

# An Attitude towards a Soul—and Its Corruptions: A Wittgensteinian View of Racial Alienation

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around us—our shadows, dark glyphs on the wall,  
bigger and stranger than we are.

—Natasha Trethewey<sup>1</sup>

When we hear a Chinese person, we are inclined to take his speech for an inarticulate gurgling. Someone who understands Chinese will recognize *language* in what he hears. Similarly, I often cannot recognize the *human being* in the man.

—Wittgenstein (CV, p. 1)<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Introduction: The Significance of Wittgenstein’s Later Philosophy for Theorizing Racism

What, if anything, do Wittgenstein’s philosophical reflections have to contribute to our understanding of racism? At first glance, the answer seems to be: nothing at all. His oeuvre contains only very few scant, scattered allusions to race or racial prejudice—not exactly shocking, given that his official philosophical interests lay elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Even *Culture and*

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<sup>1</sup> Trethewey (2018).

<sup>2</sup> My translation. Peter Winch’s canonical translation of this passage has ‘humanity’ in place of ‘human being’, which doesn’t fit the text: Wittgenstein’s term is ‘*Menschen*’, which refers to a particular rather than to a general property or class of things. In conversation with B.R. Tilghman, Winch himself has expressed dissatisfaction with his translation on this point; see Tilghman (1991), p. 186, endnote 2.

<sup>3</sup> The only passage in *Culture and Value* that refers directly to racial prejudice is this one (CV, p. 74e): ‘When you can’t unravel a tangle, the most sensible thing is for you to recognize this; and the most honorable thing, to admit it. [Antisemitism]

‘What you ought to do to remedy the evil is not clear. What you must not do is clear in particular cases.’

*Value*—the work of his in which we might reasonably hope to find some engagement with these subjects—contains almost no offhand remarks on it, much less explicit discussion of it. In light of this omission especially, and given the well-developed state of the philosophical literature on this topic, we would not be irresponsible for concluding that Wittgenstein cannot guide us in our attempts to gain insight into the nature of racism. This inference would, however, be too quick.

I will try to show that in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy we do, in fact, find at least the raw materials for a fruitful account of one form of racism: what I will call ‘racial alienation’. The fulcrum of my argument is the rightly celebrated, albeit opaque, passage in Part 2 of the *Philosophical Investigations* in which he insists that our basic recognition of the mindedness of another human being is ‘an attitude towards a soul’ (*eine Einstellung zur Seele*) rather than an ‘opinion’ that she has a soul (PI, p. 178e). This passage has been read as evidence of the latent critical, even ethical, potential of Wittgenstein’s thinking about other minds. But because he himself does not bring out that potential explicitly, my discussion will mostly center on the work of philosophers associated with the ‘Swansea School’ of the Wittgensteinian tradition, who do try to develop this aspect of his thinking in the service of moral and social criticism.<sup>4</sup> I pay particular attention to the work of Raimond Gaita. In addition to providing what is arguably the fullest exposition of Wittgenstein’s promising alternative picture of our awareness of others’ minds, Gaita has constructed, upon a basically Wittgensteinian edifice, a complementary account of racial alienation. I argue that one major advantage of Gaita’s view is that, unlike current theories of racism, it does full justice to the widespread conviction that racist attitudes involve a failure to see the humanity of the other racial group. My primary aim, however, is not exegetical

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<sup>4</sup> Winch (1980–81) and (1987); Cockburn (1990), especially part 1; Tilghman (1991), ch. 5; Gaita (2002a), chs. 4 and 13, and (2004), chs. 9–10, along with the afterword; Taylor (2002), particularly chs. 5–7. For a more skeptical internal critique, see Phillips (1992), ch. 17.

but constructive: to determine how Wittgenstein's thought must be supplemented, or transformed, to realize its critical potential with respect to one form of racist prejudice.

Thus, after presenting Gaita's most memorable example of racial alienation, the case of M (§2), I argue that leading views of racism in the analytic tradition threaten to contravene the conviction that racial alienation involves a misrecognition of the other racial group's humanity (§§3–4). This pitfall is best avoided by adopting the conception of interpersonal awareness suggested by Wittgenstein and elaborated by Gaita and other standard-bearers of the Swansea School. I sketch this conception and explain how it serves as a basis for Gaita's view of racial alienation, arguing that the whole package constitutes an intuitively plausible alternative to the usual offerings (§5). I close by raising and then deepening a challenge to Gaita's view (§6).

## **2. Racial Alienation as Misrecognition of Humanity**

In a remarkable discussion in *A Common Humanity*, Raimond Gaita introduces us to M, an acquaintance of his who, at the time, was grieving the recent loss of her child. He writes:

M was watching a television documentary on the Vietnam War which showed the grief of Vietnamese women whose children were killed in bombing raids. At first she responded as though she and the Vietnamese women shared a common affliction. Within minutes, however, she drew back and said, 'But it is different for them. They can simply have more.' ... She meant that they could replace their dead children more or less as we replace dead pets.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Gaita (2002a), pp. 57–8; Gaita (2002b), pp. 173–76; and Gaita (2004), 331–41. See also Cockburn (1994), pp. 139–40.

It is clear that M's attitude towards the Vietnamese mothers embodies a form of racism, and, more than that, that she is *missing* something, both about them and about Vietnamese people generally. According to Gaita, M's racism has a kind of generality built into it. It is a stance that she takes towards 'all aspects of the inner lives of the Vietnamese', including 'all their hopes, fears and joys' as well as their feelings and attitudes towards the defining features of the human condition: parenthood, friendship, 'sexuality, death and grief.'<sup>6</sup> As he presents her, M does not deny that the Vietnamese mothers suffer; she can plainly see that they do, although she may be in the dark about the quality of that suffering. Instead, she appears to deny that the mothers can grieve in the same way that her own racial group does, that their grief could possibly run as deep.

M has a deficient sense of the *meaning* or personal significance that this sort of suffering—grief at the loss of a child—could have for Vietnamese people, then, given that she finds it unintelligible that it could mean anything as deep to 'them' as the analogous suffering would to 'us'. Gaita does not put the point quite like this, but M is missing something, at the very least, about Vietnamese people's capacity for grief, and, by implication, their capacity for love. For she does not regard them as only contingently incapable of grieving for—and so loving—their children as deeply as 'we' do; for her, rather, 'that is how they *essentially* are.'<sup>7</sup> M suffers from 'meaning-blindness', in other words—a failure to identify with them as human beings.

