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GRASSROOTS PHILOSOPHY AND GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN
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Advocates of field philosophy—or philosophical projects that build working partnerships between academic philosophers and professionals outside academia—have sounded a warning about the future of philosophy. Given neoliberal pressures in academia to assess the value of educational efforts using market-based logic, some have argued that academic philosophy must demonstrate its utility and relevance in the "real world" to navigate an era of increasing divestment from the humanities (Frodeman et al. 2012). In this chapter, I use my experience engaging in philosophical projects outside of academia to argue why contesting neoliberal ideology can support the growth of philosophy. I propose the model of "grassroots philosophy" as a democratic approach to engaged philosophical work that resonates with some core principles of field philosophy while challenging others, which I hope will open future conversations. Grassroots philosophy reflects a praxis based in community organizing in which the norms of professional philosophy (specifically, views about who are considered philosophers, what work is understood to be "doing philosophy," and where philosophical thinking emerges and thrives) are unsettled and reconceptualized.

This chapter begins with a case study of grassroots philosophy based on my own experience as a philosopher and Black feminist community organizer. Drawing lessons from this case study, I consider the implications of grassroots philosophy for academic philosophy, particularly as it relates to countering the influence of neoliberal ideology in education. This discussion also interrogates the structuring norms within professional philosophy to propose future pathways to sustaining philosophy.

Grassroots Philosophy: A Case Study

The organizing practices of Communities Against Rape & Abuse (CARA), a community-based organization based in Seattle in the 2000s, exemplify what I describe as "grassroots philosophy." In what follows, I discuss the context of CARA's emergence and my connection with it, as well as its development as a community center for political education and philosophical analysis.

After completing a BA in philosophy in 1997, I was fortunate to quickly find a political community in Seattle with a focus on feminist anti-violence community organizing. My interest in philosophy had a particular focus on rape and domestic violence, not only as a personal ethical failure but also as a pervasive political phenomenon that forms our world, including the social production of concepts such as agency, identity, borders and nation-states, relationality, and what it means to be human. I believed that the best way to think through this philosophical problem was through a practice of service. I volunteered as a crisis line victims' advocate at the local anti-rape organization, Seattle Rape Relief (SRR). One of the first rape crisis centers established in the United States, SRR was closed in 1999 amid budget cuts. Troubled by the closure, many of the former volunteers and staff began to re-imagine what a radical feminist antiviolence organization might be like, eventually building the new organization, CARA.[1]

Established in 2000, our multiracial organization was composed of youth artists and activists; radical women of color; Black feminists and community leaders; rebellious queer, disabled, and working-class people; survivors of violence; and bookish organizers. This community instituted a contemplative organizational culture that intertwined critical thinking and community organizing, discussing a wide range of books and ideas—sometimes as a formal part of our staff and membership meetings, sometimes informally while developing workshop curricula and organizing strategies. Critical thinking shaped strategic organizing on a range of issues, including sexual and domestic violence, reproductive justice and coercive sterilization, disability justice and sexuality, immigration justice, and community-based accountability practices to address gender violence. Our ideas led to philosophical production in the form of toolkits, newsletter articles, op-eds, and workshops. We valued philosophical engagement because we believed that critical theorizing was essential to invent what was, at that time, a relatively unique community organizing approach to anti-violence work (Richie 2012; Kim 2019b).

It is in this context that several CARA members proposed that, as an antirape organization, CARA should join the growing prison abolition movement. The process that CARA undertook, leading to its organizational consensus about prison abolition, is at the heart of this case study. The national abolitionist organizations, Critical Resistance and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, emerged in 1998 and 2000, respectively, creating a locus of activist

and intellectual attention to the abolition of prisons.[2] This epistemic and political context helped guide our process of evaluating abolitionism, but we did not immediately come to a consensus about prison abolition. On one hand, prisons were devastating our communities: as mass criminalization expanded through the 1980s and 1990s, it alarmingly exacerbated structural violence and was only getting worse (Gilmore 2007; Richie 2012). However, the growing abolition movement and other prison and police reform movements on the racial justice left rarely addressed the urgent problem of sexual and domestic violence in our communities. Could we endorse the abolition of an institution that some survivors understood as a resource for safety, even granting that prisons were a largely destructive force for our communities, including for survivors?[3]

