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“HEART” ATTACK: A CRITIQUE OF JORGE GARCIA’S
VOLITIONAL CONCEPTION OF RACISM

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ABSTRACT. Since its original 1996 publication, Jorge Garcia’s “The Heart of Racism” has been widely reprinted, a testimony to its importance as a distinctive and original analysis of racism. Garcia shifts the standard framework of discussion from the socio-political to the ethical, and analyzes racism as essentially a vice. He represents his account as non-revisionist (capturing everyday usage), non-doxastic (not relying on belief), volitional (requiring ill-will), and moralized (racism is always wrong). In this paper, I critique Garcia’s analysis, arguing that he does in fact revise everyday usage, that his account does tacitly rely on belief, that ill-will is not necessary for racism, and that a moralized account gets both the scope and the dynamic of racism wrong. While I do not offer an alternative positive account myself, I suggest that traditional left-wing structural analyses are indeed superior.

KEY WORDS: analysis of racism, Jorge Garcia, racism, virtue theory, volitional account of racism

Since its original 1996 publication, Jorge Garcia’s “The Heart of Racism” has been widely reprinted, a testimony to its importance as a distinctive and original analysis of racism that challenges the conventional wisdom in the literature.¹ It is, for example, the only article to appear both in Leonard Harris’s and Bernard Boxill’s recent anthologies on race and racism.² Moreover, it is not a singleton, but merely the first of a series of linked articles advancing his case.³ In conjunction with these other papers, Garcia’s article develops a sophisticated and well worked-out viewpoint

¹ J. L. A. Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 27 (1996), pp. 5–45.

² Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” in Leonard Harris (ed.), *Racism* (Amherst: Humanity Books, 1999), pp. 398–434 and in Bernard Boxill (ed.), *Race and Racism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 257–296. An excerpt also appears in James A. Montmarquet and William H. Hardy (eds.), *Reflections: An Anthology of African American Philosophy* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2000), pp. 33–45. In my page citations, I will refer throughout to the version in the Boxill anthology.

³ J. L. A. Garcia, “Current Conceptions of Racism: A Critical Examination of Some Recent Social Philosophy,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 28 (1997), pp. 5–42 (hereafter cited as “Current Conceptions”); J. L. A. Garcia, “Philosophical Analysis and the Moral Concept of Racism,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 25 (1999), pp. 1–32 (hereafter



within the area of recent philosophical work on race that has broad implications for the defensibility of standard analyses of racism, both inside and outside of philosophy. Nor has he simply sat back and let these implications speak for themselves. An active and able polemicist, Garcia has taken on a formidable list of opponents, including such prominent figures in the field as Anthony Appiah, Derrick Bell, Dinesh D'Souza, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., David Theo Goldberg, Lewis Gordon, Andrew Hacker, Charles Hamilton, Manning Marable, Michael Omi, the late Kwame Ture (born Stokely Carmichael), Howard Winant, as well as – in an article-length critique of my 1997 book, *The Racial Contract* – myself.⁴ Within the overwhelmingly left-wing (liberal to radical) black philosophical community, Garcia is one of the few conservatives, not in the free-market, libertarian, Nozickian sense, but the traditionalist, religious, anti-modern Burkean sense. Apart from the intrinsic merits of his work, then, his presence helps to keep the rest of us honest, by contesting the cozy left consensus on race. Thus he is emerging as an important spokesperson for an alternative to this perspective, a stature likely to be enhanced by the forthcoming publication of his book, also titled *The Heart of Racism*.⁵

“The Heart of Racism,” and the follow-up articles, articulate an analysis of racism that opposes both left and right in its claims about the defining characteristics of racism, and the left in particular in its claims about the nature of the connection between racism and social structure. Whereas most analyses of racism, though differing on other points, have taken it to involve *belief* in some way (e.g., the belief that some races are superior to others), Garcia offers a *volitional, non-doxastic* analysis of racism: racism is primarily a matter of *ill-will*. Thus the double significance of his title: the “heart” – the essence – of racism is a matter of the heart, the traditional seat of the emotions. Moreover – so perhaps it is a triple significance – it is the individual’s heart. Whereas left-wing analyses of racism have traditionally favored structural, and socially holistic accounts, for which power is crucial, Garcia sees this claim as an error. Our theoretical starting-point for understanding and explaining (not merely morally condemning) institutional racism must be the ill-will in the *individual’s* heart. His account is thereby a moralized one, both in that racism is always morally wrong (one article title cited above actually refers to “the moral concept of racism”), and that the individual’s propensity for wrongdoing is central to explicating

cited as “Philosophical Analysis”); J. L. A. Garcia, “Racism and Racial Discourse,” *The Philosophical Forum* 32 (2001), pp. 125–145 (hereafter cited as “Racial Discourse”).

⁴ Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); J. L. A. Garcia, “The Racial Contract Hypothesis,” *Philosophia Africana* 4(1) (2001), pp. 27–42.

⁵ J. L. A. Garcia, *The Heart of Racism* (forthcoming).

it. In sum, the originality of Garcia’s theoretical move is that he has shifted the framework of discussion from the socio-political to the ethical: from his recommended, pre-modern perspective – the perspective of the virtues – racism is, above all, a *vice*.⁶

In a recent essay, I replied in detail to Garcia’s critique of my book, arguing that most of his criticisms rested either on factual, theoretical, or interpretive errors of his own, and above all on the misunderstanding that I was trying to offer a social-scientific explanation of *white racism* rather than a socio-political framework for conceptualizing *white supremacy*.⁷ In this essay I want to go on the offensive and do my own sustained critique of Garcia’s analysis. I see Garcia’s account as fundamentally misguided – an original, impressively researched and documented, finely detailed and well-argued, but ultimately quite wrong, idiosyncratic version of a familiar individualist viewpoint on racism that has been the longtime target of the political left, among whom I number myself.⁸ (Moreover, precisely because of its idiosyncratic nature – the fact that it is a “volitional/desiderative/emotive”⁹ conception of racism rather than a cognitivist/doxastic one – I see it as *more* rather than less vulnerable to standard criticisms.) Thus the dispute between us is in large measure ideological, arising out of our theoretical commitments to sharply divergent historico-political understandings, different pictures of how society works, and rival views on the relation between society and the individual. So my critique of his position is a principled left-wing political response to an important emerging conservative viewpoint in the field. Because of the extensiveness of Garcia’s writings, however, I will not have the space to tackle all his crucial theoretical claims. In this paper, I will just focus narrowly on the more idiosyncratic features of his conception, leaving to some other occasion (except in some brief remarks at the end) the articulation of the more familiar structural objections to *all* individualist analyses, whether doxastic

⁶ Indeed, it is a *sin*. Garcia generally keeps his religious commitments under wraps, but every now and then they slip out, as for example here, in a discussion of institutional racism: “While racism is chiefly a sin, it may come to inhabit what Pope John Paul II calls ‘structures of sin.’” Garcia, “Racial Discourse,” p. 136. One illuminating way to think of his enterprise is as a secularization of a traditional Catholic discourse on sin, with all the familiar attendant problems such a project is likely to face as attempted socio-political analysis.

⁷ Charles W. Mills, “The Racial Contract as Methodology (Not Hypothesis),” *Philosophia Africana* 5(1) (2002), pp. 75–99.

⁸ For a brief but telling critique of Garcia from a similar political perspective, from which I have benefited, see Tommie Shelby, “Is Racism in the ‘Heart’?” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33 (2002), pp. 411–420.

⁹ Garcia, “Racial Discourse,” p. 136.

or volitional. Nor will I myself offer a positive alternative conception of racism, though as my discussion will suggest, I do think that doxastic components should be crucial to it.

My critique will be divided into four main sections, looking at his account as respectively: (1) non-revisionist (2) non-doxastic (3) requiring ill-will (4) moralized.

1. A NON-REVISIONIST ACCOUNT

Before beginning the detailed analysis of Garcia's claims, it is necessary to clarify the nature of the account he is offering. Definitions may be roughly divided into the non-revisionist and the revisionist: (i) those that endorse, while seeking perhaps to refine and make more precise, existing linguistic practice, and (ii) those that seek to revise existing linguistic practice. The latter in turn can be subdivided into the simply stipulative, where the theorist simply announces that she plans to use a familiar term in an unfamiliar way, and the justifiedly (at least in pretensions) revisionist, where the theorist claims that because of some scientific discovery, or conceptual insight, or other comparable innovation, it needs to be realized that everyday usage is misleading. For example, at one point in time it was presumably the case that the same word was used indiscriminately for all celestial objects. Then people realized that planets and stars needed to be in different categories, since the difference between them was much more significant than just the fact that some seemed to move while others seemed to remain fixed. So a justifiedly (as against simply stipulative) revisionist account was offered, which has now been generally established and accepted, and is taken for granted by users of the language (at least those with a certain level of education). By contrast, in the first case (i), one is basically affirming the correctness of how the word is used, but seeking to refine it, so that though some cases around the edges may be affected, the central area of reference covered by the concept stays roughly the same. Obviously, then, this divergence has implications for those wishing to challenge the definition. While one cannot offer existing practice as a *prima facie* refutation in case (ii) (since the theorist is either simply disregarding existing practice, or providing a rationale for correcting it which needs more than *prima facie* contestation), one can do so in case (i). If a definition is claiming to be a refinement, but *not* a major revision, of how the word is used, then it is a legitimate objection to say that there are many cases where it does *not* capture how the word is standardly used.