M's orientation to Vietnamese people is a striking instance of what I will call *racial alienation*: an affectively registered inability to imagine that certain conditions could have the same sort of meaning for someone as for oneself, in light of that person's (actual or supposed) race. Insofar as a person is in the grip of racial alienation, he will regularly feel there to be a discontinuity, more or less profound, between the personal significance that various fixtures of

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<sup>6</sup> Gaita (2002a), pp. 58–60.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

human existence can have for members of this other group and what these conditions can have for him (and his ‘kind’). And he will experience that discontinuity in the form of a lacuna in his emotional responsiveness: he will have a felt sense, perhaps inarticulate, that there is an unbridgeable affective gulf between himself and those belonging to the other racial group.

Notice that my definition is compatible with the possibility of racial alienation that is based on a misidentification of a person’s race and, more broadly, with the possibility that races do not exist at all. Moreover, my definition allows that racial alienation might be reciprocal: a white person may be racially alienated from a black person, and the black person might be racially alienated from the white person in turn, for instance. But because I’m interested in racial alienation that qualifies as uncontroversially *racist*, my focus will be on the racial alienation felt by members of a *dominant racial group* vis à vis members of a *subordinate racial group*, and, going forward, I will use the term ‘racial alienation’ to refer to this narrower phenomenon.

So conceived, and like many other racist attitudes, racial alienation seems to involve a failure to fully recognize the humanity of members of the relevant group. That much is suggested by the fact that the language of invisibility or blindness is standardly employed to characterize the experience of social marginalization, and, in particular, to describe the racially motivated mistreatment of subordinate groups by members of dominant groups. For social marginalization on the basis of race would seem to be (or to be akin to) the phenomenon of racial alienation viewed, as it were, from the side of the subordinate. And it is common for marginalized people to characterize their experiences with the dominant group as their being *unseen* by members of that group. James Baldwin, to take one prominent example, tends overwhelmingly to describe the racial alienation of white Americans—and the consequent social invisibility of black people in the U.S.—in these terms, most explicitly in this excerpt from an interview with Nathan Cohen:

I don't know what white people see when they look at a Negro anymore, but I do know, that... whatever he was looking at, it wasn't me. It wasn't me. It was something he was afraid of, it was something to which he was attracted, or which he found repulsive. But it wasn't me. I was not a man.<sup>8</sup>

Given his literary gifts, it may be tempting to interpret Baldwin as merely waxing poetic when he claims that, in the eyes of white Americans, he was not a man—namely, a human being or person. Yet the temptation is quickly dispelled by a reading of his essays on race relations in the U.S., in which he describes racially tinged experiences with white people, both at home and abroad, in terms that suggests that he regards them as having a perceptual incapacity.<sup>9</sup> He really does attribute to white Americans an inability to fully see black people as human beings like them—a claim that is echoed in the famous opening of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*: 'I am an invisible man. ... I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. ... When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination—indeed, everything and anything except me.'<sup>10</sup> In both Ellison's novel and Baldwin's essays, we encounter the notion that white Americans are, in some sense, estranged from black people, and that the former fail to fully apprehend the humanity of the latter because their view of their fellows is obscured by a distorting cloud of their own projected fears, antipathies, and desires.

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<sup>8</sup> Baldwin and Cohen (1960), as quoted in Jardine (2020).

<sup>9</sup> For example, Baldwin claimed during a round-table discussion (1964: 38) that the white liberal is unaware that 'in talking to a black man, he is talking to another man like himself.'

<sup>10</sup> Ellison (1995), p. 3. Cf. Gordon (1995), p. 98: 'The Invisible Man's invisibility comes about in virtue of the denial, by virtue of the pervading norms of black inferiority in Western societies, of his humanity. In this formulation, then, the black's absence fails to translate into his *human* presence.' It is a separate and somewhat tricky question whether the experiences depicted by Ellison and Baldwin are best conceived as experiences of meaning-blindness on a Gaitean model. (I believe that they are, but I will not defend that claim here.)

Gaita's discussion of M is also animated by the conviction that, in a philosophically interesting sense, people who are socially marginalized on a racial basis are not fully seen as human beings. More precisely, according to the *Misrecognition Thesis*, if A is racially alienated from B, then A fails to see B's humanity, at least to some extent, in that A fails to fully see B's mentality.<sup>11</sup> Because the thesis finds expression in the accounts of racially oppressed people, I believe that it is an important datum to which a theory of racism should be responsive, and that we should try, if possible, to respect it. Yet exploring the rational basis of the Misrecognition Thesis (if any) has, by and large, not been among the central projects of standard philosophical theories of racism in the analytic tradition. Worse, I will argue, in addition to ignoring the phenomenon of racial alienation, both 'doxastic' (or 'ideological') theories of racism and 'volitional' (or 'attitudinal') theories of racism conflict with the Misrecognition Thesis.

### **3. Is Racial Alienation Essentially Intellectual?**

Start with *doxastic theories of racism*.<sup>12</sup> On such views, racism consists, most basically, in a belief (or network of beliefs) about members of a racial group (considered as such), perhaps in tandem with certain irrational dispositions to form and regulate beliefs concerning that group.

Kwame Anthony Appiah claims, for example, that racism comes in two distinct varieties.<sup>13</sup> *Extrinsic racism* consists in holding the belief that a racial group bears a 'racial essence' that entails that its members possess certain morally relevant empirical properties (e.g., lack of intelligence, laziness, poor self-control), the possession of which justifies discriminating

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<sup>11</sup> I will use the terms 'seeing someone's humanity', 'seeing someone as a human being', and 'seeing someone as a person' interchangeably. Talk of *seeing* someone as a human being will also be treated as synonymous with talk of *recognizing* someone as a human being.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Appiah (1990), Thomas (2000), Shelby (2002), Mills (2003), Lengbeyer (2004), and Smith (2020), ch. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Appiah (1990), pp. 6–9.

against members of the group. *Intrinsic racism*, on the other hand, is a matter of holding the belief that the racial group in question differs intrinsically in moral status—that it is superior or inferior to others—‘quite independent of the characteristics entailed by its racial essence.’<sup>14</sup>

In either case, in Appiah’s view, the racist’s beliefs are sustained by *racial prejudice*: roughly, a disposition to respond improperly to evidence bearing on racist propositions (extrinsic racism) or a disposition to use racial classifications as a basis for treating individuals with different degrees of moral consideration (intrinsic racism). Subsequent articulations of the doxastic theory have dispensed with aspects of Appiah’s framework, but these views retain its intellectualistic spirit: his insistence that (a) racist attitudes are, fundamentally, beliefs (or include beliefs), albeit beliefs that are typically formed and sustained under the influence of certain sentiments towards the racial group, and that (b) the associated sentiments do not themselves constitute racism.<sup>15</sup>

