

AL

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2020

DISCLAIMERS:

This is an e-zine, not a zine. Obviously.

We are a group of graduate students at the UNC Chapel Hill Music Department.

We are simultaneously spoon-fed and shamelessly tortured by the establishment.

We have listened too long to the shouts and cries of our fellow students, and we are here to take a stand against this university's racist history.

We're also sick of the ongoing racism in our discipline of musicology, music theory, and ethnomusicology.

We stand with scholars who are also fighting back against the established canon and existing values in our discipline, even though we realize we recognize our own privilege as White scholars.

We recognize, though, that while we are fighting for these values, we are also investing in the very institution we are determined to upend.

This e-zine, however, is our attempt at starting the conversation for how we can begin to rewrite and rethink concepts established by the discipline of musicology.

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Think about your hand for a moment. You don't really notice it; your hand is always just kind of there. Yet when you touch something, such as your mouse or keyboard, you instantly become aware of your surroundings and the difference that it poses compared to your body. The plastic's coldness makes you notice your own body temperature, or the hard surface reminds you of your soft, organic skin. Such is the same with music. When you hear a performer sing an out of tune "Star Spangled Banner" at a sports game, you're not only hearing that discomfort but also the history of you hearing all of the "Star Spangled Banners" in the past and your experience with Western music. Hearing/touching/experiencing difference makes you more aware of your own body or Self, rather than the difference itself.



INTRODUCTION TO ALTERITY

This difference is what we describe as alterity, or the state of being Other or different; Otherness. The concept of alterity spans from yourself and the outside world (such as our hand example) or Othered people within the context of oppressive colonial powers. As with the hand example, though, alterity becomes as much about the Self as the Other. In this e-zine, we hope to guide you through all things alterity, especially with regard to its role in music. This won't be just your standard

run-of-the-mill brochure to some fancy philosophical concept you pick up at the doctor's office because as you're going to notice, we're going to tell the story of alterity a bit differently. Yes, this e-zine has a LOT of White dudes in here, but we want to (re)introduce you to more scholars (Frantz Fanon; Simone de Beauvoir; Homi K. Bhabha) who have talked about alterity as well—the ones who don't get the millions of citations. Because wouldn't it be ironic to talk about alterity JUST through a White, male lens?

The structure of the e-zine is in three parts: general alterity (which you're reading right now), Emmanuel Levinas and his theory of alterity (and our critiques), and a fun guide to further listening and reading.

As three White graduate students who have all that “Western” listening baggage, we have carefully thought through our own biases when constructing this deconstruction of alterity. We encourage you—whomever you are, reader—to think about your own biases and positionalities that your “Self” has allowed you to construct your own knowledge of the outside world. What histories are you listening to? Take ten seconds to ruminate on these ideas before turning the page and opening your eyes and ears—baggage included—to these new perspectives.

AUGUSTE RODIN

– THE CATHEDRAL (1914)

