

Philosophers and Race
A workshop sponsored by the Ackerman Center
September 24, 2017

The study of race and racism has been a staple of Holocaust studies from the very beginning. In the immediate aftermath of World War II, Léon Poliakov began investigations of racial and racist ideas within all periods of Western history, particularly as they affected Jews. He produced a four-volume *History of Anti-Semitism*, published first in French in 1955-77, "effectively creating the archive of the field" (Judaken). His history of ideas approach to the questions of race and racism was taken up by many other historians working on German and European history and on the history of philosophy. This had the further consequence of raising the profile of intellectual history within mainstream historical writing.

The study of race and racism has only recently entered the mainstream of Philosophy. This comes several decades after the Martinique-born philosopher Frantz Fanon subjected racism and colonialism to psychoanalysis in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952); and a century after W. E. B. Du Bois declared that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line." Du Bois was a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), while Fanon is regarded as a founder of African existentialism and the phenomenology of race. There is this remarkable passage in *Black Skin, White Masks*: "At first thought it may seem strange that the anti-Semite's outlook should be related to that of the Negrophobe. It was my philosophy professor, a native of the Antilles, who recalled the fact to me one day: 'Whenever you hear anyone abuse the Jews, pay attention, because he is talking about you.' And I found that he was universally right--by which I meant that I was answerable in my body and in my heart for what was done to my brother. Later I realized that he meant, quite simply, an anti-Semite is inevitably anti-Negro."

The Ackerman Center will gather scholars for a day of presentations and public discussion of their research on particular philosophers and their thinking about race. The presentations will feature Asian American, Latin American, French, and German philosophers.

Visiting scholars: Demetrius L. Eudell (Wesleyan University), Emily S. Lee (CSU Fullerton)
From UT Dallas: Charles Hatfield, Peter Park, Nils Roemer, and Shilyh Warren.

Schedule

- ❖ 9:00 a.m.: Coffee, tea, pastries, fruit
- ❖ 9:30 a.m.: Opening Remarks by Nils Roemer and Peter Park
- ❖ 9:45-10:45: "Disciplining Difference: Alterity and Knowledge Praxis in the German Enlightenment"
by Demetrius Eudell & Discussion
- ❖ 10:45-11:45: "Two Interpretations of Kant's Work on Race" by Peter Park & Discussion
- ❖ 11:45-12:00: Response by Nils Roemer
- ❖ 12:00-1:30: Lunch Break
- ❖ 1:30-2:30: "Quijano and Race: Rethinking the 'Coloniality of Power'" by Charles Hatfield &
Discussion
- ❖ 2:30-3:30: "Being-as-a-Model Minority" by Emily Lee & Discussion
- ❖ 3:30-3:45: Response by Shilyh Warren
- ❖ 3:45: Reception