We aimed to engage the question rather than resolve it, turning to organizing and education as a strategy to learn more through praxis. Local chapters of Critical Resistance (CR) were organizing film festivals that featured films about the structures and impacts of carceral systems. Several CARA members proposed that CARA host one of their film festivals, which we did in 2002 and 2003. So the first CR prison abolition film festival not hosted by a local CR chapter was hosted by an anti-rape organization, which we took as an opportunity requiring thoughtful and creative planning. Event organizers (predominantly young people in their late teens and early twenties) wanted the event to intentionally address sexual and domestic violence, so we added films that were not yet part of the CR library, such as clips of speakers at the INCITE! conferences who defined the intersections of carceral violence and gendered violence. The 2003 CARA event was entitled "Both Sides of the Bars: Resisting Prisons and Building Community Alternatives." The phrase, "building community alternatives" flagged what was becoming a feminist abolitionist core principle—that abolitionism was as much a politics of invention as it was a politics of dismantling (CARA 2003b; Rojas Durazo et al. 2012). Organizers incorporated workshops, poetry sessions, and a breakout group for survivors, recognizing that diverse methods help create conditions for the emergence of new ideas, and active dialogical learning supports connection and collective action. These sessions expanded both our understanding of the scope of prisons' impact and what was possible for abolitionist organizing, sparking ideas such as coalition building between local anti-violence and anti-prison organizations, the forced institutionalization of disabled people as a kind of carceral violence, and community-based strategies to address gender violence that did not rely on police and prison.

In addition to being a community education and mobilization effort, the events represented a point of praxis that helped CARA members clarify our organizational stance on abolition. This is reflected in the event description in our outreach flyers that stated, "This is a two-day community event to help us understand how prisons are impacting our communities and how to empower our communities to resist prisons and build better alternatives for safety and

accountability" (CARA 2003a). The word "us" in this description indicates that CARA organizers understood ourselves to be in the same learning boat as community members, and that we intended to advance our own learning through praxis. By "praxis," I mean a myriad of practices that was both a means of organizing a community event and organizing the development of analysis. For example, determining what films to pick and why required research and analytical reflection on the needs of our communities and organization. Crafting the flow of the program illuminated areas that needed philosophical attention and growth in abolitionist discourse. Developing workshop curricula helped us reformulate activist strategies into pedagogical approaches. Finally, hosting the event compelled us to more clearly articulate our position on prisons, which ultimately clarified where we landed on the issue. In the 2002 event program, we wrote:

> Any movement seeking to end violence will fail if its strategy supports and helps sustain the prison industrial complex. Prisons, policing, the death penalty, the war on terror, and the war on drugs all increase rape, beatings, isolation, oppression, and death. As an anti-rape organization, we cannot support the funneling of resources into the criminal justice system to punish rapists and batterers, as this does not help end violence. It only supports the same system that views incarceration as a solution to complex social problems like rape and abuse. As survivors of rape and domestic violence, we will not let the anti-violence movement be further co-opted to support the mass criminalization of young people, the disappearance of immigrants and refugees, and the dehumanization of poor people, people of color, and people with disabilities. We support the antirape movement that builds sustainable communities on a foundation of safety, support, self-determination, and accountability.
> (CARA 2002)

In short, it was through practice that CARA fostered philosophical insight.