It follows from Appiah’s view that extrinsic racists irrationally hold false non-normative beliefs about the empirical properties of the members of the racial group in question, failing to see their specifically human capacities or powers (e.g., intelligence, rationality, self-control). Intrinsic racists, by contrast, irrationally hold false moral beliefs about the group’s moral status, in that they fail to see that the group enjoys the same (full) moral status as the racist’s own racial group. The doxastic theory therefore appears to be well poised to respect the Misrecognition Thesis. And it does seem initially plausible that M’s racial alienation is based on extrinsic racist beliefs (e.g., ‘The loss of a child doesn’t have the same meaning for Vietnamese people as for us’, ‘Vietnamese people don’t love their children like we love ours,’ etc.). We might think that some such beliefs are *necessary* for racial alienation—in particular, that they must be its basis.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 5–6.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Shelby (2002), pp. 414–15; Mills (2003), pp. 61–2; and Smith (2020), pp. 47–52.



But must racial alienation be based on racist beliefs? At first glance, it seems perfectly possible for M to feel the affective gulf definitive of racial alienation while holding no racist beliefs and even racially egalitarian beliefs—indeed, while holding no beliefs about the empirical or moral qualities of that racial group. We can imagine someone—call her M\*—who has internalized no racial stereotypes and accepts no fragment of a racist ideology yet finds herself with certain emotional responses and inhibitions towards members of other races, and Vietnamese people in particular. She might simply fail to identify with them solely because they look (or sound) so shockingly different to her than members of her own racial group that she is unable to imaginatively inhabit their perspectives in the standard emotionally charged way. M\* would then be in the grip of a purely affective racial alienation with no intellectual content.<sup>16</sup> Of course, it might still be natural to attribute certain beliefs to M\* that look quite similar to M's—e.g., 'They're just different from us', 'They're strange', or perhaps even 'They can just have more'. But in M\*'s case, and maybe M's, these formulations are *expressions* of racial alienation, not its intellectual basis, and if M\* were to accept independent racist beliefs, they may well be epiphenomenal, playing no substantial explanatory role in her cognitive life or her motivational economy. It seems initially doubtful, then, that racial alienation must be based on racist beliefs.<sup>17</sup>

This point has two significant consequences. First, in its insistence that holding racist beliefs is necessary for counting as harboring racist sentiments—and, more than that, that such beliefs are *definitive* of racism generally—a doxastic theory of racism objectionably restricts what can count as a racist attitude in the first place, excluding racial alienation from the category

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<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Larz Hertzberg (2011, p. 11) imagines A, a figure like M, but who employs no specific racial categories in denying that the Vietnamese women grieve as she does; rather, '[s]he simply felt very distant from them. She failed to be moved by their expressions of grief, she found it hard to enter imaginatively into their lives, or to see each of them as a particular individual.' A is closer to my M\*, except that Hertzberg seems to conceive of the former's attitudes as conjoined to her beliefs about the racial group(s) in question.

<sup>17</sup> J.L.A. Garcia has pressed a similar objection to doxastic theories of racism. See Garcia (1997), p. 15, and also Todorov (2000), p. 64, and Hertzberg (2011), pp. 11–2.

altogether. The restriction is unwarranted. Alberto Urquidez has persuasively argued that an attitude should be classified as racist just in case it substantively contributes to racial oppression.<sup>18</sup> While I cannot articulate his complex argument here, the criterion that he proposes is an eminently plausible one, and, importantly for our purposes, racial alienation satisfies the criterion handily. It is not hard to see how dominant group members' failure to identify with subordinate group members might make the former less acutely aware of the oppressive circumstances besetting the latter, thereby facilitating the perpetuation of racial oppression.<sup>19</sup>

Another consequence is that the doxastic theory of racism is committed to the idea that the person in the grasp of purely affective racial alienation does not qualify as failing to see the humanity of the racial group—until he comes to adopt racist beliefs, that is. According to the theory, then, despite her racial alienation, M\* still counts as fully seeing the humanity of Vietnamese people. In other words, the doxastic theory contradicts the Misrecognition Thesis, for M\* certainly seems to be missing *something* about the humanity of the Vietnamese even if she holds no racist beliefs, nor does she seem to be unaware only of their moral status, as intrinsic racists are. I will return to this point below, albeit in a somewhat different context.<sup>20</sup>

The doxastic theorist can avail himself of two rejoinders to this line of attack. First, adapting an argument of Tommie Shelby's, he can argue that holding racist beliefs is necessary for racial alienation because the very idea of purely affective racial alienation threatens to 'leave the motives of the racist largely opaque, mysterious, even unintelligible.'<sup>21</sup> Here is Shelby:

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<sup>18</sup> Urquidez (2020: ch. 7).

<sup>19</sup> For empirical evidence pertaining to the American context, see, e.g., Clark (1989) and Jardina (2019).

<sup>20</sup> See §4, pp. 16–7.

<sup>21</sup> Shelby (2002), p. 415. See also Mills (2003), p. 40.

What would it mean for a racist to hate someone *simply* because he or she is black? Does the racist hate blacks because they have dark skin and kinky hair? Surely “blackness” has deeper meaning for the racist than that—unless he or she is psychotic. Unpacking this “meaning” is a matter of uncovering and making explicit the beliefs of the racist that “make sense,” from a hermeneutic standpoint, of his or her attitudes and actions.

Thus, we need to attribute racist beliefs to the racist to make sense of her attitude as racism to begin with; indeed, Shelby might say, that claim seems almost platitudinous or analytic. Shelby does not discuss racial alienation, but his objection can easily be recast so as to apply rather straightforwardly to the possibility that I am highlighting. We can imagine Shelby protesting, on similar grounds: ‘What would it mean for a racist like M (or M\*) to be alienated from Vietnamese people *simply* because they are Vietnamese?’ This attitude, too, he might object, is ‘opaque, mysterious, even unintelligible’ as a racist attitude in the absence of prior racist beliefs.

