

# ***FUP Reading Packet 2017***



*the FUPrint*

*your first steps towards FUP love  
and the Harvard community*

## **FUP Reading Packet**

*This packet is meant to present a variety of perspectives on race, gender, sexual orientation, class, identity, ability status, religion, social justice, oppression, privilege, power structures and what it means to participate in service, activism, and social change. There is no one way to “be FUP,” but all the pieces in this packet have been chosen to provoke critical thought, discussion and reflection.*

*Don’t feel any pressure to agree with all (or any) of the authors - but do take the time to think about the issues they raise. Please do all the reading carefully, as we’ll be meeting in small, organized discussion groups throughout FUP week.*

*While we tried to include a diverse range of topics relating to service, activism, and social change, there is definitely no way for a compilation of readings like this to cover everything—if there is a topic that you feel is missing, that’s definitely something you can bring up in your small discussion group at FUP! This packet is meant to serve as a way to start the conversations that we will have throughout FUP week, but there will also be plenty of space to talk about your personal experiences with the kinds of topics raised here if you feel comfortable. While reading this packet, it can be helpful to think about what the community you’re from is like and how that has influenced how you see the issues that are brought up in this packet.*

*Please print a copy of the reading packet before arriving, so that during discussion of an article everyone can refer back to the text and refresh their memory on the details of what it said. (The length of this packet can make it especially hard to discuss without being able to do that!) If having access to a printer before arriving is an issue for you for whatever reason, email [harvardfup@gmail.com](mailto:harvardfup@gmail.com) and we can sort it out before FUP!*

*Good luck, happy reading, and we cannot wait to FUP with you!!*

## Intro to Harvard

Welcome Fuppie! We want to make sure you all are equipped to take on your freshman year, so here are a list of resources at your disposal for the next four years.

- **CS50 Course Guide** *A very comprehensive guide of Harvard courses.*  
<https://courses.cs50.net/>
- **Mental Health Resources** *There are a multitude of mental health resources at your disposal.*
  - **Student Mental Health Liaisons(SMHL)** Taken from their website: *“Aims to reach students in a non-threatening environment, engage them in the ongoing geffort to promote a community that attends to the emotional well being of students, and to provide factual information orientated to and delivered by students.”*
  - SMHL also provides a well organized diagram of all the different types of resources: professional, peer, and residential support. Link [here](#).
- **Sexual Assault Resources** *There are also a multitude of resources for sexual assault.*
  - **Office of Sexual Assault Prevention & Response(OSAPR)** Taken from the SMHL diagram: *“Trained staff members are available to survivors of sexual violence; provide support, information, and resource referral; connects students with other resources like SASH, and peer groups, like CARE”*
    - Located at 731 Smith Campus Center, open from Monday-Friday, 9AM-5PM
    - Phone: 617-496-5636, 24 hour hotline: 617-495-9100
- **Women’s Center, Office of BGLTQ Student Life, and Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations** *All these offices are located in various basements within Harvard Yard and are available for your use. They are all welcoming and inclusive environments.*
  - *Women’s Center is located in the basement of Canaday B. BGLTQ Office is located on the second floor of 7 Linden Street. Harvard Foundation is located in the basement of Thayer.*
- **Academic Advisors and Peer-Advising Fellows (PAFs)** *Your academic advisors are assigned to you based on your concentration and help you with any information you need regarding academics. Your PAFs are other students who are there to guide you in everything from academics to extracurriculars. They are both going to be great resources for you to seek out information about academics, extracurriculars, and anything else you will need.*

- **Harvard University Police Department(HUPD)** *The official Harvard University police that can help you with whatever you need if it's simply needing an escort to take you home or something more serious.*
  - Number: 617-495-1212
- **Harvard University Health Services(HUHS)** *The local hospital where you can get a checkup, use the pharmacy, or go to for any medical needs.*
  - Located at the Smith Campus Center Monday-Friday 8AM-5:30PM;Urgent Care open 24/7; Number: 617-495-5711
- **Yard Operations or Yardops** *Yardops keeps up the maintenance of all the freshmen dorms and other buildings. They are the ones you go to when something in your room is broken or you have some pests in your room.*
  - Located in the basement of Weld Hall;Number: 617-495-1874

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### Introduction to Social Justice

#### There Is No Hierarchy of Oppression

By Audre Lorde

I was born Black and a woman. I am trying to become the strongest person I can become to live the life I have been given and to help effect change toward a livable future for this earth and for my children. As a Black, lesbian, feminist, socialist, poet, mother of two including one boy and member of an interracial couple, I usually find myself part of some group in which the majority defines me as deviant, difficult, inferior or just plain "wrong".

From my membership in all of these groups I have learned that oppression and the intolerance of difference come in all shapes and sizes and colors and sexualities; and that among those of us who share the goals of liberation and a workable future for our children, there can be no hierarchies of oppression. I have learned that sexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over all others and thereby its right to dominance) and heterosexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving over all others and thereby its right to dominance) both arise from the same source as racism - a belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby its right to dominance.

"Oh," says a voice from the Black community, "but being Black is normal!" Well, I and many Black people of my age can remember grimly the days when it didn't used to be!

I simply do not believe that one aspect of myself can possibly profit from the oppression of my other part of my identity. I know that my people cannot possibly profit from the oppression of any other group which seeks the right to peaceful existence. Rather, we diminish ourselves by denying to others what we have shed blood to obtain for our children. And those children need to learn that they do not have to become like each other in order to work together for a future they will all share.

