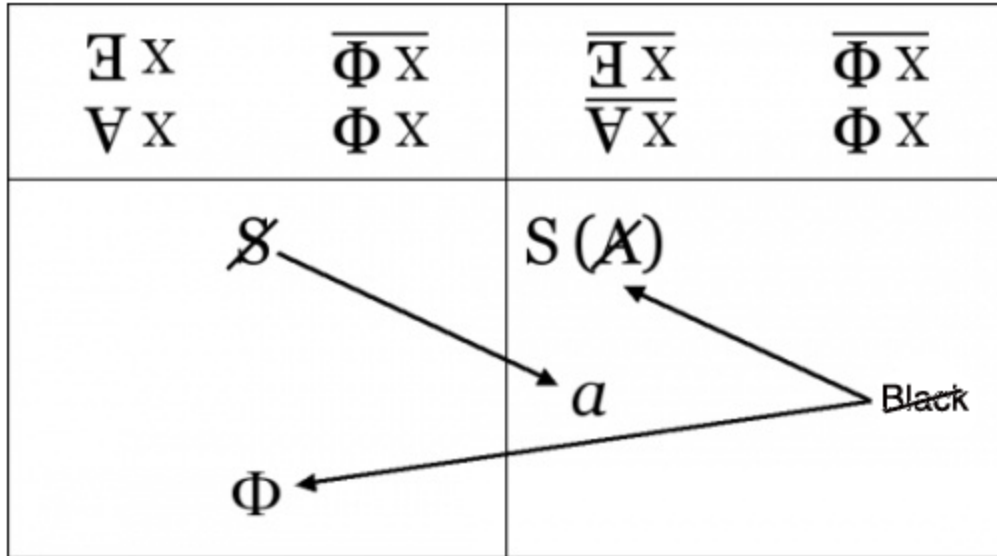


## Not All Lives Matter

Robert K. Beshara



All Lives Matter (ALM) follows the logic of phallic jouissance, which Jacques Lacan (1975/1998) qualifies as “the jouissance of the idiot” (p. 81) because it is essentially masturbatory, that is, it is fantasmatic ( $\$ \diamond a$ ). I shall now read the two formulas of sexuation on the top left with that in mind: for all lives, the phallic function (i.e., freedom) is valid, but there are some lives (i.e., Indigenous, Black, and Brown lives) which are not submitted to the phallic function.

Conversely, Black Lives Matter (BLM) represents an Other jouissance beyond the phallus of freedom. This is the space not of individualistic freedom but of collective liberation as a praxis, wherein the oppressed must lead the way (Freire, 1970/2018). Here is my interpretation of the two formulas on the top right: for not all lives, the phallic function (i.e., liberation) is valid, and there is not one life which is not submitted to the phallic function. Because oppression dehumanizes both the oppressed and the oppressors, liberation is the humanization of all--whereas freedom is the humanization of some.

Black Lives Matter because Blacks must lead the way to liberation given their historical, and ongoing, relationship with oppression. All Live Matter erases this reality, hence, why the signifier Black is barred, and as such All Lives Matter exhibits what Paulo Freire (1970/2018) calls “false generosity” and not comradeship (Dean, 2019). False generosity is founded upon the denial of privilege.

The racist subject ( $\$$ ) of ALM has a racial-sexual fantasmatic relationship with the phobogenic object ( $a$ ) of BLM. The antiracist subject of BLM, however, articulates an Other jouissance

vis-à-vis the barred Other of liberation. Traversing the fantasy then entails realizing that All Lives Matter as a discourse is actually sustained by a racial-sexual fantasy premised on phallic jouissance.

#### References

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