

# The Polymorphism of Necro-Being: Examining Racism and Ableism through the Writings of Leonard Harris

*Andrea J. Pitts*

**ABSTRACT:** In this paper, I examine the writings of African American philosopher Leonard Harris as an author who has been read primarily for his contributions to the study of Africana philosophy, U.S. pragmatism, and moral philosophy. Despite contributions to bioethics and reflections on systemic racism within the context of institutional medical settings, Harris's work has yet to be read in terms of its relevance for disability critique. This paper demonstrates how Harris's writings may be read as contributing to the field of philosophy of disability by arguing that his concept of "necro-being" helps reveal the mutually reinforcing relationships between race, disability, gender, and class. To carry this out, I consider core themes from his work such as metaphilosophy, health, and autonomy to show the relevance of his writings for philosophy of disability, and, in a parallel manner, the importance of disability critique for expanding his accounts of oppression and racism.

**KEYWORDS:** Leonard Harris; African American philosophy; disability justice; racism; oppression

In the introduction to the 2017 special issue of *African American Review* on "Blackness and Disability," guest editor Theri A. Pickens notes the difficulties of theorizing Blackness and disability together (95). Pickens writes that ableist tropes can tend to delimit a reader's recognition of disability within narratives about Black experience and Black life. In addition, she writes "the appearance of disability may also escape some readers because 'disability' can surface or disappear with language or within cultural structures that require familiarity with both to un/mark them as disability" (95). Along with this claim regarding the need for familiarity within the cultural or linguistic structures that may serve to mark or unmark the shared resonances of

Blackness and disability, Pickens also points to the complexity of the historiographic task ahead of theorists within Black disability studies. Namely, many such authors and activists that work and “sometimes liv[e] at this intersection labor toward one end, among others: to ensure that neither category insists on the other’s erasure” (95). This labor against erasure likewise supports another point made by Pickens in a 2018 interview with Mark Anthony Neal about the significance of this special issue for *African American Review*, a special issue marking the journal’s 50th anniversary. Pickens states in response to Neal’s question about the need for addressing Blackness and disability together, “the silence around disability belies the actual presence of disability” within Black life and experience (2018). In this same vein, the groundbreaking work of Christopher M. Bell underscores the ways in which disability among African American communities is often “relegated to the margins,” and Bell notes how historians and critical race theorists rarely refer to people like Harriet Tubman, Emmett Till, and James Byrd as disabled, despite the historical record of disabilities present within their archives (2011, 3).

Both Bell and Pickens also critique the whiteness of disability studies, and its ongoing scholarly proliferation that has continued to omit issues of race and ethnicity (Bell 2006; Pickens 2017). Bell’s insights include a layer of analysis regarding the political stakes of disability critique. He writes that the ablest and white dimensions that structure a great deal of critical race theory and disability studies support a “body politic” that maintains the separation between Blackness and disability. The work of scholars and activists examining the relationships between race and disability, in Bell’s words, “requires a willingness to deconstruct the systems that would keep those bodies in separate spheres . . . [and to uncover] the misrepresentations of black, disabled bodies and the missed opportunities to think about how those bodies transform(ed) systems and culture” (2011, 3–4). Following this insight, and Pickens’s prescient reminder that “the silence around disability belies the actual presence of disability,” this paper turns to the writings of Leonard Harris, the prolific African American philosopher and founder of “philosophy born of struggle,” an approach that engages struggle as a frame for the historiographical and metaphilosophical stakes of the study of philosophy (Harris 2020). Harris’s approach, put briefly, rejects the claim that philosophy begins with “souls seeking release from their earthly corporeal existence,” as Lee McBride, compiler of Harris’s work, remarks (McBride 2020, 1). Rather, philosophy born of struggle “begins in the full range of human experiences (including genocide, slavery, exploitation, misery, degradation, cognitive dissonance, cynicism, etc.)” (McBride 2020, 1). This starting point, as Harris’s work demonstrates, shifts the terms of philosophical study and its relevance to lived experience and struggles from conditions of oppression. While significant in its own right, in this paper, I argue that Harris’s writings on philosophy, oppression, and agency offer rich sources through which to theorize the relationship between dis-

ability and race. Moreover, when read through the terms of disability justice critique, I argue that Harris's work is likewise well positioned, as Bell suggests, "to deconstruct the systems that would keep those bodies in separate spheres" (Bell 2011, 3–4).

To carry out this analysis, I approach his work on core concepts such as metaphilosophy, oppression, health, and autonomy to show the relevance of his writings for philosophy of disability, and the importance of disability critique for expanding his account of racism. I thus propose, through this reading, that not only does Harris's work potentially contribute to the field of philosophy of disability, but that his work also shifts the metaphilosophical terms of "philosophy" itself, thereby suggesting an approach that resonates with contemporary disability justice scholarship and activism, and the politicized stakes for disrupting both ableist and white sites of investment and comfort within critical philosophy of race and disability studies. Accordingly, I turn specifically to Harris as an author who has been read primarily for his contributions to the study of African American philosophy, U.S. pragmatism, moral philosophy, and to the re-establishment and interpretation of the writings of Alain Locke. Throughout his career, Harris has also contributed to the field of bioethics, participating, for example, in groundbreaking works detailing poignant facets of African American bioethics (Flack and Pellegrino 1992; Dula and Goering 1994). In addition, he has authored a memoir detailing his relationship with his daughter during her experience with breast cancer and how she, he, and their family navigated the medical interventions she endured (Harris and Grant 2005). In that memoir, he also describes his own experiences with a congenital health condition and the medical interventions he endured as a child and their impact on his understanding of himself (Harris and Grant 2005, 5). However, despite these contributions to philosophy, his work has yet to be read in terms of its relevance for disability critique. In this vein, this paper seeks to demonstrate how Harris's writings, and, in particular his account of the "polymorphic" character of systemic oppression, may be read as contributing to contemporary philosophy of disability and disability justice activist discourses. I thereby read Harris's self-described "actuarial account" of oppression, or "necro-being," as adding several important metaphilosophical layers to the ongoing work of disability studies scholars and disability justice activists who are examining the relationships between race and disability within differing institutional, historical, and existential contexts. Such an actuarial account of oppression rejects claims of individualizing *logics* of differing oppressions, and opts to focus instead on the cumulative effects of differing forms of oppression, including specifically, their manifestations through deathly outcomes and the diminishment of life for those who are impacted by them. Furthermore, as I highlight through Harris's metaphilosophy below, Harris's framing of the ongoing struggle against such interrelated oppressions aptly characterizes, and thereby philosophically grounds, the work of contemporary disability justice activism today.

## A Philosophy of Struggle

It is no small task to outline Harris's metaphilosophy. Scholars of his work such as Lee McBride and Jacoby A. Carter have dedicated a journal symposium (McBride 2013), a monograph (McBride 2021), portions of a scholarly reader (McBride 2020), an edited volume (Carter and Scriven, forthcoming), and numerous articles attempting to work out the normative contours, metaphysical commitments, and praxiological conditions of his metaphilosophy (among other facets of the author's work). Moreover, Harris is a groundbreaking essayist, editor, intellectual biographer, and educator, but he has not published a monograph solely dedicated to his metaphilosophy. Rather, we find his metaphilosophy developed throughout his writings and editorial labor, and modeled through his professional career. In light of these facets of his oeuvre, providing a full account of Harris's metaphilosophy would require more space than we have here, and accordingly, I choose several of his essays that outline notable facets of his metaphilosophy, and will leave a detailed study of this aspect of his work for another time. For our purposes here, it is important to frame Harris's metaphilosophy in relation to a metaphilosophical account offered within philosophy of disability to find their points of engagement and mutual support, or their potential divergences and constructive frictions. To do this, in the remainder of this section, I focus primarily on Harris's essays "What, then, is 'Philosophy Born of Struggle'?" (2020) and "Insurrectionist Ethics" (2002), as well as a metaphilosophical framing of philosophy of disability by Shelley Tremain (2018; 2017), a white disabled feminist philosopher who has profoundly shaped the field of philosophy of disability for over the last three decades. This analysis, and my focus on Tremain's work in this first section, is not meant to preclude other authors and activists from contributing to the metaphilosophical stakes of philosophy of disability, nor to discount the rich metaphilosophical elements of Harris's other writings. As I discuss below, a number of disability theorists and activists are relevantly connected to the core themes of Harris's oeuvre. Rather, my aim in this preliminary discussion of metaphilosophy is to focus carefully on a few select writings to make a strong case for Harris's "philosophy of struggle" as being committed to and working toward a philosophy of disability that embraces connections between disability, race, and gender within its analytic purview. Given Tremain's immense contributions to metaphilosophical questions regarding the philosophy of disability, I have chosen to focus briefly on her work. As I demonstrate below, however, Harris's metaphilosophical views align well with a great deal of contemporary scholarship on the relationship between race and disability, including contemporary disability justice activism. Accordingly, such a metaphilosophical emphasis in this first section aims to underscore the philosophical relevance of struggles against multiple oppressions, or as Harris describes it,

against “necro-being,” a concept that I explore directly in the third section of the paper.