Now Garcia claims to be offering a definition of the first rather than the second kind; it is not that he has gained a radically new conceptual

insight into racism.¹⁰ Rather, he claims, he is doing the traditional (analytical) philosophical task of under-laborer: clearing up unclarity about how we use terms, and extracting from everyday usage and making explicit an *implicit* set of commitments that, he contends, has been there all along:

What we seek to discover is what, in applying the term, we are saying about the things to which we apply it. To find this out in light of the origins of the term ‘racism,’ and to sort out various inconsistencies and misunderstandings in the ways people use it, is the most promising path to discovering what racism is.¹¹

Thus, in his eight-point list of adequacy conditions for a defensible account of racism, four of the conditions (D, E, F, G) are that it will “accommodate clear cases of racism from history and imagination, and exclude cases where racism is clearly absent . . . remain internally consistent and free of unacceptable implications . . . conform to our everyday discourse about racism, insofar as this [is] free from confusion . . . either stand continuous with past uses of the term ‘racism,’ or involve a change of the term’s meaning that represents a plausible transformation along reasonable lines of development.”¹² (In the light of the preceding conditions cited, I am taking such “transformation” to fall short of the revisionist.) Similarly, he says elsewhere that his project is “to capture, albeit in more precise form, what people, Black and White, are getting at in their ordinary talk about racism.”¹³ So it will be a legitimate objection to his analysis if one can find many examples of phenomena that we would *not*, in everyday language, term racist, but which would count as such on his definition, and many examples of phenomena which *are* normally seen as racism, but which his definition excludes. One of my main critical strategies, accordingly, will be to cite examples in just these two categories.

But there is another general point to be made here. In offering one’s own definition as superior to other contenders, it is, of course, important – as it always is in philosophy – not to beg the question, and tendentiously skew the framework of debate. The ideal is that the various competitors should be able to compete on a conceptually level playing field, not one tilted in advance in favor of one’s own preferred candidate. Now on Garcia’s 8-point list of adequacy conditions I mentioned, there are two (A, H) which I would claim significantly stray from the desideratum of such neutrality. The first, (A), is that the definition should “clarify why racism is always immoral.”¹⁴ But unlike most of his other conditions, this is by no means a

¹⁰ Cf. Garcia’s discussion of Goldberg, in Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” pp. 5–6.

¹¹ Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” p. 6.

¹² Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” p. 6.

¹³ Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” p. 20.

¹⁴ Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” p. 6.

clearly unobjectionable stipulation, to be readily agreed-upon by all sides; rather, it reflects Garcia's own obviously deeply held personal convictions that racism is basically a *vice*, and as such eliminates analyses, for example structural ones, that treat racism more impersonally. I will devote a whole section to this below, but for now I just want to register the criticism that it is not legitimate to eliminate, or at least handicap, competing analyses by presenting as seemingly obvious what is in fact a theoretically heavily loaded prerequisite. *The necessary immorality of racism is something that has to be argued for, not something that can be stipulated in advance.*

The other, even more questionable condition, (H), is that the definition of racism should "have a structure similar to, and be immoral for some of the same reasons as are, central forms of antisemitism, xenophobia, misogyny, the hostility against homosexuals that is nowadays called 'homophobia' and other kinds of ethnic or religious enmity."¹⁵ What is interesting about this list, as the reader will immediately notice, is that "sexism" does not appear on it, despite the fact that most people would see racism and sexism as having crucial similarities, and the latter's coinage was based on the former. I claim, and again will argue in detail below, that this exclusion, and the careful restriction of putatively structurally similar candidates to those characterized by the common element of "hostility/enmity," is also question-begging. Were sexism to have been included on the list it would immediately have become evident how vulnerable Garcia's account is, since we certainly do *not* think of sexism as necessarily involving ill-will. So while claiming to be giving a non-revisionist account that matches everyday usage, he is omitting the phenomenon *most* commonly compared to racism. Moreover, in limiting his list of structurally similar candidates to those uncontroversially involving cognates of ill-will (evident, indeed, in their very etymology), he is presupposing the very conclusion he is supposed to be arguing for, viz., that racism comes in this form and no other. Finally, he is doing all this under the supposedly neutral methodological guise of specifying "adequacy conditions," when in fact considerations of content have clearly, circularly, played a role in determining what he is going to count as "adequate" in the first place.

2. A NON-DOXASTIC ACCOUNT

Let us begin, then, with the non-doxastic nature of Garcia's account. As emphasized at the start, for Garcia belief is not essential to racism, since racism is, at its heart, a matter of "ill-will," negative feelings toward

¹⁵ Garcia, "Current Conceptions," p. 6.

someone because of his/her race. There are two forms, the central and the derivative:

My proposal is that we conceive of racism as fundamentally a vicious kind of racially based disregard for the welfare of certain people. In its central and most vicious form, it is a hatred, ill-will, directed against a person or persons on account of their assigned race. In a derivative form, one is a racist when one either does not care at all or does not care enough (i.e., as much as morality requires) or does not care in the right ways about people assigned to a certain racial group, where this disregard is based on racial classification. Racism, then, is something that essentially involves not our beliefs and their rationality or irrationality, but our wants, intentions, likes, and dislikes and their distance from the moral virtues.¹⁶

Elsewhere, as noted, he characterizes his conception as a “volitional/desiderative/emotive” one, as against a “cognitive/doxastic” one.¹⁷ And in a useful phrase, he suggests that if the trinity of “thinks, does and feels” summarizes the main “nonsystemic ways of conceiving the nature of racism,” then while the doxastic conception “gives priority to what a person thinks,” his conception “gives priority to what she feels, where this includes what she wants and intends.”¹⁸

Now before beginning the main critique, there are some preliminary points that need to be made.

(i) The first is just briefly to challenge his implication that it is only intellectuals, not the lay public, who favor doxastic accounts.¹⁹ While I have no linguistic survey to offer (but then neither does he), the fact (as he concedes elsewhere) that an ordinary dictionary – not a specialized, professional, social-science reference work – gives a doxastic analysis as one meaning of the term (indeed, in my *Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, gives pride of place to it)²⁰ is enough to cast doubt on Garcia’s restriction of such usage to intellectuals, and thus to raise questions about how non-revisionist his analysis really is.

(ii) One can also question the accuracy of Garcia’s own characterization of his position, and object to his somewhat promiscuous alternation between terms not really equivalent. In most places, he describes his

¹⁶ Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” in Boxill (ed.), *Race and Racism*, p. 259.

¹⁷ Garcia, “Racial Discourse,” p. 136.

¹⁸ Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” p. 41, n. 48.

¹⁹ Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” p. 14.

²⁰ According to this dictionary, racism’s first sense is “belief in or doctrine asserting racial differences in character, intelligence, etc. and the superiority of one race over another or others.” Garcia’s sense, “feelings or actions of hatred and bigotry toward a person or persons because of their race,” comes in a distant third (the second sense refers to racial discrimination) [*Webster’s New World College Dictionary*, 4th edition (Foster City: IDG Books Worldwide, 2001), p. 1181].

account as a “volitional” one because of the centrality of “ill-will,” or, in the derivative sense, the “differential lack of goodwill.”²¹ But it needs to be noted, to start with, that the way in which the “will” is involved in these terms is not quite the same. The “volitional” in the standard philosophical sense refers to *one’s own willing* to do something, what happens (assuming all goes well) before an act, and thus a topic to be found in action theory and discussions of freedom and determinism. “Ill-will” and “good-will” are *willing that bad/good things happen to someone*,²² whether one’s own causality is involved or not, indeed whether one intends oneself to act or not. These are not the same, and to refer to the latter as “volitional” is really a bit of an equivocation.

Moreover, *neither* is the same as hatred or affection, which are emotions. Hatred is obviously not an act of the will (one could try to will oneself to hate somebody, but that would be different). But (less obviously) it is not the same as ill-will either. You can have hatred without ill-will, and ill-will without hatred. Clearly, one can have hatred for somebody without acting on that hatred – there is a difference between having feelings and acting on them. But, I would claim, one can also have feelings without *willing* on the basis of them. For example, one can hate somebody, but be aware that one’s hatred is unjustified, unreasonable, and so, in a process of self-monitoring and self-discipline, try to restrain one’s wishing that, say, an accident happens to that person or that he gets cancer. Unless we are saints, we routinely have emotions (hatred, lust, envy, jealousy, *Schadenfreude*) that we deem unworthy of us, and, some of the time at least, we try to suppress them, and not merely not act on them, but not even *will* on their basis. In addition, you can have ill-will for somebody, at least in the sense of wanting bad things to happen to him, without hating him: for example, if for pecuniary reasons (inheriting a fortune) you desire the death of an aged relative deluded enough to have made you his sole heir, but apart from that have no feelings about him whatsoever. So though hatred will generally lead to ill-will, these are ontologically separate entities, not to be conflated with one another as in the definition above (note 16: “it is a hatred, ill-will . . .”). And since, as noted, ill-will is also different from the volitional in the standard sense, one can have ill-will toward someone without planning to do anything about it, that is, to *act* on one’s ill-will (which is why it is

²¹ Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” p. 29.

²² “Since, so conceived, racism is primarily a matter of what a person does or does not wish, will and want for others in light of their race – the contents of a person’s will, broadly conceived – I call it a volitional conception of racism” (Garcia, “Philosophical Analysis,” p. 13).

something of an equivocation, since the volitional in the standard sense is by definition tied up with intent). So given these distinctions, to speak as Garcia does of racism as “essentially” involving our intentions does not follow from his own definition; you can have racial ill-will without any actual intent. And more generally, the volitional/desiderative/emotive are not the same, nor is what a person feels generally taken to include “what she wants and intends.” It may seem to be pedantic to be drawing these distinctions, but even if these various states usually go together, they are not equivalent, nor is the causal relation between them invariable, and in some contexts this might make a difference. So though I will sometimes follow Garcia’s terminology for the sake of convenience, I want here to register my objections to it.