A practice-to-theory model tends to be counter-intuitive for philosophers who are trained to develop theory first through logical deduction and analysis, and then apply the theory to various scenarios to test its resilience. In fact, as a person trained in academic philosophy and who is drawn to linear thinking, I was personally wary of moving forward with the events without first having a clearly articulated and collectively agreed stance on abolition. Theory through practice, however, requires epistemic humility so that one may acknowledge the need to keep learning and be open to reaching different positions or discovering new ideas through practice. This cultivates an ethic of intellectual good faith and trust in a collective learning process as fellow thinkers pursue a practice that will hopefully be revelatory. Epistemic humility also supports people reaching for theoretical insight through practice, even if they are not completely clear

about the implications of the insight. The core hesitation about abolition turned on protecting what was seen as a resource for survivors who needed safety from people who cause profound harm. When we pursued the events, we did not know how to resolve the "What else is there?" problem, we simply came to know, through learning and praxis, that reform efforts were increasingly untenable and prisons were ultimately counterproductive to survivor safety.

The openness to not knowing a firm resolution to "What else is there?" created an opportunity to conjure possible answers to this problem. CARA members slowly began to work with various social networks and groups of friends to consider possible non-carceral approaches to sexual and domestic violence. INCITE! asked CARA to translate these early experimental efforts into written form so this work could be included in their 2006 anthology, Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology, which led to our article, "Taking Risks: Implementing Grassroots Community Accountability Strategies" (Bierria et al. 2006). Again, for us, it was through practice that community accountability theory was formed, and this "from-practice-to-theory" methodology was reflected in the article itself. We described specific practices that demonstrated our integral commitments to the end of prisons and the end of gender violence, making it one of the first published pieces of writing within this era of U.S. feminist anti-violence organizing that outlined a detailed community accountability approach to gender violence. It was an important theoretical and practical contribution to a broad effort in the United States to develop transformative justice and community accountability strategies, and it has played a key role in the growing abolition movement.4 Since it was published, "Taking Risks" has been described as a foundational document for this body of work, and it has been widely distributed via zines and other media, translated into Spanish and German by feminist abolitionists outside of the United States, and cited by academics, including academic philosophers.

Grassroots Philosophy

Through its praxis methodology, its democratic approach to learning, and its intentional commitment to the complicated project of social justice, CARA's philosophical practices exemplify what I am calling "grassroots philosophy." In this section I will define this approach and discuss how it corresponds with— but also contests—the vision, practice, and purpose of field philosophy.

The term "grassroots" indicates a philosophical practice that is produced through social justice community organizing and that strengthens the community where it grows. Specifically, it signifies the principle of "group-centered leadership" as described in the grassroots organizing philosophy of legendary Civil Rights Movement organizer, Ella Baker, who, as biographer Barbara Ransby (2003, 7) writes, "viewed a democratic learning process and discourse as the cornerstone of any democratic movement." Baker argued for a radically

participatory methodology for grassroots organizing, rejecting the paradigm of a single or a few elite men being considered the primary strategic thinkers for the movement. In her view, the production of knowledge at the grassroots is collective and shared. She explained,

> In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become a part of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we now exist has to be radically changed. This means that we are going to have to learn to think in radical terms. I use the term radical in its original meaning—getting down to and understanding the root cause. It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system. (Ransby 2003, 1)

Learning to think in radical terms, as Baker urged, foregrounds the intellectual leadership needed by many people who are doing philosophy in conditions that are severely precarious and epistemically hostile in that systems of power do not "lend themselves" to oppressed people's experiences, reasoning, methodologies, or agendas for justice. Given the resistant intellectual context, it makes sense to re-think philosophical production in a broad and open sense: we need as many minds as possible working to understand these complicated "root causes," particularly those situated outside of systems that do not lend themselves to their needs. Grassroots philosophy, then, is participatory philosophy that welcomes practitioners with a diversity of skills and strengths, and promotes shared learning as much as it encourages philosophical innovation and the development of emerging ideas.

Grassroots philosophy resonates with several qualities of field philosophy: both approaches value and involve philosophical work outside professional academic philosophy, both conceptualize problems in the context of actual human experience rather than prioritizing abstract thinking, and both initiate the development and evaluation of philosophical claims and arguments in collaboration with people who are not professional academic philosophers. However, the principles of grassroots philosophy challenge and expand the focus of what might be imagined as field philosophy—and philosophy in general. Grassroots philosophy shares a de-disciplining spirit with field philosophy, but goes further in that it destabilizes academic assumptions about how we determine who is regarded as a "philosopher," what counts as philosophical labor, and for what purpose philosophical thinking is produced.