Beginning with Tremain’s work, we find that her framing of philosophy of disability (e.g., 2017; 2018) critiques the “queen of the sciences” view of philosophy (2018, 32). That is, she rejects the view that specific “core” subfields of philosophy such as “metaphysics, ethics, logic, epistemology, and philosophy of language” consist of “timeless, disinterested, and universal” questions and concerns that thereby provide the foundations for all other forms of discourse and inquiry (2018, 32). Within this approach to philosophy-as-foundational, she notes, other subfields like philosophy of disability, philosophy of race, and feminist philosophy are often considered “(mere) applications and contingent derivatives of these fundamental subfields” (2018, 32). Following Michel Foucault, Tremain has developed throughout her writings a strong case for the historical and cultural contingency of philosophy. Specifically, in *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability* (2017), she develops a sustained analysis of the “apparatus of disability” as a means to historicize terms such as “impairment,” “function,” and “normality”/“abnormality.” Within this analytic focus, Tremain also offers sustained critiques of the institutions of professional philosophy in the United States and Canada, noting that the demographics of philosophy have largely shaped its values and limitations. Tremain points to the ableism and whiteness of both the content and the demographics of professional philosophy in the United States and Canada, and seeks to undermine those trajectories via a twofold strategy. Through one approach, she seeks to challenge the naturalization of impairment, and, through another approach, she aims to critique metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics—subfields that believe themselves to be unaffected by the historical and cultural force relations that constitute the apparatus of disability. Both spheres of analysis thus require a turn to genealogical precursors and “events” within the history of philosophy, feminist theory, Western medicine, and so on. Thus, it is important to demonstrate the concepts, tools, institutions, habits, and discourses that effectively denaturalize disability as a “mere” applied subfield in philosophy.

Tremain’s work seeks to preserve a sharp focus on the institutional conditions of professional philosophy and those of disabled people who are impacted within and by this profession, yet, she likewise seeks to undermine any pregiven or naturalized origins for how these conditions came to be. It is here where we can note a preliminary connection with the metaphilosophical work of Harris. Notably, while Harris does share in Tremain’s methodological framing through Foucault in a few essays (1997; 2018), his writings on philosophy born of struggle largely build from within Black diasporic and African traditions, including, as I detail in section III, the work of Alain Locke. Namely, in the early 1980s, Harris began to outline what he titled “Philosophy Born of Struggle” in the first anthology of its kind to collect

and highlight the philosophical writings of African American writers. He begins the introduction to that groundbreaking 1983 collection with the following words:

Philosophic texts, if a product of social groups doggedly fighting to survive, are texts born of struggle. They must cut through the jungle of oppressive deeds to the accompanying labyrinth of words masking the nature of the deeds. Fraught with controversial intuitions that reflect the coming accepted beliefs of the New World, such texts challenge prevailing ways of viewing the world. (Harris 1983, xviii)

This initial offering of the anthology begins with the “dogged fight” of oppressed social groups for survival, rather than the view of philosophy as addressing timeless perennial questions. Harris continues with this point by stating “Philosophies are products endemically associated with some time, place, and social group” (1983, xxi). Alongside this contextualist view of philosophical discourse, Harris likewise critiques the totalizing tendencies of institutions of philosophy. He writes: “Independent of a particular African-American’s philosophy, the preconditions for admission to American institutions of higher education as students or teachers were battles for opportunity fought by militants of various persuasions” (1983, xviii). He continues by noting the work of W.E.B. Du Bois an author who critiqued the “speculative character” of William James. Harris also lists the efforts by Broadus N. Butler to become an educator in philosophy in the 1950s, and the cancellation of Angela Davis’s teaching contracts in philosophy by the University of California in the late 1960s due to her associations with the Communist Party. Harris states in response to these forms of struggle by African Americans within institutional philosophy, “If the content of American philosophy has not been sufficiently repugnant, the instructors and institutions have. The profession of philosophy, however, has hardly been the sole source of philosophic texts” (1983, xviii). Here, Harris directs his readers to both the exclusionary and derogatory institutional practices of professional philosophy for African Americans, and to the possibility for locating the metaphilosophical character of philosophy outside such institutions.

Pointing beyond the institution of philosophy, Harris’s metaphilosophy finds its sources for philosophical questions within the social practices of human valuation and meaning-making. He writes in a 2020 piece dedicated to clarifying his account of philosophy born of struggle, “The very structure of philosophy should provide tools, poetry, imagery, evidential reasoning, and openness about its deep structural values and norms” (15). Rather than to contemplate abstractly on the constituent elements of philosophy (e.g. specific subfields such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, etc.), Harris suggests that the task of metaphilosophy is to “enter into philosophy, to tarry in it, to conduct ourselves in its manner, that is to ‘philosophize’”

(2020, 14). With this, rather than a descriptive task, metaphilosophy is engaging the praxis of doing philosophy, including the creative and inherently normative enterprise of valuation and meaning-making.

Pairing this view of the praxis of philosophy with claims that likewise echo Tremain's emphasis on the historical and relativistic character of philosophy, Harris states that "[p]rovincialism and difference are inescapable; a pluriverse" (2020, 14). In this, there are no pre-given values or necessary mechanisms for historical change. However, the creation of human relations, social conditions, and our potential futures together are within a social and praxiological purview. He thus writes:

The universe is purposeless, and hooves are no better than feet, but undue misery is not just a consequence of evolution and maladaptation, Malthusian necessity, class conflicts, or limitations and benefits made possible by geographic conditions but also malevolent intentions and structures, desires, objectives, social group conflict, institutions, identities, communities, and misguided values. (2020, 20)

Accordingly, as Tremain does with a concept like impairment, Harris critiques naturalized, pre-given sets of meaning or value. A view that he develops explicitly through the writings of Alain Locke, when he quotes Locke's 1918 dissertation: "There is nothing in the universe that consists of virtues, principles, ideas, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs as material features that themselves reproduce themselves" (Harris 2020, 21; Locke 1918). As we explore further in section III, Locke's work itself was dedicated to clarifying an account of value—and cultural relativism, and to critiquing conceptions of the supposed superiority or inferiority of differing social and cultural groups (Carter 2012).

