

## Apartheid and Writing: White Supremacist Logic and the Racially Damaging Injures It Causes, From Derrida's and Gate's Perspectives

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### Abstract

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The article approximates Derrida's and Gates's personal concerns about racial differences and state racisms. In *Racism's Last Word*, Derrida (1986) investigates the meaning of the word Apartheid. Written nearly a decade before Mandela dismantles the state racist regime ruling the life of South Africans, Derrida's text denounces that Apartheid "institutes, declares, writes, inscribes, prescribes. As a system of marks, it outlines spaces in order to assign forced residence or to close off borders. It does not discern, it discriminates." The reflections exposed by Gates in the article *Writing "Race" and the Difference it Makes* explains how writing and freedom cooperate mutually, leading poet Phillis Wheatley to struggle to keep institutional racism at bay. The use of language in writing, Gates argues, "signifies the difference between cultures and their possession of power, spelling out the distance between subordinate and super ordinate, between bondman and lord in terms of their "race." In both Derrida's and Gates's thoughts, artistic use of language – painting, writing or both – becomes potential antidote against "relegating black people to walking abstractions, lustful creatures or invisible objects."

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**Key words:** Racism, Apartheid, Painting, Writing, Race, Aesthetics, Logics.

### Introductory Claims

This article on both Derrida's and Gates's critical thoughts on racism aims at discussing the relationships between artistic manifestation by, and racist oppression of, black people in two specific nations, South Africa and The United States. In both countries, art has always been systematically denouncing inequality against black beings' subjectivities. Both French Deconstructionist philosopher Derrida and African American Postmodernist literary critic Gates look at art – specifically painting and writing – in order to deliver ideas and thoughts willing to confront South Africa's Apartheid's racist ideology and American literary tradition's discriminatory behavior. My discussion of the interconnections between racism or racial discrimination and painting and writing is distributed in three sections. Initially, I will deal with West (1993) critical reflection on three logics sustaining ideas, metaphors and practices generating black people's social degradation and psychological devaluation.

These devaluating strategies are sponsored by Judeo-Christianity, Science and psychosexuality. Secondly, I will tackle Derrida's commentaries on racism from the perspective of South Africa's Apartheid. Finally, I will cover Gates's denunciation of how black writing has confronted institutionalized discrimination in American literary tradition. In *Race and Social Theory*, Cornel West (1993) denounces the association of racism with the oppression of people of color defended by racist thinkers. He explains that racism is a concept emanating from these three white-supremacist logics: the Judeo-Christian racist logic, the scientific racist logic and the psychosexual racist logic. West looks at these Western logics as the generating agents of types of discourses which, loaded with racist concepts, tropes and metaphors, tend to "degrade and devalue people of color" (WEST, 1993: 269).

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West goes on to say that the Judeo-Christian racist logic degrades and devalues black people by suggesting that Ham's failure to cover his biblical father Noah's nakedness results in Noah's blackening progeny as divine punishment. Implied in the divine punishment remains the assumption that "this logic links racist practices to notions of disrespect for, and rejection of, authority to ideas of unruly behavior and chaotic rebellion" (WEST, 1993: 269). Thus, racism perpetrated against, and articulated oppression of, black people are thought to derive directly from a divine wish, thus justifying the application of measures of punishing their "disrespect for and rejection of authority" (WEST, 1993: 269). Later in the same text, West (1993) arguably points out to the fact that the scientific racist logic uses Greco-Roman aesthetic standards to measure, order and compare physical characteristics, projecting the Blacks' "bodily ugliness, cultural deficiency and intellectual inferiority" (WEST, 1993: 269). Here, one is naively led to accept that, due to its supposedly deformed features, the black body does not fit in the supremacist physical values conveniently associated with Western supremacist physicality. Finally, West insists, the psychosexual racist logic relates Black people to sexual skill, connects black fathers to cruelty and revenge, black children to frivolity and irresponsibility, and links black mothers to passivity and self-devaluation. West advises us that this logic generates sexual discourses and practices related to "bodily defecation, violation and subordination, thereby relegating black people to walking abstractions, lustful creatures or invisible objects" (WEST, 1993: 269). These three logics, their biased discourses and practices against black people's human subjectivities have been validated for centuries by individuals, institutions and nations, and have attached to people of color the most devalued images and characteristics. As a consequence, black people have been regarded as the disrespectful, ugly and dirty otherness emanating from these three white-supremacist logics and, therefore, have been exposed to the various forms of racism and oppression in the world. Due to the highly devastating oppression that the country exerts over their black population, The United States are the ultimate expression of these three logics in full operation.

