# Transcription information

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# Speaker information

* Matt LaVine (Matt)
* Dwight Lewis (Dwight)
* Charles Mills (Charles)
* Shelley Tremain (Shelley)
* Linda Martín Alcoff (Linda)

Notes:

All person and place names which require confirmation and/or checking are highlighted in yellow.

Inaudible audio at:

‘The Question of Inclusion in Philosophy’

Online Panel Discussion for Larger, Freer, More Loving YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnOc8Gkvup4>

Transcript

[Start of recording]

00:00:00 Matt Welcome folks, welcome back to Larger, Freer, More Loving. I'm Matt LaVine.

00:00:06 Dwight I'm Dwight Lewis!

00:00:08 Matt Today we're talking about a more specific issue than we have in our previous episodes. That said, it's an issue that we believe connects up with racism and ableism, not only in the discipline of philosophy, but also racism and ableism in the broader culture. So in particular, we want to talk about the news that came out several weeks ago about a seven year, two point seven eight million dollar grant that was awarded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Resource Council of Canada for a project entitled Extending New Narratives in the History of Philosophy. Now, the goals of this project sound great. The goals are to change the standards of practice in philosophy to enable the discipline to become inclusive and diverse, by retrieving philosophical works of women and individuals from other marginalized groups across historical periods from 1400 through 1940 and sustaining the presence of these figures and their works in the history of philosophy. But as you all immediately noticed, there are some serious problems here. In particular, the project is run almost exclusively by non-disabled white women with a few white men thrown in and also seems to be primarily interested in uncovering the works of non-disabled white women. And there was a good deal of discussion about this at the *Daily Nous*, but also around the philosophy internet world, so we wanted to have a dedicated discussion about it with some folks who bring some serious expertise and experience on the matter. That's why y'all are here, so if you would please, could you just introduce yourselves in whatever way seems most appropriate, given the topic. I know you all have such wonderful expertise and experience; I didn't want to pick out things to focus on myself, but also if you think there is anything that needs to be added to the characterization of the topic that would be great as well, please. And I love alphabetical order so let’s start with Charles please.

00:02:16 Charles Sure, no problem. Okay so: Charles Mills. I am a distinguished professor, at the Graduate Center at the City University of New York: I did my PhD in Canada actually, way back when, in the 1970's and 1980's at the University of Toronto. I came to Canada from Jamaica and I had a very naive conception of philosophy; in particular, I did not realize how white it was. And if you think philosophy is white now, in the US, believe me, you have not seen real whiteness until you go up to Canada. So this was a real shock to me, and in fact, the very first meeting I attended of the Canadian Philosophical Association way back in the 1980s, I do believe that of all the hundreds of people there, both faculty and students, I was the only person of color in the entire meeting. So that gives you a sense of things. I came to the US because I couldn't find a job in Canada, but obviously since I did my PhD up there, I have a certain sort of lingering attachment to it, and I was really concerned, you know, when I saw this. Normally I don't get involved in these online threads, but I thought to myself: considering how long ago I did my PhD there—I got it in ‘85, it's 2020—surely there should be a bit more self-consciousness in philosophy now about these issues. Especially considering that the announcement came out in the middle of the global protest around race and racism, sparked by the George Floyd killing.

00:03:56 Matt Thank you very much Charles. Linda?

00:04:00 Linda I'm Linda Martín Alcoff and I teach at the City University of New York. Charles and I are colleagues at the Graduate Center, and I'm also at Hunter College. I've been working on race and feminism since my first publications in the 1980's when I was a graduate student. And in those days, we had to, as Charles said, do it on our own [chuckles]. I had to do Feminist Philosophy outside of the Philosophy department and I had to, in my graduate program, and those of us interested in Latin American philosophy created our own reading group. We would share documents and information and ideas and interpretations, just amongst ourselves, because there was no place inside the profession in which this field was represented at conferences or in journals to speak of. Certainly not in the requirements. I'm from Panama, I'm an immigrant, I grew up in Florida. Like Dwight is… I'm in the—[Dwight cheers] I love Florida! I went to Florida State and like Charles, I had a different experience initially because in my department at Florida State I studied the philosophy of Che Guevara and Reggie Dupre. We were reading about—because it was a different time, too, but I had a professor from Argentina and he had done a lot of work on anti-colonial philosophical debate, so I thought philosophy was the place to be to discuss the teaching for how to make global anti-imperialist revolution! Because there was a lot… you know, there is a lot of writing around the world! And then of course, I went to graduate school and discovered otherwise. But I've been president of the American Philosophical Association like Charles, so I've done both inside institutional work and also outside institutional work to try to change the profession together, with Shelley and Charles for the last… I don't know, it's been like thirty-five years or so!

00:06:26 Charles Too long!

00:06:28 Dwight Hey! Well, without y'all coming forward, we wouldn't be here; I wouldn't be here. I'm going to be serious; this wouldn't have been somewhere I got pulled towards. It's work that you guys have done that really pulled me into this, so I appreciate you, you know? And Linda, the first time I met you I was like [huge cheesy grin] in Switzerland, we were at some race or racism conference and I was like [gasp], "I can't believe this! I can't believe this!" Seriously. Yeah. We need you.

00:06:58 Matt *The Racial Contract* and *Blackness Visible* changed my life, Charles.

00:07:04 Charles Oh my god! What a burden! I'm responsible for this guy, whatever happens to him from now on! [laughter]

00:07:14 Matt So thank you both. Shelley, would you introduce yourself please?