Importantly, field philosophy expands collaborative possibilities for philosophers, creating generative opportunities for co-thinking with specialists from other fields. Field philosophy has been conceptualized as working collaborations between academic philosophers and "non-philosophic actors in real world settings" or "non-disciplinary stakeholders faced with a 'live' problem," as

advocates of field philosophy describe collaborative partners who are not professional academic philosophers (Frodeman et al. 2012; Frodeman 2017).
However, as shown in the CARA case study, grassroots philosophy challenges this distinction between "philosophic" and "non-philosophic" actors. In the case study of grassroots philosophy, all of the actors were engaged in philosophical labor as a shared practice by people with different contributions and analytical strengths, rather than reserved only for those who are located in and credentialed by academia.

A broader understanding of who can be counted as philosophic actors may be challenged by those philosophers who want to defend the notion that only those who receive sustained academic training in philosophy can count as people "doing" legitimate philosophy. However, as Kristie Dotson (2012, 19) has argued,

> This objection seems to follow from the idea that philosophy and philosophizing are not a widespread human activity…. This is a form of exceptionalism insofar as it unacceptably rarifies professional philosophical engagement, i.e. it privileges the output of one population over another.

We can acknowledge that sustained training in professional philosophy can advance some philosophical skills, while also recognizing that the practice of developing, challenging, or defending ideas—or the doing of philosophy—can flourish with or without academic training. A narrower view of who can be considered philosophic actors does not reflect the reality of philosophy as a common part of human experience, and it obscures critical philosophical production happening outside of (and, sometimes, in opposition to) academic and other professional contexts.

Though CARA was a philosophical endeavor without a specific need for the participation of academic philosophers to thrive, CARA was not isolated from academic philosophy. Just as CARA members sometimes read academic texts for our work, our own texts were read and engaged by academics, such as students and faculty at the Philosophy, Interpretation and Culture department (PIC) at Binghamton University. Philosophers at PIC, then led by Professor María Lugones, incorporated "Taking Risks" (Bierria et al. 2006) into their study of violence and redress, and produced a popular education curriculum on building violence-free communities. This discursive engagement between philosophers at CARA and philosophers at PIC reflects an important formulation of philosophical collaboration, one in which philosophers situated inside, outside, and in-between academic borders unsettle those borders and engage with each other's ideas through a shared political vision and mutual investment in each other's unique contributions.

Grassroots philosophy does not merely maintain that non-academic philosophers matter as legitimate philosophers, it challenges the terms of legitimacy,

re-situating philosophy as a resource to help critique the ways legitimization standards become integral to entrenching systems of power, and to re-imagine more inclusive and transformative methods to evaluate the "usefulness" of philosophical practice. Grassroots philosophy is not something that is brought to the field, it is produced in the field and it redefines the boundaries of the field. Also, just as grassroots philosophy demonstrates that we should not assume that philosophy is not already in "the field" without the need for collaboration from academic philosophers, it suggests that we should not assume that "the field" is not already in academic philosophy. Some academic philosophers are engaged in community organizing, policy work, scientific research, and other collaborations, but they have not necessarily been able to connect that context of philosophical labor with the context of professional academia because of the rigidity of structuring norms within academic philosophy, whether they are norms about how philosophy is done or norms about who philosophers are.