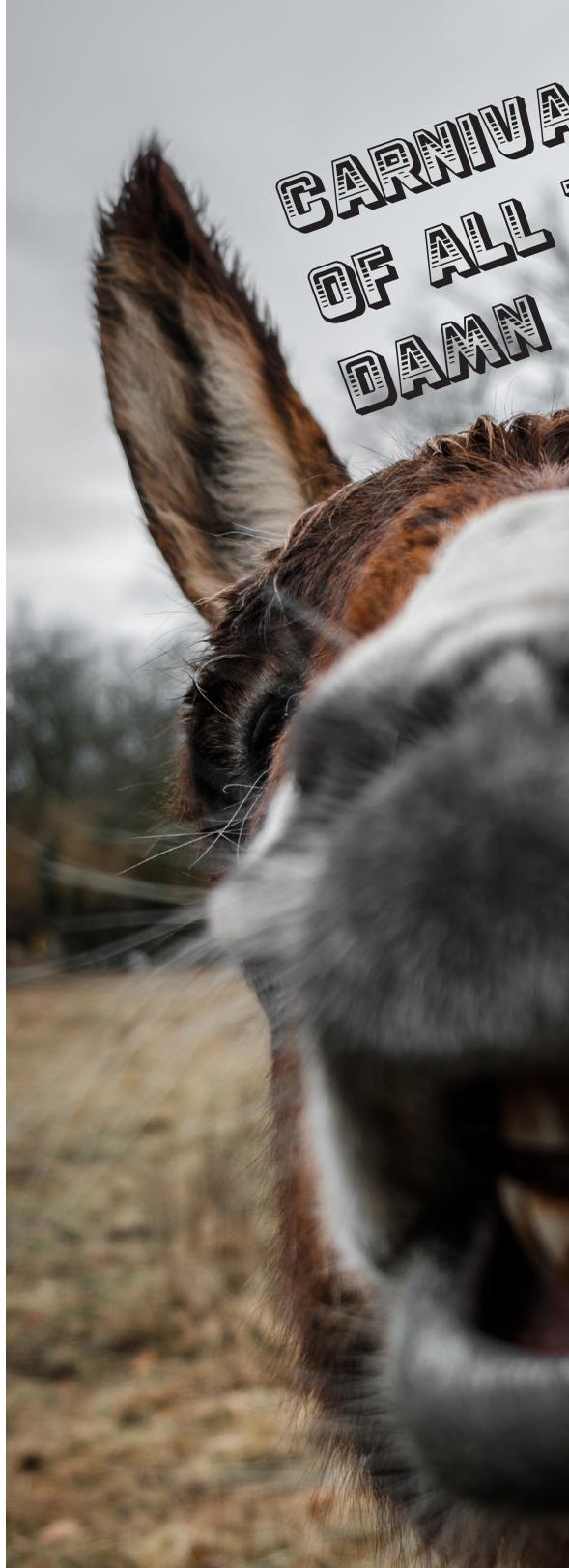
Rodin's sculpture features hands from two different figures about to grasp one another. Here, you see that point of contact, the realization of the Other, while simultaneously recognizing the feeling from the Self. In the space between the two hands lies the unknown, the threshold between the known and unknown.



For our first case study of alterity, here we have Saint-Saens's Carnival of the Animals. Aside from our fellow humans, there are Other living creatures that we co-inhabit this planet with. And just like our fellow humans, we don't fully understand what it means to exist as they do. Does your cat actually hate your favorite mug, or does she knock it off the table just to make sure that gravity is still operating?

I like to think that aliens are already observing us from afar. And, better yet, I like to think that they look at this planet and think: what the fuck, dude? Why is one species still in control of the planet if they're just going to destroy it, as has clearly been demonstrated over the last few centuries? Ah, but lest we forget, it's not actually humans in control. The extraterrestrials see it. It's our pets that control us.

In any case, composer Camille Saint-Saens (yet another White dude, I know, and I'm sorry) wrote a piece that helps explain the Otherness of our flora and fauna cohabitants. And better yet, it's marketed as classical music for kids now. Because the kids are in league with the cats. Lil Camille wrote the piece in 1886 because he was salty af about some critics' bad reviews. You could see it as the ultimate musical burn book, but we're going to take it a step further here so we can use it to explain this aspect of alterity. He wrote it originally





AL THESE ANIMALS

for a very small audience of friends and family, to be premiered in his summer home. Each type of mean music critic in his life was assigned a rude animal caricature, and each animal was given its own movement of the piece. There are tons of inside jokes in the piece that basically only his nerdy friends would understand. So you've got all sorts of players on the field here. There's team Camille, and all his homies, and it's their home game. The opposing team is the snobby music critics that hate on art for a living. And then in the audience, there are all of the animals, the cats who are still taking over the world, and us. And don't forget the aliens watching all of us from space. There are so many layers of Otherness here. Our friend Camille has portrayed his critics, whom he cannot truly understand, as animals, who he really truly cannot understand. And yet, everyone in the audience understands exactly what's going on; we know why he picked some animals over Others.

We're pickin up what Camille's puttin down. And let me make this clear - animal rights is a pretty big deal in this time period. There's a whole Stanford Encyclopedia article on the moral position of animals. And better yet, all of this is being communicated through music - a big blob of meaningless noise according to the aliens.