00:07:18 Shelley I'm Shelley Tremain and I'm currently unemployed. I'm a disabled Canadian feminist philosopher of disability and I'm also a coordinator at *BIOPOLITICAL PHILOSOPHY*, the philosophy blog that focuses on issues of exclusion and marginalization in philosophy, and with a special attention to issues of exclusion and marginalization for disabled philosophers and critical philosophical work on disability. I'm not quite sure what to say except that this project and the large grant that was awarded to it, for me, crystallized—and this goes back to a lot of what Charles was talking about—this grant for me crystallizes many of the problems with Canadian philosophy. In particular, the demographics of Canadian philosophy have not changed in, I would say, fifteen years, for anyone except non-disabled white women. And I'm really the only disabled philosopher of disability in Canada at present, and there's never been a disabled philosopher of disability employed full-time in a Canadian philosophy department. There is as far as I know only one Black philosopher employed full time in Canada at president and that's Chike Jeffers. So the situation here is very… it's very upsetting and I don't see anything happening to change that and more importantly, I don't see any institutional mechanisms that would promote or allow for that sort of change or enable it. Certainly not within the Canadian Philosophical Association which has an equity committee, but the equity committee, I mean, they, you know, publish a report maybe every few years and those reports are very uneven in terms of their quality. The last report that was put out was a good practices report and although it was good with respect to non-disabled white women and gender equity, binary gender equity, it was very poor with respect to—the quality was not very good with respect to disability in particular. I actually contacted the organizer, the head of the equity committee at the time and you know, asked her, you know, pointed out to her problems with the way disability was represented in the document. They said to me at the time, "You know, I'm not a specialist in this area, I'm a philosopher of Science," and I thought, well, so what are you doing? Why are you putting together a report that could be quite beneficial and could be quite important for the discipline and the profession in Canada and it's not even something that you are committed to or really know a lot about. So the Canadian Philosophical Association does not have any kind of mechanism that would bring about change in philosophy in Canada. I don't see any mechanisms within, you know, departments themselves that would bring about any kind of institutional change. There's nothing like Diversity Institutes in Canada. There are no—there's one conference a year for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, you got that a bit wrong Matt when you said it at the outset, but—

00:11:40 Charles You non-Canadian, you!

00:11:43 Shelley So there's one conference, a CPA, an annual conference once a year and the equity committee has a panel on it, but other than that there's nothing else. And the CSWP, Canadian Society for Women in Philosophy has an annual conference in October of every year but that's usually attended by almost exclusively non-disabled white women, because that's almost exclusively, you know, who comprises the full time faculty in this country, non-disabled white people.

00:12:22 Charles Yeah, yeah.

00:12:22 Dwight So before we move on, I do want to thank you all for being here, we really appreciate it.

00:12:29 Shelley Thank you, for organizing this.

00:12:32 Dwight We're excited to do this, as soon as we read on the *Daily Nous* we were… yeah, yeah, ecstatic to do this. So moving on, I actually want to step in, because I believe that change can happen and not just… not just amongst ourselves, but I think we can beat the institution. But I want to say that it starts at grassroots, right? We—and I, I'm going to talk too much, but you know, we talk about civil rights and yet we're still where we're at, and I think it's because, partly, the community has to police itself at the grassroots level. Your neighbors have to say something's wrong, your friends have to say something is wrong, your family has to say something's wrong. And philosophy is our family, and so this is meant to call that out, right? The goal of this is to call—is to be like, "No! Family members have been wrong or have been wronged." And so, how then do we move forward from that? So Charles, you brought up in your introduction the… this grant coming out in the wake of George Floyd, so I guess the question that I have to ask you is—and anyone can jump in on this too—is, what does this tell us about how people are attuned to Blackness in philosophy? What does this, I guess, how does this… what does this… what information does this tell us in relationship to how people are attuned to Blackness in the philosophy world?

00:14:15 Charles Well, I think it really brings home, and this is a very frustrating thing to be brought home, the extent to which, at least in certain circles, the efforts of many people over decades seem to have made no difference. Because my main research area for the past quarter century or so has been issues of race and Africana philosophy and so forth. I've published a lot in this area, I've given a lot of talks. A lot of other people, Black American philosophers, some white progressive philosophers work on race; Latinx, Asian-Americans, a handful of Native people. So these issues have been discussed for a long period of time and part of the startling thing for me about seeing the line-up was that I would think that in 2020 there'd be a sort of self-consciousness. You would automatically look at this and say, "Hold on a second, this can't go forward, it's all white people! Where are the people of color?" And I think both at the level of the PI's, the investigators themselves, and the evaluators, the people who are looking at different proposals and deciding what to fund, there should have been an immediate response: "Hold on! This is crazy!" And the very fact that that did not happen is an indication of the extent to which philosophy is just decades, decades behind the times, in terms of discussions that have been taking place in other disciplines. So it shows a certain obduracy, a certain imperviousness, that you can do all this stuff, you can be writing and publishing all this stuff: for a subset of people who have differential power in the profession, none of this has mattered. They just have been going on regardless, and the scary thing is, will continue to do so!

00:16:13 Dwight Yeah, yeah, and that is the scary thing, that we have, that we are continuing to do so. We are, we are. Linda, Linda, I'm going to ask you: so now that we are again, I'm going to bring ‘wake’ up again, because I think it's, you know, a beautiful analogy. Being in the wake of this, not only George Floyd, but then being in the wake of the fact that people are not attuned to Blackness, how do we avoid these types of situations? I know it's a big question. How to we attune people to Blackness and what should happen in response to this case? I know I'm asking a tough question.