Alongside this framing of the metaphilosophical practice of understanding the creative, agential features of philosophizing, Harris likewise develops a sustained critique of how institutional philosophy in the United States has consistently failed to understand and theorize its own role in the maintenance and perpetuation of systemic racism. With this, he develops an avowedly normative stance in "Insurrectionist Ethics: Advocacy, Moral Psychology, and Pragmatism" (2002) that any philosophy that undercounts its own role in advocacy—"that is, representing, promoting, and defending morally just causes"—has systematically failed on metaphilosophical terms. More specifically, he writes:

A philosophy that offers moral intuitions, reasoning strategies, motivations, and examples of just moral actions but falls short of requiring that we have a moral duty to support or engage in slave insurrections is defective. (2020, 175)

Notably, the term “defective” within disability studies has been carefully critiqued and historicized by authors such as Tremain (2017), Eli Clare (2017) and Douglas C. Bayton (2016), and Harris’s use here does suggest such functionalist language that operates within ableism, although elsewhere he explicitly questions functionalist arguments within historiography and theories of agency (1999; 2002; 2018; 2020 [1992]). In light of this possibility for reiterating ableism through this metaphilosophical observation, we can also glean that the “fault” or “defect” named in this account is based on the explicit rejection of one’s own moral accountability within systems of racialization and racism. It is important to note that this is not the only instance in which the language chosen by Harris suggests ableist tropes, however, in the service of understanding how disability operates in his writings and following Pickens’s prescient claim that “‘disability’ can surface or disappear with language or within cultural structures that require familiarity with both to un/mark them as disability,” I propose here that we should continue to read his work in the spirit of disability critique to understand how disability is marked or not within his writings. Such an interpretive approach, as I demonstrate in the sections below, offer philosophical resources for theorizing race and disability together that I believe will be relevant for philosophers of disability.

With respect to an “insurrectionist ethics,” Harris outlines the work of writers such as Davis Walker, Maria W. Stewart, Henry David Thoreau, and Lydia Child as exemplars of this form of philosophizing. That is, each of these authors, who Harris carefully chooses to prioritize over the often-canonical figures within Anglo-American philosophy such as William James and Charles S. Peirce, in Harris’s words, “practiced insurrectionist morality” (2020, 176). They each fought, in differing ways, for an end to racial slavery and racial segregation (2020, 176). They also made the abolition of slavery a cornerstone of their philosophical theorizing and contributions to issues such as women’s suffrage, democracy, freedom, and state authority. In this manner, Harris challenges moral and political philosophers to assume accountability for their choice to overlook the moral depravity of racial slavery, and the moral demand to end slavery and its afterlives.<sup>1</sup> Harris’s call to U.S. pragmatists in this paper is also an effort to rewrite the history of philosophy through an emphasis on the conditions of struggle of those who faced systemic oppression and dedicated their writings and actions to end such oppression. As such, this normative framing of pragmatism links Harris’s readers to his metaphilosophy of “philosophy born of struggle,” or as he also states, “philosophy as, and sourced by, strife, tenaciousness, [and] organisms striving” (2020, 20).

Accordingly, given these metaphilosophical demands, we can consider his work not simply in relation to philosophers of disability like Tremain, who through her framing of the apparatus of disability condemns the white supremacist and settler colonial aspirations of systemic ableism (2017, 68–71), but also within a broader



survey of disability studies in which the normative question of condemning racism, white supremacy, settler colonialism, and the multiplicity of oppression become central concerns. Namely, as Bell noted succinctly in “Introducing White Disability Studies: A Modest Proposal” (2006), many conferences, publications, and public discourse about disability at the time of his writing (and thereafter) seemed quite content to theorize disability without questioning its use of whiteness as the norm. His piece is a sharp criticism of the absence of critiques of whiteness, the failure to theorize racism and ableism together within disability studies, and also the tendency of white discourses of disability to continue on *without* addressing race, ethnicity, liminality, hybridity, or the overwhelming presence of resources within the writings of African American theorists like Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, and Alex Haley. That is, the ability for white disability studies to have developed and continued without addressing race and ethnicity is a core critique of the discipline itself. As such, Bell, as Harris does in philosophy, points to the enduring whiteness of academic disciplines, and each author makes methodological interventions that seek to show how each discipline has failed to do the important work of addressing the immense contributions from within Black diasporic traditions.

In this regard, Nirmala Erevelles has pointed out that analogical accounts that treat disability “like” race, or, within critical race studies, accounts that treat race “like” disability, likewise fail “to engage the complex ways in which race and disability are imbricated in the construction of the pathological Other” (2015). Erevelles’s work urges readers to consider the “historical contexts and structural conditions within which the identity categories of race and disability intersect” (2015), and to consider how these concepts support one another. For example, Erevelles (2014) and other scholars within Dis/ability Critical Race Studies, or “DisCrit” demonstrate that the school-to-prison pipeline and other segregationist practices within public education in the United States, demonstrate the mutually reinforcing relationships between race, disability, gender, and class.<sup>2</sup> This methodological insight that Erevelles locates within the writings of David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder (2003) on the “Eugenic Atlantic,” Hortense Spillers’s writings on the brutality and violence of the transatlantic slave trade (1987), and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson’s critique of the public spectacle of Black and Indigenous bodies in 19th-century “freak” shows (1997), also meet the core metaphilosophical standard of Harris’s insurrectionist ethics. That is, unlike white disability studies, Erevelles, Tremain, Mitchell and Snyder, Spillers, and Garland-Thomson condemn the moral wrongness of slavery within their accounts of disability. Within this framing, Harris’s work, when read through disability studies scholars like Erevelles, Bell, and Tremain show the shared methodological commitments to historicize and contextualize systems of oppression, and the differing forms of identification with race and disability that may emerge in light of these multiplicitous historical conditions. For example, both racialization and disability have

been used in various ways throughout history to mark societal inferiority and expendability. Such forms of denigration may thereby result in material conditions for Black and other racialized peoples that would influence their decisions *not* to seek political mobilization through identifications with the terms of disability discourses. Such claims, as I hope to demonstrate below, suggest that patterns of oppression are themselves multiplicitous, multifaceted, and “impure,” to borrow a phrase from another theorist of multiplicity, María Lugones (2003), and this insight is one likewise found within Harris’s framings of agency and health, and his account of oppression as necro-being, which we engage in the following sections.

### Critiquing Autonomy and Health

Within Harris’s metaphilosophical writings we already begin to locate his multiplicitous conception of agency and selfhood. That is, he writes that the “unity theory of virtue is wrong as well as the unity theory of the self” and “[t]here are no unified ‘selves’ that are simple cognitive machines, possessed of a singular consciousness” (2020, 20–21). By “unity theory of virtue,” Harris points to the view that

virtues such as piety or courage is a good and if genuinely possessed by an individual that virtue pervades their being and influences in appropriate ways relevant attitudes of the agent. . . . There are no such beings. (2020, 20)

Adding to his rejection of this view and his rejection of a unified theory of selfhood, Harris notes that “racists, murderers, executioners, police, and assassins . . . can be very kind to their neighbors in the morning, burn Jews and Communists or use machetes and hack to death pregnant Tutsi women in the evening, and respect their wives and husbands at night” (2020, 21). Not shying away from the grotesque violence of anti-Semitism, capitalism, racism, and ethnic cleansing, Harris suggests a theory of agency that requires *multiplicitous* framings of action, virtue, and accountability.

More toward this end, Harris’s contributions to bioethics likewise thread out these important insights. Most directly, in a 1992 piece titled “Autonomy Under Duress” Harris begins to work through both this multiplicitous framing of moral agency, and its implication for health discourses and studies of embodiment—both of which bring his work into more direct dialogue with disability critique. Harris begins by questioning the value and meaning of the term “health.” He raises questions such as “What is the nature of health or wellbeing from an African American perspective?” and “What are the roles of healers and patients in African and African American cultures?” (2020 [1992], 99). He then rehearses a few accounts, including the following: health in terms of the mechanistic materialism of Thomas Hobbes, neurological functionalist views of the body, Kantian transcendental forms of conti-

nunity between the body and reason, absolute idealist conceptions of “a congruence of a self-identified consciousness operating in an idealized domain,” pragmatist views of health as a relationship between organism-environment interaction, teleological determinist views like that of Edward W. Blyden wherein racial kinds live in accordance with their natures, and lastly Akan views of “health in terms of a peaceful embodied spirit” (2020, 99). This incredibly dense list of views of health, he remarks, suggests that the condition of “health” depends on a metaphysical framing of the human being. That is, “the existence of healthy persons is the instantiation of the ontological nature of humans as mediated by, or in congruence with, (on these accounts), their metaphysical or transcendental essence” (2020, 100). Interestingly, Harris, in the next paragraph, shifts to a conception of health from the World Health Organization, a view, he notes, that eschews any talk of metaphysical or transcendental essences. His point here is that medical institutions, like the philosophical accounts listed above, likewise rely on metaphysical conceptions of health, including contentious questions arising within accounts of personhood. He suggests that discussions of personhood within medical institutions can thereby shift to questions of autonomy and the relationships between medical providers and patients as a means of responding to an underlying metaphysical framework of health.

