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### TURN: POVERTY FOCUS BAD

#### Focus on poverty dis-empowers people to overcome their condition.

**Sheldon & Kasser 08** – Professor of Psychology University of Missouri & Professor of Psychology Knox College [Kennon M. & Tim, “Psychological threat and extrinsic goal striving” Motivation and Emotion 32 March 4, 2008 http://www.springerlink.com/content/t120x5549jrp76um/fulltext.pdf]

Given that this literature demonstrates that extrinsic goals are less likely to promote well-being than are intrinsic goals, it may seem rather puzzling that extrinsic goals nevertheless seem so prevalent in the world. That is, if the goals of consumerism, status seeking, and appearance tend to be associated with such problematic outcomes, then why does the modern world seem so full of extrinsic concerns? What factors conspire to push people towards the extrinsic goal-strivings that ultimately are unlikely to benefit their own happiness and well-being? Although the answer to this question is doubtless multifaceted (see e.g., Kasser and Kanner 2004), we have suggested that goal selection can become more extrinsic and less intrinsic when people experience psychological threat (Kasser et al. 2004; Kasser and Sheldon 2004; Sheldon 2004). Such threats lead people to feel unsafe or anxious (Chaplin 1985, p. 231), and can occur through a variety of means. For example, threats to self-esteem (Crocker and Knight 2005), social inclusion (Twenge and Baumeister 2005), people’s sense of order and control (Kofta et al. 1998), and people’s survival or sense of continuity (Greenberg et al. 1997), while all distinct types of threats, have at base a commonality: the individual feels a sense of insecurity regarding impending trouble, danger, or harm (American Heritage dictionary). It is also noteworthy that various types of threats listed above have all been linked to similar sorts of negative outcomes, such as inappropriate aggression (Twenge and Baumeister 2005), defensiveness (Rhodewalt and Vohs 2005), and antagonism (Heatherton and Vohs 2000). Several lines of research evidence support the specific proposal that various types of threats can also lead individuals to focus more on extrinsic and less on intrinsic goals. For example, adolescents’ goals are likely to be more extrinsically and less intrinsically oriented if they are raised by parents who are controlling and non-nurturing (Kasser et al. 1995, 2002; Williams et al. 2000) or by parents who are overly punitive or inconsistent (Cohen and Cohen 1996). Children whose parents divorce also are more likely to adopt a focus on materialistic goals (Rindfleisch et al. 1997). Controlling or dehumanizing academic environments have also been shown to be associated with increases in attractive appearance goals and decreases in community feeling goals (Sheldon and Krieger 2004). **Socio-economic factors such as family poverty** (Cohen and Cohen 1996; Kasser et al. 1995, 2002) and national economic difficulties (Abramson and Inglehart 1995) also **are associated with an increasing focus on** materialistic, **extrinsic goals in life**. These correlational studies are complemented by two experimental reports which begin to suggest that psychological threats can cause increases in extrinsic and decreases in intrinsic orientations. First, Kasser and Sheldon (2000) showed that participants prompted to think about their own death tended to consume more of limited community resources and to want more luxury goods in the future. Second, Chang and Arkin (2002) showed that state materialism increased when people who are chronically self-doubting are made to feel insecure and uncertain. Neither set of experiments, however, examined a full range of extrinsic and intrinsic goals, as both studies focused only upon consumption and materialism. Such empirical evidence is consistent with a variety of theoretical perspectives that imply that different kinds of threats can cause people to shift towards financial, appearance, and popularity goals and away from personal growth, affiliation, and community goals is consistent with many other theoretical positions. For example, humanistic perspectives suggest that when feelings of safety and security are threatened, individuals are less likely to focus on activities that promote growth and well-being, and more likely to concern themselves with issues such as money, image, and status (Maslow 1956, 1971; Rogers 1964). From an evolutionary perspective, it also seems likely that status, looks, and wealth may have offered important short term means of countering threats to security and survival in our evolutionary past (Buss 2000), and thus people may be somewhat ‘‘hard-wired’’ to orient towards extrinsic goals in times of uncertainty. Further, the feelings of anxiety resulting from threat may lead individuals to lose access to extended self-representational systems (Kuhl and Baumann 2000), thus preventing them from thinking clearly about pursuits that would be more meaningful or growth-promotings a result, threats may lead individuals to be more likely to seek the kinds of ‘‘quick fixes’’ promoted and glorified by contemporary media and culture (Kasser et al.2004) than they would were they to engage in thoughtful consideration.

### TURN: POVERTY FOCUS BAD

**The constant conversation about poverty cause people to ignore their ability to seek positive outcomes in society.**

HEYLIGHEN and BERNHEIM, 00, PhD. @ University of Brussels’ Department of Philosophy & Professor of Medicine @ University of Brussels, Human Ecology Department

[FRANCIS HEYLIGHEN and JAN BERNHEIM, “GLOBAL PROGRESS II: EVOLUTIONARY MECHANISMS AND THEIR SIDE-EFFECTS” in the Journal of Happiness Studies (2000), pgs. 361-363]

Why cannot society fully enjoy its undeniable successes? One factor is that **negative events simply receive much more attention**. Psychological research has shown that **there is an asymmetry between positive and negative emotions**: neutral situations produce a mildly positive feeling, the positivity offset, while unpleasant or potentially dangerous situations elicit a strong negative reaction, the negativity **bias**(Ito et al., 1998). This can be explained straightforwardly through evolutionary mechanisms: the positivity offset helps the organism to explore its environment and thus discover opportunities, while the negativity bias helps it to avoid dangers. Since much more can be lost by ignoring a danger than by ignoring an opportunity, the strength of the negative reaction tends to be much larger than the strength of the positive reaction. Thus, our brains are programmed to get much more aroused by negative than by positive or neutral stimuli.This psychological mechanism influences our perception of progress in society. A phenomenon will only attract attention if it deviates from the default expectation of no change. Negative developments are usually the result of a sudden, unexpected disturbance: an error, an accident, a conflict, or a natural disaster. Such situations require quick action, and they arouse the **immediate and full attention** of the people involved. Positive developments, on the other hand, are usually the accumulated result of the sustained efforts of many people. They merely require further continuation of the activities, without much emotion. Thus, because of the asymmetry between positivity offset and negativity bias, negative changes are much more likely to be noticed and remembered than on-going progress.

Although this negativity bias has always existed, the present problem is its amplification by the media. Something is deemed newsworthy only if it is likely to grab the attention of many people. This excludes most of the slow, predictable processes of improvement, while favoring negative events such as murders, wars, famines or kidnappings. Marshall MacLuhan summarized this phenomenon as “good news is no news”. Simon (1999) called it the “bad news bias”, discussing many examples of howitworks in practice. One of these concerned data about the catastrophic loss of farmland in the USA that had been making the headlines. When Simon investigated the situation, he found that the statistics were simply wrong. He even managed to make the authorities admit that they had made a mistake. Yet, no newspaper seemed interested in publishing the corrected – but less spectacular – statement that farmland was actually increasing. The irony of the situation is that on-going progress increases the bad news bias. As communication technologies improve, and journalists and investigators become more competent, they will be able to gather and publish more news. As people’s access to information and general education level increase, they will be subjected to more news. Given a growing amount of news about all possible events, a stable proportion of negative events, and a stable tendency to publicize only the negative events, the overall amount of bad news is bound to grow. The effect on the public’s mood can be illustrated most simply by contrasting people’s appreciation of their own situation with the appreciation they have of society at large. Eckersley (2000) calls the former “personal QOL”, the latter “social QOL”. He notes that personal QOL is typically positive, while social QOL is typically negative. In other words, people tend to judge the state of society to be much worse than their own situation. But this is paradoxical**:** if most people are quite happy, how can society as a whole then be so bad? The positivity offset explains why people on the average tend to be rather satisfied: if they haven’t experienced any major problems themselves, they will feel good. **The bad news bias explains why they tend to believe that other people are so much worse off: as they are constantly bombarded by warnings about crime**, corruption, **poverty, drug abuse**, etc., they naturally, but incorrectly, infer that these problems are the rule rather than the exception. The more worrying phenomenon is that, according to Eckersley’s survey data, a sizeable percentage of **people admit that their personal QOL is affected by their worries about society at large**. Thus, although the negativity bias and the increasing reach of the media are intrinsically positive phenomena, that help us to tackle problems at an early stage, together they may have created a **bad news bias strong enough to reduce our QOL**, thus providing another example of overshoot**.** Often the media’s emphasis on problems is being justified by the fact that it may motivate the public to do something about those shortcomings. However, the negativistic atmosphere can be so strong that people react in the opposite way: why should I exert myself to improve things if the world is going down the drain anyway? The resulting vicious cycle may be illustrated by the following example.

### INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE GOOD

#### Taking on the view from the bottom means that we must enact policies that explicitly counter racist structures

CLC National Anti-Racism Task Force, 1997

(“Racism: Going Beyond Recommendations”, canadianlabour.ca/updir/Task-Force-Report-Final-E-1997.pdf)

The continued **exclusion of Aboriginal Peoples and People of Colour** from all levels of union leadership and staff positions (servicing and organizing representatives, support staff, research and education officers, directors, and executive assistants) weakens the effectiveness of our unions because it **denies them of the views, voices, talents, energy, and contributions** of union members from these communities. It also means that aboriginal workers and workers of colour do not see themselves or their experiences truly reflected in their unions. It was evident from presentations to the task force that aboriginal members and members of colour are frustrated by the lack of any real progress to break down these barriers. They expect to see our leaders working side by side and shoulder to shoulder with our communities to fight racism. They want union leaders to challenge racism, not just in speeches, but also through financial commitments and political action. They want them to use their considerable discretionary and constitutional powers to combat racism through decisions around staffing, committee and delegation appointments and the allocation of resources. Union activists at the consultations told us that **Aboriginal Peoples and People of Colour** in our unions **will do their part to fight racism, sexism and all forms of bigotry, but they also expect those in positions of power to put their political commitment “on the line” by taking immediate steps to implement short-term and long-term anti-racism action plans.** As a first step, union policies, reports and resolutions should be taken off the shelf, dusted off, and their recommendations reviewed for short-term implementation. **There are a number of critical areas where immediate action must be taken. Those from outside the Aboriginal Peoples and People of Colour communities cannot and should not speak for us or try to be experts on the impact of racism. However, leaders from outside our communities can play a positive role by providing direction, guidance and allocating resources.**

#### The aff is too radical-Working within the system is key to solve

#### Jones 92

Bernie Jones, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of Virginia. J.D., New York University School of Law, HARVARD BLACKLETTER JOURNAL, Spring 1992,

In his autobiographical work on his life as an activist, Bell recognized "the difficulty and, often the futility of trying to propagate [his] views about racial discrimination to those who already possessed quite different, and equally deeply held views about white entitlement." For that reason, his protest leave from Harvard, "might annoy, but they would seldom undermine the authority or power of those I confronted." His victories left him feeling vindicated, that he stood up for what was right; however, they were pyrrhic. He could not change the white power structure responsible for the subordination of blacks that he saw all around him. In his view, and in the view of his student followers, Harvard Law School was part and parcel of the problem. Communities of color needed the lawyers Harvard could train; female students of color needed mentors and role models.

### RACIALIZED POLITICS BAD

Their racial politics ensures certain political interest groups dominate unjustly-Merit based absolutism and essential individualism are key to solve

Morrison 94

(John, Prof @ University of Iowa, Colorblindness, Individuality, And Merit: An Analysis Of The Rhetoric Against Affirmative Action, 1994 http://academic.udayton.edu/RACE/04NEEDS/affirm04.htm)

#### These related concerns are secondary arguments that arise from a combination of individuality and merit. Essential individualism and absolute standards can work well together Absolute standards rhetorically support defining individuality as essential individualism because the most objective judgments of merit are useless if the social unit they measure is unstable. A historical understanding of how individuals and groups interrelate might be sufficiently stable for such an objective measure. Its historical nature, however, undermines claims that merit rather than history is responsible for the measured differences. Absolute merit standards also support the choice of essential individualism because merit determines the distribution of economic benefits and burdens. The social structure in this country, given the norm of private property, distributes rewards and punishments to the essential individual.  Conversely, the choice of essential individualism helps define merit as absolute standards. Individuality implies that absolute standards are appropriate because relative standards would require an inquiry into the difficulty of overcoming various obstacles. This inquiry would examine how others with the same social and cultural backgrounds deal with the obstacle. Thus given essential individualism, merit must be absolute standards to avoid such a group-based inquiry.  If merit is absolute standards and people are essentially individuals racial politics and exploitation are wrong because essential individuals receive benefits or burdens for reasons other than merit. Merit should determine the distribution of benefits and burdens. Racial politics are wrong because they ignore these standards in distributing goods to particular political interest groups, all the while masquerading as civil rights that benefit society as a whole. Individuality dictates the level at which to look for harms and benefits. Thus, the harms are to Allan Bakke, Wendy Wygant, and Brian Weber; the beneficiaries are Carl Stotts, and Philip Paradise, Jr. "Innocent whites" are the victims of these politics.

### RACIALIZED POLITICS BAD

Racial politics only help middle class Blacks which means a) it can discriminate against Whites b) it breeds white supremacy and c) Their alternative ignores the way class functions in racial politics

Morrison 94 (John, Prof @ University of Iowa, Colorblindness, Individuality, And Merit: An Analysis Of The Rhetoric Against Affirmative Action, 1994 <http://academic.udayton.edu/RACE/04NEEDS/affirm04.htm>**)**

A pervasive argument against affirmative action is that it actually creates or exacerbates racial problems. A common version of this argument is the concern about racial politics. For example, consider Richmond v. J.A. Crosen Co. In that case Richmond, Virginia, with five of the nine city council seats held by African-Americans, enacted an affirmative action plan for city construction contacts. Justice Scalia charged that this "set-aside clearly and directly benefi[tted] the dominant political group, which happens also to be the dominant racial group." Another version of the same point is the claim that affirmative action programs injure "innocent whites," thereby encouraging the growth of white-supremacy groups. One final version argues that affirmative action is susceptible to exploitation because these programs proportedly benefit only middle-class African- Americans who do not need the help as much as those in lower socio-economic classes.

### TURN: DANGEROUS POLITICS

#### You should refuse to retreat from dangerous politics but reflect on the construction of knowledge

Michael C. Williams, Senior Lecturer in the Department of International Politics at the University of Wales, 2005, Cambridge University Press, “The Realist Tradition and the Limits of International Relations”

Each of these thinkers is fully aware of the destructive possibilities of modern politics, and their ideas reflect a direct concern with the politics of power, violence, and conflict. The relationship between knowledge and politics that is at the centre of Hobbes’ engagement with scepticism, for example, is for him no abstract question: he sees it at the heart of the bloody conflict of the English Civil War. For Rousseau, the brutal degradation he sees in civil society, and the violent state of war he observes between sovereigns is a direct consequence of the distorted forms that the process of relationality and the evolution of reason have undergone. Morgenthau’s apparently abstruse interest in the concept of ‘politics’, similarly, is not an esoteric philosophical excursion: it arises directly from his attempt to oppose the violently oppositional vision of the ‘concept of the political’ developed by the ‘crown jurist of the Nazi party,’ Carl Schmitt, and from his attempt to construct a viable liberal politics in the lights of the collapse of Weimar and the catastrophic rise of fascism. Recognising the conflictual dimensions of politics is thus undeniably a key part of what makes these thinkers recognizably ‘Realist’ in the more conventional meaning of the term. But what makes them realistic in a much deeper and more significant sense is their refusal to retreat from the dilemmas bequeathed by modern politics into a reliance upon tradition, a facile fatalism, or a narrow power politics**.** Their ‘wilfulness’ resides in their unflinching attempts to construct a viable, principled understanding of modern politics, and to use this understanding to avoid its perils and achieve its promise. The core of this Realist tradition thus does not lie in the concepts of anarchy and rationality as they have come to dominate International Relation theory. It lies instead with questions of the construction of social action and political orders, with the conditions of stable and legitimate political authority, and with the consequences of different, particular, and historically contingent resolutions to these broad political challenges. The Realism I explore in this study is not a reationalist theory of anarchy that presupposes certain forms of knowledge, subjectivity – a rational actor: it is a reflection on the constitution and limitations of precisely such a construction *of* subjectivity. It does not lack or assume a theory of domestic politics: it is a theory of domestic politics, a theory of the political at its most basic level, providing a sophisticated attempt to understand politics at both the domestic and international levels.