00:16:53 Linda No, it's the question we have to ask. What surprised me is, this project apparently was focused on gender and yet was not done in an intersectional way, and like Charles says, we've been doing work on intersectionalism for decades now. And so, you can't think about making progress in a relationship to gender by simply focusing on European philosophers or European women anymore. I mean, really, this shouldn't have happened, so—but I think we have a gap between the decision-makers and the people doing the scholarship. There is better diversity of scholarship and the journals and books today that's available, and we have a generation gap, and so the older generation who are in the position to decide who gets money and these really ambitious projects and have the gravitas, the CVs, the experience to actually get the money are not a diverse crowd. And in Canada, worse than ever, so I think the—and I think it's true that feminist philosophy has made a lot of progress in terms of representation on boards as well as numbers of publication, as well as hiring, even the top rated… I don't believe in that stuff, but the top ranked philosophy departments now. Because it used to be that you wouldn't find a feminist philosopher in the top ranked philosopher departments, now you do! Sometimes even two! So it has changed, but it is clearly insufficient, because it is feminist philosophers doing, you know, a certain range of feminist work, of feminist questions, and not intersectional questions of a variety of sorts. And so, although we have made progress, and I think that supports your hopefulness, Dwight, it has been restricted. And in some ways I think that, just the last point I'll make, I think that there's a reason for that, because I think it's easier to include European women, non-disabled white women; I think it's less challenging to philosophical methodology. I think what's really challenging to philosophical methodology and historiography is to figure out how to think about Africana philosophy back in time and Latin American philosophy and other arenas. I think that's more challenging to the business as usual of the ways in which we define what counts as a philosophical work and the way we define what counts as philosophical methodology. So I think it's not an accident that the inclusion of European women like the interlocutors with Descartes and others and so forth, have been able to get some play. Still not as much as they deserve, but they've been able to get some play, but I think it's going to be a bigger lift to get the non-Europeans, to get other kinds of intersectional issues, disability in among them, into the canon of required reading. It needs to be required reading to get your PhD! You should not be able to get a PhD in 2020 in philosophy without having done any Africana philosophy and this other kind of philosophy, but you can. So that's the next hurdle, and I think we work both inside and outside institutions; you cannot rely simply on working inside institutions. You cannot rely simply on working inside institutions, there has to be pressure from the street: that's what we learned from the movements.

00:21:27 Charles And if I could just pick up there briefly what Dwight… Dwight's metaphor, earlier. We think of this metaphor of a family. You know, that is a metaphor that does really shape perception and cognition: it's whom you're hanging out with, whom you're socially interacting with, whom you're reading. And there's a white family and the fact has to be faced: white women are subordinated, historically deprived of the vote, right to own property, to run for office, all that stuff. Nonetheless, they are part of the white family, the larger white family, in a way that people of color are not. So the people who are subordinate in the household, then there are those folks who are not in the household altogether; they're not even in the same neighborhood! So you know, in issues of race, issues of imperialism and the global South and so forth, these are in a sense more challenging as Linda says. Precisely because these are the populations that are more alien. So that you know, white women have been subordinated by white men, but there's a sense in which there's a family connection there that you do not find for the racial outsider, and I think this really does shape in a pretty deep way, in a period of protest against restrictions of access, who finds access more easy? Who is sort of able to push their way in more readily? Africana philosophers, Latinx philosophers, Native philosophers as against white women, who as I say, are historically—because the household is constructed around them. They should not, of course, be restricted to the household, that's part of the whole point of the feminist challenge, the way the household and public and private spheres are defined. Nonetheless, they are part of the family, the larger white family, in a way that people of color are definitely not.

00:23:25 Dwight Yeah, yeah, so I want to actually connect Charles and Linda here, too, because we're talk about this easy access, making access easy and then this connection to Descartes, because I worked on someone like Anton Wilhelm Amo, and the only reason why people are knocking on my door to hear about Amo is because they can easily connect him to someone like Descartes or easily connect him to someone like Leibniz.But if he was an Africana philosopher that was not connectable to the western canon so easily, no one would be knocking on my door! No one would care. No one would care, and so that leap that you were talking about, Linda, I think that's just the case, that leap is so… yeah, it's so wide, that gap is so wide that it's scary. I mean, I would love—it's also scary--

00:24:19 Linda There's a critique of Descartes going on, of, "Descartes got his ideas from the Jesuits," and also, and I think philosophers respond in the way people respond to the coming down of the monuments, "You can't take our monuments!"

00:24:36 Dwight I actually agree, I really agree, I really agree. But we're going to come back to some of the stuff that Linda brought up with the senior and junior gap, and… how we can re-think, especially for junior scholars, how we can rethink getting tenure, also, because some of us—I'm going to talk way too much, but I probably worked on somebody like Anton Wilhelm Amo because of my advisor, who… he actually is very great, Roger Ariew. He was like, "If you do Early Modern we know that you're going to get a job, you just need to figure out how to do Early Modern in the way that you do it." And so, of course, I started working on Anton Wilhelm Amo and race, but it was smart, because I really don't know if I would have a job right now if I didn't. And I don't know if I would have gotten—you know, that I’ve gotten multiple fellowships over and over, it's because I'm working on something that the white family members can relate to, right? To be serious.

00:25:47 Matt Yeah, so this is interesting. One of the things we like to do here is include with each episode a reading list and you all mentioned work you've done here in the past on these issues. Especially, one of the things that really comes to mind here is, you've all done work on the mechanisms of reproduction of global white supremacy and the disability apparatus, so I'm wondering here, would you be willing to all reference a work or two of your own in the past where you feel like you've actually done some work that if people were paying attention to these things, would have pre-empted decisions like this.

00:26:37 Linda Well I just happen to have… [holds up *The Routledge Companion to the Philosophy of Race*].

00:26:41 Charles Oh my God, she has it right with her!

00:26:43 Dwight Yes, yes!

00:26:45 Linda I didn't know you were going to ask this question.

00:26:48 Charles One of those coincidences, we all understand! [laughter] Let me see if I can happen to have a book near at hand also.

00:26:57 Matt I've got *Blackness Visible* right here for you, Charles.

00:27:00 Charles Oh my god, you're doing it for me, that's wonderful.

00:27:03 Dwight I know.

00:27:05 Shelley [holds up *Foucault and Feminist Philosophy of Disability*].

00:27:05 Charles Everybody happens to have their work with them, wonderful.

 00:27:07 Dwight I don't have my work, but… [holds up *Ain’t I A Woman* by bell hooks].

00:27:11 Matt Nice.

00:27:12 Shelley Good.

00:27:12 Charles So you're bell hooks! It's your alias!

00:27:16 Linda So people can access this collection now, which is, you know, like all these big hardback collections, very expensive, but they can actually access it free on the website, and it has, you know, thirty essays on the history of philosophy, on all philosophical areas. So that's one, just one. There's so much, but that's one resource.