The force of this objection rests on the credibility of Shelby’s assumption that racist attitudes must be transparent, unmysterious, and rationally intelligible. But why accept that assumption? Racist attitudes will often be rationally intelligible—as, say, based on false beliefs about the racial group, irrationally formed through self-deception. But why assume that they *must* be so? The fact is that racism of this kind is an utterly *strange* state of mind. Sometimes, indeed, it is baseless, lacking even the pretense of a rational basis and more readily explicable in terms of brute psychological forces. In fact, the utter strangeness of racist attitudes, racial alienation included, may help explain why racists feel rational pressure to indulge in rationalizations. Still, such rationalizations are not necessary for racism. We would do well, I think, to capture the rationally baseless, pathological character of some racist attitudes instead of trying to squeeze them into the mold of doxastic irrationality or ignorance of empirical fact.

Second, the doxastic theorist can appropriate arguments advanced by Charles Mills, which purport to demonstrate that racist sentiments must be based on racist beliefs if we are to be able to make sense of the former as intentional states of mind subject to rational assessment. Mills points out that a person whose racism is primarily affective must nevertheless have emotions (or emotional inhibitions) towards a group of people *on the basis of* their race, which seems to require that these attitudes be based on a belief about their race. But beliefs about a person's race must be linked to a whole network of background beliefs—in particular, beliefs concerning racial superiority and inferiority. Because racial classification entails belief, there can't be purely affective racism. Furthermore, borrowing an argument from Anthony Kenny (as adapted by John Deigh), Mills argues that emotion entails belief as well.<sup>22</sup> As Deigh reads him, Kenny observes that a subject's feeling an emotion such as fear or pity entails that she sees it as having a certain character; what inspires fear must be seen as harmful, for instance. From this point, Deigh seems to conclude that 'what qualifies something as the appropriate object of an emotion is the subject's belief that it has a certain character. Hence, belief and so propositional thought is essential to emotion.'<sup>23</sup> For his part, Mills draws the further conclusion that racist sentiments not only entail corresponding racist beliefs, but that the former must also be based on the latter. 'If one feels antipathy and hatred toward blacks,' say, Mills writes, 'then surely... it is precisely *because* of certain beliefs about blacks.'<sup>24</sup> Although racial alienation is a lack of emotional identification on a racial basis rather than antipathy, Mills might make similar claims about it, too, arguing that the affective gulf that the racially alienated person feels between herself and the target racial group must be based, ultimately, on racial stereotypes.

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<sup>22</sup> See Mills (2003), pp. 39–41, Deigh (1994), pp. 834–35, Kenny (1963), pp.187–94. I should note that Deigh is much more circumspect about Kenny's argument than Mills portrays him.

<sup>23</sup> Mills, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

I will address each half of the objection in turn. To start, note how intellectualized Mills's view of racism is. For him, (non-pathological) racial prejudice entails classifying someone as belonging to a particular race with a position in a racial hierarchy. That is far from obvious. M might feel racial alienation from the Vietnamese without knowing that they're Vietnamese to begin with, for one. Why can't M, even before accepting any racial stereotype about Vietnamese people, simply see them as radically different from herself—so much so that for her it is, on an affective level, unintelligible that their faces (any face that *looks like that*) could express the same kinds of emotions of which she takes herself (and those near to her) to be capable?

But, more to the point, even if racial classification is necessary, the relevant racial category could be constituted by non-doxastic attitudes rather than by racial stereotypes. M\* might feel emotional distance between herself and Vietnamese people (in light of, say, their apparent physical and behavioral differences), regarding them with fear or incomprehension, and might thereby come to see them in racialized terms, constructing a racial category out of her experiences of alienation instead of feeling racially alienated in light of racial stereotypes.

Turning now to the objection's second half: from the fact that the object of an emotion must be seen by its subject as having a certain evaluative character, it does not follow that the subject of that state must therefore have an evaluative belief to that effect, still less that the emotion must be *based* on that belief. More generally, one's seeing x as F does not entail one's believing that X is F, as shown by the familiar examples of optical illusions. And if only *seeing* the object of the racist sentiments under an evaluative guise is required by the main premise of Deigh's argument, it is left open that *these states themselves can constitute ways of evaluatively seeing their objects*. So, Mills's argument, is, at worst, invalid, or, at best, dependent on

controversial premises that should not be treated as fixed points in the debate. Applied to racial alienation, Mills's argument would not show that purely affective racial alienation is impossible.

I conclude that there is sufficient reason to reject a doxastic conception of racial alienation. Pace doxastic theories of racism, racial alienation can be purely affective at its core, without a doxastic or intellectual basis, and, even when it is so, it nevertheless qualifies both as a fully fledged racist attitude and as a misrecognition of the target group's human perspective.<sup>25</sup> A doxastic conception of racial alienation would therefore contradict the Misrecognition Thesis.

#### **4. Is Racial Alienation Essentially Noncognitive?**

My argument suggests that we should seek out a view of racial alienation that is less thoroughly intellectualized than the doxastic theory. Fortunately, we find a paradigm (and paragon) of such a theory in the work of J.L.A. Garcia.<sup>26</sup> On Garcia's 'volitional' theory of racism, racism resides 'in the heart', most fundamentally: in the holding of non-doxastic attitudes towards a person on the basis of her race, particularly antipathy (e.g., hatred) or deficient concern (e.g., indifference, contempt). Although a full evaluation of Garcia's volitional theory of racism is too large a task for this essay, we ought to determine whether the theory can accommodate racial alienation.

As far as I am aware, nowhere does Garcia discuss racial alienation directly, so we must extrapolate. Where in his view might we find a suitable place for the phenomenon? It seems unpromising to understand it as a species of antipathy. While racial alienation can certainly be hostile, it need not amount to hatred or malice towards the relevant racial group. M doesn't have

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Blum (2002), p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> See Garcia (1996), (1997), (1999), (2001), among other works.

to hate the Vietnamese or wish them ill. On the contrary, she may have warm, affectionate feelings towards them; she may even feel obligated to work for (what she sees as) their benefit.<sup>27</sup>

In my view, the better bet is that racial alienation is of Garcia's second variety of racism, (racially motivated) deficient concern. Let's return to M. It does seem correct to claim that M's concern for the Vietnamese mothers contained a significant gap: she saw that they were suffering, maybe even sympathized with them to some degree, but soon lost her felt sense that their suffering was the suffering of mothers grieving over their children—and grieving in the same sense in which she was grieving over her own child. So, by all appearances, it seems rather simple to extend Garcia's theory to include racial alienation under the rubric of racist attitudes. In this respect, the theory avoids one shoal on which, I argued, the doxastic theory foundered.

