THE CASSANDRA COMPLEX: ON VIOLENCE, RACISM, AND MOURNING

by

ALFRED FRANKOWSKI III

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of Philosophy
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

June 2012

DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Alfred Frankowski III

Title: The Cassandra Complex: On Violence, Racism, and Mourning

This dissertation has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of Philosophy by:

Naomi Zack	Chairperson
Theodore Toadvine	Member
Alejandro Vallega	Member
Michael Stern	Outside Member

and

Kimberly Andrews Espy	Vice President for Research & Innovation/Dean of the Graduate School

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

Degree awarded June 2012

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Alfred Frankowski

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Philosophy

June 2012

Title: The Cassandra Complex: On Violence, Racism, and Mourning

The Cassandra Complex is a work in the traditions of critical philosophy and psychoanalysis. In *The Cassandra Complex,* I examine the intersection of violence, racism, and mourning. I hold that analysis of this intersection gives birth to a critical view on the politics of memory and the politics of racism as it operates in its most discreet forms. What makes violence discreet is that it escapes identity or is continually misidentified. I call that structure of violence that escapes being identified as such "White violence" and argue that this structure of violence undermines our normative ways of addressing racist violence in the present. This creates a continual social pattern of misidentification, mistaken memory, and mistaken practices of thinking about the violence of racism, both past and present. The present form of this misidentification could be called post-raciality, but it is specific to how we understand and remember our own history of anti-Black violence. I argue that post-racial memory produces memory only to facilitate forgetting and thus is only seen as a social pathology in the public sphere. The term "Cassandra Complex" provides an identity for the type of social pathology that appears at the critical edge of political discursivity.

From the analysis of this social pathology, I argue that aesthetic sorrow, allegorical memory, and a sublime sense of mourning disrupt the normative functioning of the social pathology. Indeed, I argue that aesthetic sorrow makes the present strange by making the

politically unbearable aesthetically unrepresentable. This sense of loss constitutes its own history, appearing first as an a*esthetics of anesthesia*, then as *a memory that is also an amnesia*. Thus, I hold that a robust notion of allegory can be translated into the public sphere as a way of exposing the degenerative effects of post-racial memory. Moreover, I hold that allegory allows for a social analysis of those political conditions that make public that which has gone silent. I argue that an understanding the political significance of that continual movement of silence is the task of understanding the present form of violence in the post-racial.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Alfred Frankowski III

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
San Jose State University, San Jose, California

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy, Philosophy, 2012, University of Oregon
Master of Arts, Philosophy, 2005, San Jose State University
Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, 2002, San Jose State University
Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, 2002, San Jose State University

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

19th and 20th Century Continental Philosophy and Philosophy of Race

Aesthetics and Political Philosophy

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, Philosophy Department, 2011-2012.

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, Humanities Program, 2009-2011

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, Philosophy Department, 2006-2009

Teaching Assistant, Philosophy Department (SJSU), 2003-2004

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Collegium Phænomenologicum Summer Seminar, Citta di Castello, 2011

Promising Scholar Fellowship, *University of Oregon*, 2005-2006

The Robert Shapiro Award, *San Jose State University*, 2005

Ronald E. McNair Scholar, *San Jose State University*, 2004-2005

Outstanding Undergraduate Student Research, *San Jose State University*, 2004

PUBLICATIONS:

Alfred Frankowski, "Sorrow as the Longest Memory of Neglect: Aesthetic Sorrow and Allegorical Memory in Du Bois, Davis, and Billie Holiday" *African American Review* (Under Review)

Alfred Frankowski. "Reframing History: Allegory, History, and the Political in Benjamin and Du Bois" *PhænEx: a Journal of Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture* (Under Review)

Alfred Frankowski. "Temporal Consciousness: Accounting for the Consciousness of Internal Time from James and Husserl in Dialogue with Philosophy of Mind." *McNair Research Journal*, 1, May, 2005: 105-133

Alfred Frankowski. "Playing Games in Business Ethics: Problems that Arise within Game Theory when Applied to Ethics" *Discourse: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, 10, Spring 2004: 77-89

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to Professor Zack for her support, guidance, and mentorship. In addition, I would also like to thank the members of the University of Oregon Graduate community for our many valuable conversations. Special thanks to Edgar Temam, Emma Reed Jones, Elena Cuffari, George Fourlas, Rhea Muchalla, Christy Reynolds, and Jose Mendoza for all of the support and conversations we have had. Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife, partner, and moral and creative compass, Francine Wien-Frankowski. Where this work succeeds it owes a great debt to her.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Dorothy Johnson, whose person I remember little, but whose character I have come to know well.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT EVASION: WHITE VIOLENCE, NEGATION, AND THE STRUCTURE OF POST-RACIAL MEMORY

All the decisive blows are dealt left handed. Walter Benjamin, *One-way Street*

While the theme of racist violence has often been addressed by political philosophers, it is rarely addressed as part of aesthetics. I argue that, from the standpoint of aesthetics, violence needs to be understood as a force that silences or anestheticizes discursive domains having to do with race, violence, and memory. *The Cassandra Complex* attempts to rethink the extent to which White violence can be determined aesthetically. I examine how discreet forms of violence that now seem to escape recognition as violence, nonetheless, have deep implications for the forms of racism that are deeply entrenched in our social norms. Throughout the dissertation, I refer to "Cassandra" to describe a social complex, because Cassandra was the prophetess whose prophesies related to the history of a culture's violence. Unlike many philosophers who have employed this term, I take it up as indicating problematic relationships to history, memory, and politics in general. Post-racial discourse erases, as much as it amplifies, the appearance of public discussions of race. Therefore, it presents unique set of paradoxes that would not appear otherwise. I examine some of these paradoxes as they occur within

the context of public memory or memorialization. I further argue that at present, race discourse is undergoing a paradigm shift that can be called the 'post-racial.' Since this dissertation will focus on how present violence relates to the past or to history, I will focus on post-racial memory.

I take up the problem of post-raciality from the side of public memory by examining the social meaning of memorialization, to argue that memory for post-racial discourse means something different. While we normally think of memorialization as an act of reconciling the present with the past, post-racial memory memorializes only to further indicate a disjoining of the present from the past. The effect of this is two-fold. First, one has many representations of the past and one can even have public demonstrations against present forms of White violence—but these are left at the level of mere appearance. They result in the appearance of political activity without the result of political action. Second, one can argue that the violence of racism from the past no longer applies to the present, but this signifies a deeper rupture with history. Thus, we may think we are no longer a racist society or that racism has changed. I concede that to a good extent it has changed, but it is questionable whether or not it has not lessened.

The dissertation also examines the ways in which the Cassandra complex responds to its own pathology. Toward this end, I argue that aesthetic sorrow, allegorical memory, and a political form of mourning are all ways in which the aesthetic responds to the post-raciality of the Cassandra Complex. If the space of representation facilitates forgetting, aesthetic sorrow responds to post-racial memory by making that absence of memory itself disclose the way the present remembers by forgetting.

Throughout the dissertation, I also develop claims about the relevance of a political notion of mourning. Mourning is recovered as a way of highlighting how the public conceals the disjoint that has come to identify post-racial memory. I close this discussion with considerations of how that the intersection that reveals how aesthetics traces the anestheticization of memory relates to how memory is transformed into mourning.

The structure and progression of the chapters develop the foregoing themes. Chapters I and two are intended to show the structure of post-racial memory as a symptom of the Cassandra complex, while chapters three and four are intended to show a critical shift between aesthetic and political meanings that unnerve the anesthetizing of memory and history. In Chapter I, I argue that post-racial memory allows for memory in representation, but from representation we also have forgetting. I attempt to show that post-racial memory is characterized by the way that the presence of memory facilitates forgetting. It is within this context that I resituate the aesthetic meaning of memory relative to anti-Black violence. We find that the meaning of memory and forgetting is altered in significant ways in the present, requiring that recognition of the past is part of our understanding of history. But, we fail to connect this with current anti-Black violence and anti-Black sentiments. And furthermore, we fail to see how post-racial memory operates on a political level, devaluing even discourses that take racial violence seriously.

By further developing this line of thought in Chapter II, I argue that at a deeper level, memory indicates something essential about the legibility of present violence through memorialization. I ask: Why is memorialization significant? What meaning does it hold for resolving the violence of the past? What potential does it have for producing

understanding of the present? I work through this problematic in three ways. First, I examine the meaning of memorialization in general and then argue that there is a political meaning that we need to be attentive to. Because of this, I argue that memorialization in post-racial memory needs to be attentive to how it depoliticizes memory and aesthetics. Second, I argue that this de-politicization is somewhat different if we compare it to the shifting meanings of memorials addressing similar forms of violence. Here, I examine Holocaust memorials and Rwandan memorials. What is distinctive about these memorials is that they connect the present to its own suffering by making the violence committed against itself a definitive part of the present. Third, I argue that because post-racial memory disconnects suffering, we see a corollary to the way contemporary philosophical politics seems to depend on depoliticizing history. This is clear in several contemporary Black political theories. I conclude with a challenge to recognition politics to attempt to re-understand its own activity.

From this point on, I attempt to consider what implicit forms of response are already operative in the Cassandra complex. Chapter III develops the potential of aesthetic sorrow and allegorical memory. I argue that in Black aesthetics, there has been an often-overlooked tradition of aesthetic sorrow that ties violence to our anxiety of being present to this violence through memory. I show that this insight is central to W.E.B. Du Bois's "The Sorrow Songs," songs which were intended to be the message of the slave to the world. In connection with Du Bois, I show that Walter Benjamin's development of philosophical aesthetics in regard to allegory shares many of the motifs of aesthetic sorrow. But, placing Du Bois's aesthetic sorrow in conversation with Benjamin's notion of allegory also illuminates a response to the lack of memory present in post-racial

memory and what goes silent; both build from loss, absence, crisis, and rupture to situate a present anxiety that has its deepest implications in the public sphere and not in individual psychologies. Further developing allegorical memory, I argue that Benjamin's political notion of mourning is also a form of redress. Last, I examine Billie Holiday's song, "Strange Fruit," as an example of a memorial derived from aesthetic sorrow that mourns through allegorical memory.

Chapter IV engages Kantian aesthetics. I briefly develop Kant's aesthetic of the Beautiful and the Sublime. My intention in this chapter is to show that Kant not only racialized the public sphere through aesthetics, but that he mapped out a type of response to violence that is surprisingly contemporary in regard to post-racial memory. Much of the chapter works to connect Kant's aesthetics to his philosophy of history and anthropology. But, I do this to show where Kantian aesthetics foreshadows an imminent critique, disclosed in his understanding of the aesthetics of the Sublime. I argue that the aesthetics of the sublime resituates the public sphere relative to what it cannot show itself. While the post-racial community may produce history, it goes silent to memory. This silence, I argue, is what raises mourning from a disruptive politics to a clue to the state of disrepair of the public sphere. I argue that the work of mourning that takes place aesthetically where the political is liquidated in the public sphere as anything more than the representation of political activity. In contrast, the political sense of mourning works on the public sphere to redefine itself relative to the violence it misidentifies. For this reason, the present work is not simply a meditation on violence and racism that is disclosed through memory, but it is also an analysis of where mourning becomes political.

I suggest that the reflected interior of the meaning of history that is negligent of its violence can only be responded to by the exteriorization of mourning. This does not imply that mourning loses its subjective meaning, but rather that mourning can also be viewed from the side of non-subjective meaning as well. The result of this is to view that public domain (let's call it the public sphere) where sociality is always progressing as long as no one refers to how the present reiterates the contradictions and violences of the past, from the side or back, to view it at a distance, and as something disenchanted. To be sure, this work retraces an enchanting dance. But I do this from the perspective of its exterior, which is to say that this dance is viewed as the ensemble of a series of abhorrent convulsions. The result of this effort is only to bring into view how the counter-movements that make the convulsion appear as a dance are more essential to giving a context to the whole of the movement.

1. White Violence as a Social Complex

The Cassandra Complex is a philosophical meditation on the aesthetic and political intersection of violence, racism, and mourning. However, this is not a meditation on the nature or essence of violence. This is not a meditation on violence toward the politically constituted *Other*. Rather, in this dissertation, I focus on that form of violence that appears only in how it is directed against its own population. I am interested in violence in this form because it often fails recognition. For this reason, in what follows, I attempt to identify the nexus through which violence escapes its own identification.

To suggest that something escapes our recognition as *violence* is to call our normative way of understanding the term *violence* into question. I am not interested in violence in

its singularity, but rather in how it forms a network or "complex" through aesthetic and political forms of negation. I will argue that the philosophical significance of this social "complex" lies in how it identifies a mechanism of misinterpretation that makes explicit violence's turn from the particularity of the instance of brutality to the systemic dispersal of oppression.

Two questions follow. First, how can one give analysis of discreet violence that turns away from our general way of recognizing and identifying it as such? Second, what is the significance of providing a philosophical structure for this? To identify violence that turns away from the political and aesthetic sense of recognition seems to present an anomaly to most, if not all, philosophical politics. Whether we adhere to Recognition politics, Identity politics, Reconciliation politics, or a Distributive Justice approach to politics, we must be able to identify violence as such before we regard present state of affairs as politically or socially problematic.[1] These approaches to political analysis are well suited for addressing the pastness of violence in most of its previous forms. They are adept at addressing the wrongness of the mass murders of the twentieth century like the Holocaust, Kosovo's Ethnic Cleansing, or the Rwandan Genocide. But I want to suggest that these theories have a tendency to understand violence a bit too retroactively and without further analysis, they are at a loss as to how to theorize violence in its present form, without the braces of the past. Once the former violence changes its mode of expression, say from overt practices of discrimination in hiring to discreet preferential patterns of hiring, the term 'violence' itself appears to be out of place in regard to these newer practices. The problem of the violence of institutional discrimination appears to be addressed by legislating discriminatory practices, but, we should also be attentive to how

this merely marks the transformation of practices from overt discrimination to more covert forms of discrimination. In the transformation of practices we see a way in which violence avoids being identified as such.

Aesthetics seems to require that one think through the problem of violence as a present agitation with appearance, intelligibility, or articulation. Aesthetics regards the politics of violence at its leveling activity, meaning, and relationality. Jacques Rancière argues that the political starts where that part that has no part makes a claim to inclusion.[2] He writes: "For all time, the refusal to consider certain categories of people as political beings has proceeded by means of a refusal to hear the words exiting their mouths as discourse."[3] According to Rancière, the political is properly the intensification of a public through a re-sensitivization toward those groups that are excluded. He writes that, "Political activity is whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes the place's destination. It makes visible what had no business being visible, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise; it makes understood what was once only heard as noise."[4] He argues that the negative aesthetic of oppressed groups interacts with the political as a type of *dissensus* or resistance that puts the conditions of normativity in question or places these terms out of play relative to what traces a negative relation to politics in aesthetics.[5]

By following the negative trace of aesthetics through politics, we find a resistance that is attempting to articulate itself as politically significant, as publically present. This is always the harbinger of violence at the aesthetic edge of publicality. One can recall a time when child abuse had no name or escaped under the double guises of "punishment" and "domestic matters" and yet there still existed a need for a way to address the politics of

this violence and there was still a need to make this pattern of acts public as violence. Likewise, we might recall the subtle misinterpretation of sexualized language, behaviors, and attitudes that made up the workplace prior to the Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas hearings. The violence of sexual harassment escaped under the guise of "boys will be boys" or "that is the price of admission" and other clichés. Both states of affairs required a shock to the political façade that penetrated deep into the social formation that resisted the changes required at the level of law. Both transformations required that a socially pathological set of behaviors be recast in the public as violence. The normativity of a pathology that conceals practices as normative suddenly appeared to reorganize the public sphere's sensitivity toward that domain that had not received public attention. Whether or not one can argue that it was only through an equal shock to the social and objective domain of aesthetics that they arrived at successfully transfiguring a mute subject to become audible as violence, I will argue that something of this nature is necessary for understanding the most persistent violence of racism in the present.

This dissertation is about anti-Black violence because it is now that the significance of discourses about anti-Black violence is in danger of being completely loss in a public sense. Currently, discourses that address anti-Black violence appears misinterpreted, misshaped, ill informed, and out of place. I call this transformation of public meaning that governs this shift the *post-racial* and I identify the structure as a social complex, called "The Cassandra Complex." Thus, the post-racial is only a symptom of a social complex. The post-racial is distinct in how it does not require or relate to our general ways of identifying racism, present or past. It is a structure that shapes public intelligibility, frames the oppositions that appear as available in response to violence, and

then negates the essential politicizing factor in the discourse. The Cassandra complex is about that violence that escapes recognition as political, but extends into aesthetics.[6]

But why is this social transformation philosophically meaningful? This is a question I cannot answer straight away. I can only suggest that without a way of reframing many philosophical questions about the violence of racism, we will reproduce something philosophically ineffective. For instance, without the post-racial aspects of memory or identity, one can say that white violence is a matter of invisibility. It is a matter of not being included or not recognized as having a body that matters.[7] One can also say that white violence is perpetrated through a restricted form of recognition. One can be recognized but only as that which is misinterpreted.[8] All of these lead to a way of thinking about white violence as dependent on appearance, knowledge, or recognition. What happens when you have recognition but you still have the residual violence of negation as well? The problem persists, while the method of address seems to conceal and leave unproblematic that which is necessary to illuminate the problem.

Again, we might argue that white violence is a matter of habit. The habit can be of privilege or of ignorance.[9] Whichever it is, there is a passive relation to violence that is conceded. White violence loses its agency, or it is a matter of habit. To address it all we need is education or the reshaping of habits. Yet again, it is conceivable that we can educate a person to eliminate the explicit forms of racism, while leaving the more discreet forms of violence intact. Moreover, in the post-racial era, ignorance and habit work as safe-havens for White violence.

We can see this clearly in the case of anti-Black violence. If we think that anti-Black violence is a matter of ignorance or misunderstanding, then we would have to account for how a history of lynching and a present of anti-Black violence is accounted for as a matter of ignorance rather than merely a lack of empathy. How can a history of anti-Black violence be available to a relatively educated public and yet, not known at the same time?

If the type of violence this study articulates is discreet and works through negation, then my objective is not to give analysis to those annoyances or offenses of everyday (Black) life. My goal is to trace how aesthetics pulls away from and negates the political, and likewise how the political pulls away from and negates the aesthetic. And while this study is cast in the mode of analysis of critical philosophy, it does not result in a synthesis, but rather I think it forms the basis of an exploration of what remains in how these two positions of the aesthetic and the political terminate in a negation of one another.

a) Social Pathology as Harmonized Negation

I call that violence that escapes identifying itself as such White violence. I call that social formation that continually misinterprets this White violence as violence a Cassandra complex. I mean this in its fullest Freudian sense. The term "Cassandra complex" suggests that there is something about social formation itself that cultivates a pathological aversion to drawing the discreet violence that grounds the most destructive and sustaining elements of racist violence into public discourse. I will argue that the

Cassandra complex is a work of aesthetics to the extent that it traces how our sensibilities are brought into conflict with themselves; and how this conflict establishes a type of normativity. *The Cassandra Complex traces that pattern of social conditions that make the politically unbearable align with that form of aesthetics that presents itself as the anesthetic extreme of aesthetics*. That is to say that the Cassandra complex is the series of social formations that appear where representation loses its *meaning* and becomes equal to the loss of representability.

We can think of this as a limit to politics in that politics has become insensate to violence directed against itself via aesthetic negations. Therefore, aesthetic analysis of objective forms of anti-Black violence is just as necessary as political analysis. Why can one only talk about political progress in terms of representation, and only within this sphere in a limited sense? Why must our collective social memory redistribute and exchange memories that pay heed almost exclusively to the most salient images of this progress, or to the most brutal signs of its failure? I think there must be something like an implicit thesis operative that bolsters claims of social progress. While explicit attack, segregation, and discriminatory practices appear to be *out of style* politically,[10] discriminatory behavior seems to be only mildly legislated.[11] This combination results in the same old political conclusion for Blacks: *Black bodies are as disposable politically and aesthetically.* Moreover, this implicit thesis makes sense of the claim that the social sphere is prey to that unresponsiveness that now has a similar result and a similar meaning to the unresponsiveness of the most explicit forms of racism prior to the human and civil rights movements. For civil rights era politics the violated body could be used effectively as a symbol to generate political awareness of dehumanizing circumstances,

and motivate political activity against the former un-articulated violence. This does not seem to be the case in post-racial discourse. Now, while the symbol animates a social response, it also withholds political responsibility and political meaning through the visibility and recognizability of the violence itself. That is to say that the symbol and the activity itself appear as a harmonized negation.

If we consider any of the recent cases of anti-Black violence, we see both racial and post-racial dynamics at play. For instance, consider the case of the murder of Trayvon Martin. Trayvon was a Black, seventeen-year old boy, who was stalked by George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watchman. After a brief confrontation, Trayvon was shot by Zimmerman. The police did not arrest Zimmerman for over a month. In this case, we can see at least two junctures of politics and aesthetics. First, we can see that the explicit violence of law and social recognition work to make Black bodies disposable at play. This is what identifies the case as involving some form of racism. But we can also see that there is a subtle violence that appears in how the case, once visible and public, fails to reach the level of public response. Likewise, political comments showed the same problem. President Barrack Obama addressed this case, by playing between the extremes of this juncture. He appealed to general sentimentalities between himself, his family, and by extension all families. He took a grotesque political failure and put a human face on it. He was quoted in the news as saying: "Obviously this is a tragedy. I can only imagine what these parents are going through. When I think of this boy, I think of my own kids."[12] He went on to say that: "If I had a son, he would look like Trayvon." And he concluded by saying that "As Americans we all need to do some soul searching and have a serious conversation about race in this country."[13] While he humanized the victim and

personalized the situation, he also de-politicized the problem by making it public—at least aesthetically. Did that make it public enough? It may not have, because in post-raciality, one can have demonstrations, conversations, or protests against such violence, but the law is not compelled by such displays. White violence merely modernizes itself, without being brought into contact with itself.

While the explicit violence targeting Blacks in America appears intermittently as a reminder of the presence of White violence, institutionalized erasure, violation, and displacement have maintained a steady force. However, this mechanism is not restricted solely to the Black male population. I will argue that, (a) the object of the mechanism is to change its subject into a Black object, and that (b) the mechanism remains one of White violence no matter whom or what is responsible.

b) The Politicization of Amnesia and Mourning

I hold that our present discourses on anti-Black racism are cast in historical terms, yet we seem to be caught in a time where we know history but do not recognize it as something we live with. We come to know our present violence *as if* it were a memory. Starting in this chapter, I will argue that the Freudian notion of a "complex" is powerful here, because it illustrates the social condition where we are alienated from memory on the one hand, and equally estranged from the most politically charged formations in our present, on the other.

By tracing the memory that negates itself until it is only expressed in terms of misunderstanding, I draw the themes of the dissertation into comparison with the tragic Greek figure of Cassandra. Cassandra is the anti-hero of this dissertation because she is

the figure in Greek literature that underwent, and retold this history of Greek violence to the Greeks who in turn, misinterpreted her prophecy and thereby reinforced their complex. Her prophecies required that the Greek's own history be heard as the exterior of a meaning reflected into the interior of the meaning of the present. It is the chorus who is the target of Cassandra's prophesies.[14] This is important in that the Chorus, which is the representative of the general public, suffers its own amnesia and insensitivity to its former explicit violence. It is Cassandra who bears the weight of making the general public sphere see itself as a pathology that has been repeated to the point of making its discord interpreted as harmony. It is Cassandra who appears to them to be the pathological subject. Unlike the chorus in Greek tragedies, I hope that we are better suited to recognize the import of that same old question that is being asked anew in both its harmony which it lives by, its discord by which that life is threatened, and what escapes at either end.

Cassandra's impact in the *Oresteia* is not only in how she articulates a past or a future, but also in how, with her, there is a failure to encounter the memory of violence. Let us remember that for the Greek political play to signify a progressive story that reconciles all past conflicts, each death must be accounted for and placed properly in the memory of the new Athens. But, what can we say about Cassandra? She is never mourned in the play. This may be that because she is such a minor character her death is insignificant. However, she is far more significant than might appear at first blush, and as such it is through her that the tragedy that purports to reconcile itself is interrupted by that aesthetically forgotten moment that is equally a political negation, a form disclosed only through mourning. In mourning the activity of political violence is the object of

interpretation, even when it can only be disclosed as a memory and its impact only felt aesthetically. Still the breakage it signifies remains very real.

2. Forgetting and Its Shadow

To look at memory from the side of its negation means that we need to focus on where memory is intertwined with forgetting. The classical way of characterizing the relationship between memory and forgetting is to think of them as being in opposition to one another. In Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, for instance, he writes "The struggle of man against power is always the struggle of memory against forgetting."[15] If Kundera is right, the struggle of memory against forgetting is *not* analogous to the struggle that the powerless wage against the despots of power. It is analogous to struggle that gets waged once one's power is recognized as becoming powerless. But, is this the same parallel that is most suited to the politics of memory in our time? It depends upon the memorability or forgettability of some dynamic that is raced, classed, and gendered. It is as much a matter of telling the story as it is a matter of tracing the fault lines that contribute to a collective repression.

Let us approach the analogy from the side of aesthetics, since from this standpoint forgetting appears as a form of memory. We can start with the assumption that aesthetically, memory is the making present of something lost. As Augustine holds in his *Confessions*, memory is a process of returning from a state of being unsettled, at a loss, out of joint to one's sense of self and time.[16] Its meaning is closed as it reconciles the present with the recollection of the past. Memory is tied to a process of recognition that makes sensate that which only belongs to something gone. Augustine further suggests

that memory is the tracing of forgetting. He writes, "…when I remember memory, my memory is present to itself by its own power. But when I remember forgetfulness, two things are present, memory by which I remember it, and forgetfulness, which is what I remember."[17] This is to say that in the broadest sense, memory is relative to mourning. This is what distinguishes memory from mere cognitive habit, on the one hand, and mere narrative, on the other. He argues that forgetting is a memory that retains its form, but is at a loss as to its content. When I try to recall something, my memory presents the forgetting and cannot reproduce what is forgotten. Forgetting follows memory like a shadow, but what follows forgetting? Forgetting is a negation of our relation to the past, and as such, it is the disclosure of a type of anxiety externalized through memory and what negates itself from remembering.

But is forgetting really a type of memory that is at its own limit, or is what we are talking about a different type of limit? Is this really the limit between memory and forgetting or forgetting and mourning? Mourning, according to Freud, makes the normativity of our life appear perverse. For Freud, mourning is the incorporation of absence in the present through return to that content that is no longer part of the life-ego structure.[18] Mourning does not reconcile or console. While we might say that forgetting is the suffering of the way we negate the past, this negation may also be the only part left to play by memory. But in this sense, the question brought to the foreground is not a question of memory, but rather a question of history, which is the externalization of the whole domain of memory into the public sphere.

History and memory have a unique aesthetic and political relationship in regard to what is negated from memory, history, or both. In "On the Concept of History," Walter

Benjamin writes that history is not a matter of getting the telling of the past right. He argues, "Articulating the past historically does not mean recognizing it "the way it really was." It means appropriating a memory as it flashes up in a moment of danger. "[19] He points out that history and memory are not simply a matter of narrative for narrative sake. Rather, our present relation to the past provides the material that may augment the aesthetically banal in the present, in a way that is politically active and in some cases *toxic*. According to Benjamin, the lost memory, however, politicizes the present to the extent to which its ideological content requires that we aesthetically relate to the past in a depoliticized manner. He states, "Everything about history that, from the very beginning has been untimely, sorrowful, and unsuccessful, is expressed in a face—or rather a death's head. And although such a thing lacks…all humanity—this is the form in which man's subjection to nature is most obvious…"[20] The negation from the material traces a history that retains its dialectic in its stillness. Mourning traces a negation of memory against the boundary line of meaning and memory. Mourning makes aesthetic a regression of memory and meaning. What meaning appears at the intersection of memory and mourning? What meaning appears where memory is disclosed only as a forgetting?

What seems to be disclosed in 'mourning' is a resituating of the question of meaning and memory in light of aesthetic regressive formations. In *The Gift of Death,* Jacques Derrida poses a question of memory and mourning as a question of why we suffer from an ignorance of our history.[21] He argues that to be haunted by a problem that retreats from the ontologizing conjuration of metaphysics is to be left out of joint.[22] But our "being out of joint" demarcates the sphere of being itself that is non-synchronic with time; this condition enacts its own disarrangement. Derrida suggest that this

disarrangement is what brings forward questions of right (*Recht*) and questions of justice which dialectically terminate the normativity of law and justice.[23] It brings these forward as questions, but memory remains the anesthetic to these questions.