00:27:40 Charles And my first book's still my most popular book, *The Racial Contract*, if I say so myself. It starts off by saying we need to look at white supremacy. And it seemed kind of crazy and extreme at the time. Now, lo and behold, thanks to our president who has played a positive role in that respect at least, white supremacy is now a subject you can talk about much more openly than before. I mean I do self-consciously put in a global context, talk about European imperialism and colonialism and how it has shaped the world we live in. And a manifestation of that is, you know, the fact that the Floyd killing here in the US sparked these demonstrations all over. Not merely as a condemnation of US racism, but the racism in their own countries, you know like in Britain, Australia, New Zealand etcetera.

00:28:31 Dwight Beautiful.

00:28:33 Shelley Well, I held up my book, but you know, if anyone's interested in my work they can go to my *PhilPapers* page and I have most of my papers there, so they can take a look at, you know, whatever they like, there. I think I—oh, I guess I could also say that I'm going to be guest editing a special of Critical Diversity, the *International Journal of Critical Diversity Studies* in South Africa, a new South African journal, inter-disciplinary journal. And this special issue that I'm going to be guest editing is Philosophies of Disability and the Global Pandemic, and I'm really looking forward to reading the work that's submitted for that.

00:29:24 Matt Thank you. So in your responses, Charles, you brought up the cold-blooded killing of George Floyd in the streets of Minneapolis, and Shelley, you brought up the case of a global pandemic here. So a number of commenters during this discussion have said things like, "Why are we worried about what's happening in philosophy departments right now?" when there are bigger issues facing people of color, disabled people, oppressed people, etcetera. So I'm wondering, how would y'all connect this discussion about what goes on in the institution of philosophy to COVID-19, to the current political action against white supremacy culture and so on?

00:30:12 Charles Certainly it's the case, and you know, that people are right in one sense, sort of, get the priorities straight. There's a sort of crucial issue of will I get my next article published and so on, but there's a really important issue of what's happening to people in the society at large, not merely people of color, but disadvantaged white people. You know, the rent crisis, the economic crisis; this is going to be affecting people across racial lines in a major way. So the justification, nonetheless, under these circumstances, for talking about philosophy, is because we have a distinctive perspective to bring to bear on these issues, which might conceivably be of some value. Insofar as you have philosophy as a crucial part of a liberal humanist education, even if as we know, even that is under threat with the closing down of philosophy departments at some schools; insofar as you have thousands of philosophy courses being taught each year across the country, maybe tens of thousands; and, insofar as philosophy, I suppose, giving a big picture view of things. Issues of social justice and ethics and how we understand the world and so forth, philosophers can play a role in helping young Americans to get a better sense of the problems facing the country and what, you know, a good way of tackling them would be. So my own area of specialization is political philosophy, so I'll focus on that: ever since John Rawls’s book in 1971—so the fiftieth anniversary coming up next year—the main theme of Anglo-American political philosophy has been social justice, okay? So we have all these courses across the US that have been taught for decades on social justice, and here is the really amazing thing about these courses and about this body of literature: racial justice is virtually completely undiscussed. We are here in what is historically a white settler state, which establishes a white supremacist policy, so that one of the most salient manifestations of injustice is white supremacy and the very people who's supposed mission it is to clarify things for us on the issue of social justice, the last thing they want to talk about is racial justice. So you have this huge body of literature: Rawls himself, the secondary literature on Rawls, and not just Rawls but people to the center, to the right of Rawls, the liberal tradition, even the communitarian tradition, a lot of people in the continental tradition as well, all these different traditions, and what binds them, a common link, is a resolute refusal to talk about the central structure of injustice in the United States: white supremacy. So that now that we're having people demonstrate in the street, and young people are taking the lead—and you know, all credit to Black Lives Matter and people of Dwight's age—the question we need to ask is, given that political philosophers are supposed to be justice guys, where the hell where they when these  issues… they're charged to prepare young Americans to deal with problems of the country, to make it a better United States, where the hell were they entrusted with that valuable task? These are the kinds of that's philosophers—I'm focusing just on this, because as I said, political philosophy is my area, but think of what a difference it would make as the country transitions to a non-white majority—some people are claiming it's not going to happen because whiteness will be expanded, but for those who think it's transitioning to a non-white majority—think of all the problems and confluences that are going to attend this transition. Think of the role of philosophers in preparing, in particular, young white Americans for this new world they're going to be living in, and to make it as smooth and just a transition as possible. Don't philosophers, don't political philosophers need to be talking about issues of race and racial justice and corrective justice? And they need to admit the historically white supremacist character of the United States as a nation.

00:34:37 Dwight Yeah, one hundred. Yeah, that was good. So I'm going to say just one thing, and then Linda we're going to let you respond to the same question. Yeah, that was beautiful, and partly because, you know, when I was an undergrad I went to PWI, Wheaton College in Chicago, and I had an advisor there, Tom Schwanda, super white dude. But I came to him in my course, I was like, "I haven't read one Black person while I've been at Wheaton, what's… something's problematic about this." And he was like, "Yeah, you're right, you're right." Still didn't add a book at first—he did not add a book of color at first, but he gave me an extra book, he was like, "Well you can read this extra book." And then I went to him at the end of my senior year and I was like, "I think I want to do academia, but do people like me even do it?" because I hadn't seen any Black people in academia. And he was like, "Yes, and I'm going to help you!" And he has been such a fighter for me ever since; so much so that… yeah, yeah, yeah, he even emailed me this week and was like, "I know that you're hurting right now and I'm hurting for you, and I'm trying to learn ways that I can do this even better in the classroom." And I've looked at his books for the past ten years after I left school and all of them are filled with Black characters also now. These are the type of things—and what I'm getting at are, these are the type of systematic things that white people have to do, is really what I'm trying to connect with you, and say that he's doing something that's actually able to change, at least, some people, white, and help Black people, by engaging. And not just engaging at a surface level, but actually attempting to change the way that he even does research, right? And I think that's something that I feel like a lot of times is not happening, and that's what I've been saying that's in relationships, to do with people. People are not doing things that are actually changing their research, their… it's like, "I'll dabble, I'll dabble in this, but I'm not actually going to do this actual change." So, actually, we'll move on, we'll move on to another question, Linda.

00:37:01 Linda Can I just address this a little bit?

00:37:03 Dwight Yeah, please.

