

BEYOND THE PALE

Reading Ethics from the Margins

Edited by

Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas and Miguel A. De La Torre

WJK WESTMINSTER
JOHN KNOX PRESS
LOUISVILLE • KENTUCKY

Contents

Contributors	xi
Preface and Acknowledgments	xvii
Introduction	xix
Part 1 Philosophical Tradition	
1. Plato on Reason, <i>by Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas</i>	3
2. Aristotle on Politics, <i>by Edward Antonio</i>	15
3. Augustine on Just War, <i>by Valerie Elverton Dixon</i>	25
4. Thomas Aquinas on Servitude, <i>by Alejandro Crosthwaite</i>	33
5. Thomas Hobbes on Human Nature, <i>by Asante U. Todd</i>	41
6. John Locke on Property, <i>by George (Tink) Tinker</i>	49
7. Jean-Jacques Rousseau on Order, <i>by Victor Anderson</i>	61
8. Immanuel Kant on Categorical Imperative, <i>by James Samuel Logan</i>	69
9. John Stuart Mill on Utilitarianism, <i>by Ilsup Ahn</i>	81
10. Friedrich Nietzsche on Will to Power, <i>by Edward Antonio</i>	91
11. Michel Foucault on Power, <i>by Andrea Smith</i>	99
Part 2 Social Tradition	
12. Walter Rauschenbusch on Society, <i>by Ben Sanders III</i>	111
13. Reinhold Niebuhr on Realism, <i>by Traci C. West</i>	119
14. H. Richard Niebuhr on Responsibility, <i>by Darryl Trimiew</i>	129
15. Dietrich Bonhoeffer on Discipleship, <i>by Anthony B. Pinn</i>	137
16. John Rawls on Justice, <i>by Ada María Isasi-Díaz</i>	145
17. James M. Gustafson on Virtue, <i>by Angela Sims</i>	153
18. Paul Ramsey on Social Order, <i>by Keri Day</i>	161

19. Alasdair MacIntyre on <i>After Virtue</i> , by <i>Elias K. Bongmba</i>	169
20. Joseph Fletcher on Situation, by <i>Robyn Henderson-Espinoza</i>	181
21. Michael Novak on Capitalism, by <i>Darryl Trimiew</i>	189
22. John Howard Yoder on Pacifism, by <i>Rosetta Ross</i>	199
23. Richard Mouw on Divine Command, by <i>Rodolfo J. Hernández-Díaz</i>	209
24. Stanley Hauerwas on Church, by <i>Miguel A. De La Torre</i>	217
Bibliography	225
Index	237

Contributors

Ilsup Ahn is Carl I. Lindberg Associate Professor of Philosophy in Applied Ethics and faculty fellow for Asian studies at North Park University, where he teaches philosophy, theology, and ethics. He holds a doctorate (religious ethics) from the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. He is the author of *Position and Responsibility: Jürgen Habermas, Reinhold Niebuhr, and the Co-Reconstruction of the Positional Imperative* (2009) and has been published in journals such as *Journal of Religious Ethics*, *The Heythrop Journal*, and *Cooperation and Conflict*.

Victor Anderson is the Chancellor Chair, Oberlin Theological School, and Professor of Christian Ethics, Religious Studies, and African American and Diaspora Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. He is author of three books: *Beyond Ontological Blackness: An Essay on African American Religious and Cultural Criticism* (1995), *Pragmatic Theology: Negotiating the Intersections of an American Philosophy of Religion and Public Theology* (1998), and *Creative Exchange: A Constructive Theology of African American Religious Experience* (2008).

Edward Antonio teaches theology, social theory, and African studies and serves as Iliff School of Theology's Associate Dean of Diversities. He has published a

number of scholarly articles in these areas and is currently working on two book projects. He has also taught at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he served as the treasurer of the South African Academy of Religion and as a consultant for the World Council of Churches project on Ecumenical Hermeneutics.

Elias K. Bongmba holds the Harry and Hazel Chavanne Chair in Christian Theology and is also Professor of Religious Studies at Rice University. His book *The Dialectics of Transformation in Africa* won the Frantz Fanon Prize from the Caribbean Philosophical Association. He is also author of *Facing a Pandemic: The African Church and Crisis of AIDS*.

Alejandro Crosthwaite, OP, is Professor of Catholic Social Teaching, Social and Political Ethics, and Media Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Director of the Ethical Leadership in Business and Politics Program, and Vice-Rector for Public Relations at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Angelicum) in Rome. He is the author of lectures and articles on the social and political thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, Ethical/Servant Leadership studies, Latin American and Latino/a social ethics, and Media studies.

Keri Day is Assistant Professor of Theological and Social Ethics and Director of the Black Church Studies Program at Brite Divinity School. She received her BS in political science with a minor in economics from Tennessee State University. She earned an MA in religion and ethics from Yale University Divinity School and received her PhD in religion from Vanderbilt University (with a graduate certificate in women's and gender studies). Her research sits at the intersections of critical social theory, Black religion, womanist theology, and ethics and poverty studies.

Miguel A. De La Torre has authored numerous articles and over twenty books, including the award-winning *Reading the Bible from the Margins* (2002), *Santería: The Beliefs and Rituals of a Growing Religion in America* (2004), and *Doing Christian Ethics from the Margins* (2004). He presently serves as Professor of Social Ethics at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. Within the academy he is a director of the American Academy of Religion, past director of the Society of Christian Ethics, and President of the Society of Christian Ethics (2012). Additionally, he is the editor of the *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion* (www.raceandreligion.com).

Valerie Elverton Dixon, PhD, is an independent scholar and lecturer. She is founder of JustPeaceTheory.com. She taught Christian Ethics for nearly ten years at the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, and at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, Massachusetts. While working at Andover Newton, she was a faculty member of the ethics PhD seminar at

Boston College. She blogs at *God's Politics* and the *Tikkun Daily Blog*. She is a *Washington Post on Faith* panelist.

Stacey M. Floyd-Thomas is Associate Professor of Ethics and Society at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and Graduate Department of Religion. She is the author of *Mining the Motherlode: Methods in Womanist Ethics* (2006), *Deeper Shades of Purple: Womanism in Religion and Society* (2006), *Black Church Studies: An Introduction* (2007), and *Liberation Theologies in the United States: An Introduction* (2010). As a proponent of bridging the gap that exists between the academy and the church, Floyd-Thomas serves as the cofounder and CEO of the Black Religious Scholars Group (BRSG), and is also the executive director for the Society of Christian Ethics (SCE).