### **DISCUSSIONS OF RACE DON’T SOLVE**

#### Ranting about racism will not solves injustice.

Takis Fotopoulos The End of Traditional Antisystemic Movements and the Need for A New Type of Antisystemic Movement Today DEMOCRACY & NATURE: The International Journal of INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY vol.7, no.3, (November 2001)

Although these trends are obvious among many activists involved in communes of various kinds, like for instance the ‘eco-village movement’ I discussed elsewhere[[69]](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/dn/vol7/takis_movements.htm#_edn69) or those involved in ‘affinity groups’ organising various forms of direct action, I will also include in  lifestyle anarchism such activities as ethical finance, co-ops, community supported agriculture, rural economic renewal, town banks, land trusts, LETS, permaculture, as well as Third World alternative development projects. In other words, this broad description covers all those who are involved in such activities for their own sake rather than with the aim to build a new antisystemic movement with a clear vision about a future society and a strategy to reach it. These activities often present many of the characteristics attributed by Bookchin to life style anarchism, for instance,  assailing organization, programmatic commitment and se­rious social analysis, as well as rejecting the need for building a political movement (unlike the anarcho-syndicalist movement which in its heyday tried to en­gage in creating an organized movement) and relying instead on bringing social change ‘by example’ and the corresponding change in values. Such trends are rampant in countries like Britain since the 1970s, when the ideas of Colin Ward and others around him (concerning what they called ‘*Anarchy in Action’*—in fields as diverse as town planning, housing, education and allotments) became influential. Similar trends are expressed today by various anarchist currents that extol the virtues of co-ops, which they consider as ‘anarchism in its latest practical manifestation’ since ‘they allow  the practice of anarchism to be conducted within the larger capitalist economy’,[[70]](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/dn/vol7/takis_movements.htm#_edn70) or adopt a ‘pragmatic’ anarchism, which rejects the traditional antisystemic demands of anarchists to abolish the market economy and money![[71]](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/dn/vol7/takis_movements.htm#_edn71) However,such activities not onlyare usually not related to radical antisystemic politics in the sense of promoting an alternative society-- if indeed they are related to politics at all-- but, in fact, are often so politically harmless that the political elites frequently use them for their own ends. In Britain, for instance, Tony Blair’s social-liberal government openly endorses schemes like LETS with the obvious aim to alleviate the pressures created on the budget, as a result of the running down of the welfare state –a process which was initiated by Thatcher’s neoliberalism and continued by Blair’s social-liberalism.[[72]](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/dn/vol7/takis_movements.htm#_edn72)  As I pointed out elsewhere,[[73]](http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/dn/vol7/takis_movements.htm#_edn73) this sort of activities are utterly ineffective in bringing about a systemic change. Although helpful in creating an alternative culture among small sections of the population and, at the same time, morale boosting for activists who wish to see an immediate change in their lives, this approach does not have any chance of success —in the context of today’s huge concentration of power— to create the democratic majority needed for systemic social change. This is because the projects suggested by this strategy may be too easily marginalized, or absorbed into the existing power structure (as has happened many times in the past) while their effect on the socialisation process is minimal —if not nil. Furthermore, life-style strategies, by usually concentrating on single issues, which are not part of a comprehensive political program for social transformation, do not help in creating the ‘anti-systemic’ consciousness required for systemic change. Finally, systemic social change can never be achieved outside the main political and social arena. The elimination of the present power structures and relations can neither be achieved “by setting an example”, nor through education and persuasion.[[1]](#footnote-1)

### RACISM DOES NOT CAUSE MORE OPPRESSION

#### Racism does not cause societal oppression.

#### Boston College Law Review 99

(Boston College Law Review May 1999. 40 B.C. L. Rev 787 Race, Equality and the Rule of Law: Critical Race Theory's Attack on the Promises of Liberalism)

My disagreement with the race-crits has less to do with their long-term goals than with their diagnoses and solutions. Disadvantage in the United States continues to fall too heavily on racial minorities Inequities in criminal justice immigration law and welfare "reform" remain rampant, but are due to much more than simple bigotry. n27 The most important political problem today is to prepare all persons to survive and prosper in a service-oriented, information-driven economy. n28 Inequalities in wealth are growing because low-skilled jobs are leaving for third-world shores, while better paying jobs increasingly require advanced education. n2Addressing these problems is a tall order, and will not be advanced very far by academic demands for race-based benefits. Indeed, the very idea of race-based measures as a remedy for economic disadvantage is collapsing as Americans come to think less in terms of black and white and more in terms of a diverse rainbow of colors, with many hues in between. n30 So long as race was a reasonable proxy for disadvantage, as it was in the wake of de jure segregation, identity-group remedies like race-based affirmative action made a great deal of sense. n31 But, as the black middle class has grown and Americans have come to recognize wide economic and cultural differences within (and not just between) ethnic groups, such claims have lost some of their force. n32 Thus, when critical race theorists treat civil rights law as a species of interest-group politics, they surrender the moral high ground of constitutional principle and risk being seen as just another group clamoring for benefits. Such advocacy does nothing for disadvantaged minorities in America.

### LIBERATION TURN

#### **Not all minorities want to be liberated by your aff**

Vine Deloria, For this Land: Writings on Religion in America, Routledge Press, p. 100-101

Liberation theology assumes that the common experience of oppression is sufficient to create the desire for a new coalition of dissident minorities. Adherents of this movement indiscriminately classify all minorities—racial, ethnic and sexual—in a single category of people seeking liberation. Such classification is an easy way to eliminate specific complaints of specific groups and a clever way to turn aside efforts of dissenting groups to get their particular goals fulfilled. For instead of listening to their complaints, observers--and particularly liberal observers who pose a s sympathetic fellow-travelers—can tie up the conversation endlessly by eliciting questions, framed within liberation ideology, that require standard and nonsensical answers. Liberation theology, then, was an absolute necessity if the establishment was going to continue to control the minds of minorities. If a person of a minority group had not invented it, their liberal establishment most certainly would have created it. The immediate response to such an accusation is one of horrified refusal to believe that there could be any racial or sexual minority that does not consider itself to be under oppression. This is followed by the perennial suggestion that if dissident minorities “got organized” instead of remaining separate they would be able to get things done. Those who reject that concept of oppression merely prove that they are so completely the victims of oppression that they do not even recognize it. The circular logic closes neatly in upon them, making them victims indeed. Liberation theology is simply the latest gimmick to keep minority groups circling the wagons with the vain hope that they can eliminate the oppression that surrounds them. It does not seek to destroy the roots of oppression, but merely to change the manner in which oppression manifests itself. No winner, no matter how sincere, willingly surrenders his power over others. He may devise clever ways to appear to share such power, but he always keeps a couple of aces up his sleeves in case things get out of control If there were and serious concern about liberation we would see thousands of people simply walk away from the vast economic, political, and intellectual machine we call Western civilization and refuse to be enticed to participate in it any longer. Liberation is not a difficult task when one no longer finds value in a set of institutions or beliefs. We are liberated from the burden of Santa Claus and the moral demand to be “good” when, as maturing adolescents, we reject the concept of Santa Claus. Thereafter we have no sense of guilt in late November that we have not behaved properly during the year, and no fear that a lump of coal rather than a gift will await us Christmas morning. In the same manner, we are freed and liberated once we realize the insanity and fantasy of the present manner of interpreting our experiences in the world. Liberation, in its most fundamental sense, requires a rejection of everything we have been taught and its replacement by only those things we have experienced as having values. But this replacement only begins the task of liberation. For the history of Western thinking in the past eight centuries has been one of replacement of ideas within a framework that has remained basically unchanged for nearly two millennia. Challenging this framework of interpretation means a rearrangement of our manner of perceiving the world, and it involves a reexamination of the body of human knowledge and its structural reconstruction into a new format. Such a task appears to be far from the struggles of the present. It seems abstract and meaningless in the face of contemporary suffering. And it suggests that people can be made to change their oppressive activity by intellectual reorientation alone. All of these questions arise, however, because of the fundamental orientation of Western peoples toward the word. We assume that we know the structure of reality and must only make certain minor adjustments in the machinery that operates it in order to bring our institutions into line. Immediate suffering is thus placed in juxtaposition with abstract metaphysical concepts of the world and, because we can see immediate suffering, we feel impelled to change conditions quickly to relieve tensions, never coming to understand how the basic attitude toward life and its derivative attitudes toward minority groups continues to dominate the goals and activies that appear designed to create reforms.