When discussing racism in the country, Bergland (1995) notes that racist oppression "permeates American society" and has become "a tragic legacy of the Nation's history" (BERGLAND, 1995: 735). She divides American racist thought and practice into three forms of racism: individualized, institutional, and ideological modalities. She points out to how individualized and institutional forms of racism converge in the framework of the second one, as "the policies, practices, and discursive forms, based on perceived racial differences, embedded in and sanctioned by society's institutions – including legal codes and judicial practices, educational systems, financial policies, labor practices, artistic forms, and linguistic constructions" (BERGLAND, 1995: 735). From this convergence involving both individualized and institutionalized devastating wounds of racism, it is possible to infer the individual racism has its origin in the institutional, whereas the ideological, Bergland adds, "provides supposed intellectual support for the belief in white superiority," a superiority supposedly derived from "reason, nature and divine law" (BERGLAND, 1995: 736).

All this emphasis on intellectual support, white superiority, reason, nature and divine law associates Bergland's individual, institutional and ideological manifestations of racism with West's critical analysis of those white-supremacist logics. Historically, the three white-supremacist logics described by West (1993) together with the other three forms of racism discussed by Bergland (1995) have converged. In their convergence, these logics are activated by the individual, institutional and ideological racism, thus having the Blacks as the ideal targets of racist discourses and practices in The United States. However, the United States are not the only country performing such a complex and disruptively effective form of racism in full and systematic operation. Quite contrary, in their racist brutality against their black population, The United States are accompanied by many other examples, among which South Africa excels due to its Apartheid's racist and dehumanizing severity.

In fact, the aspects of racism associated with the Judeo-Christian, scientific and psychosexual logics relate to individual, institutional and ideological forms of racism and have found their concrete and devastating activation in many societies and nations. However, they have reached its highest perverted realization in South Africa and in the United States, as I will demonstrate with the discussion of two texts: Jacques Derrida's (1986) *Racism's Last Word* and Louis Henry Gate's (1986) *Writing 'Race' and the Difference it Makes*. The importance of putting the two experts and their discussion of racism together lies in a couple of similarities they share: (1) both texts demonstrate not only how racist thought and practice have differentiated the Whites from the Blacks, in specific historical moments, but also how they have determined cultural territories, by privileging Whiteness and marginalizing Blackness, based on constructed abstractions of racial superiority; (2) both articles evidence how artistic forms – painting and writing – have been transformed into instruments of denouncing racism, overcoming racist practice and thought and trading black humanity.

### Derrida: Racism and Apartheid

In *Racism's Last Word*, Derrida denounces how racism differentiates and separates the two sides of South Africa's population. He addresses his attention to a particular moment of South African racism whose name Apartheid has become "order's watchword". Written for the catalog of the "Exhibition Art contre/against Apartheid", opened in Paris in 1983, Derrida's article denounces Apartheid as South Africa's ideological state racism, whose Judeo-Christian and scientific (the psychosexual is not explicit) logics generate multiple implications to the country and its black population. These implications are related to the word Apartheid and its meaning, the European discourse on race that supports the type of racism operating in the country and, finally, the artistic exhibition working as a denouncing memory of Apartheid's cruelty.