(A

LISTENING

EXERCISE)

PAUL WITTGENSTEIN

Before I tell you about Paul Wittgenstein, listen to his performance of a piece from 1937. Pretty good, right? What if I told you that he only had one arm and was playing what you hear with only five fingers?

Your browser does not currently recognize a
of the video formats available.
[Click here to visit our frequently asked
questions about HTML5 video.](#)



Even cooler, right? Now, think about what probably just went through your head. Perhaps you just thought, “Oh wow, he could do all THAT with just one hand? He must be so talented and worked so hard!” Maybe you didn’t think that, but if you did, you’re not far from what his contemporaries considered of his performances.

A Jewish pianist from Vienna, Wittgenstein lost his arm while he was a soldier in WWI. Because he came from a wealthy family, Wittgenstein commissioned works for him to perform with his left hand, and these works became a sensation in Europe (including the one you’re listening to, titled Piano Concerto for the Left Hand by Maurice Ravel) before Hitler’s ascension and WWII.

Hearing these performances of piano compositions by Wittgenstein, critics repeatedly said that the pianist was a “triumph,” “defeat,” and “overcoming” of his disability. Thinking about what you just read about alterity, though, how would these words fit into the idea of “Othering” or overcoming “Othering?” How did your listening experience change after learning about his disability? How can listening be a form of “Othering?”



ALTERITY IN THE
UNIVERSITY (CEMETERY)





"Thus we, like birds, retreat
To groves, and hide from ev'ry eye;
Our slumb'ring dust will rise and meet
Its morning in the sky."

George Moses Horton
enslaved poet and intellectual

In honor of those buried here
in unmarked graves
September 18, 2016



How would you feel if someone checked out your Spotify playlists and told you what you listen to is “fine,” but you should realllyyyyy be listening to some other things? Like boring classical music because it’s “better” for you. Probably not great, right? You’ve got fantastic musical taste, who needs to tell you what will make you better? That’s basically what Antonín Dvořák did when he came to America in 1892 and wrote *Symphony from*