The increasing attacks upon lesbians and gay men are only an introduction to the increasing attacks upon all Black people, for wherever oppression manifests itself in this country, Black people are potential victims. And it is a standard of right-wing cynicism to encourage members of oppressed groups to act against each other, and so long as we are divided because of our particular identities we cannot join together in effective political action.

Within the lesbian community I am Black, and within the Black community I am a lesbian. Any attack against Black people is a lesbian and gay issue, because I and thousands of other Black women are part of the lesbian community. Any attack against lesbians and gays is a Black issue, because thousands of lesbians and gay men are Black. There is no hierarchy of oppression.

It is not accidental that the Family Protection Act, which is virulently anti-woman and anti-Black, is also anti-gay. As a Black person, I know who my enemies are, and when the Ku Klux Klan goes to court in Detroit to try and force the Board of Education to remove books the Klan believes "hint at homosexuality," then I know I cannot afford the luxury of fighting one form of oppression only. I cannot afford to believe that freedom from intolerance is the right of only one particular group. And I cannot afford to choose between the fronts upon which I must battle these forces of discrimination, wherever they appear to destroy me. And when they appear to destroy me, it will not be long before they appear to destroy you.

## What Is **Privilege**?

### An Analysis of Privilege, Power Structures, and Systematic Oppression

Adapted from the AFED Women's Caucus "Class Struggle Anarchist Analysis of Privilege Theory." See the full essay [here](http://www.afed.org.uk/blog/state/327-a-class-struggle-anarchist-analysis-of-privilege-theory--from-the-womens-caucus-.html).  
(<http://www.afed.org.uk/blog/state/327-a-class-struggle-anarchist-analysis-of-privilege-theory--from-the-womens-caucus-.html>)

Defined as: set of unearned benefits provided exclusively to people within a specific social group

What do we mean – and what do we *not* mean – by privilege? Privilege implies that wherever there is a system of oppression (such as patriarchy or white supremacy), there is an oppressed group and also a privileged group, who benefit from the oppressions that this system puts in place. The privileged group do not have to be active supporters of the system of oppression, or even aware of it, in order to benefit from it. They benefit from *being viewed as the norm*, and providing for their needs being seen as what is naturally done, while the oppressed group is considered the "other", and their needs are "special considerations". Sometimes, the privileged group benefits from the system in the obvious, material ways, such as when women are expected to do most or all of the housework, and male partners benefit from their unpaid labour. At other times the benefits are more subtle and invisible, and involve certain pressures being taken off a privileged group and focused on others, for example black and Asian youths being 28% more likely to be stopped and searched by the police than white youths<sup>2</sup>.

The point here is not that police harassment doesn't happen to white youths, or that being working class or a white European immigrant doesn't also mean you're more likely to face harassment; the point is that a disproportionate number of black and Asian people are targeted in companion to white people, and the result of this is that, if you are carrying drugs, and you are white, then *all other things being equal* you are much more likely to get away with it than if you were black. In the UK, white people are also less likely to be arrested or jailed, or to be the victim of a personal crime.<sup>3</sup> The point of quoting this is not to suggest we want a society in which people of all races and ethnicities face equal disadvantage – we want to create a society in which nobody faces these disadvantages. But part of getting there is acknowledging how *systems of oppression* work, which means recognizing that, if black and ethnic minority groups are more likely to face these disadvantages, then by simple maths

white people are *less* likely to face them, and that means they have an advantage, a privilege, including the privilege of not needing to be aware of the extent of the problem.

A privileged group may also, in some ways, be oppressed by the expectation of the system that privileges them; for example, men under patriarchy are expected to not show weakness or emotion, and are mistrusted as carers. However, men are not oppressed by patriarchy *for being men*, they are oppressed in these ways because it is necessary in order to *maintain women's oppression*. For women to see themselves as weak, irrational and suited only to caring roles, they must believe that men are stronger, less emotional and incapable of caring for those who need it.

It is crucial to understand that members of the privileged group of any of these systems may also be oppressed by any of the other, and this is what allows struggles to be divided. We are divided, socially and politically, by a lack of awareness of our privileges, and how they are used to set our interests against each other and break out solidarity (more on this in the section on Intersectionality).

#### **Privilege, Social Class, and Cultural Identity**

The term “privilege” has a complex relationship with class struggle, and to understand why, we need to look at some of the differences and confusions between economic and social class. Social class describes the cultural identities of working class, middle class and upper class. These identities, much like those built on gender or race, are socially constructed, created by a society based on its prejudices and expectations of people in those categories. Economic class is different. It describes the economic working and ruling classes, and is based on the ownership of material resources, regardless of your personal identity or social status. This is why a wealthy, knighted capitalist like Alan Sugar can describe himself as a “working class boy made good”. He is clearly not working class if we look at it economically, but he clings to that social identity in the belief that it in some way justifies or excuses the exploitation within his business empire. He confuses social and economic class in order to identify himself with an oppressed group (the social working class) and so deny his own significant privilege (as part of the economic ruling class).

This doesn't make economic class a “primary” oppression, or the others “secondary”, but it does mean that resistance in economic class struggle takes different forms and has slightly different aims to struggles based on cultural identities. We can't force men to give up their maleness or white people to give up their whiteness, or send them all to the guillotine and reclaim their power and privilege as if it were a resource that they were hoarding. Instead, we need to take apart and understand the systems that tend to concentrate power and resources in the hands of the privileged and question the very concepts of gender, sexuality, race, etc. that are used to build identities that divide us.