### LOVE K ALT

#### Love solves racism better than the aff.

#### Methodology of the Oppressed, p. 1-2 Sandoval in 2000

Manifest landmarks in theory transfigure when the foundational underplate that makes their very existence possible shifts upward. Methodology of the Oppressed follows this theory uprising—this ascendance of the latent force that once had inspired, energized, and made possible the U.S. intellectual geography of the late twentieth century. What surfaces is the forgotten, and underlayer of oppositional consciousness that quietly influenced the history of U.S.-Euro consciousness throughout the twentieth century. Exposed is a rhetoric of resistance, an apparatus for countering the neocolonizing postmodern global formations. Here, this apparatus is represented as first, a theory and a method of oppositional consciousness; the equal rights, revolutionary, supremacist separatist, and differential modes; second, as a methodology of the oppressed (which cuts through grammars of supremacy), and which over the course of the book transformed into a methodology of emancipation comprised of five skills: semiotics, deconstruction, meta-ideologizing, democratics and differential consciousness, and finally the book argues that these different methods, when utilized together, constitute a singular apparatus that is necessary for forging twenty-first-century modes of decolonizing globalization. That apparatus is “love.” Understood as a technology for social transformation. Foundational underpinning makes very existence possible.

### ROOT CAUSE K

**Claims that are based on a single core cause of violence are based on reductionist models that nature of violence and prevent us from finding effective solutions. The belief in root causes removes the individual responsibility that we have to choose to prevent acts of violence.**

Fred Hutchison March 22, <http://www.renewamerica.us/columns/hutchison/040322>

When liberals speak of the "root causes" of social problems, they typically are borrowing ideas from economic determinism. Root cause arguments obscure rather than enlighten. The poor are not responsible for their poverty because of root causes — we are told. Criminals are not responsible for crime because of root causes. Terrorists are not responsible for murder because of root causes. Such thinking rules out the idea of human conscience, and moral responsibility. When the belief in root causes relieves us of responsibility for our actions it also weakens the belief in the existence of free will. Nothing will destroy a golden age of innovation faster than a paralysis of the will. If we doubt we have a will because of a belief in the myth of root causes, the will becomes either paralyzed or undisciplined.

### CAP LINK - RACE

Race doesn’t exist. Their emphasis on race as a determinant of disadvantages is a self-fulfilling prophecy that ignores that class is the true cause of all their impacts. The alternative just serves the interest of advocacy groups-Getting over race must start with the state

Balko 2

(Radely, Fox News, Biologically Speaking, Race Doesn't Exist, January 17, 2002, http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,43298,00.html)

"Possibly only six genes determine the color of a persons skin," Graves, a professor of evolutionary biology and African-American Studies at Arizona University, said in the Times interview. Six genes, out of the 30,000 to 40,000 genes that make us human, determine race. Graves further asserted what genome researches have been uncovering over several years as the mapping project has wound down: as far as biology is concerned, race doesnt exist. Black, white, Asian all are artificial, really. A black man and a white man from Manhattan, for example, are likely to be more genetically similar than a black man from Manhattan and a black man from Nigeria. Graves sites sickle cell anemia as an example of what’s widely thought to be a "black disease." In fact, because sickle cells offer immunity to malaria, the condition exists wherever malaria exists. American blacks descended primarily from West African blacks, where malaria is abundant. But Graves notes that the disease is also present in Greece and Yemen. Had colonial American slaves been Greek or Yemeni, sickle cell anemia would be known to Americans as a Greek or Yemeni disease, not a black one. Graves and Venter hope their research will prevent doctors from considering race when making diagnoses. But, as the Times points out, old habits die hard. The current Surgeon General, Dr. David Satcher, continues to divert millions of dollars toward eliminating health disparities among the "races" by 2010. Black medical associations continue to fund research into black-only pharmaceuticals for "black-only" ailments. But voices like those of Graves and Venter are beginning to change some minds, if ever so slowly. This heartening new research ought to have sociological implications as well. If my doctor sees no difference between black and white, my Congressman, my teacher and my police chief shouldn’t either. It’s time government stop recognizing race. The 2000 U.S. Census lists eleven different racial and ethnic classifications, and allows for any hybrid combination of those eleven. The last Census also was steeped in racial classification controversy. Should minorities be "actually enumerated," or estimated via statistical sampling? Federal dollars are routinely allocated on the basis of race, as are federal contracts to private firms. The use of race in college admissions processes has mired academia in turmoil and controversy. Private companies are closely monitored to ensure the workers on their payroll have faces tinted to "look like America." Following the governments lead, sociologists, demographers, statisticians and academics endlessly break down our television viewing habits, purchases, mortality rates, income and voting patterns into black and white, red and yellow. Is it any wonder then why America is race-obsessed? Black Americans are routinely told that they are sicker, poorer, less intelligent, less upwardly-mobile, less motivated, more criminally-inclined and more prone to illegitimacy than their white and Asian counterparts. Of course none of these maladies is predicated on biology. They are class disparities, not race disparities. As conservative columnist George Will recently noted, if one could wave a magic wand over black America and make it white, black Americas problems would not disappear with its pigment. Affirmative action, a program that rewards race for races sake, usually at the expense of merit, is a fine example. Black social critics on the left and right have lamented that academic success in urban high schools and among black communities on college campuses is often equated with the "whiteness," or at the very least, with the lack of "blackness," of the African American students. Affirmative action -- government recognition and selection based on race has instilled in black Americans a stigmatization that equates their own race with academic failure. But race isn’t the reason the poor kid from the city needs a boost class is. A white or Asian kid from the inner city is just as disadvantaged as a black one. But he doesn’t get extra consideration. The implication is that being poor is not a disadvantage, but being black is. Some colleges now recognize "hardship" and "background" in the admissions process. But race continues to drive their selections. America will never get over race until we stop crunching our numbers by it. Change should start with the state. As more Americans intermarry, and as overseas and interracial adoptions continue to attract American couples, racial and ethnic distinctions will continue to erode in skin tone, as well as in custom and culture. Consequently, the government’s habit of recognizing these distinctions will become more and more absurd. Unfortunately, the same people who rightly want racial blinders removed from board rooms and highway troopers wrongly want government to continue to recognize race when it benefits their own interests. The statistics and alleged discrepancies that continue to racially marginalize and fractionalize Americans also fuel the fundraising drives, the political clout and the demands for federal assistance from racial advocacy groups. If science ceases to recognize race, government ought to follow suit. It’s time to take race off of the U.S. Census. And, while we’re at it, off of college applications, loan applications, and off the minds of New Jersey’s state troopers. If the state takes the lead, perhaps the rest of us will follow.

