James, but furthermore the consistency between these two movements depends on a political identity predicated upon Blackness. Thus, what distinguishes the 1805 Constitution from the French or U.S. Constitutions is that it brings the particularity of race to the forefront of its very inception. In this vein, Gulick writes, "In the Haitian Constitution, these experiences are brought to the fore, integrated into the text's narrative structure in direct contrast to the kinds of *silences* the North American model was legitimizing in its own textual-legal foundations of nationhood" (Ibid., 808, my italics). Within this vein of argument, the goal of the Haitian revolution was not to erase the language of race altogether from the legal structure of the nation-state, i.e. a state that was supplanted by a language of equality for all. Nor was the undergirding of the 1805 Constitution an aim to subtract the

particularity of race from the nation-state. Rather, the revolution was aimed at turning a racial ideology on its head; i.e. that instead of whiteness being the defining feature of citizenship, Blackness became the new measure of citizenship.

Of course, I am not proposing that the 1805 Constitution was written *ex nihilo*. Rather, the principles of the 1804 Declaration and the 1805 Constitution are the culmination of the slave revolution that began in 1791. We could, for instance, turn to the figure of Moïse who condemned Toussaint's 1801 Constitution (James 1989, 267) and who eventually fought against Toussaint's implementation of forced labour and fought for the emancipation of Blacks. As noted by James, "What these old revolutionary blacks objected to was working for their white masters. Moïse was the Commandant of the North Province, and Moïse sympathized with the blacks. Work, yes, but not for white. [He states,] "Whatever my old uncle [Toussaint] may do, I cannot bring myself to be the executioner of my color" (Ibid., 275). Moïse was ultimately executed in 1801 for leading a revolt against Toussaint that same year. As noted by Ciccariello-Maher, "it is clear that the rebellion [against Toussaint] sought Black unity and slaughter of the whites as at least a partial means toward 'complete emancipation'" (2014, 24). There is significant documentation that demonstrates that the use of universal categories, such as the Rights of Man, was used by Toussaint in the Haitian Revolution in order to appease the whites. Furthermore, the masses, who comprised the revolution and whose freedom the Haitian Revolution is meant to address, were motivated by a conception of Blackness as a political category.

Unlike Badiou's politics of indifference, the 1805 Constitution does not propose truth that is indifferent to differences or particularity. Rather, it assumes difference as a political *necessity* for emancipation. Given the tension between Nesbitt's Badiouian framing of the

Haitian Revolution and the 1805 Constitution of Hayti, I propose that this leaves us with a series of questions. Most importantly, one would need to ask: Is the Haitian Revolution an example of a political event or should it be considered an example of a cultural movement? There are two plausible responses to this question. First, if one were to say that the Haitian Revolution *is* political, then it would have to follow that race is no longer a difference to which the truth of an event must be indifferent. Second, if one were to say that the Haitian Revolution is *not* political and therefore cultural because of the language of the 1805 Constitution, then it would seem unlikely that Badiou's theory of emancipation could be properly inclusive of non-white persons.

This brings us to a third option that one might propose as a response to the tensions that exist between the 1805 Constitution and a Badiouian framework, namely to disregard the 1805 Constitution as a defining moment of the Haitian Revolution. Indeed, it is true that the Constitution was rewritten in 1806 following the assassination of Dessalines and the founding of the Republic of Haiti (Gulick 2006, 804). However, to reject the 1805 Constitution because it does not fit into Badiou's theory of emancipation would seem to propose either that this constitution was a step on the path toward universality, which reduces it to a moment in a dialectic of liberation, or, one might argue that the 1805 Constitution was a first attempt at emancipation and that its authors improved the 1805 Constitution on their second attempt. The first assertion is problematic given that it reduces liberation on the basis of race to a moment that is subordinated to something else. The latter assertion is also problematic insofar as it assumes that one can only get emancipation right, or think through emancipation, if this constitution is open to white people.

First and foremost, the Haitian Revolution ought to be understood as a political movement, rather than a cultural movement.[26] However, given the 1805 Constitution and its emphasis on race as a political category, Badiou's theory of emancipation fails to count the Haitian Revolution as political. We would likely want to say that this is not a failure on the part of the Haitian Revolution itself. Rather this is an example of a limitation of Badiou's emancipatory politics.

3.2: Badiou, Post-Marxist Political Theory, and Critique

Badiou's failure to defend emancipation on the basis of race is not a new problem. Rather, the inclination to distinguish identities or particularities (such as race) from a conception of emancipatory politics that is necessarily universal was similarly enacted by Karl Marx. For instance, as noted by Nesbitt, Marx "famously concludes that a universal class must become the agent of this process, one whose 'sufferings are universal,' one that has experienced not particular wrongs (against a class, gender, or race) but the denial of humanity itself, a class whose emancipation necessarily implies the emancipation of humanity as a whole" (Nesbitt 2013, 7). Or as noted by Marx:

> From the relationship of estranged labour to private property it further follows that the emancipation of society from private property, etc., from servitude, is expressed in the *political* form of the *emancipation of the workers*; not that *their* emancipation alone was at stake but because the emancipation of the workers contains universal human emancipation—and it contains this, because the whole of human servitude is involved in the relation of the worker to production, and

[26] It should be noted here that my use of "political" is not in reference to Badiou's conception of politics.

> every relation of servitude is but a modification and consequence of this relation (Marx 1978, 80).

Marx places an emphasis on suffering that exists as a result of one being denied humanity, which is universal, rather than on the basis of a particular identity. Marx's concern is thus a general process of dehumanization, rather than a particular structure of dehumanization (colonialism, white supremacy, or patriarchy, for instance). Similarly, in "Badiou's Axiomatic Democracy Against Cultural Politics," Wright argues that, for Badiou, a political truth (such as justice and equality) "is ultimately reducible to no particular constituency, not even the working class or the proletariat" (2009, 79). Consistent with my description of Badiou's politics of indifference in Chapter Two, the political truth of an event cannot be grounded in any particularity (such as class, race, or gender) but instead must appeal to what is universal or intelligible to all and furthermore is that which exceeds the logic of the oppressive state.

Marx's refusal to defend emancipation on the basis of any particularity has been subject to critique. For instance, Cedric J. Robinson begins *Black Marxism* (1983) with the following statement: "This work is about our people's struggle, the historical Black struggle. It takes as a first premise that for a people to survive in struggle, it must be on its own terms: the collective wisdom which is a synthesis of culture and the experience of that struggle" (Robinson 2000, xxxv). Robinson's goal for *Black Marxism* is twofold: on the one hand he seeks to determine whether the Black Radical tradition is compatible with the Marxist tradition and, on the other hand, he seeks to demonstrate that Marxism presupposes a Western framework (ex. history and experience) to the exclusion of alternative frameworks. Robinson emphasizes the importance of developing a nuanced and rich account of race for a theory of emancipation.

In "The Political Critique of Identity" Alcoff offers a similar analysis of post-Marxist theorists who critique identity politics (such as Todd Giltin and Nancy Fraser) because, they argue, identity serves to fracture the universality required for emancipation. For example, she states that Gitlin's "main worry is that the focus on identities and thus differences inhibits the possibility of creating a *progressive* political majority based on class" (Alcoff 2016, my italics). According to Alcoff, Gitlin emphasizes the importance of removing race and other identities from the political realm in order to instigate a progressive and genuine social revolution. That said, she critiques him in the following manner:

> Gitlin's account thus returns us to an outdated view of class as an essentially homogenous entity rather than a cluster concept with internal contradictions. By separating class demands from identity struggles he implies that there are generic class demands rather than the demands of skilled or unskilled workers, of the trades of the service professions, of minority workers, of women workers, of immigrant workers, and so on, that is, of groups whose interests sometimes coincide and at other times collide. Gitlin implies that the labor movement can only maintain a united form if it ignores internal differences (Ibid.).

The presumption in this case is that identity serves to detract from universal emancipation, as does any particularity. As a result, some other kind of universal category needs to supplant this particularism. In this case of Gitlin, class comes to denote a universal category. The critique that Alcoff brings against Gitlin is that his conception of universal emancipation seems to require a kind of homogeneity, and that any kind of particular identity would only serve to fracture and diminish such a move toward emancipation.

In a similar manner, Alcoff describes Fraser's rejection of identity politics as follows: Fraser calls identity politics a "'culturalist' struggle that aims at self-realization" (Ibid.). Struggles for self-realization (or recognition) "tend toward promoting 'group differentiation' while struggles for [what she calls] redistribution tend to 'promote group de-differentiation.' In other words, gays and lesbians, for example, are fighting for the very right to exist free of violence and discrimination, while the poor would rather eradicate their identity as poor" (Ibid.).

Fraser distinguishes identity politics from other forms of struggle, because the former are cultural and framed as a movement that is concerned solely with the realization of that particular group to the exclusion of other identities. Her prescribed conception of emancipation seeks to eradicate identities that would be experienced as problematic. Such a distinction can be construed as consistent with my distinction of positive and negative identity, whereby gays and lesbians seek to preserve a (positive) identity and the poor seek to eliminate (negative) identity. It is thus important to note here that there are different conceptions of identity at play and that identities can be formed in different ways. Furthermore, Fraser allocates positive identity to the realm of "culture" whereby the aims of eliminating negative identity are consistent with her conception of politics.

Alcoff draws a correlation between the works of Fraser, Gitlin, and Sartre in the following manner: "this solution [of the rejection of identity politics] is no different from the liberal approach Sartre excoriated in *Anti-Semite and Jew* when he said, the liberal wants to save the man by leaving the Jew behind" (Alcoff 2016). As discussed in Chapter One, Alcoff is here drawing her readers's attention to Sartre's claim that the emancipation of the Jewish man is possible when he gives up the particularity of his Jewishness. This tension between emancipation and one's particularity is also noted by Gines in her description of the manner in which Sartre

uplifts Négritude only to the extent that "it serves to prepare blacks to become socialists. He [Sartre] states [in "Black Orpheus"]: 'before black peasants can discover that socialism is the answer to their immediate local claims […] they must think of themselves as blacks'" (Gines 2003, 59). Consistent with my discussion of Sartre in Chapter One, Négritude is construed as necessary only to the extent that it is subordinated to a conception of universal emancipation. There is a tendency in Marxist and post-Marxist thought to distinguish between movements that are properly universal and those that incorporate particular identities. Furthermore, there seems to be an inherent tension between these conceptions of universality and particularity.

How might one conceive of the relation between these various authors and Badiou? As noted in Chapter Two, Badiou's politics of indifference similarly proposes a distinction between universal emancipation and identity politics, the latter of which he explicitly critiques in a manner that is similar to the critiques that are offered in this section (especially the critique directed against Sartre). However, Badiou also attempts to distinguish his project from the problems that might be attributed to Giltin, Fraser, and Sartre. Most notably, Badiou's universal emancipation is paired with what he calls an evental site, as discussed in Chapter Two. The evental site is intended to provide a local framework where universal emancipation takes place. An event is not conceived in abstraction, rather, it can be situated within a particular historical and geographical context. At the same time, however, the process through which this universal truth that is intelligible for all, and through which emancipation is possible, requires that identity be subtracted from it. Recalling the reference to Marx at the start of this section, it is thus dehumanization itself, and not the dehumanization of a particular group of people, that is at issue for Badiou as well. It is then this conception of the inexistent that seeks incorporation into his conception of generic humanity.

My analysis of Badiou's discussion of Négritude above, as well as Nesbitt's Badiouian framework of analysis of the Haitian Revolution, aim to support my argument that Badiou's political project juxtaposes identity and emancipation. Briefly, since this discussion was developed in detail above, Badiou claims that the Négritude movement is cultural because of its emphasis on identity. It is inconsistent with political emancipation except that it serves as a moment that needs to be sublated before universal emancipation is possible—thereby demonstrating the tension he maintains between identity and universality. Similarly, for Nesbitt, the Haitian Revolution should be understood as aiming towards politics and truths, such as universal conceptions of equality and justice. To this end, he emphasizes a correlation between the French Revolution over and against what I have argued is a conception of emancipation that centralizes race.

To what extent is it necessary to emphasize a tension between particularity and universality? And to what extent are they necessarily incommensurable? My discussion of Jane Gordon's concept of creolization in the previous chapter suggests that it need not be the case that a conception of universality (which for her is a general will) is incommensurable with identity. For Gordon, creolizing ought to aim to capture "what it is to both remain painfully aware of the most salient of meaningful differences while paying equal attention to how they might be effectively synthesized in solidarities of political action" (Gordon 2014, 3). In this statement, it is important to note that while she is arguing for a conception of universal emancipation, she does so through a) a collectivity of actions, or solidarities of mutually beneficial actions, while b) recognizing the importance of meaningful differences. In other words, differently constituted identity groups can work in solidarity towards a common goal without having to undermine their own identities. Gordon is careful to maintain some reference to identity groups in part to avoid

falling into patterns of Eurocentrism. Specifically, she notes that her political project requires continuous attention to how the "concept of the knowing subject" is defined and oriented (Ibid., 14). The knowing subject ought not be assimilated into a dominant politics.

My concern with Badiou's political theory is that the tension he locates between universality and particularity, and his inability to recognize the importance of meaningful differences as the basis for solidarity and emancipatory politics, means that his political theory cannot safeguard itself against assimilationist or Eurocentric frameworks. Along the same line, Gordon's project of creolization presupposes that a dominant framework and structure can be transformed by a minority or alternative framework. And, while it is the case that Badiou's conception of political emancipation presupposes such a transformative relation between the inexistent and the construction of a world, the framework for his own political theory itself does not perform or enact such a method of creolization. Instead, most of his references to minority perspectives and frameworks that are alternative to a Western or European framework become assimilated into his own already constructed politics, like the Négritude movement that becomes a moment within his dialectic of universal emancipation.