A large part of the resentment some feel of the term “privilege” comes from misunderstandings of how privileges based in these cultural identities work – men, white people, straight people, cisgendered people, etc., can't give up their privilege – no matter how much they may want to. It is forced on them by a system they cannot opt out of, or choose to stop benefiting from. Nevertheless, many feel as if they're

being accused of hoarding something they're not entitled to, and that they're being blamed for this or asked to feel guilty or undergo some kind of endless penance to be given absolution for their privilege. This is not the case. While some may feel guilty for their privilege, we must recognize that guilt isn't useful; awareness and thoughtful actions are. If you take nothing else away from this document, take this: You are not responsible for the system that gives you your privilege, only for how you respond to it. The privileged have a role to play in the struggle against the systems that privilege them – it's just not a leadership role (more on this later).

### Answering Objections to Privilege

A common objection to the concept of privilege is that it makes cultural status out of the lack of an oppression. You could say that not facing systematic prejudice for your skin color isn't a privilege, it's how things should be for everyone. To face racism is the aberration. To not face it should be the default experience. The problem is, if not experiencing oppression is the default experience, then experiencing oppression puts you outside the default experience, in a special category, which in turn makes a lot of the oppression invisible. To talk about privilege reveals what is normal to those without oppression, yet cannot be taken for granted by those with it. To talk about homophobia alone may reveal the existence of prejudices – stereotypes about how gay men and lesbian women behave, perhaps, or violence targeted against people for their sexuality.

To talk about straight privilege, however, show the other side of the system, the invisible side: what behavior is considered "typical" for straight people? There isn't one – straight isn't treated like a sexual category, it is treated like the absence of "gay". This analysis goes beyond worries about discrimination or prejudice to the very heart of what we consider normal and neutral, what we consider different and other, what needs explaining, what's taken as read – the prejudices in favour of being straight aren't recognizable as prejudices, because they're built into our very perceptions of what is the default way to be.

It's useful to see this, because when we look at oppressions in isolation, we tend to attribute them to personal or societal prejudice, a homophobic law that can be repealed, a racial discrimination that can be legislated against. Alone, terms like "racism", "sexism", "ableism" don't describe how oppression is woven into the fabric of a society and a normal part of life rather than an easily isolated stain on society that can be removed without a trace, leaving the fabric intact.<sup>5</sup>

Privilege theory is systematic. It explains why removing prejudice and discrimination isn't enough to remove oppression. It shows how society itself needs to be ordered differently. When people talk about being "colour-blind" in relation to race, they think it means they're not racist, but it usually means that *they think they can safely ignore differences of background and life experiences due to race*, and expect that the priorities and world views of everybody should be the same as those of white people, which they consider to be "normal". It means they think they don't have to listen to people who are trying to explain why a situation is different for them. They want difference to go away, so that everybody can be equal, yet by trying to ignore difference, *they are reinforcing it*. Recognising privilege means recognising

that differences of experience exist which we may not be aware of. It means being willing to listen when people tell us about how their experience differs from ours. It means trying to conceive of a new “normal” that we can bring about through a differently structured society, instead of erasing experiences that don’t fit into our privileged concept of “normal”.

### Intersectionality

**Intersectionality is the idea that we are all privileged by some of these systems and oppressed by others, and that, because those systems affect one another, our oppression and privileges intersect. This means that we each experience oppression in ways specific to our particular combinations of class, gender, race, sexuality, disability, age etc.<sup>6 7</sup>**

**If we want a post-revolutionary society free of all oppression, we need all the oppressed to have an equal role in creating it, and that means listening to experiences of oppression that we don’t share and working to understand how each system operates: in isolation, and in relation to other systems.**

**Just as sexism and racism divide class struggle, capitalism and racism divide gender struggles, and sexism and capitalism divide race struggles. All systems of oppression divide the struggles against all the other systems that they intersect with. This is because we find out loyalties divided by our own particular combinations of privilege and oppression, and we prioritise the struggles we see as primary to the detriment of others, and to the detriment of solidarity.**

**By being able to analyse and point out how systems of oppression intersect is vital, as hitting these systems of oppression at their intersections can be our most effective way of uniting struggles and building solidarity across a number of ideological fronts.**

**For example, certain strands of radical feminism have refused to accept the validity of trans\* struggles, keeping trans women out of women’s spaces (see the controversies over Radfem 2012 and some of the workshops at Women Up North 2012 over their “women born women” policies). The outcome of this is as above: the most oppressed get the shitty end of both sticks (in this case **cisnormativity** and patriarchy), with feminism, the movement that is supposed to be at the forefront of fighting oppression that affects both parties (patriarchy) failing at one of its sharpest intersections. This also led to the fracturing of the feminist movement and stagnation of theory through failure to communicate with trans\* activists, whose priorities and struggles have such a massive crossover with feminism. One positive that’s come out of these recent examples is the joining together of feminist and trans\* activist groups to challenge the entry policy of Radfem 2012. This leading to more communication, solidarity and the possibility of joint actions between these groups.**

The assumption that a person’s gender identity is the same as their sex assigned at birth.