00:37:05 Linda I think it's hard, I mean, I'm in New York, it's hard for my students to focus on their assignments when there's so much going on in the world, but I think it's important to have both a long term and a short term approach. You need a short-term approach that has an immediate agenda of demands and how you're going to, you know, strategically get to them, but you also have to have a long-term approach. When I was young, I got to meet this activist from El Salvador and the FMLN, and the FMLN had an eighty-year plan, and that—

00:37:47 Charles Wow.

00:37:48 Dwight Wow! That's multiple generations!

37:53 Linda We were so into immediate gratification, we thought it was going to happen in our lifetime. But if you have an eighty-year plan, you're thinking beyond your own lifetime, right? And so you have to… you have to also think about that. And for that I think, as Charles says, what we have to do is change the narrative. And philosophy has an important role to play in changing the narrative of who people of color are. The narrative is that Europeans invented freedom, individual liberty, rights… democracy. Right? That's the idea. And so, why should we respect the intellectual traditions of other groups, and shouldn't we just see them as—they shouldn't be decision makers, right? You know, we’ve got to have Europeans to be the decision makers because they're the ones at the front, they're the vanguard of the human race and thinking about justice. But, you know, what we're finding out now through research, like by Chike Jeffers at Dalhousie in Canada, is that, you know, some of these concepts were not exclusive to Europe, they have different formulations than other places. Better formulations, I think that the concept of human rights really comes from the Las Cases-Sepúlveda debates over indigenous rights in the New World, and I think there's non-ideal political philosophy traditions throughout Latin America that are not only distinct and original from the European tradition, but better in some very important respects. So it's like, philosophers have been eating from this very small, you know, part of the whole, but I think beyond the philosophical resources that we're not taking advantage of, it's the narrative in our cultures that really is critical to maintaining people's racist views, and views that, you know, even among liberals, the ranking, the intellectual ranking is as it should be, is not illegitimate. And philosophy has an important role to play in overturning that narrative if we can get on… get on board and get working.

00:40:23 Shelley I just want to pick up on that point if I can, because I think for me that is one of the most disappointing things about this Extending New Narratives project, is that it's not going to have the kind of narratives that—or I expect that it won't have the kind of narratives that Linda's referring to. It won't have alternative narratives to a very Euro-centric, Western-centric, you know, scope of the history of philosophy. I just want to say that one of the things that I mentioned in one of my comments on *Daily Nous* was that… I pointed out that there didn't seem to be any philosophers of race or philosophers of disability in the roster of PIs. And this concerns me because—you know, and this gets to what Linda and Charles have been talking about—because if there's no one who specializes in philosophy of disability or who knows the material quite well, narratives, aspects of the past that could be discussed in the present are not going to be even recognized as important to be discussed. So for instance, I… on a recent post that I made, the post that I made the other day at *BIOPOLITICAL PHILOSOPHY*, I mentioned the central role that Canadian philosophers and philosophy departments have played in the history of eugenics in Canada. The head of Philosophy at University of Alberta, who was the head of the eugenics board in Alberta and he oversaw forty eight hundred sterilizations of disabled people, mostly disabled women and indigenous women; that is a narrative that I would to be discussed in the new narratives in history of philosophy.

00:42:45 Matt It's particularly interesting that you mentioned indigenous women there at the end. Shelley and I and, actually, Charles and Linda, we are all on unceded Haudenosaunee territory right now, and lots of the folks who are PIs for this are on unceded Haudenosaunee territory as well. And just as you were talking before Linda, I was thinking about some Haudenosaunee thinking here, that would go along with exactly some of the things you're talking about here. Having this long game view, some seventh generation Haudenosaunee thinking here, is something that really helps us out on this front. Right now I work in—I actually started out working in logic; the way Westerners look at logic as a tool to fight others, to defeat others, is very, very problematic, and I tend to focus on the great peacemaker, the founder of the Haudenosaunee confederacy, who looked at logic as a tool for creating peace, for creating connections amongst community here. And these are things that are just completely and totally left out of this project, and it seems… it seems like it can only suffer because of that.

00:44:03 Linda And it's where feminism came from right? You know, Sally Wagner's historical work, there's a reason why the Seneca Falls convention was in Seneca Falls! Where there was the seat of the Iroquois Confederacy. So there was an inspiration and a sharing of ideas from the Iroquois Confederacy to European women. So the history of feminism is not told when it's not inclusive in this way.

00:44:31 Charles And just picking on that, some—and they should also have mentioned, the story we tell—and the story, to my shame, I've told myself in class, sort of looking back—you should have done better than that Charles Mills. The story we tell is that there's this thing, Western political philosophy, and there's a continental branch, the Anglo-American branch, and then it goes into a kind of decline late nineteenth century. It's doing boring stuff for several decades, then lo and behold, John Rawls steps in, this Christ figure, he sort of raises political philosophy from the dead. And there again, it's sort of back in action, ready to do stuff, and he deserves the credit for shifting the focus of Western normative political philosophy, or Anglo-American Western normative political philosophy, to social justice. And if you think about it, and as I say, to my shame, I've only begun to think about it systematically recently, so that's an indictment of me, but I can say, "Hey, I was socialized by these same traditions," so I'll blame them. The absurdity is, there's a long tradition of African-American political philosophy, which means it's Anglo-American, because these folks, they're citizens of the United States so that's American. They're speaking English, so that's perceivably Anglo. Anglo-American, going back to people like David Walker or even before, coming forward, Frederick Douglass, W.B Du Bois, Ida Wells, and their central theme is justice! Because, of course, they're looking at political philosophy from a non-ideal point of view. They're saying, "We're oppressed by these structures of race and gender, what do we do about it?" So their entire body of work is suffused by the aim of achieving social justice in a non-ideal social system. But our socialization—I say, this is in part a confession—their socialization is so efficient, it's only recently I've begun to think, this is crazy, why am I still telling students this story about Rawls, gets to re-orient Western political philosophy to social justice, when people were doing it in the United States for hundred years before Rawls! David Walker, Frederick Douglas, that's what they focused on, social justice! And if I could just put in a brief plug, there's going to be this huge book coming out, University of Chicago Press, later in the year, October, or November. Jack Turner and Melvin Rogers, *African American Political Thought: A Collected History*. So it's going to be this landmark text, with maybe thirty-something chapters, each one on a different African-American political thinker. So the hope is that with this book, it will settle once and for all: "Is there such a thing as an African-American political tradition?" And anybody who says, "No," you can hit them with this book! Or seriously, you can argue with them from this book, it's going to be a nice big book, it'll be good for hitting people with also, eight hundred pages or so. And in sort of chapter and verse, all these people, primarily Black Americans, with a few folks from the Caribbean as well like Marcus Garvey and so on. So, it should sort of put definitely, lay to rest, lay to its sort of grave, the idea that there's not an Anglo-American political tradition focused on social justice long before John Rawls or any of the white guys.