3.2a: Situating the Critique: Liberalism or Marxism

Throughout this project, I invoke the language of recognition in various places in order to situate Badiou's critique of state-based politics, as well as his critique of additive politics (contrasted with subtractive politics). To be clear, however, my overall goal in this project is not situated within this distinction. Instead, I am arguing alongside Badiou that an additive approach to politics (outlined in Chapter Two) is problematic. Thus, my project is situated against a liberal notion of politics that seeks to incorporate more recognition and representation by the state.

That said, the critique that I offer might be confused with this liberal line of thought, however, it is important to note that my critique is firmly situated in a Marxist tradition. For instance, above I make note of Robinson's text *Black Marxism* and his attempt to bring Black theorists into conversation with theories of Marx. Similarly, one could also note my reference to Fanon and Césaire and their attempts to "stretch" or "complete Marx" in Chapter One. In regards to Césaire, for example, an attempt to stretch communism entails a need to respond to what he calls "the Negro question" (Césaire 1972, 27). Finally, my discussion of Alcoff in this section, and her critique of Fraser and Giltin and their post-Marxist analyses similarly offers a critique of Marxism from an anti-liberal position.

A central concern for many of these theorists is not only the way in which race is portrayed, and the kind of location it is allocated in Marxist formulations of the political and of emancipation, but also many scholars claim that the way in which class-based movements operate in communist movements might not be equivalent to the way in which race-based movements work. For instance, a recurring theme throughout this project is the system of representation that exists within an (oppressive) nation-state that serves to count those who exist (and furthermore those who do not exist) within that nation-state. Following the politically emancipatory movement whereby the oppressive count of the nation-state is upended, then the representations (which include identities) will no longer exist, and furthermore, cannot exist if the political movement is to be counted as emancipatory. The absolution of identities is a necessary condition of emancipation on this view.

This framework for what counts as emancipation makes sense when one is thinking about communist revolutions. For instance, part of the goal of a communist revolution is that the proletariat (as a category that is produced in relation to the bourgeoisie) no longer exists

following the revolution. The reason being, in this case, both of these categories operate through a particular ordering of the nation-state (a pro-capitalist one) and if that particular state order is upended (the goal of the revolution) then there will be no more proletariat or bourgeoisie. This line of reasoning is consistent with Alcoff's note above, that "the poor" is a negative identity that one would seek to overthrow. However, a pertinent question, that resonates both in this project and for the scholars I have noted above (Robinson, Alcoff, and Césaire, for instance) is whether race operates in the same way as class. The response that is consistent between these three theorists is that race is different than class, partly because there may be good reasons to preserve race or racial group identities as a mode of existence after a revolutionary change. For this reason Marxist analysis needs to find a way to account for the differences between race and class if it is to offer a theory of emancipation that is inclusive of all persons. Given Badiou's situatedness with Marxism, this line of critique equally applies to Badiou's politics of indifference.

3.3: Why Do Politics need to be Emancipatory?

This third and final section of this chapter offers a critique of Badiou's discussion of culture and politics and by extension his politics of indifference. The question that motivates this section is: why do politics need to be emancipatory? In a certain sense, one should ask whether there are important movements which Badiou would describe as cultural, but which ought to be thought of as political (albeit not in the sense employed by Badiou). Generally speaking, the goal of this section is to demonstrate that his theory of political emancipation is limited because of what it excludes from the political realm.

In "The Political Critique of Identity," Alcoff states, "identity is not merely that which is given to an individual or group, but is also a way of inhabiting, interpreting, and working

through, both collectively and individually, an objective social location and group history" (Alcoff 2016). With this in mind, to what extent can group histories be preserved in Badiou's politics of indifference? Or, to what extent does a group history matter for his theory of emancipation? There are two points that need to be raised in order to address these questions. The first regards his conception of history, and the second point regards the relation between history and a political event.

In *Badiou in Jamaica*, Wright provides an account of Badiou's theory of history as anti-historicism. He describes it as follows:

> [His] anti-historicism by no means implies ahistoricism. To leap to such a conclusion would simply be to repeat the dominance of the historicist account of History (rather as pessimistic accounts of the omnipresence of domination collude with and extend that domination). The term "ahistoricism" implies a complete indifference to historical factors, a pure and uncompromising rejection of their relevance, or—given that it is most frequently used as an insult—an outright ignorance of supposed historical facts. Badiou cannot be justly accused of any of these things. What is required, then, is an investigation into the possibility of anti-historicist conceptualizations of history. Such an investigation paves the way […] for the affirmation of a mode of historiography that is integral to the transformative labor of the subject. Such an affirmation prevents us from adopting the essentially idealist position of viewing history tout court as something to be definitively broken away from. As we shall see, recently Badiou has allowed for a relation to History that sustains a radical, because historically informed, political

> imaginary, something surely relevant to the possibility of preevental resistance (2013, 188).

Wright is careful to distinguish between categorizing Badiou's political theory as anti-historical rather than ahistorical, arguing that the term "ahistorical" implies that a theory is completely taken out of a historical context. As noted in Chapter Two, the truth of the event is always located in a particular world. At the same time, however, this truth also transcends that particular world and all particularity is subtracted from it. Yet, as noted by Wright, "[p]easant revolts are put down to grain shortages, workers movements are ascribed to foreign interference, slave uprisings are explained away as expressions of racial difference, and so on. It is this façade of misleading contingency that prevents the dialectical momentum of class struggle from appearing as an historical necessity" (Ibid., 188-189). How then are we to conceive of the anti-historicism Badiou proposes in regards to what I have offered above about emancipation?

Badiou's theory of history is not ahistorical, according to Wright, because political events still occur within a given historical situation. Yet, we also know that a political event ruptures with the situation and provides the conditions for thinking politics anew. However, even though his politics is anti-historical rather than ahistorical, group history (as described by Alcoff above) as well as collective memory (as described by Gines) does not seem pertinent for his emancipatory politics. Badiou's exclusion of group history and collective memory is most evident in his emancipatory politics because of the negative conception of identity (to the exclusion of a positive conception of identity) that he utilizes in his politics of indifference. A positive conception of race "encompasses a sense of membership or belonging, remembrance of struggle and overcoming, and the motivation to press forward and endeavor towards new ideals and achievements" (Gines 2003, 56) and furthermore "challenges the history of oppression and

rejection that is associated with being black" (Ibid., 64). Or, in Fanon's words: "without a black past, without a black future, it was impossible for me to live by blackness […] Jean-Paul Sartre forgets that the black man suffers in his body quite differently from the white man" (2008, 117). It thus becomes important to understand the history of oppression "so that we are not condemned to repeat those sufferings in the future" (Gines 2003, 65). It is also important to maintain collective memory in order to avoid future harms and for theorists such as Gines this is possible through a conception of race that exceeds the logic of an oppressive structure. At the end of her essay on Fanon and Sartre, Gines provides her readers with a cautionary tale:

> When we realize the complex and arduous task of developing an authentic race consciousness, rather than hastily moving to rejecting race altogether; the importance of conserving and preserving race should become more evident. We cannot simply jump from aiming at an authentic race consciousness to the goal of attaining a raceless society. We must first acknowledge the difficulty involved in achieving an authentic race consciousness before we can even imagine a society without racial oppression or without race. And even if such a society is possible, I refuse to struggle to discover and take up my racial identity in a positive way only to later deny it for the sake of the class struggle or in an attempt to escape the past (Ibid., 66).

Given Badiou's conception of race, it is unclear how racial collective memories could conceptually continue to operate in his emancipatory politics. Or, perhaps more accurately, it seems to be the case that racial collective memories cannot continue to exist in his emancipatory politics. His articulation of Négritude is one such example of how a conception of authentic race consciousness and/or liberation ought to be denied for the purpose of universal emancipation,

especially in a manner that is consistent with Gines's critique of Sartre. Even if a raceless society were possible (a contentious claim that Gines does address in her essay) the issue that still remains is the means or method through which it could become possible. For Gines and Fanon, a raceless society cannot evolve out of the erasure of race.

In addition to the role of collective memory, the framework of Badiou's political theory raises a few conceptual problems for the figure of the faithful subject for several reasons. First, his politics of indifference presupposes that the subject of the event, i.e. the faithful subject, is a generic subject which means that it is constituted independent of any particular identity (whether this be an individual or a group). Second, this articulation of the faithful subject forecloses the possibility of a gender or racial analysis (for instance) of that particular location of the subject faithful to the event. This faithful subject is constituted insofar as it seeks a universal political truth (such as justice and equality) nominated through the appearance of the inexistent in a world and the creation of a new world or state through which the inexistent can be apparent or counted. The subtraction of particularity from the faithful subject however also erases differences as relevant political categories and thus such a form of subtraction fails to "remain painfully aware of the most salient of meaningful differences" (Gordon 2014, 3). Similarly, it is important to note that this conception of the generic subject forecloses the possibility to pay attention to how the "concept of the knowing subject" is defined and oriented (Ibid., 14).

Gordon maintains difference alongside her conception of universality enacted in the process of creolization. In this sense, difference and universality are allocated equally important positions. Furthermore, the implication of universality and differences are also equally important for the constitution of the knowing subject. There is thus a significant distinction between Gordon's attention to the definition and orientation of the knowing subject and Badiou's critique

of identitarian logic. Recalling Chapter Two, Badiou proposes that identitarian logic, whereby a "culture's constitutive elements are only fully comprehensible on the condition that one belongs to the subset in question" to be "genuinely *barbaric*" (Badiou 2003, 12). If one does not need to remain aware of the most salient meaningful differences in the construction of the subject of the event, and thus of political emancipation, then what implications might arise?

It is important to note that Badiou states that the production of truth emerges by way of the event and through the work of the newly formed subject of the event. The implication is that knowledge pertaining to the new principles on which the revolution is predicated, or the new principles for political universal emancipation, cannot be known in advance of the political event. Instead, they emanate from it. This means that the ideas of the revolution are transcendent and not dependent upon the knowledge that was immanent to the logic or ordering of the world prior to the event. More specifically, this means that the event does not rely on prior knowledge. This is also the reason why a new language is required, as discussed in Chapter Two, as that through which new principles or ideas (such as justice and equality) can be upheld and maintained. In addition, in order for the truth to be universal, it must have "a meaning that is intelligible to all" (Badiou & Hallward 1998, 119). If the desire is to change the structure or logic of a given world such that it is founded on different (and emancipatory) principles, then the people who occupy it would need to understand the new principles in order to properly effectuate this change.

That said, if one were to employ a positive conception of identity (such as the positive conception of race described in Chapter Two), then it remains unclear to me why this (positive) identity would need to be excluded in order to achieve universal emancipation. Furthermore, is not the knowledge that one might attain in virtue of being inexistent in a world valuable

knowledge that would be beneficial to universal emancipation? Perhaps more importantly, what seems to be at stake in the distinction I am drawing between Badiou and Gordon rests upon her conception of solidarity. Solidarity as employed by Gordon presupposes that it is possible to maintain positive identities and act towards a mutually beneficial end. For instance, as a white person, I can act in solidarity with various Black communities in the U.S., an action that does not require that I deny the importance of race for political mobilization, or that I be Black in order to understand the importance of a particular political goal.

My articulation of Négritude and the Haitian Revolution in this project is helpful for understanding the distinction between Gordon's and Badiou's respective conceptions of universality. Badiou states the following: "In each case we have to work to make a category pass from what I called its identitarian or syndical status, to a political status" (Ibid., 119). This description of the identitarian to the political is dialectical, whereby the one (identitarian status) must be subtracted in order to attain the other (political status) in a move towards universality. As previously noted, he allocates the Négritude movement to the identitarian status because it is a conception of liberation that fails to become universal and therefore emancipatory. The Haitian Revolution, according to Nesbitt, achieves this political status and thus is universal. Or similarly, in *Black* Badiou describes how the dissolution of the black-white binary was necessary for political universalism (*Black* 2017, 100). On the one hand, Gordon attempts to achieve what is conceivably a universal conception of emancipation alongside recognizing the role of identity and differences through the work of solidarity, i.e. recognition of the importance of differences *and* universality through solidarity. On the other hand, Badiou emphasizes a relation between difference and universality whereby difference is a moment prior to universality, and a moment

that ultimately needs to be surpassed (one step further) in order to achieve universal emancipation.

Consistent with my critique of Eurocentrism in Chapter Two, one ought to be cautious of the kind of move that Badiou is proposing. Namely, one should ask whether there is already at play a kind of identity informing when something is constituted as a political event. Regarding Fraser and Gitlin, in Alcoff's essay "The Political Critique of Identity," the author states "I would suggest that the identity politics at play in this case is white identity, in which whiteness is associated with the privilege to name others, to choose one's own form of discursive banter with total autonomy, as well as with the vanguard narratives of Anglo-European cultures which portray the rest of the world as existing in various stages of 'backwardness'" (2016). The juxtaposition of culture and politics seems in part to perform the distinction between the progressive (political) and the "barbaric" or backward (cultural and identitarian). For example, Nesbitt's articulation of the Haitian Revolution is progressive only because, in his view, it rejects identity politics and implements the ideals of the French Revolution (equality, for instance) for it to be progressive and properly political. Even though a political truth appears through the enactment of the subject of an event, and an event is always locatable within a particular site, it is only through the subtraction of identity that politics can take place. Contra Gordon's articulation and performance of creolization, whereby on the one hand, identity is maintained alongside a universal will, and, on the other hand, a Western (Rousseau) and a non-Western (Fanon) framework are mutually imposing, Badiou's theory of political emancipation lends itself to a conception of Western (French Revolution) framework that imposes upon a non-Western context (the Haitian Revolution). As a result, his theory runs the risk of enacting "an extension of the

privilege associated with whiteness to name and signify difference and to determine its place in a progressive narrative of united struggle" (Alcoff 2016).