**The above examples mean that thinking about privileges and oppressions is essential for organizing together, for recognizing where other struggles intersect with our own and what our role should be in those situations, where our experiences will be useful and where they will be disruptive, where we should be listening**

carefully and where we can contribute constructively. Acknowledging privilege in this situation means acknowledging that it's not the responsibility of the oppressed group to challenge the system that oppresses them, it's everybody's responsibility because being a part of a privileged group doesn't make you neutral, it means you're facing an advantage. That said, when we join the struggle against our own advantages we need to remember that it isn't about duty or guilt or altruism, because *all of our struggles are connected*. The more we can make alliances over the oppression that have been used to divide us, the more we can unite against the forces that exploit us all. None of us can do it alone.

### **The Myth of the "Oppression Olympics"**

To say that somebody has white privilege isn't to suggest that they can't also have a whole host of other oppressions. There is no points system for working out how privileged or oppressed you are in relation to somebody else, and no point in trying to do so. The only way that privilege or oppression makes your contributions to a struggle more or less valid is through that struggle's relevance to your lived experience.

A black, disabled working class lesbian may not necessarily have had a harder life than white, able-bodied working class straight cis-man, but she will have a much greater understand of the intersections between class, race, disability, gender and sexuality. The point isn't that, as the most oppressed in the room, she should lead the discussion, it's that her experience gives her insights he won't have on the relevant point of struggle, the demands that will be most effective, the bosses who represent the biggest problem, the best places and times to hold meetings or how to phrase a callout for a mass meeting so that it will appeal to a wider range of people, ways of dealing with issues that will very probably not occur to anybody whose oppression is along fewer intersections. He should be listening to her, not because she is more oppressed than him (though she may well be), but because it is vital to the struggle that she is heard, and because the prejudices that society has conditioned into us, and that still affect the most socially aware of us, continue to make it more difficult for her to be heard, for us to hear her.

Some would argue that government, public bodies and corporation have been known to use arguments like these to put forward or promote particular people into positions of power or responsibility, either as a well-meaning attempt to ensure that oppressed groups are represented or as a cynical exercise in tokenism to improve their public image. We oppose the idea that, for instance, a woman Prime Minister, will be likely to do anything more for working class women than a male Prime Minister will do for working class men. It should be remembered that privilege theory is not a movement in itself but an analysis used by a diverse range of movements, liberal and radical, reformist and revolutionary.

We have to challenge ourselves to look out for campaigns that, due to the privilege of those who initiate them, lack awareness of how an issue differs across intersections. We need to broaden out our own campaigns to include the perspectives of all those affected by the issues we cover. This will allow us to bring

more issues together, gather greater solidarity, fight more oppression and build a movement that can challenge all oppression.

### **Daily Effects of Class Privilege From the Piedmont Peace Project**

- I don't have to feel apologetic for whatever my lifestyle is
- I don't have to fight a tendency to feel ashamed of myself and my background because of others' attitudes about my economic group
- I can assume that money will not keep me from getting whatever job or career I would like, and if I choose a lower-paying job I know that I always have family to fall back on for financial support
- I know that money will not be a limiting factor in where I choose to live.
- I can afford rent, utility, and phone deposits etc. whenever I need them. If not, I have an acceptable co-signer, or can have them waived because of my income level and good credit rating
- I can take vacations and travel as often as my work permits
- I will be able to take care of myself and my family after I retire, and will have wealth to pass on to my children.
- I am not obligated to spend all my resources and personal time taking care of my extended family.
- As a child I will not be placed in a lower academic track or discouraged from taking certain classes because of my economic status.
- My thinking about higher education has always centered around *which* college I will attend rather than *if* I will attend college.
- I can make sure that my children attend schools where they will learn to read, write, and develop other skills they will need to get a job.
- If I achieve outstanding accomplishments of any kind, others will not think it is because I am an exception and different from other people of my economic group.
- I'm not portrayed as ignorant and stupid on TV and in the movies. Other people will not assume that I am dirty, lazy, and unmotivated.
- I learned early on that I can assert my rights and expect that they will be addressed.
- I have been taught to assume that it is my right to express my opinion and to analyze and criticize things.

What about the intersection of race and class?! For more on the topic look up ["explaining white privilege to a broke white person"](#)

### **White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack** Peggy McIntosh

To read the full essay, click [here](http://amptoons.com/blog/files/mcintosh.html). (Or visit: <http://amptoons.com/blog/files/mcintosh.html>)

*"I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group"*

**I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and time of work cannot count on most of these conditions.**

- 1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.**
- 2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.**
- 3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.**
- 4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.**
- 5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.**
- 6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.**
- 7. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.**
- 8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.**
- 9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.**
- 10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.**
- 11. I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another person's voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.**
- 12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.**
- 13. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.**
- 14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.**

- 15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.**
- 16. I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.**
- 17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.**
- 18. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race.**
- 19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.**
- 20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.**
- 21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.**
- 22. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.**
- 23. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.**
- 24. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge", I will be facing a person of my race.**
- 25. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.**
- 26. I can easily buy posters, post-cards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys and children's magazines featuring people of my race.**
- 27. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance or feared.**
- 28. I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her/his chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.**
- 29. I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost me heavily within my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.**
- 30. If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have.**
- 31. I can choose to ignore developments in minority writing and minority activist programs, or disparage them, or learn from them, but in any case, I can find ways to be more or less protected from negative consequences of any of these choices.**

- 32. My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.**
- 33. I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.**
- 34. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.**
- 35. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.**
- 36. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it had racial overtones.**
- 37. I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally.**
- 38. I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.**
- 39. I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race**
- 40. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.**
- 41. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.**
- 42. I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race.**
- 43. If I have low credibility as a leader I can be sure that my race is not the problem.**
- 44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.**
- 45. I can expect figurative language and imagery in all of the arts to testify to experiences of my race.**
- 46. I can chose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.**
- 47. I can travel alone or with my spouse without expecting embarrassment or hostility in those who deal with us.**
- 48. I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household.**
- 49. My children are given texts and classes which implicitly support our kind of family unit and do not turn them against my choice of domestic partnership.**

**50. I will feel welcomed and "normal" in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social.**

What's the asterisk for, you ask? It's so the phrase trans\* can represent multiple identities that share a common root. This includes transvestite, transsexual, transgender, genderless, gender fluid..... and so many more!