What about the other shoal? Well, what complicates matters is that for Garcia, the affective and/or volitional states in which racism consists are *noncognitive* (or 'conative').<sup>28</sup> They are, therefore, the sorts of attitudes that could not even in principle constitute knowledge. But the fact that they have this status raises a serious issue. If deficient concern (including racial alienation) is a noncognitive state, then it stands to reason that its opposite—adequate concern or regard—would be a noncognitive state as well. In that case, however, one's transition *from* racial alienation towards a racial group *to* adequate concern for members of that group will not really qualify as coming to see them aright. It will not count as a passage from ignorance to awareness, as the correction of a blind spot. It is difficult to see, then, how Garcia's volitional theory could

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<sup>27</sup> This objection also threatens Thomas Schmid's (1996, p. 34) 'motivational approach to racism', the view that racism consists in '*the infliction of unequal consideration, motivated by the desire to dominate, based on race alone*'. M might be totally uninterested in dominating Vietnamese people, preferring that they remain far away from her or just finding herself indifferent to them. She would still count as racially alienated.

<sup>28</sup> See Garcia (1997), p. 37, fn. 28, in which he speaks of the fundamental constituents of racist attitudes as 'noncognitive embracings', as well as Garcia (2001), p. 136.

allow for the fact that M and M\* fail to recognize the Vietnamese mothers' humanity. So extended, Garcia's volitional theory of racism threatens to contradict the Misrecognition Thesis.

To square his theory with the Misrecognition Thesis, Garcia might insist that there is a straightforward way for M to be unaware of the specifically human capacities of Vietnamese people: her affective/volitional states might cause her to form false beliefs about the group. This account of racial alienation may have some plausibility when applied to M. But it entails that M\*'s orientation to Vietnamese people is not one of ignorance or lack of awareness. By Garcia's lights, although M\* can only have bad motives or bad attitudes towards them, she fully sees them as human beings. So, this move requires objectionably curtailing the Misrecognition Thesis.

Another potential escape route for Garcia is to deny that racist attitudes are noncognitive. Admittedly, the claim that basic racist attitudes are noncognitive does not play much of a role in Garcia's thinking about racism, so it seems to do no real violence to his theory to repudiate it.<sup>29</sup> In fact, we might get a more plausible account of racial alienation if we conceive of the kind of racially motivated unconcern or disregard involved as ignorance or unawareness of the *moral status* or moral qualities of the racial group. So, on this amended view, both M and M\* fail to recognize the humanity of Vietnamese people just in the sense that they are unaware of the moral status enjoyed by the group in lights of its members' specifically human capacities.

I grant that M and her counterpart are guilty of a kind of moral ignorance with respect to Vietnamese people. Once again, though, one significant problem with M and M\* appears to be that they fail to fully recognize certain *capacities* in the Vietnamese mothers—minimally, the capacity to love and grieve their children as deeply as white people do, but plausibly other capacities as well. The problem is not solely one of moral ignorance. M and M\* are ignorant of

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<sup>29</sup> Or very *little* violence, for Garcia (1999, p. 10) does deny that claim: 'it seems counterintuitive to insist that the racist need believe in the *moral* inferiority of one race to another. Many racists stop short of that.'



the perspectives or inner lives of Vietnamese people. And because ignorance of Vietnamese people's moral status does not obviously entail ignorance of their specifically human capacities, it seems that we get no basis for thinking that M\* counts as failing to recognize their humanity.

Where do these reflections leave us? I have offered grounds for rejecting both a doxastic conception of racial alienation and an affective or volitional conception. *Pace* the doxastic theory, racist beliefs are not necessary for racial alienation: racial alienation can be purely affective. Yet the doxastic theory is committed *both* to not countenancing this form of racial alienation as a racist attitude *and* to denying that the purely affectively alienated person fails, as such, to see the humanity of the racial group. Accordingly, I have proposed that racial alienation be conceived as primarily an affective and motivational condition. *Pace* the attitudinal/volitional theory, on the other hand, racial alienation cannot consist of noncognitive attitudes, lest we be compelled to deny that racial alienation involves a failure to see the racial group's humanity.

We are closer to being in a position to address Lewis Gordon's organizing question: 'How is it possible that some human beings are able to regard some members of their species as fundamentally nonhuman?'<sup>30</sup> To answer that question, we must first find space in our theory of racism for the thought that racist attitudes like M\*'s (and perhaps M's) are somehow both cognitive failures and failures of motivation and affect. We must conceive of racial alienation as a lack of awareness of a portion of reality and a lack of emotional identification and concern.

Because racist beliefs are neither necessary nor sufficient for racial alienation, however, the cognitive purport of M\*'s attitude must not derive from its relation to any belief concerning the racial group's human status or capacities. To be clear, I am not denying that racial alienation can have an intellectual basis, still less that purely dispassionate beliefs can count as racist

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<sup>30</sup> Gordon (1995), p. 6.

attitudes. My point is just that racial alienation need not have any such basis, and also need not generate racist beliefs, and that when it doesn't, it counts as a cognitive failure nevertheless. This point, however, suggests that the contrary state of mind—seeing the humanity of members of the racial group—must also be both cognitively significant and laden with affect or concern. More accurately, it suggests that at least *one* form of interpersonal recognition—the kind that M\* (and perhaps M) lacks—must consist in, or rest on, a state of mind with these two key aspects.

The challenge before us, then, is one that should be familiar to students of analytic moral psychology. In analytic moral psychology, the challenge is to formulate a conception of the nature of moral judgment that captures both its objectivity or cognitive purport and its motivating or action-guiding character. The comparison is illuminating. For one tempting, albeit not obviously uncontroversial, resolution of the latter challenge is to posit a constitutive link between the making of a moral judgment, on the one hand, and the possession of the motives for acting on it, on the other. If that sort of move were defensible, it would succeed in showing how cognitive purport and motivating force could be combined in a single state of mind. What, then, would the analogous response to the former challenge be? The first step, I propose, would be to consider an alternative conception of seeing a person's humanity—a view that posits a parallel constitutive link between seeing someone as a human being or person, on the one hand, and certain primitive forms of emotional identification and concern, on the other. We find the rudiments of such a conception in a well-known passage of Wittgenstein's, and in Gaita's extrapolations from it.

## **5. Foundations: Wittgenstein's View of Our Awareness of Other Minds**

In part 2, §4 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein famously writes:

“I believe that he is suffering.” — Do I also *believe* that he isn’t an automaton?

Only reluctantly could I use the word in both contexts.

(Or is it like *this*: I believe that he is suffering, but am certain that he is not an automaton? Nonsense!)

Suppose I say of a friend: “He isn’t an automaton.” — What information is conveyed by this, and to whom would it be information? To a *human being* who meets him in ordinary circumstances? What information *could* it give him? (At the very most, that this man always behaves like a human being, and not occasionally like a machine.)