(iii) But my real focus is on the supposedly non-doxastic nature of the analysis. Note, to begin with, that even on his account some minimal beliefs are *necessarily* involved, insofar as the target of racism has to be identified as belonging to the “assigned race.” The racist, in other words, has to believe that person, *P*, is a member of race R_2 . But if we think of what this requires, we will see that many other beliefs are inevitably going to be involved in this classification also. Beliefs do not come as isolated monads but as linked in a complex web with other beliefs, that are arrayed in interconnections, and horizontal and vertical relations, in particular conceptual spaces. This is, of course, the famous burden of W. V. O. Quine’s work. The racist has to have the concept of a human, the concept of a race, the background notion of taxonomies in general, the more specific notion of human taxonomies, the idea of what it is to be appropriately judged as falling under one classification rather than another, the specific differentiations of adjacent classifications, the belief that *P* has certain crucial differentiating characteristics, the belief that these characteristics warrant locating him under R_2 rather than the racist’s own race, R_1 , etc. What might take only an instant of time relies on a complex set of cognitive processes.

So even in the apparently simple mental act of subsuming someone under a particular category, an associated conceptual machinery is set into motion which *already* involves numerous foregrounded and background beliefs ordered at different levels of abstraction. And this apparatus will, of course, not be the racist’s own invention, but the product of the racist’s socialization, and as such will reflect dominant conceptions.²³ It is a familiar point from the epistemology of the past few decades that seeing is

²³ Cf. Tommie Shelby on racism as a pervasive ideology into which most whites are socialized: Shelby, “Is Racism in the ‘Heart’?” pp. 415–416. The failure to advert to these

“seeing-as,” that we do not apprehend raw sense-data, a primeval “given,” but have “theory-laden” perceptions. Some philosophers have drawn relativist conclusions from this claim, but even if (as I would) we wish to affirm objectivism, it is undeniable that we have to grapple with socially-mediated perceptions and conceptions. This will be true even for the “cold” cognitive processing of entities with no particular emotive associations for us; it will be *particularly* true for categorizations of race, which for the past few hundred years has been so pivotally tied up with “hot” issues of self- and other-definition.

Imagine, then, that we are in the period of classic, old-fashioned, biologicistic racism – none of this present-day, more dilute and ambiguous, “cultural” racism – where Europeans formally rule the world, and the biological inferiority of nonwhites is taken for granted. (Since Garcia’s account of racism is ostensibly a general one, it is supposed to be able to accommodate examples from this time period; even if he defines “racism” differently, without respect to beliefs, he would presumably not deny that racism then was more widespread and clearcut than it is now.) The average white person encountering, say, a black man in the United States, is not just going to see somebody to be classified as “black” with no other associations. Rather, he is going to have in his head a human taxonomy *centrally* structured around white superiority and black inferiority, so that the categorization brings with it: black man (or, more likely, “nigger”)/from Africa/brought here as slaves/savage/uncivilized/animal-like, etc. These concepts, these beliefs, will (tendentially) go with the territory; they will all be fused into the perception (which will be a conception as well). To see someone as black *is* to see someone as inferior; that is just where they are located in the taxonomy. In a famous and oft-cited passage from *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon describes how his desire merely “to be a man among other men” was frustrated by the “racial epidermal schema” that imposed on him a self “woven [by the white man] out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories,” so that in white eyes he was already “[s]ealed into . . . crushing objecthood”:

“Dirty nigger!” Or simply, “Look, a Negro!”

I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain to the source of the world, and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects. . . .

[The black man] must be black in relation to the white man. . . . I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetichism, racial defects, slave-ships. . . .

environing structures of belief, meaning, and affect is, of course, a large part of the reason why an individualist account such as Garcia’s is going to be inadequate right from the start.

Where am I to be classified? Or, if you prefer, tucked away? . . . The Negro is an animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly; look, a nigger. . . .²⁴

This passage, I suggest, gives a far more realistic picture of how categorization and cognition actually work under such circumstances than Garcia’s abstract and denatured account. The category of black/Negro/nigger *already* has a dense and potent set of associations (formulable as beliefs) linked with it, that are going to be activated in the seemingly simple cognitive process of assigning somebody to this race. So while Garcia may claim in reply that logical distinctions can be drawn among the various components of perception, the point is not what is logically, but what is *psychologically* possible given what we know about human cognition. Insofar as his virtue- and vice-based account relies crucially on factual assumptions about human mental traits, on claims about human perception, affect, and will, it could be argued that this simple fact alone – what is involved in classifying *P* as a member of R_2 , especially in the period of classic racism – is enough to cast doubt on the very possibility of a purely non-doxastic account of racism.

(iv) If the previous preliminary objection challenges the severing of classification from belief, the next challenges the severing of emotion from belief. As seen in his definitional quote above, the central kind of racism for Garcia involves hatred, that is, an emotion, and a very strong one (that is why he can also describe his account as an emotive one). But this emotion is not itself supposed to be etiologically linked to belief, though it may, *ex post facto*, generate rationalizing beliefs. Yet it may be doubted whether Garcia’s analysis here rests on any defensible model of human psychology. Reviving the classical pre-modern virtues in ethical theory is one thing; reviving the pre-modern picture of human psychology often presupposed by classical authors is quite another. Garcia’s account is going to have to be able to stand up to the criticisms of present-day philosophy of mind. And as John Deigh points out, in this field cognitivism now rules:

Cognitivism now dominates the philosophical study of emotions. Its ascendancy in this area parallels the ascendancy of cognitivism in the philosophy of mind generally. Yet the two trends have independent sources. . . . In the philosophical study of emotion, it arose from unhappiness with affective conceptions of the phenomenon. . . . Thought replaced feeling as the principal element in the general conception of emotion. . . . Two criticisms are chiefly responsible for the demise of feeling-centered conceptions. . . . One is that feeling-centered conceptions cannot satisfactorily account for the intentionality of emotions. The other is that they cannot satisfactorily represent emotions as proper objects of rational assessment. . . . The most influential argument is due to [Anthony] Kenny. Its main thesis is that the concept of each emotion, be it that of fear, pity, envy, or what have you, restricts

²⁴ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1967), pp. 109–113.

what can be its object. That is, the object must have a certain character, or at least the subject must see it as having that character. Thus, the object of fear must be seen as something or someone who threatens harm; the object of pity must be seen as someone who has suffered misfortune; and the object of envy must be seen as someone who has an advantage one lacks. . . . *From these considerations it should be clear that what qualifies something as the appropriate object of an emotion is the subject's belief that it has a certain character. Hence, belief and so propositional thought is essential to emotion* [my emphasis]. Hence, the familiar refrain, "There is a logic to the concept of x such that to say that a person feels x toward z implies that he believes such and such about z ." . . . That evaluation is essential to emotion is reflected in the restrictions that, on the main thesis of Kenny's argument, the concepts of specific emotions place on what can be their objects. If the object of fear must be something that is seen to threaten harm, then fear entails an evaluation of its object as the potential source or agent of some bad effect. . . . [Cognitivists argue that] the object of an emotion can have, in the subject's mind, its evaluative character only if the subject believes or judges it to have this character. For each evaluation implies that the object is in some way good or in some way bad, and being in some way good or in some way bad can be seen as a property of an object only if one attributes it to that object. The conclusion then follows, given the presumption that such attributions only come from belief or through judgment.²⁵

So the traditional sharp polarization within philosophy of emotion vs. rationality, the heart vs. the head, has long since been superseded (or at least softened), judged to be misleading because emotions are tied to perceptions, conscious or unconscious, which can be translated into beliefs. This is not to deny the possibility of pathological racism which bears no link to actual or supposed reality (the racist hates in a cognitive vacuum), but the point is that, given Garcia's claims to be giving a non-revisionist account, he cannot be taking such racism as his modal case.²⁶ Rather, he has to be able to explain everyday racism, the kind that is routine and found in what we would regard as ordinary people, not those people requiring institutionalization. So given the findings of cognitive psychology, Garcia's picture of free-floating emotions untethered to specific beliefs just seems quite wrong. And even independently of such research, ordinary lay opinion, I think, would be dubious about the claim that such feelings develop out of nowhere. If one feels antipathy and hatred toward blacks, then surely, as suggested above, it is precisely *because* of certain beliefs about blacks, for example that they are violent, animalistic, savage, prone to crime, libidinous, potential rapists, a threat to one's family and neighborhood, etc. Garcia's causal picture of the psyche, by virtue of which the racist has the emotions *first* and generates the appropriate

²⁵ John Deigh, "Cognitivism in the Theory of Emotions," *Ethics* 104 (1994), pp. 824–825, 834–836. Deigh himself, it should be noted, has reservations about certain cognitivist claims.

²⁶ This would be like "groundless emotion," which Deigh mentions as a possible counter-example.

beliefs *after*, just seems counter-intuitive, a complete inversion both of common-sense and what we know from cognitive psychology. Filling in the variables of the “familiar refrain” Deigh cites above, one could say that “There is a logic to the concept of ill-will such that to say that a white racist feels ill-will toward a black man [on account of his race] implies that he believes such and such about the black man.” Beliefs are what ground the ill-will. Moreover, we can evaluate emotions to determine their appropriateness, not merely morally but rationally. The emotion of ill-will can be evaluated, “rationally assessed,” to determine whether the black man, on account of his race, actually has that character, and whether the emotion is appropriate. So the whole process is placed, far more illuminatingly, in a cognitivist framework from the start, with belief playing a crucial role at every level.