Conclusion

Once again, I ask: Why must politics be emancipatory? In *Badiou in Jamaica,* Wright analyses the Rasta movement through Badiou's theory of the event in an attempt to demonstrate that it *too* is political. Similarly, Michael Neocosmos and Grant Farred each respectively analyze the South African anti-apartheid movement in an attempt to demonstrate that it *too* is an example of a Badiouian political event (see Neocosmos 2018 and Farred 2018). However, given the structure of Badiou's political theory, his conception of what counts as political becomes quite limited and, as a result, much labor and activism gets lost.

There are many texts that speak to the role and the relevance of acts of resistance that did not follow from an evental sequence, and yet there is cause to consider them as political acts of resistance in the face of oppression. In "Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves" (1972), Angela Davis discusses various acts of resistance by Black women within the history of anti-slavery struggles, an area of analysis that continues to be underserved in academic writings. As noted by Davis, "black women often poisoned the food and set fire to the houses of their masters. For those who were also employed as domestics these particular overt forms of resistance were especially available" (1972, 91). In her essay, she provides numerous accounts of acts of resistance against white slave owners by Black female slaves. One might ask, should these be considered political acts?

Furthermore, why should we assume that identity is problematic for universal emancipation? (Alcoff 2016). In fact, there are various moments in history of resistance

movements in which solidarity of identity was central to working towards emancipation. As noted by Alcoff, "for example, the Communist Party USA of the 1930s demanded 'Self-determination for the Afro-American Nation' in its basic party platform, and supported black nationalist demands even unto the right of separation" (Ibid.). Additionally, regarding the division between class and race, Alcoff states the following: "Picturing class formations as ideal types without race or gender disenables our ability to use the concept of class as an explanatory concept in social theory" (Ibid.).

In summation, as we go forward it is important to keep in mind the question with which this conclusion began: why should politics be emancipatory? The aim of this section has been in part to describe the ways in which politics ought to be more than what gets counted as emancipation. Furthermore, my aim was to demonstrate that the conception of politics offered by Badiou (as only that which is emancipatory) is insufficient. That said, in the following section, I also aim to provide an alternative (and what I believe to be a superior) conception of political emancipation, one that is not premised on the politics of indifference offered by Badiou. Instead, I propose that Sylvia Wynter offers a conception of universal humanism that maintains the importance of identity for the purpose of universal emancipation.

Chapter Four: Sylvia Wynter's Theory of Emancipation

Introduction

Given the tensions outlined above regarding Badiou's conception of emancipation and his politics of truth as indifferent to differences, one might ask: What responses might Badiou or other scholars interested in emancipatory politics and universalism provide? I propose that one helpful answer to this question is located in the work of Sylvia Wynter.

While they are distinct in ways that I develop throughout this chapter, there are a number of reasons why it is appropriate to bring Wynter and Badiou into conversation. First, like Badiou, Wynter describes how worlds are organized by a particular logic (or what she calls a worldview) that determines who appears (exists) in a world and who does not appear (inexists). Wynter's project is a response to a specific problem: the inexistence and oppression of a particular group of people due to the logic of a state. Or more specifically, she analyses particular logics of worlds by drawing a correlation between colonialism and conceptions of the subject (or Man) that are operating in contemporary Western societies. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being" is a demonstration of how "Man" is constructed through a binary that presupposes the existence of, and simultaneously, the creation of its negation (or what inexists in a state). In other words, we can think of the concept Man as constituted through a conception of Non-Man (see McKittrick 2015, Chapter 4; Wynter 1995). As a result, what it means to be human is founded upon the presupposition of a group of persons who are *excluded* from the category human. For instance, below I develop Wynter's analysis of a particular kind of subjectivity (or Man), namely the "rational subject." The rational subject is important for her project because this conception of subjectivity is bound up with European expansionism and the colonization of Africa, Asia, and the Americas (Wynter, 1995). The implication is, therefore, that "rationality" is in fact not

universal, as it purports to be; rather it is dependent upon an Other that is effaced from humanity. Thus, like Badiou, Wynter's political theory and theory of emancipation offer a critique of systems of oppression and domination and she does so by focusing on the conception of the "subject" around which a worldview is organized. The first section of this chapter develops constructions of "subject-other" relations for Wynter in conversation with Badiou.

Second, like Badiou, Wynter's theory of emancipation seeks to change oppressive structures and turns to what is outside the dominant logic that orders a particular world. Recall how Badiou develops his conception of truth, as indifferent to the differences and identities that are formed within a particular logic of world. For him, truth provides the conditions for rupturing the logic of a world insofar as it transcends that world. Wynter, on the other hand, does not turn to the same kind of universal truths that are indifferent to differences; instead, she develops a conception of liminality. For Wynter the "liminal" is a position through which conscious awareness of the logic of a particular world can be made evident. Contra Badiou, the operation of the liminal or marginal subject is not to *subtract* particularity and identities from truth, emphasizing the importance of universal truths. Rather, Wynter emphasizes the importance of identities *for* emancipation through her analysis of the Négritude movement. For her, Négritude is exemplary of emancipation because it operates outside the subject-other binary that determines who exists according to a particular logic. Wytner's analysis of Négritude is juxtaposed with Badiou's for whom Négritude cannot be thought of as either political or emancipatory because it is based in particularity, and, as such, fails to rise to the level of universality. Contra Badiou, for Wynter, Négritude is demonstrative of her conception of emancipation and the political. The second section of this chapter outlines the importance of the liminal for Wynter's project juxtaposed with Badiou's conception of subtraction and his politics of indifference.

Third, Wynter expands her analysis of Négritude in "Beyond the Categories of the Master Conception: The Counterdoctrine of the Jamesian Poiesis" (1992) in order to demonstrate how it is possible to conceive of a politics of emancipation that is universal while also maintaining the importance of particularity for the purpose of political emancipation. In this essay, she provides what she calls a "pluri-conceptual" model for emancipation that emphasizes multiplicity over singularity. The third section of this chapter develops Wynter's "pluri-conceptual" model for political emancipation in conversation with Badiou's politics of indifference.

This chapter is thus broken down in the following way: (1) I draw a comparison between Wynter's construction of subject-other relations and Badiou's description of existence-inexistence; (2) I develop Wynter's conception of the liminal in order to distinguish it from Badiou's method of subtraction; (3) I develop Wynter's pluri-conceptual model for politics and emancipation compared with Badiou's politics of indifference.

4.1: On Constructions of Subject-Other

The first section of this chapter addresses problematic, dominant conceptions of historical subjects and the production of knowledge as a kind of perpetuation of colonialism or, more specifically in this case, "coloniality." Coloniality is a term introduced by Aníbal Quijano in "Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality." He proposes that coloniality is a correlate to, and an extension of, colonialism and of modernity. In short, if one were to conclude that European colonialism no longer exists in a particular place, the effects of colonialism, through the dependency relation between colonialism and modernity, would continue to exist. For example, such continuations of coloniality/modernity exist in contemporary societies through racialized oppression and Eurocentric structures of knowledge. This continuation of colonialism and its

support for European modernity is what Quijano names "coloniality." Coloniality refers to a framework of power created by European groups over "racially" and "ethnically" marginalized communities. Specifically, coloniality refers to the exploitation and domination of cultures and the imagination of marginalized groups (Quijano 2007, 168-169). In naming coloniality, and through his critical interrogation of it, Quijano proposes a decolonial project.

Similar to Quijano, Wynter offers a decolonial project that critiques coloniality, however, she uses the term "enchantment" in several essays to describe her approach to coloniality. She portrays enchantment as a state of existence that is undergirded with colonial histories and yet wholly unreflective of the various implications of coloniality. Enchantment is also meant to express a social condition and a collective state of mind (or social imaginary) which might accompany the lack of reflexivity within a given worldview. As a result, enchantment is a term she uses that has political and colonial implications, as well as psychological and cognitive ones. The manner in which she is able to interweave such seemingly disparate systems of thought is developed throughout this chapter. For the time being, we can think of enchantment as a kind of lack of reflexivity about reality.

The aim of her decolonial project is a process of "disenchantment," i.e. to throw off the blinders of enchantment and to engage in a critical project. Additionally, one must also guard against what she calls the "re-enchantment," whereby the social imagination falls back into an unreflexive and uncritical position supported by coloniality. What follows is a development of various historical moments that exemplify modes of enchantment.

The geopolitical context that Wynter is concerned with begins with Europe. Specifically, she is concerned with what led to European expansion in the New World. The manner in which I provide an account for this European expansionism (or more specifically European colonialism)

is via differing conceptions of dominant European subjects (i.e. of the human or of Man). In other words, we can better understand how European colonialism was possible and conditioned through dominant conceptions of what was meant by "human" at various points in time. According to Wynter:

> [W]hether religious or secular, all such schemas/programs and their formulations of a "general order of existence" also function to inscribe the specific "descriptive statement" of the human that is enacting of the ontogeny/sociogeny, nature-culture mode of being human, for whom the specific ensemble of motivated behaviors will be adaptively advantageous (Wynter 2003, 280, sic.).

In other words, the conception of what it means to be human that dominates any particular world reflects, or more specifically, *is* the inscription of a kind of ordering that dominates that world. The three distinct conceptions of the subject that are discussed below are as follows: i) the Judeo-Christian conception of the subject (i.e. the Human or the true Christian self), ii) the rational self as a political subject of the state (i.e. Man 1), iii) the economic and biological man (i.e. Man 2). It is important to understand these conceptions of subjecthood because we can draw various correlations between them, and because the economic and biological man (Man 2) continues to influence present-day Western social and political relations. In addition, in each case, we can locate the correlation between the descriptive statement of what it means to be human and the general order of existence that it perpetuates. This conception of the human thus serves as an analogue to Badiou's conception of the transcendental operator that will be discussed in further detail below.

4.1a: The Judeo-Christian Subject: The "Human" or the "True Christian Self"

The Judeo-Christian conception of the subject is theocentric and loosely corresponds to conceptions of the subject in Medieval Latin Christian Europe (Ibid., 268). Generally speaking, the Judeo-Christian subject presupposes a notion of the existence of the true Christian self (Ibid., 281). The true Christian self can be understood as being "gifted with spirit" and thus blessed by the grace of God. At the same time, not all persons were attributed this position of the true Christian self. Instead, outside of this order of existence, there is a space of Otherness for those who have succumbed to the "ills of fallen flesh," those who exist outside of the grace of God, and those who are sinful by nature. Specifically, this refers to heretics and "enemies of Christ," or pagan-idolaters (Ibid., 266). Of course, within this general order of existence, there is a plan of salvation to cure the ills of those who were enslaved by original sin, insofar as original sin threatened all the subjects of the order (Ibid., 278-279). Interestingly, in this sense, there were degrees of spiritual perfection and imperfection, resulting in a hierarchy of humanness (Ibid., 287).

The general order of existence in Medieval Christian Europe is mapped onto the dichotomy between "Spirit" and "Flesh." In addition to its production of a dominant conception of the subject operating at the time, the Judeo-Christian order of existence was also projected onto the cosmos. As Wynter states, "This Spirit/Flesh code had then been projected onto the physical cosmos, precisely onto the represented nonhomogeneity of substance between the spiritual perfection of the heavens […] as opposed to the sublunary realm of earth, which […] had to be at the center of the universe as its dregs" (Ibid., 278). In other words, there was a difference in substance between the heavens (spirit) and the earth (flesh). In addition, the earth was the center of the universe insofar as it lacked the capacity for motion (and motion was a

divine attribute). This general order of existence has implications not only for the subject that it constituted (or that was attempted to be created, in its most perfect form), but this order also structured the conception of the universe. This order was all encompassing.

In addition, the mapping of the geography of the earth can also be understood in terms of the existing order of Spirit/Flesh. During this period, the Judeo-Christian conception of the world was divided up between realms that were habitable and were in the grace of God (centering on Jerusalem) and regions that were considered uninhabitable because they existed outside the grace of God. Thus, "before the fifteenth-century voyages of the Portuguese and Columbus […] the Torrid Zone beyond the bulge of Cape Bojador on the upper coast of Africa […] had to be known as too hot for habitation, while the Western hemisphere had had to be known as being devoid of land" (Ibid., 279). The Torrid Zone comprised those areas of the world that existed outside of the grace of God and that were therefore uninhabitable.

The theocentric conception of what it meant to be human was produced through the master code of Spirit/Flesh, and further reified through the nonhomogeneity of the heavens and the earth as well as the geography of the earth. However, this descriptive statement of what it meant to be human was unsustainable for a few reasons. First, the fifteenth century voyages "proved that the earth was homogenously habitable by humans, seeing that the Torrid Zone was indeed inhabited, [and that …] the land of the Western hemisphere […] turned out to be above water (Ibid., 280). In other words, the geography of the theocentric framework described above was proven to be false. Together with Copernicus's new astronomy, that proposed that the earth moves around the sun, the nonhomogeneity of the heavens and the earth, as well as the previous conception of how the earth was mapped, could no longer be sustained.

As a result, "an epochal rupture" was set in motion (Ibid., 281). The theocentric conception of the subject as the true Christian self was no longer feasible because the master code upon which it was structured (Spirit/Flesh as evident through the geography of the earth and manifest in the study of the cosmos) had been swept away in favor of a new science and a new mapping of the earth.