Both differentiation and discrimination lie in the word's meaning. As for the word's meaning, Derrida writes that Apartheid is "the archival record of the unnamable" (330), that is, the racism that does not say itself. This is the racism that is in the beginning and in the end, that is the first and the last one that is profoundly inserted "in the political code of South Africa" (DERRIDA, 1986: 330). Derrida notes that South African state Apartheid has a meaning, expressed by the word "last" present in the title *Racism's Last Word*. He points out that the word "last" shows two distinct meanings: (1) it means the worst, indicating that, as a system of differentiation, segregation and discrimination, Apartheid is the most ignoble of all racisms. In other words, Apartheid is the "last" of the racisms because of its most destructive cruelty. Derrida writes: "here finishing off the essence of evil, the worst, the essence of its very worst – as if there were something like a racism par excellence, the most racist of racisms" (DERRIDA, 1986: 330). (2) Apartheid also signifies "the oldest and the youngest" (DERRIDA, 1986: 330) form of racism. Therefore, Apartheid, in Derrida's words, is not only the worst, but is also the racism, which is in the beginning and is in the end of all systems of segregation, partition and exclusion. In other words, he insists, Apartheid as the form of exclusion, which is born in 1948, still survives in the political constitution of South Africa, but precedes its political application for having become the metaphor for all kinds of racism, past, present and future.

Concerning European discourses on race supporting Apartheid, Derrida notes that, due to its baseness and constitutional survival, Apartheid is the racist code that separates and excludes based on the three white-supremacist logics discussed by West (1993). That is, in ways similar to the white supremacist values of the logics, Apartheid also claims South African Whites' rights over the Blacks, taking blood and color values, original hierarchy, natural and divine rights into account. Therefore, justified by its supposedly divine and rational source, Apartheid, Derrida explains, "Institutes, declares, writes, inscribes, prescribes. As a system of marks, it outlines spaces in order to assign forced residence or to close off borders. It does not discern it discriminates" (DERRIDA, 1986: 331). Emerging from European discourses, which associate race with a system not based on reality but on political and theological constructions, Apartheid discriminates the black population through the elaboration of a certain representation of nature, life, history, religion and law that only favors the white segment of the country's population.

Derrida finds contradictions in the application of European White supremacist logics, which are expected to rule Apartheid. As European creation, Apartheid contradicts itself because it is instituted and maintained against the British Commonwealth which begins with England's abolition of slavery in 1834. Contradictorily, England stops with slavery, but at the same time, not only allows Apartheid to exist, but also supports it, in South Africa. This contradiction is necessary, Derrida argues, because the stability of the Pretoria regime is prerequisite for the political, economic and strategic equilibrium in Europe. Even more contradictory is the fact that the innumerable condemnations of Apartheid by many European countries never prevent diplomatic, economic or cultural exchanges from occurring between South Africa and all these same countries.

The final contradiction raised by Derrida is the fact that the pressure on Apartheid to relax its discriminatory severity is not always inspired by respect for human rights but, quite contrary, it derives from economic reasons. Defenders of relaxation justify their pressures on South Africa by arguing that segregation hurts the market economy, reduces effectiveness of free enterprise, limits domestic consumption, mobility, and interferes negatively with training of labor. Derrida observes that "if one day *apartheid* is abolished, its demise will not be credited only to the account of moral standards – because moral standards should not count or keep accounts, to be sure, but also because, on the scale which is that of a worldwide computer, the law of the marketplace will have imposed another standard of calculation" (DERRIDA, 1986: 335).

While Apartheid's abolition comes neither for moral standards nor for economic calculations, its stability is based on theological-political discourses which invent prohibitions, which are founded on theology and the Scriptures. Derrida points out that at the base of Apartheid lies the idea that its political power is originated in God and, therefore, is expected to remain indivisible. This is an indivisibility that separates individual rights from those (the Blacks) who are judged and are considered to be immature people, and those who (Blacks again) rebel against God (Ham's disobedience). The discriminatory argument goes on to say that to dispense rights to these immature and rebellious people would be an act against God. Contradictorily, Apartheid associates Theology and Western Democracy. It discriminates its Blacks for religious reasons and, at the same time, offers universal suffrage, and relative freedom of the press, thus guaranteeing individual aspirations and the judicial system.