ANTONIN DVOŘÁK

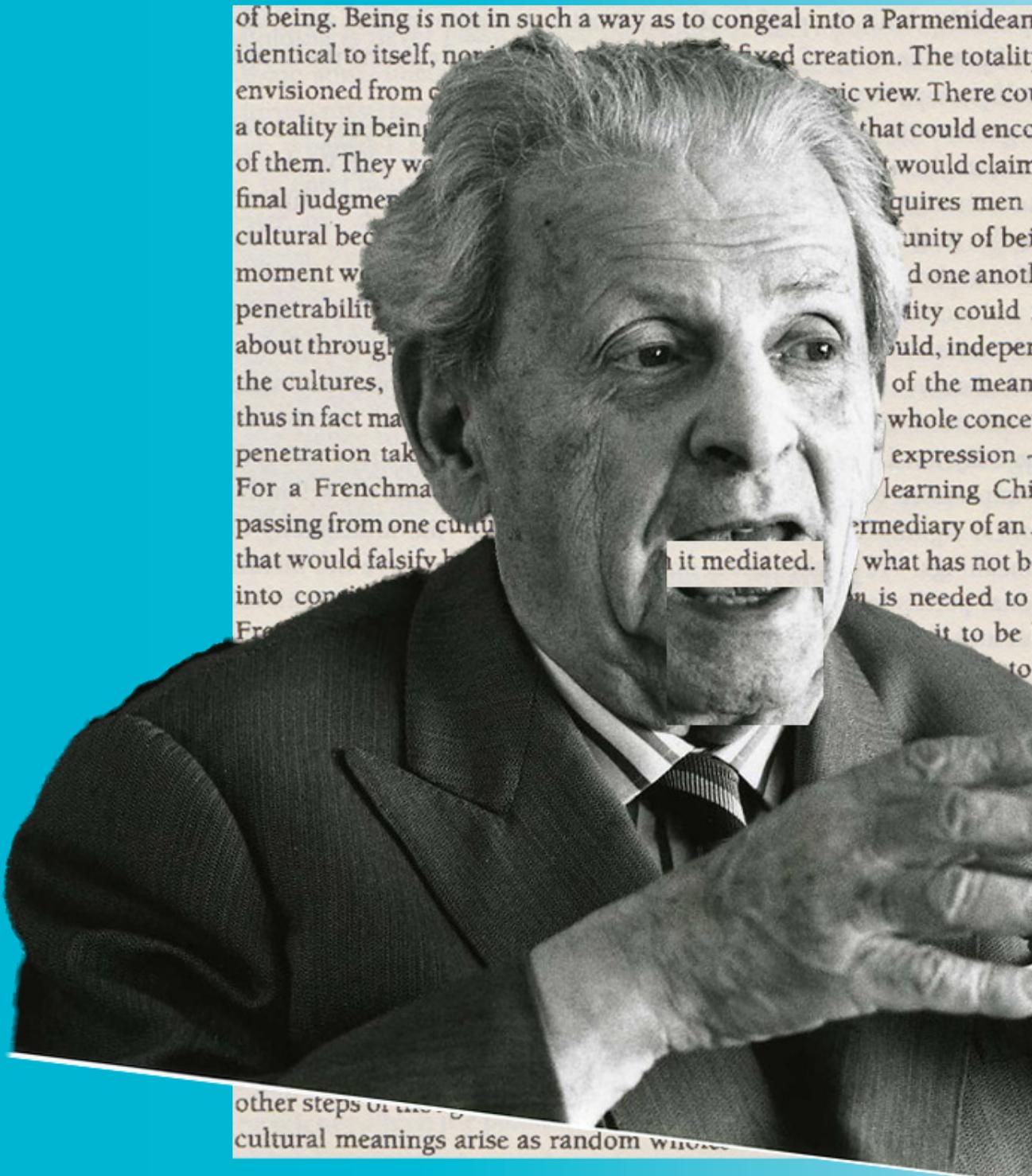
(1841–1904)

the New World. A Czech composer, he was an “Other” who studied Black and Indigenous cultures

and thought that America should incorporate the folk traditions of these “true” Americans. White Americans, as you can probably imagine, had none of this. They thought that this man was crazy. As much as Dvořák wanted this change,

though, he never once visited the American South, where most African Americans lived, and relied on his Black student Harry T. Burleigh to sing spirituals to him for his *Symphony from the New World*. So, as much as the New World Symphony opened doors for more Black students to receive notice for their work, American musicians and audiences had a love-hate relationship with the work itself. And Dvořák’s supposed ignorance of race relations in America when he wrote this little symphony (and his Otherness as a Czech) further divided feelings about this symphony. Our take? It’s...complicated.

For an introduction, read Dvořák’s own words in *Music and America (1895)* as well as Doug Shadle’s *Antonin Dvořák’s New World Symphony (2021)*, which situates the symphony with problems today.



of being. Being is not in such a way as to congeal into a Parmenidean
identical to itself, nor is it a fixed creation. The totalit
envisioned from a certain point of view. There con
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QUICK AND DIRTY

SUMMARY OF LEVINAS' IDEAS

On the surface, alterity is Otherness. You and I know that you are you, and I am me, but you are not me and I am not you. You are an Other. A side character in my story. A rock in space that does nothing Other than revolve around me. Taken a step further, alterity can also refer to anything that one cannot grasp. The only thing philosophers seem to agree on when it comes to alterity is that we cannot truly understand what it is to be the Other. ***The real question I want to get at here is: Who the fuck cares?***

Well, just like every Other boring White dude philosopher, Levinas wants us to think that the stakes of the Other question are pretty high. Whether or not you actually buy it is up to you. And, as Levinas might say, I can't ever really know if you've actually bought into it. So here goes into a whole bunch of meaningless theoretical nothingness. ***If you're already yawning, there's no shame in skipping ahead to the playlist on the next page or just flipping through this to look at the pictures.***



Non-Self: The world. The Universe. Anything that is not you, broadly defined.