Grassroots philosophical labor is by no means unique to CARA; it flourishes in scores of grassroots feminist and social justice organizations whose members collectively develop critical theory and frameworks to understand power and opportunities for transformation. However, I learned that grassroots organizations must intentionally cultivate a value for learning, analysis, and discussion so that members feel free to engage in philosophical labor as part of their organizational contribution. Because many non-profit organizations are pressured by funders to model an economized formula for production, and thus discouraged from intellectual creativity, practicing philosophy at the grassroots can require deviating from conventional expectations of what community organizations are meant to do (INCITE! 2007). Relatedly, academic units may require intentional efforts to support academic philosophers to engage in grassroots philosophy, particularly as units become pressured to conform to similar neoliberal conceptions of value that use market-based criteria to determine the worth of non-market endeavors. For example, the PIC department in Binghamton faced closure in 2011, and PIC students and faculty asserted that it was the department's lack of profitability that made them a target for campus budget cuts (Racow 2011). In the next sections, I explore what grassroots philosophy can teach us about the utility of academic philosophy in a neoliberal era, and I propose a methodology of deviation, or going against the grain of unjust institutional power, as a survival method for philosophy.

From Conforming to Transforming

Field philosophers have acknowledged the impact of neoliberalism on higher education, particularly the market-driven reasoning that determines the criteria according to which learning and scholarship are valued (Frodeman et al. 2012). Though they do not endorse the corporatization of educational cultures and

institutions, they argue that philosophers in academia should be responsive to the increased demand placed on academic philosophy departments—and other humanities disciplines perceived as isolated from "the real world"—to provide evidence of its active value to people beyond the university in order to have a better chance of surviving an anti-humanities climate. Philosophy, they argue, can and must respond effectively to "neoliberal demands for accountability" (Frodeman et al. 2012, 17). While this strategic move may be a pragmatic defense of professional academic philosophy in the context of neoliberal pressures, I flag a warning for several reasons.

First, pragmatic responsiveness can easily creep into institutional absorption, as Mimi Kim has demonstrated in her study of anti-violence advocates attempting to manage neoliberal investments in criminalization, only to find themselves subsumed by criminalizing institutions (Kim 2019a). Pragmatic responsiveness may also obscure the ways in which neoliberalism and academia are coconstituted systems. Abigail Boggs and Nick Mitchell have argued that examinations of neoliberalism's relationship with higher education often presume an idealized notion of the university that is being "wrecked by neoliberalism"; rather, they must more squarely contend with how universities themselves are structured by the same political–historical contexts that produced neoliberalism, positioning universities as more of a "mechanism" of neoliberalism rather than a victim of it (Boggs and Mitchell 2018, 443). Finally, neoliberal constructions of accountability and efficiency destructively re-shape the terms of legitimacy to align with market-based paradigms. In a previous essay, I documented the difficulty, and ultimate impossibility, of keeping CARA afloat within related political conditions in the nonprofit field, including navigating funding as the local government re-framed human services as a market enterprise that conflated human beings with capital—ultimately insisting that organizations officially reconceptualize survivors of violence as "customers" receiving "products" in a social service market (Bierria 2007). Neoliberal principles radically transform meaning, recasting human endeavors such as learning or care into commodified exchanges within an economic system that is exploitative, violent, and antidemocratic. Philosophy in all its various fields and forms should be on the front lines of resistance to a political swell that is not only anti-humanities, but antihuman.

However, if we disentangle the notion of being responsive to neoliberal conceptions of "usefulness" from field philosophers' recommendation that academic philosophy more actively demonstrates its social relevance, we can find important shared interests. Given increased conditions of social and economic precarity, philosophy, as a humanities discipline, can (and, I argue, must) be of service in helping us understand and act on social issues that are anti-human, such as prisons, gender violence, global warming, and war. Lecturing in the late 1960s, Angela Y. Davis articulates a similar understanding of how to meaningfully orient the relevancy of philosophy, stating,

> My idea of philosophy is that if it is not relevant to human problems, if it
> does not tell us how we can go about eradicating some of the misery in
> this world, then it is not worth the name of philosophy. I think Socrates
> made a very profound statement when he asserted that the raison d'être of
> philosophy is to teach us proper living. In this day and age 'proper living'
> means liberation from the urgent problems of poverty, economic necessity
> and indoctrination, mental oppression.
> (Davis 1969)

The CARA case illustrates how philosophy can be a liberation project, as Davis outlines, and is therefore socially relevant, impactful, and useful. However, in this case, the utility of philosophy was oriented toward the demands of participatory social justice—that is, philosophy was used to push against, rather than fall in line with, the momentum of neoliberal developments (such as the big business of mass incarceration). Field and other forms of philosophy can use deviation from harmful institutional currents as a method to imagine survival strategies for philosophy.