Noting the contingency of such framings of health and personhood, Harris then introduces one of his central claims of the essay: that “autonomy does not escape entrapment in a web of meaning” (2020, 100). The relevant shift here in his introduction, from health to autonomy, points to a careful methodological move in this piece. Namely, Harris’s discussion of autonomy begins by pointing to the plurality of ontological views of health and human wellbeing that can frame medical practice. While he appears to settle on that of the WHO and bioethical discourses of autonomy (citing bioethicists and moral theorists of autonomy such as Tristram Engelhardt Jr, Daniel Callahan, Gerald Dworkin, Bruce Miller, James Childress, John Rawls, and Robert Nozick), his critique of autonomy is itself focused on the contextual and historically-dependent nature of the concept of autonomy (2020, 111–12). He does not, and admittedly so, develop a conception of health in the course of the essay, although he does define the “body as socially enwebbed,” which is a second central claim in the essay. Moreover, Harris leverages that the “episteme on which the health care system grounds itself” needs to be challenged, and that African American critiques of health care offer critical directions from which to engage in such a shift. With this, Harris returns to his initial framing of health in terms of an ontological view of the human being. He states, “What health is should be considered as an extension of a conception of the subject, that is how the subject’s being is to be perceived” (2020, 108). Yet, he notes that African Americans and other persons dedicated to “ending the immiseration of Blacks” shape his framing and contextualism of health and the relative worth of a concept like autonomy. Citing here, in a footnote, the work of

both Alain Locke and Michel Foucault, Harris refers to authors that each critique the existence of pre-given qualities, values, meanings, or a species-specific ontology for the human animal. Rather, both Locke and Foucault, in differing ways, historicize human existence, and seek to examine the emergence of values, qualities, and meaning within human existence as a social project. In this, as with Tremain, Harris brings the question of health and autonomy into a sphere of human activity, action, and meaning-making.

When read in light of disability critique, this stance is quite significant. Rather than assuming health to be an unqualified good or the body as exempt from meaning-making activities, Harris locates wellbeing within the pluralistic social and historical conditions of human beings. This view joins those of decolonial theorists like Frantz Fanon, who argued in his writings on psychiatry and colonialism against the claim that “[w]hen the discipline considered concerns man’s health, when its very principle is to ease pain, it is clear that no negative reaction can be justified” (1965, 121),<sup>3</sup> and philosophers of disability like Stephen Campbell and Joseph Stramondo who defend the view that wellbeing is a normative term, and not a “purely descriptive or empirical term” (2017, 153). Harris’s critical question, in particular, is whether the assumed values and goals of medical institutions, and the presumption that conceptions of health, wellbeing, and autonomy that circulate within these institutions, are themselves morally neutral or beneficial for African Americans. His answer to this question is a resounding “no.”

That is, Harris begins by addressing the assumed importance of a concept like autonomy within biomedical ethics, taking “autonomy” to refer to “a form of independence and authenticity,” “conditions for its effective expression,” and “reasoning procedures for its appropriate application” (2020, 100). He continues to provide several allegories regarding different atrocities committed against African Americans within the history of U.S. medical institutions and the forms of rationalized justification given for them.<sup>4</sup> In a skillful display of Harris’s core insight mentioned above that “the unity theory of virtue is wrong as well as the unity theory of the self,” he describes a story of “Dr. Dick” who he describes as “a good doctor . . . also a good person,” and “concerned about the welfare of his community,” whose specialization is “castration and abortion” (2020, 101). Shifting from the literary voice of an author of a philosophical treatise (or an academician) to that of a storyteller, Harris displaces the epistemic authority of an assumed objectivist narrative presence within bioethics. That is, he offers a way of pursuing the question of autonomy and health among African Americans through storytelling, a moral pedagogy found among communities across the Black diaspora and the continent of Africa. For example, harkening to the Akan view of health that he mentions at the opening of the essay, the shift to allegory in the essay suggests a method of philosophizing by Ghanaian philosopher, Kwame Gyekye, with whose work Harris was quite familiar (e.g., Har-

ris 2017a; Harris 2014). Namely, Gyekye foregrounds the importance of practice of philosophizing among many African traditions included “philosophical material [as] embedded in proverbs, myths and folktales, folk songs, rituals, beliefs, customs, and traditions of the people, in their art symbols and in their sociopolitical institutions and practices” (1995, 13). Through allegory, Harris details the forms of moral reasoning undertaken by Dr. Dick, including utilitarian considerations, deontological principles of respecting autonomy through informed consent, and principles such as beneficence and non-maleficence. Dr. Dick thus provides a “figurative example,” to use Harris’s phrase, of the process by which a well-meaning and “good doctor” can justify surgically castrating Black men in the U.S. South. Referring to a Black boy subject to this procedure as “George Washington Carver,” Harris also points to historical questions regarding the castration of the now-renowned agricultural scientist. While stories of Carver’s castration arose, in part, due to the high-pitch of his voice as an adult, Linda O. McMurry, an historian of Carver’s life and influence, argues that there is further evidence in Carver’s personal correspondences that support the claim that he may have been castrated as a child while living under conditions of slavery in Missouri (1981, 14). Harris’s allegory thus points to the practice of castration among medical doctors in the United States, a practice linked to white anxieties regarding Black men’s assumed hypersexuality and “super-human” embodiment. While the castration of Black men was common as an extralegal practice among white lynch mobs in the United States for example, the practice was also conducted, in legal settings, by medical doctors as a method to render enslaved servants more “docile” and less threatening, or when carried out as a punishment for crime. For example, the *Macon Daily Telegraph* in 1864 documents how two medical doctors carried out a legal order to castrate an enslaved Black man who was accused of attempting to rape an 11-year-old white girl (Pinar 2001, 245).<sup>5</sup>

When read through the terms of disability critique, Harris’s insight here points to the co-constitutive character of categories of race and disability. Notably, his work resonates with that of Erevelles, who claims in this regard that blackness and disability were mutually co-constructed through markings on the maimed, denigrated, and brutalized bodies of enslaved peoples (2011, 40–41).<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, the construction of ableist sovereignty and bodily norms were, as Erevelles remarks, “[i]nstructed with much mathematical precision, bodily boundaries collapse and collide, stretch and shrink” (2011, 41). With regard to practices of sterilization and castration impacting disabled people, Michelle Jarman (2012) argues that the early 20th century practice of medical castration and eugenic sterilization of white disabled people likely found its justification and naturalization through the “ubiquitous presence of lynching in the public imagination during the period of 1890–1940” (92). Her central claim is that, alongside the racial segregation of mental institutions in the Jim Crow South, there were differences in the discursive practices regarding the surgi-

cal castration and sterilization of cognitively disabled African Americans and white Americans. That is, following the racialized eugenics of the period, no justification needed to be given for these procedures to be performed on Black men in the South (whether marked by disability or not), while medical institutions *did* find the need to rationalize this practice on white boys and men housed within mental institutions during the period (2012, 96). Jarman writes that eugenicists were “preoccupied with preserving the sanctity and strength of the white race,” and this mission drove the practice of surgical castration and sterilization among dis/abled Black men and disabled white men. Jarman traces this joint racialized and ableist view through debates in the late 19th century (prior to its legalization through *Buck v. Bell* in 1927) that sought to justify the surgical castration and sterilization of disabled men of any race. For example, Jarman recounts how one Kansas superintendent for a mental asylum in 1894 was met with public rebuke and removed from his position when information became public that he had castrated forty-four boys within an all-white institution. Yet, she notes, it was eugenicists who came to his defense and supported his eventual reinstatement. Such public outrage and debate, Jarman suggests, would not have surfaced regarding the castration or sterilization of Black men (both disabled and able-bodied) at the time. Moreover, Jarman argues that:

the excesses of lynching—the spectacularization of murders as cultural events, the barbaric mutilation, and communal participation—served a contrastive function to eugenic methods, rendering their purportedly scientific rhetoric and medicalized violence seemingly more benign. (2012, 100)

With this, she notes there was a shift from the extralegal practice of lynching and mutilation of Black men and boys to the initially extralegal practice of surgically castrating white disabled men. Yet, it was the relationships between white doctors and white patients undergoing these procedures within medical institutions that demanded a shift into “the rationality of the law” (2012, 100).