The violence that memory mourns in the regressive social formations of the present is the continuation of White violence as a symptom of the Cassandra complex. In a sense, we are all distorted by a subtle form of White violence that places us at odds with ourselves. I want to show this displacement by engaging how white violence appears in how we depoliticize the objective side of memory, the objective side of mourning, and the objective meaning of aesthetics. I will consider mourning further over the course of the dissertation, but for now I want to focus on the anxiety that is disclosed at the juncture of aesthetics and politics.

a) Negation in Place of Memory

The relation of the activity of memory to mourning suggests that discreet violence is always legible in that it can always be traced by analysis of the structural conditions that identify its locus of activity and how it is embrocated in a network of undisclosed meanings. It also suggests that discreet violence is always enacted by some set of material and objective forms of negation. If we restrict our analysis of violence solely to its most explicit forms, then we lose much in that we never arrive at its dialectical completion. Violence denotes a break with law, morality, or normativity. It is given to particulars, regardless of whether it indicates a particular group, or a single agent. In this, we leave open the door through which it retains the ability to escape. For instance, when we think of violence committed against the state as embodied in the image of "the Middle

Easterner," the social ego is in a state of non-identity. But the same is true of images of the most explicit White violence against Blacks. If we look at the image of White police officers using dogs to attack Black children, the ego reverts to a state of non-identity or negation from identification. In negation, however, we will see how one side of this relation retains its meaning to memory or history, while the other side only retains its meaning in the way that it pulls away from the other. But in this pulling away, we can trace the negation that is foundational for its meaning—and it is this relational negation identifies the philosophical form of mourning that is politically oriented.

Mourning suggests that what lay reconciled in memory is active. On the one hand, we have a synchronic representational memory of history. But, raising a critique to this, Benjamin states, "Historical 'understanding' is to be grasped, in principle, as an afterlife of that which is understood; and what has been recognized in 'the afterlife of works,' in the analysis of 'frame,' is therefore to be considered the foundation of history itself."[24] History, in this sense, is productive; it bears a relationship to knowing and the known. It embodies a power of representation in that it is synchronous with a will to represent. He states, "Every present day is determined by the images that are synchronic with it: each 'now' is the now of a particular recognizability."[25] But as Benjamin further points out, synchrony is not the basis of political progress, solely because it can be a sign of progress. He argues that what appears as progress can also be a sign of decline. Moreover, Benjamin states, "History decays into images, not into stories"[26] and "In other words: the image is dialectics at a standstill."[27] In this standstill that effaces the dialectics of memory, the political potentialities of history are reduced to its symbolic referent, referring to nothing other than itself. For Benjamin this presents the very real danger of

detaching meaning and appearance. What is important for us, at this point, is that he provides a critique of history in a way that orients us toward the negations that remain active and in dialectical motion, despite their displacement. While this former approach is better suited for post-racial memory, we need to build it out of a memory of White violence itself.

b) The Dialectic of Racial Memory and Forgetting

The dependence of White violence on a relation to memory and history can be seen in the way the history of anti-Black violence changes from overt social forms of segregation to the erasure or devaluation of Black history. In one of the few studies on African American memorials, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*, Owen Dwyer and Derek Adlerman point out that,

> …the contributions of African Americans to American history were largely neglected prior to the 1970s, with the significant exception of the various Frederick Douglass high schools and Dunbar parks that dotted the segregation era's landscape. Since the appearance of King Streets, the historic invisibility of African Americans on the cultural landscape has seemed to be in retreat —and, this is a situation impossible to conceive of without the broad political and social change ushered in by the [Civil Rights] Movement.[28]

The advance that Dwyer and Adlerman point out here is significant, but the violence itself changes its form. When ignoring memory seemed to fail, defunding it seemed to prevail. Defunding had the advantage of allowing someone to claim the memorial had

value, but denying its existence. In 1981, when M.T. Billingsley petitioned the Chattanooga City Commission to name a street after Martin Luther King Jr., there was public agreement to the naming of a street after King, but disagreement on where and why. Billingsley intended to rename Ninth Street (East and West) to commemorate the birthday of King and as a symbolic recognition of recent civil disturbances in the Black community. The year before, three White men were charged with shooting four Black women on that street. But, two of three White assailants were acquitted, and this sparked riots in the community. The street was to be in honor of Martin Luther King, but it was also intended to be a gesture of reconciliation for the violence on that street. At the time, T.A. Lupton, a local developer, stated that although he was in favor of honoring Martin Luther King by renaming a portion of Ninth Street after him, "West Ninth Street is not related to Dr. King…. [It] is no longer a solid Black street. It is no longer a residential street or a rundown business street. It is a top class business street that can play a great part in the future of Chattanooga."[29] But this signals a deeper sense of the present's relation to memory as forgetting.

Forgetting the past violence constituted a particular form of White violence that seemed to only be operative on the level of aesthetics because institutionally, anti-Back violence continued in the form of a visible lack. From the early 1980's to the present, there has been general recognition of a lack of sites to African American memory, as one of the many results of the history of anti-Black racism. Several responses have followed, such as: the acknowledgement of Black history through a month of education and/or days of service, the production of several sites for memorializing the civil rights movement throughout the American South, and several forms of honoring specific civil rights

leaders such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. The general fear that the history of the African American experience of racial violence may be forgotten seems to have been corrected by these efforts. The suggestion that images to the African American past is now a sign of progress effaces a deeper problem suggested in Benjamin's comments on history, namely, that the image that is permitted is still the distorted image that a racist society desires.[30] It has changed from the humble slave groveling at the feet of the benevolent slave master, to images that emphasize the role of Whites in "the good fight" of the civil rights era. These tend to be permissible images of White violence in the past. But even in the recognition of White violence something undergoes a principle negation.

The permissible images of history may be seen further in the struggle to produce memorial arts that represent the complex structure of this negative aesthetic space. For instance, to some extent, memorials to African American history have become synonymous with memorials to the civil rights movement. These are distinctly representative of the time and events beginning with the *Brown versus the Board of Education* decision, 1954, to the Martin Luther King Jr. assassination in 1968. Many of the memorials dedicated to African American history commemorate King's life and the places of the civil rights movement that relate to him.[31] Contrary results follow from this. While the iconic status of King's image marks a great form of recognition, it also works to obscure the complexity of the social criticism of the inhuman social treatment of non-white people in America, against which the civil rights movement erupted.

If the problem of racial violence that appears to be connected to the lack of memorials were solely that there is a need for increased visibility, then Dwyer and Adlerman's conclusion is correct—and to some extent they are correct. For instance, it may not be

that White and Black communities disagree that the production of memorials are important. However, arguments based on aversion allow one to be in favor of the production of memorials to honor Black history, but they are against any form that this may take. Any proposed form of commemoration may be resisted because it is not enough, or it is not the right time, or that any place may not be the right place for the representation to be established. Black memorial sites are important, but they must be restricted to the part of the city that can be avoided by White economic interests. This violence is not simply the violence of restriction and devaluation in the general sense, but particular to the effects of the intersections between aesthetics, politics, and memory.

c) White Forgetting/ White Ignorance

Recognition politics is often paired with standpoint epistemology. In the context of the philosophy of race, racism is a matter of knowing or not knowing. It rarely identifies the former type of racism which was perpetrated as a knowing de-humanization. In Charles Mills's *The Racial Contract*, this negation is cast in terms of the positive development of both contract political theory and the flourishing of Western culture on the backs of Black labour. In light of this, however, Mills argues that what was violent about slavery was not the cultural exploitation that motivated its continuance, nor was its violence essentially the erasure of political affectivity. Rather, he argues that the essence of its violence was an initially aesthetic negation: the force of the violence of slavery was in his or her acceptance of his/her own self-negation of personhood.[32] The subtle violence of custom, regulation, and, in short, the totality of social practices employed to render the Slave as Slave (i.e. the negation of person) were part of the violence in addition to the

most explicit acts of beating, whipping, and burning, etc. This makes it a matter of aesthetics, on the one hand, and the interpretation and knowledge of history, on the other. Mills argues that a willful ignorance to the African American past is an effective form of violence, reproducing the Negro the White community wants to see, and causing an aesthetic poverty that retains the violence of the former explicit violence.[33] He writes: "Racism as an ideology needs to be understood as aiming at the minds of nonwhites as well as whites, inculcating subjugation."[34] And while this violence underscores a negative aesthetic relationship within the community, to itself, Mills's point reflects how a broader historical view of the violence directed against African Americans is synchronic with a political ideology of progress.

Advancing from Mills's view, however, we can say that forgetting in terms of ignorance of the past is no longer a legitimate refuge of White violence. Rather, with the bloom of memorials to the African American past, such a basis seems to be dissipating quickly. But the overuse of civil rights images for the purposes of addressing the lack of memorial sites to African American history seem to address the former violence of forgetting through the erasure of memory, while facilitating another form of forgetting by supplying memory. Therefore, we have to venture on a new way of thinking about the discreet and objective side of violence. For if we posit that the violence is due to a lack of visibility, we can see evidence to the contrary in the proliferation of sites of memory. But we might notice that only a selected type is in proliferation. And in this we would have to posit that while the original discriminatory violence reduced visibility, the new discriminatory violence increases visibility. This can be seen in the way MLK streets are traditionally located in traditionally poor and/or traditionally Black neighborhoods, while

reassigning non-Black names to streets in traditionally White and emerging prosperous neighborhoods.

The counterexample of the segregation of memory is found in the Martin Luther King memorial located in Washington D.C.'s Memorial Park, where one can see that the dialectical interpretation of memory as forgetting is fully on display. On the one hand, the symbol of civil rights is now located in the national capitol and comparable to monuments symbolizing historical power and progress. This symbol of MLK distorts our relationship to history as much as it reminds us of our past. The inclusion of MLK in Memorial Park signifies a present point at which we, as a community, can recognize our past. But it also conceals the extent to which White violence penetrated and still penetrates our social and aesthetic environment. Dialectically, the image of MLK is surrounded by passages from his speeches. Many visitors to the initial viewing of the monument commented that his words sounded like he could be talking about today. Oddly enough, then, this memorial introduces a sense of loss that is contemporary and is represented as memory. It introduces a memory that also mourns. But it is this strange impasse through which memory facilitates forgetting that identifies the post-racial, which is the discursive tactics that displaces discourses on race. While there is much to be said about post-racial discourse, I will focus mainly on how this discourse relates to public memory and designates a distinct discourse itself as post-racial memory.

3. Post-Racial Discourse, Post-Racial Memory

Epistemic ignorance and White forgetting (or White amnesia) is conducive to concealing the post-racial. What is denied in the memorial discourse is changed into the saturated content that forms a deafening effect in post-racial discourse. In either case, memory shows up as the anesthetic of politicization. The post-racial characterization of the history of American racism allows for the present community to hold that the racist past need not be a locus of present cultural identity. This sensibility further forecast a series of post-racial gestures that demarcate the way race, racism, and oppression have come to be forms of discourse that are *out of style* in the present political context. However, I think that such a sensibility misconstrues the dynamics of racism in relation to history and politics, in general, and conceals a deep and subtle crisis that brings into close relationship the bestial past that *this* "humanitarianism" wishes to disown. Post-racial discourse has several striking features that form the basis of a power structure or a complex.

Mills argues that White ignorance underwrites a form of erasure that appears as a denial of knowledge, or a form of amnesia in regard to the history of White violence against Blacks.[35] Mills claims that *ignorance* is both a belief in a false notion and the absence of a right notion.[36] He explains that "white ignorance" is attributed equally to all groups, despite one's standpoint, since it is the poverty not only of what can or should be known, but the poverty in knowing what is known generally. He states,

> The erasure of the history of Jim Crow makes it possible to present the playing field as historically level, so that current black poverty just proves blacks' unwillingness to

work. As individual memory is assisted through a larger social memory, so individual amnesia is assisted by a larger collective amnesia.[37]

Mills argues that through a form of epistemological ignorance, White indifference to Black suffering is not only a matter of a lack of historical consciousness, but a matter of aesthetics. What follows from Mills's argument is a critique of forgetting as part of White violence. Is this merely a struggle for recognition or the legitimacy of a knowledge claim? Is this not also the struggle of memory against forgetting? And, is this struggle really a matter of making the past present or keeping memory retained? Or, rather, is this struggle a matter of establishing meaning within the social appearance of negation? If, so, then I think that Mills's understanding of 'White amnesia' is code for a poverty of meaning and not simply a lack of memory. This suggests that the amnesiac is both the conduit of anti-Black violence and the champion of the post-racial at the same time. The result is that the negation of Black political power is concealed via the anesthetic effect of memory, reducing the history to a series of symbols without content. This is to say that post racial discourse is involved in the de-politicization of memory. The content of memory is regarded as a matter of absence, even when there is representation; it is regarded as a matter of ignorance, even when there is knowledge.

We can consider post-racial discourse from the side of politics. The political emerges as a type of *exception*, i.e. an exception to a history of racism.[38] In post-racial discourse we can see how our use of memory as forgetting foreshadows a type of crisis.[39] We can also see that this use of memory moves against the main theses of the political philosophy of oppression, in that this philosophy relies heavily on the philosophy of history. In the United States, post-racial discourse may be a sign of a politics that furthers the politics of

White supremacy by both removing the legitimacy of race-discourse in the present and from the present and removing the politics of White supremacy from history.

In part, what goes unsaid in post-racial discourse is that the post racial is only possible if the history of White supremacy as a political institution is cast in innocent and a-historical terms. Furthering this argument, in Paul Taylor's "After Race, After Justice, After History," he claims that the present post-racial political discourse aggrandizes the present community as the culmination of the achievements of civil rights era politics and ideals.[40] He argues that this is a way of enacting disaffiliation with a violent and inhuman past rhetorically without having to enact it politically as well.[41] Post-racial discourse, therefore, may capture the anti-racist's ideals of society, but all too often, it politically benefits the embedded ideals of White supremacy by eliminating the position from which renewed efforts that focus on the dynamics of race and power may be waged legitimately. To be more precise: what is negated is the ego-identity, on the one hand, and the broader politicization of this sphere, on the other. Because of this effect, White violence needs to be seen more directly as a power structure and a structuring of politics that also results in a structuring of the way the present society relates to its history.

If present political interests intervene in representations of history, then that which goes unsaid in these interventions needs to be made explicit. When White supremacy is ignored as a power structure and its history abandoned, the political becomes conditioned as another form of White supremacy. Post-racial discourse that takes into account the present historical and political stakes may provide more analytic focus on the way that the history of anti-Black racism is intertwined with the present symptoms of a politics. By thinking of the post-racial as a conditioning of public discourse, we will see how

White violence is wedded to a systemic social form that conceals the presence of itself. But this unfolds only within the development of a suspicion of the role of representation in memory, in general, and the difference between aesthetic domains of the political, in particular. Hence, the analysis of sites of memory and what they reveal about the reproduction of the violence of oppression in terms of aesthetic analysis of the role of representation, recognition, and absence.

Cultural amnesia constitutes a form of poverty that extends beyond social and economic poverty and inequality; it is a type of poverty that retains the impoverished within a condition of vulnerability to certain forms of disaster. Likewise, Naomi Zack argues that despite the elimination of explicit and overt forms of racism, in the context of disaster, racist forms of inequality are magnified.[42] What also follows is that this vulnerability repeats the former disaster as a rupture with the space and time of cultural memory. Thus, a production or reproduction of cultural amnesia leads back to consideration of the way that past explicit violence of anti-Black racism continues in present forms of absence, erasure, and misperception.

Both Mills and Taylor identify the key features that enable the shift of racist discourse to post-racial discourse by bringing the content of history and the present unifying forces of the community into contact with its own self-negation. However, they retain then analyses appropriate to the most explicit forms of violence and envelop their insights under the umbrella of White supremacy. I think we can only see this correctly by thinking about it on its most subtle and most widespread level—we need to consider its effects in their negations, which is to say that we need to consider it as a social pathological complex, a set of symptoms that we have just described as negations.

I want to show that the set of negations that allow post racial memory to be effective conceal racial discourse by reproducing its image everywhere. The symptoms of this are not matters of repression, but evade the ego identity via aesthetic anesthetics.[43] The Freudian concept of repression applies directly to the aesthetic analysis of the social pathology of anti-Black racism, because it is continually that which is "turned away," or the object of aversion.[44] Freud states that repression "demands a persistent expenditure of force."[45] Repression also indicates a domain of history, but its aesthetic apparatus is a form of aesthetic absence. However we should revisit this one question: What is the significance of a history of anti-Black racism that affects the aesthetics of the memory of the past and the significance of memorial arts? I will examine this question at length in the next chapter.

When the domain of memory and history is also the space of displacement particular to nonwhite racial groups, White violence needs to be further understood as a power construct facilitating both overt and discreet forms of racism.[46] The aesthetic aspects of the philosophy of the history of anti-Black racism does not seek mere representation, nor mere inclusion, but attempts to disentangle the act of suppression of memory from the mere lack of memorial sites. The resolution of the politics of memory in regard to anti-Black racism is not simply one that can be solved by mere inclusion, but rather, requires recognition of the way aesthetics retains a history of violence reproduced in the tradition it is a part of. Similarly, Angela Davis argues, "The civil rights movement demanded access, and access has been granted to some. The challenge for the twenty-first century is not to demand equal opportunity to participate in the machinery of oppression. Rather, it is to identify and dismantle those structures in which racism continues to be

embedded."[47] Identifying the discreet ways White supremacy continues to be reproduced along aesthetic and political grounds is nothing short of the identification of the continual forms of normativity of this violence, which continue to be reproduced.

4. The Cassandra Complex

As I have said, the Cassandra Complex is not a work overly concerned with memory although this seems to be its main object. It is concerned with a type of relation that appears dimly in the present. To describe racism under the rubric of a complex is not to show how it does not involve personal responsibility, or personal choice; it does. But I want to restrict the analysis to exactly those aspects of racism that are objective. Complexes in Freud are objective; they indicate a relation of the ego to itself, by negation. It is in the foregoing sense that the dynamics of remembrance indicates the social pathological complex that is the Cassandra complex.[48] Furthermore, if, as Freud suggests, pathology can be analyzed from egological forms of aversion and unconscious tactics of evasion and protection, then the way White violence continues as a social pathology needs further examination. This complex can first be seen in how the political use of forgetting and memory take shape in aesthetic analysis of the past.

Furthermore, the analysis of memory is essential to understanding the present forms of pathology. The pathological, according to Freud, appears and is recovered through the psychoanalyst's ability to provoke forms of remembrance in the *analysand*, making the remembrance representable for the subject's cognition. According to Freud, the pathology is not contained in what the *analysand* remembers, but in what the *analysand* repeats unconsciously; it is what he or she cannot stop repeating in his/her

neurotic behavior.[49] The neurotic behavior forms a symbolic pattern for the psychoanalyst, which allows identification of the context through which the complex is maintained and reproduced. Thus, a social pathology appears only in terms of how the public discourse evades recognition of its own violence.

Similarly, "aversion," in this sense, describes a social pathology that illuminates the significance of present forms of anti-Black racism. I think the symbolic parallel for this complex is found in the mythic figure of Cassandra. Cassandra is a particularly effective symbol of the social pathology that forms out of a history of anti-Black racism, because of the way she is represented as the object of oppression, torn from her historical and ethical context, primarily because of her relation to the field of representation and to the violence of the present and the violence of history.[50] What I am describing as the Cassandra complex is the condition where violence becomes a normative mode of perception that hides from public sites of recognition and, in this case, appears only in the way the community or culture divests itself from the object of recognition. It is in the way the aesthetic and the political form a political ontology that pathologically hides the way former violence is inscribed in the present.

The examples that I have provided in this chapter indicate how the aesthetic analysis shows the continuity with which a destabilized politics is reproduced. They also show the extent to which aesthetic forms of violence become part of the normative function of social consciousness and social sensibility. The problem of assuming that the production of memorials is sufficient for reconciliation moves too quickly to a distortion of history in the memorial representation, by rendering the past forgettable. This form of aversion to the production of memory conveys a broader defense of a political structure

that remains largely one indebted to the benefits of white supremacy. As a result of these arguments and strategies, white supremacy appears to enclose itself in strategic forms of negativity, but it is in negation that the politicized content appears. Furthermore, social pathology does not indicate the actuality of a pathology in any particular member of the society, because any particular member may be able to function perfectly fine within the conditions of the society. Rather, it is a description of social modes of behavior that one does not find one's ego invested in and the way what counts as functioning on the cultural level is a series of tactics, some of which reproduce the violence of former times, some of which reproduce the conditions that benefit a system of White violence, and some of which that hide both of the former benefits altogether.[51]

Cassandra reveals a social pathology that thrives on willful misunderstanding, which is an *understanding that is in negation of itself*. The essence of Cassandra's tragic figure is twofold in that it consists in her being misunderstood, and going to her death without being mourned. But the misunderstanding is produced by the social sphere's pathological formation in negation. When Cassandra first appears in Aeschylus' "Agamemnon," Clytemnestra (Agamemnon's wife) regards her as close to being inhuman, because she believes she cannot speak or understand Greek.[52] Rather she has nothing to say to individuals. Her presence can be described as a sensible absence and, in this way she symbolizes the inability to confront the products of one's own connection to the production of violence. When she does speak, she says to the Chorus, "And yet, I know the Greek language (*logos*) all too well."[53] She knows not only the Greek language, but also its meaning, its reasoning, and its violence—that is to say she knows what the Greeks mean to themselves via their violence.

What does Cassandra speak about? What does she wrest from silence to transform into the audible space of the public? What dialectical content is moved from the death of repression into the life altered state of remembrance? In general, she speaks about the history of violence attached to that specific Agamemnon's house, and how this violence is repeated within the present. The history of the violence is a known object for the hearers, but they fail to recognize it as the history one identifies with. Thus, when they fail to understand Cassandra, they are also disavowing any relationship to that past and can be said to be reproducing a political ontology of neglect. In this sense, the Cassandra complex reveals an aesthetic relationship to the reproduction of a political ontology of negation. Likewise, Benjamin points out that "Dialectical images are constellated between alienated things and incoming and disappearing meaning, are instantiated in the moment between death and meaning."[54] He argues that the condition in which death goes without recognition, but enfolds a history that resists recognition (*thymos*). But, just this tension between the image and absence, absence as image, that makes the political violence appear where aesthetically memory pulls away from representation. All complexes bring life close to that point where it is most vulnerable and the same applies to politics.

The completion of the complex rest on the fact that Cassandra goes to her death to mourn, but is not mourned in return. When Cassandra passes through the doorway of Agamemnon, she goes to face her death. The chorus wonders how she can be so brave as to know her death and willingly go in and face it.[55] She is driven back from Agamemnon's door because "It is the smell of an open grave."[56] Thus, when Cassandra hesitates before the door of Agamemnon's house, she is going to mourn the opposite side

of the social dynamics that produce and require her own death. She is not only bravely going in to face her fate, but she enters into the halls that produce that inverted time, time folded back on itself, from whence memory cannot escape.

As an analogy to the politics surrounding African-American memory within a White supremacist politics, the countermovement of memory generates a present in which the past, and possibly the present, cannot mourn. Just as Cassandra enters the space where masculine supremacist powers control her life and death, but also into the space where her death will not be mourned, so too, aesthetic sorrow indicates this relation in the dynamics of African American memory in light of the unintelligibility, misperceptions, and amnesia associated with the Cassandra complex.

Furthermore, Cassandra seems to be the complex that reminds one of a politics too heavy to bear, and so, must become aesthetically antagonistic against all that can be made aesthetic or inaesthetic—she is the symbol of negation within presence.[57] This is to say, that which is repressed from appearing is a sign of what may be unrepresentable, shameful, or what precedes the cognition of judgment. What precedes the cognition of judgment is the aesthetics of judgment. It is the way in which the social tears away from memory and at the same time tears away from that which is unmemorable. In turn, what can only be remembered in its movement of evasion, in its being torn away, constitutes the symptom of the pathology and the formation of an undisclosed memory that the social sphere forms against and continually puts out of play. Let me further suggest that while post-racial memory allows for the proliferation of memorials, it does so only to facilitate forgetting. Post-racial memory is a problem in how the public sphere exhibits a form of amnesia when it comes to remembering anti-Black violence, on the one hand, and

anesthesia, when it comes to recognizing the political reiteration of former violence in the present. The next chapter will trace how the post-racial allows for the representation of memory to appear, while the meaning of that memory appears only insofar as it is anesthesized.

5. Notes

[1] John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, ed. Erin Kelly. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003. Also see Nancy Fraser and Axle Honneth's *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical* Exchange. New York: Verso, 2003.

[2] Jacques Rancière, *Dis-agreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. John Rose. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999, 11. Rancière's argument is strong for how he addresses the relation of aesthetics to politics, but it does not rethink the social implications from the innovative aesthetics. He still models oppression on a normative relation of aesthetics to politics as being concerned with inclusion, participation, and ultimately recognition. While I do not explicitly problematize Rancière here, his argument is just as prone to the problem of post-racial discourse as Rawls's.

[3]Jacques Rancière, "Aesthetics as Political," in *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, trans. Steven Corcoran. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, 24.

[4] Ibid., 30.

[5] Ibid., 25.

[6] See Walter Benjamin's "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol. 4, 1938-1940*, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006. While Benjamin was responding to particular uses of aesthetics by fascism, he did so in response to both a tradition and to the pressing questions of his time. His warning is still valid. I only want to argue that a broader stance may be assumed given how the mechanisms of violence have modernized themselves.

[7] Linda Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race Gender and the Self*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

[8] George Yancy, "The Elevator effect: Black Bodies/White Bodies" in *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race.* New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008.

[9] For a discussion of the unconscious habits of whiteness, see Shannon Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006 and Terrance MacMullen, *Habits of Whiteness: A Pragmatist Reconstruction*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009. For epistemologies of ignorance see the articles in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance,* ed. Nancy Tuana and Shannon Sullivan. New York: SUNY Press, 2007.

[10] I mean this in the sense of being in or out of fashion. This would mean that talk about racism is somewhat outside of the modern political discourse. There is something quite false about this, however. We seem to be awash in talk about race, given our current president and recent memorials. However, there is still something left out. When we talk about race and racism, we do so to avoid the issue of politics.

[11] See Derrick Bell, *Faces from the Bottom of the Well: On the Permanence of Racism.* New York: Basic Books, 1992.

[12] "Obama Speaks Out on Trayvon Martin Killing," *The New York Times*, http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/23/obama-makes-first-comments-on-trayvon-martin-shooting/?hp [accessed March 25, 2012]

[13] Ibid.

[14] See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, trans. Ronald Speirs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. He argues that tragedy is primarily an address to the collective, the whole, orgiastic. Its art is founded on the chorus. Cassandra does not address Agamemnon, nor does she address Clytemnestra, she speaks exclusively to the chorus as the collective and the social. This not only supports my emphasis on an otherwise marginal character and my claim that she describes a social pathology, whereas Oedipus could only describe a personal pathology.

[15] Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting.* New York: Vintage Books, Harper Perennial, 1999, 4.

[16] Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin. New York: Penguin Books, 1961, 225.

[17] Ibid., 222.

[18] Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1995, 586.

[19] Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol. 4 1938-1940*, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006, 391.

[20] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne. New York: Verso, 2003, 166.

[21] Jacques Derrida, "The Secret of European Responsibility," in *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, 4.

[22] Jacques Derrida, "Injunctions of Marx," in *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 2006, 9.

[23] Ibid., 29.

[24] Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002, 460.

[25] Ibid., 462-63.

[26] Ibid., 476.

[27] Ibid., 462.

[28] Owen Dwyer and Derek Adlerman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory.* Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2008, 48.

[29] Ibid., 3.

[30] Also see Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997 and his essay, "White Ignorance" in *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, ed. Nancy Tuana and Shannon Sullivan. New York: SUNY Press, 2007.

[31] This has been called the "Won Cause" narrative. It focuses on the fourteen year period that the movement struggled to secure voting rights. It seemingly ends with the achievement of voting rights and de-segregation of the South. See "Stories Told, Stories Silenced," in *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*, 28-29. Dwyer and Adlerman argue that the extensive focus on Martin Luther King reduces the visibility of women in the Movement.

[32] Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999, 88.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 89.

[35] Ibid., 74.

[36] Charles Mills, "White Ignorance." *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, ed. Nancy Tuana and Shannon Sullivan. New York: SUNY Press, 2007, 16.

[37] Ibid., 31.

[38] *The State of Exception* is somewhat current in contemporary continental political philosophy. It has recently appeared in the work of Giorgio Agamben, *The State of*

Exception. I draw more heavily on Walter Benjamin's use of this term in his essays "Critique of Violence," "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of European Intelligentsia" and most explicitly in his "On Concept of History." All references to this are derived from Carl Schmitt's *Political Theology: Four Chapters on Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005 and *On the Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007. I use Benjamin here because of the way he recovers this term from a conservative politics to understand social contradictions as the site of the activity of political philosophy.

[39]Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Books, 2003, 24-25.

[40] Paul Taylor, "After Race, After Justice, After History," in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy: Race, Racism, and Liberalism in the Twenty-First Century*, XLVII, Supplement (2009): 30.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Naomi Zack, "Race, Class and Money in Disaster," in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy: Race, Racism, and Liberalism in the Twenty-First Century*, XLVII, Supplement (2009): 87. Also see Zack's "The Disadvantaged and Disaster" in *Ethics for Disaster*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011 and "Violence, Poverty, and Disaster: New Orleans, Haiti, Chili," *Radical Philosophy Review*, 15, no. 1, (2012): 53-65. In this last article, Zack argues that despite the severity of disasters between New Orleans, Haiti, and Chili, the social dynamics between them and their exploitability determines the extent of the damage. For the poor and the poor black this damage continues insofar as they pass from the highly visible social status of being worthy of charity and exploitation, to being visible without worth. Her term, "depredation" describes that state of not being worthy of exploitation.

[43] Sigmund Freud, "Repression," in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1995, 570. Furthermore, the fact that racism was explicit at one point and is now covert in many respects follows the Freudian schema of repression is not an initial response, but an "after-pressure." The implicit form of racism can properly be called a form of social repression.