(v) However, all these objections have been preliminary to my main point (though I would claim certainly damaging enough in their own right). My main objection to Garcia’s non-doxastic analysis is that, without a specification more detailed than “ill-will,” a specification which is necessarily going to involve reference to beliefs, we are arguably not in a position to apply the label of *racism* in the first place. So Garcia’s definition will be too broad because it will admit many phenomena that are not appropriately to be judged as racist, because, for example, of the different role that “race” may be playing in picking out individuals, and exactly what it is tracking.

In order to get our intuitions going, let us move the discussion from the abstract and general to the concrete and historically specific. (Garcia warns that tying the discussion of racism too closely to the actual history may dispose us “to confuse racism with various inessential concomitant phenomena,”²⁷ which is fair enough. But the danger of the converse policy – which he admits – is that in a proliferation of far-fetched counterfactual examples we may lose sight of the import of real-life paradigm cases.) Imagine a person of color who is a victim of one of the many structures of racial subordination that have made the modern world what it is: a Native American in the Caribbean or Mexico or Peru who has seen 95% of his community wiped out by the Spanish through disease and outright massacre, accompanied by torture, disembowelings, dismemberment, infanticide, rape, burnings, etc.; a black slave on a New World plantation being worked to death since it is more economical that way, or a black woman routinely gang-raped by the owner and his friends; a Congolese native whose arm has been cut off and whose family have all died as a result of King Leopold’s quest for rubber, which resulted

²⁷ Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” p. 10.

in an estimated 10 million deaths in the Congo at the start of the 20th century.²⁸ Now if any of these individuals harbored feelings of antipathy, hatred, and “ill-will” toward white people because of their race, would we call it racism? I submit that we would not, at least not without a further determination of the nature and content of their feelings, and to what they are theoretically committed.

Consider some different possible varieties of “ill-will” (IW) toward whites harbored by persons of color in these situations, and imagine that they are associated with different component beliefs, having to do with the kind of generalization at work, presumed sociological explanation, resulting desires, and consequent prescriptions offered:

- IW₁: All white people (at all times and all places) are bad.
- IW₂: Most white people (at this time and place) are bad.
- IW₃: White people (at all times and all places) are bad because of their intrinsic nature.
- IW₄: White people (at this time and place) tend to be bad because of their racist socialization.
- IW₅: White people should be made to suffer (indiscriminately).
- IW₆: White people guilty of racist crimes should be punished.

Obviously, further variants can be imagined, but I think the point is made. In all six of these cases (and others the reader can easily supply), the person of color can have “ill-will” toward white people because of their race: strong feelings of antipathy and hatred. But obviously it is only the odd-numbered claims and prescriptions that are clearly racist (as generalization, analysis, and prescription): that all white people throughout history are bad, that this is a matter of their intrinsic nature, and that they should collectively and indiscriminately suffer.²⁹ The even-numbered claims and prescriptions are not racist at all. (So while the first set might be an example of what Jean-Paul Sartre called “anti-racist racism,” and we could then debate how harshly it should be morally condemned, I am denying that the second set should count as racist in the first place.)

²⁸ For the gory details, see, for example, David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) and Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

²⁹ Note that the doxastic dimension of the racism of subordinate groups (when this judgment is appropriate) does not usually take the form of claims about the *intellectual* inferiority of the dominant race (after all, if they are intellectually inferior, then why are they dominant?!), but rather in claims about their intrinsic *moral* inferiority. They are seen as being intrinsically bad, treacherous, evil, etc.

Now contrast two people of color, both of whom, because of horrible experiences such as the above, have feelings of hatred and ill-will toward whites, but one of whom, Odd, believes IW_1 , IW_3 , IW_5 , while the other, Even, believes IW_2 , IW_4 , IW_6 . According to Garcia’s definition, we must count them both as racist, since they have “hatred, ill-will, directed against [whites] on account of their assigned race.” But my claim is that we would *not* do this, since there is a crucial difference in what they believe about whites, and a crucial difference in the ways in which the assignation (of whites) to a particular race grounds their feelings. In other words, we would – following both folk psychology and philosophical psychology (here in convergence, I claim) – be seeking to ascertain what specific beliefs underlie the ill-will, what its more detailed characterization should be, and how, accordingly, it should be evaluated, both rationally and morally.

For Odd, whiteness signifies membership in a group destined by biological or onto-theological traits to evildoing, so that their wickedness is innate and collective punishment is justifiable. For Even, whiteness signifies membership in a group socialized to be racist and to maltreat people of color, so that while negative generalizations about them are warranted, distinctions also need to be drawn. IW_4 involves no dubious biologicistic or onto-theological commitments, and, re-phrased in a less moralistic way, would be judged quite unexceptionable by many sociologists as a defensible generalization about the white population in particular times and places in the modern world. Especially in a time period, whether global or local, of blatant racial domination – the New World during the epoch of Native American genocide and expropriation, and later African slavery; the U.S. South during Jim Crow; Asia and Africa under European rule; South Africa during apartheid – whites were socialized to be racist, looked down on people of color, and treated them accordingly. So in their relations to their nonwhite fellow-humans, most whites were indeed “bad” – and a generalization, IW_2 , to this effect would be perfectly reasonable on Bayesian grounds. Indeed, we would be justified in questioning the rationality of a black person who, in the depths, say, of turn-of-the-20th-century Mississippi, expected fair treatment from whites!³⁰ Finally, to call for the punishment of the guilty, IW_6 , is presumably just what morality demands, not at all a violation of it. So “race” is doing different work in

³⁰ Leon Litwack points out that for their own survival, black children in this period were taught by their parents “the necessary rituals of subservience and subordination. . . . For some black youths the most difficult part of this lesson in racial etiquette was to learn that they should never expect whites to reciprocate with similar terms of deference and respect.” Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), p. 35.

the odd- and even-numbered sets, and though both Odd and Even may have hatred and ill-will toward whites, the claim that they are both racist seems clearly wrong. An account of racism which just focuses on feelings without an examination of their accompanying beliefs is not going to work because we need to know what beliefs *ground* the feelings in order to adjudicate whether they are racist or not.

At this stage, Garcia could make several replies. He might claim, for example, that insofar as Even still has ill-will toward whites, this still counts as racist. But this would just be to repeat his definition, not to give an additional argument for it. Ill-will has many sources, and because here it is ill-will toward a person because of his race, it does not follow (given the differentiation of the beliefs) that it is racist ill-will. He might also claim that, while understanding the terrible ordeals the person has undergone, we should still condemn his/her ill-will as morally wrong.³¹ But even if this is so (and obviously any sensible moral theory will have to take account of different circumstances, so that the condemnation of a victim of harm under these circumstances cannot be the same as the condemnation of those who have inflicted the harm), it is a separate question. What has to be proven is not merely that it is wrong, but that it is wrong in a racist way.

Another possibility is for Garcia to deny that ill-will against whites can coexist with the even-numbered beliefs. Either one hates whites, like Odd, and adheres to the odd-numbered beliefs, or one has feelings of moral indignation and a desire for justice, but no hatred of whites, and adheres to the even-numbered beliefs.³² So his thesis would be saved since as a matter

³¹ Indeed, in one endnote Garcia makes the astonishing statement that even *resentment* is to be morally condemned: "Some philosophers have recently spoken up for hatred and resentment in certain circumstances. . . . While moral outrage and righteous indignation, however, are morally admirable, I think hate and resentment unacceptable" (Garcia, "Current Conceptions," p. 36, n. 21). My first reaction on reading this statement was that this is a theory of the virtues not for humans, but for saints! But actually, that is not right; that mis-states the point. Could not a case be made that if, in the situations described above, you did not feel at the *very* least "resentment" – in fact, could not a case be made that if all you felt *was* resentment – then this would actually show that there was something deeply wrong with your moral character, the very moral character that Garcia, as a virtue theorist, is supposed to be concerned about? "You know, I really resent the fact that you have just disemboweled my child." What would we think of the appropriateness of this as a mother's moral reaction? Would this not be ludicrously *inappropriate*? Garcia may, of course, be using the term in some idiosyncratic sense (*Webster's* says, p. 1219, "a feeling of displeasure and indignation, from a sense of being injured or offended," which sounds perfectly morally respectable to me – not merely morally *permissible*, but [minimally] *demanding* under the circumstances). But then why would he be bothering to underline his difference from other philosophers, if it is merely idiolectic?

³² See quotation from Garcia, previous note.

of fact nobody would both have ill-will against whites and believe the even-numbered set: Even cannot exist as both a hater and believer of IW_2 , IW_4 , IW_6 . But I think that as a matter of human psychology, such a claim would just be naïve. Hatred can accompany the desire to get justice, and one can throttle back one’s feelings for revenge while still having them. Part of the point of giving the concrete examples is to ask the reader to imagine himself or herself in these positions. Would hatred and ill-will not be the most likely outcome? And could it not coincide with the recognition that these terrible deeds have come about not because of biology but socialization, so that one needs to recognize that it is not innate – in short, not to make the crucial step into (by my, and most other theorists’, criteria) racism?

Alternatively, Garcia might deny that the reaction of Even, as I have described it, counts as ill-will on the basis of race, thereby failing to meet the criteria of his definition, since the ill-will here is based on what whites have done, not what they are (metaphysically). But my reply would be that it *is* precisely because of what they are that they have done these things. The reality here is not, of course, a biological reality, but a social one, but it is a reality nonetheless. What we call “whites” in this period – Europeans socialized by this system of racial domination – objectively *are* people who will, tendentially, think of themselves as superior, look down on people of color, and thus be more prone to commit racial atrocities.³³ (As a virtue theorist committed to the theoretical importance of linking behavior to intent and positive and negative character features, virtue and vice, Garcia should presumably have no problem in principle with such a claim.)