It is important to note here that there continue to be some similarities between Badiou and Wynter, given the description of Wynter's project provided above. First, for both figures a state or world is organized according to particular principles, i.e. what Badiou calls the "transcendental index" and which Wynter has described as the theocentric framework ordered by the master code of Spirit/Flesh. Second, both figures regard the Copernican Revolution as an event, albeit in different ways. Recall from Chapter Two that an event is a rupture with the current transcendental order through which a new transcendental order takes place. Within this framework, the Copernican Revolution attests to an evental rupture that radically changed the manner in which the universe was ordered. Again, this has serious implications for the sciences, and as a result a new (physical) science emerges. In addition, for both Badiou and Wynter, it follows that the principles that order any particular world are contingent.

There are also notable differences between Wynter and Badiou at this juncture. While it is the case for Wynter that with the Copernican Revolution, and the discovery of inhabited land in the Torrid Zone, result in an epochal rupture and the creation of a new set of ordering principles, it is not the case that the epochal rupture is a totalizing break between the two. While these two ordering principles are different in kind, and the former did not cause the latter, there remains some continuity between them. Recalling the discussion of Badiou's conception of event in Chapter Two, we know that for him there can be no continuity between the transcendental

order prior to the event and the transcendental order that follows from the event. For Badiou, a total break is imperative in order to constitute a new political structure. In other words, in order to avoid an adaptation or adjustment of a previous transcendental order, a total break is required. For Wynter, as I demonstrate below, elements of the Spirit/Flesh master code will reappear in different worldviews, despite the logic of the worldview (including sciences, geography, and subject-formation) being distinct. Finally, for Wynter, a new subject emanates from the rupture of the dominant ordering principles of Spirit/Flesh; it is the rational political subject of the state.

4.1b: The Rational Political Subject of the State: Man 1

The rational political subject of the state roughly corresponds historically to the Renaissance period. The emanation of the rational political subject of the state from the Judeo-Christian conception of the true self can be located in part by drawing out the differences between a religious concept of man/humanity that preceded the Copernican Revolution and a rational concept of man/humanity that followed. The narrative Wynter develops in "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being" draws upon the fluctuating influence of science and religion in knowledge production. In summation, she states:

> It was therefore to be on the basis of this new conception, and of its related civic-humanist reformulation, that Man was to be invented in its first forms as the rational political subject of the state, as one who displayed his reason by primarily adhering to the laws of the state—rather than, as before, in seeking to redeem himself from the enslavement to Original Sin by primarily adhering to the prohibitions of the Church (Ibid., 277).

Put simply, following the Copernican Revolution, we find in the Enlightenment era a concept of man/humanity that presupposes reason—via the new role of science—as a founding idea for the new universal "man." Within this new framework, God became knowable to human beings, insofar as human beings were then conceived as being created in God's image which is distinct from the theocentric conception of the human for whom knowledge of God was foreclosed (Ibid., 278). Similarly, there was a shift from understanding the cosmos via supernatural causation to understanding the universe through natural causation, a shift that was required for the rise of the natural sciences (Ibid., 305).

With regard to the formation of the subject in particular, with the epochal shift described above, Wynter is pointing to the "systemic representational shift being made out of the order of discourse that had been elaborated on the basis of the Judeo-Christian Spirit/Flesh organizing principle […] to the new rational/irrational organizing principle and master code" (Ibid., 300). In other words, what it meant to be human in this era became equated with the capacity for rationality which additionally came to adhere in the degree to which one could obey the laws of the state. As a result, the state itself is what determined what it meant to be rational.

According to Wynter, Man 1 was still dependent upon a certain conception of God, however, the manner in which God was conceived is strikingly different from the previous era. She writes:

> It was this new premise that God had created the world/universe for mankind's sake, as a premise that ensured that He would have had to make it according to rational, nonarbitrary rules that could be knowable by the beings that He had made it for, that would lead to Copernicus's astronomy […] that since the

> universe had been made for our sake by the best and wisest of craftsmen, it had to be knowable (Ibid., 278).

Within this framework, God became more beneficent and mankind was now considered capable of understanding God's plan.

The historical narrative Wynter uses serves to demonstrate that dominant conceptions of man or of human are not accidentally constituted. Rather, there is often some impetus or force that is responsible for creating such dominant conceptions. As previously noted, prior to the Copernican Revolution, the dominant concept of humanity was founded upon natural law, and was implemented by the laws of the Christianity. Part of her project is to ascertain what led to the shift from natural law to reason. There are a few ways in which we can understand the shift from the Christian to the Enlightenment concept of man/human that the Copernican revolution marks. For instance, she notes it could be attributed to the rise of science as changing the structure of knowledge production at that time. Along the same lines, it could be attributed to a notion of equality which was becoming more prevalent. In other words, in lieu of one's position being dependent upon natural law, the Enlightenment era assumed the rational subject to be capable of presupposing a kind of universality that had previously been foreclosed, i.e. that all persons could be rational but not all persons could be touched by the grace by God. However, she stipulates that these are, in fact, *not* the overarching reasons for the shift to the Enlightenment concept of humanism. First, she states, "it was a constitutive part of the new order of *adaptive truth-for* that had begun to be put in place with the rise to hegemony of the modern state, based on the new descriptive statement of the human, Man, as primarily a political subject—of, therefore, the West's own self-conception" (Ibid., 300). In other words, the new world order was founded upon, and indeed perpetuated, a specific conception of man that was of its own making.

But, it is the manner in which this self-conception was constructed that renders it a worthy object of critique regarding the racial hierarchies and conceptions of universality that issued from it. Wynter emphasizes the role of the subject, over the role of sciences, as shaping the order of the modern state. Whether or not it is an accurate portrayal of the shift from the Judeo-Christian worldview to the Enlightenment worldview, her primary concern is the experience of what it means to be human in each worldview that I discuss in order to make evident those who are excluded from what it means to be human. In addition, and by implication, her intention is to demonstrate how the logics of particular worlds are built on the creation of those who are excluded from the experience of being human. Furthermore, to assume that the shift to the Enlightenment was based upon a notion of equality would be to overlook the context in which this transition takes place. Specifically, the context through which she develops this analysis of the shift from the Judeo-Christian conception of the human to Man 1 is European expansionism and colonialism. She reminds us that "it is important to realize that this reinvention of the Western self was determined by a concrete relation" (Wynter 1976, 84). This new order was also made possible through the reinvention of the dominant conception of the subject as rational.

Before we continue to the conception of the human that Wynter claims continues to exist in the contemporary Western world (Man 2), it is important to note the similarities between the two conceptions of the subject just discussed, i.e. the theocentric True Christian self (the human) and the rational conception of the political subject (Man 1). On this topic, she states:

> In the wake of the West's reinvention of its True Christian Self in the transumed terms of the Rational self of Man, however, it was to be the peoples of the militarily expropriated New World territories (i.e. Indians), as well as the enslaved peoples of Black Africa (i.e. Negroes), that were made to reoccupy the

> matrix slot of Otherness—to be made into the physical referent of the idea of the irrational/subrational Human Other (Wynter 2003, 266).

First, the construction of the dominant conception of the mode of being human is dependent upon the simultaneous construction of its own negation. We see this in what it means to be a True Christian self, a position which maintains a fear of the enemies of Christ and the explicit desire to save those enemies of Christ for the purpose of preserving a specific world order. Similarly, the construction of the rational subject can be understood as being for the purpose of delineating a group who are considered irrational or subrational. The categories of irrational and subrational human other, for example, are not unintended consequences of the idea of the rational subject; rather they are intentionally created alongside the dominant subject category. In addition, while the rational subject might be categorized as an idea, the subrational and irrational positions are inherently physically and materially experienced, ex. military expropriation and genocide of indigenous populations and the enslavement of people from Black Africa. All this is to say, that "Cultural racism is therefore organic to—and not anomalous to—Western capitalism, and *ipso facto* to Western civilization" (Wynter 1976, 86). As a result, it is important to understand the dominant conception of the subject and the role it plays in perpetuating the logics of worlds.

For example, the Valladolid controversy of the 1550s was the first European debate about the rights of colonized people. Of course, it should be noted here that the rights of the colonized people needs to be thought in relation to arguments for the justification or the legitimation of the rights of European settlers over the New World and the peoples who inhabited these new worlds. The two figures who were engaged in this debate were Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda. Las Casas was a sixteenth century Dominican friar. He was one of the first

European settlers in America. Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda was a sixteenth-century philosopher and theologian. The Valladolid controversy is of particular importance for the purpose of this project because it makes evident the two distinct conceptions of the subject just described, i.e. the Human and Man 1.

Generally speaking, Las Casas's position in the Valladolid debate can be thought of as operating within the theocentric model of the subject, i.e. within the Spirit/Flesh master code of the Judeo-Christian conception of what it means to be human. As noted by Wynter, for Las Casas:

> [T]he indigenous peoples of the New World could not be classified as Enemies-of-Christ, since Christ's apostles had never reached the New World, never preached the World of the Gospel to them. Which means that because they could not have ever refused the Word they could not […] be classified as Christ-Refusers, their lands justly taken, and they themselves enslaved and/or enserfed with a "just title" (Wynter 2003, 293).

The indigenous people of the New World (who obviously were not Christian prior to European settlers' arrival in the New World) could not be thought of as enemies of Christ because they had never heard the word of God and therefore could not have denied it. As a result, within this world order there was no justification through which indigenous peoples could be disenfranchised of their rights and their lands. At the same time, however, "African slaves, whom he then believed to have been acquired with a just title, should be brought in limited numbers as a labor force to replace the Indians" (Ibid., 293). According to Las Casas, the colonization of Africa was justified because the peoples of Africa were enemies of Christ because he had assumed that they had heard the word of God and denied it. As a result, he

contended that the African continent belonged to no one prior to European colonization (*terra nullius*) and thus European conquest of the continent was justified. This was, then, the start of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Ibid., 293-294). Of course, it should be noted that once Las Casas learned about the unjust methods used by the Portuguese to obtain African slaves, he regretted his decision (Las Casas 1971).

As is made evident in the Valladolid controversy, Las Casas's position was neither the only position regarding the indigenous populations in the New World, nor would his be the dominant one. As Wynter states: "Las Casas had thought and acted in the terms of his Christian evangelizing imperative. The Spanish state's primary imperative, however, was that of its territorial expansion, of realizing its imperial goals of sovereignty over the new lands" (2003, 294). Las Casas's position reflects the theocentric master code described above. For him, the aim was to provide the conditions through which the True Christian Self could be achieved by all persons, including indigenous populations of the New World. Presumably, the kind of European expansionism that he was concerned with was in reference to this theocentric model and genre of human being. However, with the epochal rupture on the geographical and cosmological level, and the corresponding effects in the sciences, a new set of goals was constructed. And with this new set of goals came about the new rational conception of the subject. What Wynter draws our attention to, in conversation with various theorists such as Anibál Quijano and Walter Mignolo, is the motivation for this new conception of the subject for the purpose of European expansionism. This correlation is most evident in Sepúlveda's justification for the colonization of indigenous populations of the New World.

According to Sepúlveda, indigenous populations, as well as African populations, could justifiably be enslaved based on a new conception of order: rationality. For him, indigenous

populations were considered irrational and the mass of enslaved peoples of Africa were considered subrational. I would like to draw our attention to two points about this claim. First, the presumption was that the capacity for rationality (of various degrees) was based upon a conception of nature. For instance, some populations did not have rationality by nature; it was a natural distinction or perhaps thought to be naturally occurring. The explicit culmination of this point for Sepúlveda in particular (and in the context of the Valladolid controversy) was that Indigenous and African populations were *natural* slaves and therefore their enslavement was justified. Importantly, this brings us to the second implication, that "it was here that the modern phenomenon of race, as a new, extrahumanly determined classificatory principle and mechanism of domination, was first invented" (Wynter 2003, 296). Rationality, or the degree to which one is in the mode of being human, becomes constructed through phenotypical and religio-cultural differences.

The existence of a Self-Other distinction in Wynter's project—whereby the dominant conception of what it means to be human (i.e. the True Christian Self or the Rational Subject) simultaneously creates its own negation (i.e. the fallen or the irrational)—is similarly part of Badiou's critique. As noted in Chapter Two, Badiou aims to develop a theory of politics that is *not* based upon exclusion and thus his view seeks to address this dichotomy of the Self/Other. Wynter also conceives of this dichotomy as appearing problematically in European colonial history, as noted above. However, as previously discussed, the manner in which Badiou attempts to dismantle this exclusionary construction of the state (a requirement for his theory of emancipation) is by way of his politics of indifference. As I move forward with this project, my attention is focused on the manner in which Badiou and Wynter each respectively attend to the inexistent or the position of negation, as well as the role they each respectively assign to this

position. Briefly, Badiou and Wynter seek the emancipation of the inexistent, to use Badiou's language. However, Badiou's theory of emancipation requires an indifference to differences (such as race) in order to achieve universal emancipation, whereas Wynter's theory of emancipation works through differences (such as race) in order to achieve universal emancipation. The third example of the self/other master code is the economic and biological man, or Man 2.

4.1c: The Economic and Biological Man: Man 2

The economic and biological genre of being human that continues to pervade Western social and political contexts begins roughly in the nineteenth-century by way of liberal humanist intellectuals (Ibid., 314). As we will see below, while Man 2 is both continuous and discontinuous with Man 1 and the theocentric conception of being human, the principles that Man 2 presupposes are quite distinct (Ibid., 318). Man 2 is a secular conception of what it means to be human. The distancing of Man 2 from a religio-centered construction is due to its focus on a biocentric and economic mode of being human.

Generally speaking, this conception of the human is dependent upon Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. In particular, two premises of Darwin's theory are particularly important for Wynter's construction of Man 2: a) that the human exists "in a line of pure continuity with all other organic forms of life" (Ibid., 314); and b) natural selection impacts the fitness of species, resulting in certain traits being passed down to future generations through reproduction. The implications of these two premises are developed below. Alongside the biocentric conception of the human is the economic conception of the human, i.e. *homo economicus*. Like the theocentric

and rational conceptions of what it means to be human, the biocentric and economic co-constitution of the genre of being human is defined through its negation.