### CAP LINK – RACE

**Modern Racism is no longer based on ideologies of cultural or natural superiority - economic**

**egotism is the root of modern racism**   
**Zizek 2008** Slavoj Violence p 101-104

But we are not dealing here only with good old racism. Something more is at stake: a fundamental feature of our emerging “global” society. On ii September 2001 the Twin Towers were hit. Twelve years earlier, on 9 November 1989, the Berlin Wall fell. That date heralded the “happy ‘9os,” the Francis Fukuyama dream of the “end of history” —the belief that liberal democracy had, in principle, won; that the search was over; that the advent of a global, liberal world community lurked just around the corner; that the obstacles to this ultra-Hollywood happy ending were merely empirical and contingent (local pockets of resistance where the leaders did not yet grasp that their time was up). In contrast, 9/11 is the main symbol of the end of the Clintonite happy ‘9os. This is the era in which new walls emerge everywhere, between Israel and the West Bank, around the European Union, on the U.S.—Mexico border. The rise of the populist New Right is just the most prominent example of the urge to raise new walls.   
A couple of years ago, an ominous decision of the European Union passed almost unnoticed: the plan to establish an all-European border police force to secure the isolation of Union territory and thus to prevent the influx of immigrants. *This* is the truth of globalisation: the construction of new walls safeguarding prosperous Europe from the immigrant flood. One is tempted to resuscitate here the old Marxist “humanist” opposition of “relations between things” and “relations between persons”: in the much-celebrated free circulation opened up by global capitalism, it is “things” (commodities) which freely circulate, while the circulation of “persons” is more and more controlled. We are not dealing now with “globalisation” as an unfinished project but with a true “dialectics of globalisation”: the segregation of the people *is* the reality of economic globalisation. This new racism of the developed is in a way much more brutal than the previous ones: its implicit legitimisation is neither naturalist (the “natural” superiority of the developed West) nor any longer culturalist (we in the West also want to preserve our cultural identity), but unabashed economic egotism. The fundamental divide is one between those included in the sphere of (relative) economic prosperity and those excluded from it.

### CAP LINK – RACE

**Racism mask the real problem of poverty**

**Zizek 2008** Slavoj Violence p 66-67So, perhaps, the fact that *reason* and *race* have the same root in Latin (ratio)tells us something: language, not primitive egotistic interest, is the first and greatest divider, it is because of language that we and our neighbours (can) “live in different worlds” even when we live on the same street. What this means is that verbal violence is not a secondary distortion, but the ultimate resort of every specifically human violence. Take the example of anti-Semitic pogroms, which can stand in for all racist violence. What the perpetrators of pogroms find intolerable and rage-provoking, what they react to, is not the immediate reality of Jews, but the image/figure of the “Jew” which circulates and has been constructed in their tradition. The catch, of course, is that one single individual cannot distinguish in any simple way between real Jews and their anti-Semitic image: this image overdetermines the way I experience real Jews themselves, and furthermore it affects the way Jews experience themselves. What makes a real Jew that an anti-Semite encounters on the Street “intolerable,” what the anti-Semite tries to destroy when he attacks the Jew, the true target of his fury, is this fantasmatic dimension.

### CAP LINK - MULTICULTURALISM

#### Multiculturalism is an attempt to break down barriers for capitalism to spread.

#### Zizek 2009

Senior Researcher at the Institute for Social Studies, Ljubljana, Slovenia, Slavoj, The Ticklish Subject, page 216-217)

And, of course, the ideal form of ideology of this global capitalism is multiculturalism, the attitude which, from a kind of empty global position, treats each local culture as the colonizer treats colonized people - as 'natives' whose mores are to be carefully studied and 'respected'. That is to say: the relationship between traditional imperialist colonialism and global capitalist self-colonization is exactly the same as the relationship between Western cultural imperialism and multiculturalism - just as global capitalism involves the paradox of colonization without the colonizing nation-state metropolis, multiculturalism involving a patronizing Eurocentrist distance and/or respect for local cultures without roots in one's own particular culture. In other words, **multiculturalism is a disavowed, inverted, self-referential form of racism, a 'racism with a distance' - It 'respects' the Other's identity conceiving the Other as a self-enclosed 'authentic' community towards which the multiculturalist maintains a distance made possible by his/her privileged universal position. Multiculturalism is a racism which empties its own position of all positive content (the multiculturalist is not a direct racist; he or she does not oppose to the Other the particular values of his or her own culture); none the less he or she retains this position as the privileged empty point of universality from which one is able to appreciate (and depreciate) other particular cultures properly -multiculturalist respect for the Other's specificity is the very form of asserting one's own superiority** . From the standpoint of the post-Marxist anti-essentialist notion of politics as the field of hegemonic struggle with no pre-established rules that would define its parameters in advance, it is easy to reject the very notion of the 'logic of Capital' as precisely the remainder of the old essentialist stance: far from being reducible to an ideologico-cultural effect of the economic process, the passage from standard cultural imperialism to the more tolerant multiculturalism with its openness towards the wealth of hybrid ethnic, sexual, and so on, identities is the result of a long and difficult politico-cultural struggle whose final outcome was in no way guaranteed by the a priori co-ordinates of the 'logic of Capital'…. The crucial point, however, is that this struggle for the politicization and assertion of multiple ethnic, sexual, and other identities always took place against the back round of an invisible yet all the more forbidding barrier: the global capitalist system was able to incorporate the gains of the postmodern politics of identities to the extent that they did not disturb the smooth circulation of Capital - the moment some political intervention poses a serious threat to that, an elaborate set of exclusionary measures quashes it.

### TURN – CRITIQUES ARE ESSENTIALIST

#### Critiques are dependent on essentialist ideas

Martha T. **McClusky** (Faculty Scholar and Professor, State University of New York at Buffalo), “Book Review: Thinking with Wolves: Left Legal Theory After the Right's Rise,” Buffalo Law Review. Pg. 447. Jan **2007**.

The paradox of critique is that its missionary project of replacing "common sense" with reason inevitably must build reason through common sense. The heart of the problem is that any critique must distinguish which arguments, which speakers, and which factual narratives merit attention and authority as relevant and rational - and whicharguments, speakers, and storiesget ignored, dismissed, or constrained as irrational power, irrelevant indulgence, or primitive sentiment. Due to inevitable limits on time, space, and information, those distinctions fall back on common sense, habit, and institutional custom - much of which (like the Germanic folk tales echoed in Heidegger) has been saturated with essentialist ideas and practices of race, gender, and sexual (and other) subordination**.**

### REPRESENTATIONS DON’T MATTER

#### We should focus on the effects of our actions rather than whether or not our claims are accurate representations of reality.

#### Richard Rorty, 1982,*Consequences of Pragmatism* Pg Pg. xvi

Pragmatism cuts across this transcendental/empirical distinction by questioning the common presupposition that there is an invidious distinction to be drawn between kinds of truths. For the pragmatist, true sentences are not true because they correspond to reality, and so there is no need to worry what sort of reality, if any, a given sentence corresponds to -no need to worry about what "makes" it true. (just as there is no need to worry, once one has determined what one should do, whether there is something in Reality which makes that act the Right one to perform.) So the pragmatist sees no need to worry about whether Plato or Kant was right in thinking that something non-spatio-temporal made moral judgments true, nor about whether the absence of such a thing means that such judgments are is merely expressions of emotion" or "merely conventional" or "merely subjective.