Rodolfo J. Hernández-Díaz is a PhD candidate in religious and theological studies, concentrating in religion and social change, at University of Denver and Iliff School of Theology. He is the author of a number of entries in *Hispanic American Religious Cultures* (2009) and the *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics (DSE)* (forthcoming). He currently serves on the steering committee of the Latina/o Critical and Comparative Studies Consultation and the Latina/o Religion, Culture, and Society Group at the AAR. He also serves as coconvener of Latino(a) Working Group of the Society of Christian Ethics.

Robyn Henderson-Espinoza is a joint doctoral student at the University of Denver and at the Iliff School of Theology, pursuing a degree in social ethics with a graduate certificate in Latina/o studies. Robyn's academic work seeks to shape the existing discourse concerning social ethics and Latina/os, and her primary academic interest is the *mestizaje* body, moral subjectivity, and queer theories and epistemologies. The lenses of the Christian agnostic and queer-mestizo shape her pursuit of justice and ethical analysis. Robyn is a doctoral fellow for the Hispanic Theological Initiative and was selected as a Human Rights Campaign Fellow.

Ada María Isasi-Díaz is Professor Emerita of Ethics and Theology, Drew University, where she taught from 1991 to 2009. A native of Cuba, she received her PhD in 1990 from Union Theological Seminary, New York. Since 1987 Isasi-Díaz has elaborated a *mujerista* theology based on the religious understandings and practices of USA Latinas. She is coauthor with Yolanda Tarango of *Hispanic Women: Prophetic Voice in the Church*, the first USA Latina theology book. Her other books are: *En La Lucha—In the Struggle, Mujerista Theology*, and *La Lucha Continues*. She has coedited several books and has published articles in countless books and journals.

James Samuel Logan was born in Harlem and raised in the South Bronx. At Earlham College he is Associate Professor of Religion and Associate Professor

and Director of African and African American Studies. Logan is the author of *Good Punishment? Christian Moral Practice and U.S. Imprisonment* (2008) and “Liberalism, Race, and Stanley Hauerwas,” *CrossCurrents* (Winter 2006). He is coeditor (with Marcia Riggs) of *Ethics That Matters*, a volume of contemporary African, Caribbean, and African American essays on religious social ethics (2011).

Anthony B. Pinn is the Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor of Humanities and Professor of Religious Studies at Rice University. He is the author or editor of twenty-six books addressing a variety of issues related to religious aesthetics, liberation theologies, religion and popular culture, and humanism. He is the founding director of the HERE Project, a program fostering better relationships between Houston and Rice through creative research collaborations and innovative pedagogical approaches. Pinn is also the director of research for the Institute for Humanist Studies, and a member of the Meadville Lombard Theological School Board of Trustees.

Rosetta Ross teaches religious studies at Spelman College in Atlanta. Her research and writing explore the role of religion in Black women’s activism, focusing particularly on the civil rights movement. She is author of *Witnessing and Testifying: Black Women, Religion, and Civil Rights*, which examines religion as a source that helped engender and sustain activities of seven Black women civil rights leaders. Ross has also written many articles examining religion in Black women’s activism.

Ben Sanders III is currently a PhD student in Religion and Social Change (Social Ethics) in the PhD program at the Iliff School of Theology and the University of Denver. He earned a BA in religion from Hope College (Holland, Mich.) and an MDiv with a focus in Christian theology and social ethics from Union Theological Seminary, New York. His research engages the roles of race and religion in the construction of moral and political systems in the United States, with the aim of imagining and constructing new social possibilities from the grassroots level.

Angela Sims is Assistant Professor of Ethics and Black Church Studies at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri. Her oral history research has been supported by the Ford Foundation, the Womanist Scholars Program at the Interdenominational Theological Center, the Louisville Institute, the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, and the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University. She is the author of *Ethical Complications of Lynching: Ida B. Wells’s Interrogation of American Terror* and the coeditor, with Katie Geneva Cannon and Emilie Townes, of *Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader*.

Andrea Smith is an associate professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California–Riverside. She is the author of numerous works, including *Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances* (2008), *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* (2007), and *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (2005). She is the U.S. coordinator for the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). Dr. Smith is also the cofounder of INCITE! Women of Color against Violence and the Boarding School Healing Project.

George (Tink) Tinker is Professor of American Indian Cultures and Religious Traditions at Iliff School of Theology (Denver). He is the author of numerous books, including *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (1993) and *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty* (2008). Tinker's writings, speeches, and activism bring attention to the liberation efforts of American Indians and critique the colonialism perpetuated against American Indians. Tinker has served as director of Four Winds American Indian Survival Project in Denver and president of the Native American Theological Association.

Asante U. Todd is a doctoral candidate in the Graduate Department of Religion at Vanderbilt University in the Ethics and Society program. He holds degrees from the University of Texas at Austin (BA) and Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary (MDiv). Todd's research, under the rubric of political theology, is located at the intersection of African American cultural studies and theological ethics. At Vanderbilt, Todd is also a member of the Theology and Practice program, which emphasizes critical thought on issues of theological education and Christian ministry.

Darryl Trimiew is the chair of the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Medgar Evers College, Brooklyn, New York. He holds a PhD from Emory University and a JD from Rutgers School of Law, Newark. He is on the board of *The Journal of Law and Religion* and is a past president of the Society of Christian Ethics. His best-known publications are *God Bless the Child That's Got Its Own: The Economic Rights Debate* (1997), *Voices of the Silenced: The Responsible Self in a Marginalized Community* (1993), and an edited collection of sermons, *Out of Mighty Waters* (1994).

Traci West is Professor of Ethics and African American Studies at Drew University Theological School in Madison, New Jersey. She is the author of *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter* (2006) and *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics* (1999). She is also the editor of *Our Family Values: Religion and Same-sex Marriage* (2006) and has published several articles on justice issues in church and society.