[44] Ibid., 569.

[45] Ibid., 572.

[46] Charles Mills, *From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2003, 129.

[47] Angela Davis, *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, and Torture*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005, 29.

[48] On the sociality pathology see Sigmund Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005. Also see his essay "Repression" in *The Freud Reader*, where repression is described as the idiosyncratic

way something is turned away from consciousness. Repression is the mechanism that disengages in one's own particular way the traumatic object and whose appearance creates a sense of anxiety. See Theodore W. Adorno's "Freudian Group Psychology and Fascist Propaganda," in *The Culture Industry*, ed. Richard Bernstein. New York: Routledge Classics, 2001.

[49] Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961, 13. Also see "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex" in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1995.

[50] Cassandra is forcibly removed, that is, raped, at Apollo's alter. This suggests a series of violations that extend beyond the political.

[51] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, he argues that a pathological culture can be diagnosed without claiming that any of the individuals in that society are or ought to be perceived as pathological. See Frantz Fanon, "The Negro and Psychopathology," in *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1967.

[52] Aeschylus, "Agamemnon" in *Oresteia*, trans. Peter Meineck. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998, 37.

[53] Ibid., 49.

[54] Benjamin, *Arcades*, 466.

[55] Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, 51.

[56]Ibid., 52.

[57] Freud, "Repression," 572.

CHAPTER II

THE RETURN OF THE AMNESIACS: POST-RACIAL MEMORY AND THE DEPOLITICIZATION OF MEMORY

> *Forgetting is no mere vis intertiea as the superficial imagine, it is an active and in the strictest sense positive activity of repression, that is responsible for the fact that what we experience and absorb enters our consciousness as little while we are digesting it (one might call the process "inpsychation") as does the thousandfold process involved in physical nourishment—so called incorporation.* Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*

To illustrate the amnesia of post-racial memory, I will refer to the public memory of anti-Black violence of pre-civil rights memory as a contrast. In the summer of 1955, a 14 year-old Black boy named Emmitt Louis Till travelled from his home in Chicago to a small town in Alabama to visit his cousins. Till was brutally murdered during his stay in Alabama for "whistling at a white woman." The incident became the hallmark representation that made White violence a public matter. For some reason, despite a history of being indifferent to Black suffering, Till's murder punctured the public sphere. The event is credited with being the precursor for civil rights politics and the source of reigniting collective efforts to lessen the effects of White violence against non-Whites.

Like any other memorial, the documentary, *Untold Story of Emmitt Louis Till*, serves as much as a work of memory for the public. It keeps alive the memorial event of

his open-casket funeral that was to be, according to his mother, *seared in the memory of all Americans.* The documentary goes further. It chronicles the events surrounding his death. The documentary records the reflections and recollections of relatives and the memories that came to be characterized as normative of the time. It outstrips memory; it re-lives suffering from the standpoint of each relative. Emmitt's mother recalls that he was aware of the differences in the racism of Chicago and the racism of the Deep South.

The documentary humanizes the boy beyond the initial images and representations. It gives Emmitt Till a family and a life before his death. But, it also does less than the funeral did. The documentary also seems to make the event a private matter of recollecting. It is a trauma experienced by the family, and less so by the public sphere. It also seems to be indicative of a violence we no longer suffer from. The documentary frames the memory as historically important, but no longer relevant, and there is something true and something false in this. This chapter will focus on how memory appears as a broken site of resistance to present suffering.

While I trace post-racial amnesia, I want to also trace the depoliticization of memory in the public sphere. There is something contemporary about the way many of the memories in the documentary conclude with some politicizing or de-politicizing feature. For instance, Emmitt's mother recalls that prior to his trip to Alabama; he was coached as to what to be aware of in the South. He was reminded to keep himself safe, which meant to keep away from White violence. He was specifically coached on how to act around White people. He was reminded of the importance of *policing* his behavior in front of White people—especially in front of White eyes and White tongues, and of what to do to escape the grasp of White violence. None of this was enough, however. In an

instant, the boy who was described by his family as the beautiful, enthusiastic, and well mannered boy from Chicago somehow was transposed into that decaying historical figure of *that nigger from the North.* And, while we might cringe at the level and extremes of violence in lynching, what hits the deepest chord here is the way that this violence also symbolizes the discreet violence that Whites, Blacks and every other person lives through.

Blacks are often trained to be aware of authority in particular ways that Whites are not. This training, then, as much as now, is as much about history as it is about the present and its relation to history. *Blackness equals vulnerability*. Blackness as vulnerability is the condition that one becomes aware of being born into, a condition that is always already there, which is to say that the Black body comes to know itself as always already ensnared in a circuit of White violence that masks the objectivity of the violence itself, and appears merely subjectively.

How does post-racial memory relate to the former mode of White violence that Till suffered through? Why was memory a meaningful way of addressing this violence? In what way is it not meaningful anymore? What do we need to bring to the foreground for understanding a present mode of White violence through memory? The depoliticization of memory not only holds critical implications for memorial arts, but also for Black politics. In this chapter, I want to start by considering the meaning of memory in how it addresses former violence. Unlike the last chapter, however, I want to situate the meaning of memory by asking what remembers and what forgets in and through the memorial. I will then take up the question in the broader context of memorials to mass murder and then return to the issue of anti-Black violence. I will close these reflections

with critical considerations of the impact of depoliticization of memory and history for contemporary Black political theory.

1. Amnesiacs and the Residue of Violence

What is memory's public relation to the violence it commits against itself? This was more or less our orienting question. Memory has a representational and passive meaning as well as an active and public meaning. In what way does the activity of objective memory reach a unity of these two meanings? Throughout the course of this chapter, I want to suggest that the relation of the present to past violence is one that slips between its political significance and the way we erase the aesthetic impact of that violence. The result is that memory may be public, but it appears as *mere* memory, which is to say that it appears depoliticized. But, let us examine what memorialization or commemoration means in its activity.

a) Meaning, Memory, Memorialization

One might say that the activity of memorialization has a phenomenological effect on the structuring of interpersonal dynamics of community through a shared representation of history. In *Remembrance,* Edward Casey claims that memory not only structures our experience and perceptions, but that it also structures a deep sense of place in the world.[1] In this sense, the meaning of shared memory constitutes a "background" through which the place gains both internal and external significance to members of a

community, but this is an activity that is passively a *there* for the community.[2] The background provided by the public's memory is active in how it presents the conditions through which the present can be interpreted. The public's memory, however, is both an indication of how the present values the past *and* a presentation of its own ability to empathize with the varying elements of its own community.[3] The activity of memory, however, represents a past as much as it disciplines a collective present's relation to history. The representation is not the most active signification of memorialization, because this signification remains secondary to how, and in what, way the memory implaces or disciplines what is disclosed in the present.

While Casey overlooks the disciplining function of the public's memory, he rightly focuses on the significance of memorials for communities in the activity of memorialization. He holds that the monuments, or rituals associated with commemorative acts, re-introduce the past into the present; they act as enduring (perduring) symbols, which promise that the memory will remain.[4] Reconciling the past seems to require this type of acknowledgement, promise, or agreement that the past condition or violence has been overcome or resisted. The significance of the activity of commemoration is found in how it restores a sense of unity to community.[5] Casey argues that this is achieved in memorialization because the act of memorialization allows for the community to form a new public identity, post-violence.[6] Conversely, what a community cannot commemorate has not come to an end in a significant sense.[7] All of this suggests that the activity of memorialization is complete when it compensates, repairs, or redresses the violence that shaped a former political or social identity. We can say that it raises the gesture of apology to a public aesthetic level.

While for White memory, commemoration may remain passive and insensitive to the way it relates to history, this is not the case for a group beset by violence in its history and in its present. We must be attentive to the way memory is also a critical tool for politicizing the public sphere. Houston Baker, in "Critical Memory and the Black Public Sphere," argues that critical memory is the very faculty of revolution. He writes, "Critical memory, one might say, is always uncanny, it is always in crisis."[8] And it reshapes the discursive possibilities in the public sphere. He warns that memory and violence are always already political and can be used to promote conservative politics that fall into nostalgia. Aesthetics, in this sense, is used to depoliticize the public relation to history. But, Baker is equally not attentive to how post-racial memory achieves the same end. Memorials to Martin Luther King signal an aesthetic revolution, but not a political one. If we are to pursue what is at heart critical in memory, we need to be more critical about what this form of memory means to the dynamics of our public sphere.

At least two problems follow Casey and Baker, however. First, the activity of memorialization may have as its end unification, but there is no reason why this end can only be achieved by reparation or resolution. If the memorial has as its goal the unity of a community, it only entertains the goals of reconciliation as long as the symbol aligns with the interest of the community. Therefore, it may unify by facilitating forgetting, just as much as it may unify through memory in its most passive form. Second, Casey fails to address what happens with memory while the history that has been torn out is under censure, or repressed, which is to say that he fails to address the depoliticization of memory. This complicates the way in which historically abused groups relate to the politics of history, and it complicates the aesthetics of memory. It is a problem in how the

violence is embrocated between the depoliticizing of memory and the social implications of forgetting in order to unify a present; violence disappears from the social aesthetic landscape with the result of continuing to exert the former explicit violence in a more dispersed way. How does the White violence of memory appear as a form of redress, on the one hand, and amnesia, on the other?

Memory suffers amnesia to resolve an anxiety that appears only at the limit of the public sphere. The public sphere is central to understanding where anestheticization occurs. It is not just part of social discourse, but discourse that is public and informs the deepest structures of publicality. The question of the meaning of the activity of memory in relation to violence reveals a discreet consequence that is not foreign to anti-Black violence, but is amplified in post-racial memory. We will see how this is at play in contemporary discourses that show an anxiety about the making racist dynamics of violence public.

b) The Anesthetics of Memorials: Tulsa Oklahoma

Although it has been almost forgotten in both local and larger consciousness of the public sphere, before there was Emmitt Till there was the Tulsa Oklahoma "race riots" of 1921. As opposed to publicality of the Emmitt Till case, the Tulsa massacre was largely ignored in the public sphere. It has become an enduring symbol of White indifference because, although when it is referred to it is known as the most violent incident of lynching in U.S. history, it has also been the most extreme case of public amnesia.[9] In 1921, race riots ensued after some charges that a Black man raped a White

woman. No foundation was ever found for these charges. The white mob mobilized, and the riot resulted in an estimated 300 Black deaths in a single night. It is also estimated that over 8,000 inhabitants were left homeless. Forty blocks were destroyed, resulting in approximately 1,256 destroyed homes. Businesses were burned to the ground, leaving only the traces of the railway tracks that used to neatly serve as the stitching that bound the two thriving parts of the town together.[10]

Periodically, around major anniversaries, someone would write an article or begin a campaign for recognition of the debt owed to the survivors of this event. One might recall that the racial dynamics of the city had not always been how they are now, for instance. This seems to suggest that something of the decimation survived as memory. As a response, Tulsa gathered funds to construct a memorial called "Reconciliation Park," which was completed in 2005. The John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation serves as a community center, park, and has a museum component that documents the city's history, including the documents of the riot. No legislative or legal form of address has been established and no reparations have been paid to the survivors. Now approximately 40 survivors remain living and although there are increasing efforts to provide iconic forms of remembrance, the park still stands as a memory in its most alienated form.[11]

Tulsa, Oklahoma is not unique simply because it is the site of the most extensive lynching in U.S. History; it is also the site of the most extensive campaign to forget history. No one was ever charged with the murders. No one was ever held accountable. Worse yet, no reparations have ever been paid to the families or to the survivors. And still worse, the incident has been all but erased from the history and the collective memory of the nation and the people of Tulsa. But the curious aspect of this campaign of forgetting

is that it is helped along by the symbolic memorialization. The park works to remind symbolically, but it also allows for memory to serve as the basis of forgetting. It is not that there is a lack of information, or an absence of representation: the stories have been written or retold, the memorial exists, but there is still a pattern of neglect which constitutes waiting for the memory to die. At heart, it is not ignorance, but something that can only be thought of as an anesthetic of memory. The result is not simply that the past is not remembered, but that history is depoliticized.

If the park does not actively instigate memory, then what is its activity? I think we can answer this in two ways. First, at its basic level, the symbol, in the form of a park, is there, but the memory that the park symbolizes is still not public. Because it is not public, the memorial does the remembering, while the general population does the forgetting. Second, it remains politically impotent. Although the event makes the news every so often, it is not a matter of forgetting or amnesia or ignorance. It is a matter of anesthetization to history—or, to say this in a different way, history is reduced to the facts about the past, or is aesthetically important, but inept in the present. Therefore, history is depoliticized, even while it remains socially present.

c) The Anesthetics of Politics in the Case of Trayvon Martin

The past is not the only disclosure of memory, but also an indication of the present. The same slippage of memory can be illustrated in the case of the murder of Trayvon Martin. Trayvon, who was murdered by the self described neighborhood watchman, George Zimmermann, illustrates the extreme case of that general mechanism

that makes all Black bodies vulnerable as a resource for devaluation. Much like Emmitt Till, Trayvon was murdered for suspicion based on his race. While the law was explicitly against the actions of George Zimmerman, he was apparently immune from it. Much like the Emmitt Till murder, for a while, Trayvon's murderer appeared to be immune from charges and legal and moral responsibility. Again, in the way that the black body becomes devalued, it is not simply the murderer who is excused, but the structure of White violence.

We should notice that Zimmerman acted and justified his actions *as if he were the law*. It matters little that Zimmermann is not White in characterizing his actions as White violence. He mimicked the social position that has the authority to negate Blackness, which calls the appearance of Blackness suspicious or attaches to it an implicit threat. Zimmerman profiled, stalked, and operated as the law, even if he did not officially have this authority. This mattered little to the law officials, because if they were in a similar situation, they likely would have done the same thing. His actions as violence escaped through a mechanism of ego-identity. Moreover, the violence of his action is only questionable, and may ultimately disappear, if blackness appears in the public sphere as violence in itself. White violence leaves open the appeal and the ability to respond, without corresponding responsibility.

The activity of memory is also an interruption vis-à-vis history. Trayvon Martin's murder *legitimates* itself in the same way that Emmitt Till's murderers legitimated themselves, not only by finding a safety haven in the law, but by making clear the mechanisms of White violence in the way it erases its violence, disconnects its form from its content, and requires a particular form of amnesia to set the limits of social discourse.

While the body, in both cases, was an object of White violence rendering it disposable as a material object, it also appeared as indispensible, as a political symbol that re-instantiates the order of White violence, which is never out of view, but always out of sight—and this is the negation that links these failures to the post-racial dynamic of present society.

But we still have to deal with the splitting of aesthetics from politics and of politics from aesthetics, in the activity of memory. The Martin case has received a record amount of attention, representation, and recognition. But "attention" and "recognition" are not really at issue here. In what way does recognizing violence in this case depend upon the politicization or de-politicization of history? While the outrage against this violence is laudable, and it is not insignificant that 900,000 people marched in protest of this violence and demanded the arrest of the assailant, what remains protected is the subtle way that this violence connects to a history of displacement, disposability, and cancelation of Black politics. One still has the appearance of Black politics, but in terms of post-racial memory, this appearance is only a means for forgetting. One forgets that this results in the same ends that lynching sought, that the political response to Black deaths by the violence of Whites is a repetition that ricochets through every decade of this country. One forgets that this is not only a matter of killing Blacks, but a matter of how we relate to our racism through aesthetics. While the event is outrageous from the perspective of our contemporary mores, its truth about the political remains historically consistent.

In the following sections I will argue that it is within the form of anesthesia that unfolds within memory, where we find this double bind that we will find the meaning of

memory as the involution of politicization (or de-politicization), even in the appearance of the political. I will try to show this a bit more clearly with reference to other types of memorial arts and then show how this affects Black political theory.

2. Counter-Memory as Countering Anesthetic Memory

Instead of examining what claims the memorial makes in its representation, which appears to be its least active form in relation to memorials violence done against itself, I want to trace the anesthesia of memory as a clue as to how our aesthetic relationship to history is altered. I will argue that what only appears as absence, and what simply fails to ever appear as representation, constitutes a de-politicizing change in the public's aesthetic relationship to history. This means we need to trace how memory finds its most objective meaning in forgetting. But I also want to show this through contrast with similar political contexts of memory. Toward this effort, I will examine a few examples of memorials to Holocaust memory in Germany, and the Rwandan Genocide memorials. My purpose is not to point out that the post-racial dynamics in America are not operative in other cultural contexts—post-raciality may be, but it would need to be understood along with the way racism designates a particular political domain. What can be gained from examination of how other cultures address this challenge provides us with enough leeway to resituate the way we think of memorials in the American context.

a) Returning to Memory's Suffering

If we consider ourselves to be amnesiacs to the memory of horrors of our own violence, then Germans are antiquarians. Memorials to the Holocaust, in particular, have been largely dedicated to recognition and remembrance. The majority of these memorials are said to *bear witness* or provide images to capture the lives, times, and tragedies of the Holocaust. Many sites have been left as is to remain a permanent reminder of the places and times in which the Holocaust occurred. But, memory in this context seems to mean at least two things. First, there is a mimetic value. The repetition of the past as aesthetic remembrance functions as analogous to a continual remembrance. Memory becomes synchronous with the image. However, there is something effaced in this, where memory is also transmuted. Moreover, memory becomes static in its representation. The second meaning of the activity of memorialization is preservative. The representation that contains the sign of memory is not meaningful in itself or by itself, but only becomes meaningful in how its act preserves or traces the present's distance from the past. Testimonials, preservation of sites, and any act that bears witness, is equally valuable here.

However, there is a central problem that becomes clearer if we focus on how Holocaust memory only *bears witness.* What is meant by the Holocaust cannot be remembered—or, a remembrance of it seems to reduce what ought to be remembered to a collection of acts, activities, events. What is remembered in the Holocaust, whether in and through images, or in spite of them? While the Holocaust *means* a burning out of the human, it signifies a liquidation of the human in form. The Holocaust signifies the violence of bringing a human totality to its end. The pre-Holocaust Jew is not the post-

Holocaust Jew. Something ended and cannot be repaired or restored. Something did not end and remains despite the violence, namely the endless self-referring vulnerability to death in absence of law. And this is the violence that sparks anew the presence of *an old suffering*; a pain that persists always already as both background and foreground. The memorial does not reconcile, but announces the presence of an old pain that predates your individual arrival, and whose meaning is disclosed neither in your being nor in your memory.

We should also ask a slightly different question: we cannot only ask what is disclosed through memory, but also what is closed through memory, since the activity of memory seems to be dependent on this closure. If, for instance, one never experiences, or there is erased from reflective experience, the immediacy of violence, then what is remembered is what results from the violence. If the mechanisms of violence itself are comparable to an apparatus, we never suffer from violence itself; we suffer under its activity (*unter Leiden*). If we look a bit closer at the meaning of the traditional memorial, its active perdurance is a way of apologizing for the past, or a public *suffering.* The German expression, *Es tut mir Leid* literally means that when there is an object that suffers, my suffering is there too. What suffers in memory is my present. But what do we suffer from in the present? Is it the past violence of a present-memory between past and present? No, the negation of memory signals the objective aftershocks and aftereffects of the violence that alter the meaning-structure of the present. This has been the meaning that escapes the traditional memorial, but it is also the meaning that must be restricted unless the memorial itself only retains a commodity value. The commodity value of a memorial changes every return to suffer into an *it* that does the work of suffering. Every

apologetic gesture is changed into an *it suffers*, signifying the negation of memory into an object of neglect. What suffers is not the subject encountering the memory, but the memorial. Critical memory is replaced by a critique of aesthetic history in the way it interacts with the public sphere.

Moreover, what is closed to memory produces the grounds for what turns away from the traditional forms of memory, but not away from memory. For instance, the contemporary Holocaust memorials called counter-memorials turn against the images of history and instead attempt to use the memorial as a way of evoking the suffering of absence. This means that the memory of the Holocaust is one contemporary Germans grew up with, but not one that stems from their past. These memories are often shrouded in silence or ambiguity, or communicated through a felt sense of loss and a memorial sense of what undergoes an aesthetic transformation of sense of memory that makes present the anesthetics of memory.

Many of these works attempt to structure the memorial sites with a sense of absence. They highlight that aesthetic aspect of history as an interruption. For this reason, counter-memorials tend to violate the restrictions of mimetic representations and the serene placement associated with memorial arts in general, by not depending on the static image or the contemplative setting to enact the memorial.[12] This makes abnegation, or self-consumption, the tool for making memory critical. For instance, Jochan Gerz and Esther Shelev-Gerz's "Monument against Fascism, War, and Violence—and for Peace and Human Rights," achieves this by establishing the first abnegation and self-effacing memorial. The memorial was forty feet high, three foot square, made out of hollow aluminum in the middle of Harberg's commercial center. Members of the community

were encouraged to etch their names into the slate to show solidarity with anti-fascism. Thus, it was a temporary monument that was intended to represent the voices of the present community "against the process of forgetting Fascism."[13] Young writes that over the course of ten years the monument was lowered into the ground and resides beneath the city. While this monument served to interrupt and now displace memory from its traditional mode of representation and site of construction, it also interrupted everyday lives and replaced that interruption with absence as a type of interruption—making the effects of extermination sensible.

With the Gertz and Shelev-Gertz memorial, there is no meaning in the site of memory, only an activity or aftereffect of the present depoliticization of memory. Young argues that "in effect, the vanishing monument has returned the burden of memory to visitors."[14] The retraction of the iconic structure and any reference to the object of memory makes sensible that process of erasure, and the responsibility of memory itself. The monument itself is buried or absent, depending on the visitors' perspective. What this monument achieves is that absence is brought into the aesthetic space of political and cultural recognition. But it also places in the space of memory the way the present attends to its own condition of absence as a form of suffering. The memorial negates itself as the subject to do the work of memory and the work of suffering. Young points out that "[The Gertzs] have likened it…to a great black knife in the back of Germany, slowly being plunged "in each act of commemoration." [15] What this shows in relation to discreet violence is that it is the objectivity of violence that is generally muted in memorialization, and this is exactly what a counter-memorial is in opposition to.

If counter-memorialization is a turn toward the presence of violence in its own abnegation, as it inverts our relation to memory in representation, then it is equally a return to the inhuman that remains buried in our relation to history in the way that highlights the suffering of the public sphere negating memory and negating history. In the "Aschrott-Brunnen Memorial" at Kassel, 1987, Horst Hoheisel recreated the original "Aschrott-Brunnen Fountain," but it is not simply a recreation of a symbolic fountain. While the fountain was originally a gift to the city by a well known Jewish family, it was also formerly known as "The Jews' Fountain" during the Nazi regime. At one point it was the place where many Jews were gathered for deportation to work and death camps. And, finally, it was destroyed as part of Nazi destruction of Jewish artworks and culture. Hoheisel's recreation is a negative monument in the sense that it is a concaved version of the original fountain that allowed the viewer to look into the hole where the "Aschrott-Brunnen Fountain" once stood. By blowing up parts of the infrastructure in order to re-create the fountain, the monument retains the violence of the former destruction. Young points out that the inverted fountain was intended to be "a mirror image of the old one, sunk beneath the old place in order to rescue the history of this place as a wound and as an open question, to penetrate the consciousness of the Kassel citizens so that such things never happen again."[16] Thus, Young argues that it was to function as a reminder of the former violence and a reminder to remember this memory itself.

As reminders, we must ask: what do they record as memory of the nation's violence against itself? They seem to record a public iteration of suffering in a state of amnesia. The fountain makes present all of the histories of that fountain. One meaning had to be buried for the other meaning to step forth. It is the enumeration of names,

events, and meanings that had been underwritten, traumatized, and suspended in history that appear in the concave fountain. Moreover, it allows the residues of anti-Semitism, the discreet violence that contorted between the first significance of the fountain, into the present. That is, the fountain lets the broken relation to the past is what makes the reminder also a reference to the present. What these arts in general underscore is that the traumatic cannot aesthetically be written in or written out of memory, if can only be gleaned, upon its movement between past and present, politics and aesthetics, or in how we return to history and efface history in the same movement. Likewise, the traumatic, according to Freud, can only be approached through interpretation of what makes itself known in how the symptom interrupts the present as a residue of the past. He advises that the analyst must seek to re-produce a trauma in the *analysand* as a "remembrance" (*Gedenken*) that is also being relived as "now" (*Jetztzeit*).[17] The *traumatic* content uses memory as a manner of approach; memory is the configuration that allows for the trading of relations.

b) Memory Suffers the Present (*Jetztzeit*) of Forgetting

Let us take another example. In 1994, between April to July, the Hutu, an ethnic majority in Rwanda, killed somewhere around 800,000 Tutsi, the ethnic minority. At one site, in Murgambi, Tutis and other people were led to believe through radio broadcast that they could take sanctuary. The Murgambi site became a place of mass slaughter, but now is the site of a memorial composed of the bodies, frozen in the position that they died. Is

the memorial a reminder? Is it responding to the danger of forgetting? Is it representing the unrepresentable? All of these questions seem secondary.

The Murgambi Memorial, which consists of the main campus buildings where the massacres occurred and the mass grave where most of the bodies were dumped is not simply representative or non-representative, it does not do the work of remembering or reminding, or forgetting or reconciling. It seems to work by making the breakage that appears where political becomes inaesthetic via the memorial, the complete exposure of memory itself. Within the main buildings everything was preserved virtually untouched.[18] The bodies of approximately 1,000 children and adults who sought refuge at the Murgambi site were exhumed from the mass grave.[19] The bodies of the children were presented with brief descriptions of the lives of each child. The memorials bring the space of former violence into the politically present. This is what stands at the foreground of the remains themselves and is what goes unrepresented within the children's fragile bodies that bear the marks of the machete that severed limb and life—and further reflected in the frozen expression of terror on the people's faces and submissive and protective postures.

What is unique about the Murgambi memorial is that it makes suffering present in all its moments. It is the present-to-death, or the memory, that suffers, that violates the representation's activity of being solely memory. What would one encounter if one traveled from site to site? Bodies? Persons? Lives? No, one would encounter a montage of death in its parts, in its moments. Here, death is seen as an arm, there, as a torso, over there, as a head, mostly intact. This is death made objective, or rather, the violence of history frames the scene. And we could say that in memory it amplifies something that is

present (*Jetztzeit*), frozen in tormented faces petrified in suffering. It is not the horror of one or two instances, or of an abstract process, but the horror of everything all-at-once. The memory that closes itself is disclosed in all of its segments, all of its parts, at one time and the same time—every start is also its termination point. This torso was no more or less than the entry point of violence, no less than the totality of violence that we still suffer.

Memory is only a return to the past when the former violence of the public sphere is no longer present. When this is not the case, memory is that interplay between closures and disclosures, it is the aesthetic condition of the activity of politics. Achilles Mbembe argues that Africa is a place where negation is the rule. He suggests that the Post-Colony is the place where even *memory* is put to death.[20] But, we should notice that the Murgambi memorial also brings the massacred people into the present as a reflection of their liquidation. The bodies make present every momentary presence to death, not only as a "then," but also as a "now." The memorial is the absence that makes history and mourning intertwined into a social form of mourning. In mourning, however, the memorial does not simply remember, recall, or recount, but it petrifies that initial event that works as an example of the extremes of politics and violence, due to a long indebtedness to a social body anesthetized. As a countermovement, the memorial prolongs suffering. It makes aesthetic that which is structures the anesthetic of violence and thus, it makes present what Mbembe calls the *spirit of violence* as a rupturing memory and of that special domain of legitimate memoriability. He writes "This spirit makes violence omnipresent; it is presence—presence not deferred (except occasionally) but specialized, visible, immediate, sometimes ritualized, sometimes dramatic, very often

carictural."[21] In the memorial, the sickening signification of violence is frozen, as if caught by the gaze of the deaths-head, in a plurality of motions. Moreover, the half-hacked body, the fearful expression before the slaughter, the body in tremors succumbing to force, the last hope of escape—all frozen and consummated, all at the same time. It is through memory that violence becomes hollowed out. But it is in its dialectal death throes that mourning transfigures memory, and aesthetics transposes politics.

This is to suggest that the involution of our sense of pastness itself is a suffering. It makes the memorial signify a movement from a suffering object to a suffering that is a condition of the public. More succinctly, every memorial is a repetition of interruption; it is what Benjamin referred to as the power of origin (*Ur-sprung*). Origin is the breaking off of a tradition that then must reconfigure the mundane. He writes, "Origin is not therefore discovered by the examination of actual finding, but it is related to their history and their subsequent development."[22] The memorial directs a form that momentarily liquidates legitimate relations of present and past, normativity and violence. This is to say that where memoriability violates memory, we are disenchanted to that domain of violence that has normatively operated as structuring social relations. Benjamin writes:

> [Historical materialism] is a process of empathy. Its origin is indolence of the heat, that *acedia* that despairs of appropriating the genuine historical image as it briefly flashes up. Among medieval theologians, acedia was considered as the root cause of sadness. Flaubert, who was familiar with it, wrote: "[Few will guess how sad one had to be in order to resuscitate Carthage!]" The nature of this sadness becomes clearer if we ask: With whom does historicism actually sympathize? The answer is inevitable: with the victor. And all rulers are heirs of

> prior conquerors. Hence, empathizing with the victors invariably benefits the current rulers.[23]

The larger context of memory is that it, too, displays a larger relation to the public sphere. This larger relation is history, and our relation to history is always a matter of politics. What we pull out of memory is also what makes this whole sphere appear as an anxiety in the present insofar as what is pulled out is also what the present suffers to avoid.