### IDENTITY POLITICS BAD

Their essentialist identity politics inevitably silence intersectional experiences and breed the sort of fundamentalism that makes wars inevitable. The alternative ends in fragmentation which kills solvency

Letts & ****Aujla 96****

(Guy & Angela, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Identity Politics, October 28, 1996, http://www.peak.sfu.ca/the-peak/96-3/issue9/identity.html)

For those who believe that "ism's" are comprised of left- wing rhetoric, bleeding heart liberals, and politically correct nazi's, let us assure you, it is only because you have not 'experienced' an "ism" directed toward, through, or on you yet. And, given your positionality in society, may never. These "ism's" have less to do with right/left political distinctions and everything to do with "fairness." A notion that, we believe, still has some meaning in a western, hyper-individualized society. At least, it is still portrayed as such every time we go to the movies, turn on the TV, or watch a hockey game. After all, how we treat our citizenry bears directly on how we ourselves fare on the scale of compassion, understanding, and civility-qualities we still assert over the barbarous actions of "ism-ist" assholes and vacuous dielectrics. However, having said this, there remains a dark side contained within contemporary identity politics that we find disturbing. In its quest for fairness and justice, identity politics haven fragmented the emancipatory project by the construction of identities which either seek to homogenize or essentialize themselves and other groups. This has led people like Peter Emberley, in his book Zero Tolerance, to suggest that, "The cultural left errs when it seeks to immure ethnic groups into solitudes, squeeze multiculturalism's potential into the narrowest expression of uniform diversity...." While much of Emberley's criticisms are the result of his own backlash to change and threatened liberal values, the point he makes is well situated. That isin the battle for both representation and re-presentation based on gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity, "groups" have had to define themselves, indeed their identities, as a means of legitimating their concerns. In the process of redefining a collective identity (we are this ...) there is an inherent need to homogenize or essentialize that same identity. No longer are people individuals, but rather, they become identified as part of a reductionistic category which in turn feeds the dominant stereotype of the oppositional other--male/female, heterosexual/homosexual, white/person of Colour. An example of this can be seen in the term "South Asian" whereby individuals identify themselves with a geographical location whether through birth place or ancestry. The irony here not only lies in the fact that such distinctions are often premised on the internalization of difference dictated by the dominant culture, but that the homogenous category "South Asian" reduces a magnitude of diversity into a simplistic collective identity. Thus, the term itself suggests that whether you were from India or Pakistan, or are a Hindu or Sikh, your experience, history, culture, and identity is all the same. This problem of identity and representation is not new. Feminists have struggled with the problematic of essentializing the category "woman" for decades. After sharp criticisms from women of Colour and lesbian women, the feminist movement recognized that an essential, universalizing category of "woman" was representationally problematic. That is, which "women" were actually being represented as an ideal type--merely white, heterosexual women with two breasts and two ovaries? However, what followed was the fragmentation of a collective feminist movement. White, liberal feminists no longer represented all women's experiences and concerns. In the enthusiasm for adequate representation, the feminist movement began to break apart into fragmented and specialized camps which could address specific concerns surrounding identity. The lack of a cohesive movement prompted many feminist philosophers to reconcile the chasm between individual difference and collective goals. As early as 1985, feminists, like Chantel Mouffe, had begun to produce practical theories that could resolve the ensuing conflict. The outcome was simple: women cannot be essentialized under a general category, but people, as unique individuals, are still able to pursue common goals through collectives and common practices. The solution seems easy enough: as "individuals" we should work together toward shared goals without having to reduce ourselves to this or that, black or white, or what Nietzsche called "the herd instinct." However, despite the good intentions of many feminists, the feminist movement, in part, has appropriated only half of the philosophy. That is, while women are now seen as a heterogeneic group, this heterogeneity is often at the expense of homogenizing and essentializing other groups--the very thing that marginalized groups fought against. For instance, the term "men" is synonymous with misogynist, oppressor, and patriarchy, regardless of one's values, beliefs, and relative power in society. *Similarly, statements that proclaim that all whites are racists also infers a certain reductionistic* essentializing. Not only are such statements superficial, but they presuppose an identity constructed around victimization. While no one is denying the existence of victims in society, it is quite another matter to construct an identity around an essentialized category based solely on gender, sexuality, or race. As individuals, many of us experience marginalization based on a number of factors including our body types, our "looks," our personality types, our family histories, our experiences, and our socio-economic status. The question must be asked: at what point in history can we, as "humyn" individuals, begin to interact with one another through our similarities rather than through our differences? Campuses across Canada are currently experiencing the reductio ad absurdum of political correctness. In many cases, challenges to professors, curriculums, and universities are warranted, but in many other instances it is the result of a fanatical, fundamentalist intolerance. Such intolerance is marked through the construct of difference. When two groups become intolerant, the result can only be escalated conflict, as is the case in Bosnia. While the university is not Bosnia, identity politics continue to flourish in Canadian universities. For example, when a colleague, who defines herself as a half-breed, inquired about joining a anti-racist group on campus, she was told that whites were not allowed because they tended to dominate the conversation. When she explained that she was not simply a woman of Colour but both white and a person of Colour simultaneously, she was assured that she was in fact a woman of Colour and, presumably, they believed her "whiteness" would not assert itself and dominate the discussions. The latest SFU PIRG zine, Antithesis, has an ad for the People of Colour Discussion Group which defines a person of Colour as "people who self-identify as "non-white," whether they be African, Asian, First Nations, Latin American,

mixed race, or other..." or "people of Colour (those with light skin, European features, etc. but who have significant non- white ancestry)." The absurdity of this definition not only brings together potential oppressor with potential victims (i.e. an Eastern European that goes on to work at Indian Affairs), but assumes that Northern Europeans are not the derivative of African ancestry, not to mention Celtic, Mongolian, and so on. Moreover, if one was "white" but self- identified themselves as being Indian because they were born and raised there, would they be allowed to part take in the discussion group? The discussion group ad also asserts that they provide a "safe place" for people of Colour to "talk openly without feeling censored by white people." Again, this presumes that all people of Colour share the same experiences, beliefs, and goals and thus there would be no censoring between them, or that censoring from whites is somehow worse. This does not even touch on the idea that many professors, white or otherwise, feel that they are being censored by feminists, gays and lesbians, and people of Colour. Take Back the Night is another example of exclusionary practices based on homogenous difference. The majority of violence that takes place in society is male on male. While men maybe socialized to deal with their fears differently, many do not feel safe on the streets at night. Whether you are a white male, a man of Colour, or a gay man, Take Back the Night is not for you. While there is nothing stopping each of these arbitrary groups from having their own Take Back the Night march, it would seem more practical if Take Back the Night was comprised of a citizenry that wanted to promote a society free of violence where all individuals could feel safe at night. While women's concerns may be somewhat different than those of men, the end goal, that is the similarities not the differences, is the same. These are only a few examples of many that illustrate the intolerance and essentializing nature that plagues identity politics. As a result, the crisis over representation has fragmented any true means of achieving common goals within a social justice framework. As Emberley puts it, "The cultural left's political agenda has played neatly into the hands of the corporate right [and state hegemony]... What has been lost is the humanizing force and the highest unifying purpose of the scholarly culture." It was this humanizing force and unifying purpose that made the counter culture revolution of the 1960's successful. The counter culture itself was not inherently "left" but rather, grew out of a concern over oppression, war, and environmental issues. Rather than promoting hyper-individualism, essentializing categories and us/them dichotomies, the counter culture was supported by ideals of peace, love and friendship as opposed to hatred, difference, and intolerance. Perhaps if we are to be intolerant at all, it should be directed towards intolerance.

### MATERIAL CONDITIONS ARE GETTING BETTER

#### Overall material conditions of the poor are improving across every major indicator

**Eberstadt, 08** – senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (Nicholas, The Poverty of “The Poverty Rate”

<http://www.aei.org/docLib/20081117_PovertyofthePovertyRate.pdf> **OPR = Official Poverty Rate**

One additional and signal failure of the official poverty rate must be flagged in any empirical discussion of poverty and material well-being in America today. This is its manifest inability to provide an accurate reading of absolute poverty in the United States—the charge that the indicator was expressly assigned from the 1960s on.