Deviation as Method

Deviation as a survival method answers Ella Baker's call to "[face] a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devis[e] means by which you change that system." "Lend itself" is a particularly useful phrase, inviting us to ask how a system can organize itself to be of use to the needs of those on the margins of philosophy, academia, and social structures. The structuring norms that constitute the discipline of professional philosophy—including methodologies, intellectual legacies, research content, social practices, and social demographics —create institutional currents that usually do not lend the production of philosophical thought to the needs of those that fall out of the norm, including those who have non-normative bodies and social identities, non-normative social backgrounds, and non-normative approaches to philosophy. Deviating from these currents—or pushing in a different direction by challenging or refusing these norms—can be exhausting and professionally hazardous, but can also provoke better conditions for thinking more creatively about the direction of philosophy (Dotson 2012; Berruz 2014; James 2014).

As an example of a structuring norm within academic philosophy, let us consider the norm of whiteness. The Eurocentrism and white supremacy embedded in the development of dominant forms of Western philosophy has been well documented and analyzed (Mills 1997; Babbitt and Campbell 1999; Wynter 2003). Whiteness structures the institution of philosophy in multiple ways, including through the demographics of students and faculty, the erasure of nonwhite histories of philosophy, and imagined philosophical publics. Echoing Cheryl Harris's framework in her landmark work, "Whiteness as Property,"

whiteness also operates as a credentializing property within philosophy (Harris 1993). Imagining whiteness not just as a socially constructed racial identity, but as a valuable asset, helps provide a framework for understanding whiteness in philosophy as not just a characteristic of the vast majority of U.S. professional philosophers, but as an academic credential that bestows a presumption of legitimacy upon white philosophers and their work.

Whiteness as an unspoken credential in philosophy, a professional property, is relevant to the politics of pursuing innovative forms of philosophy in academia that transgress or challenge other structuring norms within the profession, including field philosophy. If whiteness works as a structuring norm that accredits white philosophers with a critical presumption of legitimacy, and if, as Kristie Dotson (2012, 5) argues, "legitimation [is] the penultimate vetting process," then we must consider how that dynamic shapes the stakes of engaging in field philosophy. That is, how does the credential of whiteness afford credibility to white philosophers who are taking creative risks in professional philosophy? Philosophers without the whiteness credit (particularly women of color) have provided vivid testimony, reflecting on prudently managing a pre-existing professional racial/gender debt by avoiding the transgression of dominant norms in methodology or subject matter (Alcoff 2012; Berruz 2014; James 2014). But if philosophers are credentialed with whiteness (among other identity-based credentials), they potentially have more flexibility to transgress prevailing norms in methodology and subject matter (such as engaging in projects like field philosophy or radical philosophy) without weakening their status as "legitimate" philosophers doing "legitimate" philosophy. In this way, field philosophy and other innovating philosophies within academia are structurally situated to "go with the flow" of whiteness as a credentializing property.

In an exploration of institutional practices, Sara Ahmed (2015) reflects,

> Maybe an institution is like an old garment: if it has acquired the shape of those who tend to wear it, then it becomes easier to wear if you have that shape. The ease of movement, the lack of a stress might describe not only the habits of a body that has incorporated things, but also how an institution takes shape around a body.… Once a certain body is assumed, then a body that fulfills this assumption can more easily take up a space even if the space is imagined as open to anybody.