Oneself as Other: Aspects of yourself that you can never know. Your subconscious feelings. That part of the middle of your back that you can't reach and yet is somehow always itchy.

Other Self: Beings that we understand have a concept of Self, but we cannot know. Becky with the Good Hair.

Some philosophers
split up
alterity
into three
categories:

Critique of Levinas

The Philosophical Staring Contest:



Levinas cares a lot about why we should care.

He needs to work on his fucking priorities then.

Yikes. He cares so much that he wants to look you in the eye and feel your sense of Self. He thinks that it's ethical, to some degree a moral imperative, to look at someone's face and attempt to understand their nature.

But you're not just looking at their face.

I mean, I'm never not just looking at anyone's face, so...

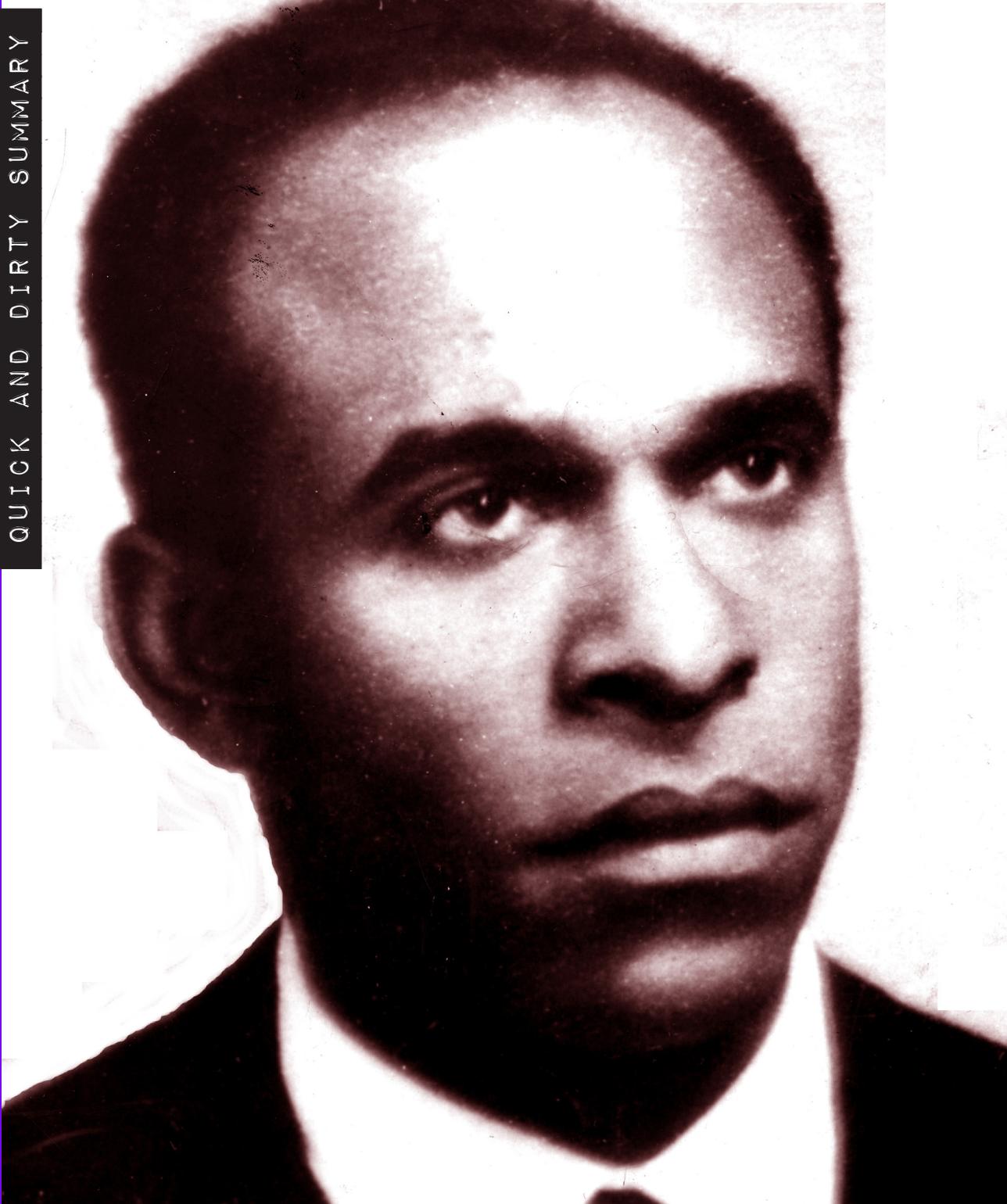
For Levinas, the face of the Other is the way they present themselves to the world. It is the way in which they behave, comprehend, be. The key here is the moment at which the Other returns my gaze, accepting me as a "face."