The OPR is, by explicit official designation, meant to monitor absolute poverty—that is to say, to measure poverty in relation to a set income threshold, rather than in relation to the current incomes reported by families or some other relative, and thus perennially changing, standard. Ever since the OPR’s original poverty thresholds were established back in 1965, they have been annually revised solely to take account of changes in the Consumer Price Index. In principle, this should mean that a fixed and unchanging income criterion is being used for determining the poverty status of families. Further, since the inflation-adjusted income threshold of those counted officially poor is supposed to remain constant over time, the material condition of those below the poverty line should similarly be more or less consistent from one decade to the next.

Yet, as we saw, this supposition is completely refuted by biometric and other physical data on the living conditions of the U.S. poverty population. With regard to food and nutrition, anthropometric data demonstrate that our poor are incontestably better off today than in 1965; ironically, in fact, overweight and obesity are the prime problems that have emerged over this interim as major nutritional concerns with regard to this population. With respect to housing, the poor today live in decidedly less crowded, more spacious, and better-furnished dwellings than they did four decades ago—and those housing standards appear to have improved steadily, decade by decade. By a number of benchmarks, indeed, the officially poor today enjoy better housing conditions than the nonpoor in 1970, or the American population as a whole as recently as 1980. With respect to transportation, a steadily increasing proportion (by now, the vast majority) of officially poor households own cars, trucks, or other sorts of motor vehicles, and a significant and rising minority of officially poor families have two or more motor vehicles. Finally, utilization of medical and health-care services by the officially poor has progressively expanded over the decades—so much so that children in families below the poverty line in 2004 were more likely to have at least one annual doctor’s visit than were children in families with incomes well above the official poverty line only two decades earlier.

### QUALITY OF LIFE TAKEOUT

#### Most of the poor are relatively well off

**Rector, 08** – Senior Research Fellow in Domestic Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation (Robert, CQ Congressional Testimony, “REDUCING THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES LIVING IN POVERTY” 9/25, lexis

For example, according to the government's own data, nearly two thirds of households defined by Census as "poor" have cable or satellite television. Eighty five percent have air conditioning. Overall, the typical American defined as poor by the government has a car, air conditioning, a refrigerator, a stove, a clothes washer and dryer, and a microwave. He has two color televisions, and cable or satellite TV reception. He has a VCR, a DVD player, and a stereo. He is able to obtain medical care. His home is in good repair and is not overcrowded. By his own report, his family is not hungry and he had sufficient funds in the past year to meet his family's essential needs. While this individual's life is not opulent, it is equally far from the popular images of dire poverty conveyed by the press, liberal activists, and politicians.

### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE BAD

**THEIR FETISHIZATION OF MATERIAL LIVED EXPERIENCE DEGENERATES INTO A CRUDE BIOLOGISM THAT NATURALIZES IDENTITY CATEGORIES OF DIFFERENCE AND VIOLENCE. DEBATE DEVOLVES INTO FACTIONALIST POLITICS, WHERE THEIR PRESUMED IMMEDIACY OF ADDRESSING LIVED EXPERIENCE ENDS UP IN THE SAME HYPER-COMPETITIVENESS THAT THEY SAY DEVALUES AGENCY AND RESISTANCE. THIS FORM OF POLITICS NATURALIZES BIOLOGICAL CATEGORIES OF DIFFERENCE THAT FORM MICROFACISMS**  
Craig **Ireland, 2K2**  
[“THE APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES VARIATIONS ON A PERSISTENT THOMPSONIAN THEME,” cultural critique, 52 fall 2002. P. 87-89]  
  
**More is involved here than some epistemological blunder. In their bid to circumvent ideological mediation by turning to the presumed immediacy of experience**, Thompsonian **experience-oriented theories advance an argument that is not so much theoretically specious as it is potentially dangerous: there is nothing within the logic of such an argument that precludes the hypostatization of other nondiscursive bases for group membership and specificity**—bases that can as readily be those of a group’s immediate experiences as they can be those of a group’s presumed materially immediate biological characteristics or physical markers of ethnicity and sexuality. **If the criterion for the disruptive antihegemonic potential of experience is its immediacy, and if, as we have just seen, such a criterion can readily lead to a fetishization of the material body itself, then what starts out as an attempt to account for a nonmediated locus of resistance and agency can end up as a surenchère of immediacy that by but a nudge of a cluster of circumstances can propel toward** what Michael Piore’s Beyond Individualism calls **“biologism”—an increasingly common trend whereby “a person’s entire identity resides in a single physical characteristic, whether it be of blackness, of deafness or of homosexuality”** (quoted in Gitlin, 6). Blut und Boden seem but a step away.

**The step from a wager on immediate experience**, whether from theories hoping to account for agency or from groups struggling for cultural recognition, **to rabid neoethnic fundamentalisms is only a possible step and not a necessary one**; and the link between these two trends is certainly not one of affinity, and still less one of causality. What the parallelism between the two does suggest, however, is that **in spite of their divergent motivations and means, they both attempt to ground group specificity by appealing to immediacy**—by appealing, in other words, to something that is less a historical product or a mediated construct than it is an immediately given natural entity, whether it be the essence of a Volk, as in current tribalisms, or the essence of material experiences specific to groups, as in strains of Alltagsgeschichte and certain subaltern endeavors. If a potential for biologism and the specter of neoethnic tribalism are close at hand in certain cultural theories and social movements, it is because **the recourse to immediate experience opens the back door to what was booted out the front door—it inadvertently naturalizes what it initially set out to historicize.**

**The tendency in appeals to experience toward naturalizing the historical have already been repeatedly pointed out by those most sympathetic to the motivations behind such appeals**. Joan W. Scott—hardly an antisubaltern historian—has argued, as have Nancy Fraser, Rita Felski, and others, that **it is precisely by predicating identity and agency on shared nonmediated experiences that certain historians of difference and cultural theorists in fact “locate resistance outside its discursive construction and reify agency as an inherent attribute of individuals”—a move that, when pushed to its logical conclusion, “naturalizes categories such as woman, black, white, heterosexual and homosexual by treating them as given characteristics of individuals”** (Scott, 777). Although such a tendency within experience-oriented theories is rarely thematized, and rarer still is it intended, it nevertheless logically follows from the argument according to which group identity, specificity, and concerted political action have as their condition of possibility the nonmediated experiences that bind or are shared by their members. On the basis of such a stance, it is hardly surprising that currents of gay identity politics (to take but one of the more recent examples) should treat homosexuality, as Nancy Fraser has noted, “as a substantive, cultural, identificatory positivity, much like an ethnicity” (83).

**It may seem unfair to impute to certain experience-oriented theories an argument that,** when carried to its logical conclusion, **can as readily foster an emancipatory politics of identity as it can neoethnic tribalism.** The potential for biologism hardly represents the intentions of experience-oriented theories; these, after all, focus on the immediacy of experience, rather than on the essence of a group, in order to avoid strong structural determination on the one hand, and the naturalizing of class or subaltern groups on the other. But **if there cannot be a discursive differentiation of one experience from another—the counterhegemonic potential of experience is predicated on its prediscursive immediacy,** and mediation is relegated to a supplemental and retrospective operation—and if a nondiscursive or ideologically uncontaminated common ground becomes the guarantor of group authenticity, then the criterion for group specificiy must be those elements that unite groups in nondiscursive ways. And such elements can as readily be those of a group’s shared nonmediated experience, such as oppression, as they can be those of a group’s biological characteristics. **At best, “the evidence of experience**,” Scott notes, **“becomes the evidence for the fact of difference, rather than a way of exploring how differences are established**” (796); at worst, **the wager on the immediacy of experience fosters tribalistic reflexes that need but a little prodding before turning into those rabid, neoethnic “micro fascisms”** against which Félix Guattari warned in his last essay before his death (26–27).