“I believe that he is not an automaton”, just like that, so far makes no sense.

My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the *opinion* that he has a soul. (PI, p. 178e)

This passage has been read as an intimation of Wittgenstein’s view of our awareness of the minds of other human beings.<sup>31</sup> I interpret him as making two main points, one negative and one positive. First, while it is possible to believe, doubt, or know that others are in particular mental states, such epistemic categories are inapplicable to our sense of the mindedness of another person (‘an attitude towards a soul’), particularly one whom we encounter in contexts of personal interaction. Indeed, for Wittgenstein, it is—as a *conceptual* (or, more accurately, grammatical) matter—impossible to believe, doubt, or know that those who are exhibiting characteristically human forms of behavior are human beings with minds like our own, rather than mindless automata. Whatever an attitude towards a soul is, it is an altogether different state of mind.

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<sup>31</sup> For discussion of this passage, see the citations in fn. 4, above, as well as Kripke (1982), pp. 48–9, fn. 31; Margalit (1996), pp. 108–12; Overgaard (2007), ch. 8; Cerbone (2019); and Dain (2019).

This first point concerns what an attitude towards a soul is *not*. What, then, might this ground-floor conviction be? That brings us to Wittgenstein's second, positive point. Following Peter Winch, I read him as referring, in this passage, to an affective and practical orientation towards other human beings that differs significantly from our standard postures towards objects.<sup>32</sup> At the most general level, an attitude towards a soul is a web of dispositions to feel particular emotions and to exhibit particular patterns of personal concern for other people, especially in light of their attitudes and other mental states.<sup>33</sup> Given Wittgenstein's emphasis, elsewhere in the *Investigations*, on our sympathetic responses and their constitutive role in our recognition of the suffering of others, we can safely conjecture that, by his own lights, a basic proneness to sympathy would belong to the collection of affective and practical dispositions that constitute our attitude towards a soul.<sup>34</sup> But the picture evoked by Wittgenstein's remarks is frustratingly vague, and, beyond a disposition to sympathy, it is unclear which strands make up the web.<sup>35</sup> What *is* clear is that for Wittgenstein these sorts of reactions do not consist in, or depend on, doxastic states utterly unimbued with intrinsic emotional and practical significance.

Wittgenstein is, in effect, drawing our attention to a typically overlooked distinction between two broad conceptions of what it is to be presented with the mindedness of another human being. First, there is what I will call the *classification model*: the view that our awareness of another person as a human being with a mind like our own consists in, or is based on, the belief that they are minded human beings. This belief is of the same form as other beliefs about the world in that, like our beliefs about stones and trees, it is affectively and motivationally

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<sup>32</sup> See Winch (1980–1981), particularly p. 8. A similar view is given by Diamond (1978), pp. 469–70.

<sup>33</sup> Cockburn (1990, pp. 5–6) helpfully proposes that an attitude towards a soul is marked by forms of *non-instrumental* concern for others, particularly for others' perspectives.

<sup>34</sup> See especially PI §§281–87 and §310.

<sup>35</sup> Other plausible candidates for inclusion are what P.F. Strawson called the 'reactive attitudes', or, more narrowly, the personal reactive attitudes: 'resentment, gratitude, forgiveness, anger,' and the reciprocal love of which adults are capable. See Strawson (2008), p. 10. I would add shame at another person's gaze to the list as well.

neutral.<sup>36</sup> In denying that our basic stance towards someone who behaves in characteristically human ways is most accurately construed as a matter of holding the ‘opinion’ that she has a soul, Wittgenstein signals his opposition to such an intellectualistic view of interpersonal awareness.

Gaita, too, explicitly rejects the classification model, which he associates with the traditional picture of knowledge as the upshot of an epistemic subject’s efforts to ‘classify entities as belonging to different kinds according to their different properties by means of the operation of a cognitive capacity which is (conceptually) independent of action and affect.’<sup>37</sup> Applied to our sense of the reality of other people, he contends, this picture implies that there is no constitutive link between our awareness of other people as such and our emotions and will; consequently, others are present to our awareness in a way that is no different, in its structure, from the way in which a tree that appears in our visual field is present to our awareness.<sup>38</sup> Gaita therefore charges the classification model with failing to adequately capture the ‘otherness of the other’, in Stanley Cavell’s phrase, by which I take him to mean that the view misses the fact that our sense of the reality of others is intrinsically permeated with emotional and practical significance and that it reflects our concern for others’ perspectives as distinct from our own.<sup>39</sup>

In any case, the lesson that Gaita draws from Wittgenstein’s discussion, to return to the other half of the distinction, is that our basic awareness of other people as minded is non-propositional and constitutively, rather than just causally, connected with our affective and volitional capacities.<sup>40</sup> I will call the alternative endorsed by Gaita, and arguably insinuated by

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<sup>36</sup> I further explore these two conceptions of interpersonal recognition in Tarasenko-Struc (2020).

<sup>37</sup> Gaita (2004), p. 169. See also Overgaard (2007), p. 142. As Overgaard reads Wittgenstein, seeing someone as a minded person involves being presented with the embodied other as a source of *claims* on our emotions and will. Compare Cockburn (1990), p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Gaita (2004), p. 176.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 171–73; cf. Cavell (1975), p. 375.

<sup>40</sup> Thus, Hertzberg (2011, p. 12) cannot be correct when he objects that Gaita is ‘inclined, on the whole, to speak as if [racism] always had an explicit thought system at its core.’

Wittgenstein, the *engagement model*: the view that our awareness of another person as a human being with a mind like our own consists in, or is based on, our exhibiting a range of (non-discursive) modes of emotional and practical responsiveness to their perspective.<sup>41</sup> According to Gaita, then, we count as seeing or recognizing someone as a human being only if, roughly, our orientation to them is *an attitude towards a soul*; alternatively, and more strongly, interpersonal recognition might consist in the activation of the dispositions constitutive of that attitude.

A version of the engagement model has the potential to respect the Misrecognition Thesis, by enabling us to make sense of the possibility that racial alienation constitutes a failure to see the humanity of a racial group even when the racially alienated person holds no racist (e.g., ideological) beliefs. The challenge was to show how racial alienation could be both a cognitive failure and a failure of affect and motivation vis à vis members of the relevant racial group, even when not based on such beliefs. In marrying interpersonal awareness with our affective and practical dispositions, the engagement model seems to be of the right shape to answer the challenge. M\*'s purely affective racial alienation—her felt inability to imagine that the loss of a child can have the same meaning for Vietnamese people as for her ‘kind’—could then, in principle, qualify as a real lack of awareness of their perspectives, not merely a morally objectionable conative attitude. This view appears to occupy roughly the right region of logical space, then, although whether its potential is realized depends on how the sketch is filled in.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Brenner (1995), pp. 287–88. See RPP I §§93, 96, and Z §528.