Preface and Acknowledgments

The genesis of this book can be traced to when the editors first met: in a doctoral class being taught by the fearless liberationist ethicist Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon at Temple University during the mid-1990s. Influenced by her wisdom, the experiences of being marginalized throughout our lives, and having the scholarship that our communities conduct dismissed within the academy led us, and many other scholars of color, to read the dominant culture with a healthy dose of hermeneutical suspicion. Although we are not interested in simply discarding the formative ethical or theological thinkers of the dominant culture, we are propelled to seriously consider how their works consciously or unconsciously contribute to the disenfranchisement and dispossession of marginalized communities of color. Regardless of how progressive their words may sound, their unexamined social location influences their thinking in ways that are life-denying to the communities existing on their underside.

We are keenly aware that subalterns are seldom allowed to speak for themselves, let alone critique the scholarship and wisdom of those accustomed to speaking for the subalterns. To do so runs the risk of being labeled “angry colored folk,” so that what is being said can easily be dismissed. Yet it is crucial, for the

sake of academic excellence, not only to find our own voices, but also to use those voices to unmask and uncover how the moral and theological reasoning of the dominant culture perpetuates the continued marginalization of communities of color.

For these reasons, we are deeply grateful for all of our colleagues, our sisters and brothers, who chose to stand in solidarity with us. Their individual voices have created a collective witness concerning how the thinking of the dominant culture has been normalized and legitimized within the academy—to our detriment. We are also grateful to Jon Berquist, former editor at Westminster John Knox, who believed in our mission from the start. Special thanks must also be given to Jacob G. Robinson, a doctoral student at Vanderbilt Divinity School, who spent countless hours assisting in editing this manuscript. And finally we thank our soul mates, Juan M. Floyd-Thomas and Deborah De La Torre, who have been faithful in love and unrelenting *en la lucha*.

Introduction

Beyond the Pale: Reading Ethics from the Margins

Liberation ethics is debunking, unmasking and disentangling the ideologies, theologies and systems of value operative in a particular society, by analyzing the established power relationships that determine the cultural, political and economic presuppositions and by evaluating the legitimating myths which sanction the enforcement of such values, in order to become responsible decision-makers who envision structural and systematic alternatives that embrace the well-being of us all.

—Katie Geneva Cannon²

Embedded within the liberationist ethical process is the fundamental query: *How do we resurrect the ethical realities and concerns of those from the underside of history?* Attending to the underside of history is a bold, audacious, and willful act. As marginalized ethicists continue to push from margin to center in their presence, perspectives, and publications, the foundational truths of our discipline must shift to allow room for the ethical realities of *all* people as those who are not only endowed with the “unalienable rights . . . [of] life, liberty and pursuit of happiness,” but also were “made in the image and likeness of God.” Such work makes marginalized Christian ethicists not only adept scholars but also liberationists who wrest marginalized ethical realities from the death-dealing grips of what womanist ethicist Katie Cannon calls the “false, objectified conceptualities and images that undergird the apparatuses of systemic oppression” that threaten to obliterate the truth of history and those caught within it.³ Thus the mandate of this work is to attend to an ethical historiography that unearths the ethical realities of people of color and the two-thirds world from the pervasive as well as perpetually conjoined gazes of White supremacy: the purpose is to illustrate

how the oppressed were silenced and have suffered, survived, and subverted those gazes throughout history. It is the uncovering of normative, oppressive ideologies and the recovering of liberationist analysis that drives this work. This is especially vital as it furthers the liberationist task, as womanist ethicists claim, of *wanting to know more and in greater depth than that which has been considered "good" and "true."*

To be sure, liberation ethics in the United States has matured, gaining both the attention of the publishing world and a solid place in the curriculum of undergraduate and graduate institutions of higher learning. While attention has been given to the genealogy of various forms of liberation theological ethics, much of this revolves around introductory texts that treat each modality in isolation. However, the study of the field of Christian ethics has been two-tiered: (1) normative ethics discussed about and by White males, and (2) marginalized ethics written by and for minoritized people and those who are curious. Rarely does the study of the field's genealogy include the centered perspectives and sustained critiques of those who forever seek to move from the margin of Christian ethics to the center of its study. Even surveys that seek to present a cross-range of liberation ethics tend to understand these forms of ethics within the context of a general liberal religion framework. In so doing, the unique theoretical and resource framework of constructive ethics—such as womanist ethics or Latina/o ethics—is lost to a general ethos that theoretically privileges the dominant liberal/neo-orthodox framework. This is problematic because progressive ethics such as feminist ethics and those previously named develop as a way to jettison the rather rigid and status-quo concerns of the dominant ethical paradigms in the United States. The very structural logic of most texts in Christian ethics frames “introductory readings in Christian Ethics” in a way that privileges the (almost exclusively) White and (predominantly) male traditions of moral thought: liberationist views of ethics are not presented in a way that best highlights their connections to important challenges of the dominant ethical traditions. Mindful of this, several liberationist scholars have long noted the need for a foundational text that seeks to liberate Christian ethics from its stronghold of Eurocentric heteropatriarchal normativity. To accomplish this, *Beyond the Pale* is a reader that offers liberationist critiques of the fathers of Christian ethics and their concepts that serve as presuppositions and legitimating myths limiting the human flourishing of people of color.

The expression “beyond the pale” typically refers to any action regarded as outside the limits of “normal” behavior that might be construed as unacceptable or improper. A prime example of this primary usage is found in the British novelist Charles Dickens’s *The Pickwick Papers* (1837): “I look upon you, sir, as a man who has placed himself *beyond the pale* of society, by his most audacious, disgraceful, and abominable public conduct” (emphasis added). The two words “pale” appear as two homonyms, with tricky etymological roots: one root refers to matters of color and is from the Latin verb *pallere*, “to be pale”; the second root is from *palus*, meaning “a stake.” Turning our attention toward the double

entendre allows us to grapple with two concepts of “pale.” On the one hand, we clearly address “pale” as an adjectival reference for something approaching whiteness in color in both a literal as well as a figurative sense. As scholars of color, we strive to envision theological education and academic discourse writ large in ways that can freely criticize and thoroughly deconstruct the hegemonic stranglehold of the White normative gaze. On the other hand, when “pale” is taken in the sense of an enclosure or a limited space beyond which it is not permissible to go, our discussion of the pale also means an old name for a pointed stake driven into the ground (our modern word “pole” is derived from the same source). By an obvious extension, this use of “pale” suggests the creation of a fence made of such stakes as a means of marking territory and claiming ground that is one’s exclusive property or domain. As such, the relevance of our current endeavor is focused on the pale as a realm of activity, a branch of study, or a body of knowledge in much the same way we use the notion of academic “field” nowadays, with an implicit notion that civilization effectively stops at its fixed and definite boundary. Toward this end, our operative notion of the pale as an enclosed sphere of influence has grown out of this particular sense. Ultimately, those of us who strive to move beyond the pale do not share dominant values, beliefs, or social customs; thus we yearn to exist outside the parameters of the academy’s normalizing effects by delving more deeply into the full range of our experiences and consciousness.