Ahmed's description resonates with the character of academic philosophy, an institution which also takes shape around a body—both an assumed body that is racialized as white which creates norms about who a philosopher is and, relatedly, a body of assumptions that creates norms for how philosophy ought to be done. A deviation from methodological norms within academic philosophy can structurally reinforce whiteness as credit, as institutions will seek to compensate for the destabilization of one norm by seeking the ease and comfort of

familiarity with another. If white philosophers challenge how philosophy is done, the challenge to methodology may be met with skepticism from the professional field, yet the implicit and unacknowledged structuring norm of whiteness can also afford them the benefit of the doubt. Thus, white philosophers are provided with more institutional ease to deviate from academic philosophy's methodological structuring norms—such as methodological norms that must be abandoned or transformed to enable field philosophy. Therefore, though field philosophy is occupied with deviations from methodological norms that are oriented outward into "the field," ethically, it must simultaneously advocate for deviations from various harmful norms (such as whiteness as a structuring norm) that are oriented inward toward departments, campuses, and professional institutions.

As an example of opportunities created by deviations, consider the recent data finding that majors in what are considered the "four big humanities disciplines"—philosophy, history, languages, and English—have experienced a startling drop of nearly 50 percent since 2008 (Schmidt 2018). Researcher Benjamin Schmidt argues that the drop is likely due to students' pessimism about perceived, rather than actual, job prospects for humanities majors, which underscores the ideological power of neoliberalism. However, Schmidt (2018) notes a significant exception to this trend, writing,

> While history, English, and the rest have faded, only one set of humanities fields without a foot in the sciences has clearly held its own: the much newer (and smaller) disciplines the statistical agency joins together as ethnic, gender, and cultural studies.… Relatedly, I've only found one large class of schools where humanities enrollments have held steady: historically black colleges and universities [HBCUs]. [These] are also the only institutional class where a majority of students say they're dedicated to crafting a philosophy of life.

It appears that the humanities fields that are weathering an era of divestment, at least in terms of holding firm their rate of undergraduate majors, are interdisciplinary fields that intentionally focus on the lives and intellectual legacies of those communities that are most marginalized by academic philosophy, flagging an important area for academic philosophy to grow. The fact that predominantly Black student populations attending HBCUs remain consistently engaged in the humanities—both as majors in fields of study and as an approach to living one's life—also marks an important opportunity for academic philosophy, which continues to have a considerably low percentage of Black students (American Academy of Arts & Sciences 2016). Furthermore, intellectual engagement and collaboration with communities outside of academia is a central founding principle for Ethnic Studies (Delgado 2016), which suggests possible generative common ground between Ethnic Studies scholars and field/grassroots philosophers.

Because academic philosophy continues to be one of the least diverse humanities fields with regard to race and gender, I propose that philosophy departments, practitioners, and advocates establish practices that go against the grain of exclusionary structuring norms to become more actively and explicitly invested in racial and gender justice within and outside of philosophy. Institutional efforts to affirm racial and gender justice—via both institutional practices and curricular content5—may help to increase the relevance of academic philosophy for those on its margins or not on its radar at all. I am not merely referring to the acknowledged view that the discipline must increase its demographic diversity. Philosophers must courageously contend with the exclusionary infrastructure of the disciplinary field itself to radically expand what is possible in academic philosophy and allow it to earn the diversity it needs.

Structuring norms constitute and produce academic philosophy, defining the boundaries of its purpose, providing ease when one goes with the flow of those norms, and complication, alienation, and doubt when one deviates. As Ahmed (2018) succinctly notes, "Deviation is hard. Deviation is made hard." Therefore, for philosophy to have a robust future, it will require that philosophers—inside and outside academia—actively cultivate conditions that make deviations from structuring norms within philosophy less hard. For academic philosophers, examples of "first step" recommendations could include the following:

- welcome non- academic philosophical practitioners to participate in academic philosophy events and advocate for changes needed to make it more accessible and relevant to more kinds of philosophers;
- create institutional opportunities for students and faculty to discuss their non-academic philosophical work with the departmental and campus community, especially if they lack the accreditation of whiteness;
- seek interdisciplinary partnerships with faculty and students of color in other departments committed to community-engaged scholarship, and challenge hesitations to do so based on the worry that other departments have "different standards";
- contest the notion that the stakes of "free speech" are equal for everyone, and actively support the speech of colleagues and others inside and outside academia who are targeted by systems of oppression;
- critically evaluate the race and gender politics of who is valued as "philo sophers" in departments and associations, including demographics of faculty and students, curricular priorities, and visual representations of who are taken to be "typical" philosophers;
- prioritize hiring faculty and admitting students from groups marginalized within academic philosophy, including those not doing "traditional" philosophy;
- consistently support living wages and fair labor practices on campus and beyond.