Levinas calls this moment of mutual understanding the epiphany.

Except that's just generally what the word "epiphany" means?

What the fuck.

QUICK AND DIRTY SUMMARY



“The colonized, underdeveloped man is a political creature in the most global sense of the term.”

“Now, comrades, now is the time to decide to change sides. We must shake off the great mantle of night which has enveloped us, and reach for the light. The new day which is dawning must find us determined, enlightened, and resolute.”

The Wretched of the Earth

FRANTZ

■ ■ ■

FANON

Fanon (1925-1962) was a psychologist and philosopher from Martinique, when it was still a French colony. He’s famous for his book *The Wretched of the Earth*, in which he argues for decolonization through globalization, and does an in-depth analysis of the nature of colonialism itself. However, in

order to build up to his analysis of colonialism, he dove into the topic of anti-Black racism in his first published work, *Black Skin, White Masks*. He was a key figure in later studies of race and alterity despite being a cult figure during his lifetime. He was a political activist for the Algerian National

Liberation Front, and his political philosophies continue to influence revolutionary movements today, the most prominent example of which being the Black Lives Matter Movement.

Florence Price was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1887. She was a pioneering African American woman composer who produced over 300 works of music including symphonies, art songs, piano concertos, organ concertos, chamber

White classical culture, am I right? “Let’s just ignore this great composer until it’s convenient for us to ‘discover’ her like Columbus supposedly ‘discovered’ America.” Give me a break.

the beginning to any old symphony. The third movement, however, is titled “Juba Dance”-- both referencing Gullah Island dancing as well as the traditional “scherzo” (dance) third movement in European symphonies. Or Price’s Mississippi River



works, and arrangements of spirituals (crazy, right?). Price was really famous in Chicago during the 1930s and 40s, but then White classical concert culture ignored her until someone found a lot of her music in a random abandoned house. Which is soooooo

As you will hear from this fun mixtape playlist (see right), Price composed much of her music by combining Western European elements and African American music. Take her Symphony No. 1, for instance: the first movement sounds like

Suite is a great example. She wrote the piece as if you were sailing down the Mississippi River listening to the many different cultures in the delta.

Mad respect.

Top: Price's Symphony in E Minor was premiered by the Chicago Symphony on June 15, 1933 with Frederick Stock conducting. The program included other works by notable Black composers and, unfortunately, an overture by white supremacist, John Powell.

Bottom: a Price mixtape of certified bangers (no white supremacists here).

AUDITORIUM THEATRE

Thursday Evening, June 15th, 1933 at 8:30 P. M.

Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Frederick A. Stock, Conductor
Roland Hayes, Soloist

OVERTURE—"IN OLD VIRGINIA" POWELL
ARIA—"LE REPOS DE LA SAINTE FAMILLE" BERLIOZ
FROM "L'ENFANCE DU CHRIST"
(First time in Chicago)

SYMPHONY IN E. MINOR FLORENCE PRICE
(First performance)

ARIA—"ON-AWAY, AWAKE BELOVED" .. S. COLERIDGE-TAYLOR
FROM "HIAWATHA"

INTERMISSION

CONCERTINO, for PIANO and ORCHESTRA

ALLEGRO CON MOTO
LENTO GRAZIOSO—ALLEGRO

FLORENCE PRICE [MIXTAPE]

1. Price - Symphony No. 1 - Mvmt I
2. Price - Symphony No. 1 - Mvmt III
3. Price/Hughes - Hold Fast to Dreams
4. Price - Fantasie Nègre No. 4
5. Price - My Soul is Anchored in the Lord
6. Price - Mississippi River Suite
7. Blue Ivy/Beyoncé - BROWN SKIN GIRL
8. Nina Simone - Four Women
9. Janelle Monae - I Like That

SIMONE

DE BEAUVOIR

was a bad bitch.