00:48:07 Dwight [laughs] I love that, I love that, and I love Melvin, he is absolutely great, he's absolutely great. So we are going to move on to another question here, this is coming from someone like me, others like me that are just coming out of grad school, starting that walk into being a junior scholar. And from my experience and the experience of junior scholars around me, many senior scholars are not speaking out about these types of systematic issues in philosophy. But we see a slew of grad students and junior scholars doing this; the grad students that run MAP; I was at APA Pacific in 2019 at the Diversity Summit there and the grad students took over that also. These grad students and junior scholars are oftentimes putting their careers on the line by speaking out; even someone like me right now, I'm an Early Modernist. I am Facebook friends with many people that are on this Canada grant. I am—I've been at conferences; I've given papers alongside them! And so—

00:49:28 Charles Dwight, what I would guess is that there's so many Black people in philosophy, especially up in Canada, that they probably did not remember you, that has to be the explanation.

00:49:40 Dwight [laughs] That is… that's spot on, spot on. But… with this, how, then, do we get senior scholars to back us, right? To back grad students and junior scholars from being—you know, it's—we all understand that philosophy is particularly focused on—you move forward from connections, relationships, right? And so, if you start breaking relationships, you begin to endanger your career, so that's one thing, even in this, I'm trying not to endanger my career, because a lot of people that are connected to this grant are people that I have spent a lot of time with. So how, then, do we get senior scholars to back junior scholars so that they won't be black-balled, and why does it feel like senior scholars are not willing to help at times? Oftentimes. So how do we get them to back these junior scholars, and then, why does it feel—at least, oftentimes, on my end, it feels like I'm putting myself in danger, often, speaking out, and I… yeah, I'm very early on in my career. It's like I'm a baby fish and you could just, you know, get rid of me.

00:51:06 Linda Let me say something to this, because I think the senior scholars in some fields, like Early Modern, like History of Philosophy, certain fields, are not… I mean, you want to be able to maintain as good relations as you can with scholars in your sub-field. So you want to try to—it's like working within any institution, it's hard to work in our institutions that are all compromised and, you know, morally compromised, right? So you… and some institutions you leave, I've left some, but you try to, you have to work with people that you don't have total agreement with. But if you, you know, if you do good scholarship and your historical archival research or whatever it is you have to do in that field, then there should be some at least that recognize it. But what's… what happened with my generation and Charles' generation is, we began—or some other people—we began to create journals and conferences and organizations outside the mainstream, like the Caribbean Philosophical Association and the *Critical Philosophy of Race* journal, and feminist philosophy journals. This… this isn't everything you need, because there will be some who will discount your presence to give conference papers or a publication and these journals; they will just discount this. But it gives you—beyond the fact that it will give you lines on your CV, it gives you an intellectual community that will challenge your work in productive ways. Like, you know, sometimes you go to the APA and you get challenged in unproductive ways, shall we say, right? But you want an intellectual community that knows enough about the literature you're talking about and what your project is that they can actually challenge you in good ways and help you improve work. So the point of creating these alternative sites was also to improve the intellectual quality of our work, by creating venues in which we could engage in a serious and critical way with people who knew something [laughs] relevant to what we were doing. I think… but the other thing I wanted to say is that… there—sometimes deans are better than philosophy faculty and your projects, your CVs, are also going to be looked at by non-philosophy people. Thank god, in some cases! They have a wider frame of reference; most other disciplines are ahead of us in thinking about diversifying the canon and diversifying the problematics of the discipline. We are behind the humanities and behind the social sciences. So when you have inter-disciplinary tenure review committees and when deans look at your CV, you're actually sometimes better off than you are when it's just philosophers. But also, I'd say that there has been a movement within the academy for at least a quarter of a century, I've been involved in, and other people have been involved in, to change the tenure requirements to recognize the work we do in newspapers and magazines and speaking to community groups and working with community groups and to have that—so you have scholarship, teaching and service, and then we created a fourth category at Syracuse University where I used to teach, of community engagement. So I don't have… Herb Boyd has worked on this, but some other people, I'm forgetting the names, but I can put it on my Facebook page—to rewrite—and several institutions have been on board with this, because obviously it should be something that—it used to be, it would just fall off the map. You would do all this community engagement and it would just fall off the map when you wrote your tenure file. But today, there's a movement afoot to change that, to recognize, and I think the key is, to recognize that it's intellectual work. It's not simply bringing the knowledge from the ivory tower to the hoi polloi; it's also getting another kind of critical engagement that can also improve the quality of your intellectual work from a wider set of publics who know some other things. They may not know the academic canon, but they know some other things that are relevant to your project. So that's the argument that we've made, is that this is intellectual work, it also can be seen as service work and that should be important, but it's also intellectual work. So this is what people need, to feel confident that they can make these arguments in their tenure case and clarify what they've been doing and call it intellectual work and demand, assert, that this be part of how you are judged at tenure time.

00:56:55 Dwight I have one quick question, so—and then I'm going to go back to the family analogy, because when we're… so I guess now, I'm… we're trying… because in the past, like you were saying, you made particular journals, conferences, to work within. But we want to take over the family, right? We don't want to be step-children anymore, and so it's like, how do I take over this family?