However, all these democratic guarantees do not reach the country's black population. Derrida explains that this dichotomy reflects the double-bind logic of Europe's national and international interests, turning Apartheid the price that all European states have to pay. Contradictorily, they make others – black people again – to pay the price. By projecting their internal contradictions on South Africa's Apartheid, the European states gain world peace, general economy and a marketplace for European labor. Therefore, the repetitive denouncing of Apartheid as an evil becomes Europe's dialectics of denegation. In other words, this is an instrument of condemning without the condemnation of the repressive system, this ambiguity resulting in the effortlessness of the 1973 verdict, when Apartheid is declared "crime against humanity". Amnesty International acknowledges the ineffectiveness of the 1973 verdict and reaffirms that the existence of Apartheid signals to the impossibility of recognizing human rights and guaranteeing their application. As a result, Derrida calls for another law which will allow the overcoming of Apartheid to occur. This law cannot limit itself to the global computer, the dialectic of strategic or economic calculations, the state control, the national or international tribunals, and the juridico-political or theological-political discourses.

This new law leads us to consider the Exhibition as the denouncing memory of Apartheid's cruelty. For Derrida, this new law is affirmed by the artistic Exhibition because it is able to provide a new reading, thinking and a new doing, all that concerning the crimes generated by Apartheid. By acting as memory of racism's last word, the Exhibition will be operating in relation to Apartheid the same way Picasso's *Guernica* did in Spain. Derrida acknowledges *Guernica's* forces asserting that "*Guernica* denounces civilized barbarism, and from out of the painting's exile, in its dead silence, one hears the cry of moaning or accusation. Brought forward by the painting, the cry joins with children's screams and the bomber's din, until the last day of dictatorship when the work is repatriated to a place in which it has never dwelled" (DERRIDA, 1986: 338).

Derrida observes that the artists' Exhibition, in France, multiplies *Guernica's* signification and crosses national, cultural and political frontiers for its peculiarities and multiplicities, by involving artists from different modalities and nationalities. Besides, the Exhibition addresses a continuous gaze to Apartheid, denounces its cruelty, and calls out, in silence, for the abolition of the repressive regime. Although the abolition is something expected to happen in the future, the Exhibition celebrates its success in anticipation. And while the Exhibition expects the final success, Derrida explains, it moves from city to city and becomes an archival record – a file of observation, information and witness – that speaks loudly against the white supremacist logics of Apartheid, and is heard everywhere and excites people to act against the racist evil. For Derrida, the Exhibition is a warning which advises us not to "forget *apartheid*, save humanity from this evil, an evil that cannot be summed up in the principal and abstract iniquity of a system. It is also daily suffering, oppression, poverty, violence, torture inflicted by an arrogant white minority [...] on the mass of the black population" (DERRIDA, 1986: 332).

In the language of the artistic warning, the Exhibition is speaking "the other's language without renouncing" (DERRIDA, 1986: 333) its own. This creative language of warning, solidarity and hope among people is older than Europe itself, Derrida concludes. So far, my discussion of Derrida's *Racism's Last Word* has demonstrated how racial differences are established to separate the Whites from the Blacks in South Africa, by highlighting three aspects: (1) by pointing out Apartheid's meaning as the first, the last and the worst form of discrimination in operation against black people in South Africa; (2) by denouncing the European discourse on race that justifies the operation of Apartheid based upon the abstractions of the theological/juridico-political codes of the Whites' desirous superiority over the Blacks; (3) finally, by evaluating the symbolic representation of the artistic Exhibition, which advises people everywhere, in advance, of the action that will, in the future, result in the salvation of humanity from Apartheid's shame.