What then is the negation upon which Man 2 is dependent? The new category of human otherness is "now comprised of the jobless, the homeless, the Poor, the systemically made jobless and criminalized—of the 'underdeveloped'—all as the category of the economically *damnés*, rather than, as before, of the politically condemned" (Wynter 2003, 321).[27] Man 2 is, on the one hand, constructed on the basis of what it means to be an economically productive member of society. The ills of the society, as a result, concern the population who are perceived as not contributing economically. For example:

> Enslavement here is no longer tied to Original Sin, or to one's irrational nature […] Rather, enslavement is now to the threat of Malthusian overpopulation, to its concomitant "ill" of Natural Scarcity whose imperative "plan of salvation" would now be postulated in economic terms as that of keeping this at bay—of material, in the place of the matrix spiritual, Redemption (Ibid., 320).

At the same time, however, Wynter claims that the economic genre of being human is mapped onto a Darwinian chain of being that is manifest in two manners (Ibid., 309). First, "this principle, that of bio-evolutionary Natural Selection, was now to function at the level of the new bourgeois social order as a de facto new Argument-from-Design—one in which while one's selected or dysselected status could not be known in advance, it would come to be verified by one's (or one's group's) success or failure in life" (Ibid., 310). An economic hierarchy is mapped onto a biocentric hierarchy. Or, in other words, economic success (and thus economic failure) is mapped onto a conception of who is most fit (or least fit) in society. As a result, the

[27] It is important to note that Wynter explicitly references Fanon in this quote, indirectly citing the 1963 version of Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*.

economically damned in society, or the dependents of society, can thus justifiably (according to this system) be dysselected from society and thus undeserving of social aid. Second, drawing from a Darwinian conception of the continuity between all living creatures, the economic and biocentric conception of man also operates upon a continuity of those who are most fit and those who are least fit.

An important implication of this new space of otherness is confirmed by Frederick Douglas's "The Color Line" (1881) echoed in W. E. B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). Wynter describes the Color Line as "a line drawn between the lighter and the darker peoples of the earth, and enforced at the level of social reality by the lawlikely instituted relation of socioeconomic dominance/subordination between them" (Wynter 2003, 310, sic). As a result, the Color Line comes to demarcate what in previous systems were the Heaven/Earth dichotomy and the rational/irrational dichotomy, culminating in the demarcation of those who are deserving of reward (and the most fit) from those who are not (Ibid., 322). More specifically, those who were economically disenfranchised because of their race, through racial segregation and red lining, for instance, are deemed less fit within a given social reality, i.e. economic failure is a failure of their ability to adapt and survive in a social context.

For Du Bois, the Color Line refers to the racial segregation of African-American people in the U.S., segregation that occurred through legal structures as well as discursive means. In addition, his discussion of the Color Line also establishes what he calls "double consciousness." In *The Souls of Black Folk*, he states the following:

> 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 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 (Du Bois 1994, 2).

In other words, a marginalized person recognizes not only their own self-perception but also how they are perceived as a member of a marginalized group by a dominant group. A further implication here is that someone who has the sensation or experience of double-consciousness has a particular kind of epistemic position in the world, whereby they have access to different kinds of knowledge based on their position in relation to the Color Line. As a result, for Du Bois and for Wynter, marginalized people have access to knowledge that is not immediately accessible (if accessible at all) to those who occupy dominant positions within the same social reality.

There are various examples that we can draw from in order to understand the ramifications of this genre of being human. We could look to the recent (and historical) anti-economic migrant sentiment in Europe and North America. For instance, in the U.K. the anti-immigrant sentiment that was central to the 2016 Brexit vote was based on the idea of job scarcity for U.K. citizens, a distinction which is likely based upon the Color Line just described, albeit an extension of the Color Line based upon a racialized other that is "not British." One might also consider "the criminalized majority Black and dark-skinned Latino inner-city males now made to man the rapidly expanding prison-industrial complex" (Wynter 2003, 261) or the criminalization of First Nations populations in Canada. In all these cases, racial profiling presupposes the evolutionary natural selection of those who will "make it" and those who will not.

At this point, it should be apparent that there are some similarities between the conceptions of a worldview and the notion of worlds developed by Wynter and Badiou respectively. For instance, for Badiou, "world" implies a series of relations, a network through which objects appear (Badiou 2009a, 99). Additionally, "a world articulates the cohesion of multiples around a structured operator (the transcendental)" (Ibid., 102). In other words, worlds provide the conditions through which objects appear, but are ordered by what he calls the transcendental index. Furthermore, the ordering of any world is wholly contingent. For Wynter, a worldview refers to a dominant narrative that organizes worlds according to a particular conception of what it means to be human (i.e. the True Christian Self, the Rational Political Man, or the Economic and Biological Man). Similarly for Wynter, the organization of worlds according to some master code is contingent and thus could be organized differently. Generally speaking, both Wynter and Badiou offer a critique of these dominant and oppressive conceptions of worlds and also seek solutions to oppressive world orders. The continuities between Badiou's and Wynter's political theories of emancipation provide the conditions for my analysis of why and how Wynter's political theory offers a substantial alternative to Badiou's project without radically changing the kinds of goals he has for his project. Alternatively, the continuities between their projects also allow me to demonstrate that there is an alternative solution to Badiou's project in Wynter's work. To these ends, it is the distinctions between their projects with which I am concerned. Whereby Badiou focuses on a politics of indifference based upon a theory of political truths Wynter focuses on liminal positions and a theory that emphasizes differences in addition to universal emancipation through her pluri-conceptual framework. These points of comparison are the focus of the next two sections.

4.2: On Liminality and Négritude

4.2a: The Role of Liminality

In *The Ceremony Must be Found*, Wynter defines liminality as follows:

> [It is the] experience [of] a structural contradiction between [one's] lived experience and the grammar of representation which generate the mode of reality by prescribing the parameters of collective behaviors that dynamically bring that "reality" into being. The liminal frame of reference therefore, unlike the normative, can provide […] the outer view from which perspective the grammars of regularities of boundary and structure maintaining discourses are perceivable (Wynter 1984, 39, sic.).

Unlike the normative or dominant position, the liminal position is thus situated such that it marks the lives of those whose experiences are in contradiction with that dominant position. Recall, for instance, the discussion above of Du Bois's conception of double consciousness, whereby an African-American experiences the contradiction between being American and being Black. Such a contradiction is experienced because their lived reality is imposed upon by the dominant position that excludes them. At the same time, however, because of the experiences of the liminal position, marginalized persons are well situated to see the contradictions inherent to the normative view. There are a number of ways in which one can be marginalized and, as a result, a plethora of liminal positions that one could occupy. For this reason, I will not attempt to name them here. However, a significant amount of work on the experiences of marginalization and the kind of knowledge that is produced out of this marginalization has been done. Most notably, Du Bois wrote on the topic most explicitly in *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903). One could also consider Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) as providing an account of the epistemic

situatedness of women in a male-centered society. Similarly, Monique Wittig's *The Straight Mind* (1980) offers a conception of "the lesbian" as epistemically situated differently within a heterosexual social reality. It is important to note, however, that one's identity as Black, gendered, and gay for instance does not mean that one inherently has conscious awareness of the epistemic situatedness of their liminal positions. Rather, as stated above, they are *better situated* to gain this epistemic position.

Similarly, in *Beyond Liberal and Marxist Feminisms* Wynter draws on the work of Asmaran Legesse, stating that "it is the liminal category who 'generates conscious change by exposing all the injustices inherent in structure'" (Wynter 1982, 36, sic.). Thus, for Wynter, liminality can provide a view from which to understand a dominant/normative structure and ordering of the dominant referent through which the subordinate being and the dominant referent are both constituted. In this sense, it is very important to provide space for a discursive intervention from the liminal frame of reference.

According the Wynter, "the category minority is always already a subordinated category within the organizing principle of difference/deference of our present 'symbolic contract' and of the mode of particular 'nature' to which its specific secular ontology 'tied us down' metaphysically" (Wynter 1990, 233). However, "in order to call in question this ontologically subordinated function, 'minority discourse' can *not* be merely another voice in the present ongoing conversation or order of discourse" (Ibid.). In other words, the significance of the liminal over the dominant referent is that the liminal provides a point of view which can shift/disenchant the dominant referent; it is to disenchant, to make unstable, the structure which seeks its own stability. It is the liminal that provides the conditions for a critique of the dominant worldview, according to Wynter. However, the manner in which the liminal becomes manifest

for Wynter is such that it is firmly entrenched in particularity and difference. The foremost example of this for her occurs in the Négritude movement.

4.2b: The Négritude Movement

In many of Wynter's essays, she notes the prevalence of a conception of Being formed on the basis of a lack-of-being.[28] For example, the rational/irrational or subrational binary, and the true Christian self/pagan idolater binary, both of which emulate the Being/lack-of-being binary. Noting the problems of this binary above, the central aim of this section is to determine how it is possible to move beyond this binary logic. Or, alternatively, I am going to consider in what ways it is possible to conceive of the emancipation of those who are allocated to the position of lack-of-being. For Wynter, the creation of the liminal or "minority" category alone is insufficient in order to transcend the binary. As she states in "On Disenchanting Discourse," "the category minority is always already a subordinated category within the organizing principle of difference/deference of our present 'symbolic contract' and of the mode of particular 'nature' to which its specific secular ontology 'tied us down' metaphysically" (Ibid.). Thus, she provides an alternative to a conception of Other (or lack-of-being) that is juxtaposed against the Self (Being), or the One, or a "we" juxtaposed against a "they." According to Wynter, the juxtaposition of these two locations is one of co-dependence, or more specifically each position is constructed for the benefit of the dominant location. An attempt to rethink and unravel this system requires a different positionality, one that exists outside the binary logic. This third position that exists outside of the binary is akin to Du Bois's description of double consciousness. Namely, it is a marginalized position, but one that is also epistemically situated and conscious of the manner in which the binary operates. It is thus important to note a difference between those who are

[28] Of particular note, however, would be the following essays: Wynter 1990; Wynter 2003.

relegated to the position of other within the Self/Other binary, and those who are marginalized in society and have gained double consciousness. While the former can be construed as a product of the binary, the latter should be thought of as existing outside the determination of the binary, or at least not wholly determined by it. For Wynter, Négritude is an example of a position that exists outside an oppressive binary logic and is helpful in shedding light on the importance of the liminal position and its role for a theory of emancipation.

In "Ethno or Socio Poetics," Wynter makes reference to Cesaire's famous poem *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*. She states the following:

> [This poem] comes from the fact that in creating the concept of Negritude, he was contesting an implicit Western assumption of Blanchitude, (the term is Jacques Leenhardt's) that created characteristics of its own negation in the Negro; so that Negritude took as much issue with this implicit concept of the negro as it did with the assumptions of blanchitude (Wynter 1976, 92).

One of the central features of the Négritude movement for Wynter is evident in the delineation between blanchitude/Negro and Négritude. Similar to previous discussions of the problem of enchantment, the correlation between blachitude and "Negro" is one of negation. In this example, blanchitude presupposes the position of the dominant or normative position (or Being) and "Negro" is the negation of this position (or lack-of-being). This is akin to Badiou's conception of (negative) identity discussed in Chapter Two. However, what distinguishes Wynter from Badiou is evident in her articulation of the different roles of "Negro" and Négritude. As previously noted, the category of "Negro" is produced for the purpose of the creation of the dominant position, namely blanchitude in this instance. "Negro" is dependent upon blanchitude. Recalling Chapter One and my discussion of negative identity, "Negro" can be

thought of as constituted through the white gaze. Négritude, however, is not constituted through the white gaze, nor was it created for the purpose of maintaining the dominant position. Rather, as noted above, for Wynter, it serves to demarcate a position that is critical of both blanchitude (Being) and "Negro" (lack-of-being). In this sense, it would be problematic for Wynter to equate "Negro" and Négritude because doing so would erase the source from which Négritude gains its meaning, and it would erase the existence of those who named it. Given that Négritude offers a critique of both the "Negro" and blanchitude from a marginalized position, it exists outside of the Self/Other binary. Thus, she maintains a conception of identity that is not merely negative, but alongside Gines, she affirms that such conceptions can also be construed as positive.

Wynter provides us with a second example that utilizes her analysis of the Négritude movement in an alternative way. She states:

> [T]he black experience in the New World […] constituted an existence which daily criticized the abstract consciousness of humanism; that the popular oral culture which the black created in response to an initial negation of this humanness, constitutes as culture, the heresy of humanism; and that is why black popular culture—spirituals, blues, jazz, Reggae, Afro-Cuban music—and its manifold variants have constituted an underground cultural experience as subversive of the status quo Western culture as was Christianity in the catacombs of the Roman Empire. For it was in this culture that the blacks reinvented themselves as a WE that needed no OTHER to constitute their Being; that laid down the cultural parameters of a concretely universal *ethnos* (Ibid., 92).

Similar to her description of Négritude above, she provides an example of identity that is not premised upon a binary system. For instance, when she states that the reinvention of Blackness is

a *we* that needed *no other*, she is proposing that it is possible to create an identity that is produced outside a dominant binary, and not merely a negation. Importantly, she also describes this movement as both cultural and universal, the implications of which are developed below. The concept of Négritude both creates a new concept (sign) and exists outside the negative dialectic of blanchitude and "Negro." It is in this way, at least in part, that we see that the construction of something new, rather than perpetuating the dominant worldview and what it creates, is autonomous and a closed (and yet dynamic) system.