Notably, Harris, in his discussion of this practice and its relationship to conceptions of patient autonomy raises the possibility of the castration of white men. Harris, however, overlooks the practice as it was carried out on disabled white men. He writes:

The possibility, however, of castrating whites did not fit the epistemological figures or background conceptions of subjects, that is castration was obviously not a benefit for whites, obviously no one’s interest, and obviously contrary to their natures, authenticity, traditions, integrity, and codes of honor. The fact that white males were not made eunuchs re-

flected social meanings they were not, as agents, constituted as innately, irreversible, and permanently subordinate persons. (2020, 104)

While not considering disabled white men in this passage, this account does put Harris's work in dialogue with Jarman's regarding the sterilization and castration of white disabled men. While such practices are an historical fact, the medical practice, when committed against white men, was publicly debated among courts of law and medical professionals precisely because it was in tension with the norms of white traditions, integrity, and codes of honor. Harris's account of the construction of agency and subordination relies on social forms of meaning-making and reasoning procedures, like those of physicians who justified the forced castration and sterilization of Black, Indigenous, and disabled people. Namely, the reasoning for this, Harris suggests, is "because their integrity entailed living lives as subordinates . . . a fulfilling life for them was only possible as a happy or contented subordination" (2020, 104). As such, discourses of autonomy, honor, integrity, and so forth are shaped by "intervening background assumptions about personhood, bodily integrity, the moral community, fulfilling lives, and utility" (Harris 2020, 105). For this reason, Harris's shift to the "body as socially enwebbed" and to a methodological focus on the "how the immiserated are treated" within such webs of meaning suggests a framing of oppression that, I argue in the next section, can encompass issues of disability (2020, 107–08).

### **Oppression as Necro-Being**

In light of the resonances with disability critique that I note above, this third section turns directly to Harris's account of oppression as necro-being to show its relevance for philosophers of disability. As some readers may suspect by this point, Harris's account of oppression is not focused solely or predominantly on individuals, but rather on the suffering of social groups. A number of his essays are dedicated to analyzing the formation and meaning of social group cohesion and the oppression of racial groups, in particular, as experienced by Black peoples (e.g., Harris 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2014).

Harris's account of the social ontology of groups is crucial for understanding his conception of oppression. As mentioned earlier, Harris describes himself as influenced by the work of Alain Locke, and Locke too wrote substantively on the formation and meaning of social groups. For example, in a 2017 interview with Azuka Nzegwu in the *Journal on African Philosophy*, Harris responds to a question from the interviewer regarding whether and how people of African descent should be guided or shaped by African-derived values. Harris responds in the following way:

Like the philosopher Alain Locke I believe that African contributions to the worlds' intellectual growth is massive and rarely appreciated. Trying

to foreground those creations and contributions in every arena is a valuable mission; yet, racial exceptionalism is misguided. There is no world of polylogics—where every race has an authentic moral personality and providence or the nature of history encodes races with a destiny or unique contribution to a mythical transcendental sphere of knowledge. (Nzegwu 2017a, 149)

Here, Harris positions his response through a descriptive alliance with Locke's work. Notably, this stance regarding a rejection of "polylogics" or sustained, rational explanations for racial groupings is an important feature of Harris's proposal of what he describes as an "actuarial" account of racism in his later work, or "necro-being."

Harris writes in a chapter reflecting on his work on Locke that he "discovered features of Locke's philosophy accidentally in the course of research for [his 1983] anthology *Philosophy Born of Struggle: Anthology of African American Philosophy from 1917*" (Harris 2017b, 128). In the research for that book, Harris took note of the immense philosophical scholarship of Locke, an observation which then extended his frustration and curiosity into why Locke had virtually no books, analysis, or reception literature to his name within the profession of philosophy. Aside from Locke's role as the first African American Rhodes Scholar, the first African American to receive a doctorate degree in philosophy from Harvard, and his importance within the context of the Harlem Renaissance, including works on poetry, art, and music, Locke had never been considered a philosopher. Moreover, Harris likewise notes that when conducting his research on Locke, he found near silence within philosophy regarding Locke's sexuality and his influence on American philosophy as an African American gay man who had dedicated his life to understanding the contours of race and racial oppression. Harris also describes presenting a paper on Locke at the Black Nations/Queer Nations Conference of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the City University of New York in 1995, and noting that his was the only paper there that acknowledged Locke's work as a Black gay theorist.

Alongside Harris's calls for more scholarship on Locke within LGBTQ philosophy, I would also argue that it is significant as well that Locke himself, although not identifying with the term "disabled," did note that he was impacted in terms of "three minorities." That is, as Harris and Charles Molesworth write in an intellectual biography of Locke, in a 1949 letter, Locke describes himself in terms of identifying as a homosexual, as Black, and as being of short stature—just over five feet tall—a fact that he attributes to a heart condition that impacted his development as a child and led to other health conditions throughout his life (2008, 18). With this, we can take note of the insight of disability justice author Leah-Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarintha that



Disability is everywhere. Disabled queers are in the water. We're also written out of history in a way that is a constant, violent, intentional forgetting, by both those who explicitly want us dead and nondisabled Left and queer movements. (2019, 57)

Piepzna-Samarasinha notes here that the erasure of disabled queer people occurs not simply through explicitly conservative political discourse. Rather, Leftist and queer movements are also implicated for their respective tendencies to overlook, under-theorize, or sometimes simply reject the relationships between disability, politics, sexuality, embodiment, and desire. Importantly, Harris in his writings on Locke, in a parallel manner as Piepzna-Samarasinha, demands recognition of the fullness of Locke's life in its very multidimensionality, as Black, as gay, and as struggling against embodied norms that condemn bodily difference, a view that we may consider aligning with the demands of disability justice. Unlike a naturalizing view of any of these aspects of identity, Locke, likewise through his signature contextualizing and relativizing philosophical method remarks:

Three minorities—Had I been born in ancient Greece I would have escaped the first [sexuality]; In Europe I would have been spared the second [race]; In Japan I would have been above rather than below average [disability]. (Harris and Molesworth 2008, 18)

With this, we find the framing of identities within Locke, and written through the work of Harris and his co-author Charles Molesworth, that such forms of identity and their social significance are “malleable, and at least to some extent, shaped by human choice” (Harris and Molesworth 2008, 18). Additionally, as Locke highlights and Harris emphasizes throughout his writings on the complexity of Locke as a philosopher of struggle, these dimensions of his life all shaped his philosophical views in various ways.

Regarding Locke's work more generally, it is important to note, as Jeffrey C. Stewart has argued that “Locke can be credited . . . with removing race from its biological basis and putting it squarely in a cultural foundation” (Stewart 1992, xxv). While prominent anthropologists such as Franz Boas rejected strictly biological or evolutionary justifications for racism in the early 20th century, Locke, in a series of lectures delivered in 1916 at Howard University, outlined an extensive set of arguments that thoroughly denaturalized race and the production of sociopolitical and economic processes that perpetuated racism (Stewart 1992, xxv). Locke offered an account of racial groups and racism as inherently dynamic and subject to constant change due to shifting cultural and historical exchanges. However, unlike many anthropologists of the era (although similar to W.E.B. Du Bois's contributions on the topic), Locke argued that race and racial groupings were important facets of social life for

non-dominant groups, and should thus continue to exist, despite their contingent and dynamic statuses. Race is instrumentally important, including racial identifications through art, literature, and other aesthetic means, he contended, to support group cohesion, processes of self-valuation, and the advancement of humankind.