### **Non-Trans\* Privilege or Cisgender Privilege List**

***This list is based on Peggy McIntosh's White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.***

***You can find this list [here](http://new.oberlin.edu/dotAsset/2012181.pdf), or by visiting:***

**<http://new.oberlin.edu/dotAsset/2012181.pdf>**

- 1) Strangers don't assume they can ask me what my genitals look like and how I have sex.**
- 2) My validity as a man/woman/human is not based upon how much surgery I've had or how well I "pass" as a non-Trans person.**
- 3) When initiating sex with someone, I do not have to worry that they won't be able to deal with my parts or that having sex with me will cause my partner to question his or her own sexual orientation.**
- 4) I am not excluded from events which are either explicitly or de facto\* men-born-men or women born-women only. (\*possibly anything involving nudity)**
- 5) My politics are not questioned based on the choices I make with regard to my body.**
- 6) I don't have to hear "So have you had THE surgery?" or "Oh, so you're REALLY a [incorrect sex or gender]?" each time I come out to someone.**
- 7) I am not expected to constantly defend my medical decisions.**
- 8) Strangers do not ask me what my "real name" [birth name] is and then assume that they have a right to call me by that name.**
- 9) People do not disrespect me by using incorrect pronouns even after they've been corrected.**
- 10) I do not have to worry that someone wants to be my friend or have sex with me in order to prove his or her "hipness" or "good" politics.**
- 11) I do not have to worry about whether I will be able to find a safe and accessible bathroom or locker room to use.**
- 12) When engaging in political action, I do not have to worry about the gendered repercussions of being arrested. (i.e. What will happen to me if the cops find out that my genitals do not match my gendered appearance? Will I end up in a cell with people of my own gender?)**

**13) I do not have to defend my right to be a part of "Queer" space or movement, and lesbian, gay, and bisexual people will not try to exclude me from our movements in order to gain political legitimacy for themselves.**

**14) My experience of gender (or gendered spaces) is not viewed as "baggage" by others of the gender in which I live.**

**15) I do not have to choose between either invisibility ("passing") or being consistently "othered" and/or tokenized based on my gender.**

**16) I am not told that my sexual orientation and gender identity are mutually exclusive.**

**17) When I go to the gym or a public pool, I can use the showers.**

**18) If I end up in the emergency room, I do not have to worry that my gender will keep me from receiving appropriate treatment nor will all of my medical issues be seen as a product of my gender. ("Your nose is running and your throat hurts? Must be due to the hormones!")**

**19) My health insurance provider (or public health system) does not specifically exclude me from receiving benefits or treatments available to others because of my gender.**

**20) When I express my internal identities in my daily life, I am not considered "mentally ill" by the medical establishment.**

**21) I am not required to undergo extensive psychological evaluation in order to receive basic medical care.**

**22) The medical establishment does not serve as a "gatekeeper" which disallows self-determination of what happens to my body.**

**23) People do not use me as a scapegoat for their own unresolved gender issues.**

### **Able-bodied Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack**

**By Amy Kelly**

**To read the full essay, click [here](http://www2.edc.org/WomensEquity/edequity/hypermail/1180.html) or visit:**

**<http://www2.edc.org/WomensEquity/edequity/hypermail/1180.html>**

**1. I cannot easily arrange to be in the company of people of my physical ability.**

**2. If I need to move, I cannot easily be assured of purchasing housing I can get access to easily - accessibility is one thing I need to make a special point of looking for. \***

**3. I cannot be assured that my entire neighborhood will be accessible to me. \***

**4. I cannot assume that I can go shopping alone, and they will always have appropriate accommodations to make this experience hassle-free. \***

- 5. I cannot turn on the television or open a newspaper and see people of my physical ability represented. (This is more so the case for people who walk on crutches, or who have some sort of physical distortion, as these people are not as attractive as people sitting neatly in a wheelchair whom you would not know were handicapped if they were seated in a regular chair.)**
- 6. When I learned about history, people of my physical ability were not well represented. (Roosevelt's polio was kept out of the media as much as possible, as is Dole's and Silber's amputation --I would be interested in discussing their decision to not make it an issue with anyone who is interested.)**
- 7. I was not given curricular material which showed people like me as a role model. (Like other minorities, we are only portrayed as either pathetic or heroic, not normal)**
- 8. This point may be arguable, but I have seen few pieces of literature on able-bodied privilege.**
- 9. I cannot be assured that assumptions about my mental capabilities will not be made based on my physical status.**
- 10. I cannot swear, dress sloppily, or even be in a bad mood without people attributing it to my physical disability.**
- 11. I cannot do well in challenging situations very often without being told what an inspiration I must be to other disabled people.**
- 12. I have been asked to speak for all physically challenged people.**
- 13. I have often, when criticizing an organization for not being accomodating enough, been thought of as mal-adjusted.**
- 14. I hardly ever, when asking to speak to the person in charge, will find someone of the same physical status.**
- 15. I cannot buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, children's magazines featuring people of the same physical status. (Unless it is a specialty book, aimed at sensitivity training, or a **pc** doll "Share a Smile Becky" with the acronym for the Individuals with Disabilities Act sprawled across her sweater, sending the message: "Don't worry, I am always happy - see my ever present smile?" and "My disability is my sole identity".**
- 16. I cannot take a job with an affirmative action employer without having someone suspect I got my job because of my disability.**
- 17. If I am fired, not given a raise, or not hired, I must question if it had anything to do with my appearing physically incompetent. (although it doesn't serve any purpose to question it, because it would be almost impossible to prove).**