00:57:24 Charles Dwight, taking over might not be the best verb under these circumstances! “Joining as equals,” how about that for a nice harmonious phrasing of things.

00:57:33 Dwight I mean, that sounds… but you know what I'm saying? How do I make this movement where this is like, I'm no longer a stepchild that has my own toys to play with, but that I can have the family's toys to also play with? And that's like…?

00:57:54 Linda If you have been invited, I'm sure… you know, all of us here have done institutional work and it's a pain, it's time consuming, sometimes there's a lot of aggravation involved. But I generally say yes, and I know Charles says yes to almost every… like, APA committee or you know, journal review, editorial board.

00:58:23 Dwight Y'all said yes to this, too, which we really appreciate!

00:58:28 Linda It's hard to be in those rooms where you're the only one, believe me, I've walked out once or twice! But it… one voice can make a difference; it can turn the tide, so I think… there's a takeover, but we also, it's also good to create the alternative institutions in which we can build from the ground up in a different way.

00:58:54 Dwight I agree, one hundred percent, I agree one hundred percent, I do.

00:58:59 Matt So Shelley, you're coming at this from a different standpoint here: from an unemployed philosopher, do you have thoughts from your standpoints on these issues here? I guess, part of what I'm thinking about here is, how much can be done from within the institution of philosophy, how much needs to be done from outside of the institution?

00:59:21 Shelley Okay, well, I have to say that… you know, I've been listening to what Charles and Linda have been saying and I agree with a lot of it, but quite a bit of it I think is… it’s almost specific to the American context, because I don't think that—and Charles, you've experienced Canadian philosophy from the inside so you might concur with this—I don't think that in Canadian philosophy, many of the institutional… I don't think that the scaffolding is in place that would enable the changes that we would like to see. And… I think that… I also think that has to do with the relation of… the relation between Canadian philosophers and American philosophers, and the relation between Canadian philosophers and the APA. Because… an increasing number of philosophers who could bring about change, who could bring change in Canadian philosophy, are taking up leadership positions in the APA. And I really question whether their… whether as leaders in the APA, they're going to be looking out for the interests of Canadian philosophers. That's something that I don't… I don't know if that's going to happen. And… so what you have is, basically, a Canadian Philosophical Association that, itself, you know, is increasingly…increasingly powerless, increasingly disjointed, and always on the brink of not existing. And the APA is… giving more and more leadership positions to Canadian philosophers that I'm not sure that… I'm not at all confident that our interests are going to be addressed by the APA, our specific interests. Like, I don't…I don't know how interested the APA would be in taking up the problems with the SSHRC grant. And yet, a number of the—the funding came from the federal government in Canada, but a number of the PIs are members of the APA, including Lisa Shapiro, who, you know, sort of coordinated the whole thing. So I mean, that's just to give one example of how I'm not quite sure that… I don't know that a lot of what's being said about the possibility of change, I'm not sure that applies to Canadian philosophy much at all. I mean, I think that… I think that individual philosophers can of course, can change. You know, they can change their syllabi, they can change the focus of the research, they can change the perspectives that they start to teach and write about, but in terms of Canadian philosophy itself, I'm not confident. And the reason I'm not confident is because I've had such a hard time getting a job, and because the—I mean, the departments are so exclusionary. I mean it's really, really… I mean, as I said, in my initial post at *Daily Nous*, more than thirty percent of full-time faculty are non-disabled white women, think about that. I think it's probably closer to forty percent. And so, I mean, non-disabled white women don't make up forty percent of the Canadian population, there's no… you know, not even close! And yet… so the lack of representation and I don't see that changing any time soon because it hasn't changed in fifteen years. In fact, it's… you know, there's been more gender parity for non-disabled white women, but for no one else has there been any kind of parity. And I've tried from within the CPA itself, I've been on, you know, I was on the equity committee at one point, and so I don't have the optimism that some of the rest of you have.

01:04:48 Dwight Yeah, I got it, I got it, I've got all of that. Maybe I have too much optimism.

01:04:56 Shelley No, that's good! But I'm not sure it applies to the geographical context where I'm located.

01:05:05 Dwight I just know, so… you know, Black people have been really patient in America for a really long time and it's actually… you know, there’s—our hope in that change actually produced change. If we never had hope I wouldn't be here, right? And so I've got to hold on to something! Or let it… or die with it, you know? But… so just some closing thoughts while we wrap this up. So, two of the things that really grabbed my mind here, in relation to all of this, was when Charles, of course, you were talking about philosophy being a particular white family. And… and Linda and Shelley, when we talk about the amount of “diverse food” that we're actually digesting as philosophers, and so, just… I want to throw it out there just to give you any type of closing thoughts that you have on that, or on anything you could just bring up. Or you can pass, just any closing thoughts?

01:06:13 Linda Well, what does give me hope is the younger generation. I don't know the Canadian scene as well, and I do know that sometimes the younger generation is worrisome because they've come through these institutions that have trained them in such exclusionary ways, so it's very dismaying. I've certainly seen my share of young assistant professors who are completely uneducated in any of the fields of philosophy that we represent, and I think, why? How did these people get here? But, there are amazing… you know, there's people doing amazing work who are untenured right now, likeStephanie Rivera Berruz who is doing work, doing archival research to uncover feminist theorists in Puerto Rico that have not been read. Chike, who's doing work… I mean, there's… that actually gives me a lot of hope, because it takes time for this work to get solidified as part… and into the canon, but they're doing new work, original work, and some of them are getting jobs and are getting tenure. So I think, I feel hopeful, because sometimes you just have to wait for people to die off!

01:07:43 Dwight Yeah, yeah.

01:07:46 Matt Kuhn tells us, right? [laughs]

01:07:48 Linda Yeah! And so, you know, I think that there's things that our generation did, but I think this new, younger generation… like, I waited until tenure, I made some changes in what I was working on at tenure time. And you know, I had two kids to support and I had to make strategic decisions like everybody else, but I'm seeing these younger people do this stuff before tenure! And it's serious philosophical work, I think they're going to be good and they're at… in departments, with graduate students, you know, like Stephanie and Chike. So that's what gives me hope, is your generation, y'all's generation.