In a similar manner, Wynter describes Black aesthetics more generally as "the transformation of consciousness from being 'Negro,' in the negative sense defined by the dominant society, to being self-defined positively as 'Black,' with the suffering of a Negro-Black conversion experience" (Wynter 1998, 273). A reordering of Western aesthetics, like Western politics, (as one that "saw the exclusion and denigration of the black historical experience and the 'white orientedness' of the universality as a whole" (Ibid.)) requires that Black people and Black artists "define the 'world in their own terms'" (Ibid., 274). The importance of the Négritude movement is in part because it provides the conditions to get outside the normative binary (of positive and negative identities, in this case blanchitude and "Negro"). At the same time, the liminal position (such as Négritude) is important because it provides the conditions for the creation of new objects of knowledge. Wynter's articulation of the role of the creation of new objects of knowledge from the liminal position is evidenced in her conception of epistemic disobedience, the focus of the next section.

Before I delve into epistemic disobedience, it is important to note the differences between Wynter's and Badiou's respective conceptions of Négritude. Recall that for Badiou, Négritude was neither political nor progressive. Instead, Négritude was categorized as cultural. For him,

Négritude was cultural because it was mired in identity, i.e. identity that was also subsequently determined by the oppressive structure that it sought to upend. Contra Badiou, for Wynter, Négritude is not determined by the oppressive structure that it seeks to upend. Rather, Négritude exists outside of the Self/Other binary that orders a particular world. Thus, contra Badiou, Wynter claims that Négritude produces itself outside the Self/Other or subject-other binary and therefore can be progressive and political.

4.2c: Epistemic Disobedience

What, then, is the correlation between the liminal position, Négritude, and the ability to constitute new worlds? The answer is located in a conception of epistemic disobedience. There are various ways in which Wynter performs epistemic disobedience. In "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being" and "1492: A New World View" (1995), two of her most foundational essays, she investigates specific representations of what it means to be human, and the structure that gives rise to, or produces, such representations. For instance, the production of Man 1 (or the rational subject) discussed above already presupposes what counts as knowledge. In a circular fashion, "Man 1" presupposes that knowledge can only be produced by rational subjects, yet rationality is attributed only to select groups of persons. Accordingly, groups of people who are not considered rational are thereby excluded from humanity, and are thus considered incapable of producing knowledge. As a result, knowledge has a very specific structure that Wynter claims is bound up with colonial conquest (see Wynter 2003; 1995). Walter Mignolo describes epistemic disobedience in the following manner:

> Under the rules of the epistemic canon, and according to its racial mandates, if you have been classified in/as difference, then you are required to submit and to

> assimilate to the canon or remain outside. Wynter does not follow either of these pathways. She instead engages what I call the decolonial option, a practice of rethinking and unraveling dominant worldviews that have been opened up by Indigenous and black and Caribbean thinkers since the sixteenth century in América (with accent) and the Caribbean. The decolonial option does not simply protest the contents of imperial Coloniality; it demands a delinking of oneself from the knowledge systems we take for granted (and can profit from) and practicing epistemic disobedience (2015, 106-107).

The practices of epistemic disobedience that Mignolo attributes to Wynter are not reactionary positions *against* dominant systems of knowledge. Rather, epistemic disobedience is an interrogation of the manner in which knowledge production transpires. The act of "delinking" that he makes reference to as an important aspect of epistemic disobedience denotes a specific location from which practices of epistemic disobedience can be enacted. From such a location, an interrogation of dominant knowledge systems can take place *outside* the dominant system of knowledge itself. For her, however, this "outside" does not reify the binary logic discussed above, whereby the dominant system of knowledge exemplifies the "One" and practices of epistemic disobedience represent what is "Other." Rather, dominant systems of knowledge are founded on a binary logic, whereby what is (e.g. the rational subject, the counted) always already presupposes what is not (i.e. its negation). The act of delinking and practices of epistemic disobedience necessitate a location outside this binary logic, a kind of third position. It is this position of radical differentiation from the structure of knowledge production itself, that makes possible a "rethinking and unraveling of [a] dominant worldview."

As noted by Mignolo above, "Indigenous and black and Caribbean thinkers since the sixteenth century" have been engaging in decolonial practices of epistemic disobedience. Jane Gordon's practice of creolization discussed in Chapters Two and Three enacts similar decolonial practices, whereby it is imperative to engage with theorists outside of the dominant system of knowledge production (Frantz Fanon in her case) in order to reconceive of figures in the philosophical canon (Jean Jacques Rousseau, for instance). The manner in which this engagement is enacted, however, is equally important. For instance, Gordon is careful not to make use of or appropriate Fanon for the purpose of developing a theory based on Rousseau. Rather, as she states explicitly, Fanon and Rousseau must equally be imposing on the other. Through this method of creolization, she is not enacting the rejection of the Western European philosophical canon, instead she is providing the conditions for a new structure of knowledge by meaningfully introducing thinkers that have been delegitimated and marginalized within philosophy.

Within practices of epistemic disobedience, Wynter's goal is "to introduce and integrate […] several 'new objects of knowledge' which cannot meaningfully exist within the discursive *vrai* (truth) of our present 'fundamental arrangements of knowledge' nor within the analogic of its '(ethic-) theoretical foundations'" (Wynter 1990, 207). In addition, what becomes possible is the establishment of new ground, upon which "new objects of knowledge can find their efficient criterion/condition of truth" (Ibid., 207-208). According to Mignolo, Wynter is not attempting to overturn existing systems of knowledge. Rather, through her critique, she is attempting to change the way in which knowledge is produced and through which *knowing itself* is constituted. At the same time, however, he claims that "Wynter is not proposing to contribute to and comfortably participate in a system of knowledge that left her out of humanity (as a black/Caribbean woman),

but rather delink herself from this very system of knowledge in order to engage in epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo 2015, 106). Thus it would seem that, for her, in addition to offering a critique of how knowledge is produced she is also attentive to her own positionality (as an academic) in relation to systems of knowledge production. While epistemic disobedience is not a concept Wynter herself employs, it nonetheless provides a manner through which one can understand her methodology.

In addition, new objects of knowledge exceed and cannot be constrained or understood within the production of knowledge already operating. In so doing, epistemic disobedience can serve to disrupt the "episteme or fundamental arrangements of knowledge," insofar as knowledge practices perpetuate a specific worldview (Wynter 1990, 208). In addition, "for fundamental change to take place, it must take place both in the conception and in the pattern of relations" (Wynter 1992, 67).

4.3: A Pluri-Conceptual Framework: Multiplicity and Difference

Wynter's conception of the liminal exemplified by the Négritude movement and the function of epistemic disobedience provide the conditions for her theory of emancipation. That said, in order to further develop her theory of emancipation, we must develop what she calls a "pluri-conceptual framework." This framework is of particular importance to her theory of emancipation because it both demonstrates the importance of identities such as race for a theory of emancipation, and, in line with the role of the liminal articulated above, it also describes a component of her theory that is universal. Central to this framework is, thus, an articulation of emancipation that is dependent upon particularity *and* universality. Her conception of universality is developed in her discussion of what she calls "Jamesian Poiesis."

In her essay titled "Beyond the Categories of the Master Conception: The Counterdoctrine of the Jamesian Poiesis" (1992), Wynter provides an analysis of the "deconstructive thrusts in [C. L. R.] James's works and the counterdoctrine that they produced" (63). Of interest to this project is her description of James's "pieza framework" that she describes as "pluri-conceptual" (Ibid.). "The pieza was the name given by the Portuguese, during the slave trade, to the African who functioned as the standard measure" or the equivalent of physical labor against which all the others could be measured" (Ibid., 81). The pieza was determined on the basis of the amount of labour an approximately 25 year old male in good health could produce. The values of slaves were thus determined on the basis of a pieza.

For Wynter, by way of James, the pieza can become a more general standard of measure "establishing equivalences between a wider variety of oppressed labor power" (Ibid.). In other words, the standard of slave labour is used to conceptualize oppressed labour power in general. The initial goal of the pieza framework is to displace normative Western conceptual frames, repositioning a labour conceptual framework such that it can incorporate the trade in African slaves (Ibid.). The starting point for this analysis of oppressed labour is the slave trade, thus emphasizing the importance of understanding the slave trade as foundational to a conception of labour. In addition, the pieza framework requires an analysis of the relation between modes of production and modes of domination (Ibid.). More specifically, "economic exploitation only follows on, and does not precede, the mode of domination set in motion by the *imaginaire social* of bourgeoisie" (Ibid.). Domination is thus not a product of economic exploitation, domination can be conceptually prior to economic exploitation, and a theory of labour must be able to account for this priority. James provides a theory of labour oppression that utilizes liminal positionalities and enacts epistemic disobedience.

Wynter's use of liminality for her theory of emancipation, and her discussion of James's pieza framework, also demonstrates the importance of identity for her theory of emancipation. Specifically, she states that "James was aided in the task of deconstructing these [Master] conceptions by his identity as Negro […] it is because of the multiplicity of his consciousness" (Ibid., 68). Wynter's use of "Negro" in this instance is not merely an invocation of negative identity, whereby James's identity and existence is entirely constituted through the dominant (white supremacist) order. Rather, her description of James's deconstructing of Master conceptions is meant to imply the critical capacity of the liminal position. James's marginalization and his critical interrogation of oppressive logics, indicates that there is thus some knowledge or perspective that James has access to that aids in his ability to offer a critique of Western conceptions of labour.

It is important to note here that Wynter's reference to James's Black identity aiding in the development of his theory of emancipation is explicitly distinct from Badiou's theory of emancipation. Recall that Badiou considers minoritarian and identitarian logics that do "not hesitate to posit that this culture's constitutive elements are only fully comprehensible on the condition that one belongs to the subset in question" to be "genuinely barbaric" (Badiou 2003, 12). By extension, as discussed in Chapter Two, politics cannot adhere to identities if a politics is to be emancipatory. Instead, identities must be subtracted from the truth of politics. Badiou might then consider it "barbaric" or apolitical for James to utilize his Black identity for the purpose of augmenting his theory of emancipation.

The question that remains, however, is in what way can Wynter offer a theory of universal emancipation that also emphasizes a role for identities? First and foremost, she stresses a multiplicity of intersecting identities in order to constitute one's lived reality. In speaking about

James she states "these multiple permutations [color, levels of education, levels of wealth, and levels of 'culture'] gave rise to multiple identities: to the 'ecumenicism' then of being a Negro– of being Caliban" (Wynter 1992, 68). The experience of "being a Negro" is not determined by any one particularity or essential characteristic. Instead there are multiplicities of identities that arise from a multiplicity of permutations. Similar to my description of race in Chapter Two through the work of Outlaw, race is conceived as "'a *cluster* concept' in which no single factor, like biological descent, is essential and thus the causal determinant of all the others" (Jeffers 2013, 406).

Second, she insists that "A system of color value existed side by side with capital value, education value, merit value, and labor value. To single out any of these factors was to negate the complex laws of the functioning of the social order, the multiple modes of coercion and power relations exiting at all levels of the social system" (Wynter 1992, 69). It is thus imperative to provide an analysis of social systems and power relations through a pluralistic framework. In contradistinction to Sartre's emphasis on class over race, Wynter notes that the "factory model was only one of many models" (Ibid.). Furthermore, in contradistinction to Badiou who subtracts particularity from his conception of the political, Wynter emphasizes "the multiple modes of coercion and of exploitation" (Ibid.). The pieza framework is an attempt to contain all modes of coercion and of exploitation (Ibid.), i.e. a framework that aims to "constitute the multiple identities and competing subjective entry points of struggle particular for achieving Black self-determination" (Glick 2016, 161). In other words, there is no singular mode of oppression and exploitation that provides the conditions for theorizing Black liberation or the Negro question. Neither is it possible to conceive of emancipation by subtracting particularities such as race, class, or gender from its conception. Rather, the pieza framework requires that one address

multiple modes of coercion. For example, as previously noted, a conception of economic exploitation ought not conceptually and materially center classism over racism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Third, "Different Pieza groups means different sites, opportunities, and actors of resistance to domination" (Ibid. 161). Thus, the implication is that political emancipation is a multifaceted approach. This means that there is no "mono-conceptual framework—no pure revolutionary subject, no single locus of the Great Refusal [of a social hierarchy], no single correct line" (Wynter 1992, 69). For Wynter, the benefit of the pieza framework is that it names particular groups ("women, workers, dominated races, and other groups" (Ibid., 63)) in order to articulate a theory of emancipation that can address multiple forms of oppression. To subtract particularity and identity from a theory of emancipation would be to subsume all oppression under one general and generic framework. Furthermore, as noted by Gordon and discussed in Chapter Three, a theory of oppression that is dependent upon a generic framework runs the risk of replicating a Eurocentric framework.

Wynter's emphasis on particularity can thus be juxtaposed with Badiou's conception of "the people." As discussed in Chapter Two, the people, for the most part, must denote a generic set from which all particularity is subtracted from it. In order for "the people" to be constituted politically, they must be faithful to a political truth that transcends the logic of the current state. Furthermore, all identities and particularities (such as race and gender), insofar as they are determined by the logic of the state the subject aims to upend, cannot be utilized for the purpose of universal emancipation. In other words, the people cannot seek the emancipation of Black trans women, for instance. Identities are thus negative and cannot be utilized for the purpose of emancipation. The question that I am attempting to address through the pieza framework is as

follows: what kind of oppression does such a theory of emancipation seek to upend? The problem that I have been attempting to make evident throughout this project is that for Badiou oppression itself seems to be conceived of along a single axis. In other words, there is little to no consideration of how different structures of oppression exist and how they need to be addressed in different ways. One might ask the following: in what way is the emancipation of Black people possible if there is no consideration granted to the knowledge of those who have been oppressed on the basis of their Blackness, without addressing the structure through which oppression of Black people takes place (racism, sexism, classism, for example), and without the affirmation of Black people in particular?