### Gates: Racism and Writing

If Apartheid is racism placed in the beginning and in the end of all forms of racism, as Derrida admits it, then racism in America is already present in the way Apartheid operates and, therefore, operates similarly, by differentiating the Whites from the Blacks, favoring the first part and discriminating the second group. The insertion of all kinds of racism in the Apartheid's functioning is what approximates Derrida's and Gate's concerns with racism. Similarly, as Derrida's *Racism's Last Word* does with Apartheid in South Africa, in *Editor's Introduction: Writing Race and the Difference it Makes*, Gates (1986) writes to denounce how the US version of Apartheid differentiates and separates the two sides of the literary population in the country. In this respect, the difference between Gates and Derrida and their thoughts is the fact that, while Derrida deals with the state racism of South Africa, Gates concentrates on racism in US literature. In Derrida's ideas, one deals with the multiple pictorial and sculptural languages of the artists' Exhibition, in France and notes these languages' attempts "to speak the other's language without renouncing their own" (DERRIDA, 1986: 333). This very concern with the artistic language – not painting, but writing now – worries African-American writers and critics who, Gates advances, also want to write in the other's language without renouncing their own black language.

As Gates sees the issue, the use of the other's language without renouncing their own should be taken by the Blacks as a strategy to neutralize the profound racist differences caused by fixed binary positions. In other words, Gates calls for a critical integration of both languages, the European and the Black. The double-sided consciousness joining the two languages in African-American literary tradition is deeply embedded in the limits and possibilities of The United States' radicalized society. In *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison (1993) notes that "there seems to be a more or less tacit agreement among literary scholars that because American literature has been clearly the preserve of white male views, genius, and power, those views, genius, and power are without relationships to and removed from the overwhelming presence of black people in the United States" (MORRISON, 1993: 5). Morrison denounces the erasure of the African-American literary presence from white supremacist logics which, based on radicalized assumptions, values white racial features and devalues black ones. She struggles for a balance of forces between the two literary presences. Echoing Morrison, Gates explains how "the preserve of white male views, genius and power" (MORRISON, 1993: 5) in operation in US literature is generated by the white-supremacist logics.

These logics mingle race, culture and literature to discredit black people's humanity. Gates (1986) argues that in *History of English Literature*, Taine explains that race generates the forms in which the people of that race develop their process of thinking and feeling, of character and mind, structures of concepts, appearances, beliefs and consciousness. In this sense, Taine admits, race is the fountain that generates people's faculties, and is seen as a community of blood and intellect. When associated with race, literature becomes the vehicle through which all these racial attributes are displayed, analyzed, and evaluated positively or negatively. Gates observes that, because the views of culture and race are generated by the same white-supremacist logics, when culture is emphasized nothing really changes. On the contrary, being parts of the same logic, culture and race produce the same effects, the effects intended by the Greco-Roman and the Judeo-Christian traditions. These traditions – or logics in West's (1993) view – provide the ways to judge, prescribe and justify racial, cultural and literary similarities or differences.

For example, if one author does not belong to the same Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian cultural traditions he, consequently, belongs to another culture or race and, therefore, he is judged as not belonging to the traditions, for his differences are described and inscribed "as differences of language, belief system, artistic tradition" (GATES, 1986: 5), gene pool and natural attributes like rhythm, athletic ability, cerebration and others. Derived from biological scientific views, Gates observes, racial differences evoke universal and transcendental values. In Western literature, rhetorical figures of race are utilized by the writers to make them natural, absolute, fixed and finite categories for the expression of authority over the non-Western others. Gates problematizes these categories and figures, arbitrarily constructed and, therefore, are distant from reality. He explains that "language is not only the medium of this often insidious tendency; it is a sign. Current language use signifies the difference between cultures and their possession of power, spelling out the distance between subordinate and superordinate, between bondman and lord in terms of their "race". These usages develop simultaneously with the shaping of an economic order in which the cultures of color have been dominated in several important senses by Western Judeo-Christian, Greco-Roman cultures and their traditions" (GATES, 1986: 6).