With an eye toward our own aesthetic relationship to history, we need to ask, how much sorrow is required to resuscitate Trayvon Martin, Emmitt Till, and the victims of the Tulsa Oklahoma massacre—and all the victims of anti-Black violence? But these memorials stand not only against the suffering that is restricted in traditional forms, but against that whole set of breakages that can be seen in the depoliticization of history. This appears not only in memorialization but has shaped a distinctly troubling trend in Black political philosophy as well. The eternal return of the amnesiacs is just as much a matter of aesthetics as it is a matter of politics in post-racial politics.

What do any of these counter-memorials amount to, other than a way of situating memory in its most alienated form? Memory, in the act of memorialization, must be reduced to an *it suffers*, which is to say memory is presented in its de-politicized or most alienated form. What aesthetic analysis shows is that there is a significant domain that is continually withheld from the domain of representation, even *in* representation. However, I want to distinguish the aesthetic sense of absence from this parallel political domain as a domain of neglect. While absence may be comparable to aesthetic forms of exclusion, the political sense of *neglect* is not reducible to the political state of exclusion. The

neglected are always out of place, out of history, and outside of the political form of recognition. Neglect, in its political sense, is not only a lack of value, but also an indifference to the other, or a way of leaving something in its state. But, what is left is a meaning that is political, and it is only political because it interrupts the particularity of the present with the weight of history, a history in negation that mourns without mourners.

3. Post-Racial Memory and the Depoliticization of the Suffering of the Past

I want to return to Till because in many ways the whole of the human/civil rights movement and much of the development of black politics, is indebted to the memory of the public memory and mourning of Emmitt Till's death. Moreover, *The Untold Story of Emmitt Louis Till* (2003) is regarded as a type of memorial to his lynching. But, now we need to ask, what does that mean in a post-racial context? What suffers memory and what suffers forgetting? I want to return to this example to examine how aesthetics relates to a negativity that shapes politics. Our question, however, has changed from what is the meaning of memory in relation to violence, to what is the meaning of the public sphere disclosed in the dead. What does it mean to suffer history as a suffering of the present?

a) Mourning a Present Suffering through Black Memory

In *The Untold Story of Emmitt Louis Till*, we see the convergence of a variety of *tellings* of the life of Emmitt Till. We also see something that *tells on*, or *reports on*,

White violence. The memories that make up the content of the film move between the poles of the political as the representation of the elated politics of the civil rights, and the personal memory of deep regret, grief, and loss. And it is within this production of memory that the boundary between memorialization and aversion or neglect is traced with particular acuity, and exposes several contradictory moments that dissolve into the cultural normative characterization of pre-civil rights memory. On the one hand, this was done to such an effective extent that it re-launched an investigation into the 1955 lynching of Emmitt Till in 2004. On the other hand, much was left unexplored. What was left was the public's memory of mourning, and that can be explored in terms of its philosophical meaning.

The philosophical meaning of mourning reconfigures the meaning of this activity as a form of work. In Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia," for instance, he holds that mourning is the way in which the psychic life works through loss by redefining external relations to activities, objects, and social groups.[24] Freud concludes that this liberates the ego from the love-object in that it works through a present ego that forms because of the former loss.[25] Thus, mourning is the way the ego integrates loss into the new ego-formation dealing with the present.[26] Mourning is not, however, a way of "getting on with life" as usual, but a way of letting absence *spring-forth* (literally, *Ur-sprung*) as the psychic life in mourning undergoes the repetition of loss. Mourning suffers from the past now, not as a past, but rather as that uncanny past that is also a present.

In this other philosophical sense, *The Untold Story of Emmitt Till* goes a long way to memorialize mourning rather than memory, but it leaves this in the interpersonal domain. Where Till's mother looks for something for memory, for recognition, she continually

finds no memory, only the residue of violence. What once signified a face became a surface beyond recognition, save the severed tongue that had been cut out and then shoved back into the orifice. His ears that were just like hers now appear only as what had been torn off, the eyes that showed how bright he was, now gouged out, or the face that she remembered, now swollen and resembling nothing human. She tries to figure out what killed him, but she is left enumerating the many ways he could have died: his head was split in half, gunshot at close range, blowing a hole through his head, drowned by being tied to a cotton mill by barbed wire. The erasure of White violence itself traces the memory of a present suffering.

What does suffering mean when it discloses itself *only as memory*? What does the the tension between memory and mourning underscore beyond the suffering of a group at a particular time? How does either memory that cannot mourn, or mourning that cannot remember,--that is, how does post-racial memory—efface the personal significance of loss, for a political one? When one of Till's cousins recalls a mixture of feelings of anger, sadness, and disbelief; he characterizes this as a "strange feeling," suggesting that these words are inadequate to disclose the totality of his memory. The condition is both past and present, determined by an inability to recognize what is in conflict with a desire to reconcile. One of his cousins recalls that he, "never felt any sadness, I just thought he would come home." Moreover, the other cousin recalls, "To me, it is as if he never died. I never had any sorrow or remorse, because I always thought inside that I would see him again. I don't know if I was in a state of shock or what. But when they said they found his body, it was like '*Whose body? He's not dead*.' I went to the funeral, the same thing." He states that he always thought that he would see him again. That White violence petrifies

instead of letting death pass, underscores its effect as a continuum. It is the petrification of suffering that makes memory transition into mourning. Mourning, likewise, appears as a broken relation to history trying to settle itself and find meaning in the presence of loss.

What post-racial memory implies is that there is no reparation, nor any restoration, that could possibly account for the history of anti-Black violence. We suffer historically what we depoliticize aesthetically. To transpose absence as memory breaks with the merely subjective signification of mourning and makes the public sphere appear at odds with itself.

I do not want to downplay the emotional and cultural relevance of Emmitt Till; I merely want to amplify how his symbolic significance discloses the structure of White violence in relation to Black politics. This is particularly important for us *post-racials*, who remember and forget all at the same time. It is particular for us who, in searching for solidarity against oppression, forget that the aesthetic and political sides of memory are also potentially engaging in a public act of forgetting. While we remember the civil rights, we forget the present's distance from this politics. While we remember the atrocities of the Jim Crow south, we forget this past's reiteration in White privilege. We forget these pivotal moments in our country's past as meaning more than a memory of horror, and in a distinct way, we become knowing and willful amnesiacs to our own history as well as to our own present violence.

b) The Amnesiacs of Black Political Aesthetics

We have drawn out the characteristics of the Cassandra complex from the broad sphere of public memory and its regressions. This confusion seems to be repeated in contemporary Black political philosophy in how (philosophy of) history has played a decreasingly significant role. For many Black thinkers, history and memory has always played an important role for situating political theory, illuminating white supremacist ideology, or motivating political activity. Memory works as a foundation for positivist politics. In contemporary Black political philosophy, memory is still used in order to form a positive politics out of oppression, but it is only regarded as a background for the present; memory is important, but it is passive. For instance, Tommie Shelby argues that one needs to find a basis for solidarity, despite negative social meanings of group identity. For Shelby, the political identity for Blacks resides solely on the ability to form in-group solidarity. The problem he addresses, however, is that for Blacks, there is no coherent center to form solidarity around. One's history becomes metaphysical in how it determines one's current political commitments; class is always a matter of shifting; and culture does little to define or refine the basis of the group. Shelby argues that a Black political philosophy in general should include commitments to antiracism, antipoverty, and substantive racial equality.[27] While he critiques recognition politics, he counters it with a subtle form of identity solidarity (alternatively called "collective identity theory") based in a form of pragmatic nationalism.[28] He argues that "a shared identity is essential for an effective black solidarity whose aim is liberation from racial oppression, and thus blacks who are committed to emancipatory group solidarity must steadfastly embrace their distinctive black identity."[29] However, Shelby also includes the embracing of Black

goals, values, and the value of dismantling racism as essential as well. While Shelby argues for a pragmatic basis of solidarity, he does not take this argument to its end.

Shelby takes historical factors as reified, but it is not clear when we shift to thinking about racism as cast in history, but reproduced as present violence, that what is suggested correctly apprehends the situation. We might be comfortable with Shelby's thought if and only if racism appears in the way it historically has—at least in its external expression as blunt discrimination, interpersonal and mob violence, incarceration, and discrimination in terms of employment. While the inner violence may still be there, the external is exactly what seems to be shifting. The solidarity of Black politics forms out of its history, but we see that the identity it is predicated upon depoliticizes the present. The past is given as a reified objective past from which its meanings are already determined, its story basically complete, and its value reduced to a utility value. History is considered one-sidedly in its form of historicism, which means that history stands in for representation.

While the former view lets historicism overdetermine its politics, the next addresses itself to a Black political climate. Eddie Glaude argues that "America must confront the fraudulent nature of its life, that its avowal of virtue shields it from honestly confronting the darkness within its own soul."[30] In regard to history, he argues that Black politics cannot be predetermined as emancipatory politics based on its past. History overdetermines the content of the political in order to reduce it to a fixed identity. But this approach attempts to identify history solely as a result of human (political) activity.[31] He argues that history really is a matter of aesthetics over politics. It matters only to the extent that it informs us, orients us, and lets us know who we are.[32] He amplifies its

meaning as a background, but not as a foreground in a critical sense. It is valuable because of what use it has. But what use has the history of racism served as?

According to Glaude, we have told a bad story. There is no fixed self, but if this is true then what follows is the suggestion that all we need to do is to tell a better or more useful story. This is far too simplistic and gives too much credit to the trend of revisionist history. How or why is it that even in the revisions of history, we still have a bad story being told—or rather an impoverishment that takes place? Let us assume that we now include slavery, the indebtedness of the country to African American ingenuity, work, labour, etc. as part of our story: have we really resolved the problem? How does this revision become relevant now? How does it contribute to the struggle to undermine the present content? Or, have we more effectively addressed a former sign of violence by repressing the social juncture that revealed the problem to begin with? Have we simply depoliticized memory by reducing its meaning to a representation of the past? Glaude's view similarly depoliticizes history by reducing its meaning for the present to how and what about its content makes it useful. In depoliticizing the history, and making it about the stories a culture tells itself, he reduces its content to cultural relativism without further allowing a Black political use of history the leverage it might need to challenge a White normative history that is underwritten with White violence.

This is not to suggest that history is a-political or unimportant to Glaude. In fact, he argues that history has a severe disciplining effect. He states, "Most young African American men, for example, have been told how to behave in the presence of police officers. We are told to speak respectfully, to appear nonthreatening, and to keep our

hands in full view at all times."[33] But, history holds another dual significance for him in that it makes us debtors to our collective past. He writes:

> References to the black freedom movement thus serve two purposes: First, they serve to call forth a particular political orientation; the listener is urged to take up a calling, to fight for, or at least to support, civil rights. …Second, they refer to loss and sacrifice. Many died for our current freedom, and recognition of this fact obligates us to act so as to honor their sacrifice."[34]

According to Glaude, history appears as a disciplining force. And, again its meaning is twofold. First, it overdetermines a political orientation by virtue of recognition and debt. Second, it trains one to respond to current problems through the lens of past struggles.[35] This is Glaude's main objection to the uses and abuses of history in Black political philosophy: there is no way to understand the present problems solely within the confines of the past.

However, this is not a problem of activity and motivation, nor is it a problem of a lack of imagination,[36] but a problem that is at the basis of Glaude's own method: politics depoliticizes itself in the very effort to make the public recognize the political. His view of history, and his criticisms of it rest within the confines of thinking history as utility, as representation, as a collection of images. In short, his own failure to rethink history beyond historicism cuts short the way in which his political suggestions can raise the problem of politics to where they can be rethought.

4. Critical Memory Revisited: Critique and Mourning

Unlike memory, critical approaches to history have always already included a relation to politics. History has always already been politically problematic insofar as it has been used to erase the violence of a dominant group by telling the version of the past that is most favorable to that group's interests. White violence has not been an exception to this rule. It was on this basis that W.E.B. Du Bois explicitly critiqued the politics of history to this end in his late work, *Black Reconstruction in America*. He argues that the attitude guiding the "objective view" of the history of Reconstruction relies on the status of the Negro as exempted from history. He observes, "The chief witness in Reconstruction, the emancipated slave himself, has been almost barred out of court. His written Reconstruction record has been largely destroyed and nearly always neglected."[37] Therefore, history takes as its truth the exempted subject of the events of history, on the one hand, and produces a present form of violence toward the subjugated group, on the other. Du Bois continues, "The result is that the most unfair caricatures of Negroes have been carefully preserved; but serious speeches, successful administration and upright character are almost universally forgotten."[38] Thus, what is produced is history as a form of amnesia.

Du Bois further argues that the truth of the period of Black Reconstruction was to determine the effectiveness of mass rule through the "failed" attempts at real democracy from the outset.[39] He argues that the ideology of the history of Reconstruction was motivated to show "objectively" that Negroes were ignorant, lazy, dishonest, and not responsible for their own emancipation.[40] This image found its validation in the process through which it was reproduced, namely through academic reproduction. For Du Bois,

this means that science doubled itself also as propaganda. Du Bois continues, "The real frontal attack on Reconstruction, as interpreted by the leaders of national thought in 1870 and for some time thereafter, came from the universities and particularly from Columbia and John Hopkins."[41] Propaganda presents the truth of history as a violence that continues to reintroduce the same destructive forms in the present, but under the normative laws of science itself. Thus, history as a science becomes the rationalization of the perversion of history.[42] In this way, propaganda doubles as a tool of cultural distortion and as that which amplifies the discreet violence operative at the level of aesthetics. I want to argue in the next chapter why this doubling of the history and memory forms both a symptom of White violence and a response. I want to argue that critical history or critical memory has taken an even more radical turn toward aesthetics.

While this critical juncture between aesthetics and politics cannot warrant a return to critical histories, we should carefully assess what the post-racial means for history. This break is prefigured in what Paul Taylor calls the "Post-Black" era of art. Taylor states that the post-Black artist works to redefine notions of Blackness by inverting historical categories, while at the same time denying the categorization of being a Black artist.[43] The post-Black artist seems to make Blackness as defined culturally, a matter of propaganda. Taylor argues that post-racial art is defined by that activity that provides a space-clearing act that rejects the assumptions of the past placed on Black culture. The Black artist rejects the shared enterprise that gives strength to these cultural assumptions, but also that draws or connects the present oppression to the past in a new way.[44] Taylor claims that the post-Black artist should reject the idea that "…if they do not draw principally on, say, black vernacular cultures, or express perspectives on racialized

themes like lynching, slavery, or civil rights, then they aren't black enough to gain entry into the art world by the only means available to them—as participants in specialized "diversity" exhibits."[45] The condition imposed on Black artist is itself conditioned by race-thinking, which the post-Black artist complicates, if not rejecting it wholesale. Therefore, the post-Black is a sign of the liquidation of race-thinking.[46] But this end cuts in two directions: it is the end of identity politics of a certain brand and an end of the necessary connection of Black politics to its history. Taylor concludes that this end is then the new platform on which Blackness is free to define a set of pluralisms.

What seems most significant in Taylor's discussion is that the *post* signifies that something has been brought to its end. To bring something to its end, Taylor notes, does not mean it goes away, because its practices may remain.[47] The end of something may be brought about in two meanings: annihilation of aesthetic meaning and the annihilation of political meaning. These two meanings are often intermingled. What Taylor fails to address is how despite the happy advance over race-thinking, race-practices continue anew as the reiteration of White violence. What needs to be underscored is that the liquidation itself makes the violence in its older form meaningless, but not discontinuous. Continuance in its anesthetized form may be a more efficient means of disseminating violence. Taylor is right to the extent that the post-Black may signal the end of race-thinking, but it does not give an account of the residue of race and racist-practices.

Furthermore, on Taylor's account, post-Black aesthetics is a sign that refers to a particular rupture between politics and tradition, yet he does not attend to the way this rupture also signifies the de-politicization between aesthetics and the politics of memory. In the post-Black, one does not simply move away from history, without also altering the

way social normativity appears in the present and how its history appears to this movement. There can be no new platform without consideration of the search for political meaning.

As we have talked about memory, we have also talked about what makes the present meaningful. What is the situation of meaning relative to post-raciality? What it means to be a post-racial, post-Black, or post-political thinker is to take history to its critical edge. The *post* therefore is not simply an *after*, as in an announcement of a liquidation of race. But it is equally not a *post* as in a position from which to reexamine race.[48] Still, Taylor is right to point out that it does demarcate that something is undergoing its end, suffering its loss, and that there is a context through which we need to re-examine this. Unlike Taylor, though, I think that post-raciality does depend on a history and memory of race discourses; it depends on them now because it is not clear which forms of race thinking and race language facilitate the politicization of history and which facilitate the depoliticizing of history. I think we need to return to a way of thinking a type of history in its political implications. For the moment, I want to reject the idea that history is simply important because it retains a set of facts, but rather it is history or memory that intervenes in the present. *History prepares the present for what it must suffer.*

In our tracing of the objectivity of violence, we have run up against tradition and history, in both its alienated and politicized formations. I want to suggest that this is the very same aesthetics that wed history to representations. I have talked about a post-racial memory within post-Black politics because its post-status is part of what hides it, what negates its recognition, and sits at the basis of its violence. The negation it hides by is

also what defines the Cassandra complex, since this is the complex that makes our own violence illegible to us and it achieves this by making history simply a matter of pastness.

There is also something sublime in history and tradition as well. But what does this sublime heightening rest on? For us, in post-racial discourse, absence must be returned to even in representation. This means that the present memory is marked with an aesthetic form of forgetting. And, every political gesture of reconciliation is marked with a suffering that transposes sorrow within the public sphere. I think it is fair to further suggest that such an undertaking has the power to move the *it* that *suffers* to a present suffering of what we have become insensate to; it is a form of apology that suffers the forgetfulness of the present. Moreover, mourning is the reverse of the anesthesia of post-racial memory. It is in this context that aesthetics receives an altogether different meaning for situating politics. Over the course of the next two chapters, I will argue that the political value of aesthetics is not in what it represents or what it idealizes, but what it lets suffer. The next chapter will develop the politics that lets suffering suffer, through an examination of Du Bois's aesthetic discussion of the Negro sorrow songs and Billie Holiday's song "Strange Fruit.

5. Notes

[1] Edward Casey, *Remembrance: A Phenomenological Study*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987. For an alternative phenomenology of memory see Charles Scott *The Time of Memory*. New York: SUNY Press, 1999.

[2] Edmund Husserl, *Phantasy, Image-Consciousness, and Memory (1898-1925)*, trans. John Brough. Netherlands: Springer, 2005, No. 15, 401.

[3] Ibid., 408.

[4] Casey, *Remembering*, 228.

[5] Ibid., 238.

[6] Ibid., 244.

[7] Ibid., 255.

[8] Houston Baker Jr., "Critical Memory and the Black Public Sphere," in *The Black Public Sphere: A Public Culture Book*, ed. The Black Public Sphere Collective. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995, 7.

[9] I owe thanks to Naomi Zack for bringing both of these articles to my attention. The most recent reference to this that I am aware of occurred on Monday, April 9th, 2012, in a *New York Times* article, "Arrests in Shootings ends a Terrifying Weekend in Tulsa," describing the events of a killing spree in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The shooters, Joseph C. England (Native American, but has described himself as white) and Alvin Watts (white), killed three Black men and harmed two others. The crime has not been determined as a "hate crime." See full article at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/09/us/tulsa-police-arrest-2-men-in-shootings.html. [accessed April 12, 2012]

[10] "Tulsa Oklahoma Massacre," *New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/20/us/20tulsa.html?_r=1, [accessed July 23, 2011]

[11] They are also attempting to get the lynching included in history text books.

[12] James Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000, 184.

[13] James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993, 28.

[14] Similarly, the politics and incompletion of Peter Eisenman's proposed "Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe" shares this same quality, while also introducing a sense of the uncanny into its formation. Eisenman's memorial consists of several slabs of stone at varying sizes arranged angularly to one another. They unsettle perception and augment the field of relations. See James Young, *At Memory's Edge,* 130-131.

[15] Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 135.

[16] Ibid., 98.

[17] Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989, 19.

[18] "Rwanda Genocide Memorial Sites" http://safarisrwanda.com/rwanda/destinations/rwanda-genocide-sites.html [accessed August 20, 2011]

[19] "Rwanda Genocide Memorial" *The World*, PRI http://www.pri.org/theworld/?q=node/7997 [accessed August 20, 2011]

[20] Achille Mbembe. *On the Postcolony*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, 173-174.

[21]Ibid., 174.

[22] Walter Benjamin, *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne. New York: Verso, 2003, 46.

[23] Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," 391.

[24] Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995, 587.

[25] Ibid., 588.

[26] See Sigmund Freud's, "Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psychoanalysis: Recollection, Repetition, and Working-Through," in *Therapy and Technique*, trans. Joan Riviere. New York: Collier Books, 1963, 165.

[27] Tommie Shelby, *We Who are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005, 161.

[28] Ibid., 202.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Eddie Glaude Jr., *In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007, 2.

[31] Ibid., 55.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 134.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., 149.

[36] Ibid.,150.

[37] W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880.* New York: The Free Press, 1992, 721.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Joseph DeMarco, *The Social Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1983, 115.

[40] Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, 711-12.

[41] Ibid., 718.

[42] David Blight, "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Struggle for American Historical Memory," in *History and Memory in African American Culture*, ed. Genevieve Fabre & Robert O'Meally. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 63. Compare this point with Fanon's insight into the process of domination used in colonialism. The process of supplanting values and perverting the colonized culture is argued to be one of the more destructive forms of violence in his chapter "On Violence," in *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 1963.

[43] Paul Taylor, "Post-Black, Old Black," *The African American Review*, 41, no. 4 (2007): 626.

[44] Ibid., 629-30.

[45] Ibid., 632.

[46] Ibid., 638.

[47] Ibid., 639.

[48] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985. Lyotard considers several meanings of being *post*. I have introduced yet another distinction that can be derived from Lyotard, but is not fully explained in his text.

CHAPTER III

SORROW AS THE LONGEST MEMORY OF NEGLECT: AESTHETIC SORROW AND ALLEGORICAL MEMORY

> *We were stolen, sold, and brought together from the African continent. We got on the slave ships together. We lay back to belly in the holds of the slave ships in each other's excrement and urine together, sometimes died together, and our lifeless bodies thrown overboard together. Today, we are standing up together, with faith and even some joy.* A quote from Maya Angelou inscribed on "The monument to the forgotten slaves" memorial in Savannah, Georgia by Abigail Jordan[1]

I chose to begin this chapter with a quote that exemplifies the extremes of the memory of sorrow and the memory of neglect. Maya Angelou articulates a deep fissure that marks and demarcates the difference between Blacks and any other people—Blacks start their history in negation, in violence. Angelou writes from the standpoint of a universal "we" who begin together in a complete state of vulnerability that is also a state of closure. She implies that 'we" begin, paradoxically, where "we" are broken. We remain in the aftermath of a great sorrow, broken from tradition, relatives, and communities, and this sorrow is transmitted by a history that continues to be torn from

history. Because this history has no place, it relates the sorrowful. At the same time, the passage seems to suggest that that history has come to a close. It implies that today, we stand together to overcome that oppression. If this means that we are ready to dismantle the operations of anti-Black oppression, then I think that the statement falls into the historicism critiqued in the last chapter. However, if it means to call attention to the changing situation required to go to battle with oppression in its changing form, then it maybe truer now than it was before. But, this last passage was added to the original placard to quell social anxiety. It speaks, but what it has to say seems restricted.

I quoted this Maya Angelou passage from Abigail Jordan's memorial to the un-remembered slaves that made the journey of the Middle Passage, in Savannah, Georgia. The passage is inscribed at the base of the memorial to underscore the great debt Georgia owes to the history of slavery and to highlight the extent to which present day Georgia is indebted to forgetting this past. Abigail Jordan is not African American, but she felt that the success of the city owed much debt to the memory of the slave trade. Instead of a memorial that represented slavery or the slave trade, she intended to utilize the space of the River Front to produce a memory, or a reminder, exactly where memory is erased. Derek Adlerman writes that for Jordan, the legacy of slavery in Savannah had become an invisible story that had "been publically forgotten for too many years."[2] This seems to be the anxiety of forgetting, a forgetting that is as much a present activity as it is a decisive moment that broke with the past, which I want to thematize in this chapter as aesthetic sorrow. I will argue that that aesthetic sorrow has as its corollary, allegorical memory.

The Savannah memorial depicts a family of four, with broken chains at their feet. There are no references in the representation itself to those people who lost their lives

during the Middle Passage, but rather to a presence of memory of that institution. The memorial is placed directly on the pier in Savannah Georgia, where slaves were traded. Maybe it counters forgetting. More importantly, it suffers, it sorrows, and it makes anxiety appear to become a memory.

Furthermore, up to this point, I have described the way a Cassandra complex makes its own violence unintelligible, despite representations. I have argued that the complex itself is a product amplified as a post-racial context. Post-racial memory in particular depoliticizes the past, regardless of whether the social body is attempting to dismantle racism or reinforce it. This chapter will develop aesthetic sorrow and its connection to allegorical memory. I will argue that allegory is the way what has been torn out, forgotten, or erased, communicates itself to a present that is invested in continuing the former violence. To do this, first I will focus on W.E.B. Du Bois and Walter Benjamin's aesthetics. Next, I will consider what allegorical memory means in response to the Cassandra complex. My example for this is Billie Holiday's song, "Strange Fruit." For all of these, I argue that what makes them suited responses to post-racial memory, specifically, and the Cassandra complex, in general, is that they pull away from and negate their dependence on representation. They put on display a state of affairs, a set of conditions, and a limit to the public sphere.

1. The Present Memory of an Old Sorrow

If the Cassandra complex traced the way that post-racial memory obscures relations to history, we can say that it relied on deeply entrenched negligibility. While in former times, this was taken up as whole scale exclusion, now it seems to shape the way we include alternate histories, perspectives, and representations. However, something more is needed at this time. Neglect still constitutes a memory, though. And it is this form of memory, which is neither a representation, nor a point of unrepresentability, that seems to cause memorial arts to be shrouded in anxiety. Aesthetic sorrow is attached to African American memory in a specific way that is worth considering in our context, because it is directed at public memory that only unfolds a public neglect.

a) Du Boisian Aesthetics and the Politics of Sorrow

While Du Bois is generally praised for his astute analysis of cultural history and memory, or his incisive contributions to political activism, his aesthetics is often characterized as under developed, at best. In his brief 1926 essay, "Criteria of Negro Art," he argues that art that has no political content has no concern for him, thus reducing the importance of art to its significance in relation to politics.[3] The fact that he does not give much space to the arts furthers this characterization. Following this sentiment, Arnold Rampersad holds that Du Bois had little judgment in terms of appreciation of art, and thus regarded art as insignificant.[4] Likewise, Keith Byerman argues that Du Bois's idea of art is primarily concerned with social, political, and historical realities and not with philosophical aesthetics.[5] According to both commentators, art for Du Bois is only a

tool for politics rather than a distinct domain of human and social experience. Byerman argues that "art," according to Du Bois, is for the purpose of transcending human suffering and is significant in that it produces an image of an ideal beyond the constraints of present suffering.[6] But, this is not a rejection of how aesthetics relates to politics or to memory. Du Bois rejects discussions of art, or the philosophy of art, without rejecting aesthetics. I want to show that his thought is thoroughly concerned with aesthetics, while conceding that it is not concerned with the philosophy of art.

The Souls of Black Folk is a thoroughly multi-layered text. It is sociology, history, and philosophy all at once. But, at the head of each chapter, Du Bois places a phrase of music. Nothing more is said about this until the closing chapter of the book. In Du Bois's last essay in *The Souls*, "Of the Sorrow Songs," he argues that the central importance of songs to African-American lives is two-fold: these songs are songs of memory and the first truly American music. He writes, "They that walked in darkness sang songs in the olden days—Sorrow Songs—for they were weary at heart."[7] The songs shaped a texture of life in memory and out of place. They served as much for memory as they did for community. Shannon Zamir argues that for Du Bois, the use of the sorrow songs and spirituals are a "living recollection that continues to speak to the disgraces of the present that has by no means severed its link" to the past.[8] But, recall that the songs are songs of sorrow, and not simply songs of memory. They are songs that suffer (*unter Leiden*). The present becomes shaped by loss, or the sense of the sorrowful, just as much as a past remains present through its traces. Further, since the sorrowful does not form a continuity with anything, what sort of memory or signification can it bear?

This question can be approached in yet another way. For most of *Souls* the goal of Du Bois's political work is to seek to recover a history that has been left out, and, at the same time, to correct forms of social misperception that underlay much of the racism of his time. "Of the Sorrow Songs" does not seem to achieve the end of recovery, however. Rather than recover a past that has been lost, it seems to expose a present *as* broken. He states, "They are the music of an unhappy people, of the children of disappointment; they tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world, of misty wanderings and hidden ways."[9] Even if one can see the traces of social progress, one can also see a tendency to make public memory a matter of a voice becoming inept. Aesthetic sorrow seems to start from this point, and its work seems to be a subtle way of disrupting the power of tradition. Likewise, according to Zamir, the sorrow songs are a form of resistance to reconcile community within a totalizing ideal.[10] If music is the transmission of memory, then it is a memory without content. He states, "The child sang it to his children and they to their children's children, and so for two hundred years it has travelled down to us and we sing it to our children, knowing as little as our fathers what its words mean, but knowing well the meaning of the music."[11] But, what are they really resisting? What is its end? What is the meaning that is being resituated with aesthetic sorrow? There is no such thing as African-American history, according to his thought, because most if not all Black folk have lost connection to their origin and are continually treated as if they are out of place. What are they drawing into the space of memory in the present? What are they pulling away from as memory, in the present?