Wynter's analysis and development of the Pieza framework is an attempt to address such concerns regarding single-axis approaches to theories of emancipation. Yet, the framework that she provides through James is not solely focused on individual particularities. Rather, the Pieza framework is pluralistic, emphasizing a multiplicity of identities at the same time, in order to address multiple faces of oppression. Her politics of emancipation emphasizes, that is, "the mode of being together in the polis, is shaped by the struggle of groups and individuals to maintain or redefine the terms of their relations" (Ibid., 73). Universal emancipation thus takes the form of a multifaceted approach, through various identities, to approach all forms of oppression. "A pluri-conceptual theoretics, a universal based on the particular (Cesaire) is the logical result and outcome of the Jamesian poiesis [… that] leads necessarily to a praxis that is correspondingly plural in nature" (Ibid., 84, sic). Thus unlike Badiou for whom universality is juxtaposed against particularity, for Wynter, universality is based upon particularity. According to Wynter, it is possible to base universality on particularity if a theory of emancipation is pluralistic, intersectional, and engages in a politics of solidarity. For instance, she states, "a relation in which

the solidarity of the labor code, that is, of the world proletariat, must not negate the imperative solidarity of the African people. The road to the universal passes through the realization of the particular—at least in the popular conceptual frame" (Ibid., 87). Contra Sartre and Badiou, it is not the case that particularity must be sublated in order to attain universality, as something that needs to be overcome. Rather, for Wynter the realization of particularity is the source of universal emancipation. As mentioned in Chapter One, even Césaire states that the communist agenda should not forget about "the Negro question." Similarly, "black particularism […] opens up the possibility of providing a transcultural perspective" (Wynter 1998, 281). The benefit of such a framework is that it remains open to a plurality of oppressions. This theory is inclusive of, for instance, poor rural whites in the U.S. South. It is important to note, however, that the experiences of oppression of poor rural whites will be distinct from poor Black people in the rural U.S. South.

The general mode of resistance offered by James is dependent upon the affirmation of marginalized and oppressed communities. Furthermore, for Wynter, emancipation is motivated by the lived experiences of those who experience a tension at the heart of their lived reality and who critically interrogate this tension, i.e. those who exist in what she names the liminal sphere. For a theory to properly address the emancipation of all persons, it must not presume the mere contingency of racial identity. As Nesbitt states

> Césaire's brief article "Conscience raciale et revolution" concisely refutes […] the priority of proletarian class struggle, and the corresponding precedence of the vanguard Stalinist party (PCF), over anti-imperialism and anti-racism, to assert instead the imperative of black self-consciousness: "We must not be revolutionaries who accidentally happen to be black [*nègres*], but truly

> revolutionary blacks [*nègres révolutionnaires*].” The lived experience of racial subjection is in this view preeminent, and the recognition and assertion of the Martinican’s negritude, the article asserts, must occur prior to any truly revolutionary politics (Nesbitt 2013, 104).[29]

In this instance it becomes apparent that race is not incidental to the revolution; rather it provides a central feature of it. As a result, the liminal is not something that is empty nor ought we to endeavor to be indifferent to differences. Rather the liminal is a position that while unprivileged according to the norms and the structure of society, is privileged according to having the means to create new modes of existence. The liminal, as difference, is thus crucial for Wynter’s theory of emancipation. This move is then further evidenced by her maintenance of “cultural movements” such as the Négritude movement as having significant political import.

4.4: A Return to Gordon and Creolization

What remains to be seen is how one is to understand the relation, or distinction, between Gordon’s conception of creolization discussed herein, and my articulation of Négritude and a positive conception of race. In what follows, I outline what I take to be the two most evident differences between Gordon’s view and my own.

To begin, Gordon defines “creolization” in two ways. First, the concept “creole” is indebted to historically, geographically, and linguistically situated groups of people emerging in the 16th century (Gordon 2014, 2). Yet her use of “creolization” is distinct from these groups of people. Second, her working definition of “creolization” concerns a “particular approach to politics and to the engagement and construction of political ideas” (Ibid.) whereby “opposed,

[29] This selection of text refers to a specific era of Césaire’s writings. There are various eras in his writings and (significantly) his political career and there were various twists and turns throughout. That said, the quote that is used here most accurately reflects Wynter’s use of his works.

unequal groups forged mutually instantiating practices in contexts of historical rupture" (Gordon 2014, 3). Most pointedly, this approach (a) "focuses on collective ends beyond those of basic coexistence and toleration [and] draws attention to the mutual transformation involved in molding that which emerges as politically shared" (Ibid., 3) (b) by offering "noncanonical interpretations of a canonical figure" (Gordon and Roberts 2015, 2-3).

It is on the basis of the two last points, regarding collective ends and the canonical figure, that I locate the differences between our respective projects. First, Gordon's use of "collective ends" as an aspect of creolization for the purpose of universal emancipation can be construed as somewhat problematic insofar as it fails to recognize that struggles for emancipation may be more complicated and difficult to negotiate. Gordon's statement seems to presuppose that it is always the case that a common goal, or a collective end, can be located between various disparate disenfranchised communities. However, according to Alcoff, "group interests sometimes coincide and at other times collide" (2016). While it is sometimes the case that various groups can come together and work towards a common goal, to presume that a politics of emancipation *only* takes place when this is the case is to offer a very narrow conception of politics and emancipation.

Second, Gordon's process of creolization is located between noncanonical and canonical figures, and thus always necessarily situated in relation to Western European Theory. For instance, Gordon's and Neil Roberts's 2015 edited collection titled *Creolizing Rousseau* engages in the political practice of creolizing Rousseau (as the title of this book suggests). Similarly, her 2014 monograph titled *Creolizing Political Theory* engages in creolizing Rousseau by way of a relation to Fanon. As such, it is only by placing the dominant figure in relation with a non-dominant or marginal theorist that the political practice of creolization is possible for her. Such a

pairing should raise questions regarding the extent to which Rousseau and, by extension, Western Philosophical theory is necessary for theories of emancipation. Furthermore, one might ask the degree to which creolization is a process that is demanded of all theorists or merely those for whom creolization (or proximity to that which is creole, or marginal) is not yet attained. As a result, it thus seems as though the political process of creolization implicitly re-centers (albeit unintentionally) an already dominant position. Or, to put it in different terms, one might inquire into whether it is the case that marginal theorists are important in and of themselves, or only to the degree that they are in conversation with dominant theorists.[30]

In the latter part of this dissertation, I have attempted to demonstrate that Wynter's articulation of Négritude, as well as her construction of universal emancipation, is different than what is offered by Badiou and Gordon for (at least) two reasons. First, as discussed in Chapter Four section 2a, Wynter centers the marginal or liminal position in the section titled "The Role of Liminality." Second, the manner in which Wynter locates the liminal position is not in relation to a dominant position, as discussed in Chapter Four section 2b titled "The Négritude Movement.". Notably, in her articulation of Négritude, she proposes that it embarks on a process of constructing a "WE that needed no OTHER" (Wynter 1976, 92). The most obvious interpretation of this statement is that Négritude need not be bound up with its other, i.e., Western theories. Such a move reiterates one of the features of a positive conception of race

[30] In a similar fashion, Donna V. Jones critiques Nick Nesbitt's description of Négritude in *Voicing Memory* for his dependence on Hegel's master/slave dialectic because of its reliance upon the recognition of the master race. She states, "The dialectic of reflection, by which self-consciousness is engendered, is inherently mutual for Hegel, yet the predication of self-esteem on the recognition of the master race is a tragically destructive act, an act sure to yield only shame and violence, internal and external" (2010, 167). In addition, she states, "it is absurd to think that slave labor of the New World plantations served any educative function [whereby the bondsman becomes conscious to his own meaning in the product of his labor] and that black intellectuals would embrace the fear and service that Hegel thought the bondsman must endure in order to become objective to himself. The Hegelian dialectic simply does not seem to fit the experience of African slaves in the New World" (Ibid.). One might also consider Fanon's critique of Hegel's master/slave dialectic in *Black Skin, White Masks*. However, this critique is not a central concern for this project.

outlined in Chapter One, i.e. that Négritude need not be reduced to racism and that it need not be found lacking.

Moreover, there is a justifiable reason for Wynter to advance such an articulation of Négritude, and for such a justification we might also consider the works of Césaire. For him, political emancipation should not come in the form of the subordination of a part for a common goal or collective ends. Rather, as noted in Chapter One, racial and colonial emancipation is more complex and of a different nature, therefore such emancipation may require different strategies than other forms of emancipatory processes. Additionally, he states the following:

> [W]hat I want is that Marxism and communism be placed in the service of black peoples, and not black peoples in the service of Marxism and communism. That the doctrine and the movement would be made to fit men, not men to fit the doctrine or the movement (Césaire 2010, 150).

Césaire warns against centering whiteness (for instance) in political emancipatory movements under the guise of universality. Contra the argument offered by Sartre (regarding the relationship between racial emancipation and class-based emancipation), Césaire argues that the communist party ought to be concerned with the needs of black peoples. In other words, the center around which the communist party rotates need not be emptied of substance but instead filled with the particularity of those who are most marginalized.

To be clear, it is not the case that by outlining the importance of particularity for emancipatory movements that one must assume a position of pure particularity (or cultural relativism) against universalism. Similarly, it is not the case that this position presumes a purity that cannot be altered by any other. In fact, in response to the former of these two claims, Césaire states the following:

> I am not burying myself in a narrow particularism. But neither do I want to lose myself in an emaciated universalism. There are two ways to lose oneself: walled segregation in the particular or dilution in the "universal." My conception of the universal is that of a universal enriched by all that is particular, a universal enriched by every particular: the deepening and coexistence of all particulars. […] So we need to have patience to take up the task anew; the strength to redo that which has been undone; the strength to invent instead of follow; the strength to "invent" our path and to clear it of ready-made forms, those petrified forms that obstruct it" (Ibid., 152).[31]

Herein lies a claim that is similar to one made by Wynter, in conversation with C. L. R. James's and a pluri-conceptual framework developed in Chapter Four, section 3. In this section, I outline the way in which a (new) form of universalism becomes possible through the affirmation of particularities thus preserving the importance of a positive conception of race. Such a framework not only avoids the trappings of narrow (or pure) particularity, but also of a Euro-centric conception of universality.

It is also important to keep in mind that it is *not* the case that Négritude describes a positive content that cannot be altered by engaging with seemingly disparate discourses. As previously argued in Chapter One section 3, the conception of race offered through Césaire in particular, and Négritude in general (while recognizing that this is not the dominant interpretation) does not propose that race is something static and unchanging. Rather, in these examples, race is better understood as dynamic and continually changing. The dynamism of racial identity is thematized in Césaire's "Notebook of a Return to the Native Land" as follows:

[31] This letter culminates with the following statement: "Under these conditions, I ask you to accept my resignation as a member of the French Communist Party. *Paris, October 24, 1956*" (Ibid.).

"the great black hole where a moon ago I wanted to drown it is there I will now fish the malevolent tongue of the night in its motionless veerition!" (Césaire 1983, 85, sic.). According to Jones, "the black hole (trou) […] may be read as an internal cross-reference, signifying, among other things, the spiritual space uncovered by the poet's persistent probing of the depths of plural black identity" (Jones 2010, 165). Or, similarly, Davis describes this theme as follows:

> Negritude is positively defined not by predicate nouns […] but by verbs […] The shift to verbs strongly indicates that Negritude is not to be regarded as a state, but an activity – an activity of self-exploration, of "delving" into the psycho-social unconscious. Negritude is nothing less than the ongoing process itself, the subterranean interior journey (Davis 1997, 50-51).

Thus, it seems to be the case that Césaire offers a conception of race that is plural and thus not static, pure, totalizing, nor unchanging. These points serve to reinforce the argument I provide above regarding debates in Négritude Studies and they coincide with Wynter's argument against essentialism in Chapter Four, as well as the various articulations of a positive conception of race offered by Jeffers, Outlaw, and Du Bois. It is on these grounds that the conception of Négritude that I advance through Césaire and Wynter is distinct from Gordon's conception of creolization and Badiou's conception of universal emancipation.

Conclusion

In many ways, this is not only a cursory account of Wynter's project, but also a cursory analysis of the relation between Badiou and Wynter. However, the central feature of this project has been the role of race in their respective theories. The previous chapters focused on Badiou's politics of indifference as providing the means for political universal emancipation. In this sense, his

position is easily juxtaposed with Wynter's uplifting of the liminal position (as difference). Namely, identity can be constituted for the purposes of emancipation, whereby new objects of knowledge can be created for the purpose of a new emancipatory episteme and new conceptions of the subject. That said, there is much work left to be done.

Conclusion

This project aims to offer an analysis of the conception of race that operates in Badiou's theory of the political, paying special attention to his conception of emancipation. Generally speaking, I have approached the problem of race with the following questions in mind: for whom is emancipation possible in Badiou's political theory? What counts as emancipation? And furthermore, what are the historical conditions that Badiou relies upon to decide what counts as politics and emancipation? Such questions have motivated the entirety of my project. Additionally, very few theorists have examined his conception of race in relation to Francophone Black Studies, and my project begins to take up that task as well. In what follows, I first attend to historical connections within Francophone political theory that link Badiou's work to authors of the Negritude movement. Second, I offer an overview of the project, and demonstrate the merits and relevance of such research today. Finally, I conclude by outlining several additional dimensions of scholarship to which my work in this project can contribute.