Activated to generate separation and distance between those who belong and those who do not belong to the proper language, the Judeo-Christian, Greco-Roman cultures and traditions differentiate, separate and distance themselves from the cultures of color. A number of studies suggest that the possession of the proper language, that is, writing, marks the separation and distance between the European and the African cultures. Gates briefly considers Hume, Kant and Hegel's positions.

He notes that Hume argues that the Negroes are inferior to the Whites because "there never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white" (GATES, 1986: 10). Kant believes that difference between races "appears to be as great in regard to mental capacities as in color" (GATES, 1986: 10). Finally, Gates suggests that Hegel declares that the African does not have history because he does not have writing, and did not master the art of using European languages in writing, and not mastering writing means not having written history and no collective and cultural memory. Out of all these extreme negations of the Africans' writing, history, rationality and humanity, Gates denounces these thoughts, saying that "without writing, no repeatable sign of the workings of reason, of mind, could exist. Without history, no humanity, as defined consistently from Vico to Hegel, could exist" (GATES, 1986: 11).

Gates enumerates, within the African-American Literary tradition, a number of examples of writing experience which contradict Hume's, Kant's and Hegel's positions and affirm the African's and the African-American's history, rationality, cultural memory and humanity. Among these examples Phillis Wheatley's case is meaningful. In 1772, Phillis Wheatley has her authorship of *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* recognized after a committee of noble white men, in Boston, writes an attestation deciding that she "is thought qualified to write" (GATES, 1986: 7) those poems. Gates argues that behind Wheatley's case are the values associated with writing, with the humanity of the Africans and with Slavery. That is, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the European belief is that the Africans are not able to create formal literature or master the arts and the sciences. The capacity to create formal literature and to master the arts and the sciences is restricted to white Europeans only and, therefore, this mastery attests their humanity. The idea goes on: if the Africans are able to do what the Europeans do, that is, if they control literary, artistic and scientific formalities, then the African variety of humanity and the European variety are fundamentally related. However, on the contrary, if the Africans are not able to master all these artistic and scientific qualities then they are destined to be slaves.

Gates (1986) observes that Wheatley's case attests not only the humanity of the Africans but also their rationality. Therefore, by possessing the ability to write she, consequently, possesses the ability to reason, due to the Western general assumption that writing is "the visible sign of reason" (GATES, 1986: 8). Gates still argues that, by postulating "man's ability to reason" (GATES, 1986: 8), the Enlightenment uses the presence or the absence of reason to judge the humanity of people of color and place them in the human scale, or out of it. The recognition of Wheatley's and George Moses-Horton's (a case similar to hers) authorship, in 1772 and 1820, is the evidence that the African is indeed a human being and should not be enslaved.

Gates (1986) points out that writing is relevant for Wheatley and Moses-Horton in two ways: firstly, it is an activity of their minds; secondly, it is the product they use to trade their humanity.

Besides, there are extreme examples against constraints, limitations and laws prohibiting the slaves' literary genius, as it is prescribed in 1740 South Carolina Stature. Gates signals that by positioning itself against all these allegations of the absence of writing among the Blacks, African-American writing is telling that black writers have written and still write fiction, poetry and autobiographical narratives. In their writing the authors are positing the individual "I" of the black author and the collective "I" of the race. Through writing they establish their black authorship and voice, which challenge the silence imposed by the European Enlightenment in order to negate the Africans' humanity.

Presently, writing is no longer a commodity used to trade humanity, the way Wheatley and Moses-Horton had to use it, but is the affirmation of an authentic voice, the instrument of transformation of the African into an European, of the slave into an ex-slave, of the brute animal into the a human being. The birth of the black literary tradition starts with slave narratives, signaling "the claim of black people being as black people themselves would have it" (GATES, 1986: 12). Gates (1986) argues that "making the book speak, then, constituted a motivated and political engagement with, and condemnation of Europe's fundamental sign of domination, the commodity of writing, the text and technology of reason" (GATES, 1986: 12).

