PERFORMANCE
PHILOSOPHY

WHITENESS

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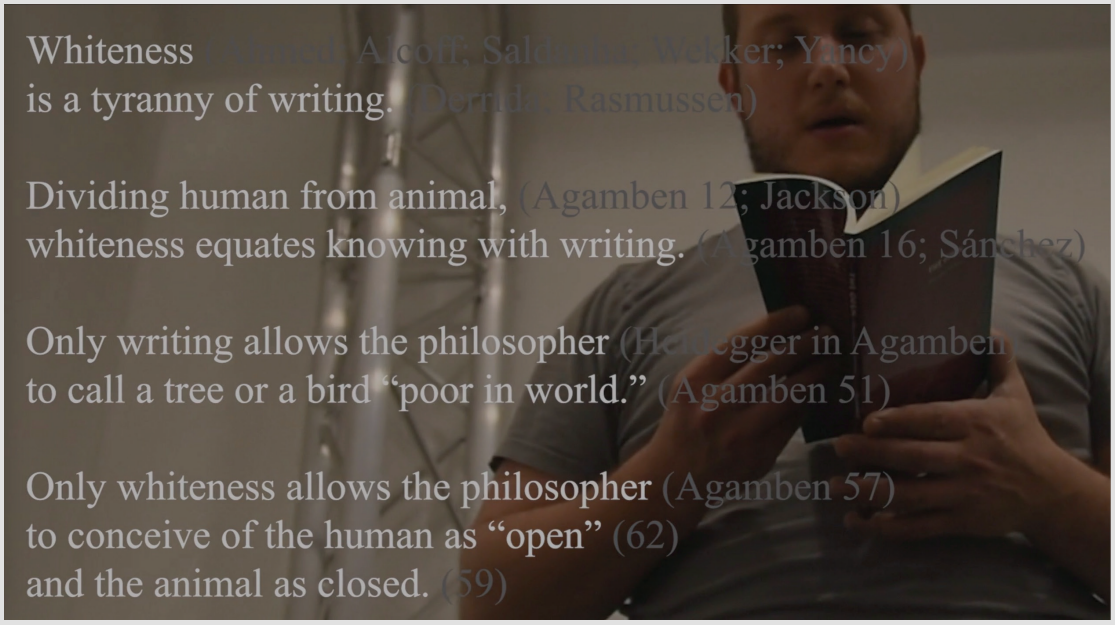

https://vimeo.com/performancephilosophy/whiteness

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Transcript

Whiteness (Ahmed; Alcoff; Saldanha; Wekker; Yancy)
is a tyranny of writing. (Derrida; Brander Rasmussen)

Dividing human from animal, (Agamben 12; Jackson)
whiteness equates knowing with writing. (Agamben 16; Sánchez)

Only writing allows the philosopher (Heidegger in Agamben)
to call a tree or a bird "poor in world." (Agamben 51)

Only whiteness allows the philosopher (Agamben 57)
to conceive of the human as "open" (62)
and the animal as closed. (59)

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Heidegger describes the experience of disembodiment,
which he calls "boredom." In this state, (Agamben 63)
the world is present but has "nothing to offer." (64)

Affect is zero, affordances are null. (Agamben 66-68)
A body can do nothing. (70)

This is the beginning of whiteness, (Baucom; Hage; Weheliye)
the "anthropological machine of humanism," (Agamben 29)
or *anthropogenesis*: a structure, not an event (79; Wolfe)

From here, it becomes possible to destroy the world. (Liboiron)

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Words are not things that can be written down. (Simpson)
Freedom is not a kind of speech. (Kelley; McKittrick)

How do we *call in* philosophy? (la paperson; Manning)
How do we *call in* the act of writing? (Robinson 77–105)

Only by abandoning the *logos*, (Agamben 90)
the illusion of transparency: (Silva)
not writing, but the tyranny of writing. (King)

Can the white body be decolonized (Agamben 10, 91–92)
without killing it? (Bey 69–70; Rigby Jr. and Ziyad; Spatz 18)

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"The Bible, the Greeks: What is the nature of these texts' openness to the whole world? One the one hand, for Levinas, they are available to the whole world; on the other hand, they *are* the whole world. The whole world is in these texts and the refusal of these texts, the failure to enter into them is also a failure to enter into the world…

"At issue is the possibility and desirability of avoiding song which is associated with intoxication, sleep, lack of seriousness, the technoprimitivity that attends modern audiovisual distraction…"

— Moten (11, 25)

Credits

"whiteness" (2022).

Video essay by Ben Spatz with Nazlıhan Eda Erçin, Ilona Krawczyk, and Agnieszka Mendel. *Performance Philosophy* 7 (2): Margins.

Practitioners: Ilona Krawczyk and Ben Spatz
Director / Witness: Nazlıhan Eda
Videographer: Agnieszka Mendel
Editor / Annotator: Ben Spatz

This session took place on 31 July 2017, during the project "Judaica: An Embodied Laboratory for Songwork" at the University of Huddersfield, UK (AHRC 2016–2018).

During the session, Ilona Krawczyk shared work from her PhD research on embodied voice (University of Huddersfield).

The book is *The Open: Man and Animal by Giorgio Agamben* (2004).

Special thanks to Caroline Gatt for introducing books into the lab.

On the research method, see:
Spatz, Ben. 2020. *Making a Laboratory: Dynamic Configurations with Transversal Video*. New York: Punctum Books.

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