<sup>42</sup> Is the Gaitean/Wittgensteinian move compulsory? In particular, we might wonder whether it would be better to understand racially alienated people as holding certain motivationally charged beliefs—e.g., the belief that it is appropriate or fitting to treat members of the racial group(s) in question differently. Briefly, I think that this proposal gets things backwards: it's *because* the racist feels that things cannot have the same kind of meaning for members of the other racial group as for his own that he believes that it's appropriate or fitting to treat them differently, and, anyway, the racially alienated person need not have any very definite idea of how they should be treated differently. So, while I'm not sure that the view being proposed is mandatory, it is, at the very least, more plausible than many of the alternatives on offer. My thanks to Richard Rowland for pressing me to address this point.

Let's return to Gaita's conception of racial alienation as misrecognition of humanity, to see whether his version of the engagement model can bear the theoretical weight of that conception. For him, the kind of racism exhibited by M or by some white slave-owners in the antebellum U.S. is not primarily a matter of their failing to classify the relevant racial groups as instances of the species *Homo sapiens*, or even of their failing to dispassionately identify certain specifically human capacities in them. Instead, racism of this kind amounts to the racist's failure to identify with members of the racial group in an emotionally charged and action-guiding way. Thus, this sort of racism is, first and foremost, a failure to *see* them as human beings—to see (and feel) lineaments of their humanity in their expressive behavior—and not a failure to *believe* that they are human. The failure shows up as a lacuna in the racist's perception of their perspective, as it is expressed in their behavior. A white slave-owner's failure of identification, for example, might take the form of an inability to see 'human sexuality as fully present in a black body' or 'human sorrow in a black face' (i.e., because *no face that looks like that can express it*); of an inability to hear human affliction expressed in the slaves' music; and so forth.<sup>43</sup>

Consider, for instance, the response of the historian Ulrich Phillips to black soldiers singing the spiritual 'Down by the Riverside' at Camp Gordon during World War I.<sup>44</sup> Hearing the soldiers' song (with its refrain 'I ain't gonna study war no more/Study war no more/Ain't gonna study war no more'), Phillips wrote that he was struck by their showing, as he saw it, 'the same easy-going, amiable, serio-comic obedience... which distinguished their [enslaved] forbears', which, rather unfortunately, led him to conclude that 'a generation of freedom has

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<sup>43</sup> Gaita (2004), pp. 159–60.

<sup>44</sup> I want to thank Cora Diamond for suggesting this excellent example.

wrought less transformation in the bulk of the blacks than might casually be supposed.’<sup>45</sup> Phillips appeared to believe that the black soldiers were human beings, in the biological sense, yet he was unable to hear the full range of human emotional responsiveness in their singing, and this inability of his is more plausibly regarded as one aspect of his failure to see them as fully human.

Now, following Gaita’s lead, we need not think that there are two distinct mental states present: on the one hand, Phillips’s belief that black people do not exhibit human emotional responses as white people do, encoded in his perception of them, and, on the other hand, the affective and volitional states towards the soldiers that causes him to accept that belief or that might be caused by that belief. Rather, his affective and practical orientation towards the soldiers can *itself* be a cognitive failure in addition, perhaps, to causing a further cognitive failure—namely, the racist belief that black people had not changed significantly since the antebellum era. Thus, it is natural to speak of a *corruption* of Phillips’s capacity for interpersonal recognition.

How, though, could emotionally identifying with another person be a form of cognition of her perspective, such that failing to identify with her in certain ways counts as a cognitive failure? In the background of Gaita’s view, I think, is the idea that certain forms of emotional responsiveness to others themselves constitute ways of seeing (or not seeing) others’ minds. The idea is bold and intriguing, and it merits serious consideration. As a first step in that direction, I want to raise a worry, unaddressed by Gaita’s discussion, that threatens the tenability of this idea and that seems thereby to undermine his view’s ability to respect the Misrecognition Thesis.

Here’s one way to see the issue. It is unclear how, exactly, to extract a morally loaded view of interpersonal awareness like Gaita’s from Wittgenstein’s point about our basic

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<sup>45</sup> As quoted in Smith (2013), pp. 148–49. This analysis comports with the analysis of Adriane Lentz-Smith (2009: 2), who observes that to ‘truly hear African Americans, Phillips would have had to listen past his prejudices, to understand black people as fully human, and to see black troops as men, not children.’



awareness of others, even if we admit that certain supplementary premises are needed. At first approximation, the difficulty, as Gaita himself points out, is that merely having an attitude towards a soul vis à vis someone seems plainly insufficient for seeing their humanity in a sense that might exclude racial alienation, among other morally objectionable stances towards others.<sup>46</sup> An attitude towards a soul potentially comprises dispositions to hold very many different kinds of attitudes, both pro-social and anti-social—including love and hatred, esteem and contempt, gratitude and resentment, and so forth. What makes certain interpersonal stances count as instances of real awareness of someone’s human perspective and others count as unawareness?

To be fair, Gaita tries to close this gap, claiming that beyond having a bare ‘attitude towards a soul’ vis à vis someone, we must regard her as endowed with the kind of individuality that makes her an intelligible object of love if we are to qualify as seeing her humanity.<sup>47</sup> We must also, and relatedly, regard her as a potential partner in dialogue, which involves, *inter alia*, having an emotionally charged sense of her as ‘capable of an ever deepening, individuating responsiveness to the defining facts of the human condition,’ including sexuality, love, and death.<sup>48</sup> There is considerable wisdom in these suggestions, and I do not mean to diminish it. Indeed, Gaita’s view seems to comport with some of our talk about what it is to see the humanity of other people. All that I want to point out is that it is unclear why these two modes of regarding another person—seeing her as an intelligible object of human love and seeing her as a potential partner in dialogue—qualify as instances of seeing her humanity in a standard, literal sense.