However, having acquired writing in the European language the problem remains because the simple acquisition of writing does not eliminate the differences, separations and discriminations brought up by concepts of race. Gates insists that the acceptance of writing in the language of the white European tradition implies the acceptance of its premises and traps. How can the trap be overcome, then? Gate's answer is that the black tradition must critique this relation between its writing and the white European tradition, if traps are meant to be neutralized. To replace the white European tradition for the black one is futile and dangerous, as Appiah admits, because the mere replacement only replaces old and bizarre stereotypes for new and bizarre stereotypes. To imitate and apply the white canon of criticism is also a wrong decision. Gates accepts that Derrida's position seems to be more useful for this trap to be neutralized. In Derrida's terms, the Blacks must master to speak the other's language without renouncing theirs.

Gates (1986) sees Derrida's suggestion to be appropriate, and believes that the right attitude African-American critics – writers also – can perform is to turn to the black tradition itself and develop theories of criticism indigenous to their literatures. Gates observes that examples of this attitude is Walker's (1982) decision to repeat and revise, in her *The Color Purple*, Rebecca Cox Jackson's parable of white man's teaching Jeane how to interpret God's words. In her novel, Walker dismantles this relation involving a black woman, the interpretation of God's words and a white man, and constructs another one in which God's words and works are mediated by two black women, Celie and Shug. Their direct address to God is possible because man – white man – is eliminated as mediator.

Similarly, Gates (1986) argues, the elimination of white man – white European tradition – from the literary experiences of African-American critics and writers means specially the use of the most sophisticated critical theories and methods available to re-appropriate and to define their own colonial discourse. In other words, Gates believes that the African-American critics have to use the Western theories "insofar as they are relevant to the study of their own literatures" (GATES, 1986: 14). Gates concludes his thought, noting that the African-American critics should analyze the ways in which writing relates to race and how attitudes toward racial differences generate and structure texts by them and about them.

So far, the discussion of Gate's *Editor's Introduction: Writing 'Race' and the Differences it Makes* has demonstrated how differences are institutionalized to separate white literary writing from Black literary writing, by highlighting 3 aspects: (1) by denouncing that the concepts of race, culture and writing generated by the white-supremacist logics of the Greco-Roman and the Judeo-Christian traditions were systematically employed to justify white humanity and prescribe black inhumanity; (2) by signaling that African-American authors have acquired the mastery of writing in the Western languages and, therefore, have traded and affirmed their humanity; (3) finally, by defending that the acquisition of writing in the western languages had to be associated with the black authors' mastery of their own black vernacular traditions.

### **Concluding Remarks**

To sum up, it must be said that Derrida and Gates demonstrated, in their texts, not only that the White supremacist logics were activated to produce racist concepts, tropes and metaphors that differentiated the Whites from the Blacks, but also that all those concepts, tropes and metaphors became effective and their effectiveness operated racial differences which privileged the Whites and unfavored the Blacks. On the one hand, it was noted, in Derrida's discussion, his insistence in denouncing Apartheid's first, last and worst baseness, that baseness emanated from the European discourse on race that provided theological, juridical and political justifications for the practiced superiority of the white minority over the black majority in South Africa. On the other, it was explicitly evidenced in Gate's analysis his concern with the employment of both the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian logics as the instruments for the establishment of both the white humanity and the black inhumanity, this resulting in the African-American struggle for writing in order to trade the black humanity. Besides, if Derrida evaluated the artistic Exhibition as the symbolic affirmation of the salvation of humanity from Apartheid's cruelty, then Gates signaled the association of the Western languages with the Black vernacular tradition as the effective and productive agenda for the black writing. By acting so, both Derrida and Gates believed, the individual, institutional, ideological and state forms of racism, and their supremacist logics will be neutralized in South Africa and in American literature.

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