Simone de Beauvoir was a bad bitch. Like, really. She basically lived during the same time as Emmanuel Levinas (she was only 3 years younger than him), and she was one of the only feminist philosophers to stand up to Levinas's ideas--and the patriarchy in general.

Her book *The Second Sex* (1949) was super important for the soon-to-be second wave feminist movement in the 1960s and 70s. Drawing on Levinas's ideas of the Self and Other, Beauvoir argues that women are the Other, and that men--such as Levinas--only understand alterity from a male perspective, without taking gender into account.

Check out this quote:

- “When he [Levinas] writes that woman is mystery, he implies that she is mystery for man
- so much that his description, which claims to be objective, is in fact an affirmation of masculine privilege.”
- Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 1949

**DAAAAA
MINNNNN**

With this attack, you can tell that Beauvoir means business.

She expands Levinas's philosophy by labeling two types of alterity:

1. Sociopolitical alterity

- In this context, othering comes from positions of power
- Women, suppressed by the patriarchy, are the Other
- The Other is stripped of their humanity and reduced to objects

2. Existential alterity

- In this version, Beauvoir agrees with Levinas's assertion of the power of the Other
- The Self recognizes the freedom and humanity of the Other, thus giving the Other their power

Beauvoir agrees with Levinas that one cannot truly know the Other. Yet she argues that the "ethics" of Levinas's ideas lies in a choice between the Self and Other. In this interaction, the Self has an ethical choice to consider the Other's freedom. This choice is at the heart of Beauvoir's idea of ethics: denying the Other of their freedom is 'unethical.' But, if the Self recognizes the freedom of the Other, then the Other has the power that Levinas talks about. Freedom is super important to Beauvoir, who used the idea of feminist existentialism.

Now, I don't know about you, but Beauvoir's idea of alterity seems to be wayyyy more about ethics than Levinas's original concept. With her philosophy, one has a choice to make a good or bad decision when interacting with the Other. Hopefully we can all take Beauvoir's advice in our interactions as we think about how we recognize individuals' freedoms.



UNIVERSAL VOTES FOR WOMEN



- TRACK 1: REBEL GIRL**
- BIKINI KILL
- TRACK 2: THE WRECKERS OVERTURE**
- ETHEL SMYTH
- TRACK 3: TRIO FOR PIANO, VIOLIN AND CELLO**
- ETHEL SMYTH
- TRACK 4: SERENADE IN D MAJOR, MVMT II**
SCHERZO - ETHEL SMYTH
- TRACK 5: THE MARCH OF THE WOMEN**
- ETHEL SMYTH

SUFFRAGETTE.
DAME.
DOG LOVER.
COMPOSER.
QUEER.
ENGLISH-BORN.
FEMINIST ICON.

Suffragette. Dame. Composer.
Queer. English-born. Feminist icon.
That's right: we're talking about
Ethel Smyth.

When she was training to be a composer, she was hanging out with composers such as Antonin Dvorak, Edvard Grieg, Peter Tchaikovsky, and Clara Schumann. Then, when she returned back to England, Smyth became a superhero fighting for women's right to vote (listen to *March of the Women!*). Although she composed many art songs, chamber works, and orchestral works, Smyth's main ambition was to compose opera. One of her six operas, *Der Wald* (1903) was the only female-composed opera performed by the New York Metropolitan Opera until 2016.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: THE MEMOIRS OF ETHEL SMYTH BY SMYTH/ RONALD CRICHTON/JORY BENNETT.