As Keith Byerman argues, we might suggest that these historicized slave expressions are really counter-histories to dominant culture.[12] Second, as Robert

Goodings-Williams argues, the present is justified, but only to the extent that it is asked to respond to this message. He writes: "To respond to the message of the sorrow songs, white Americans must acknowledge their implications in the lives of black Americans by heeding the message of the sorrow songs and extending to black Americans their civil and political rights."[13] But this is the claim that needs to be challenged because it reduces the meaning of memory to our most comfortable reference point.

The claim that the message of the sorrow songs offers a counter-history or a politics of civil rights is fundamentally problematic. Both Gooding-Williams and Byerman tie the meaning of the songs to a distinct "message," but that is exactly what is never articulated. Du Bois holds the opposite, in that the sorrow songs *make the present strange*. Furthermore, according to Byerman and Goodings-Williams, *Sorrow* restores a sense of former times, without abandoning the present. But, this is to forget that according to Du Bois the music of the slave does not have a message distinctly shaped for our past, but rather to the world. Its message is one that iterates a past suffering in the present. And because it alerts the present to a crisis, its meaning is found only in the way we reinterpret the present in light of what the music unsettles.

The politics that we become aware of in this alternative movement are not the politics opposed to the dominant form, but one that displaces the significance of aesthetics from its former place. This displacement seems to be what is significant in Byerman's observation that Du Bois's aesthetic employs increasing sensitivity toward a sense of distance, when one of proximity would be expected.[14] What is expected, given a politics of recognition, rather than sorrow, appears confused, or inverted, but it is just this inversion that takes us to the radical potential of aesthetic sorrow. Du Bois states, "The

songs are indeed the siftings of centuries"[15] and that they are the "voice of exile."[16] But they *speak* to the present as that which is continually exiled. And thus, aesthetic sorrow traces a memory underwritten by politics, although it itself is not a memory, but a movement between the politics and the aesthetics of memory, in the politics of the present. Aesthetic sorrow challenges us to be able to think of erasure and of what is brought to silence as both constituting memory as well. They communicate allegorically, however. Aesthetic sorrow depends on allegory because allegory is able to express the forgotten in memory.

b) Memory Exiled

What Du Bois's aesthetics achieves is that transition of history into philosophy, from the study of the conditions of human development and life, to the resituating of concepts and problems. The philosophical sense of *sorrow* itself designates a specific aesthetic domain that is within the present, but *out of place* in this present. Sorrow is that which lingers on in the present by moving inward, or positioning itself out of the space of representation.[17] Aesthetic sorrow is not simply the negativity of loss launched into the public sphere. In "Of the Passing of the First-Born," Du Bois writes,

> All that day and all that night there sat an awful gladness in my heart,—nay, blame me not if I see the world thus darkly through the Veil,—and my soul whispers ever to me saying, 'not dead, not dead, but escaped; not bond, but free.' No bitter meanness now shall sicken his baby heart till it die a living death, no taunt shall madden his happy boyhood. Fool that I was to think or wish that this little soul should grow chocked and deformed within the Veil![18]

Accordingly, sorrow exposes a condition that normatively is there, but has gone silent. And it is because of this that what was broken comes to stand in as the sign of what remains broken. Aesthetic sorrow marks the breakage that continues within the present as a continuation of the social fabric that unites the cultural memory of the past. Therefore, aesthetic sorrow is the aesthetic that retains that which remains as the remains of former times. Sorrow reminds in order to form a response. Thus, Du Bois writes:

> Within the Veil was he born, said I; and there within shall he live,—a Negro and a Negro's son. Holding in that little head—ah, bitterly!—the unbowed pride of a hunted race, clinging with that tiny dimpled hand—ah, wearily!—to a hope not hopeless but unhopeful, and seeing with those bright wondering eyes that peer into my soul a land whose freedom is to us a mockery and whose liberty a lie.[19]

Indeed, aesthetic sorrow, in this sense, is not simply absence, but that which pulls away from history. It is that absence that structures oppression at the level f sensation in such a way as to reflect how the past political commitments continue forward discreetly in the present. Du Bois emphasizes this point when he writes that, "Mother and Child are sung, but seldom father; fugitive and wearily wanderer call for pity and affection, but there is little wooing and wedding; the rocks and mountains are well known, but home is unknown."[20] What is aestheticized is not recovered, but left in its present state of distance and disrepair. It is left as a sorrow that sings its own suffering in place of memory.

Aesthetic sorrow makes the present strange, which is to say that it reminds the present of what it always already is suffering, even as it avoids this suffering. This

avoidance is also disclosed in aesthetic sorrow to the extent that it reveals that the progress of the present is prefigured by its own degree of being in a state of erasure. Indeed, aesthetic sorrow indicates that condition in the present that is continuous with a radical break, first explicitly indicated in the past. It is underwritten by a sense of *haunting* and *silence*. Memory in this sense is not involved in the production of memory proper, representations of memory, but retains the sense in which the present displays various forms of breakage, disavowal, denial, and active forgetting or suppression. Sorrow communicates indirectly; it relies on those signs that carry with them something completely outdated, which is to say that sorrow communicates allegorically. Allegory has its value because it communicates through symbol over narrative. It tends to build its meaning by requiring one to read the present as giving meaning to the past rather than the past giving meaning to the present. This is why Walter Benjamin claims that allegory has always been present in times of social change and political crisis; it is a way of exposing the limits of the public sphere toward the social formation of its own anxiety.

2. Allegory at the Limits of the Memorable

I will argue that out of aesthetic sorrow we find allegorical memory. Allegory and allegorical aesthetics have often been devalued as political tools. First, allegory is the art of symbols. As such, it is often indirect, interpretative, and self-referential. One can argue that allegory overly subjectivizes its object. But allegory makes everything interior and exterior a matter of a sign. For instance, it may represent an image from Christian history, but its meaning signifies a present as well as a past condition. Thus allegory communicates directly what cannot be placed in the discursive space of the public sphere.

Second, it is hampered by archaic images, derived from the past, or overwrought with historical references. But, its architecture is such that it shows directly what is implied in the present, through an image of the past. Third, one might argue that allegory is a mute art form; it depends on reading more than interpreting; it is passive more than it is active. However, it traces what has gone mute, what is made to be only in its being silent. But we need to examine this a bit closer, how silence is a form of expression.

a) Sorrow's Silence and Allegorical Memory

By examining allegory as an art of silence, we will see how close Du Bois's use of sorrow is: sorrow is that memory that goes silent. Walter Benjamin argues that allegory is descriptive of the way aesthetic absence is turned into the politically active. In his early study of an obscure form of late baroque German drama, called *mourning plays* (*Trauerspiels*), he argues that allegory is the philosophical and aesthetic form that is employed in times of political crisis—that is, in times when authority, power, and organization are in the process of, or in need of, transformation.[21] In general, allegory is thought of as a stylistic variation of art, or a technique of reading and interpreting that is heavily symbolic. But contrary to this, Benjamin writes, "Allegory… is not a playful illustrative technique, but a form of expression, just as speech is expression, and, indeed, as writing is."[22] Allegory un-writes, or rather it does the obverse of writing. For Benjamin this is significant because it constitutes a decisive break with the material from other traditions, recast in new relations, holding different significances, and ordering different patterns, and thus requiring a different interpretation. For Benjamin, *allegory* works by

disjoining images, domains, and references to normative forms of representation. It is, in a sense, a representative art that does not represent representations, but retains that aesthetic sensibility that pulls away or exceeds the image or representation. Thus Benjamin argues that the Baroque mourning plays depend upon allegory because it is the art that exposes the decay or inversion of the representational itself in the sense that a representation represents a totality.

Like aesthetic sorrow for Du Bois, allegorical arts are always out of place, and disruptive. Inversion and decay are not just the main themes in allegorical arts. They depend upon the expression's that are most significant but often mute, inept, or in a state of arrested development. Allegory resists representation, resists forms of appearance, but all the same, does not fail to communicate its essential content.[23] Susan Buck-Morss points out that for Benjamin this requires seeing history as continual transition and reproduction.[24] It is also in this sense that Benjamin argues that allegory needs to be seen as an indirect communication of the content that does not become incorporated into history. Rather allegory is that which is left out, left in neglect, or undergoes the ruinous result of history.

While aesthetic sorrow makes the present strange, allegory makes the silence and exile a suffering in the present or public sphere. Benjamin argues that in *Trauerspiels*, history itself comes to a standstill. Thus, he states that allegory can be seen as an intrusion that could be described as "a harsh disturbance of the peace and a violation of *law* and *order* in the arts."[25] And it is this violation of the genre type that forms a new combination or constellation through its own ruptures. We can say that allegory shows where fractured relations are maintained in order to efface the fracture itself. Likewise,

John McCole describes this quality of Benjamin's aesthetics as the mode of non-synthetic dialectics that renders the present as being pinned between two contrary traditions where a harmonious or totalizing synthesis is denied, but a link between how they constitute an exclusion of one another is formed.[26] In the same way, the state's relation to legitimate space is challenged, legitimate memory is challenged by the allegorical as well—but only based on the way it inverts a set of relations. But allegory is not only an art form independent to the same degree as other art forms, it is a form of expression and a form of aesthetic experience that expresses the extremes of the private within the public and the extremes of the public within the private.

For this reason, Benjamin claims that allegory is charged with a philosophy of history, but rather than resituating the past within the present, it seeks to situate a sense of the political within the aesthetic, which is why Benjamin's *theses* "On the Concept of History" build toward an aesthetic sense of *acedia* against the motifs of redemption.[27] As Buck-Morss suggests, Benjamin's philosophy of history brings the object of history out of infinite distance and into infinite proximity.[28] The response to the public sphere in allegory can be linked to a philosophical development of the concept of mourning. We cannot characterize mourning as related only to psychology or interiority. Mourning is a particular name for a response to a context, and our context is the post-racial.

b) Mourning and Politics

What is mourning to allegorical memory? First, mourning is a substitute for memory when memory is removed from its public significance. Mourning is a search for public meaning in spite of loss. Similarly, this is what distinguishes Walter Benjamin's notion of mourning (*trauer*) from other more psychologized notions. Benjamin argues that the *Trauerspiels* show a violation of boundaries as a convergence of distinctions that appear in these works as arbitrary. Mourning politicizes the present by way of aesthetic memory that produces the appearance of inversions. He argues, "For these are not so much plays which cause mourning, as plays through which mournfulness finds (*findet*) satisfaction (*Genügen*): plays for the mournful."[29] According to Benjamin, they are plays in which mourning is the mode of expression, which is to say that what mourns places the forgetting of memory in place of where there is no longer memory, it communicates a silence that finds its expression as it mourns.[30]

Likewise, *Findet* is a 'finding' or an attempt at 'founding' in the sense of discovery. One does not discover something that never was, but reinterprets what has always been. Discovery calls for the resituating of a set of related (and sometimes unrelated) concepts. Likewise, in mourning, one discovers what has always been there, but now requires that common and normative concepts undergo further reworking. Mourning does not cease in its finding, but begins its work as a re-grounding and re-membering of the meaning and significance of former terms and laws. Similarly, *Genügen* is a form of 'satisfaction.' In this sense, satisfaction means that what is discovered entails or relates what is to be done. But, satisfaction is also a limit because what is required also articulates the extent to which something can be done. It operates as

a term of seeking "just enough and no more." Mourning responds by making the settled questionable and thus is a type of activity or work.[31] However, in making a settled state of affairs questionable, mourning is determined by resistance, and it is this resistance that makes the public appear in its strangeness since public reconciliation with the past is withheld.

Allegory is that mode of expression—and more than a mode of expression, but a mode of experience—that traces where the expressible *goes silent*. When we think of the violence that marked the Martin case, while memory governs the public discourse, there is much that is left to be communicated only through the allegorical. Notice the number of representations that alleviate the activity of resistance from its responsibility. It is a responding without responsibility. At some point, we will be left to mourn, and mourning is a suffering now and for a long time to come, a meaninglessness in the public sphere that also suffers its own incommunicability, its own context, in its most alienated form.

Now more than at other times, attention to allegorical memory and aesthetic mourning is important. These are the responses available to us, but notice that they do not stop or circumvent post-racial discourse. They put on display the conditions under which we suffer now from an ineptitude of suffering. They trace a silence that contains the memory of what we sorrow, and in doing so make us responsive, if not to an object or a condition, then to a limit of the public sphere.

3. The Strangest Fruit: From Aesthetic Sorrow to Allegorical Memory

I have suggested that mourning makes the public appear in its strangest posture, as if caught in its most embarrassing activity. I will return to this point in the next chapter. But for now I want to trace that initial response of aesthetic sorrow through the post-racial. I began to argue that aesthetic sorrow was initially what constitutes one of Black America's innovations to aesthetics. I think it is within this tradition that a long history of radicalism is unveiled. In Angela Davis's critical aesthetic work, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism,* she works out much of this tradition along with the significance of early female Jazz artists. In *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, Davis examines the political importance of several early blues women and argues that their aesthetic impact influences the political domain of possibility. But it is her focus on the work of Billie Holiday that relates to the aesthetic of sorrow. For us, her reading of Holiday's music as a political landscape offers much for us to think about as we situate Holiday in the tradition of aesthetic sorrow. I will focus on "Strange Fruit" as an example of aesthetic memory that weds aesthetic sorrow to allegorical memory.[32]

a) Davis's Political Billie Holiday

Angela Davis's work on Billie Holiday and other Jazz figures goes to great lengths to provide a way of discussing the intersection of history, politics, and cultural aesthetics. Through Jazz, she philosophically situates a type of proto-feminist aesthetics. This is clearest in her reading of particular songs and aesthetic aspects of Billie Holiday's

work. From Holiday, Davis develops the political potentiality of her music, but it is developed in large part along the lines of aesthetic sorrow.

In relation to Billie Holiday, Davis focuses on the strong, defiant, and surprisingly subversive nature of her musical style, fusing themes of hope inverted by disappointment. Davis argues that the music itself transformed a set of social relations that were and are politically rigid and often lack sites of expression or representation.[33] She states, "[Holiday's] message is able to escape the ideological constraints of the lyrics. In the music, in her phrasing, her timing, the timbre of her voice, the social roots of pain and despair in women's emotional lives are given a lyrical legibility."[34] She argues that these songs articulate a life that, prior to this, had no forum for articulation. Similarly, Davis views Holiday's music as enfolding and disclosing a politics within its aesthetic dimension. Thus, her music prefigures forms of consciousness-raising and many other themes that became part of civil and human rights era politics, providing a context of history where transformative to the politics of the 1960's.

According to Davis, Holiday's music reveals a social texture that originates out of the uncertainty of a time and place of expression that had no former place in time, because the expression had no former place in the present. The aesthetic sorrow of Holiday's music is not directly sorrowful either, but based on that which could find no expression anywhere else. The aesthetic dimension that Holiday's music contains is a type of performative rupturing of time and space that plays in a domain of inversions. Davis argues that the play of inverse relations and stylistic innovations that forms the basis of Holiday's unique music also prefigures the tone of revolutionary politics. Holiday's music destabilizes norms and forms a fluidity of boundaries, between happy

and sad, song and language, past and present.[35] Therefore, while Holiday had the ability to transform a song that was full of clichéd images into a critique of its own content, she cleared the space for the expression of life *gone silent*.[36]

Davis argues that in Billie Holiday's music, a simple love song becomes a critique of anti-Black racism to the extent that Blacks are not integrated into the "American Dream." For example, in "Some Other Spring," Holiday makes a song about longing to find love once again, a song that is mournful. Developing Herbert Marcuse's aesthetics, Davis holds that it places the tension between Eros and Power within a political dream that African Americans have no part in.[37] Likewise, the sorrowful is communicated by remembrance of neither an illuminated past, from the stand point of the present, nor from a compellingly politicized present from which the past is brought to bear. In "Yesterdays," Holiday's wordplay fumbles through sound-pairings of a happy past at odds with a present. It is this tension that suspends a fixed state of reconciliation, making the present a fluid boundary through which a transformative reconfiguration takes place. Aesthetic sorrow dissolves of the line between the aesthetic and the political to the illumination of the political through the aesthetic. In this sense we can say that it is aesthetic sorrow that makes Holiday's music so poignant and refigures memory as an ambiguity intruding in the present sensibility of time, space, and place. Furthermore, the aesthetic dimension for Davis is fundamentally historical and collective—it "represents a symbiosis, drawing from and contributing to an African American social and musical history in which women's political agency is nurtured by, and in turn natures, aesthetic agency."[38] But there also something that unsettles this sphere of the public as well.

Davis follows this line of thought through to her interpretation of Holiday's politically charged "Strange Fruit." Davis first handles "Strange Fruit" as a song that is *out of place* in Holiday's oeuvre. Despite the many subversive songs of Holiday's, this is the only one with an overt political theme. Davis holds that Holiday's "Strange Fruit" is primarily Holiday's protest song against the anti-Black violence of White supremacy that Holiday lived through. Davis is right based on the politics of the time, but this does not identify in what way the song aesthetically continues these *protests*.[39] Davis errs in that she displaces the aesthetic significance for a political significance. She argues that the significance of the song remains in the fact that "Strange Fruit" evokes the horrors of lynching at a time when Black people were still passionately calling for allies in the campaign to eradicate this murderous and terroristic manifestation of racism.[40]

While the song may be thought of as a reflection on the terrors of the past, and still may refer to her present time, this does not explain why it has and continues to be an unsettling song that reminds the present of its bestial past and yet still is cause for anxiety. Likewise, this explanation does not provide a way for interpreting how the song evades reference to any specific time, but rather refers to areas of sensation that are closely associated with both presence and memory. It allegorizes even when it is representing, and it mourns even when it is remembering: in short, it reminds us through how it makes us suffer a present that is strange.

This potentiality is further obscured in the way Davis places its significance on the level of personal biography and points out that it is a work stemming from deep childhood memories. While this serves to show that Holiday was aware of the political significance of the song at the time she was presented with it, both in terms of her

biography and from her involvement and support of anti-lynching campaigns, Davis's interpretation comes at the expense of retaining the song's import solely as a historicized artifact. And because of this, the song loses its power as something that augments the politics it was a precursor for. In post-racial memory, the political significance of the song dies with the civil rights movement. And this loss de-legitimates the use of the aesthetic dimension, since rather than retaining its connection to the political, it is rather an artistic presentation of a recollection.

This point is further problematic because Davis interprets the song as a precursor or originary expression of the seeds of a political movement. It is a song that remains at odds with the political conditions of the present, even though it is situated as a precursor to a past moment. Rather than simply indicating *this* particular injustice, it indicates a set of injustices relationally exposed in the memory. Indeed, "Strange Fruit" is not really a form of memory in the classical sense, since it displaces a present politics by opening up the discursive space where discreet systemic violence appears as the reiteration of a former displacement. It is closer to allegory or a type of mourning of its time (and ours), insofar as we are not able to adequately memorialize and put it behind us, a history that forms and reproduces its violence. Thus, in what follows I will argue that "Strange Fruit" is not just a model of aesthetic sorrow, but also a model of allegorical memory. As long as we fail to think of it as a song about or responding to lynching, it pierces the public sphere with a tracing of the residue of White violence.

b) "Strange Fruit" Reconsidered

Because of aesthetic sorrow and its relation to allegory, let us rethink of the relation of memory of a violence that a nation commits against itself the other way around. Let us think it from the side of allegory via Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit." First, the way this song relates to the present is as allegorical memory, which requires an inversion of the social dynamics, through which the political becomes estranged from its relation to memory. We can achieve this estrangement by reading the song as allegory, which inflects its pastness with the present. Second, to think of the song this way also implies that "Strange Fruit" is a prophetic song, but not because it forecast a future political situation, and neither is it prophetic because it has a message to the world that is still in need of being deciphered. Rather, it is prophetic in the sense that it expresses something that has *gone silent*. "Strange Fruit" calls to mind a present where memory has gone sorrowful. If "Strange Fruit" is a type of memory, it is a memory estranged, and its "progress" is seated right at the expense of what must be repressed. In the same way, the memory of lynching, of anti-Black violence, forms as a memory of a history that is compulsively forgotten. I think that the song needs to be reinterpreted along the lines of an aesthetic sorrow and as allegorical memory. We need to trace where its allegorical meaning displays memory as a type of mourning that marks out the aesthetic relations of a present that spark anxiety. This is done in the way that the song places an emphasis on the broken relation of a present to its history, and to what has *gone silent* by letting absence of voice and absence of image become an intimately decisive emphasis about in the song. Every image in the song is a decayed image, resting against a memory that is supplied only allegorically.

She sings *Southern trees; bear a strange fruit/blood at the leaves and, blood at the root, /black body swinging in the southern breeze/Strange fruit hanging from the polar trees. Pastoral scene of the gallant south, / the bulging eyes and the twisted mouth.* The images symbiotically rest against one another and shatter the sense that each retains on its own. It is expressly what does not get amplified and what is not made explicit that retains a political register. What *goes silent* is a question of repair, limit, and recognition. All of these questions seem odd and out of place.

We might also say that *strange fruit* reveals a political dream. It is as much a recasting of a political dream as it is a response to the violence itself. The body of the lynched victim is a displayed object and a waste object, in either case prepared for consumption, which pairs its status with that of fruit.[41] The lynched body, much like fruit, is produced, and then consumed in the local shop as trophy, or hung in the center of town as manufactured memory. Therefore, White violence is paired with the cultivation, care, and growth of the poplar tree. The pairing shows the way the South has benefitted from a history of exploiting black bodies for its own profit, as if this violence were a product of nature, sharing the same origin and representing two sides of the same thing. This conflation of human-made violence to nature results in a pairing of violence with nature, which is the long memory of neglect that is intertwined with the long memory of sorrow. This pairing does not resolve itself in the face of the victim, but the way the face dissipates into parts, displacing any notion of face with the inhuman "twisted mouth."

I mentioned that the rest of the song seems to retreat from this image, but it might be clearer to say that it *hesitates*, or *brings her singing to its silence*. One could say that there is a *voicing* that is expressed in this silence in the sense that something is withheld,

held in within the present, but without representation. Or, to say this in another way, with the present as a petrified object, one that petrifies if it were not suppressed from the start. Thus, in the face of eternal sadness, the present is continually petrified. Despite this hesitation, the music continues, or rather it *lingers* on—which means where there is a vocal withholding. There is also a tonal *taking of time.* This time stands inversely related to voice. It continues where the other continues inversely and is a time that moves outward or onward, while the voice moves inward or elsewhere.

Holiday's song illustrates the becoming of a silence that one is required to be present, much like the way the closed casket brings one closer to one's own death than the sight of the corpse. We should recognize in all this that a silence resulting from the inability to speak is different from the silence resulting from a will that will not put itself into words. If the context invites words, then silence is a struggle and a resisting within the context. The same can be said about the choice of imagery, which from this point on is not visual, because the withholding of voice and reducing of vocalization mimics the withholding of the visual.

The lyrics then defer to the sensual referents that flee from visibility. She sings, *Scent of magnolia, sweet and fresh/sudden smell of burning flesh.* While the scent of magnolia may mask the smell of burning flesh, or the smell of burning flesh may cancel the scent of magnolia, neither are cancelled and both are embedded in one another. "Smell" is used as a parallel sense, but smell is a primary sense of memory. Smell recalls a past, or a position where something was, and a dispersal of presence, and in this sense it shares a similarity with involuntary memory. Smell is also primarily a trace, it *lingers* even when the event and the body have been removed. In this way, it *haunts*, or hangs on

as a memory or trace that has yet to be repressed. Or, the smell is that object that generates a sense that is always already not here. The smell of burning flesh is the smell of the diffuse atmosphere of White violence. It is that quality that links the image of a past moment to a present state of affairs. Moreover, the smell of burning flesh is also sudden, unexpected, disruptive shock. The time of lingering is the time that interrupts, interferes with, or hangs on longer than it should within the present.

The last stanza of the song traces a fragmentation. She sings, in a way re-naturalizing the scene, *Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck/ for the rain to gather, for the wind to suck/for the sun to rot, for the tree to—drop/ Here is a –Strange—and bitter fruit.* Just as Benjamin focused on the ruin, the fragment, and the removal of material history that leaves traces in its removal, Holiday's version of this song breaks each appearance of nature with regard to it consuming the memory of violence. This removal of a body does not end the history of what is removed, but places it within a context of countermovement, preserving it as a reproduced removal .This is not simply the erasure of death, but its perseverance as a countermovement against the abyss of forgetting, against a repairable moment, and against a present that could recover—and requires empathy. It is in this sense that involution makes the present strange. Aesthetic sorrow reflects the political training of the present to confront terror as it turns the political toward its inward condition of potency.[42]

Despite the fact that the song addresses the death of a person, this is not a song that mourns any particular person—it is not personal in that sense. The death is public, impersonal, and from any time. It is allegorical at the same time that it is memorial. By rejecting the expression imposed in the form of representation, the song draws into its

scope the social pathology of White violence. It does this by making the meaning and not the image audible. White violence makes the sayable not worth saying or only worth representing allegorically. By rendering the words sung, spoken, murmured indifferently or powerfully beside the pastoral and elegant imagery, all of this lays bare a social contradiction on which White violence still operates. Just as, for Benjamin, a frozen landscape of the present and of history, or rather, as that which "breaks off in the middle of the process of resounding…which was ready to pour forth, [and] provokes mourning," the song works as a memory that amplifies a present that is silencing a sensitivity to loss.[43] It is a fire alarm that sounds for sixty seconds every minute.[44]

4. The Sublime Residue of Sorrow

I have argued that there is no real response against a Cassandra complex other than what exposes the complex itself as an exterior condition conditioning our contextualized aesthetic relations to domains of politicization. Aesthetic sorrow and allegorical memory simply make the aspects of the complex appear in their fragmentation and awkwardness. They put on display the activity of hiding what the complex wants to keep hidden. Allegorical memory that replaces memory with mourning goes a bit further in how, if we thematize mourning, it places images in the place where it is also withholding something. If the song or memorial must represent, it will throw up a representation, but within the representation there is also a publicizing of how the present suffers its own forgetfulness. This has a meaning for politics in that it makes public that which is anestheticized.

If "Strange Fruit" is a form of aesthetic memory that is allegorical, it must fail as a direct memory or representation. This failure would seem to find its resolve in provoking

the sense of dissent, or reorganizing the senses toward the sorrowful. Much like other works of allegory, the domain of representation and the domain of allegory encounter one another as limiting factors, or extremes of one another. The singing of "Strange Fruit" allows it not only to operate as memorial aesthetic sorrow, but as a critical memorialization of what has undergone decay and become the object of a progressive insensitivity. As a memory, it reveals the way racist memory unfolds as a detritus of representation and representability (or, recognition). It reveals either the condition in which social consciousness has become numb even to this type of violence (which is the same as listening to "Strange Fruit" for enjoyment or as dancing music), or in which this type of violence has come to be abolished. Likewise, what aesthetic sorrow seems to be is a memorial art that makes the allegorical expression of memory present. In a sense, the illegitimation of the memory of this past reveals a dynamic of the politics of the present in a memory that nobody wants to remember. Likewise, Benjamin points out that "Ghosts, like the profoundly significant allegories, are manifestations from the realm of mourning; they have an affinity for mourners, for those who ponder over signs and over the future."[45] The future, in this sense, is always undetermined in that it is pitted between abolition and repetition. In this way, the political sense of mourning is the work of making the public sphere restless in reference to the way past loss refers to a present oppression.

I argued that aesthetic sorrow is not a new form of aesthetics, nor is it a different form of memory, because it resituates a particular question of violence relative to history, on the one hand, and the present context, on the other. Memory becomes allegorical where representation appears as only representation, and thereby inadequate. In this

context it challenges the present not only to regard the present as shot through with the ruptures of the past, and in so doing, bear the weight of our violence, but also to see the past as shot through with the present. This is what has been left unsaid in Du Bois, Benjamin, and Davis. To think of the past as being shot through with the present means that former absence aesthetically un-determines the significance of our positive notions of politics in which neglect is not only an instance of a political failure, but the symptomatic structure of a political complex.

Furthermore, allegory resists domination that governs its importance. It is in this domain that silence appears as a type of speaking; it is the negative relation to speaking that pulls away from audibility and yet makes it possible all at the same time. Silence is not found on its own, but only where voice is present. I have tried to show that the same can be said for sorrow. Where progress asserts that history and tradition are advancing, sorrow appears as that which can only appear in its implied form. Mourning is the double of aesthetic sorrow; it amplifies the presence of memory's anesthesia.