Sometimes, especially in postmodernist discussions, one gets the *non sequitur* that since race is constructed, it is not real. But as many theorists have argued, this conclusion does not follow, since there are perfectly respectable and conventional metaphysical criteria of reality by which race can be shown to be *both* constructed and real³⁴ (nor does Garcia, in his brief discussions of this topic, deny the reality of race in this sense³⁵). Because they are white – not biologically, but socially – they *will* tend to be a certain way, and this will be a real metaphysical, though historically non-invariant, fact about them. The same Europeans physically, in

³³ I emphasize *tendentially* because even in the most racist system, of course, some whites have always been exceptions: “race traitors.”

³⁴ See, for example, Charles Mills, “‘But What Are You Really?’ The Metaphysics of Race,” in Charles Mills, *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 41–66, and Ronald R. Sundstrom, “‘Racial’ Nominalism,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 33 (2002), pp. 193–210.

³⁵ See, for example: Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” p. 260; Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” p. 36, n. 17.

a parallel universe, a twin earth, where European colonialism and global white domination had never occurred, would not be “white.” But these Europeans, on our earth, are. And as such, their whiteness, like other socially real characteristics, will support generalizations in *this* world about how (in this place and time period) they are likely to react and what they are likely to do (we see here the virtues of a systemic account, which links not merely racism but race itself to social structure). In other words – as against an atomic individualism – we need to realize that whites in racist structures will be socialized to have, in Garcia’s language, vicious characters where nonwhites are concerned. Being white means (to some high, if not precisely specifiable, degree of probability) being a person who looks down on you and, given motive and opportunity (and of course whites in this period have the power, so they *will* generally have the opportunity), will be likely to mistreat you. So hostility toward the person because of his or her race *is* what is involved, but in determining whether it is *racist* the crucial issue is what “race” is tracking in Odd’s, Even’s, and the white racist’s cognition, which is why discrimination among all three of them is necessary.

Suppose, however, that Garcia makes the following move. “The connection with race you are presupposing in the mind of the second person of color is not the kind of connection of which I am thinking. Even has ill-will toward whites because of a past history of white wrongdoing, and likely future wrongdoing. But this is not because of their race in the sense that I meant. *I* meant that the ill-will is based on racial assignment to a certain category independent of these histories, which is why it counts as racism.”

But were he to make this reply, he would, in effect, have conceded the game. To stipulate that his definition really tacitly relies on this kind of connection is to admit that belief plays a role he has denied it in his official formulation. What had seemed like a neutral concept – “assigned to race” – would then turn out to have been loaded in a question-begging way. For Garcia would then be admitting that for him “ill-will directed at persons on account of their assigned race” has to be unpacked as “ill-will directed at persons on account of their assigned race *as a result of illicit biological generalizations based on race*” (such as those endorsed by Odd). But this would mean that claims about innate racial character, supposedly irrelevant to his definition, had been tacitly incorporated in it, whether in the conceptualization of “ill-will” or in the process of racial categorization and assignment itself, so that certain kinds of categorial assignment meet his criteria and others do not. Belief would have been smuggled into the defi-

dition in an unacknowledged way, and as such, he would have contradicted his initial characterization of his view as non-doxastic.

Yet the preceding reconstructions of Garcia’s replies might all be simply beside the point. He could say that I am wasting time, focusing on peripheral issues, while missing the most obvious and most fundamental refutation of all, which indeed annihilates my whole line of critique from the start. I have written as if “ill-will” were a *non-moralized* term, so that the justice being sought by Even, IW₆, still counts as being linked with ill-will. After all, when we seek the punishment of wrongdoers, it means that we *want* bad things to happen to them (fines, shaming, imprisonment, execution), and as such we wish them ill. Whether or not these bad things are morally justifiable in some ethical or juristic framework, they are still bad things. But Garcia might say that this only shows how completely I have misunderstood him from the start. His use of the term, he will now (or long ago) point out, is a *moralized* one. So my earlier gloss of ill-will – willing that bad things happen to someone – is mistaken because it lacks the moral dimension that he means to be included in it. Racism is not just ill-will directed at somebody because of his race, but ill-will that is in addition conceptually tied to promoting the *unjust* treatment of that person because of his race, ill-will linked to the *failure to respect* that person’s rights:

In the first form, it consists in racial antipathy, the desire . . . to harm people assigned to a certain racial group. . . . This sort of racist manifests the vice of malevolence, and, in her aim to deprive members of the hated race of things to which they are entitled, she also manifests the vice of injustice. In the second form, it consists not in ill will, but in a differential lack of goodwill such that one doesn’t much care about people assigned to a certain racial group, precisely because they are deemed to belong to that group. . . . Such a racist has the vice of moral disregard, indifference. She will also have the vice of injustice, because, caring little about those she assigns to a certain racial group, she will disdain them and their rights as beneath notice, therein breaching that respect for others and their dignity which the virtue of justice demands.³⁶

Insofar as Even seeks *justice* in the punishment of white racists, then (which implies that their rights are to be respected, since of course criminal justice does not mean *ignoring* the rights of criminals), Even does not have ill-will toward them. My counterexample does not work because of my initial failure to recognize that ill-will in Garcia’s definition is crucially a moralized notion.

But if this is Garcia’s reply, then I would claim that the putatively non-doxastic nature of his conception, already under considerable strain, here simply snaps outright. Note, to begin with, how the already heterogeneous

³⁶ Garcia, “Current Conceptions,” p. 29.

list of items from our mental furniture subsumed under his account (volitional/desiderative/emotive) has had yet another member added to the inventory: the moral. To repeat my earlier points: the “volitional” will in ill-will is not, or at least not straightforwardly, the “volitional” will in intent, and neither is an emotion. Moreover, to the extent that racial categorization is part of the process, and emotion is cognitive, beliefs are necessarily going to be involved in both. Now if, it turns out, ill-will is moralized, then it involves *another* item from the psychic inventory: a moral attitude. And not only is a moral attitude not an emotion, it is not even necessarily causally connected with emotion. It is a familiar feature of Kantian ethics that he thought our moral motivation should be the desire to do our duty, independent of “inclinations,” and that indeed our actions had no moral worth insofar as they were motivated by inclination. Whatever one thinks of this picture as an ideal, however attractive or unattractive one finds it, it is at least completely comprehensible, and not contradictory. Respect for others is not an emotion, and neither is disrespect.

So the point is that we now need to think of ill-will, or lack of good-will, as being in Garcia’s conception conjoined with a certain moral attitude. But insofar as we do so, I would claim, we necessarily have to invoke beliefs. Even when I was positing ill-will as non-moralized, a kind of diffuse antipathy, I argued that both folk and philosophical psychology would find dubious the assertion that it would not be based on some set of beliefs. Now that it turns out to be moralized, I would claim, the argument goes through even more strongly. For moral attitudes, even more clearly than emotions, are necessarily translatable into beliefs. Respecting someone means recognizing his personhood, his entitlement to a certain schedule of rights, and the obligation not to infringe upon them. Disrespecting someone means failing to recognize these things. Insofar as – to use the more clearcut “lack of goodwill” case – the racist cares “little about those she assigns to a certain racial group . . . disdain[ing] them and their rights as beneath notice, therein breaching that respect for others,” she is minimally committed, I would claim, to the belief either that they have no rights or that their rights do not matter. She believes that *it is morally permissible to treat the person as if he did not have equal rights*. And if one asks the natural question, *why* she believes this, then the natural answer is that some inequality, whether intellectual or moral, justifies this permission. So excavating this chain of beliefs, what we would get is the following – somewhat cumbersome, but no longer misleadingly elliptical – unpacking of Garcia’s proposed definition:

X is a racist because she has ill-will (or lack of good-will) toward P based on P’s race, where ill-will (or lack of good-will) means

a willing that (or an indifference when) bad things happen to *P* that involve an infringement on *P*'s rights, *because* (belief₁) *X* does not believe that *P*'s rights need be respected, *because* (belief₂) *X* believes that *P* is somehow morally lesser, and either does not have the rights in the first place or has them only in some greatly attenuated sense.

Beliefs – indeed the very beliefs of innate superiority and inferiority that were earlier dismissed by Garcia – would then indeed be crucial to understanding what racism is, and his supposedly non-doxastic definition would turn out to be doxastic after all.

How could Garcia block this conclusion? He could claim that moral attitudes are *not* cognitive, and thus not translatable into beliefs. In analytical philosophy circles in the first half of the 20th century, of course, the dominant meta-ethical position did in fact make precisely this claim, and was for that reason known as noncognitivism, whether the emotivism of A. J. Ayer and C. L. Stevenson, or the prescriptivism of R. M. Hare. For emotivism (the most appropriate comparison here), morality was essentially a matter of “pro” and “con” attitudes, with no propositional content, so that what might seem like the normative statement that “Abortion is wrong” would really just be the interjection “Boo to abortion!” But obviously this would be pretty strange and unwelcome company for Garcia – clearly a moral cognitivist and objectivist, who wants to condemn racism as objectively wrong and vicious – to find himself in. Perhaps, then, he could concede that moral attitudes are cognitive while denying that the racist's moral attitude implies her belief, belief₁, that “*P*'s rights need not be respected.” But I do not see how he could deny this without contradicting his own analysis, cited above: “She will disdain them and their rights as beneath notice.” How could one have this moral attitude *without* having this belief? Is that not just what the attitude *is*? Could she “disdain them [R₂s] and their rights” while simultaneously believing that *P*'s rights as an *R*₂ *should* be respected? Would that not be an outright contradiction? So I do not see how that move would work either.