### WHITENESS K

THEIR KRITIK OF WHITENESS AS A CONCEPT DIVERTS ATTENTION FROM CHALLENGING WHITE SUPREMACY AS THOUGHT AND IDEOLOGY. THIS MERELY PSYCHOLOGIZES WHITE SUPREMACY AND FOSTERS COMPARATIVE VICTIMIZATION. BY OBSCURING THE OPPRESSOR/OPPRESSED DICHOTOMY THE ALTERNATIVE DECENTERS WHITE SUPREMACY

Karenga, May 13, 1999

Dr. Maulana Karenga was one of the scholars who pressed for Black studies in the late 60's and early 70s, founder of Kwanzaa, and currently professor and chair of the Black studies department at California State University-Long Beach, “Whiteness Studies: Deceptive or Welcome Discourse?,” Black Issues, http://diverseeducation.com/article/139/, ACC. 11-11-10, JT

MK: The new focus on the study of Whiteness by Whites and other scholars engenders ambivalence on several levels.  It immediately raises questions about its intent, methodology and effect.  As a Black studies scholar, my tendency is to be ambivalent about new calls for the study of White people when the majority of the curriculum is about them and usually in the most Eurocentric and vulgarly self-congratulatory forms.  Certainly, my colleagues in Black studies and I have been consistent in our calls for the critical study of the pathologies of White society, especially its addiction to racism and White supremacy.  So, in as far as Whiteness studies offers an additional critique of the source and character of White domination and contributes to public policy initiatives to correct wealth and power inequities, we see this as a reaffirmation of our ongoing contentions and a useful addition to our own work and we welcome the discourse.    
However, such a thrust carries with it a capacity to become both conceptually diversionary and intellectually deceptive. First, such studies of "Whiteness" as a concept as distinct from White supremacy as thought and practice of domination can end up psychologizing White domination in counterproductive ways.  This begins with one's rediscovering and trotting out the old liberal argument that Whites are victimized like the people of color they victimize.  This leads to comparative victimization discourse and thus, the intentional or inadvertent cultivation of an empathetic understanding of the oppressor. Whatever merit this approach may have in mitigating White angst about their power and privilege, it tends to diminish the necessary moral and social distinction between oppressor and oppressed, and thus moves away from the central issue of White domination.

### WHITENESS K

THEIR DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF WHITENESS AS A MONOLITHIC IDEA OVERSIMPLIFIES INTERSECTIONS OF OPPRESSION

Rasmussen, Et al, 2K1

Birgit Brander Rasmussen, PhD, Dept. of Comparative and Ethnic Studies, UCal-Berkeley, “Introduction,” The making and unmaking of whiteness, pp. 7-8, JT

As these recent debates over resources and opportunities in California make clear, it is important to be critically attentive to the language used to make claims about race and race-based privilege. The shift from "affirmative action" to "racial preferences" was more than a linguistic shift. It also reinforced a political consolidation of previously disparate groups of white and conservative people of color voters. In this campaign it became clear that monolithic notions of whiteness not only oversimplified the issues and did a disservice to the ways in which race intersected with other axes of social power and inequality—they also hampered the ability of those struggling to maintain affirma­tive action to mount an effective political countercampaign.

Definitions of whiteness, as many contributors to this book argue, will always be dynamic and context-specific. This is why the work of explaining what happened to the groups who "became white" but who did not profit from it is becoming a more important part of the study of whiteness. For example, the question of how whites themselves are internally differentiated, how the same white skin that has facilitated the integration, assimilation, and enrichment of some docs not guarantee that others—such as poor whites and queer whites—might not also experience deprivation, stigmatization, and subjugation.16 Scholars of “multiraciality" have helped to show how race is simultaneously connected to and disconnected from bodies and narratives about bodies, especially when those bodies can "pass" for while. Moreover, scholars of sexuality and difference, such as Cherne Moraga, have argued that lesbian or gay whiteness does not guarantee. nor does it entirely abrogate, access to white skin privilege.

### WHITENESS K

CRITIQUES OF WHITENESS INEVITABLY DEVOLVE INTO COMPARING OPPRESSIONS—THIS IS AN INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL DEAD END

Karenga, May 13, 1999

Dr. Maulana Karenga was one of the scholars who pressed for Black studies in the late 60's and early 70s, founder of Kwanzaa, and currently professor and chair of the Black studies department at California State University-Long Beach, “Whiteness Studies: Deceptive or Welcome Discourse?,” Black Issues, http://diverseeducation.com/article/139/, ACC. 11-11-10, JT

Closely related to this conceptual misadventure, Whiteness studies might also revive the Hegelian doctrine of the master's struggle for recognition as master as a kind of social and moral equivalency of the enslaved person's struggle for recognition as a human being.  Again, such studies must be careful not to suggest such social or moral equivalence with the peoples' of color ongoing struggle against White supremacy and for human freedom and human flourishing.  Otherwise, Whiteness studies again deteriorates into a problematic comparative study of the oppression of people of color and Whites which cannot be sustained intellectually or morally.

### RECONCEPTUALIZATION TAKES TOO LONG

#### Their advantage is too long term to make a difference

**Nilsen, 07** – Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security, U.S. Government Accountability Office (Sigurd,

CQ Congressional Testimony, “THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL COSTS OF POVERTY,” 1/24, lexis

Economists have long recognized the strong association between poverty and a range of adverse outcomes for individuals, and empirical research, while limited, has also begun to help us better understand the impact of poverty on a nation's economic growth. The interrelationships between poverty and various adverse social outcomes are complex, and our understanding of these relationships can lead to vastly different conclusions regarding appropriate interventions to address each specific outcome. Furthermore, any such interventions could take years, or even a generation, to yield significant and lasting results, as the greatest impacts are likely to be seen among children. Nevertheless, whatever the underlying causes of poverty may be, economic research suggests that improvements in the health, neighborhoods, education, and skills of those living in poverty could have impacts far beyond individuals and families, potentially improving the economic well-being of the nation as a whole.

### ECONOMY TAKEOUT

#### They can’t solve the economy

**Haskins, 07 –** Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution and a Senior Consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Ron, CQ Congressional Testimony, “THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIETAL COSTS OF POVERTY”, 1/24, lexis

Another complication arises. I think Professor Holzer and his colleagues would agree that in order to realize the gains to the economy they calculate would require changes in the behavior of both poor parents and poor children. Indeed, the underlying implication of their analysis is that the savings they estimate can only be achieved if we can figure out a way to boost poor children into an entirely different developmental trajectory than the one that currently limits their potential. We can have a big argument about whether it is possible to achieve this kind of impact on children, but virtually every student of poverty thinks that just giving money to poor parents would not be enough. Professor Susan Mayer of Northwestern University, in a remarkable study cited by Professor Holzer and his colleagues, found that influencing child outcomes requires more than just money. The title of her book, What Money Can't Buy, hints at her message that once basic material needs are met, factors other than income become increasingly important.

This point is worth emphasizing. The nature of Professor Holzer's analysis is to compare productivity, crime, and health of children from poor families with children from non-poor families. It is inherent in the logic of their analysis that any differences they find in the labor force productivity, health, or criminal behavior of children from poor and non-poor families cannot be attributed just to family differences in income. The authors are admirably explicit about this point:

[Our estimates ] include not only the effects of low parental income, but also of the entire range of environmental factors associated with poverty in the U.S., and all of the personal characteristics imparted by parents, schools, and neighborhoods to children who grow up with them or in them. . . . Of course, in defining poverty this way, we also assume that the entire range of negative influences associated with low family incomes would ultimately be eliminated if all poor children were instead raised in non-poor households. (p. 6)

I think we have some fairly good ideas about how to influence children's development, but no intervention has shown that it is possible to have these sweeping effects on the child's home, neighborhood, and school environment. In short, I would not expect to be designing interventions any time soon that will enable us to capture a major portion of the $500 billion Professor Holzer estimates is lost to our economy every year because children are reared in poverty.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)