With this Lockean social ontology, his critique of autonomy and health, and the metaphilosophy addressed above, we can now turn directly to Harris's conception of necro-being as oppression. Harris has most directly outlined this view in a 2018 essay titled "Necro-Being: An Actuarial Account of Racism." He opens this piece by stating the following:

Racism is a form of necro-being: it kills and prevents persons from being born. It is absolute necro-tragedy. There is no redemption for the worst of its victims. Dominant groups acquire longer lives, assets, and high senses of self-worth at the cost of the extinction or sustained subordination of the subjugated. Racism kills as a function of the way especially health and wealth benefits occur to the communities for which racists belong through the aegis of fatal inventions of race. Racism is a polymorphous agent of death, premature births, shortened lives, starving children, debilitating theft, abusive larceny, degrading insults, and insulting stereotypes forcibly imposed. Racism persists because it works sufficiently well in an imperfect world to ensure a confluence of benefits, especially the most important benefit—namely, health benefits, for enough people over generations. It effects the preconditions for the possibility of embodied wellbeing. In addition, recursive and compounded benefits allow for sustaining vast differences in life chances. The relationship between dominant and subjected groups is one in which health can be understood as transferred from one to the other. Racism, as polyhedron, is only one variable in a vast range of sometimes ambiguous and multifarious influences of different saliences making necro-being. (Harris 2018a, 273–274)

Harris's statement here that racism is "polymorphous" and a "polyhedron" demonstrates a deep pluralism, not simply about entities like social groups, values, and so forth, but also about the character of the collective social forces that create the tragedy of differing oppressions. Throughout the essay, Harris engages a number of prominent theorists of racism, including Charles Mills and Jorge Garcia among others, to argue against any prevailing logic or explanation that can account for the immense forms of misery and violence encompassed within racism. Also, his emphasis on racism as a likelihood to diminish life and to deny the benefits of embodied well being bring his account of racism into further dialogue with disability critique. For example, his invocation of the phrase "fatal inventions of race" is itself derived from

the work of Dorothy Roberts, an acclaimed theorist of the relationships between medical racism, eugenics, and disability (e.g., Harris 2020, 194). Roberts's own work is dedicated to interrogating the intersecting forms of oppression and potentially resistant alliances impacting racial groups, women, and disabled communities (e.g., 2009; 2011; Roberts and Jesudason 2013). Additionally, Roberts's work on the biologization of race through the study of genetics and health technologies have also made a significant impact on critiques of biologized conceptions of race and embodiment. In this respect, Harris and disability scholars like Tremain point to Roberts's critical work on biologized conceptions of the body (Harris 2020, 194; Tremain 2017, 4).

Harris also directly connects Roberts's critique of biological explanations of race to Locke's work, by noting the shared dilemma of both critiquing the essentializing discourse of race, while also noting its importance in naming group-level harms and traditions of resistance. With this, the "actuarial" character of Harris's account, he notes, is based in "that which makes living a kind of death—like that is simultaneously being robbed of its sheer potential physical being as well as nonbeing, the unborn" (70). He continues that "[t]he situation of necro-being is hardly the sole consequence of racism, and the situation can exist under conditions effected by, for example, only ethnic or status variables. I focus here on racism" (70). As such, it is here under "status variables" that we begin to find space within this framework for considerations regarding the forms of oppression impacting disabled communities, including some of the same deadly conditions that Harris describes in terms of the racist aspects of necro-being. That is, like Erevelles and Tremain both argue, disability is not an individualized feature of human bodies, and both authors thereby reject elements of the medical and social models of disability in this regard (Erevelles 2011, 19; Tremain 2017, 85–102). Accordingly, Harris's account of necro-being foregrounds an account of oppression that considers the historical, cultural, and normative forms of valuation and societal structures that have the tendency to lead to deadly outcomes, diminished and denigrated lives, or nonexistence (in terms of forced sterilization, abortion, and other eugenic practices). Likewise, authors tracing the relationships between racial capitalism and disability like Erevelles (2011) and Joel Michael Reynolds (2020) cite, alongside Harris, the work of Achille Mbembe. Mbembe, for all three authors, points to the processual and institutional character of racialized oppression (Erevelles 2011, 47–48; Reynolds 2021, 7; Harris 2020, 70–71). Yet, for Harris, he rejects the idea of a singular "logic" of racism, or polylogics of each form or structure of oppression. Rather than focusing on the individual etiological origins of oppression, Harris's actuarial account tracks the consequences of oppression and their shared movement toward deathliness and immiseration.

Importantly, this is not a view that groups impacted by racialization, disability, or any other experience of oppression are necessarily unhappy or that they live in disdain of their group identifications as members of racial, disabled, and/or sexual

communities. Notably, Harris, as with disability theorists who reject the claim that disability necessarily diminishes an individual's valuation of their own life or their own happiness in relation to others, defends a view regarding what Campbell, Stramondo, and Wasserman call the "multiple realizability" of "the things that make our lives go well—such as happiness and pleasure, achievement, knowledge, fulfilling relationships, appreciation of beauty, and virtue" (Campbell, Stramondo, Wasserman 2021, 2). Moreover, Harris alongside Campbell, Stramondo, and Wasserman cite the work of moral theorist Dan Moller (2011) as support for their respective claims regarding, in Harris's words, the "relatively high sense of happiness [that] may exist whether [one] is disabled or with a low income or asset holding" (Harris 2020, 89; Campbell, Stramondo, and Wasserman 2021, 2). While Harris does use ableist language such as "suffering" from a disability, his account does not view disability itself as inherently or intrinsically having a negative impact on one's life, a common view critically referred to as the "Standard View" by Ron Amundson (2005), and held by a number of moral philosophers and bioethicist (e.g., Crawley 2020; Singer 1993; Brock 2005; Davis 2009). Against this view, Harris notes that his view of necro-being is not a claim that "defeats [a] theory of well being" (Harris 2020, 88). As we considered above regarding his analyses of conceptions of health and autonomy, these are normative concepts and will differ depending on a host of contextual features. Yet, echoing the claim made within disability critique as well (e.g., Ben-Moshe 2020; Campbell and Stramondo 2017), that death and deathliness, a systemic lack of social and health supports, and the proffering of social benefits to only a few while denying those viewed as "less deserving," are where to begin locating the locus of oppression and collective harm. As such, the prescriptive move against racism for Harris is the

death of necro-being—a mapping by race that no longer shows the polymorphic being of undue death and ill-health, whether caused by class structures, hoarding, ill-wills, fraudulent social contracts, intuitions, dysfunctional biases inherited from evolutionary stratagems, willful ignorance, bad faith, or weak wills. (2020, 91–92)

This long list of possible etiological origins for racial oppression also demands an analysis from a disability perspective. That is, as I conclude below, addressing what Harris describes as the "polymorphic" character of necro-being is a goal that can be found within contemporary disability justice movements. As such, while Harris's work can provide a helpful philosophical framing for theorists within philosophy of disability, disability justice critiques also add an important layer of analysis to his account of necro-being.

## The Struggle Continues

In light of the analysis of Harris's writings just offered, we can find within his work opportunities for shared projects within philosophy of disability. To conclude here, I would like to simply note that there are a growing number of contemporary efforts within and outside philosophy that endeavor to examine the joint constitution of oppressions such as racism and ableism. For example, Sami Schalk (2018; 2017) and Moya Bailey and Izetta Autumn Mobley (2019) work through key insights from within a Black feminist framework for developing disability critique, noting the importance of contributions from Black authors such as Harriet Jacobs, Audre Lorde, and Octavia Butler. Additionally, authors, activists, and artists exploring Black masculinity and disability such as Leroy F. Moore and Tommy J. Curry have each detailed their own experiences with the confluence of the co-enabling relations between anti-Black racism and ableism, and these authors have underscored the racialized norms of hypersexuality and super-humanism attributed to Black men that denies their vulnerability and possibility for being understood in terms of disability critique (Moore 2016; Moore 2017; Curry 2020; Curry 2017). Additionally, writings by authors challenging the ableist violence of colonialism, carcerality, and military occupation such as Liat Ben-Moshe (2020; 2016), Helen Meekosha (2011), Julie Minich (2013), and Aurora Levins Morales (2014; 2019) work against the co-enabling conditions of racism and ableism in a variety of ways. This body of scholarship and activism responds to the call of Harris's insurrectionist moral theory, while also demanding an analysis of disability within the patterned racialized and colonial violences that Black, brown, and Indigenous communities face.