Having said all this, the purpose of the book is to read formative ethical thinkers from the social location of marginalized communities—as a means by which to interrogate the Eurocentrism ensconced within the canon of Christian ethics. Within these pages, some of the leading liberation ethicists, who have been significantly involved in the academic success and ongoing development of liberation thought in the field, have chosen to critique those classic theorists at the center from the margins of society, with the goal of a more thoroughgoing liberation ethics in mind. Twenty-four scholars address this need by providing the following in each essay:

- A historical backdrop for the development of a normative ethical thinker who has shaped the philosophical or social tradition of Christian ethics
- A description of the thinker’s role in a given moral camp
- Reference to marginalized sources for engaging the thinker’s form of ethics
- Theoretical and methodological considerations at work
- Ongoing issues of concern within that moral tradition

Throughout the modern era, people of color have had proof texts of philosophical and religious ethical thinking imposed upon them.⁴ In order to justify racialized oppression in the modern world, everything from biblical teachings to pseudo-scientific research to governmental public policy has been used to

fabricate a sense of identity and history that not only rationalized the misery of racial-ethnic minorities but also mandated that White patriarchal supremacy was God's only ordained plan for all humanity. Debunking, unmasking, and disentangling these normative ideologies is not simply *revisionism*; it also is actually *revivification*. For liberation ethicists, an interrogation of the history of Christian ethics is a constant and ongoing attempt to right the wrongs of our field, in an effort to undo the damage that a flawed and incomplete rendition of history has already done. This is so that the lives and thoughts of those who have been silenced and denigrated may become the indigenous sources that might not only rescue the oppressed from "the Western metaphysics of rationalization that dispirits the world in favor of power and hierarchy," but will also further the real work of human flourishing and communal accountability.⁵

Of course, no single scholarly act can single-handedly erase the legacy of oppression that the marginalized face, but such intentionality makes a vital difference in the case of informing the future direction of a field while instituting an ethic of accountability and self-reflexivity for the work of all scholars. So much of the experience of oppressed peoples has been portrayed as a series of inevitabilities. When viewed in this manner, the perennial crises facing marginalized communities are justified by the fact that people of color in this country are the descendants of denigrated and dispossessed peoples who were ostensibly reviled by Western culture. Consequently, it has been nearly impossible to imagine escape from the strongholds of such disdain, let alone redeem any sense of *the good*. What does it mean to have some sense of selfhood and moral agency as a person of color in America? How does one gain a positive sense of self in society while trying to wrestle with a historical context that has systematically denied these men, women, and children the basic elements of human regard and self-determination?

The challenge now is not only to tell the general public about what happened in the past, in accord with the radical truth-telling provided by the crisis caused by the history of Christian ethics, but to also inform them about why it matters. As it embraces the mandate of a liberative ethic, the overarching concern in the case of this emergent field is to challenge the prevailing sense of apathy that so often accompanied by the perennial question "So what?" We need a liberationist historiography such as this text that will challenge what we presently and naively take for granted as true concerning the most marginalized among us. In such a critique of our historical horizon, Christian ethicists become moral agents who have the responsibility to identify the so-called normative aspects of religious, social, political, cultural, and economic typologies. Typologies that have reproduced justifications for oppression, conditions for slavery, laws for apartheid, and frequently state-sanctioned of genocide have perennially invoked a divine sanction and scholarly rationale for declaring that God has ordained the natural order this way. By propping up the status quo in this fashion, we witness the codification of grave injustices done in the name of a religion that is supposed to liberate the oppressed. Even worse, this process of co-opting an otherwise liberating faith

for the purposes of perpetuating oppressive power structures and unequal human relationships further destroys the moral agency of those of us on the margins; in turn, it makes us complicit in reproducing the same rationales and conditions that thwart the prospects of meaningful life and human flourishing.

Beyond the Pale is an effort to move beyond traditionalist modes of normative Christian ethics. It is an unapologetic and unashamed act to address the fictive truth of the status that people of color have as an oppressed class, as expressed and enacted by a Eurocentric project to dehumanize them. As Charles Long declares, this is “their second creation”: the discovery of their own autonomy and agency to reveal the myths and tell the truth about “their first creation.”⁶ Indeed, the moral impetus for this project is to dehistoricize the myth-making and delegitimize death-dealing components of normative Christian ethics for the sake of creating a new discourse and new form of humanity—one that is no longer based on the master-slave or center-margins dialectic. This is done in order to help reeducate the world that people are not the sum total of their history, but rather that the course of scholarship is to write a history that is the sum total of a people. In so doing, the goal of this text is to actually reveal a “hidden history” of sorts that has been shared by both the oppressed and the oppressor but never articulated as such. The White patriarchal supremacy of Western culture has reinforced the logic that controlling the history of a people through canonical literature results in the absolute control of the people themselves. Conversely, a people in search of their own history move from being victims of circumstance to becoming agents of change. The appeal of the history-making work of liberation ethics is that it offers a consistent and insistent challenge to capture the rich essence of the experience of those who have had a worm’s-eye view of the world, from its foundation to the foreground of a brighter future.

In sum, *Beyond the Pale* embraces this historical approach to liberation ethics not only to demonstrate how individual lives come to represent vital generational changes. It also elevates the importance of the momentous decisions that frame moral formation within the Western imagination and American community. The interrogation of a normative history and the incorporation of a truer one illuminate how marginalized ethical perspectives and concerns have been overlooked for centuries. This work attempts to bring the fullness and richness of an ethical and liberative agenda in the hopes of serving as a thoroughgoing corrective.

Notes

1. Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge & Sons, 1945), preface to the first edition.
2. Katie Cannon, “Wheels in the Middle of Wheels,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 8, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 125–32.
3. *Ibid.*, 125.
4. For a critical analysis of this phenomenon, see Anthony Pinn, *African American Humanist Principles: Living and Thinking Like the Children of Nimrod* (New York: Palgrave, 2004).