Interventions in Francophone Studies

First, Francophone Black studies is a particularly pertinent and important area of study that ought to be brought into conversation with Badiou's project. As such, it will be important here to mention some biographical information about several of the authors that I have addressed in this project thus far to highlight how their respective writings may be importantly put into conversation. As many readers may already know, Césaire was a Martinican politician and author. He attended the *École Normale Superieure* (passing the entrance exam in 1935) in Paris, and while he was there he started a literary review journal titled *L'Étudian Noir* (The Black Student) with Senghor and Léon Dumas, both of whom were founding members of the Négritude

movement alongside Césaire. Césaire was granted a state funeral in 2008, at which the President of France (then-President Sarkozy) was in attendance. Senghor, too, was reared in the shadow of French colonial dominance. He was born in French West Africa (what is present-day Senegal), studied at the Sorbonne, the *École Normale Superieure*, and graduated from the University of Paris in 1935.

Adding to this Black Francophone history, Fanon was born and reared in the French colony of Martinique. Coming from a middle-class family, Fanon was well educated and studied under Césaire in Martinique, and then went on to study medicine and psychology in Lyons, France, where he also took classes with prominent French philosophers of the era, including Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Fanon was also close friends with Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.

Accordingly, Badiou's work as a French political theorist could be thought to fit well into this history of Francophone theorists exploring conceptions of race and politics. Namely, Badiou was born in French Morocco, and, like Césiare and Senghor, also attended the *École Normale Superieure* (in 1955-1960). As such, there are a number of geopolitical connections between Badiou, Césaire, Fanon, and Senghor that ought to be explored.

Moreover, such connections might warrant the assumption that there could be some familiarity on Badiou's part of the work of these previous theorists. In this vein, it is apparent that Badiou does have, at the very least, a passing familiarity with these authors. For instance, in *Black* he makes one reference to Césaire's writings, and in *Logics of Worlds* he refers to "the wretched of the earth" (2009a, 53) an obvious reference to Fanon's (1961) *Wretched of the Earth*. Unfortunately, however, Badiou makes this statement without specific reference to, or acknowledgement of, Fanon's work. Accordingly, these disparate references in his corpus

suggest that Badiou has not adequately done the work of engaging with these authors, nor with the literature and debates that surround these theorists, a limitation that I have addressed in this project, and that I hope further scholars in Francophone political theory and Black Studies can continue to explore.

Analysing Badiou on Race

In order to begin to offer a response to the kinds of questions offered in the opening paragraph of this conclusion, throughout the project I have brought Badiou's politics of indifference into conversation with a number of pertinent historical and philosophical debates regarding race.

First, I have drawn a correlation between Badiou's conception of Négritude and the 1948-1952 debate between Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon. As stated in Chapter One, the Fanon-Sartre debate is situated between Sartre's "Black Orpheus" (1948) and Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon's concern (according to Gines and Bernasconi) was that Sartre's "Black Orpheus" relinquished race to a moment in a dialectic that needed to be overcome in order to achieve universal emancipation. In Sartre's essay, race becomes an obstacle to emancipation, and thus is conceived as problematic. While there are notable differences between Badiou and Sartre, the similarities between their respective discussions of Négritude, and the role that Négritude can play in what they respectively call emancipation is striking. I argued that like Sartre, Badiou construes race as an obstacle to universal emancipation. Fanon's concern regarding the denigration of race as a category for emancipation still haunts Badiou's 2017 book *Black*. This comparative analysis between Sartre and Badiou is timely—given that *Black* was published so recently—and important, because the debate between Fanon and Sartre continues to be engaged by contemporary scholars of race in the 21st century.

The second debate that I bring into conversation with Badiou's political theory of emancipation is located within the field of critical race studies, and I offer two approaches to understand critical approaches to race that are relevantly linked to Badiou's "politics of indifference." First, I address W. E. B. Du Bois's engagement with the question of whether "races" ought to be conserved. Second, I discuss two contrasting interpretations of the Haitian Revolution.

In Du Bois's 1897 essay titled "The Conservation of Races," the author proposes that there are conceptions of race that should persist despite considerable political gains for African Americans. This proposition presumes that there are conceptions of race that exist that are not reducible to what Fanon calls the "white gaze," or what might otherwise be named white supremacy or structural racism. While some figures, such as Anthony Appiah (2000) have critiqued Du Bois's argument for the conservation of races, other theorists such as Kathryn Gines (2003), Chike Jeffers (2013), and Lucius T. Outlaw Jr. (1996) have not only engaged in a defence of Du Bois's argument but have extended it as well. Out of this rich debate regarding the conservation of races comes the necessity of distinguishing between positive and negative conceptions of race. As I argue in Chapter Two, a negative conception of race maintains that race is reducible to oppressive structures, and that in order to do away with racism one must also do away with race. This negative conception of race is consistent with my analysis of Sartre. For Du Bois, Gines, Jeffers, Césaire, Wynter, and Outlaw, however, there exist positive conceptions of race. A positive conception of race exists independently of racial oppression, and instead affirms joy, life, and the value of Blackness (Césaire, Fanon, and Jeffers), as well as collective histories associated with Blackness (Gines, Jeffers, and Wynter). Accordingly, I endorse the claim that it

is possible to think race independently of white supremacy, and that race ought not be reduced to an effect of white supremacy.

I thereby bring Badiou into conversation with these critical race theorists by way of my discussion of negative and positive conceptions of race. I argue that he fails to account for a positive conception of race that is consistent with this debate regarding the conservation of races. Badiou seems to propose that race can only be construed as a negative concept, bound up with notions of white supremacy (for instance), and, for this reason, that race is a concept that must be overcome in order to engage in political emancipation. His negative conception of race, I propose, re-centers whiteness as wholly determining. Furthermore, the presumption that race is antithetical to politics because it is divisive or essentialist offers a limited conception of race that fails to properly account for the many rich and diverse discussions available regarding positive conceptions of race. Contra Badiou, I have proposed (alongside Wynter, Césaire, and Outlaw) that a positive conception of race can be political.

Within this vein of inquiry, in Chapter Three, I have situated a discussion of the Haitian Revolution as a hard problem for Badiou's theory of emancipation and his politics of indifference. In this chapter, I offer two readings of the Haitian Revolution. First, Nesbitt, a prominent Badiou scholar, employs a Badiouian political framework in order to analyze the Haitian Revolution in *Universal Emancipation* (2008) and *Caribbean Critique* (2013). Nesbitt's articulation of the Haitian Revolution provides a mode through which one can apply Badiou's theory to a political movement that seeks the emancipation of racialized subjects. However, in Nesbitt's analysis, race does not have any political implications. The second (or alternative) reading that I offer emanates from David Geggus's *The Haitian Revolution* (2014) (a historian of the Haitian Revolution), and George Ciccariello-Maher's "So Much the Worse for the Whites"

(2014) (a decolonial theorist). In their respective analyses of the Haitian Revolution, race takes on political significance. While one might ask why one should opt for the alternative reading of the Haitian Revolution rather than the one offered by scholars of Badiou, this was not my primary concern. Rather, I aimed to shift the concern regarding this debate to ask instead, why should one opt for the Badiouian reading of the Haitian Revolution over the one that is concerned with race? Along this same line, what, then, would be the problem with race such that it must be excluded from a theory of emancipation? Moreover, in my analysis of the Haitian Revolution through the alternative readings offered by Geggus and Cicarriello-Maher, I outline why it is the case that the Haitian Revolution ought to be conceived of as a political event, and one that is emancipatory, but also how Badiou's conception of politics fails to properly take-up this revolutionary moment. By way of a careful analysis of pivotal moments of the Haitian Revolution, it becomes apparent that race is a central proponent of this movement. Furthermore, attempts to devalue the role race plays for this revolution only seem to re-center a problematic conception of whiteness and Eurocentrism.

Lastly, the third area of analysis that I have brought Badiou's theory of emancipation into explicit conversation with is decolonial theory. Namely, I engage with the work of Aníbal Quijano and (more extensively) Sylvia Wynter to examine their respective approaches to politics and race, and compared this to the position of Badiou. Wynter is a particularly relevant decolonial theorist to bring into conversation with Badiou in this project for two reasons. First, her use of Négritude as a theoretical and political concept—in "Ethno and Socio Poetics" (1976)—can be read alongside Badiou's description of Négritude as a cultural concept in *Black*. Wynter's interpretations of such authors as Césaire and Fanon also proved to be helpful in drawing a continuity between the Fanon-Sartre debate and her own writings. In this sense,

inherent to Wynter's decolonial politics is an anti-essentialist conception of race whereby race is creative, changing, and productive.

Wynter's decolonial project drawing from C. L. R. James in "Beyond the Categories of the Master Conception" (1992) offers a model for universality (or universal emancipation) that can incorporate a positive conception of race. Once again, her reading of universal emancipation can be read alongside Badiou's theory of emancipation and yet, as I have argued in the last chapter, Wynter's conception of emancipation addresses the limitations of Badiou's project with respect to race outlined in Chapters Two and Three. The critical comparative analysis performed in this project between these two authors is particularly illuminating because I engage in a debate about the relevancy of race and of particularity for a conception of emancipation. The debate in which I engage is thus not one between conceptions of particularity over and against universality. Rather, much of my project concerns divergent conceptions of universality. Rather than propose that one must do away with all forms of particularity (like race) in the political realm in order to achieve something universal, Wynter calls for a politics of solidarity. According to such a view, particularities can coexist alongside other particularities when working toward converging goals. Or, as noted by Alcoff, "group interests sometimes coincide and at other times collide" (2016). Yet, for Wynter, universal emancipation requires that one address multiple forms of oppression through a multiplicity of forms of resistance.

Further Avenues for Analysis

It is my hope that this project makes evident that more scholarship is needed that engages why it matters to examine race within Badiou's project and what the implications of his work are for theorists of race. One such potential line of research is to develop a response to the question: can

Badiou be creolized? As noted in Chapters Two and Three, Gordon's conception of "creolizing" in *Creolizing Political Theory* (2014) is described as a "particular approach to politics and to the engagement and construction of political ideas" (2) whereby "opposed, unequal groups [forge] mutually instantiating practices in contexts of historical rupture" (3). Just as Gordon brings Jean-Jacques Rousseau into conversation with Frantz Fanon, so too could one bring Badiou into conversation with a number of opposing and unequally situated political theorists. This method of creolization of Badiou's project could be a fruitful way to address some of the limitations of his project outlined in this dissertation.

An additional potential area of investigation to consider might be the implications of, and correlations between, Badiou's conception of race and his implementation of sexual difference throughout his writings. There are two reasons in particular why it is important to consider correlations between his conceptions of race and sexual difference. First and foremost, a properly intersectional account of race and sexual difference requires such analysis. The project as it currently stands, with its concentration on race to the exclusion of an account of sexual difference, runs the risk of effacing the position of Black women, for instance.

Second, 2011 marks a significant turn in Badiou's conception of sexual difference according to Louise Burchill, a prominent Badiou scholar. In "Of a Universal No Longer Indifferent to Difference: Badiou (and Irigaray) on Women, Truths and Philosophy" (2018), Burchill describes this radical turn:

> In a startling inflexion of his core tenet of truths' trans-particularity or the neutrality of the universal, Badiou's 2011 paper "Figures of Femininity in the Contemporary World" proclaims that truth processes can no longer be considered as indifferent to sexual difference, with it now necessary, thereby, to examine how

> sexuation functions in the domains of political, scientific, artistic and amorous truths (Burchill 2018).

As noted throughout this dissertation, previously Badiou called for the subtraction of all predicates from the subject. This means that the subject of truth could not retain any identity, including those pertaining to gender or sexuality. Consistent with the politics of indifference developed in Chapter Two of my dissertation, politics must remain indifferent to differences (such as race and gender) in order to be emancipatory, and thereby political.

However, the turn that Burchill remarks as having taken place in Badiou's "Figures of Femininity" calls for a reconceptualization of what the subject of truth procedures can look like. One can now ask, for instance, "what is a woman involved in emancipatory politics?" (Burchill 2018). In other words, if the difference of sexual difference is pertinent to politics, then in what way does "woman" for instance operate in that truth procedure? Furthermore, drawing on the title of Burchill's forthcoming article, one might ask: What might a conception of the universal that is no longer indifferent to difference look like? As I have proposed throughout this project, I believe that Wynter offers us an analysis of what such an articulation of the universal might look like.

Regarding Badiou's political theory, considerable work must be done before an answer to this question is even possible, and theorists such as Louise Burchill and Sigi Jöttkandt are already engaging in the implications of this radical change for his theory of sexual difference. That said, such an analysis requires that one understand why it is that sexual difference takes on a distinct role. Is Badiou unintentionally implementing a biological or essentialist conception of sexual difference? In addition, how are sexual difference and race constituted differently for him

such that the turn in the relation between truth and sexual difference does not extend to race as well, evident in his most recent book about race *Black*?

Whatever the case, this radical turn in Badiou's conception of sexual difference has significant implications for his conception of race as well as for his articulation of politics and emancipation. However, providing a response to such questions, and an analysis of the implication of this radical turn for his project, requires a considerable amount of additional work.

Lastly, regarding Wynter's political theory, I believe that much work is left to be done in order to demonstrate how it is that she is offering a new conception of humanism, one that is not indifferent to differences, for example. As I have developed in Chapter Four, she is offering a critique of conceptions of "the human" that dominate various historical periods and the ways in which they are problematic. However, her attempt to critique and dismantle problematic conceptions of "the human" that operate for the purpose of oppression does not mean that she does not (or cannot) offer a robust and nuanced account of humanism. However, more work needs to be done in order to develop a clear analysis of her theory of humanism, and to draw out the differences between Wynter's and Badiou's humanism.

Such questions are projects for another time. What I have offered here is an attempt to open further avenues for analysis within Badiou's work, and to engage with critical theorists of race and decolonial scholars to extend philosophical thinking about the questions of emancipation and universalism, race as a positive conception of identity and meaning, as a well as the value of theorizing from the margins. Such questions, I hope, remain significant within political theory for many decades to come.

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