Harris's philosophy of struggle thus calls for further analysis and reflection through the register of disability justice, including his personal writings on his and his daughter's embodied experiences with medicalization and illness (Harris and Grant 2005). Accordingly, as Harris's body of scholarship attests, philosophizing is done from within conditions of struggle, striving, and the demand for an end to human suffering. It is thus there where we can work, as Kristie Dotson does through her interpretation of Harris's insurrectionist ethics, "to situate oppression so as to better approximate the bonds of oppression and the range of oppressors one faces" (2013, 89). It is thus this call for pluralism and multiplicity, built from within Harris's approach to studies of oppression and a commitment to communities in struggle, that offer his work as an important body of scholarship for philosophy of disability.

## ENDNOTES

1. “The afterlife of slavery” is a phrase developed by Saidiya Hartman in *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007).
2. See, for example, Connor, Ferri, and Annamma 2016; Connor and Ferri 2005; Artiles 2011; Annamma, Ferri, and Connor 2018; Annamma, Boéle, Moore, and Klingner 2013.
3. For an analysis of Fanon’s writings in terms of disability critique and mad studies, see Eromosele 2020.
4. Harris’ critique of medical institutions and their failures to attend to the sociocultural and historical conditions that underlie conceptions of personhood might also align directly with Tremain’s arguments regarding the manner in which the field of bioethics has added to the relegation of disability as solely a biomedical phenomenon. Tremain argues that bioethics contributes to the biopolitical governance of disabled peoples, including the research programs, clinical guidelines, and policy decisions that impact their lives (Tremain 2017, Ch. 5). In this way, Harris’ foregrounding of the operative notion of personhood within bioethical discourses and the materials conditions that such notions entail would appear to support the form of historicized and contextualized philosophy of disability that Tremain develops throughout her work and her framings of the harms perpetuated through bioethics. Many thanks to an anonymous referee for pointing to these shared resonances between Harris’s and Tremain’s respective views. Much more analysis on these potential connections would be a welcome intervention within philosophy of disability.
5. Critical legal scholar, Marques P. Richeson (2009) links the legal practice of chemical castration for persons convicted of sex crimes as continuing to build from this history of anti-Black eugenics in the United States.
6. See also Puar 2017 for an important extension of this line of argumentation from Erevelles.

## REFERENCES

- Amundson, Ron. 2005. “Disability, Ideology, and Quality of Life: A Bias in Biomedical Ethics.” In *Quality of Life and Human Difference*, edited by David Wasserman, Jerome Bickenbach, and Robert Wachbroit, 101–24. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511614590.005>
- Annamma, Subini A., Amy L. Boelé, Brooke A. Moore, and Janette Klingner. 2013. “Challenging the Ideology of Normal in Schools.” *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 17 (12): 1278–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2013.802379>
- Annamma, Subini Ancy, Beth A. Ferri, and David J. Connor. 2018. “Disability Critical Race Theory: Exploring the Intersectional Lineage, Emergence, and Potential Futures of DisCrit in Education.” *Review of Research in Education* 42 (1): 46–71. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732x18759041>
- Artiles, Alfredo J. 2011. “Towards an Interdisciplinary Understanding of Educational Equity and Difference: The Case of the Racialization of Ability.” *Educational Researcher* 40: 431–45. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189x11429391>

- Bailey, Moya, and Izetta Autumn Mobley. 2019. "Work in the Intersections: A Black Feminist Disability Framework." *Gender and Society* 33 (1): 19–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243218801523>
- Baynton, Douglas C. 2016. *Defectives in the Land: Disability and Immigration in the Age of Eugenics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226364339.001.0001>
- Bell, Christopher. 2006. "Introducing White Disability Studies: A Modest Proposal." In *The Disability Studies Reader* 2nd edition, edited by Lennard J. Davis. New York: Routledge.
- Bell, Christopher. 2011. *Blackness and Disability: Critical Examinations and Cultural Interventions*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.49-6344>
- Ben-Moshe, Liat. 2020. *Decarcerating Disability*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. <https://doi.org/10.5749/j.ctv10vm2vw>
- Ben-Moshe, Liat. 2016. "Movements at War? Disability and Anti-occupation Activism in Israel." In *Occupying Disability: Critical Approaches to Community, Justice, and Decolonizing Disability*, edited by Pamela Block, Devva Kasnitz, Akemi Nishida, and Nick Pollard, 47–62. New York: Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9984-3\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9984-3_4)
- Brock, Daniel. 2005. "Preventing Genetically Transmitted Disabilities while Respecting Persons with Disabilities." In *Quality of Life and Human Difference*, edited by David Wasserman, Jerome Bickenbach, and Robert Wachbroit, 67–100. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511614590.004>
- Campbell, Stephen M., and Joseph R. Stramondo. 2017. "The Complicated Relationship of Disability and Well-Being." *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 27 (2): 151–84. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ken.2017.0014>
- Campbell, Stephen M., Joseph A. Stramondo, and David Wasserman. 2021. "How to (Consistently) Reject the Options Argument." *Utilitas*, 1–9. FirstView Articles. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0953820820000473>
- Carter, Jacoby A., and Darryl L. Scriven. Forthcoming. *Insurrectionist Ethics*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Carter, Jacoby Adeshei. 2012. "Alain LeRoy Locke." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2012/entries/alain-locke/>.
- Clare, Eli. 2017. *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure*. Durham: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822373520>
- Connor, David J., Beth A. Ferri, and Subini A. Annamma. 2016. *DisCrit: Disability Studies and Critical Race Theory in Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Connor, David J., and Beth A. Ferri. 2005. "Integration and Inclusion: A Troubling Nexus: Race, Disability, and Special Education." *Journal of African American History* 90: 107–27. <https://doi.org/10.1086/jaahv90n1-2p107>
- Crawley, Thomas. 2020. "Disability, Options and Well-Being." *Utilitas* 32 (3): 316–34. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0953820819000463>
- Curry, Tommy J. 2020. "Black Disabled Men: 'Man-Not.'" Interview with Dr. Tommy Curry by Leroy F. Moore Jr. *National Black Disability Coalition*, May 18, 2020. <http://www.blackdisability.org/content/black-disabled-men-%E2%80%9Cman-not%E2%80%9D%C2%A0>.
- Curry, Tommy J. 2017. "This Nigger's Broken: Hyper-masculinity, the Buck, and the Role of Physical Disability in White Anxiety Toward the Black Male Body." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 48 (3): 321–43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12193>

- Davis, Dena. 2009. *Genetic Dilemmas: Reproductive Technology, Parental Choices, and Children's Futures*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dotson, Kristie. 2013. "Querying Leonard Harris's Insurrectionist Standards." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 49 (1): 74–92.  
<https://doi.org/10.2979/trancharpeirsoc.49.1.74>
- Dula, Annette, and Sara Goering. "It Just Ain't Fair": *The Ethics of Health Care for African Americans*. Westport: Praeger Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3342626>
- Erevelles, Nirmala. 2015. "Race." In *Keywords for Disability Studies*, edited by Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, and David Serlin. New York: NYU Press.
- Erevelles, Nirmala. 2014. "Crippin' Jim Crow: Disability, Dis-Location, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline." In *Disability Incarcerated: Imprisonment and Disability in the United States and Canada*, edited by Ben-Moshe, Liat, Chris Chapman, and Allison C. Carey. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137388476\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137388476_5)
- Erevelles, Nirmala. 2011. *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts: Enabling a Transformative Body Politic*. New York: Palgrave. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137001184>
- Eromosele, Femi. 2020. "Frantz Fanon in the Time of Mad Studies." *World Futures: The Journal of New Paradigm Research* 76: 167–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02604027.2020.1730737>
- Fanon, Frantz. 1965. *A Dying Colonialism*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier. New York: Grove Press.
- Flack, Harley E., and Edmund D. Pellegrino. 1992. *African-American Perspectives on Biomedical Ethics*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. 1997. *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Gyekye, Kwame. 1995. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, 2nd edition. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Harris, Leonard. 2020. *A Philosophy of Struggle: The Leonard Harris Reader*, edited by Lee A. McBride III. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Harris, Leonard. 2017a. "Interview with Professor Leonard Harris," by Azuka Nzegwu. *Journal of African Philosophy* 16: 144–51.
- Harris, Leonard. 2017b. "Looking for Locke." In *Oxford Encyclopedia of Race and Philosophy*. Edited by Naomi Zack. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190236953.013.44>
- Harris, Leonard. 2014. "Telos and Tradition: Making the Future—Bridges to Future Traditions." *Philosophia Africana: Analysis and Issues in Africa and the Black Diaspora* 16 (2): 59–72.  
<https://doi.org/10.5840/philafricana20141625>
- Harris, Leonard. 2002. "Insurrectionist Ethics: Advocacy, Moral Psychology, and Pragmatism." In *Ethical Issues for a New Millenium*, edited by John Howie, 192–210. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Harris, Leonard. 2001. "'Outing' Alain L. Locke: Empowering the Silenced." In *Sexual Identities, Queer Politics*, edited by Mark Blasius, 321–41. Princeton: Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv19fvxz3.16>
- Harris, Leonard. 1999. "What, Then, Is Racism?" In *Racism*, edited by Leonard Harris, 437–50. Amherst: Humanity Books.