5. In womanist metaethics, the answering of the “So what?” question is the linchpin for satisfying the why-crisis of any moral problem. The answer to this question must take into account the pathos (feelings), logos (reason), ethos (values), and theos (ultimate concern) of an otherwise apathetic audience who must be logically persuaded and morally compelled to use their agency to address and resolve a moral problem in which they have been complicit.
6. Charles Long, *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion* (Aurora, CO: The Davies Group, 1995), 184.

PART ONE
PHILOSOPHICAL
TRADITION

Plato on Reason

STACEY M. FLOYD-THOMAS

The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.

—Alfred North Whitehead¹

Plato is philosophy, and philosophy, Plato—at once the glory and the shame of mankind, since neither Saxon nor Roman have availed to add any idea to his categories. No wife, no children had he, and the thinkers of all civilized nations are his posterity, and are tinged with his mind.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson²

HISTORICAL BACKDROP

Plato was born into an aristocratic family circa 427 BCE and lived in Athens, a city that served as home to scores of scientists, artists, mathematicians, and those considered to be “lovers of wisdom.” Athens was a leading city of cultural achievement and scientific advancement and was regarded then, as now, as the cradle of Western civilization. Even though it was a sizable and significant city-state, Athens was still relatively small enough that everyone who was anyone knew each other. Despite his disheveled appearance and curious personal habits, Plato’s teacher Socrates was a popular figure among the young upper-class Athenians. This was especially true with Plato, who along with his peers considered the philosopher Socrates to be a charismatic guru, due to his unconventional wisdom and courage to challenge traditional beliefs. Plato was drawn particularly to Socrates’ dialectical irony and thought-provoking dialogue, which consisted

of a quirky method of asking basic questions about various concepts and abstract ideals such as “What is the good life?” Like the Sophists, Socrates rejected the idea that tradition alone justifies conduct. Unlike them, however, he deemed morality not merely to be a convenience, but also a path chartered by the impetus to guide conduct by the means of reason. For Socrates, reason alone could bring about true self-knowledge.

Socrates maintained that neither morality nor philosophy could be taught because the life of the mind is a way of life rather than a body of knowledge. Thus he insisted that his pupils—among whom Plato claimed to be chief—engage in dialectical dialogue as an effort to override ignorance as the cause of evil, and take up reason as their life’s calling because “the unexamined life is not worth living.” According to Plato, until the final days leading up to his execution, Socrates maintained that “God orders me to fulfil [*sic*] the philosopher’s mission of searching into myself and other men.”³ Plato found it difficult to live in Athens after the death of Socrates and as the city declined under the dominance of Sparta; he gave up his political aspirations and philosophical ponderings and left the cradle of his motherland and his father figure.

Sometime around 387 BCE, the homesick yet headstrong Plato returned to Athens as a man on a mission—to resurrect the classical soul of Athens and the spirit of Socrates. Although his professional résumé was distinguished by his experience as an aristocrat, philosopher, mathematician, and descendant of royalty and lawmakers, it was his founding of the Academy that enabled him to make a profession out of his mentor’s way of life. With the power from this position, Plato created what was to become the first institution of higher learning in the Western world (where his star pupil, Aristotle, would later become the father of ethics); he did this by using the fiscal capital provided by his familial inheritance and by laying claim as the rightful inheritor of the cultural capital and legacy of the great philosopher Socrates.

Socrates is considered to be the architect of Western philosophy, yet so far as we know, he never wrote a word because he believed in the superiority of oral argument over writing. It is Plato’s account of his mentor’s conversations and debates that serves as our primary source for the words and thoughts of the historical Socrates—an account that functions as the very cornerstone of the field of Western philosophy. Thus it is actually Plato’s original institutionalization of this philosophy that forms the foundation of how the academy and Western civilization study normative ethics and define and measure reason. Since Plato is regarded as both a beguiling and imaginative writer, historians of Western philosophy have observed that “it is very hard to judge how far Plato means to portray the historical Socrates and how far he intends the person called ‘Socrates’ in his dialogues to be merely the mouthpiece of his own opinions.”⁴ With the heft of the Academy, the fundamental history of Socratic thought, and his aristocratic clout, Plato helped to lend credibility to the saying “Knowledge is power.” Consequently Plato is regarded as having written the blueprint for how to conceive of moral reasoning in modern ethics. Moreover, his ambition

established philosophy as the root of ethics, which uses reason as a means to persuade people and order society.

As he established the Academy and compiled and codified Socrates' philosophy in his own hand, Plato tried to develop a coherent and sound answer to the Socratic question "What is the good life?" Preferring perfection to life, however, Plato did not feel that the question of the good could or should be answered through the radicality of Socrates' way of living. Instead, Plato felt that efforts to define the good life needed to be systematic, comprehensive, and persuasive. It had to become a school of thought that could only be explored and grasped within the process of schooling itself. Plato's motivating concern regarding reason was one of ethics. When systemized academically, Plato held that one could appreciate ethics as a philosophical system, but when employed systemically in society, it could also become public truth. Therefore Plato's ethics were interested not only in the *personal* pursuit for the good life but more importantly to establish a *political* system that would govern how people conducted their lives for the greater purpose of "civilizing" them.⁵ Plato sought to develop a hierarchy of persons who would both exemplify and allow others to understand what it means to live the good life, to be civilized. Foregrounding ethics in the pursuit of the good and truth was, in fact, Plato's faulty way of expressing and solving the problem of justice, faulty in that his rationale was founded on the presumption that injustice could be righted by the intellectual rigor of those who possessed the highest skills of reason and by the obedience of everyone else to devote their role in life and society according to what these intellectual elites *reasoned* to be truly good. To achieve his goal, however, Plato required a means of ethical analysis that explained why people do what they do, in order to inform what they *ought* to do. To this end, Plato introduced readers to the Theory of the Soul.