Finally, then, Garcia might try to cut off my unwelcome unpacking at a lower doxastic point, conceding that the racist believes “*P*'s rights need not be respected,” but denying that this commits her to the further belief, belief₂, that “*P* is somehow morally lesser.” Yet insofar as it is *because of P*'s race that his rights need not be respected, how could the implication be avoided? There are, of course, situations where, at least according to many moral theorists, one is justified in overriding certain of a person's rights, for example to break into his medicine cabinet in his absence to get the life-saving vaccine. So overriding the person's rights under these circum-

stances would not at all imply anything about his moral standing. But by hypothesis this situation is not of that kind; it is not a set of conjunctural circumstances which justifies, for *X*, the *overriding* of *P*'s rights but the fact that *P* is a member of a certain race which justifies, for *X*, *ignoring* *P*'s rights (or, alternatively, denying that *P* has rights in the first place). How then could the racist *not* have some equivalent of belief₂? What other alternative is there? Insofar as *X* is rational (and remember, Garcia's definition is supposed to be able to handle everyday racism; it cannot be limited to the racism of psychopaths), how could belief₁ just be hovering in a state of doxastic ungroundedness? Does not belief₁ (given that it is based on *P*'s race) just *imply* belief₂? Admittedly, it is a general dictum that "objective" logical implication and "subjective" doxastic implication need to be distinguished. The fact that a seemingly simple mathematical claim can be shown, through a long chain of intermediate steps, to have all kinds of complex and perhaps even counterintuitive implications at the other end does not mean, when we affirm our belief in the first link, that we recognize those implications. Even if *a* implies *z*, it does not mean that the person who believes *a* also believes *z*. But here the conceptual and doxastic "distance" between the two is not remotely comparable to such examples. These "links" are *adjacent* (if not identical). For in fact, I am not sure that (Quine notwithstanding) it is not simply *analytic* that "*P*'s rights need not be respected [because of *P*'s race]" implies "*P* is somehow morally lesser." If not, it certainly comes close. But in any case, since it is the "subjective" (doxastic) side with which we are concerned, it seems highly doubtful that there would be any psychological gap there, even if there is a logical one.

The alternative for Garcia would be to claim that the belief-chain reaches a termination-point in belief₁; there is just nothing more (note that the account would still then be a doxastic one, if not extending to beliefs about the inferior moral standing of *P*). In epistemological debates over foundationalism, some defenders argue that there are self-justifying beliefs which need no further support, for example "I am currently having a reddish visual impression." But whatever the merits of such an analysis, it is obvious that belief₁ is *not* of this putatively self-justifying, foundationalist kind. So Garcia's conception requires us to accept that *X* could have belief₁ *without* having any beliefs about the features of *P* that make such infringement permissible (or unnecessary, since there is nothing to be infringed upon). If this is not an outright contradiction, then at the very least, it is a piling-up of further psychological implausibilities into a toppling tower.

Apart from my initial criticisms, then, my first major objection to Garcia's claim is to argue that his definition of racism would cover many

cases of racial hostility and ill-will which, on a non-moralized conception, it is *not* justifiable to consider as racist. On the other hand, if the conception of ill-will *is* moralized, then it arguably incorporates in a tacit way the very beliefs about innate inferiority that the definition was supposed to exclude. Denied (with great fanfare) entry at the front door, doxastic considerations – specific beliefs about race, innate characteristics, and the link between these and moral standing – would then have been surreptitiously admitted at the back door.

3. AN “ILL-WILL” ACCOUNT

So either Garcia’s definition does not provide us with sufficient conditions for racism, since people can have ill-will toward others because of their race without its being racist, or it excludes this possibility only through illicitly invoking the doxastic. I will now argue that it does not give us necessary conditions either. People can have good-will toward others because of their race and it can still be racist. If, in the previous section, my basic point was that belief is going to be crucial to determining the content of ill-will, my basic point here is that it is even more obviously crucial to determining intent. In neither case can the doxastic be excluded, and once it is included, the judgment of “racism” will be determined by how it shapes the will, and not just by that will.

Consider what is sometimes referred to as paternalistic racism. A white person has feelings of good-will toward Native Americans (whom he wants to see successfully assimilate), to black slaves in the U.S. (whom he wants to take care of, since they are incapable of taking care of themselves), to blacks, browns, and yellows in the colonial world (whom he wants to civilize). His feelings of benevolence seem quite real, but in each case they are predicated on his belief in the inferiority to whites, whether biological and/or cultural, of the nonwhite racial groups. So these inferiors – Tonto, Faithful Ol’ Uncle Remus, Gunga Din – need to be helped, and he gets real pleasure out of doing what he can to help them. Now in the literature on racism, this is seen as an important sub-variety; racism comes in more than one form, and there are other kinds besides the malevolent kind. Yet most theorists would insist that this still counts as racism, since what is crucial for them, unlike Garcia, is the doxastic dimension: the paternalist’s belief in the racial inferiority of these nonwhites.

Garcia is well aware of this objection as a major problem for his definition, and he explicitly addresses it in more than one place. His most detailed treatment is in “The Heart of Racism.” He discusses here the cases of the antebellum southern white aristocracy, and Kiplingesque colonial-

ists, both of whom oppose racial equality while seeming to be “free of any vehement racial hatred.” In reply, he invokes both his core notion (racial hatred) and its derivative (racial disregard):

These people [the southern aristocracy] strongly opposed Black equality in the social, economic, political realms, but they appear to have been free of any vehement racial hatred. It appears that we should call such people racists. The question is: Does the account offered here allow them to be so classified? . . . It is important to remember, however, that not all hatred is wishing another ill for its own sake. . . . What is essential is that [racial antipathy] consists in either opposition to the well-being of people classified as members of the targeted racial group or in a racially based callousness to the needs and interests of such people. This, I think, gives us what we need in order to see part of what makes our patricians racists. . . . They stand against the advancement of Black people. . . . They are averse to it as such, not merely doing things that have the *side* effect of setting back the interests of Black people. Rather, they *mean* to retard those interests, to keep Black people “in their place” relative to White people. They may adopt this stance of active, conscious, and deliberate hostility to Black welfare either simply to benefit themselves at the expense of Black people or out of the contemptuous belief that, because they are Black, they merit no better. In any event, these aristocrats and their behavior can properly be classified as racist.³⁷

I want to argue, on lines somewhat analogous to those in the previous section, that this response does not work. To begin with, we need to make some preliminary clarificatory points about “intent.” If I give you a glass of water because you have complained of thirst, and I do not know that somebody has put cyanide in it, I do not intend to kill you, even though you die as a result (in part) of my actions. I believed the water would do you good, and so meant well, not ill. My intention had a bad outcome because of properties unknown to me of what I was giving you. Similarly, if I give you a dose of medicine, such as penicillin, standardly prescribed for people in your condition, without realizing that because of your constitution you fall into the category of people who are allergic to it (you are not wearing your warning medical bracelet), I do not intend your harm even though you die as a result of my actions. I believed the penicillin would do you good, and so meant well, not ill. My intention had a bad outcome because of properties unknown to me of your constitution. And this judgment would also be applicable for the converse case in which I withhold penicillin from you when you are ill, because of a mistaken but sincere belief that you are allergic to it, and you die as a result. So in general, if I have a certain (mistaken) picture of your needs, capabilities, and limitations, which I sincerely believe, and I act on the basis of this picture to further your well-being, then it cannot justifiably be claimed, when you suffer by my actions, that I desired to harm you.

³⁷ Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” pp. 273–274.

Now by Garcia's own criteria, it is not enough that actions, or general patterns of behavior, are "against the advancement of Black people" to call them racist. Given his virtue-theorist's emphasis on individual motivation and personal intent, the criterion has to be motivation-based, not results-based (and in fact Garcia says this explicitly elsewhere, in his criticisms of attempts to prove "institutional racism" just by looking at outcomes).³⁸ So the criterion here is "subjective," adverting to motivation, rather than "objective," adverting to outcomes. The crucial question is: what do they intend? Garcia says of the southern aristocrats that they are "opposed to the well-being" of blacks, "stand against their advancement," and "mean to retard their interests" in order to keep them in their place. But superficially, at least, their motivation is benevolent, based on the belief that they know best what black interests are. What entitles him (he thinks) to make his judgment of ill-will, is that he is relying on an objective (i.e., non-racist) standard of black well-being and black interests, and an objective (non-racist) judgment of what place blacks should have in the society (i.e., any place that their talents, which are equal to whites', can take them). But my claim would be that *he is not entitled to do this*. From the perspective of "intent," the crucial issue is not how *Garcia* (or any other non-racist, third-person observer) sees things, but how the *southern aristocrats* (as first persons) see things. "Intent," and its link with ill- or good-will has to be determined with respect to them. "*Well-being*," "*advancement*," and "*interests*" are all then contested rather than neutral terms. The conception the southern aristocrats will have of black well-being, advancement, and interests will overlap somewhat with that of the non-racist outsider, insofar as there are basics that any plausible theory will have to agree on, but apart from this core, there will be major divergences. And my claim would be that these divergences will be determined precisely by competing factual claims about blacks' inferiority or equality. Garcia's judgment on the southern aristocrats relies on the rejection as false of a view of well-being, advancement, and interests that is predicated on black racial inferiority. And given his non-doxastic account, he is not entitled to do this, since he is implicitly appealing to a belief (in racial equality) not shared by them, and which he is not supposed to need to judge them as having racist intent.