**Politically Correct:**  
Pejorative term used to frame oppressive actions against a social group as "offensive to sensitive people" rather than real and systemic.

## **Class and Socio-Economic Status (SES)**

## **A Safety Net that is leaving more people out**

### **By Yvonne Abraham, *The Boston Globe***

**Ginna and her daughter had bounced from couch to couch for months before they lost their last refuge: A friend, worried about losing her lease, asked her to leave.**

**Unemployed and out of options, the young mother went to the state to ask for emergency shelter on Aug. 8. She had previously been denied because she was \$12 over the income limit. Now Department of Housing and Community Development workers suspected Ginna of quitting her job at a sandwich shop to get benefits. She begged them to talk to her former boss, who could tell them she was let go because she had no child care and couldn't make shifts. They didn't.**

**"If only they had made that call, this would never, ever have happened to me," said the slight, dark-haired 21-year-old.**

**Instead, Ginna and her 17-month-old began sleeping at South Station. On the first night, a man brought her food. He came back the next night and told her he had a place for her to stay. She was exhausted and her baby was wailing and she had no one, so she went with him. Later that night, the man raped her. She waited for him to fall asleep, then fled with her daughter.**

**"I work, I don't party, I don't do drugs. I'm a good girl. I want to make something of myself," Ginna, a rape victim who was turned away from homeless shelter.**

**The Patrick administration's heart might be in the right place when it comes to ending homelessness, but its new approach to this huge problem is hurting some of the very people most in need of help. While boosting resources for permanent housing, the state has begun turning away an alarming number of families from its shelter system. Until recently, 40 to 50 percent of families who applied for emergency shelter were denied each month. Last month, the average was 68 percent. In the last week of September, 74 percent of families seeking shelter were denied. Ginna's case is the most tragic of many.**

**"We've seen a real spike," said Jim Greene, director of Boston's Emergency Shelter Commission, which took about 500 calls from desperate families last month, compared to an average of 375 earlier this year. "We get calls almost daily . . . reporting that people are staying in emergency rooms because they have nowhere else to go. More people are reporting to us that they're staying in parks and vans." Boston Medical Center confirms that it has seen an increase in homeless families showing up at the ER over the last month.**

**"We are completely inundated" with calls from families who have nowhere to go, said Ruth Bourquin, senior attorney at the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute. "Before August, we almost never heard of families staying in [cars]. Now it's every day."**

**Since new regulations went into effect in August, state workers are suddenly far more skeptical about people's claims of homelessness, far less likely to believe somebody who says they can no longer stay with the friend or grandmother with whom they've been doubled up.**

**“The restrictions have never been this tough before,” said Kelly Turley, legislative director of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless. “This is the most discouraging situation I’ve seen. It’s scary.”**

**How did we get here? From good intentions, actually. The Patrick administration and many legislators are truly committed when it comes to the issue of homelessness. Currently, the state provides shelter space to about 2,000 families, and houses another 1,800 in expensive motels. Few other states provide that kind of safety net.**

**In an effort to move people out of politically unpopular motels and head off homelessness before it happens, the 2013 budget contains big funding increases for rental assistance and other programs that keep struggling families in their homes. Accompanying the shift towards permanent housing are the new regulations designed to make getting into shelters more difficult.**

**“Obviously we want to maintain a strong safety net,” said Aaron Gornstein, undersecretary for Housing and Community Development. “But we also want to make sure we’re spending taxpayer dollars wisely, investing in prevention and permanent housing, and that emergency shelter is a last resort.”**

**The problem is, there isn’t yet enough prevention and affordable housing to save many families from the street. “None of us have a safety net to put under the safety net that has been restricted,” said Greene.**

**What’s frustrating to him, and to others who work on the front lines, is that the state seems unwilling to recognize there is a problem here. State officials seem entirely wedded to the notion that almost everybody has somewhere to stay, even when they say they don’t. They say this is based on experience – that their past investigations have shown people can almost always find someone to take them in.**

**They’re not persuaded by the stories of families sleeping in cars and on beaches and in the lobbies of apartment buildings, which they believe are exaggerated by advocates determined to grow the shelter system. Privately, they have suggested Greene and others are using poor families as pawns. Publicly, they wonder if advocates are suggesting homeless families put themselves in dangerous situations just to qualify for shelter.**

**“I hope they’re not coaching them to do that,” Gornstein said.**

**Seriously? People who have devoted careers to ending homelessness would advise families to give up homes and put themselves in harm’s way?**

**It’s hard to reconcile the Deval Patrick who demanded that his party stop apologizing for its values at the Democratic National Convention with the way his administration is handling this.**

**“I believe the governor when he said it’s about our values,” said Senator Ken Donnelly, an Arlington Democrat who is one of a group of legislators trying to rebalance the shelter regulations. “But they have this feeling that people are somehow gaming the system, and you just look at them and say, ‘What planet are you on?’”**

**Look, this is clearly a tough issue. The governor and the Legislature have taken on a difficult and expensive balancing act trying to work out how much to devote to long-term solutions like affordable housing and how much to short-term**

ones like shelter. It is always a good idea to keep people with family or friends as they await help with permanent housing — as long as that is possible. But the state is increasingly unwilling to admit that sometimes, it's not. And some of the very people shelters are designed to protect are casualties.