We need to ask further about what aesthetic sensibility outstrips the public sphere in such a way that what anxiety reveals is a system of relationality that is in negation. I think that Kantian aesthetics achieves this with his revision of the aesthetics of the sublime, but the sublime has further implications. I am neither returning to a Kantian aesthetics that applies his notion of the sublime to politics, nor am I rehabilitating a version of Kant for this project. I will focus on a few insights on how the aesthetic and the public sphere relate to one another from Kant's aesthetic and political writings. For this reason, I am also not reviving a postmodern Kant. I am only in search of a tool, a scrap, or a lever that responds to post-racialism and can be used to respond to the

Cassandra complex. If this does damage to Kantian aesthetics, so be it. But, I will focus on the Sublime in its first and initial moments, which is to say, that I will focus on the aesthetic relationality of the anxiety of the Sublime. I do this not to erase the previous work that scholars have done on Kant, but to show that while the aesthetic of the Sublime is important to aesthetics, it is also important to politics, and not only in its reactionary form. In its first moments, the Sublime appears at the same time as the Beautiful emasculating the Beautiful and calling for a resituating of cognition. I think this is significant to examine in the context of politics and our post-racial relation to history. Where the Sublime turns away from the Beautiful, a negative relation to the public sphere appears—and this can only be developed further as a more fundamental political sense of mourning.

5. Notes

[1] The last line was added to the original inscription, after much public outcry. The monument itself was the topic of controversy for more than a decade. This was true of many aspects of the memorial, including the site. The first site she requested for the memorial was by the river front, and it was turned down because the city claimed it did not own that property. It then rented that same site to a developer to construct restrooms to accommodate large groups of tourists. The monument was eventually given a place in a Rouzakis Plaza on River Street in 2002. See Derek Alderman , "Surrogation and the Politics of Remembering Slavery in Savannah, Georgia," *Journal of Historical Geography*, 36, (2010): 90-101.

[2] Derek Alderman, "Surrogation and the Politics of Remembering Slavery in Savannah, Georgia," 95.

[3] W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Criteria of Negro Art," in *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings*. New York: The Library of America, 1986, 993.

[4] Arnold Rampersad, "W.E.B. Du Bois as a Man of Letters," in *Critical Essays on W.E.B. Du Bois*, ed. Ward Andrews. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1985, 58. Also see Arnold

Rampersad, *The Art and Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976. Neither work addresses Du Bois' critical thought on aesthetics. Instead, Rampersad critiques Du Bois as a writer of fiction and poetry. Whether or not Du Bois' fiction is good or bad ignores the question of what Du Bois' insights into aesthetics really are.

[5] Keith Byerman, "Master and Man: The Souls of Black Folk as Mastering Narrative," in *Seizing the Word: History, Art, and Self in the Work of W.E.B. Du Bois.* Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994, 29.

[6] Ibid., 31.

[7] Du Bois, "Of the Sorrow Songs," in Souls of Black Folk, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings*. New York: The Library of America, 1986, 536.

[8] Shannon Zamir, *Dark Voices: W.E.B. Du Bois and American Thought, 1888-1903.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995, 174.

[9] Du Bois "Of the Sorrow Songs," *Writings*, 537.

[10] Zamir. *Dark Voices*, 181.

[11] Du Bois, "Of the Sorrow Songs," 538.

[12] Byerman, *Seizing the Word*, 34.

[13] Robert Goodings-Williams, *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009, 126.

[14] Byerman, *Seizing the Word*, 29.

[15] Du Bois, "The Sorrow Songs," 537.

[16] Ibid., 538.

[17] See Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," 584-589.

[18] Du Bois, "Of the Passing of the First-Born," in Souls of Black Folk, in *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings*. New York: The Library of America, 1986, 510.

[19] Ibid., 506.

[20] Ibid., 542.

[21] Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades-Project*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995, 178.

[22] Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* trans. John Osborne. New York: Verso, 2003, 162.

[23] In the "Epistemo-Critical Prologue" he argues that the philosophical use of allegory delineates the way that pausing, silence, or the unspoken are part of the aesthetic as well. The moment of seizure is the prerequisite for reflection, for a new constellation of the old categories. This account does not think of silence or death in passive terms, but rather as the space where the new finds its origin (*Ur-sprung)* within the philosophy of history. Also, importantly, for Benjamin, origin does not mean an attempt to see things the way they originally were; rather he argues that "origin" means to trace the conditions that provide for a break from tradition. The original is that which *breaks from* the concept of the past and literally *springs forth* a past concept that was out of place as a now (*Jetztzeit*) that is embedded in the present. See Benjamin, "The Epistemo-Critical Prologue" in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 28-30.

[24] Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 168.

[25] Ibid., 177.

[26] John McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993, 140.

[27] Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol. 4, 1938-1940,* eds. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006, 391.

[28] Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*, 160.

[29] It is not clear what sense *findet* (or "finds") is intended to have in relation to *Genügen* (or "satisfaction"). *Findet* could either mean finds satisfaction, ceasing a previous need, or it could mean that it grounds a searching for meaning, in the sense of discovering a new way of looking at the same material. See Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 119 (see *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, 100).

[30] This question is inspired by what Benjamin says in his "Epistemo-Critical Prologue" to the *Trauerspiel* study. Here he argues that aesthetic thinking is as much concerned with reflective thought as it is with the moments where thought comes to a standstill, finds itself pausing, or at a moment of arrest, which is also the disjunction of the gaze of the deaths head, *de anima* in permanent arrest. He returns to this notion in "Convolute N" of the *Arcades* project, stating that "To thinking belongs the movement as well as the arrests of thoughts. Where thinking comes to a standstill in a constellation saturated with tensions—there the dialectical image appears. It is the caesura in the movement of thought. It position is naturally not an arbitrary one." (*Arcades-Project*, p. 475) The arrested moment intensifies the reflective conception of its opposite. Thus, arrest is taken as activity. I think the same is true of what he suggests about mourning.

[31] See, for instance, Walter Benjamin's discussion of the "clumsy" appearance of *Trauerspiel* that introduces a radical grounding, a reorientation insofar as it also produces an agitation that reveals the limitation—*Aporien*—or the ground from which a new set of questions of the old form takes root. See *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 123. Also see Susan Buck-Morss' "The Method in Action: Constructing Constellations," in *The*

Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute. New York: The Free Press, 1979.

[32] Angela Davis, "When a Woman Loves a Man," in *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday.* New York: Vintage Books, 1998, 163

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 177.

[35] Ibid., 174.

[36] Ibid., 170.

[37] Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978, 9-21.

[38] Davis, "When a Woman Loves a Man," 164.

[39] Davis, "Strange Fruit: Music and Social Consciousness," in *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*, 196.

[40] Ibid., 183.

[41] See Ida B. Wells numerous accounts of lynching, festival lynchings, and the dispersal of dead parts in the collection *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*, ed. Joyce Royster. Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1997 and her *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, ed. A.M. Duster. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970. Also see W.E. B. Du Bois' account in *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Towards an Autobiography of a Race Concept* in *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings.* New York: The Library of America, 1986. All three provide contextual accounts of the deep unease with which even those removed from the effects of racism might feel the aesthetic power of such dispersal. Also see Angela Davis' description of the enjoyment of the masses in forcing one man to kill himself before a crowd by eating parts of himself in "Strange Fruit: Music and Social Consciousness" *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude 'Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday.* New York: Vintage Books, 1999, 188-189.

[42] Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 119.

[43] Ibid., 209.

[44] Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of European Intelligentsia," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol. 2, 1927-1930*, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 2005, 218.

[45] Ibid., 193.

CHAPTER IV

POVERTY OF THE AESTHETIC AND THE SUBLIME SILENCE OF MOURNING

We have followed White violence as it relates to post-racial memory and found that, in memory itself, the post-racial remembers by making the traces of White violence appear as mere memory in the public sphere. But the memory *goes silent*. We found that the memory aestheticized the object of memory, while depoliticizing the activity of memory, on the one hand, and the present's relation to history, on the other. We characterized this by saying that post-racial memory anesthetized the present. The anestheticized character itself left the traces of the erasure of white violence as a memory of sorrow. Aesthetic sorrow and allegorical memory were then suggested as responses to the post-racial problematic.

I want to suggest something further that appears at the edge of memory and aesthetics. I want to suggest that what appears aesthetically as response clarifies the political anestheticization of memory by bringing its effects, its displacements, its strangeness into the public sphere. Thus, what appears as aesthetic poverty retains something of the sublime in its meaning; it raises the poverty to a condition that mourns. While this chapter will focus on Kantian aesthetics, it also focuses on the meaning of an

aesthetic poverty that makes that forgotten matter something that appears even when it *goes silent.*

There is still a valuable counter-argument to my position that I have done little to address up to this point, other than suggest that it rests on a particularly political anesthesia of memory. One may still want to argue that violence against Blacks is not as extreme as it once was, because the expression of this violence has changed. Let us consider this point more carefully to illustrate the main themes of this chapter. For the most part, contemporary violence is not the violence of pre-civil rights era politics. In 1934, for instance, a Florida newspaper publicized the details from eye-witnesses to Claude Neal's lynching. It reported that Neal died in part by *auto-phagy*. The eye-witness reports,

> First they cut off his penis. He was made to eat it. Then they cut off his testicles and made him eat them and say he liked it.
>
> Then they sliced his sides and stomach with knives and every now and then somebody would cut off a finger or a toe. Red hot irons were used on the nigger to burn him from top to bottom. From time to time during the torture a rope would be tied around Neal's neck and he was pulled over a limb and held there until he almost chocked to death, when he would be let down and the torture begun all over again.

> Neal's body was tied to a rope on the rear of an automobile and dragged over the highway to the Cannidy home. Here a mob estimated to number somewhere between 3,000 to 7,000 people from eleven southern states was excitedly waiting his arrival…A woman came out of the Cannidy house and drove a butcher knife into his heart. Then the crowd came by and some kicked him and some drove their cars over him. What remained of the body was brought by the mob to Marianna, where it is now hanging from a tree on the northeast corner of the courthouse square.
>
> Photographers say they will soon have pictures of the body for sale at fifty cents each. Fingers and toes from Neal's body are freely exhibited on street-corners here.[1]

One would claim that while such violence still occasionally happens, it does not happen as a public affair. The violence that is directed against Blacks is largely secondary violence or systemic violence. However, one wonders how we can be sure that the dispersal of violence indicates a cessation of violence. This type of progress seems to be undercut by the more efficient and more discreet violence I have been describing. What is the meaning of social change when we see, in each advance, progress in the available forms of expression, as well as regression in the activity of public responsiveness? One might argue that the progress that eliminates public lynchings of the magnitude described is a matter of White violence becoming more efficient. We do not need to hang bodies by the courthouses anymore. We merely need to post a sign that reads: "Trayvon is a Nigger" on a public street as a reminder of the presence of White violence. More accurately, we merely need to accompany racial violence with the discourse that puts questions of race out of play.

In any case, the history of anti-Black violence is the history of aesthetic anestheticization of the public sphere. Let us recall that in W.E.B. Du Bois's time, even though the violence of Jim Crow, lynch laws, and lynching was present, the violence that shook him most was the discreet presence and symbolic reminder of the anesthesia of White violence. In *Dusk of Dawn*, he recalls that he overheard some White folks talking about a nigger who was just lynched. Not unlike Neal, the victim's knuckles were on display in the window of the local shop. Du Bois knew he had to cross this store in order to get to where he needed to go to make an important meeting he had. He recalls that the news stopped him in his tracks. Cold with fear, he returned home and cancelled all his appointments that day. Now, we might focus on the psychological effect that this had to have for Du Bois and any African American at that time. But, I think something else sparked this response. The problem was not that someone who looked approximately like Du Bois was killed. The problem was not that Du Bois was afraid of encountering the grotesque display of human violence; he feared encountering that reminder of the anesthesia of the violence itself. He writes,

> Lynching continued in the United States, but raised curiously enough little protest. Three hundred and twenty seven victims were publically murdered by the mob during the Years 1910 to1914, and in 1915 the number jumped to one hundred in a single year. The pulpit, the social reformers, the statesmen continued in silence before the greatest affront to civilization which the modern world has known.[2]

White violence is not foreign to silence, to anestheticization; it is born of it. It is reiterated as a memory of forgetting when that very silence comes to structure the limits of discursivity around the anxiety of White racism about its violence.

The memory of lynching is a memory caught between the elevation of the particular to its broader social meaning and the reduction of social meaning back into its own form of aesthetic poverty. When a black body is lynched, the desecration that occurs on the body prepares it for being forgotten, for being that thing that is sought for, but not responded to. The torture is almost scripted with the binding of the body and the removal of organs such as the genitals, the tongue, and the eyes. The body is bound by rope, often in a fashion resembling the binding of sacrificial animals, or it is held in place by many people, while others beat the will to resist out of it. The genitals are removed and often force fed to the victim. The tongue is cut out and sometime shoved back down the throat. The eyes are usually burned or beaten out. The castrations achieve three negations: *logos*, or language; *skopos,* or observation; *eros,* or unity (fertility, productivity, power, etc. are also implied). Don't speak, don't see, and above all don't link yourself to a past or a future—which is to say that for all three symbols the message is: Don't remind us.

Moreover, all three castrations work to anesthetize response. We can see this if we briefly juxtapose this form of murder against the frenzied violence of Greek antiquity. This violence is just as brutal in its explicit form as that of lynching. But it is contrary in that it does not castrate responsiveness as part of its means: the violence can always be stopped in the act of supplication. Here again, the victim is in a position of complete vulnerability, but the supplicant can place his or her hand on the chin of the aggressor, allowing the meeting of the eyes to interrupt the activity of the violence, a prayer or plea

can be made, and some gesture of atonement, compensation, or unity is promised linking the present to a past or a future. If the victim is female, she may bear her breast to *remind* the aggressor of his own indebtedness to a mother. Notice that the victim interrupts violence by precise means. She displaces a 'now' with a 'now that must remember;' she replaces that individual "I" with all of history. This too shows that to remember (*Gedenken*) is to respond—which means that one also has to keep something in the sphere of one's thought or concern. But it is just this reminder, in the slightest form, which appears as a mobilizing anxiety, casting White violence always as part of a public neglect. Since this is done as compulsion, rather than tactic, the lack of concern is more of a sense of *aesthetic poverty* than anything else—it makes the conditions of loss accompany the appearance of loss.

To think back is an activity that keeps the present in hand, and thus a memory of a past without the present in hand is memory in its most alienated form. I will argue that while the activity of White violence lies in producing aesthetic poverty insofar as it has always been the use of aesthetics that anestheticize the ability to respond, this too has its limit in aesthetics. In this chapter, I will focus on the theme of aesthetic alienation in how it is shaped in the public sphere and responded to in aesthetics. I will argue that Kantian aesthetics traces the sociability of temperament and feeling, depends on a philosophy of history, and further retraces the limits of a rational aesthetics, first through the beautiful, and then through the sublime.

While Kant intended to settle the question of how a private feeling could result in a public judgment in unified consciousness, for us the questions are different. How does this condition relate a public form of anxiety to aesthetic poverty? First, I will ask, what

is it that iterates itself when its articulation has been made impossible in the public sphere? Next, I will ask, where does this appear when we remember in order to forget? I will address these questions by developing aspects of Kant's aesthetics in relation to the philosophical racism that appears in his aesthetics, anthropology, and philosophy of history. I will argue that the contrast that he develops in his aesthetic of the sublime is even more pronounced in reference to post-racial discourse, in general, and post-racial memory, in particular. Thus, by sketching out the sociability of aesthetics in Kant, we will have a clearer idea of how and in what way aesthetic terms like the beautiful and the sublime are at work in the way post-racial memory relates to the public sphere.

1. Aesthetics and Anesthetics in Kant

The problem of anesthesia that defines the post-racial is contained in the Kantian welding of aesthetics to politics. Let us break from that issue momentarily to consider the construction of Kantian aesthetics, which predates the critical period (1780-1789) by at least a decade. In Kant's early writings, around 1769, he was concerned with a central problem; how does a taste, which is determinative of a private sensation, raise itself to the level of an all encompassing universal Taste? How does the inner become the outer, or how does the private become the public? What is the sociability of sensation that stands behind the elevation of a particular set of tastes to actual judgments? The sociability of sensation has a long and not altogether clear genealogy in Kant's thought, from 1769 up to some point in the late 1780's, as Kant sought to develop a critique of taste and not a critique of judgment.[3] This suggests that Kant intended to develop the sense of sociability

within a point of view particular to it, but found that sociability exceeded this domain and required the development of judgment in a more expansive sense than he considered it to have at the close of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[4] But what does this mean other than that, from the standpoint of aesthetics, Kant worried about particularity and universality? I think it means that Kant's aesthetics are concerned with relationality in the public sphere, which is cut short by social forms of anxiety. The tension that develops between pleasure and un-pleasure, representation and the non-representable, eudaimonic and abderitic, and the beautiful and the sublime, are all many ways of underwriting and responding to the same anxiety. But this is an anxiety that structures the public sphere and makes the normativity of the public sphere something to be defended.

a) Sociable Universality

What makes Kant distinct from other thinkers working in aesthetics is that he starts aesthetic inquiry by asking how pleasure, a private sensation, is also public, a matter of taste or judgment. His aesthetics are about the limits of that public sphere I have frequently referred to throughout this discussion. In the *Critique of Judgement* (hereafter referred to as the third *Critique*), Kant distinguishes pleasure by its sociable activity. Pleasure, when stripped of its privatized meaning, takes on a public sense; it is not simply *what pleases*, but what appears as the expansion of life or the feeling of life. Likewise, Roldophe Gasché points out concerning pleasure that, "The feeling of life predicated in judgments of taste is a non-cognitive awareness of being alive. The pleasure predicated of representations in judgments of taste is the pleasure of coming to life, as it were."[5] What is strange, however, is that the activity that gives pleasure its meaning is the activity that

requires that it withdraws aesthetic primacy of the content, to replace this content with its relation to form.

Indeed, what facilitates life is what agrees with or is in harmony with the faculties of cognition. The word translating "agreement" and "harmony" are the same: *übereinstimmung*, which literally means to speak within or over all with one voice, mood, or tone. This constitutes its primary relation to sociability. The beautiful bears the force of agreement within all knowing, and is thus a domain of relations to its aesthetic ideal. What can be known as appearance, in appearance, and represented in its clarity (*scheinen*) is a relation that comes close to the aesthetic ideal of the beautiful (*Schönen*). The comparative gestures of the judgment derive the ideal not as perfection but as a standard from itself whereby the beautiful is both determined and determines itself by itself.[6] He concludes that, "To feel one's life, to enjoy oneself, is then nothing else but to feel constantly impelled to pass beyond the present state (which, consequently, has also to be a frequently recurring grief)."[7]According to Kant, the feeling of life is the ability to represent the increase of life as a whole and not as a particular, whereas pain is the displeasure of sensation and is found in the loss of life.[8]

But is the agreeable *feeling of life* really a type of pleasure? How does this feeling relate to the sociability of pleasure? Kant asserts that "gratification" is the pleasure of advancement of life, while pain that of hindrance of life.[9] Life, therefore, is *eudaimonic*, if it is expansive. On the contrary, too much pain is a hindrance to growth and productivity. Pain precedes pleasure, and thus makes the pleasurable possible and moves life into the state of activity.[10] This suggest that pleasure is active in recognition of unity

in the public sphere. Pleasure marks out the exterior of discursivity that instantiates meaning, and in its most radical form it is harmony (*übereinstimmung*).

Could the activity of harmony could be a type of knowing that potentially is recognized by all as an interest?[11] Thus, recognition of community may be at the basis of Kantian aesthetics. But it is communicated in the form of the feeling that harmonizes all subjective cognition toward its object, which must be pleasure. Pleasure is the feeling that is a *quickening* of imagination and understanding[12]—which is a type of interplay or enlivening of these two abilities. Pleasure, therefore, is the result of the abilities of knowing determining a representation. Representation only has force insofar as it pushes cognition towards *eudaimonia*.[13] *Eudaimonia* is significant to Kant's understanding of the public sphere and to history, both of which underpin his discussion on race. Let me leave this point to the side for now, in order to situate Kant's discussion of appearance and beauty. I will return the problem of Kant's racism in the following section.

b) <u>The Limit of Appearance</u>

If the activity of pleasure is based in the founding of community in agreement with universal appearance, then how does this situate the activity and meaning of representation? In the third *Critique*, Kant develops judgment's ability to exceed the determinations of beauty within form by enacting a secondary erasure: We move from appearance, which is a representation of the agreement of my cognitive faculties, to *mere appearance*. This is what seems to make judgment the focus of his aesthetics over tastes. But also according to Kant, reflective judgment requires that representation, in the formal domain, find a limit that is also the requirement of appearance. Kant repeatedly refers to

the *Bloss* (mere or dumb) appearance of the thing. Roldophe Gasché points out that for Kant, "*Bloss* designates a state that is exceptional, out of the ordinary. What is said to be *bloss* is distinct from, and even opposed to, the fullness that ordinarily characterizes something."[14] *Mere appearance* is appearance in its dumb and almost completely incommunicable state. Kant argues that aesthetic judgment results in comparing appearance that is deprived of all coverings, and is produced on its own, within the domain of representation.[15] But appearance is nothing other than the composite play of force, resolving in form. Mere appearance is only force or a pressure; it is an appearing without the distinction of being a representation (*vorstellen*). Mere appearance appears as a force, while representation is an accomplishment of cognition. Jean-François Lyotard puts it this way: A representation is not simple, but a complex set of conditions of appearing and appearing as, a process of *situating* of existants in existence.[16] Thus, representation requires that we refine the sense of political discursivity to reflect the relation that situates the private domain of existence relative to the appearance of sociability of the public sphere.

To address the way appearance and judgment relate to the aesthetic and political limitations of the public sphere, let us reconsider the status of representation on Kantian grounds a bit more closely. According to Kant, representation is the result of how *Erscheinen* (the phenomenon) *scheinens* (shines or shows itself), and at the highest level this condition is determined as *schönen* (as beautiful). What stands in negative relation to the aesthetic of the Beautiful is not non-representation, but appearance particularized, or sensation. Representation is required to be reflective and its function is to be comparative in that it draws from sensation to appearance the experiential basis that produces a law

and gives it to itself as a representation.[17] Reflective judgment is based on a comparative form of knowing that finds justification in comparative agreements in lieu of a universal;[18] it is a self-relation that reflects the whole. Insofar as reflective judgment is an ability of cognition, it is the development of power (*Macht*) as a result of sociability. Reflective judgment is based on a comparative form of knowing that finds justification in comparative agreements in lieu of a universal;[19] it is a self-relation that reflects the whole.

But Kant argues that this power develops by way of a negative relation to sensation in that it determines whether the particular is consummate with a principle or a representation (a state of affairs) or whether it hinders or obscures these.[20] In subsuming the particular under a rule or principle,[21] mere appearance manages to stand against a crisis that comes to be understood as representation. The primary object of reflective judgment is no longer sensation, but the aesthetic category of appearance. Therefore, reflective judgment not only depends on the primary erasure, but enacts a second and final erasure that determines the aesthetic of the beautiful within the domain of representation. This time the erasure, however, only appears as force (*Gewalt*).[22] Or, what appears also has its double, which is the concealment of its own violence. And violence is what goes silent in regard to the publicality of the Beautiful. This situates a limit to public discursivity, limited by the domain of agreement.

2. The Weakest Signs: Culture, History, and Race in Kant's Aesthetics

While the recognition of life is dependent on eudaimonic drives displayed through temperaments and feelings, Kant's anthropology is based on an aesthetic reading of the present community's relation to history. History is, then, also a matter of aesthetics that traces the boundary between sensibility, discursivity, and the potentialities of the public sphere. And it is here that Kant develops both his cosmopolitanism and his intellectual racism.

Kant's racism, unlike that of many thinkers of his time and thereafter, is not problematic for the reason that it shows a moral failing in a prominent moral philosopher. Rather, the way in which meaning is retained in the conceptions that frame and disclose the political seems to reproduce the very violence that the social is supposed to be ridding itself of. This perfection is bound to the residue of a sign's determination as a political meaning of weakness. Kant writes, "All the culture and art that adorn mankind, as well as the most beautiful social order, are fruits of unsociableness that is forced to discipline itself and thus through an imposed art to develop nature's seed completely."[23] This basic power is considered representation, and it is in this form of representation that Kant's racism is deeply embedded in his conceptual determinations when it is used as a sign of history related to geography.[24] This is decidedly embedded in the way the *eudaimonia* as a historicity of sociability is wedded to the determinations of *sensus communis*, which determines the limits of a public sphere of cognizability. This means that in his critical writings, Kant attempts to articulate the way the public sphere defines its limits given the limits of human cognition. The results are a clarification of what we mean by Truth, Morality, and Beauty. By contrast, in his anthropological writings, Kant attempts to

articulate the way the public sphere is limited by its traditions and habits. The result is a clarification of the social meaning of Culture (*Bildung*), History, and Politics. At the center of both is a development of how aesthetics determines or unsettles a public sphere burdened by its traditions, and challenged by its history. Thus, for Kant, we should consider how he challenges us to think of tradition and history as useful to the progress of the culture—especially since this is intimately linked to the sociability of his notion of temperament and feeling.

a) History and the Feeling of Life

Kant's notion of history is intimately linked to his aesthetics, especially in terms of how he develops the social significance of temperament and feeling. To see this parallel let us return to Kant's use of the term *eudaimonia*. Since Kant holds that reflective judgment transforms the feeling of pleasure into the feeling for life from the point of view of aesthetic judgment, it defines the *eudaimonic* in the same terms from the point of view of pragmatic judgment.[25] Therefore, there is a two-tiered politics at work in the same way that appearance and non-appearance form a symmetric relationship with the sociable and the insociable and both relations indicate the interplay between the powerful and the disempowered. That which appears otherwise presents a contradiction and hinders the expansion of the sociable; it also appears as that which weakens life.

Of course, Kantian thought is aimed at the question of knowing in its clearest and most unified public sense. This often takes the form of Kant giving attributes to temperaments and feelings, such as strength and weakness, when all he is talking about is a relationality. But in his anthropology and his philosophy of history we see something of

the notion of weakness that is made public. Weakness is not only a temperament that moves from the public inward. Allan Wood, for instance, argues that the social development of Kant's thought is heavily interlaced with the need for a way of sharing history as propæduetic of culture and as a resistance to the unsociable impulses in society.[26] By contrast, *eudaimonia* is judged against the concept of perfectibility that is the sign of the strongest aspects of the species. However, Kant also argues that there is much in society that is caught in-between, or mixed, which he calls the unsociable sociable impulse. He groups war in with these signs and argues that they designate a feeling for life, but this feeling is a deadening. Similar to the feeling associated with the anesthesia of memory, intertwined with *eudaimonia* is a feeling that is counter to the feeling of life. What public does weakness stand in relation to other than a public that fortifies itself against it, configuring it as weak, but a strong weakness that is cause for anxiety? It is within this sphere that Kant's thought situates his racism in aesthetics, and takes a turn toward the post-racial.

b) Kant's Aesthetic Historical Transcendentalism

We can see the way anesthetic and anesthetic limits form political relations in Kant's anthropological writings. Thus it is significant that these are the writings that form the basis of his early aesthetics. These writings can be grouped together as Kant's *observations on mankind*. These writings interlace and sometimes shift the focus of the critical writings, but at least in part they retain many of the deep and highly developed concepts that the critical works painstakingly develop. They closely follow the development of his philosophy of history and aesthetics. Likewise, if his political use of

history and political use of anthropology mirror the meanings established in the aesthetics, then we ought to be attentive to the way in which a deep structure of racism is disclosed within the political determinations of Taste, *eudaimonia*, pleasure, or Beauty.

In these writings, the central terms are *temperaments* and *feelings*, which have precise meanings. While both feeling and temperament are general, temperament is more sociable than feeling, since feeling indicates the interior representation of the whole, and temperament represents the exterior relation. Feeling is a relation to life in that the feeling that can raise itself to sociability is pleasure. But, the feeling that cannot raise itself out of the self-referring circuit cannot indicate the expansion of life, but only the closing in of life. For instance, in his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, he writes that "The Negroes of Africa have by nature no feeling that rises above the trifling."[27] The fact that Kant thinks that the feelings sometimes stall on the way to temperaments further suggests that *feelings* must be thought in terms of the whole or the general. For some groups or cultures, they possess (at the level of publicality) feelings and temperaments that weaken life, disclosing a history within the present that has become anestheticized as representation.

For Kant, history includes that movement of appearance toward representation, which is a power of appearance, and toward mere appearance, which is disempowerment of appearance. He casts both within his philosophy of history. Thus, he argues that physical geography produces a rational and teleological structure, and reveals a force rendering place as a type of agreement. He argues that nature places those characteristics in humans who find their place in the environments characteristic of periods of human development.[28] In this context Kant states that, "the Negro, who is well suited to his

climate, namely strong, fleshy, supple, but who, given the abundant provision of his motherland is lazy, soft, and trifling."[29] Kant's idea of the "feeling" that weakens the feeling for life allows him to be able to use the lack of sociability of feelings as the basis for a deep form of cultural racism, writ large in his philosophy of history.[30] But let us be clear: the trifling temperament is still public in that it further discloses the sensate extreme, configured as a momentary sensation or relation of the public sphere to anxiety.