We need a criterion of veridicality for interpersonal awareness, in other words: a general account of what makes a given way of regarding others’ minds an instance of seeing their

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>47</sup> This is the topic of Gaita (2004), ch. 9.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 331–32.

humanity and the contrary way of regarding their minds an instance of distorted or occluded vision. Otherwise, on what grounds can we legitimately insist that the lifelong anti-racist sees the humanity of her fellows aright whereas M and M\* don't? Gaita is not making the dubious move of merely building the morally required forms of responsiveness into his conception of seeing another person's humanity from the outset. He is not presenting what is basically a stipulative definition as a substantive philosophical thesis concerning our awareness of other people as such. In that case, though, Gaita needs a criterion of veridicality for would-be instances of interpersonal awareness, and we do not find in his work a sustained attempt to articulate one.

Notice that a proponent of the classification model does *not* appear to have trouble specifying a criterion of veridicality. We see the humanity of others, she might claim, if and only if we ascribe certain characteristically human capacities to them and they really have those capacities. But in opting for the engagement model instead, Gaita cannot avail himself of that reply, it seems. To put the worry more provocatively: in the absence of such a criterion, Gaita's view of racial alienation and interpersonal recognition begins to look much like a kind of dogmatism or mysticism—a suitably naturalized variety, to be sure, but mysticism nevertheless.

The worry that I have highlighted is a stubborn knot, and I do not know how to untangle it. To tighten the knot, I will close by examining an objection to Gaita's view raised by Tamas Pataki. Pataki objects to Gaita on the grounds that his view posits too extrinsic a connection between racism and the (I would say, distinctively interpersonal) hostility or even cruelty that seems essential to it, including 'mass murder, systematic humiliation, lynchings, mutilations.'<sup>49</sup> 'On Gaita's account these things are not essentially connected to racism as particular expressions

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<sup>49</sup> Pataki (2004), p. 193. He also argues that the phenomenon that Gaita is describing seems 'marginal', 'affecting only some people and, indeed, a fluctuating constituency', and that Gaita needs an account of why this happens only to some people some of the time (p. 192).

of it,' alleges Pataki; rather, 'racism is conceived of as a kind of permissive cause that allows these acts to proceed. Instead of being part of the explanation of what motivates the racist to bear ill will, exact deference, perform atrocities, racism is understood as external to that motivation.'<sup>50</sup> That is, Gaita's view of racial alienation might justifiably predict that someone in its grip would treat the target racial group with indifference or instrumentalization, but not with hostility.

This is an excellent point, and my response to it here can only be partial and tentative. Briefly, despite the misleading title of his chapter, I do not take Gaita to be offering an account of racism in general, but, more modestly, an account of a certain kind of racist perception.<sup>51</sup> It would be strange, though, if racial alienation had *nothing* directly to do with racial hatred or hostility, and it is unfortunate that he does not consider its connection to the latter. In any case, we can imagine a plausible, albeit sketchy, story that links racial alienation with racial hostility.

For notice that M, who need bear no ill will towards the Vietnamese mothers, is watching them on television—importantly, *at a distance from her*. It is not difficult to see, however, how her relatively cool indifference or contempt for them might transform into hostility if that buffer between her and them were to be removed—if, say, all parties were living in the same neighborhood or even country, sharing a public sphere (and a competitive labor market!) with each other. If M truly feels that the defining aspects of the human condition just cannot have the same sort of meaning for Vietnamese people as for her (and her 'kind'), then it is a short step, I submit, to seeing them as an inhuman invasive species whose prospective 'takeover' of social space can only be prevented through acts of brutal violence—particularly, *retributive* acts of violence that express or enact white racists' dominance and their targets' subordination. So,

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 193.

<sup>51</sup> I want to thank Gaita for clarifying this aspect of his view in personal correspondence.

racial hostility is not as external to racial alienation as Pataki supposes; they may be two sides of the same coin, or two more or less distinct aspects of racists' perception of the racial outgroup.

This story has some credibility. But much more remains to be explained. In particular, there is still the problem that it is unclear how to conceive of racial hatred or hostility on a Gaitean conception of interpersonal awareness. This point brings us back to my original worry. Unlike callous indifference, racial hatred is not straightforwardly comparable to blindness to the perspective of their object. Such hatred plausibly includes some (emotionally and motivationally charged) awareness, however dim, of its object's perspective, albeit a twisted kind that is also marred by a selective inattentiveness to aspects of their perspective. And, whatever its merits, the account that I have just sketched does not obviously help us to conceptualize these aspects of the racist's state of mind or their relation to each other. As I said, it is a stubborn knot indeed.

## **6. Conclusion**

In closing, let us revisit the question with which this essay began: what, if anything, do Wittgenstein's philosophical reflections have to contribute to our understanding of racism?

I have argued that racial alienation need not always be based on racist beliefs, nor need it consist, fundamentally, in noncognitive attitudes. On the contrary, racial alienation can be purely affective, with no intellectual basis, yet, per the Misrecognition Thesis, it still constitutes a failure to see the human perspective of members of the racial group. Wittgenstein's remarks on our awareness of others as minded human beings give us an appealing way to make these claims consistent. By conceiving of our ground-floor conviction that others are minded as an affective-cum-practical orientation towards their perspectives ('an attitude towards a soul'), we can make sense of the idea that racial alienation qualifies as a bona fide cognitive failure, a misrecognition

of a person's humanity. Wittgenstein therefore provides us fertile ground for a conception of racial alienation, of the kind that flowers in Gaita's work. At the same time, my contention has been that Gaita's view needs a deeper account of what it is that makes one kind of attitude count as seeing someone's humanity and its opposite count as a misrecognition of humanity.

One implication of my argument is that racism's relationship to ideology is far from straightforward. Because racial alienation is a form of racism and a racially alienated person need not accept, or even be aware of, a racist ideology, it follows that not all racist attitudes are founded on ideology. This point is compatible, however, with thinking that it is no coincidence that societies infected by racial alienation will tend to concoct a racist ideology (if only to rationalize their own alienation), and with thinking that those societies *must* be ones in which a racist ideology has taken root, even if not every racially alienated person accepts it. I take my argument to dovetail, too, with recent challenges to the pervasive idea that (racist) implicit biases should be construed as unconscious beliefs or belief-like states of mind. This discussion is, therefore, part of a broader effort to resist the tendency to overly intellectualize racist attitudes.<sup>52</sup>

But the account sketched here also suggests a Gaitean conception of one of the main aims of antiracist efforts and of social justice movements more broadly, one for which I hope to have provided the philosophical underpinnings. The ideal of social justice is, in Gaita's own words, defined by the characteristic 'insistence that our state and civic institutions should, to the degree that is humanly possible, reveal rather than obscure the full humanity of our fellow citizens.'<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Madva (2016), among others.

<sup>53</sup> Gaita (2002), p. 72.

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