THE THEORY OF THE SOUL

Drawing upon Socrates' ideas, Plato conceptualized the soul as the definitive essence of human beings, which helps determine their behavior. However, he realized that the intricacies and inner workings of the soul were difficult, if not impossible, to understand. So Plato utilized the analogy of the state as a clearly delineated entity, in order to extrapolate from it insight into the soul. In his most regarded text, the *Republic*, which served as the basic framework and foundation for his entire philosophy, Plato outlined his Theory of the Soul and of the society as the individual soul writ large. By correlating its function with that of the larger society, Plato set the course for what, how, and why reason is essential for the soul's quest in search of the good in both microcosmic and macrocosmic terms. Simply put, he argued that a person's conduct is analogous to the social systems wherein people display the same features, functions, and forces that city-states do. Just as a society is made up of different characters, so too the individual is made up of distinct characteristics. Likewise, whether as a

citizen or city, people experience conflict when they are forced to make a choice about how to conduct themselves when their inclinations pull them in different directions. Plato thought the most reasonable path was to distinguish among the elements and interests of the soul, along with the virtues that relegate them and the classes that represent them, and thus one could come to understand the soul in its own right.

Plato's Theory of the Soul has three elements, with three corresponding interests, classes, and virtues. First, the *appetite* is the base and most common element of the soul, driven as it is by the basic desires of people to stay alive (via hunger and thirst) as well as by the unduly desires in which people often indulge (via overeating and excessive sex). The appetite is most dominant among the working class (the commoners and laborers), for whom moderation is the ultimate virtue because it compels their right behavior and ensures the good of their soul and livelihood. Next, the *spirit* is the element of the soul that seeks honor and victory—the responsibilities of the auxiliary/military class (soldiers and warriors), who rely on the virtue of courage to defend and protect the citizen, the city, and civilization. Last but not least, *reason* is the rational part of the soul, which is driven by the pursuit of the truth and is the sole domain of the guardian class, the philosophers, whose virtue of wisdom is not only necessary to rightly divide the truth but also to use truth as a dividing line to limit the spirit and appetite of the soul/state and keep the lust of the masses and the violence of the military in check.

Within the Theory of the Soul, one finds what Karl Popper has called the “spell of Plato,” by which he suggests that Plato used his spokesman Socrates to lead his readers down a dubious road of Socratic dialogue.⁶ What began as a pursuit in philosophical humility culminated in an ominous ontological ordering of human beings, wherein the specific functions of the soul via the separate, three factions of society must conform to this hegemony in order for individuals to live the good life and for the establishment of a just society. Individually, members of society were valued only in accordance with their specialization and natural impulse, inasmuch as they worked on behalf of the common good by attending to their constitutive character. The ideal state could be realized only if and when there was a rigid ethic governed by reason and everyone acted according to their purpose.

THEORY OF FORMS AND DUALISM

Plato's Theory of the Soul is situated within a larger dualistic world of forms, in which philosophers regarded reason as being independent of the senses (forms) and prioritized mind over matter (dualism). Since morality or virtue have universal, ephemeral, and fleeting qualities in Plato's world of forms, it is not necessary to define morality or virtue with absolute precision, but rather to seek and search for their essence. Likewise, his Theory of Dualism insists that the universe is

divided into two irreducible realms, wherein abstraction trumps reality, sacred is separate from secular, and transcendence is dissociated from immanence. Plato's privileging of one reality over and against another in this manner maintains a hierarchical categorization of entities in which normative manners of reason and intelligence override all other forms of knowledge. When taken together, forms and dualism create a soul and state whose ideal existence is independent of a "sensible" world. Referred to as *apatheia* by the Stoics, this notion of being spiritually free from emotion privileges conceptual power via reason as the vehicle through which justice emerges and develops within the formation of an ideal society.

According to womanist theologian Kelly Brown Douglas, this theoretical trinity of state, forms, and dualism represents the problematic theological core of what she calls the "heretical nature of Platonized Christianity."⁷ Plato's reasoning purports to protect the integrity of the soul and society by creating a social hierarchy, privileging the surreal over the real, as well as separating the mind from the body; yet in essence it undermines and is at odds with the very mission of Christian ethics. Thus the trinity of state, forms, and dualism has created ongoing issues toward making this field of inquiry unusable for those who are on the margins or underside of the hierarchical divide.

ONGOING ISSUES

The Power of the Elect

In that his philosophical pursuit forms the very basis of the political ideology of the Western world, Plato's moral reasoning also represents a sophisticated, Western cosmology. His notion of reason has become the divine law—in effect the Logos—of the Western world. Regarding this reality, English philosopher John Locke declared, "*Reason* must be our last Judge and Guide in every Thing."⁸ A crucial question in this respect is, To whom does the sovereign domain of reason belong in this world? According to Platonic reasoning, it is only the philosopher who is able to reason and therefore discern the good. In Plato's cosmos, all of society should listen to and follow the philosopher-kings, and any activity or opinion that runs counter to them is regarded as unreasonable. As they fulfill their roles as philosophical guardians of the soul, the philosophers become a class of kings and thus the only ones capable of defining, meting out, and commanding justice. However, the fact remains that where there are kings, there is no democracy.

Plato's principles leave little doubt as to the role reason plays in establishing the sovereign ability of the philosopher-kings to control and discipline the proletariat—in direct opposition to the ideals of an open society or true democracy. In the second passage from *Laws*, Plato states:

The greatest principle of all is that nobody, whether male or female, should ever be without a leader. Nor should the mind of anybody be habituated to

letting him do anything at all on his own initiative, neither out of zeal, nor even playfully. But in war and in the midst of peace—to his leader he shall direct his eye, and follow him faithfully. And even in the smallest matters he should stand under leadership. For example, he should get up, or move, or wash, or take his meals . . . only if he has been told to do so. . . . In a word, he should teach his soul, by long habit, never to dream of acting independently, and to become utterly incapable of it. In this way the life of all will be spent in total community. There is no law, nor will there ever be one, which is superior to this, or better and more effective in ensuring salvation and victory. . . . *And in times of peace, and from the earliest childhood on*, should it be fostered—this habit of ruling others, and of being ruled by others. And every trace of anarchy should be utterly eradicated from *all the life of all the men*, and even of the wild beasts which are subject to men.⁹

Platonic reason actually draws us to the problematic theological core of orthodox Christianity. With the hierarchy of society and the sovereignty of the philosopher-kings, the notion of an elect class—propagated since the time of Paul—became a driving force for scores of theologians who proclaimed a form of Christianity that implicitly used Platonic thought to provide a theological justification for claims that God had preordained certain people to govern the affairs, lives, and bodies of others. Chief among these theologians was John Calvin, who made use of Platonic reason to create a doctrine of election. Commonly referred to as the doctrine of predestination, Calvinist orthodoxy sought to articulate the method by which the “elect” were “eternally adopted” as “sons of God.” In Calvin’s own words, “God’s eternal decree, by which he compacted with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others.”¹⁰ Such systematic theology and Calvinist orthodoxy gave way to the theological foundation and assertions that deemed Black people as cursed (“The Hamitic Curse”) and saw little irony in the fact that the first British ship that carried enslaved Africans as chattel across the Atlantic was nicknamed “The Good Jesus.” Platonized hierarchy is intertwined in Christianity to such a degree that many deem them as synonymous. Platonized Christianity is so inherently compatible with institutionalized systemic oppression that some of the worst atrocities known to humanity (such as Native American genocide, the Atlantic slave trade, and the Jewish Holocaust) have not only been deemed rational but also justified as preordained and carried out in accordance with the will of God by God’s very elect themselves.