"I work, I don't party, I don't do drugs," Ginna said. "I'm a good girl. I want to make something of myself."

When she went back to the housing office in Roxbury after she was raped, Ginna said, housing officials refused to look at her rape kit. They denied her shelter again, then had her escorted out by guards, she said. Then the workers who had refused Ginna and her daughter a safe place to sleep filed a report accusing her of neglecting her baby.

After Bourquin and others got involved, Ginna finally was granted emergency shelter. The neglect complaint was thrown out.

Gornstein said Ginna's shelter denials had nothing to do with the new, stricter regulations. He said she would have been denied last year, too, because workers believed she had quit her job without good cause.

No way, say those who have been fighting for Ginna: They're certain she would have gotten the benefit of the doubt before, that workers would have made the call to her supervisor.

That would have taken three minutes, tops. Last week, that supervisor, Robert Peebles, picked up on the second ring at the cell number Ginna begged state workers to call in August. He said he never received a call or a message from housing workers. Ginna lost her job "because she couldn't make it any more, she had her daughter and she was not able to obtain child care," he confirmed. A second call to the sandwich shop to confirm Peebles was a supervisor there took another minute.

In an affidavit, a Department of Housing and Community Development supervisor said a worker in the Dudley Square office did try Peebles's cell at some point, but did not speak to him. Ginna said the worker certainly didn't call while she was pleading with her in the office.

"While she was sleeping in her bed, I was being raped," she said. "That's going to be with me for the rest of my life. Nobody can erase this."

Still, Ginna is trying to move on. The sandwich shop hired her back last week. She is working on finding care for her daughter so she can pick up more hours. She wants to get into her own place quickly, to stabilize her life so she can bring her husband from the Dominican Republic; she is a US citizen.

Gornstein said he is looking into Ginna's case, and at those of other families across the state who advocates say have been unfairly denied shelter under the new rules. "I want to assure you, we are taking this very seriously to make sure people don't fall through the cracks," Gornstein said. "We're trying to err on the side of caution and make sure we maintain a safety net for people who really need it."

There will be hearings on the new shelter regulations in Western Massachusetts on Oct. 22, and in Boston on Oct. 25. Ginna may testify. Gornstein points out that his office has already made 20 changes to the new rules based on

public input, and that it's prepared to make more to better protect families who need help.

Good. This must be fixed, and fast. Winter is coming.

## **Gap's Inconsistent Corporate Ethics**

**By Greg Randolph, *U.S. News & World Report***

To read online, click [here](#) or visit:

<http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2013/12/11/gap-can-build-on-its-sikh-ad-by-protecting-bangladeshi-garment-workers>

The liberal social media bloc was abuzz recently with praise for Gap, the ubiquitous apparel company known for its khaki, clean-cut sense of style and — most recently — an advertisement that featured a visibly Sikh male model, sporting a pagdi (turban) and a full beard. The ad achieved nationwide fame when the company produced a swift and emphatic [response](#) to racist graffiti scribbled over it in a New York subway station.

But another of Gap's recent decisions — its refusal to join a groundbreaking accord to protect Bangladeshi garment workers — calls into question whether the corporate ethic of inclusion extends beyond marketing campaigns.

By selecting Waris Ahluwalia to model in its "Make Love" campaign, and immediately denouncing the act of an intolerant graffiti artist who changed that slogan to "Make Bombs," Gap sent an important message of inclusion to [280,000](#) Sikhs living in the United States, telling them that Gap believes their faces and lived experiences are part of the American story.

Socially minded consumers might find it surprising then, that on another issue of justice and inclusion, Gap's response has been anemic. After the [death of nearly 1,200 apparel workers](#) in the horrific collapse of Rana Plaza — a dilapidated building housing several garment factories on the outskirts of Dhaka — retailers around the world sought channels for improving working conditions in the country. A landmark agreement emerged, aimed at strengthening worker protections in Bangladesh's massive apparel industry, but Gap has refused to sign on.

The [Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh](#) goes beyond traditional corporate social responsibility. First of all, a broad coalition of corporations, trade unions and workers' rights organizations negotiated jointly and endorse the agreement. Second, its signatories are legally obligated to fund independent inspection of facilities, plus structural repairs and renovations of existing factories. Over 100 international brands — including Gap competitors like Abercrombie & Fitch, American Eagle Outfitters and H&M — have already signed on. The accord is about basic human rights. Bangladeshi workers possess the right to safe working conditions, the right to fair wages and the right to life.

It's also about inclusion. Mirroring the globalization story in many countries, economic growth in Bangladesh has been rapid, but its rewards have not been shared broadly. Rather than creating an economic culture of shared prosperity, Bangladesh has engaged in a ["race to the bottom"](#) — maintaining substandard wages

and working conditions in order to make production costs attractively, and artificially, low. The accord is a first step toward transforming those marginalized by globalization into its beneficiaries.