The temperaments, however, tell the same story with different implications. According to Kant, temperaments are a sign for the geopolitical scene. For Kant, temperaments are signs of nature in the form of physical geography as well, and we can see that this retains the same structure as feelings, but writ large on the scale of the political as such. Kant states that,

> The inhabitant of the temperate parts of the world, above all the central part, has a more beautiful body, works harder, is more jocular, more controlled in his passions, more intelligent than any other race of people in the world. That is why at all points in time these peoples have educated the others and controlled them with weapons.[31]

He holds that when humans mainly occupied and flourished in hot deserts, dark skin was produced as the trait for humanity.[32] Therefore, according to Kant, the Negro is the trace of life of the past, which is to say that the political apprehends Africans, slaves, and what comes under the social rubric of "savages" within a discursive frame of the past. The Black body shows the ends of history: it is configured as an elevated motif on the past, and the most stubborn of relics of the present.

c) The Ends of History

I will suggest that, for Kant, history is the working out of public anxieties because of the way sociability is tied to perfectibility. This seems to be why perfectability is also a form of influence on the development of character held within the limits of a political, translated as history and defined against the appearance of the unsociable social drives.[33]

We should add that this is significant because, for Kant, history is the representation of the power of representation and recognition within us, of a public sphere beyond our particularity.[34] In his aesthetics, we have the basis for the movement of relations in the public sphere, which, at its highest point is representation, and representation as the *eudaimonic*.

Eudaimonia becomes an important term for Kant's philosophy of history, but I also want to point out how it is used as an aesthetic term as well. In "On the Use of Teleological Principles in Philosophy," Kant argues that the history of the human race is derived not from different types, but in a way that underscores the unity of a human race.[35] What we typically call 'race' are varieties disposed differently to history, environment, and organization. Kant argues that this is a sign of nature in that generation in other places offers equal adaptability. Therefore, non-whites are historic, in the same sense that a relic has a weak relation to the present.[36] It is not that this determines their existence in any actual way, but it does make clear their relation to the public sphere.

Likewise, history works out the anxieties that appear in relation to one another in the public sphere. In "Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent," Kant argues that aims of history stand in opposition to the effects of human society, in that the two are composed of a contradiction: a sociable unsociability. He states, "For along this

course of human affairs a whole host of hardships awaits man. But it appears that nature is utterly unconcerned that man live well, only that he bring himself to the point where his conduct makes him worthy of a life and well being." [37] Therefore, for Kant, the end of these antagonisms results in law-governed order in society, as a sign of freedom that only means that the sign of life is fused within political discursivity.[38]

For Kant, then, history is governed by the power of representation, as a circumstance or situation joining synthetic domains. In the second part of *Conflict of the Faculties*, called "On an Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing Forward?" Kant shifts his point of view (*Hinsicht*), from the idea of universal history with a cosmopolitan intent, to reflecting on the form of the history a culture employs toward the production of a general will. He still makes history a matter of the power to represent or appear. But, unlike when *eudaimonia* is governing the political, he shows that again appearance can have a negative representation.

The relation to the concept of life to the sphere of public discursivity is more explicit in terms of its relation to a political form of racism. Kant argues that there are three ways of representing history: one that moves forward from dependency to independence and is called *eudaimonistic*; one that moves backwards towards its own destruction and is called the *terroristic*; and one that does not progress at all and is called the *abderitic*.[39] Kant holds that while the *eudaimonistic* form of representing history can help the other two, it can also be hindered by them. On his view the form of history a culture has is determined through a nation or state's ability to achieve a form of autonomy (a capacity for freedom).[40]

Therefore, Kant holds that progress can only be made from the *eudaimonistic* culture's influence on the other two.[41] In this we can see that despite any change in Kant's own personal opinions about race, his philosophy of history remains deeply racist.[42] This means that as long as he has not altered his views on eudaimonia or the way his critical project conceives of temperaments and feelings, his politics remains disturbingly racist. Temperaments are the active habits of a culture and what it can and cannot produce for itself. It is thus mapped back onto the Kantian physical geography and naturalized as a product of nature, but as a social reality of the political asserting legitimacy through a form of agreement.[43] This seems to be the exact way in which the political must be configured to omit its own contradictory apprehension of its own violence.

What we have seen here operates without a dependence on Kantian notions of the beautiful or the sublime. Rather, unity, agreement, and harmony are all notions that trace iterability and history. They trace recognition and representation as the exterior activity of politics. However, we are also interested in the interior, and this should be seen in the light of the aesthetic of the beautiful and the sublime.

d) The Unbearable Dialectic of the Beautiful

All of this is to say that the aesthetic of the beautiful voices the ideal of universal consent. It does not achieve it, represent it, or result in it. It is the possibility of making accords, harmony, agreement, part of a public sphere. These are all terms rendered by the *übereinstimmung* and are inflected with a sense of the political. But, in what way is this related to the Beautiful, rather than merely to representation? The Beautiful is defined as

a power (*Macht*) and not strictly as representation, and it is the negation that expands the domain of representation in a two-fold way: It expands it as a sign of the enhancement of the feeling of life, and it exceeds this expansion as a sign of the limit of discursivity. But, if the Beautiful is that which enlarges and enlivens, then it is this activity of eliminating what negates and choosing or reproducing what is agreeable that makes or facilitates the sociability of the senses toward life. But it also bears the traces of what weakens life at the same time. In this way, Kant aesthetic of the Beautiful does not concern itself with what appears in or as representation. The Beautiful is not representable, but what appears in accord with itself situates the public sphere as becoming attuned toward Beauty (which parallels Truth or the Moral law within us).[44] Kant argues that the Beautiful is "something that is neither nature nor freedom and yet is linked with the basis of freedom, the supersensible, in which the theoretical and the practical power are in an unknown manner combined and joined into a unity."[45] Thus, the force of the Beautiful situates the public sphere of accord aesthetically, while the Beautiful itself remains inaesthetic.

We see that Kant designates the Beautiful dialectically through the avoidance and withholding of tensions; the Beautiful is a movement away from tension toward illumination, away from representation toward truth of appearance, and also away from particularity toward universality. In this way, we should point out that the Beautiful is a withholding, but it is also a clearing. It is a measure of power against that which goes silent, but this means that it is also a measure of aesthetic poverty. There is nothing Beautiful in art unless we put it there ourselves by translating elevated image by the Understanding. What is beautiful other than that movement that clears, on the one hand, and allows for an alternative form of appearance, appearance of negation as *catharsis*, on

the other? Clearing and silencing in this sense are ways to ready the public sphere. But, this form of clearing is also implied in Kant's Aesthetic of the Sublime.

3. The Sublime and Its Shadow

If the Beautiful situates the public sphere by clearing away the space for the public sphere to appear in agreement, what appears at the edge of, or as the condition that disappears in, this appearing? If the appearance of the Beautiful is cognition attempting to formulate its unity in the transformation of its past into a *eudiamonic* drive, then what appears even in the most successful attempt at this is its failure, its point at which the image or narrative *goes silent*. While the Beautiful is that which we arrive at, come to know, or understand as a critical condition for the sake of the unity of the whole, the Sublime takes the same position, but it is not *for the sake of* the unity of the whole, and it is this *not for the sake of* that constitutes the ground of its response to the de-politicizing tendencies of post-racial memory.

If the aesthetic of the Sublime is a going silent, a quieting, then we should understand what is meant by this a bit more carefully. One is quiet if one restricts one's voice or has one's voice restricted. But, one that also *goes quiet* because words no longer express anything worth saying. I think it is in this sense that the Kantian aesthetic of the Sublime is said to exceed all boundaries and at the same time come to indicate a limit concept. The aesthetic of the sublime is a resituating of the structure of normativity toward a problem that exceeds that normativity. It is a resituating of knowing toward a different sense of meaning.

a) Situating the Aesthetic of the Sublime

Kant's aesthetic of the Sublime is often characterized as an aesthetic that embraces the limit of the aesthetic as such; it appears as an anti-aesthetic. *Erhaben* is literally that force that exceeds what can be had (*haben*); it is that which outstrips appearance and representation. If the aesthetic of the Sublime is characterized as being formless, excessive, and beyond the bounds of cognition, then it seems to describe a subject-object relation to objectivity, rather than a subject-object relation to subjectivity. But the relation of form and content does not exceed representation in that it marks and demarcates only the unrepresentable. Rather it indicates a representation that bears its own alienation or otherness with it, and its object is aesthesis as such. Kant writes, "Hence sublimity is contained not in anything of nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious of our superiority to nature within us, and thereby nature without us (as far as it influences us)."[46] The Sublime indicates a relation to what exceeds the relation of form and content in the sense of not being determined by a set of normative relations.[47]

One can argue that Kant's aesthetic of the sublime is a form of an anti-aesthetic, since the sublime is determined as such by way of negating the grounds, the conditions, of the meaning of appearance, representation, sensation, etc. For instance, in the Mathematical Sublime, Kant describes this as the representation of that which is absolutely powerful and brings imagination and the understanding to their limit.[48] He writes, "Sublime is what even to be able to think proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense."[49] The Sublime is an anti-aesthetic in the sense that it forms in between the aesthetic and the inaesthetic, or rather it brings the inaesthetic relation to bear on the public sphere in terms of where it fails to be responsive.

The Sublime presents two types of silencings. First, it makes normativity go silent in light of what it constitutes as its limit-concept. What aesthetic judgment brings to bear on sensibility, or rather on subjectivity, creates an unbearability or indeterminability (*Unbestimmung*) of an in-between-ness, which requires a different attunement toward its own limit or limit-concept.[50] *Unbestimmung* is the negation of voice, underscoring the presence of voice. In the same way, this is the Sublime's relation to harmony, accord, or agreement (*übereinstimmung*). But again, this is not a direct negation, but the in-between that does not form its meaning in the accord between form and content, between past and present, or simply within the aesthetic or within the political. For example, while the aesthetic of the Sublime is marked by a sense of "excess," Kant holds that it cannot be thought of as that which stretches beyond what can be sensed.

However, the negation of aesthetics in the aesthetic of the sublime itself forms the in-between that is *not for the sake of* any end. It forms that interstitial point where meaning is voice as strained with silence; where a pleasure is so pleasurable that it is also a pain. Rather than thinking of the Sublime as opposed to the Beautiful, the Beautiful must be present for the Sublime: it is that which brings the representation into view, and from which the two forms of aesthetic judgment re-figure the juncture between aesthetics and politics and mark where the aesthetic becomes inaesthetic.

But the beyond of sensibility that the Sublime indicates is not outside the circuit of sensibility. Rather, it is at the basis of it, rooted in it privately and publically. Thus, the aesthetic of the Sublime, in being found in relation to negative pleasure, or a pleasure so pleasurable it is pain-pleasure, or a pain so painful it is a pleasure-pain, makes silent the duality. The negative pleasure is not for the sake of a particular result, but keeps in play

the tension. Ruth Ronen argues that while aesthetic pleasure can only be located in its proximity to universal agreement, the psychoanalytic notion of anxiety is located to what stands neither as agreement or disagreement.[51] Anxiety, while a type of displeasure, as an indication of the limit of the public sphere, subsumes both pleasure and displeasure.[52]

Indeed, the Sublime marks that cognition that responds to something that appears in how it does not appear to that which does not appear only to make the anxiety that represses appearance appear. Furthermore, aesthetic judgment cannot determine its meaning in the public sphere, and it thus withholds meaning, or keeps its meaning in abeyance between two senses that contradict the grounding of the aesthetic itself. For this reason, Kant holds that the Sublime appears as an intrusion of the minimal form of intelligibility that de-contextualizes every formative context.[53]

Anxiety, then, is the negative condition conditioning aesthetics. It marks the Sublime as that boundlessness in relationality. Gasché argues that "Only when formlessness is not merely a lack of form or a negative modification of it but instead a formlessness entirely different from a simple opposite of the beautiful is it possible to find sublimity in it."[54] Therefore, aesthetic judgments of the Sublime are not opposed to what appears or what is represented; they are not opposed to harmony or accord, which are the conditions of appearing—rather, the aesthetic judgment of the sublime surpasses the conditions of appearing, putting the meaning that occurs in this distinction within a boundednesss and out of this boundedness at the same time. This is to say that not only within any determination is the sublime that which is always a bit more than what appears, but in-between the meaning of what has a determination, or a *for the sake of which*, and that which *the sake of which* is not the issue. The aesthetic judgment of the sublime is not

purely a negation, but the aesthetic of the Sublime requires an interstitial constitution within the conditions of representation itself.

b) Sublimity and Its Unbounded Dialectic

I want to underscore that Kant holds this paradoxical relation of the Sublime itself, since much like the aesthetic of the beautiful, the aesthetic of the Sublime emits of an *interstitial point of convergence* that makes every appearance reducible to a zero-point of representability. This paradox implies that loss suffers the public, sets the stage for the public sphere to be the site that mourns, even when it forgets. We can see this clearer in how the Sublime is violent to cognition, in that it is unbounded.

Kant holds that violence marks the force of the Sublime to render reason over the imagination, or "because it is a *Gewalt* that reason[*Grund*] exerts over sensibility only for the sake of expanding it commensurately with reason's own domain (the practical one) and letting it look outward toward the infinite, which for sensibility is an abyss [*ab-grund*]."[55] The relation of the power of reason, which is involved in the determination of concepts,[56] the determination of meaning, relates sensibility to an abyss, or the indeterminable. The *Ungrund* is considered as the grounding of reason, but only insofar as aesthetic judgment requires a limit concept. The negative relation itself is a negative productivity. Thus, violence that relates *Grund* to aesthetic sensibility is its own negation, or limit concept, the *un-grund.* If the aesthetic of the Sublime is the rational part of the Kantian aesthetics, then it must be so through a general, and not specific, negation. Kant states,

> For it is precisely nature's inadequacy to the idea—and this presupposes both that the mind is receptive to ideas and that the imagination strains to treat nature as a schema for them—that constitutes what both repels our sensibility and attracts us at the same time, because it is a *dominance (Gewalt)* that reason exerts over sensibility only for the sake of expanding it commensurately with reason's own domain (the practical one) and letting it look outward toward the infinite, which for sensibility is an abyss.[57]

The Sublime is not simply what appears in opposition, but what appears as the residue that displaces the mechanisms of dominance. The meaning of aesthetic judgment does not simply point to what exceeds it, but attempts to situate meanings relative to oppositions. The meaning of the aesthetic judgment survives the in-between-ness that sets the conditions of subjectivity as it relates to its production of objectivity. Likewise, the survivor is not excessive to appearance, but cannot exactly find his/her meaning within the past or present. Kant argues that "Sublime is what even to be able to think proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense."[58] This can also mean that the aesthetic of the Sublime is more than a sign or the presence of a conflict, but it is the way we present the aesthetic becoming inaesthetic within the domain of representation. Thus, Kant writes, "If a [thing] is excessive for imagination (and the imagination is driven to [such excess] as it apprehends [the thing] in intuition), then [the thing] is, as it were, an abyss in which the imagination is afraid to lose itself."[59] It is the way the public sphere forgets its pastness, while retaining a relation of public memory to history, and thus frames a way for identifying the social dynamics of the aesthetics of post-racial memory.

c) Negative Pleasure and Its Political Counterparts

So far I have suggested that Kant's aesthetics of the Sublime disclose a quieting that is resisted by cognition, because it can only appear as violent to cognition— it presents representation at its dialectical limit. He calls this aspect of the sublime a *negative pleasure*. I want to further develop the implications of the negativity of the Sublime by focusing on how it can be represented in two ways. First, it is that in-between feeling that is a pain, so painful, it is pleasurable, or a pleasure so pleasurable that it is painful.[60] But it is also that feeling of pleasure or pain that is neither pleasure nor pain. Thus, the sublime exceeds the category of pleasure (*Lust*) and displeasure (*Unlust*). Rather, the feeling is interstitial—which means it is defined without giving it a set, a domain, or a place. This characterization of the Sublime implies that the domain of pleasure and displeasure reach their discursive limitations and are outstretched by the negative pleasure of the Sublime. What is called "Sublime" is not within the domain that furthers life, but it is equally not within the domain that liquidates life or brings it to its end. Kant argues that what is the Sublime momentarily inhibits the feelings of life, overpowering cognition, or makes that domain of legitimation strange in itself.[61] The Sublime is that feeling that unveils the public sphere as estranged from its own anxiety. Therefore, pleasure that is apprehended only by means of displeasure is a pleasure that is foreclosed by political discursivity, which is disclosed only by its restriction.[62] But this movement itself is only the disclosure of a condition that forecloses something that *goes silent*.

What I find significant about all of this in relation to post-racial memory is that Kant challenges us to rethink the significance of what forms at the juncture of the aesthetic becoming silent, or anesthetic, outside of the domain of aesthetics and inaesthetics: this is

an unprecedented aesthetics that finds its way into aesthetics. For this reason, Kant argues that indeterminability is a type of grounding that grounds what has meaning, but from the side of that in-between that does not act out of or find its meaning relative to *that which is for the sake of* some other end. It is disinterested, in that it shares none of the determined interests. And third, what appears only appears as the momentary aesthetic interruption of the public sphere, and for that reason Kant writes that the aesthetic of the sublime is "the momentary inhibition of the vital forces."[63] But, interruption is not simply resistance, and we cannot assume that the Sublime is what *resists* appearance.[64] Thus it is clear that the Sublime indicates a relational limit. It is equally clear that it indicates a relationality that is also an inhabitation, a going silent that is always already present.[65] What goes silent is not the result of inhibition or weakening of the ability to speak, nor is it only the withholding of speaking. Rather what goes silent is the appearance of the condition that makes speaking or not speaking amount to the same thing. The domain where speaking can constitute a public act appears as its own dumb show. The silence that goes silent is not simply a loss, but forms *not for the sake of* in every relational point that appears between appearance and representation. Since it cannot be an object, an event, or even a set of circumstances, it must be that relationality that negates its own basis. It is that relationality that shares the features of the psychoanalytic meaning of anxiety and thus introduces a dialectical indeterminancy into the aesthetic and political space.

4. The Dialectics of the Sublime and Post-Racial Memory

What concerns us at the juncture of the political and the aesthetic is the survival of a type of memory of forgetting. I have argued that this appears as a public form of anxiety. It also situates a politics that is without a *for the sake of which* orientation toward the political. What appears under the rubric of the Sublime is a public sphere that is confronting the unprecedented. The unprecedented is that point in the aesthetic movement toward the Beautiful, where it feels its own poverty—and this poverty is a poverty that anesthetizes all of cognition, all of knowing as such.

a) Sublime Poverty

There is a unique quality of the sublime in that it does not depend on recognition or appearance, but rather on a sensing that is impoverished and senses its own impoverishment in other things. However, as soon as we start to talk about politics or responses to political conditions, we have lost the sense in which a Kantian aesthetic of the sublime operates as a negative relation that discloses the whole without being *for the sake of* some other end. The critical negation that indicates the sublime as sublime seems dependent on the fact that it is not disclosed in the unwitnessable, or the unbearable, but that in what we have come to witness over and over again, something unwitnessable appears. It is not that we fail to remember or attempt to remember something so great that our cognition fails to grasp it, but exactly what we remember appears as a failure of memory as such. In similar sense, Peg Birmingham argues, "The crisis of truth that testimony bears witness to is not the crisis of relativism, as if anything could be said in the testimony. The doubt concerning historical accuracy and the uncertainty of the verdict

have to do with the unpredictability and unprecedented nature of the events themselves."[66] To take up the Kantian sublime in this context is to show that the sublime is the unprecedented in everything that we bear witness to. But it is this insofar as it appears through the impoverishment of what appears. Moreover, what is born in the public use of memory that is at a loss also marks that activity that continues forgetting into mourning.

What seems most significant here is that in the poverty of the aesthetic, the sublime is also a type of suffering. It marks that condition where we suffer not only our own anesthetization and inability to respond, but we suffer it as it is a condition for us. We suffer it as the condition for the possibility of what defines the public sphere. This suffering illuminates the negations of the past while presenting the unrepairability of the present. There is no reparation that could be meaningful, no grounding as yet as to what would make the past forgettable. The post-racial suffers its forgetfulness in its memory.

b) The Sublime Presence Suffering in Memory

While the sublime demarcates the aesthetic disjuncture of social meaning that indicates where the politically unbearable terminates in the aesthetically unrepresentable, the same thing can be seen in relation to post-racial memory if the Sublime is translated into a type of mourning. But what I have been discussing has been the obverse side of memory. I have been discussing a type of memory that, because it is only the disclosure of a public forgetting, gives up playing witness to the past and instead witnesses the mournful in the present. The sublime is not the unrepresentability of great magnitudes, but the suffering of a great and expansive ineptitude; it is that suffering of a limit that defines the public sphere itself.

This seems to me to be the relation of the sublime to memory insofar as memory can form a response to post-racial discourse. The Sublime is not the presentation of horror, nor does it bring us closer to the weight or debt we owe to history. The Sublime's relation to the public sphere is found in how it clears the space for a present memory of forgetting. In a present state of aesthetic poverty, we confront our own inability to remember even that which has been committed to public memory. Much like allegory, the Sublime is not communicated in the image or representation, nor in what cannot be represented, but in the activity of aesthetic poverty that allows mourning to open a great suffering now.

The memorial is no longer a tracing of the past, it no longer seems to be able to apologize or repair the past. This seems just as true of Holocaust memory as it now is for post-racial memory. For instance, the invisibility of the murdered Jews of Europe is placed on display in the empty rooms of Peter Eisenman's memorials. Eisenman argues that his interest has been primarily in the disruption of the space and time continuum. Thus, aesthetic remembrances disturb the public by a primary act of displacement.[67] Such an act is essentially one that disturbs the political by disturbing the aesthetic. The effect of this is that remembrance becomes a politicized activity achieved at the border of visibility. But the aesthetic attention given to the visibility of invisibility also seems to escape the post-racial problem insofar as it depends on an analogy to the political form of disappearance, invisibility, and erasure which conceals these modes as mechanisms of violence.

Furthermore, Eisenman's work points to another layer of the aesthetic-political relation that is worth considering in relation to how I intend to frame our discussion of

the Kantian sublime. Eisenman holds that the relation of community to space and time is significantly blurred in relation to certain structures.[68] This blurring is neither the effect of the building, nor the subject in the presence of the building, but the subjectivity that encapsulates both, or the in-between that survives as neither subject-subjective relationship, nor as subject-objective relationship. Likewise, Andrew Benjamin points out that Eisenman's architectural concerns rest on the incorporation of the terms *blurring* and *interstitial* into his work.[69] Benjamin argues that the work of Eisenman relies heavily on a productive negative that forces a blurring of the determinate. What appears as proper to the past is blurred with the present, and negative to both. He writes, "[Eisenman] says that the proposed spatial organization blurs the distinction between new and old, where new pushes into old and old into new."[70] The interstitial, then, is the *in-betweeness* of subjectivity in its political form, it is neither and both the subject-object relation and the subject-subject relation, while not being either. Likewise, we can characterize this as what survives in the dominance of the new and the annihilation of the old, in the preservation of the old, and the devaluation of the new, in-between. It is what makes the pathological return appear in anxiety as a negative presentation.

The same thing can be said of the way the history of slavery and the history of racial violence are memorialized in the United States. A memorial to Martin Luther King Jr. or to the slaves in Savannah Georgia, may be meaningful in itself for many reasons, but for no reason more than it demarcates a confusion of aesthetics and politics that reveals a memory that forgets and a forgetting that remembers. In Washington D.C., as much as in Savannah, Georgia, the works of memory are significant in how they present forgetfulness. What is more, though, is that the spaces in which they intervene disclose

forgetfulness at every step beyond the memorial space, into our history that can only remember itself, but does not suffer itself—we suffer our forgetting in post-racial memory. The Sublime is not a response in the form of a resolution; rather it is a way of altering our engagement with the past, and it alters it to encompass that form of mourning that makes the discursive limit that goes silent in the public sphere, translated as legibly present suffering, bringing that political life of Kantian *eudaimonia* into the domain of the Sublime as the inhibition of life. Let us follow this sign of the Sublime further as it is fundamental for understanding the political significance of mourning in light of the problem that post-racial memory poses.

c) The Mournful as Remembrance

Since remembrance is marred with problem's in post-racial memory, mourning is a primary response to the Cassandra complex in that it is through a sublime disturbance that what appears shows its own pathology. While Benjamin held that mourning marks that activity, whether psychological or political, of setting meanings, from a Kantian point of view, we should conclude that mourning also makes the social poverty aesthetic in its anesthetic state. This suggests that mourning responds in this privative way: what is appears as the sign that conceals the depoliticization of memory or history, and it appears impoverished. In its own impoverishment, it indicates the task of unearthing pathological tendencies. But this is why the response must be first a resituating of our questioning and concern toward this same old question and same old problem.

The problem we attached to the objective meaning of memory seems to have inverted itself. From a Kantian perspective, we can no longer say that a memorial, no matter how

sophisticated or anti-traditional, contains any meaning. To argue otherwise places too much dependence on the memory or meaning of the memorial or artist. It would mean that the memorial remembers, suffers, or mourns—but this leaves the public sphere out of the circle of concern. We want to point out that the memorial is founded on a social aesthetics that fails in remembering, putting on display a breakage that cannot be repaired. We might not remember pre-civil rights memory, but it is not the work of the memorial to do so for us. We suffer its amnesia, but more to the point, there is a public sphere that suffers this amnesia as well, and it is this that makes the depoliticization of history an iteration of a memory of sorrow, or a memory of our present forgetting.

Now we might still wonder what ought to be our response or what line of action ought to be taken if we concede that a Cassandra Complex is operative and post-racial memory is its symptom. We might wonder what practical philosophy or practical politics actually follows from what I have said so far? However, I have also argued that this is not the place for such speculation. First and foremost, the Cassandra Complex only spells out a set of circumstances that need to be exposed. The aesthetic responses critique practical political activity based on the way post-racial memory makes normal practical addresses ineffective. It is not that these methods and efforts should be disbanded, but they do need to be taken critically.

Also, let me be clear, the responses forged in aesthetics are not simply speculative. To say that the memory is enwrapped in a circuit of sorrow, or the the Sublime discloses a form of mourning, means that we need to be attentive to that level at which a response is required. Mourning and Sorrow respond to the complex in the way that they take on a different significance politically. They imply that the public sphere that suffers its own

forgetfulness in direct proportion to an overproduction of memory. These are practical responses in that they open new ways of thinking about the meaning of violence, racism, and memory. These are responses in that they require that we interpret the same old questions, anew. And, finally, I argued that these are responses because they require that we attend to the critical line that emerges between political and aesthetic ways of responding and reading history in memory and memory in history. I have argued that the Cassandra Complex is necessary to remove a particular blockage, a blockage that conceals White violence. The removal itself is critical, but it is not as satisfying as a politics of recognition. There is no repair, but there may be ways to release or manage the public sphere's anxiety, on the one hand and to confront the way White violence continues discreetly in the present, on the other.

5. Notes

[1] See Angela Davis's "Strange Fruit," in *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday*. New York: Vintage Books, 1999, 188-189. Also see Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*, ed. Joyce J. Royster. Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1997.

[2] W.E.B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn*, in *W.E. B. Du Bois: Writings*. New York: The Library of America, 1986, 717.

[3] Paul Guyer, "The Problem of Tastes" and "Kant's Early Views," in *Kant and the Claims of Tastes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979. Guyer's arguments can be more radically supported by consideration of recently archived material from Kant's notebooks contained in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Notes and Fragments*, trans. Paul Guyer, C. Bowman, and F. Rauscher. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Special Attention should be directed toward section 5 "Aesthetics" which contains notes spanning from 1770-1790. For a further discussion of this development, and the increasing concern with sociality and its intersection with anthropology see John Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's* Critique of Judgment. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

[4] The Social, for Kant is no slight deviation. Tastes are always tied to the social from 1770 on. Furthermore, a notion of the social is needed for the exercise of Reason, which is public. If Reason is to bind it has to be derived from a Public reason and deployed upon a social. Even though Kant means these in an abstract sense, he fully discloses the political that must be at play in them as well.

[5] Roldophe Gasché, *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant's Aesthetics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003, 44.

[6] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co, 1987, §17, 83/234-235. All quotations have been checked with the German, Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilkraft* (Band 4) Köln: Könemann Verlagsgesellchaft, 1995.

[7] Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Viktor Dowdell. Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996, §61, 133. All translations were checked with Immanuel Kant, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht.* Stuttgart: Reclam, 2003.

[8] Kant, *Anthropology*, §60, 130.

[9] Ibid., 131.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §9, 61/217.

[12] Ibid., §16, 63/219.

[13] Dieter Henrich, "Kant's Explanation of Aesthetic Judgment" in *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World*, ed. E. Förster. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992, 33. He argues that the pleasure of taste differs from the pleasure of sense because the pleasure of taste derives from the aesthetic activity rather than from the aesthetic object.

[14] Gasché, *The Idea of Form*, 21.

[15] Ibid., 22.

[16] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abeele. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press,1988, 64.

[17] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, Introduction, part IV, 19/180.

[18] Ibid., VII, 30-31/190.

[19] Ibid., VII, 30-31/190.

[20] Kant, *Notes and Fragments*, 516.

[21] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, IV, 18-19/179.

[22] I use the general form of '*Gewalt*' as force, but it may also be rendered as 'violence' and sometimes in Pluhar's translation as 'dominance.'

[23] Immanuel Kant, "Idea of Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent," in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays on Politics, History, and Morals*, trans. Ted Humphrey. Indianapolis/ Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983, 33.

[24] Robert Bernasconi, "Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism," in *Philosophers on Race: Critical Essays*, ed. Julia Ward and Tommie Lott. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

[25] Allan Wood, "Kant and the problem of Human Nature," in *Essays on Kant's Anthropology*, ed. Brian Jacobs and Paul Kain. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 53.