01:08:36 Dwight [chuckles] Shelley, Charles, do you have anything?

01:08:42 Charles Well, I'm just worried about an already terrible pre-COVID job market, what a post-COVID job market is going to be, so that… it's easy for me to have tenure, got it some time ago, so it's easy for me to be staking out pseudo-radical or even generally radical positions. But I mean, what about folks who have to worry about being able to pay the rent, pay the mortgage, pay their kids' education in a situation where the jobs are really going to be… it's going to be even tighter than it was before. And any kind of rational interest-based calculation would really point in the direction of playing it safe, so I guess I'm not that optimistic. I mean, what Linda says is correct, you know, it's amazing what people have already been doing. I wonder if they'll be able to keep on doing it or if others will come on to join them in the job market we're going to be getting for the next few years. So that's a concern that I have.

01:09:55 Linda You know, they're going to need teachers and the teachers need to teach courses that fill. And the generation of students is also interested in race.

01:10:07 Charles Okay, that's a positive argument, yes, I guess that's true.

01:10:10 Linda I think we will get pushed from outside, the profession will get pushed from outside in terms of we’ll have students taking what kinds of courses. And I think also, we have to do street action, right? I mean, that's the way Black Studies and Latin American Studies and Women’s Studies came into existence, and Disability Studies as well, is through activism. Student protests, student sit-ins, student lock-ins. You know, there's a lot of stuff now on Third World Studies, of how it actually came into existence and then how it got recuperated into Ethnic Studies and demobilized in certain respects. But we… you know, we have to continue to make these revolutions every generation; you can't stop, it's permanent, so I think there's got to be mobilizing from outside. And there is now, that's part of the Black Lives Matter agenda, is a curricular agenda, to force institutions of education to think about what they're teaching and what they're not teaching. So I think there's mobilizing going on, whether it's—how successful it's going to be I don't know, but even without tenure I think there are reasons to think that if you're teaching, you will be able to expand your curricula, because that's what the students will want. And so you know—and in some institutions like the California systems, non-tenure track faculty have expansive health benefits, livable wages, and job security. So we may lose tenure, but that doesn't mean that we will lose job security, health benefits, etcetera, if we organize. If we organize into unions, and that's what's happening in the United States; I'm not so clear about Canada. To protect the ability to do good intellectual work and to have livable wages for the work that we do.

01:12:26 Dwight Also I want to say too that we need the senior scholars in the room, also, to be fighting to keep those junior scholars that are living on the edge, the ones that are actually trying to push a little bit. We need the people that are in the room to say, "Hey! Hey! We need this person!" And not just for our department, because no one that's working on Critical Theory is just doing things for their department; they're doing things for everyone. You're reviewing articles for this journal, you're showing up at this school, you're doing a little bit too much actually, and that's why we need these seniors. I'm going to keep calling on senior scholars, I keep bringing it up, because these are the… it's like, I think this is where the young scholars need a tether and I think you can get lost in the process of like, having to pay your rent, of having to pay stuff. And it's like, I will say over the last couple of years, I've felt that way, and then now that I'm in my thirties I'm trying to, you know, make sure that I'm going to be alright, and it's safer for me to write about Descartes. It's safer for me to write about Leibniz. And I know then that I would end up getting tenure. But if I write something on the edge, the people that are going to at least give me that tether, and hold me here, are senior scholars that are willing to speak out in faculty meetings, you know? Yeah, yeah, I just… I just… my two cents.

01:14:11 Linda Point taken! Point taken!

01:14:15 Matt Shelley, did you have last thoughts on this?

01:14:18 Shelley Well, actually, I wanted to get some views from all of you with regards to one of the questions that you suggested you might ask, and that is, what can be done to change this? Isn't that one of the questions that you asked, I guess you were referring specifically to the project and the grant, what can be done, you know, to sort of resist this or, you know, bring about some kind of change to the project or motivate the PI's to change the project themselves in some way, or—is that, that was one of the questions that you suggested, right? So I'd be interested in hearing some views about what could be possibly done.

01:15:13 Charles Well, I wouldn’t want to go into detail, but as a result of the *Daily Nous* exchange, people in the project have reached out to certain individuals.

01:15:24 Shelley Oh, that's good!

01:15:25 Charles Yeah, so I guess I just want to leave it there rather than sort of specify. And so I think we're still waiting to see what comes of it, but there has been some response to the actual exchange.

01:15:44 Linda Yeah, so agitation can sometimes have an effect of shaming, especially when it's done in the public eye, which the *Daily Nous* was, so when it's got some kind of… you know, if it puts people in a fishbowl, that's a good thing, because sometimes… they wouldn't do it otherwise!

01:16:08 Dwight Yeah, one hundred percent.

01:16:09 Linda It's the way that forces them to do something further, whether they… how significant their actions are will depend on continued pressure, continued work, but we'll see.

01:16:26 Dwight And they definitely have, I even… they have a postdoc for the grant and actually, someone emailed me to apply for the postdoc, but I… I've already deferred too long, and so I have to start my job, they're… yeah, you know how that is! But yeah, so they are definitely reaching out, they really are. And I actually, I'm proud, at least, to some extent, of how they're responding to this. It seems to be that they are really being proactive to some extent, which I'm like… at least, at least if you do this, this does happen, be proactive in fixing it, right? At least be proactive in fixing it, but we really appreciate you all being here, thank you so much, this was actually--

01:17:17 Charles Thank you for the invitation!

01:17:19 Shelley Thank you!

01:17:20 Dwight I enjoyed it, I really did.

01:17:21 Linda I enjoyed it very much, nice to see you guys.

01:17:24 Shelley Thank you!

01:17:25 Matt Thank you also, a pleasure.

01:17:26 Charles And Dwight, you’re the radical courageous guy, you, more power to you!

01:17:31 Dwight I'm trying, I'm trying, I appreciate it Charles, I really am trying.

01:17:36 Matt Thank you all!

01:17:37 Shelley Have a nice day!

01:17:39 Charles Take care Matt, Shelley, Linda!

[End of recording]