Last but not least, we have philosopher Homi K. Bhabha. Indian-born yet educated at Oxford, Bhabha understands what it means to be a colonial subject and how imperial powers (in his case, the British) impose an Otherness on the native peoples of the colonized nation. Because of his experience, Bhabha holds a much more cynical position of alterity than Levinas, Beauvoir, or Fanon, but his ideas are super important for the whole field of postcolonial studies. But beware: Bhabha once got an award for the “worst writing in philosophy,” so his stuff might seem really hard to get through (But what philosophy isn’t? Ugh, so annoying). I’ll go ahead and summarize it all for you here, but feel free to read it yourself.

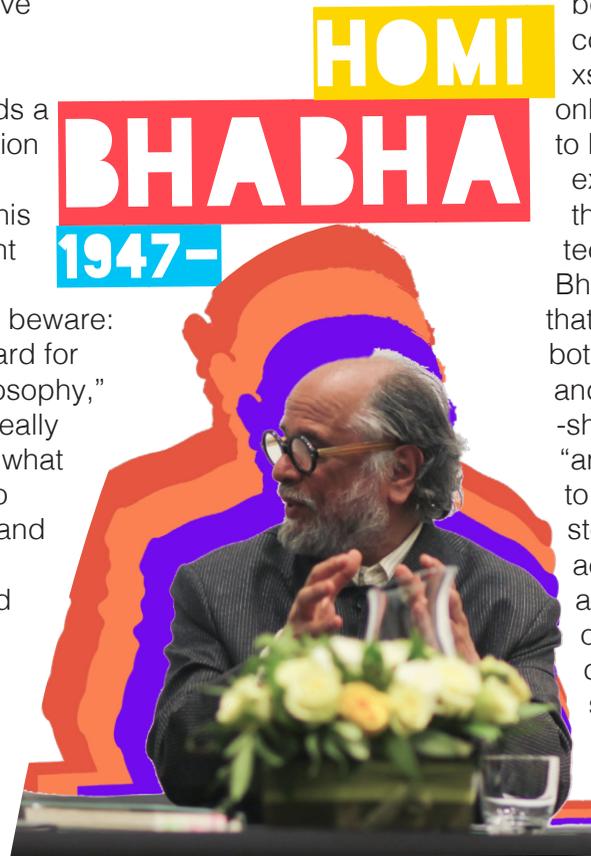
In his chapter “The Other Question: The Stereotype in Colonial Discourse,” Bhabha discusses how Othered people are reduced to stereotypes, or “a fixated form of representation.” We’re probably all aware of stereotypes that we’ve grown up with: stereotypes we’ve heard about Others, or ourselves, and maybe some we’ve unknowingly perpetuated. The stereotype is what gives colonial powers the ability to control Others within the society. So, take for instance, the horrible stereotypes against Mexican Americans, generated

by right-wing (and, to some extent, Democrat) politicians—I won’t repeat them here, but use your imagination. These stereotypes have been the reason for so many immigration policies against this population and along the Southern

border. Of course, Latino/a/xs are not the only community to be exploited by this technique. Bhabha urges that people--both colonizers and colonized--should not be “ambivalent” to these stereotypes and actively work against them in order to break down these systems.

Bhabha is the only contemporary philosopher we mention in this e-zine,

but his work is among many theorists and thinkers who are analyzing previous philosophies about alterity. If you’re interested in any of these sources, be sure to check out our further reading section.



1820

Camille Saint-Saëns 1835-1921

1840

Antonin Dvořák 1841-1904

1860

Ethel Smyth 1858-1944

1880

Virginia Woolf 1882-1941

Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals* 1886/1922

Florence B. Price 1887-1953

Paul Wittgenstein 1887-1961

Dvořák's *Symphony from the New World* 1893

Columbian Exposition of Chicago 1893

1900

Emmanuel Levinas 1905-95

Simone de Beauvoir 1908-1986

19

20

Frantz Fanon 1925-61

Price's Symphony No. 1 in E Minor 1933

World War II 1939-1945

1940

Homi K. Bhabha 1947-
Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* 1949

1960

1980

2000

2020

We made this e-zine ^{*best not to remember this year}

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Philosophy and Alterity Sources

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