The culmination and most comprehensive impact of Plato’s principles is Platonized Christianity, seen today in the vestiges of Calvinist orthodoxy. Taking Plato’s cue that we search for the good, Calvin argues that we are incapable of apprehending the good if left to our own impulsive and divisive devices; our only hope of salvation (from ourselves or by God) is to be found in the power of the sovereign. God’s sovereignty is the good and determines the will. There is no other power of salvation. But immediately, the philosophical or theological question arises: If living the good life or seeking the power of salvation is only

possible by the power of the sovereign and is independent in any respect from human free will, how is it then that some people are saved and others are not? The answer to this question is found in the decree of election: the adjudicating divine principle that a person's moral worth is determined by one's ability to reason and thus to rule. Thus the elect in this sense are those who live apathetic lives, refusing to concern themselves with the matters of the world.

The Pretense of Enlightenment

Plato's most famous passage, the Allegory of the Cave, provides an effective snapshot of the role that human knowledge (reason) plays in framing and understanding both reality and the human condition. In it, Socrates describes a big dark cave, shrouded in darkness and hidden from the world. Inside it, people stand next to each other with their backs to the exit and their necks, limbs, and feet bound so that none can see either each other or a way out. Shadows are cast by a fire behind their backs, and echoes of voices can be heard resounding through the cave. All they can see on the wall facing them are projected reflections, images, and shadows of people walking back and forth while talking and transporting things on their heads. The only things these prisoners ever perceive or experience throughout their subterranean existence are these shadows and echoes: this alone is their perceived "reality." If a prisoner should somehow become free from his chains, he would initially find himself entirely confounded as a result of being held entirely hostage by the darkness of the cave. Upon exiting the cave, he would at first be blinded by the light and fearful for his freedom. Upon returning to the cave, he would once again be blinded by its darkness. The outside reality that he experienced would be unintelligible and impossible to share with the other prisoners, whose knowledge and range of experience extended no further than the reality of the shadows and the echoes of the cave. The moral of the Allegory of the Cave is that the mind and ability of humans to reason are trapped in their bodies. Save for those few elected to be enlightened, most people are equally imprisoned and incapable of discerning their real selves, their own reality, and the realities of others. In other words, for most people the experience of reality is nothing more than projected images and echoes of reality that resound in their minds.

The Allegory of the Cave is a crystallization of everything that Platonic philosophy represents. It is familiar to nearly all who count themselves among the educated, general public, and it is virtually impossible to understand the discourse of the Enlightenment without it. This allegory has also served as the prevailing narrative of Eurocentric, White cultural ideology, as well as the means through which Platonized Christianity gives birth to the religious racism via Eurocentric heteropatriarchal normativity.

However much Plato's writings are considered to be preracist in the modern sense of that term, they were still elitist and eventually pressed into the service of the modern forms of racism that the Enlightenment philosophies spawned and fostered. As two prime examples, Cartesian thought (*Cogito ergo sum*, "I

think, therefore I am”) and Kantian thought (*Sapere aude*, “Dare to know”) were philosophical projects that not only were complicit in the dehumanization of African peoples, but also disposed pre-Enlightenment Platonic thought into an organized, comprehensive, and classified system of Western knowledge that continues to be influential to the present day. Chief among the champions of its Americanized version was Thomas Jefferson, who clearly wielded both his pen and power in the dissemination of Enlightenment discourse and the rationalization of religious racism. Many of our contemporary practices and perspectives regarding criminalization, enslavement, impoverishment, eroticization, demonization, and second-class citizenship of African Americans are heavily dependent on Jeffersonian thought based on Platonic and Enlightenment perspectives of reason. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson shares his views on African Americans:

We will consider [Blacks] here, on the same stage with the whites, and where the facts are not apocryphal on which a judgment is to be formed. It will be right to make great allowances for the difference of condition, of education, of conversation, of the sphere in which they move. . . . Most of them indeed have been confined to tillage, to their own homes, and their own society: yet many have been so situated, that they might have availed themselves of the conversation of their masters. . . . In general, their existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection. . . . Comparing them by their faculties of memory, reason, and imagination, it appears to me that in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior. . . . Their love is ardent, but it kindles the senses only, not the imagination. . . . Though for a century and a half we have had under our eyes the races of black and of red men, they have never yet been viewed by us as subjects of natural history. I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the whites.¹¹

As if giving an eighteenth-century rendition of Plato’s fifth-century-BCE myth, Jefferson’s republic is the United States, and his allegory alludes to the systematic chattel enslavement of African Americans. He supports that all people (Blacks and Whites) are created by God; yet simply because of conditions or unforeseen circumstances, those who are enlightened and freed from the same bondage as other human beings are deservedly masters of reason. If they should, perhaps, be willing to facilitate the cultivation of their lesser counterparts, they would ultimately be unable to do so due to their counterparts’ lack of reason, and thus inferior state. This resounds with Kelly Brown Douglas: “The underlying assumption is that white people are the quintessence of rationality.”¹² Consequently, twenty-first-century politics, ethics, metaphysics, rhetoric, the art of reasoning, and the division of the social sciences are all heavily dependent on this line of reasoning made possible via Platonic thought. Even more, Plato’s philosophy becomes the impetus and thesis not only of scientific racism but also of the racist ideologies that limit the social welfare, educational opportunity, and equal rights of people of color who are subject and held hostage to the Enlightenment

forms of government, which dictate the legislative, judicial, and administrative functions of their private and public life.