Let me try to explain this in a bit more detail. Let us focus on well-being, and turn Garcia's claims about ill-will into statements of the form "They would like it to be the case that blacks do not do well." "Doing well" might be interpreted in hedonic terms, as pleasure, or happiness, or in more achievement-oriented terms, as accomplishing something. Now

³⁸ Garcia, "The Heart of Racism," pp. 284–292.

since by hypothesis paternalistic racism involves at least the appearance of good-will, and thus implies statements of the form “They would like it to be the case that blacks do well,” Garcia has to claim, in order for his definition to go through, that this *is* mere appearance, and not an appearance that corresponds to reality. But obviously to convince his opponent, he cannot just assert this illusory character, but must prove it. Imagine, for example, that we are still in the antebellum period. Then part of his proof may involve pointing to the fact that the southern aristocrats do not want to free their slaves: “They would like it to be the case that blacks are not set free.” So his inference would be of the respectable *modus tollens* form: If they wanted blacks to do well, they would want them to be set free; they do not want blacks to be set free; therefore, they do not want blacks to do well. But while the inference is, of course, valid, the first premise cannot be assumed to be true. For it rests on the assumption that southern aristocrats believe that blacks are the kind of creatures who will do well when they are free. But (at least some) southern aristocrats would *not* have believed this. As Leon Litwack points out in his recent definitive book on Jim Crow, the belief that blacks were incapable of managing themselves, and would flounder if left on their own, was widespread in the South (not confined just to aristocrats). Blacks were seen as “a race possessing neither the physical nor the mental resources to care for themselves”:

[P]essimism [about the “race problem”] was based . . . on a popular notion that enjoyed academic standing: that the [black] race had demonstrated throughout its long existence an incapacity for improvement, except under the immediate tutelage of whites. . . . The notion that black men and women were doomed to provide labor and service to whites, while otherwise keeping to their separate and inferior place, had come to be so deeply rooted as to defy any challenge or doubts. Assumptions about black character and destiny had changed little since slavery, and these cast the Negro as a “helpless subject” and “child of nature” requiring the guidance and restraint of whites; black people needed to be protected from themselves. . . . The notion that black Southerners, no longer confined to the [paternalistic] custody of slavery and doomed to compete with whites, were destined for racial extinction enjoyed immense popularity in the late nineteenth century.³⁹

In sum, for people with these beliefs, “enslavement had been the best possible condition for black people [since] it had conferred incalculable benefits on a race incapable of caring for itself.”⁴⁰ Other races would flourish with the “medicine” of freedom, but, as with the example above of the withholding of penicillin, blacks were thought to be “allergic” to it. Indeed, they would actually *die* if left on their own. So, given specific beliefs about blacks’ needs, capabilities, and limitations, keeping them enslaved was a kindness; *freeing them* would have been the harm. Intent

³⁹ Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, pp. 186, 202, 204, 211.

⁴⁰ Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*, p. 245.

cannot be inferred just from actions – one needs to know what beliefs ground those actions. Committed to an ill-will/lack of good-will account of racism, Garcia has to rule out benevolent racism as an awkward counter-example to his analysis, and this requires him to represent it as malevolent racism in disguise. But without knowing what belief-set shapes intent, we cannot accurately determine intent in the first place (itself a problem for a supposedly non-doxastic analysis), and we can easily supply candidates – not merely as abstract logical possibilities, but taken from actual history – which, presupposing black inferiority, make the intent well-meaning. On standard analyses of racism, such a conjunction of beliefs and intentions still counts as racist; on Garcia’s, it does not, which has to be a major objection to his conception. Terrible harms were obviously done to blacks because of this peculiar doxastic and conative set, harms which for most analysts are clearly and uncontroversially racist harms. But insofar as the intent was good, Garcia’s definition forbids this judgment.

The comparison to sexism is a natural one at this point. Misogyny, woman-hating, is of course a variety of sexism, but though some radical feminists have seen them as coextensive, mainstream feminism does not. It is obvious that most men – as fathers, brothers, husbands, lovers, friends – love people who are women. But what, at least until comparatively recently, has made most of them *sexist*, nonetheless, is their conviction of female inferiority, and their resulting beliefs about the rightness of women’s subordinate place in the household, the inappropriateness of their participation in public life, etc. In the classic period of sexism, the idea that women should have the vote, be able to run for office, own property, have “male” jobs, was generally seen as laughable. It was taken for granted that women’s “well-being” was tied to staying in the household under male guidance, their “advancement” limited to achievement in a strictly bounded set of appropriate areas, and their “interests” linked to recognizing their inferior capabilities and not trying to go beyond them. So women could actually hurt or even destroy themselves by attempting to transcend their limitations. Preventing women from doing these things, then, is *not* holding them back, because they are not capable of doing them to start with. (If we restrain somebody who, believing he can fly, is about to take off from the 40th floor, we may be holding him back physically, but not in terms of achieving his goal.) Women’s place has been determined (theologically, biologically), and it is simple kindness to them to stop them if, failing to recognize this, they try to do things for which they are unsuited. “Benevolent” sexism of this sort is, of course, central to gender relations in a way that “benevolent” racism is not to race relations. Nonetheless, the Litwack quotes above show that benevolent

racism does exist as an important sub-variety of racism, and by its existence demonstrates that malign intent is not a necessary prerequisite, since it can be analyzed in a fashion analogous to sexism. Garcia wants to block this comparison, as illustrated by his pre-emptive (and question-begging) exclusion of “sexism” from the (H) category of his initial eight-point list of “adequacy conditions.” But as earlier argued, his decision here can be more persuasively seen as determined by his own prior commitments than by putatively neutral criteria of adequacy.⁴¹

Let us turn now, more briefly, to what Garcia calls the “Kiplingesque” racist. His strategy there is to invoke the derivative form of racism, inferior regard:

One who holds such a Kiplingesque view . . . thinks non-Whites ignorant, backward, undisciplined, and generally in need of a tough dose of European “civilizing” in important aspects of their lives. This training in civilization may sometimes be harsh, but it is supposed to be for the good of the “primitive” people. . . . An important part of respect is recognizing the other as a human like oneself, including treating her like one. There can be extremes of condescension so inordinate they constitute degradation. In such cases, a subject goes beyond more familiar forms of paternalism to demean the other, treating her as utterly irresponsible. Plainly, those who take it upon themselves to conscript mature, responsible, healthy, socialized (innocent) adults into a regimen of education designed to strip them of all authority over their own lives and make them into “civilized” folk condescend in just this way. This abusive paternalism borders on contempt and it can violate the rights of the subjugated people by denying them the respect and deference to which their status entitles them. By willfully depriving the oppressed people of the goods of freedom, even as part of an ultimately well-meant project of “improving” them, the colonizers act with the kind of instrumentally malevolent benevolence we discussed above. The colonizers stunt and maim in order to help, and therein plainly will certain evils to the victims they think of as beneficiaries. Thus, their conduct counts as a kind of malevolence insofar as we take the term literally to mean willing evils.⁴²

My discussion here will be briefer, since readers will already be able to anticipate my line of rebuttal. Note, to begin with, how central moral categories have now become: respect, condescension, rights-violation. As earlier argued, the appositeness of such judgments about the racist’s attitudes unavoidably requires reference to the doxastic, to what she believes. So again, we have moved a long way from a purely volitional account. And to determine intent, the racist’s beliefs are the pertinent ones, not

⁴¹ In a footnote, p. 275, n. 35, in “The Heart of Racism,” as part of his discussion of “Kiplingesque” racism, Garcia does concede that this kind of racism “most nearly approaches the structure of sexism,” while asserting (a claim with which I would agree) that it is more peripheral for racism than sexism. But he seems to think that his argument (the one I challenged above) that hatred or at least racial “uncaring” is still involved removes the sting from this comparison. As indicated, I would deny that his argument works, and so see the likeness as crucially damaging.

⁴² Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” pp. 275–276.

Garcia’s. Throughout this passage, Garcia relies on the assumption (true, of course!) that people of color are moral equals, that they are full humans just like whites, that they are “mature” and “responsible,” that they have equal rights, and that their “status” entitles them to equal “respect and deference.” *These claims would all be denied by the Kiplingesque racist.* Within her framework, it is *not* a matter of treating equals with condescension, since people of color are not seen as equals in the first place. Our moral responsibilities, and appropriate moral attitude, toward any entity, *Z*, depend on what *Z* is, what general class it falls into (persons, animals, rocks) and what particular class it falls into (our spouse and children, our pets, the rocks of our next door neighbor, etc.). So what counts as morally appropriate regard will depend on a combination of these factors, and behavior judged inappropriate in one case will be permissible or mandatory in other cases. The regard owed a group of people deemed to have inferior moral status will be different from the respect owed to full-fledged persons, so that it is permissible to do certain things in their case that it would not be permissible to do in the latter case. One sees them as less able, less competent, having lesser rights, and so covered by a different set of principles. In other words, the moral code is explicitly color-coded – partitioned, with different rules for whites and people of color. So from this perspective the Kiplingesque racist is *not*, within her moral and conceptual framework, condescending to the person of color (“denying them the respect and deference to which their status entitles them”), since, as a member of an inferior group, the person of color *is not entitled to equal/person-to-person moral respect in the first place.* It is not that the racist shows ill will by transgressing a moral rule (of equal respect) that governs the behavior toward the person of color, because for her no such rule exists. Again, Garcia is illegitimately – given his initial declaration – imputing an intent to the Kiplingesque racist which only follows given counterfactual assumptions about what the racist believes.