- Harris, Leonard. 1998a. "The Concept of Racism: An Essentially Contested Concept?" *Centennial Review* 42 (2): 217–31.
- Harris, Leonard. 1998b. "Universal Human Liberation: Community and Multiculturalism." In *Theorizing Multiculturalism*, edited by Cynthia Willett, 449–57. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harris, Leonard, Anne S. Waters, and Scott L. Pratt. 2001. *American Philosophies: An Anthology*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Harris, Leonard, and Charles Molesworth. 2008. *Alain Locke: Biography of a Philosopher*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226317809.001.0001>
- Harris, Leonard, and Jamila R. Grant. 2005. *A Father's Journey, a Daughter's Voyage, a Cancer Journal: Father I Daughter We*. Lincoln: iUniverse Books.
- Hartman, Saidiya. 2007. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Jarman, Michelle. 2012. "Dismembering the Lynch Mob: Intersecting Narratives of Disability, Race, and Sexual Menace." In *Sex and Disability*, edited by Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow, 89–107. Durham: Duke University Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822394877-005>
- Locke, Alain. 1942. "Pluralism and Intellectual Democracy." In *The Philosophy of Alain Locke: Harlem Renaissance and Beyond*, edited by Leonard Harris, 53–66. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Locke, Alain. 1935. "Values and Imperatives." In *The Philosophy of Alain Locke: Harlem Renaissance and Beyond*, edited by Leonard Harris, 34–50. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Locke, Alain. 1918. *The Problem of Classification in the Theory of Value*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Locke, Alain, and Bernhard J. Stern. 1942. *When Peoples Meet: A Study of Race and Culture Contacts*. New York: Progressive Education Association.
- Lugones, María. 2003. *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- McBride, Lee. 2013. "Symposium on Insurrectionist Ethics." *Charles S. Peirce Society: Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 49 (1): 27–111.  
<https://doi.org/10.2979/trancharpeirsoc.49.1.27>
- McBride III, Lee A. 2020. "Editor's Introduction." In *A Philosophy of Struggle: The Leonard Harris Reader*, 1–10. New York: Bloomsbury.
- McBride, Lee A. 2021. *Ethics and Insurrection: A Pragmatism for the Oppressed*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- McMurry, Linda O. 1981. *George Washington Carver: Scientist and Symbol*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Meekosha, Helen. 2011. "Decolonising" Disability: Thinking and Acting "Globally." *Disability and Society* 26 (6): 667–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2011.602860>
- Minich, Julie. 2013. *Accessible Citizenships: Disability, Nation, and the Cultural Politics of Greater Mexico*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvrd3tp>
- Mitchell, David T., and Sharon Snyder. 2003. "The Eugenic Atlantic: Race, Disability, and the Making of an International Eugenic Science, 1800–1945." *Disability and Society* 18: 843–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0968759032000127281>

- Moore Jr, Leroy F. 2017. "Krip-Hop Nation is Moore than Music." *Wordgathering* 22 [https://wordgathering.syr.edu/past\\_issues/issue22/essays/moore2.html](https://wordgathering.syr.edu/past_issues/issue22/essays/moore2.html).
- Moore Jr., Leroy F., Tiny aka Lisa Gray-Garcia, and Emmitt H. Thrower. 2016. "Black and Blue: Policing Disability and Poverty Beyond Occupy." In *Occupying Disability: Critical Approaches to Community, Justice, and Decolonizing Disability*, edited by Pamela Block, Devva Kasnitz, Akemi Nishida, and Nick Pollard, 295–318. New York: Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9984-3\\_21](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9984-3_21)
- Morales, Aurora Levins. 2019. *Medicine Stories: Essays for Radicals*. Durham: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9781478003373>
- Morales, Aurora Levins. 2013. *Kindling: Writings on the Body*. Cambridge: Palabrer Press.
- Pickens, Therí A. 2017. "Blue Blackness, Black Blueness: Making Sense of Blackness and Disability." *African American Review* 50 (2): 93–103. <https://doi.org/10.1353/afa.2017.0015>
- Pickens, Therí A. 2018. "Black Disability or Blackness Disabled? A Conversation with Therí A. Pickens," interview by Mark Anthony Neal. *Left of Black* 59: E5, October 18, 2018. <https://leftofblack.tumblr.com/post/179251195778/left-of-black-s9e5-black-disability-or-blackness>.
- Piepzna-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. 2019. "Disability Justice/Stonewall's Legacy, or: Love Mad Trans Black Women When They Are Alive and Dead, Let Their Revolutions Teach Your Resistance All the Time." *QED: A Journal of GLBTQ Worldmaking* 6 (2): 54–62. <https://doi.org/10.14321/qed.6.2.0054>
- Pinar, William F. 2001. "The Gendered Civil War in the South." *Counterpoints* 163: 237–70.
- Puar, Jasbir K. 2017. *The Right to Maim*. Durham: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822372530>
- Reynolds, Joel Michael. Forthcoming. "Disability and White Supremacy." *Critical Philosophy of Race*, 1–22.
- Richeson, Marques P. "Sex, Drugs, and Race-to-Castrate: A Black Box Warning of Chemical Castration's Potential Racial Side Effects." *Harvard BlackLetter Law Journal* 25: 95–131.
- Roberts, Dorothy. 2011. *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: The New Press.
- Roberts, Dorothy. 2009. "Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 34 (4): 783–804. <https://doi.org/10.1086/597132>
- Roberts, Dorothy, and Sujatha Jesudason. 2013. "Movement Intersectionality: The Case of Race, Gender, Disability, and Genetic Technologies." *Du Bois Review* 10 (2): 313–28. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1742058x13000210>
- Schalk, Sami. 2018. *Bodyminds Reimagined: (Dis)ability, Race, and Gender, in Black Women's Speculative Fiction*. Durham: Duke University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822371830>
- Schalk, Sami. 2017. "Interpreting Disability Metaphor and Race in Octavia Butler's "The Evening and the Morning and the Night." *African American Review* 50 (2): 139–51. <https://doi.org/10.1353/afa.2017.0018>
- Singer, Peter. 1993. *Practical Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Spillers, Hortense J. 1987. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Dia-critics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism* 17: 65–81. <https://doi.org/10.2307/464747>

- Stewart, Jeffrey C. 1992. "Introduction." In *Race Contacts and Interracial Relations: Lectures on the Theory and Practice of Race* by Alain LeRoy Locke, xix-lix. Washington, DC: Howard University Press.
- Tremain, Shelley. 2018. "Philosophy of Disability as Critical Diversity Studies." *International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies* 1 (1): 30–44.  
<https://doi.org/10.13169/intecritdivestud.1.1.0030>
- Tremain, Shelley. 2017. *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.8504605>