Are these recommendations radical? They're not radical in Baker's sense of getting at the root causes. However, initial steps can begin orienting academic philosophy toward becoming a system that, to echo Baker, lends itself to the needs of philosophers who may be invisible to, or marginal in, the professional field, but who may also have a particular investment in the humanities. Though these recommendations are relatively modest, they may nevertheless make some in academic philosophy feel uncomfortable. It is this discomfort of deviation that I am recommending academic philosophers embrace. Small deviations toward more inclusion can enrich the practice of philosophy; more importantly, strategic deviations can create conditions for philosophy to not merely allow a limited number of different kinds of philosophers and philosophical projects into academic philosophy, but to let those people and projects transform academic philosophy to make it more open, collaborative, relevant, and generative. Committing to initial practices with the courage to let those practices make room for bigger deviations can enable more people to radically re-imagine the utility of philosophy and develop foundational challenges to systems destructive to many things, including the humanities. Through practice, theory.

As a nonprofit, CARA did not survive—in part because the organization could no longer contort itself to fall in line with the demands of neoliberalism. However, as a philosophical project, CARA carries on as a decentralized set of learnings that have a persistent influence in ways that I, at least, could not anticipate. Philosophy's future will turn on its ability to deviate inside and outside academia, to adapt its form to fit many more kinds of practices and people who have profound stakes in the survival of philosophy and, relatedly, the survival of their communities. Ultimately, I think that philosophers will need to disaggregate the project of "saving philosophy" from "saving the university," giving us the space we need to map a future for philosophy that is more plural, transformative, and free.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1 I review the details of SRR's closure and the emergence of CARA in the article, "Pursuing A Radical Anti-Violence Agenda Inside/Outside a Non-Profit Structure" (Bierria 2007). Also, because so much of CARA's work occurred in rich collective praxis, I should note that the description of CARA's work laid out here is meant to reflect my own memory and experiences.

2 Notably, philosopher and former political prisoner, Angela Y. Davis, had key roles in the inaugural conferences for both of these organizations—milestone events for the contemporary abolitionist movement.

3 This tension is explored in the 2001 INCITE!–Critical Resistance Statement on "Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex," a document written by a national group of feminist of color anti-violence scholars, advocates, and activists, including CARA members Eboni Colbert and Theryn Kigvamasud'Vashti. The statement became a key document that supported feminist critiques of criminalizing responses to violence.

4 The emergence of this movement is explored in Brazzell (2015) and Rojas Durazo et al. (2012). Transformative justice/community accountability efforts have resonance with more radical forms of restorative justice, but are distinct in that they are deliberately grounded in a feminist, social justice, and abolitionist politics. Also, it should be noted that "Taking Risks" was published at a time when mainstream discourse and anti-violence advocacy rarely engaged the concept of abolishing carceral systems as a serious political position; the abolitionist movement, however, has since achieved important growth. Calls to abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and policing have since entered the mainstream with meaningful engagement, and calls for non-carceral "alternative" responses to gender violence have become more common in feminist anti-violence fields, a development made possible by decades of community organizing led by many people and organizations.

5 Regarding the relationship between demographics and philosophical areas of study, Anita Allen notes,

> During the past 60 years, new fields of specialization have emerged—philosophy of race, African-American philosophy, Africana philosophy, black feminist/womanist thought, and so on. These have appeared in tandem with an increase in the number of professionally trained philosophers of black descent.
> (Yancy 2018)

Allen's observation resonates with a 2014 study asserting that, for Black philosophers who have earned, or are working towards, PhDs in philosophy, race theory, social and political philosophy, ethics, Africana philosophy, and feminist philosophy were among the most popular areas of specialization (Botts et al. 2014).

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