[26] Ibid., 56.

[27] Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, trans. John Goldthwait. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991, 110.

[28] Immanuel Kant, "Determination of the Concept of a Human Race," in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. Gunter Zöller and Robert Louden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 157.

[29] Immanuel Kant, "Of the Different Races of Human Beings," in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. Gunter Zöller and Robert Louden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 93.

[30] See Charles Mills, *The Racial Contract.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997, 69-71. This point is further supported in Kant's notes to the *Observations*. He argues that the slave sacrifices will altogether and gives up legislative power. The legislative power comes from the body and its ability to make the others' will coincide with my choice. The slave, like the wood, must not only be assumed to share in the will of master, but must also be assumed to be an order of life whose living principle is formally the same as dead or inert, weak, matter. Also see Immanuel Kant, *Notes and Fragments*, sh.18/p. 9.

[31] Immanuel Kant, "From *Physical Geography*," in *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel C. Eze. Boston: Blackwell Publishing, 1997, 64.

[32] There is increasing agreement amongst Kant scholars that the anthropological lectures as well as the writings that constitute this corpus are significant not only for Kant's overall thought but for understanding the philosophical significance of his critical thought, especially as it develops an increasingly sophisticated relationship to social and political thought. Emmanuel Eze first noted the distinct relationship between Kant's anthropological writings and the moral works in his *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*, ed. Emmanuel C. Eze. Boston: Blackwell Publishing, 1997. He drew attention to the conflict between a universal employment of reason that seemed to determine morality

for all rational beings and the explicitly derogatory depiction of non-white races in Kant's anthropological writings. The typical response until recently has been to claim that these works were not intended or submitted to the rigorous treatment of the critical works and show only a marginal relation to his critical and especially his moral works. Furthermore, many of the problems that these works suggest can be rectified by more rigorously applying Kantian rational concepts of morality or cosmopolitanism to our society than he did. The issue becomes more complex however when we consider that the anthropological lectures and the writings that occur throughout his critical period and seem to employ, develop, and expand—if not defend—many of the central motifs of the critical works. For example, Werner Stark argues that the anthropology is intrinsically linked to the development of the critical philosophy and is essential to understanding Kant's philosophy in general. See his "Historical Notes and Interpretive Questions about Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology*" in *Essays on Kant's Anthropology* pp.15-37. The question of race or racism does not enter into Stark's consideration, but he notes that the relevance to the critical philosophy is clear despite deep divisions on this issue. Likewise, in Paul Guyer's essay, "Beauty, Freedom and Morality: *Kant's* Lectures on Anthropology *and the development of his Aesthetic Theory*" in *Essays on Kant's Anthropology,* ed. Brian Jacobs and Paul Kain. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, where he argues for the distinct relationship and importance of the anthropology to the critical works in general, but the critique of judgment in particular, whose main themes, including the decisive role of judgment, as a "Critique of Taste" are worked out as early as 1770 in these lectures. Still the connection of race and aesthetics is only handled marginally in the literature.

Race and racism present a difficult challenge for thinking through Kant's contribution to politics, history, and the philosophy of race and racism. Robert Bernasconi, Naomi Zack and Charles Mills (discussed in this chapter) all have contributed to the scholarship in this area by pointing out that Kant was a major architect in constructing a scientific notion of race and furthering an intellectual form of racism that may not be separable from his critical philosophy, epistemologically, morally, or politically. The most recent contributions to this line of argumentation are found in Pauline Kleingeld's "Kant's Second Thoughts on Race." She agrees that there is much more to Kant's racism than simply an expression and defense of particular prejudices he may or may not have held. This seems most present in what Kleingeld distinguishes as his early and less politically motivated works. Kleingeld argues that Kant's racism is present at both the superficial and deep levels of his work spanning his critical period, and she argues that this all disappears in his last work, especially in his understanding of politics in *Perpetual Peace*. Here is not the place to challenge this notion, but I will point out that as thorough as Kleingeld's scholarship is on this and many other points in Kant, what she has shown is that he erases the language and appearance of racism, without dislodging the way power determines and works as a determining force in Kant's thought. While there is reason to think that Kant had second thoughts about race toward the end of his life, we do not have reason to believe that Kantian racism stopped determining conceptual distinctions as it had before. We can only say that we end up with a Kant who has found his former examples and language problematic. See Pauline

Kleinsgeld, "Kant's Second Thoughts on Race," *Philosophical Quarterly,* 57 (2007): 573-592.

[33]Charles Mills, "Dark Ontology," in *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998, 77. He argues that Kant's politics only exists on the back of a "dark ontology," i.e. one that is color-coded and based on necessary subordination and domination of groups, and one that remains hidden or unacknowledged as a form of white supremacy. He concludes that the advantage of using a Kantian framework to understand race and cultural dynamics rests on the fact that for Kant there is no such thing as a "raceless" moral theory or perfectability. However, if Mills is correct in his estimation of Kant then one should not try to work within a Kantian political or moral philosophy since doing so repeats the white supremacy implicit therein. I think this gives Kant too much credit. His racism is part of the private limitations of his thinking. But, his white supremacy says something quite different about the general character of the political, and it is this general character that seems to me to be the issue. Kant is the best representative of the Enlightenment, but also in his thought we find the clearest articulation of the deep fissures that require a concept of the political itself. It is by no mistake that the coherency of Kant's system depends upon an altogether incoherence that appears in the aesthetics. In this, I think there is much work to be done to understand the interconnection between a white supremacist politics and the political as a domain of possibilities.

[34] See Naomi Zack, *Philosophy of Science and Race.* New York: Routledge, 2002, 22. She argues that Kant's racism can be seen as underpinning his philosophy of history in so far as some groups of people are, in a sense, "written out of history." While Kant could not consistently hold that some people are 'in history' and some are outside of history, Zack argues that, according to Kant, Europe has matured enough to understand its history as a form of progression (*eudiamonic*) while other cultures display a type of retrogressive history (terrible) or static history (*abderitic*). See Kant's *Contest of the Faculties*, "On the Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?" in *On History* and my discussion of this point below. Likewise, see Axel Honneth's discussion of Kant's use of history. He has argued that Kant continued to recover a sense of history that captured both the progressive tendencies that showed humanity at its fullest and wedded this to the persistence of the inhuman in historical representation. See Honneth's "The Irreducibility of Progress: Kant's account of the Relationship between Morality and History" in *Pathologies of Reason: On the Legacy of Critical Theory*, discussed below.

[35] Immanuel Kant, "On the Use if Teleological Principles in Philosophy." *Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. Gunter Zöller & Robert Louden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 201.

[36] Ibid., 207.

[37] Kant, "Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent," in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays on Politics, History, and Morals,* trans. Ted Humphrey. Indianapolis/ Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983, 31.

[38] Ibid., 31.

[39] Immanuel Kant, *Conflict of the Faculties, Part 2: On An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing Forward? On History,* trans. L. W. Beck, R.E. Anchor, & E. L. Fackenheim, Indianapolis/New York: The Bobbs-Merill Company Inc. 1963, 139-141.

[40] Ibid., 143.

[41] Ibid., 152.

[42] Pauline Kliensgeld, "Kant's Second Thoughts on Race." *Philosophical Quarterly*, 57 (2007): 580. While Kliensgeld argues that Kant re-thinks the concept of race after these writings it is not clear that his conception of temperaments and feelings really changes beyond a shift in the use of examples and the implementation of a more cautious vocabulary, even in *Perpetual Peace*.

[43] Kant, "Idea of a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent," 33.

[44] Gasché, *The Idea of Form*, 91.

[45] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §59, 229/353.

[46] Ibid., §28, 123/264.

[47] Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology*, §67, 144.

[48] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §25, 103/248.

[49] Ibid., 106/250.

[50] Ibid. §26, 113/256.

[51] Ruth Ronen, *Aesthetics of Anxiety.* New York: SUNY Press, 2009, 26-27.

[52] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology.* New York: Verso, 2008.

[53] An analogy could be drawn here between this aspect of the Kantian sublime and Aristotelian virtue or excellence. If excellence is what is in the right amount, at the right time and done the right way, the sublime is exactly the opposite, since it is that which occurs at exactly the wrong time. I think it is in this sense that the Kantian sublime is a type of intrusion.

[54] Gasché, *The Idea of Form*, 123.

[55] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §29, 124/265.

[56] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis/ Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co., 1996. Also see, Immanuel Kant, *Logic*, trans. Robert Hartman and Wolfgang Schwarz. New York: Dover Publications, 1974.

[57] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §29, 124/265.

[58] Ibid., §25, p. 106/250.

[59] Ibid. §27, 115/258.

[60] Ibid. §23, 98/245.

[61] Ibid., §23, 98/244.

[62] Ibid., §27, 117/260.

[63] Ibid., §23, 98/245.

[64] For formulations along this line see Giles Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy* and Jean-Francois Lyotard's *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*. Contemporary discussions of the political importance of both the Kantian aesthetic of the sublime and mourning often change from the negative character of the critique to the positive notions required for political philosophy. Both Deleuze and Lyotard identify what can be characterized as a positive aspect of the Kantian sublime, but neither seems to explore how this violates Kant's negative critique, nor do they examine what the alternative might be. Thus, when Lyotard develops a political sense of mourning in *The Differend*, it carries with it an overly psychological and positive connotation.

[65] Sigmund Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*, trans. Alix Strachey and James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989.

[66] Peg Birmingham, "Elated Citizenry: Deception and the Democratic Task of Bearing Witness," *Research in Phenomenology*, 38, (2008): 212.

[67] Peter Eisenman "Written Into the Void," in *Written Into the Void: Selected Writings, 1990-2004*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007, 86.

[68] Peter Eisenman, "Blurred Zones," in *Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, 6.

[69] Andrew Benjamin, "Opening the Interstitial: Eisenman's Space of Difference," in *Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, 306.

[70] Ibid., 310.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have argued that the Cassandra Complex is conceptually necessary for understanding many of the ways that White violence continues in the present as a discreet form of violence. While I have focused on post-racial memory, I have also developed how and why a political sense of mourning is necessary to formulate a response to post-raciality. Ultimately, these theses may still be unsatisfying to the reader, because they result in a critique of present politics, without proposing a positive course of political action. They may also be unsatisfying because they warn against a politics committed to a view of the past or future.[1]

Both forms of disappointment are warranted, and I think we are at a moment when a different approach to anti-racist politics is necessary. Along with efforts to address racism and violence, I think there is a need to resituate our understanding of racism relative to forms of White violence that tend to escape recognition as violence.

I have also argued that we must be attentive to the extent to which what goes silent in the public sphere communicates through a negative representation. We saw that this resulted in an aesthetic disenchantment in politics and that it reveals where memory appeared as forgetting and forgetting appeared as the brokenness of memory. That negative representation is what the Cassandra Complex underscores, because the present is in a state of forgetting. It is exactly the breakage of the public sphere in relation to its present.

I have drawn into the arena of suspicion the status of the representations that mark racial social progress. Out of them, I suggested that there was memory that suppressed meaning. The violence of the past never found itself resulting in a state of mourning in a way that affected the public sphere.

The suppression of mourning is justified as the necessary means to transform violence into order, into a past history, or into a justification for certain laws. Much like the way Athena changes the meaning of the name of the Furies into the *Eumenides*, or the Kindly Ones, a suppression of meaning even with access to memory facilitates the forgetting needed to assert there is social progress without further ramifications for the public sphere.[2] The domain that they govern is the same but their history is negated only to allow for a new history and meaning to begin.

Cassandra is important to develop this point because she is not mourned over the course of the play; her death is not accounted for in any real way. This has the political significance of underscoring that her role relative to power is that she *is not for the sake of* the past political order or the present. Cassandra is absolutely *other* to the present political situation and yet she bears the memory of that politics in bearing everything that is forgotten. She emerges as a prophetess, who must speak to others plainly about what they know but fail to remember, and thus her words and speech are familiar and strange at the same time. And further, it is in the conditions in which the living smells the normative as if it were an open grave, covered by an ideological investment in forgetting, concealing, disfiguring, or disseminating the present and the past as memory, or forgotten, as absence or lack. But, the lack of mourning is due primarily to the fact that

she has no investment, and can find no meaning in either political framework. But, what is the value of such an approach?

I began this dissertation by suggesting that the philosophical importance of this line of questioning lay in how and what types of questions it resituated. At least two things have been achieved toward this effort. First, the Cassandra Complex called into question our relation to memory and our relation to history. In doing this, the complex produced several paradoxes that required that we rethink the boundaries of what we call violence. We can say that its value is that it makes violence a questionable issue again. Second, the Cassandra Complex provides a way of articulating a particular anomaly that is at play between racism, memory, and the public sphere. I called this anomaly post-raciality, in general, and focused particularly on post-racial memory. The value of this relies on the way *what goes silent* forms aesthetic reports on the extent of White violence. In many ways, this required that the memory of past violence also be read as an interruption of the public sphere, insofar as it also doubled as a type of forgetting.

I have interpreted the meaning of this interruption from the side of aesthetics and argued that mourning is a political response. I have not gone so far as to say that these responses constitute *actions*; instead, I think they respond to the way anti-Black violence is situated in the present. I want to close this dissertation by suggesting that each interruption founds a line of questioning to be pursued toward practical actions. That said, I think there are several questions that follow from what has been suggested by this study. I will only briefly mention these.

First, I have argued that memory memorializes its political past and at the same time forgets its memory. Post-racial memory puts out of play the political meaning of

memory. We might, however, wonder if there is a recovery of this meaning that could be positive, or, is there a positive sense of mourning? I think that there have been many attempts to reconstruct a positive political notion of mourning. Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, and Judith Butler have already undertaken this project.[3] They think of mourning as a way of redressing the political violence of displacement. For all three philosophers, there is a positive side to mourning because it works to foreground forms of reconciliation, restoration, or reparation facilitating or providing the ground for forgiveness. A parallel could be drawn for us to align mourning with reparations. The groups and conditions they have addressed have a similarity in that they are addressing recent or intermediate violence. They are not addressing that violence that has shaped the people it has oppressed by tearing them out of history, and continuing that condition in the present. Unlike that kind of tearing out of history the positive side of mourning results in reconciliation, but sometimes it means that there is no amount of reparation that could repair the great loss. This should not be interpreted as suggesting that reparations are not needed or that acts of reparation are not important. Just because one cannot pay off a great debt does not mean that efforts toward that end are not needed and are not meaningful. It just means that we need to understand the meaning of the activity in more ways than we have become accustomed to.

Second, I have focused on aesthetics as the main way to describe how discreet forms of violence are identified, but what does this imply about the political potential of art or the philosophy of art? What does this imply about the political violence of racism and art? I am not sure what would follow for how or in what way we might use the discussion to reinterpret the relevance of Black art. However, I have suggested that aesthetics can

critically engage politics in the way that it agitates the public sphere. I have also suggested that a philosophy of art may be wholly inadequate to the task ascribed here to aesthetics for two reasons.

Philosophy of art is in itself a positivist endeavor. It describes positive relations of society or history to the significance of artworks or art genres. Its scope is in line with other positive philosophical endeavors like the Philosophy of Liberation or Post-Colonial Political Philosophy. However, this positivism is not appropriate to a philosophical approach to a symptomatology, since a symptomatology can only be described negatively. Moreover, a philosophy of art runs the risk of reifying the art, artist, or artwork as political in and of itself, without critically situating the phenomenon under discussion. We might look to African American art, or to Black artists, to see how they illuminate the social sphere that impinges upon them as a group. I have not argued that this is the most effective way of understanding White violence. I am not assuming that Black artists or Black arts have epistemic privilege over other art or artists. I am not objecting to this view, but aesthetics does not seem to assume it. I have used art examples that display how a negative, i.e., critical, aesthetic juncture exposes White violence. The racial identities of the artists have largely been Black, but this has not always been the case and the race of authors has not mattered, either. For instance, in chapter three, I focused on Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit"—I focused specifically on her version of the song because it haunts the present in ways no other version of "Strange Fruit" does. But, it was not her race that mattered here. If it was, then the point would be lost since the song was written by a Jewish high school English teacher, Abel Meerpool, but these facts do not matter. The aesthetic of the song as it is performed by Billie Holiday is one that

allegorizes history, on the one hand, and foregrounds White violence, on the other. Likewise, in chapter four, I use Abigail Jordan's memorial to illustrate a memorial to forgetting. Again, the fact that she is not Black is not a real concern for the validity of the analysis.

Moreover, Black artists already bear a heavy burden in the arts. We cannot and should not expect that the works they produce also function to educate a public about White violence. This places the burden of that violence back on the group most explicitly violated by White violence. For the time being, there is no clear way to square this analysis with the aims and potentials of a philosophy of art, other than that I am suggesting that there is some value in making a stronger distinction between aesthetics and the philosophy of art than has been maintained in contemporary philosophy.

Third, we might wonder if there is relevance of post-raciality beyond this analysis of White violence. I think the answer to this question is ambiguous. The idea that we are haunted by a history of colonialism, or colonial subjectivization, is still very present. But, I have underscored how this is not only a form of White violence, it is also that part of the American imagination that it fails to remember the past of anti-Black violence when in fact it has been engaged in memorializing this past for quite some time. It is a hallmark of the American imagination that its memory facilitates a forgetting. That being said, I am not confident enough to claim that White violence performs the same feats relative to other groups or in other places. I am confident enough to say that post-raciality is potentially operative in all contemporary aesthetics of memory.

Kant may have been endlessly fascinated by the cosmos above us and the moral law within us. I want to voice almost the opposite sentiment: I want to suggest that we all

need to be just as deeply repulsed by the aesthetic poverty that appears in each of us in relation to White violence. With the present rise in anti-Black violence in America, one may not worry about large scale termination, enslavement, or the reemergence of segregation; we worry only about the lifelong lasting effects of a great indifference to Black suffering—which is a violence that always already structures our aesthetic proximity to present and past violence.

1. Notes

[1] My view is not that we need to "not act" but rather that acting requires some regard for how we are situated in the present. Thus, my view is not the same as Slavoj Žižek and Judith Butler, who argue that we do not need to act in the present. They base their claims on the political relevance of critical philosophy. Thus, they both argue that inaction is a type of action. Both draw on Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" and employ his notion of a general strike, or the removal of interest in the political sphere, to defend their argument. Unlike them, I have argued that critical philosophy is deeply tied to a development of the philosophy of history (historical materialism in particular). Because of this, I am arguing that our former modes of action may appear as responses to present forms of violence and injustice, but they may also be further modes of inaction. What was formerly critiqued as politically inept, namely a politics of mourning or allegory, seem like the only real responses to a violence that seems to operate but never really appears. See Walter Benjamin's "Critique of Violence" in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol. 1 1913*-1926, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004, 236-252. See Slavoj Žižek's discussion of this essay and his development of his political critique in *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador, 2008, 193-205. Also see Judith Butler's explicit discussion of Benjamin and implicit discussion of Žižek in *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* New York: Verso, 2009, 176-184.

[2] Aeschylus, "The Furies" in *Oresteia*, trans. Peter Meineck. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co., 1998, 158.

[3] Derrida's work on forgiveness seems to be directly related to his work on mourning. The problem of Europeanism is that it forgets colonialism, or it forgets to ask a question about its history. This view is important, but it only particularly addresses the question of violence and history. See Jean François Lyotard, "The Sign of History" in *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute.* He develops Kant's aesthetics of the Sublime as a type of mourning. Similarly, Jacques Derrida develops a way of talking about the after-violence of displacement in terms of mourning and haunting in *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York:

Routledge, 1994. In this work he focuses on that after-effect of political violence that leaves a sense of being out of joint with time and with politics. Judith Butler underscores the same aspect of the after effects of violence by arguing that the framing out of violence continues the former violence by way of instituting a non-discursive space of interminability. She argues that the fact that the lives of Guantanamo prisoners cannot be made grievable and have not been mourned underscores a particular violence. The way they are framed out of public discourse is a type of violence. Butler argues that this "framing out" also implies that the ungrievable life is the life that has never really lived. Again, like Derrida, there is something important here, but she has not carried the analysis to its radical end. The life that is not grievable is the life that has never really been alive, and yet, it is or has been alive. How is it a life that is not grievable and yet is memorable? If it was truly the radical framing out that she describes, then the life would either not be memorable, making the analysis speculative only, or it would indicate a present state in which the ungrievability facilitates a present mournability—but not toward a repairing or resituating of the present. It would not result in the inclusion of what has been left out. This is only a radical move if and only if the peoples under discussion have had a past in which they were not the object of violence. This may be true for many groups, but it has never been true for Blacks in America, and thus postmodern mourning is inadequate. For Butler's development of the theme of mourning one should also consult her earlier works, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997 and *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2004.

REFERENCES CITED

Adorno, Theodore W. *Culture Industry*. Edited by Robert Bernstein. New York: Routledge Classics, 2001.

Aeschylus. *Oresteia*. Translated by Peter Meineck. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1998.

Alcoff, Linda. *Visible Identities: Race Gender and the Self*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Alderman, Derek. "Surrogation and the Politics of Remembering Slavery in Savannah, Georgia."*Journal of Historical Geography* 36, 2010: 90-101.

Augustine. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*. Translated by R. S. Pine-Coffin. New York: Penguin Books, 1961.

Baker, Jr., Houston. *The Black Public Sphere: A Public Culture Book*. Edited by The Black Public Sphere Collective. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Bell, Derrick. *Faces from the Bottom of the Well: On the Permanence of Racism*. New York: Basic Books, 1992.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Translated by Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.

-----. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Translated by John Osborne. New York: Verso, 2003.

----. *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*. Suhrkamp:Taschenbuch: 1974.

-----. *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol. 1 1913-1926*. Edited by Marcus Bullock & Michael Jennings. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004.

-----. *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol. 2 1927-1930*. Edited by Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, & Gary Smith. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.

-----. *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, vol. 4 1938-1940*. Edited by Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.

-----. *Illuminationen: Ausgewähte Schriften 1.* Suhrkamp:Taschenbuch: 1977.

Benjamin, Andrew. "Opening the Interstitial: Eisenman's Space of Difference." *Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial.* New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003

Bernasconi, Robert. "Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism." *Philosophers on Race: Critical Essays*. Edited by Julia Ward and Tommie Lott. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Blight, David. "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Struggle for American Historical Memory." *History and Memory in African American Culture*. Edited by Genevieve Fabre and Robert O'Meally. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Birmingham, Peg. "Elated Citizenry: Deception and the Democratic Task of Bearing Witness," *Research in Phenomenology*, 38, no. *2*, 2008: 198-215.

Buck-Morss, Susan. *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute*. New York: The Free Press, 1979.

-----. *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades-Project*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995.

Butler, Judith. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* New York: Verso, 2009.

Byerman, Keith. *Seizing the Word: History, Art and Self in the Work of W.E.B. Du Bois.* Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1994.

Casey, Edward. *Remembrance: A Phenomenological Study*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Davis, Angela. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday.* New York: Vintage Books, 1998.

-----. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003.

-----. *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Empire, Prisons, and Torture.* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005.

DeMarco, Joseph. *The Social Thought of W.E.B. Du Bois*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1983.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Gift of Death*. Translated by David Wills. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

----. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Du Bois, W.E.B. "The Criteria for Negro Art" *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings*. New York: The Library of America, 1986.

----. Souls of Black Folk *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings*. New York: The Library of America, 1986.

---- Dusk of Dawn: The Biography of a Concept of Race. *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings*. New York: The Library of America, 1986.

----. *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*. New York: The Free Press, 1992.

Dwyer, Own and Adlerman, Derek. *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*. Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2008.

Eisenman, Peter. "Written Into the Void." *Written Into the Void: Selected Writings, 1990-2004*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

----. "Burred Zones." *Blurred Zones: Investigations of the Interstitial*. New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translation by Charles Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1967.

----. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translation by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 1963.

Fraser, Nancy and Honneth, Axel. *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*. New York: Verso, 2003.

Freud, Sigmund. *Inhibition, Symptom, and Anxiety*. Translated by Alix Strachey and James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1959.

----. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Translated by James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961.

----. "Further Recommendations in the technique of Psychoanalysis: Recollection, Repetition, and Working Through." *Therapy and Technique.* Edited by Philip Rieff. New York: Collier Books, 1963, 157-166.

----. *The Freud Reader.* Edited by Peter Gay. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1995.

----. *The Uncanny*. Translated by David McLintock. New York: Penguin Books, 2004.

----. *Civilization and its Discontents*. Translated James Strachey. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005.

Gasché, Roldophe. *The Idea of Form: Rethinking Kant's Aesthetics.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Glaude Jr., Eddie. *In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America.* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007.

Goodings-Williams, Robert. *In the Shadow of Du Bois: Afro-Modern Political Thought in America.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Guyer, Paul. *Kant and the Claims of Tastes.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Honneth, Axel. "The Irreducibility of Progress: Kant's Account of the Relationship between Morality and History." *Pathologies of Reason: On the Legacy of Critical Theory*. Translated by James Ingram. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Henrich, Dieter. *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World*. Edited by Eckert Förster. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992.

Husserl, Edmund. *Phantasy, Image-Consciousness, and Memory (1898-1925)*. Translated by John Brough. Netherlands: Springer, 2005.

Kant, Immanuel. "Conflict of the Faculties, Part 2: On An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing Forward?" *On History*. Translated by L.W. Beck, R.E. Anchor, & E. L. Fackenheim. Indianapolis/New York: The Bobbs-Merill Company Inc. 1963.

----. "Idea of Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent." *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays on Politics, History, and Morals*. Translated by Ted Humphrey. Indianapolis/ Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983.

----. *Critique of Judgment*. Translated by Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987.

----. *Kritik der Urteilkraft* (Band 4). Köln: Könemann Verlagsgesellchaft, 1995.

----. *Logic.* Translated by R. Hartman & W. Schwarz. New York: Dover, 1988.

----. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*. Translated by John T. Goldthwait. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991.

----. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Werner Pluhar. Indianapolis/ Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996.

----. *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Translated by Viktor Dowdell. Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996.

----. *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2003.

----. "From *Physical Geography.*" *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader*. Edited by Emmanuel C. Eze. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1997.

----. *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Notes and Fragments*. Translated by Paul Guyer, Curtis Bowman, & Frederick Rauscher. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

----. "Determination of the Concept of a Human Race." *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Edited by Gunter Zöller & Robert Louden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

----. "Of the Different Races of Human Beings." *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Edited by Gunter Zöller & Robert Louden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

----. "On the Use if Teleological Principles in Philosophy." *Anthropology, History, and Education*. Edited by Gunter Zöller & Robert Louden. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Kleinsgeld, Pauline. "Kant's Second Thoughts on Race." *Philosophical Quarterly*, 57, 2007: 573-92.

Kundera, Milan. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting.* New York: Vintage Books, Harper Perennial, 1999.

Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.

----. *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*. Translated by Georges Van Den Abeele. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1988.

MacMullen, Terrance. *Habits of Whiteness: A Pragmatist Reconstruction.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University press, 2009.

Marcuse, Herbert. *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.

Mbembe, Achille. *On the Postcolony.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

McCole, John. *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Mills, Charles. *The Racial Contract.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

----. "Dark Ontologies." *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

----. *From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2003.

----. "White Ignorance." *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance.* Edited by Nancy Tuana and Shannon Sullivan. New York: SUNY Press, 2007.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*. Translated by Ronald Speirs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Rampersad, Arnold. "W.E.B. Du Bois as a Man of Letters." *Critical Essays on W.E.B. Du Bois*. Edited by W. Andrews. Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1985.

Rancière, Jacques. *Dis-agreement: Politics and Philosophy*. Translated by John Rose. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

----. *Aesthetics and its Discontents*. Translated by Steve Corcoran. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009.

Rawls, John. *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. Edited by Erin Kelly. Cambridge: the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.

Ronen, Ruth. *Aesthetics of Anxiety*. New York: SUNY Press, 2009.

Shelby, Tommie. *We Who are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005.

Stark, Werner. "Beauty, Freedom and Morality: Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology* and the Development of His Aesthetic Theory." *Essays on Kant's Anthropology.* Edited by Brian Jacobs & Paul Kain. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Sullivan, Shannon. *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Taylor, Paul. "Post-Black, Old Black." *The African American Review*, 41, no. 4, 2007: 625-40.

----. "After Race, After Justice, After History." *The Southern Journal of Philosophy: Race, Racism, and Liberalism in the Twenty-First Century*, XLVII, Supplement, 2009: 25-41.

Wells, Ida B. *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*. Edited by Joyce Royster. Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1997.

Wood, Allen. "Kant and the Problem of Human Nature." *Essays on Kant's Anthropology.* Edited by Brian Jacobs & Paul Kain. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Yancy, George. *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race.* New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008.

Young, James. *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

----. *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Zack, Naomi. *Philosophy of Science and Race.* New York: Routledge, 2002.

----. "Race, Class and Money in Disaster," 87. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy: Race, Racism, and Liberalism in the Twenty-First Century* XLVII, Supplement, 2009: 84-103.

----. *Ethics for Disaster.* New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011.

----. "Violence, Poverty, and Disaster: New Orleans, Haiti, Chili." *Radical Philosophy Review Radical Philosophy Review* 15, no. 1, 2012: 53-65

Zamir, Shannon, *Dark Voices: W.E.B. Du Bois and American Thought, 1888-1903.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Zammito, John. *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. New York: Verso, 2008.

----. *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador, 2008.