The Problem of Embodiment

The fact that Plato never admitted the category of slavery into his Theory of the Soul or his model state (which he acknowledged existed in his day) itself proves that much of his moral reasoning is founded upon the invalidation of other epistemologies or functional wisdom. According to his reasoning, “We have different natural aptitudes, which fit us for different jobs,”¹³ and this too, in Plato’s ideal republic, had to find its damaging and dualistic end. It only served to reason that the ideal form of the philosopher-king and enlightened individual also be examined.

In our final analysis, Platonism is most damaging in terms of how it deals with the materiality of the body. While the metaphors of the philosopher-king as the elect or the enlightened master of the races are powerful and pretentious, it is in the relationship between God and the world that Platonism lends its final blow by denigrating not only matter and the senses but also the body. In so doing, Platonism provides no notion for communion with God through the embodiment of humankind, especially as it relates to women and people and color.

Taken as a whole: the Theory of the Soul relegates both the lowest class of society and the most depraved part of humanity to the realm of sensory perception, which lends itself to hypersexuality and gluttony (to name only two of its vices); the Theory of Forms claims that the existence of soul within the body renders it tainted by the “nonsensible” world of forms; and the Theory of Dualism mandates that the mundane, material world of matter is inferior and should be dominated by the rational capacity of the mind. The culmination of this rational equation (as we can readily see with the Elect and the Enlightened) is that a certain class of people are marked by the bodies they inhabit and are subject to the whims of their senses. As such, they are unable to be entrusted or endowed with the power of reason.

Among the many subsequent understandings of Neoplatonic thought, Augustine’s construction of sexuality is first and foremost. In the course of Western, European history, a blend of Greek and Christian hierarchical and patriarchal concepts fostered a pattern of ideas, expectations, and institutions that were available to the church during the Middle Ages. Augustine of Hippo adapted Plato’s reasoning about the good and the soul into a Christian legacy of control that views sexuality specifically as a problem. When coupled with Judeo-Christian understandings of the fall (Gen. 3), Plato’s reasoning suggests not merely that the body must obey the soul, but also that the fall itself represents the impulsive power of lust leading to the soul’s loss of control over the body. The result is humanity’s sin against and separation from God. In his Platonized reasoning, Augustine also argues that there is an essential human sexual nature that includes two sexes, male and female, and two genders, masculine and feminine: in each set

the two features correspond to and are opposite to each other. Sex is an undisciplined result of a body overtaking its soul—a powerful force that drives men more than it does women, yet one nonetheless caused by women. Since the mind should control the body, sexual activity should be controlled as well.

The man/woman hierarchy, therefore, is reflective and synonymous to the soul/body relation. Interrelated patterns of sexism follow suit, for as kings and warriors, men are superior and must guard both their bodies and those of women who are subject to a “strict watch.” When men rape women, it is because women have used their bodies to ensnare the soul of men. As a result, misogyny is rational and heterosexism is a virtue. Likewise, sexual activity should be severely restricted for women of the same social and economic class as the men whose sexual needs are so powerful and demanding, but it is nonetheless allowed and encouraged for men with “lower-class” women (women outside the circle of dominant-class men).

Taken one step further, when Neoplatonized constructions of sexuality find a common cause with expressions of religious racism, Platonized Christianity portends a catastrophic crisis for people of color. In the American scene, Blacks serve as the baseline for how this unfortunate partnership plays out. In effect, the genocide, raping, lynching, forced sterilization, medical butchering, state-sanctioned violence, police brutality, and human trafficking of Black, Latino/a, Asian, and Native bodies all serve as the sacrificial offerings of White racists, which both fulfill their mimetic desires to absolve their guilt, shame, and existential angst, and also uphold the sanctification and enactment of their flawed reasoning. The price for restoring order is often the price of colored flesh, and the rationale for their bodies as sacrifice becomes a religious rite. One need look no further than to the numerous accounts in U.S. history when the lynching of Black bodies was seen as a religiously sanctioned ritual enacted by White Christians, sometimes after Sunday services and during the course of family picnics:

2,000 people watched as [Sam] Hose was burned to death. But “before the torch was applied to the pyre, the Negro was deprived of his ears, fingers and other portions of his body with surprising fortitude. Before the body was cool, it was cut to pieces, the bones were crushed into small bits and even the tree upon which the wretch met his fate was torn up and disposed of as souvenirs. The Negro’s heart was cut in several pieces, as was also his liver. Those unable to obtain the ghastly relics directly, paid more fortunate possessors extravagant sums for them.” Ritual remains were often displayed, . . . turned into jewelry worn with pride, like a family heirloom, . . . as if to “signify” on the threat of blacks’ presence and to pronounce white control over the enemy within.¹⁴

With Plato as the heir apparent of Socrates, mentor to Aristotle, prime mover to Augustine, role model to Calvin, and progenitor of Enlightenment—it is clear for all to see what one man hath wrought. Plato’s ethics and theories for reason may have unified intellectual concepts, but they also created a greater, more-tragic, unfathomable distancing between human beings. His contribution to

how modern society grapples with the ethical and philosophical realities of the world looms large. The great, ongoing challenge now is to reconcile that which Plato has torn asunder.

Notes

1. Alfred Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: MacMillan Press, 1929), 63.
2. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Plato; or, The Philosopher," in *Representative Men: Seven Lectures*, with text established by Douglas Emory Wilson (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 21.
3. Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), 412.
4. Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945; repr., New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007), 84.
5. Howard Alexander Slatte, *Plato's Dialogues and Ethics* (New York: University Press of America, 2000), 88.
6. Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vols. 1–2 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1945).
7. Kelly Brown Douglas, *What's Faith Got to Do With It? Black Bodies / Christian Souls* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 71–103.
8. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Philadelphia: Kay & Troutman, 1847), 456.
9. Plato, *Laws*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000), emphasis added.
10. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Library of Christian Classics edition), 3.21.5.
11. Thomas Jefferson, "On the Differences between the Races," in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London: J. Stockdale, 1787), Query 14.
12. Douglas, *What's Faith Got to Do With It?* 117.
13. Plato, *The Republic* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003), 2.2.57.
14. The lynching of Sam Hose in 1899 as cited in Anthony Pinn, *Terror and Triumph: The Nature of Black Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 74.