I would claim, then, that in benevolent racism, whether of the southern aristocrat or the Kiplingesque imperialist, we have an important counter-example to Garcia’s analysis, which he can only count as racist through illicitly imputing to the racist beliefs that the racist does not in fact have. And since in certain time periods and certain societies benevolent racism has been widespread, this must be a major problem for his account.⁴³

⁴³ At the end of this section of his article, Garcia does concede that by the terms of his account “some people in these situations, some involved in racially oppressive social systems, will not themselves be racist in their attitudes, in their behavior, or even in their beliefs.” Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” p. 276. Again, as with the sexism comparison, my

4. A MORALIZED ACCOUNT

Finally, I want to turn, more briefly, to the moralized nature of Garcia's account. The point of conceptualizing racism within a virtue framework, as the heart's ill-will, is to reflect Garcia's conviction that racism is always morally wrong. This is a repeated theme in these articles. "[A]lthough racism is not essentially 'a moral doctrine,' *pace* [Anthony] Appiah, it is always a moral evil."⁴⁴ "[R]acism in the term's central, focal sense is a moral concept, a term for a type of moral viciousness."⁴⁵ "Racism is . . . always and inherently wrong."⁴⁶ "[R]acism is immoral, not just presumptively but conclusively."⁴⁷ And racism's necessary immorality is on Garcia's 8-point list of adequacy conditions, indeed the very first item on the list. As Tommie Shelby comments in his critique of Garcia, there is something sociologically very odd about this – though I think Shelby understates the degree of oddness by assuming that Garcia "means to apply this methodological requirement to only *moral-philosophical* analyses of racism."⁴⁸ In fact, Garcia speaks *generally*, before giving his 8-point list, of "social philosophy's task of understanding social phenomena and determining their significance and value,"⁴⁹ so I see his stipulation to be of broader import. Yet the question of the nature and significance of a social phenomenon (its social sources, functional role, historical evolution, distinctive features, etc.) is a different question from its moral status, and to use morality as a preliminary filter is likely to have unfortunate theoretical consequences. In particular, we should not start *a priori* with the position that racism in its different varieties is always wrong before we seek to do an analysis of racism, since this aprioristic assumption may distort the investigative project. Rather than approaching things neutrally, we may find ourselves denying that certain phenomena which *prima facie* seem racist, or have been taken by many to be racist, are such, because they do not pass the (im)morality test. Shelby argues, and I agree, that this is just what has happened in Garcia's account. By moralizing racism, by making it (always) a vice, a sin, he not only ties himself to an account with implausible implications, but distorts his own investigation, ending up tailoring the description of the phenomena to fit his preferred definition. In addition,

claim would be that this concession is far more damaging to the tenability of his definition than he admits.

⁴⁴ Garcia, "The Heart of Racism," p. 259.

⁴⁵ Garcia, "Philosophical Analysis," p. 18.

⁴⁶ Garcia, "Racial Discourse," p. 134.

⁴⁷ Garcia, "Current Conceptions," p. 12.

⁴⁸ Shelby, "Is Racism in the 'Heart'?" p. 411.

⁴⁹ Garcia, "Current Conceptions," p. 6.

by taking individual vice as the dynamo, which then shapes social structures (“Institutional racism begins when racism extends from the hearts of individual people to become institutionalized”),⁵⁰ he commits himself to a dubious sociology and political economy – the problem I mentioned at the start of trying to secularize a traditional religious discourse on sin and transform it into explanatory socio-political theory. So the moralization of racism has at least two negative sets of implications: for the scope of the conception (what will, and what will not, be taken to count), and for the explanatory mechanisms posited (what is taken to be driving things).

We have seen the first set of problems illustrated in his assertion of the definitional centrality of ill-will, or the lack of good-will. Since racism is a vice, and since good-will based on mistaken beliefs is not obviously vicious (one would have to do some spadework establishing epistemic vice, and then linking it to moral vice),⁵¹ it cannot count as racism, so it has to be claimed that it is ill-will in disguise, or have its significance downplayed, or its existence denied. Since a comparison with sexism would undercut the viability of the account, sexism has to be left off the list of structurally similar phenomena, despite the fact that most people would include it on the list. Since belief as such is not normally thought of as a moral issue, those who believe in the racial inferiority of certain races, without the associated set of “willings” that make it vicious, are for Garcia either not racists at all, or racists only in some attenuated Pickwickian sense.⁵² In all these cases, I suggest, the aprioristic commitment to a vice-based account is prejudicing the sociological investigation.

Because I have generally stayed away from the structural question, I have not had much to say about the second set, and my remarks on this score will be cursory. But briefly, the ethical here is being made to drive the explanatory. Since it would be odd to speak of structures as being motivated by vice, the logic of structural exclusion has to be personalized. Since morality is central, and the wrongness of racism is located in the individual heart, the wrongness of institutional racism has to be explained in terms of an infection from this diseased heart to larger social structures. Yet as Shelby points out, this hardly matches what we know of, say, the history of the origins of New World slavery, where hatred of blacks cannot plausibly be represented as its main cause.⁵³

⁵⁰ Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” p. 266.

⁵¹ Garcia gestures in this direction at the end of his discussion of the Kiplingesque racist: Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” p. 276. My response would be that much more of a case would need to be made to avoid begging the question, since her beliefs could certainly have sources other than “her desire to gain by harming others.”

⁵² Garcia, “The Heart of Racism,” p. 268; “Current Conceptions,” p. 16.

⁵³ Shelby, “Is Racism in the ‘Heart’?” pp. 417–419.

Consider another “ism,” speciesism (one does not have to endorse the legitimacy of the concept to follow the argument I am now going to present). Throughout human history, the vast majority of humans have taken for granted that animals either have no moral standing, or a standing so low that it is perfectly legitimate for us to use them for food, clothing, labor, recreational hunting, medical experiments, etc., and to clear their habitations for living-space for ourselves. Now does this mean that we *hate*, or have *ill-will*, for animals? No, it does not. Particular animals may attract our ire – that threatening dog next door, that wolf that has been killing our sheep, those cockroaches that will not stay out of the kitchen – but most of the time we do not even think about them. Certainly when we buy a steak in the supermarket, or a leather coat at the clothing store, it is not with any particular “feelings,” or “ill-wishings,” about their late source.

Now if ethicists like Peter Singer⁵⁴ and certain of the animal rights movement are correct, this attitude of ours has resulted in enormous wrongs, horrible injustices, being done to animals for millennia. Yet before the advent of this movement, I am sure it would never even have *occurred* to most of us that this foundation of human society could be morally characterized in terms of systemic wrongdoing and exploitation. We were “innocent” speciesists, but speciesists nonetheless. If Singer et al. are right, the simple belief in our privileged moral status has had immense and disastrous consequences for the non-human animal population, consequences appropriately morally categorized in terms of injustice and oppression, though the beliefs were not themselves viciously motivated. (Note that all I need for my argument is agreement with the hypothetical of the previous sentence, not endorsement of the first premise.) It is not that, because of individual viciousness, we choose to ignore the moral status of animals (antecedently recognized as rights-bearers), hating them and determined to ignore their rights; rather, it is that, because of how we categorize them, we do not think of them as entitled to such a status in the first place. And what this illustrates more generally, in my opinion, is that the focus on individual vice as a motivation is just misplaced in trying to track and explain the most important kinds of wrong-makings in systematic oppression. Returning to his useful trio of “thinks, does, feels,” one could say that for the left, “does” is really the most important component, not so much on the individual as on the social level, and that when the “does” of a particular system has been established, “thinks” and “feels,” the doxastic and the affective, will tend to follow. The way in which society is economically organized, the particular social roles people occupy, and the

⁵⁴ Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, 2nd edition (New York: Random House, 1990).

dominant socialization patterns, will largely determine people’s beliefs and resulting moral psychologies. Someone raised in a carnivorous and animal-exploiting social order will “innocently” contribute to its reproduction not through vicious feelings about animals, but because of the belief that their status removes them from such moral concern.

I suggest that the most important kind of racism, in terms of the numbers of people affected, and the level of oppression involved, is, similarly, social-systemic, and that many whites have historically been “innocent racists,” in the sense that they have taken for granted the inferiority of people of color, without this belief’s being attended by Garcia’s “ill-will.” But nonetheless, their racism has helped to reproduce systemic oppression, so that their beliefs have been far from innocent in their consequences. Native American expropriation, African slavery, European colonialism, arose not out of spontaneous antipathy to the racial Other in the individual European heart but as a result of larger socio-economic processes for which personal “vice” cannot plausibly be explanatory.

None of this criticism is meant, by implication, to endorse the old *wertfrei* position that social theory should not take a moral stand on what it is describing, or, since I started out by locating myself on the left, the variant often imputed to Marxism, that objective moral judgments about the justice or injustice of particular social systems are not possible, since they are necessarily relativized to class or the mode of production, or because morality is all just “ideology” anyway. It is simply to recognize the existence of different spheres of inquiry. Moral judgments about racism and racialized social structures should certainly be made (and in my own work I have made them myself), but these should be left as open questions, not definitional prerequisites. The alternative to a moralized account is not an amoral account, but an account which separates the descriptive from the normative, which is alert, in Shelby’s phrase, to the “moral significance” of the social phenomena under theoretical scrutiny, without using the moral as a filter to determine what phenomena are examined in the first place. Moreover, moral judgments have to be made in the context of people’s socialization and access to information, which shape both their hearts and their minds. Garcia’s social ontology is basically an individualist one – though not, I suppose, given his pre-modern sympathies, a bourgeois individualist one – in which people confront each other with hearts filled with vice or virtue. The molding of human cognition and psychology by social structure is not a primary concern of his, insofar as his primary goal is to seek to place moral blame on the individually sinful. By contrast, in the left tradition, going back to Karl Marx, the individual heart cannot be the theoretical starting-point because this organ beats in the bloodstream,

the systolic and diastolic flow, of the larger corpus of the body politic. It is here, I suggest, in the larger “vice” of racial exploitation, that we will more illuminatingly be able to locate racism as a social phenomenon. But defending that disheartening diagnosis must be left for another day; at this point we arrest our cardiac investigation.

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