If it joined the accord, Gap would send another powerful message of inclusion to [four million](#) Bangladeshi garment workers: your economic opportunity, your ability to obtain a just job, and your right to share in the fruits of economic growth, matter to us. Further, it could demonstrate to its new Tweeting extollers that the company's progressive attitudes inform its supply chain management, not only its advertising.

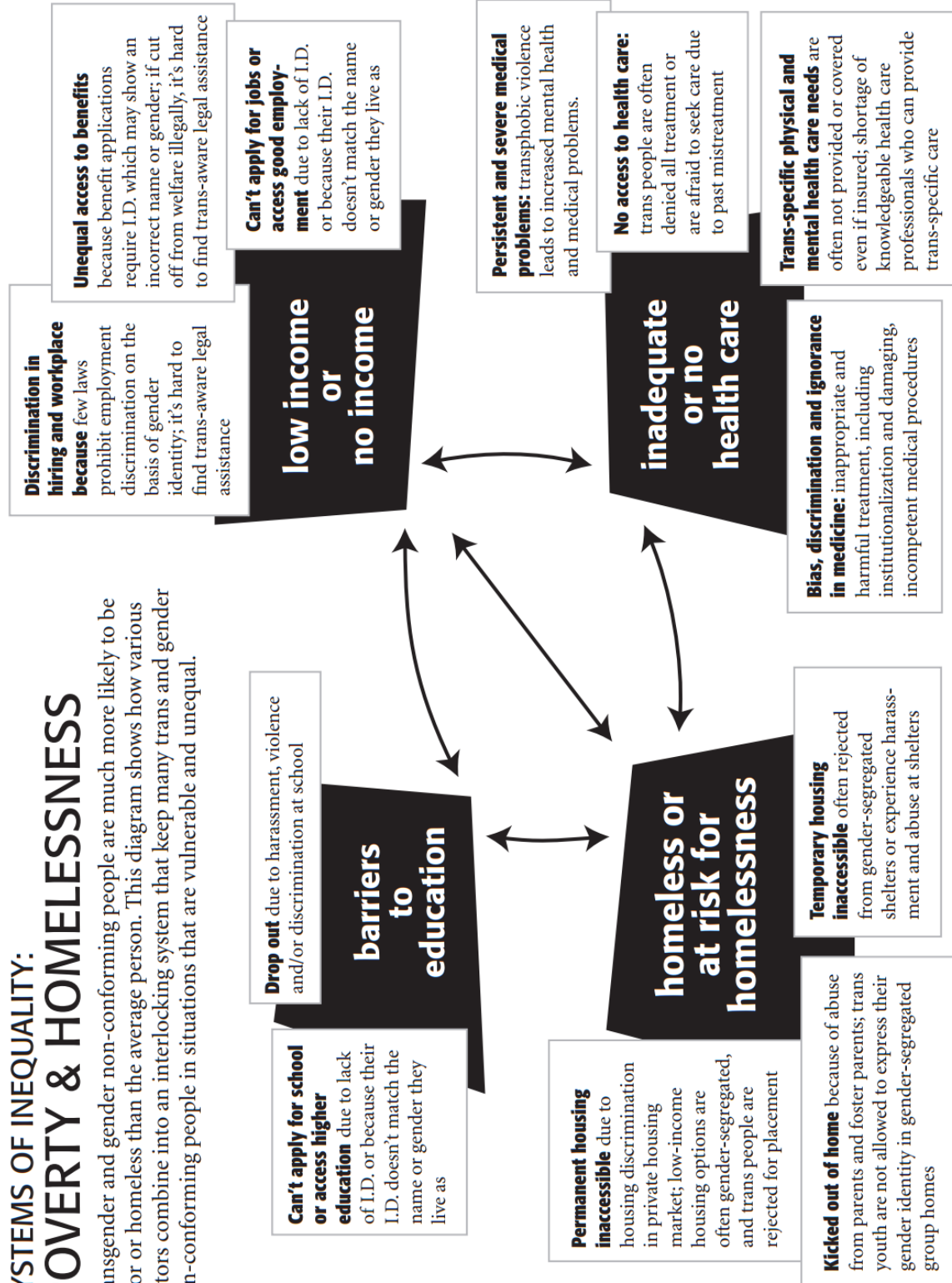
Arsalan Iftikhar, the social commentator and online personality who made the Gap ad famous, [wrote last month](#): "I want to live in an America where a fashion model can be a handsome, bearded brown dude in a turban who is considered as beautiful as a busty blonde-haired white girl in see-through lingerie."

That America does sound nice. But a fashion industry committed to diversity and inclusion stands on hollow ground if the products it markets are founded in economic exclusion. With the power of its brand and the size of its supply chain, Gap can and should do more to create just jobs in the apparel sector. Signing the accord is a necessary step.

## SYSTEMS OF INEQUALITY:

# POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS

Transgender and gender non-conforming people are much more likely to be poor or homeless than the average person. This diagram shows how various factors combine into an interlocking system that keep many trans and gender non-conforming people in situations that are vulnerable and unequal.



SYLVIA RIVERA LAW PROJECT

www.srlp.org

info@srlp.org

212.337.8550

## Race and Contemporary Discrimination

### **Masked Racism: Reflections on Prison-Industrial Complex**

**By Angela Davis**

To read online, click [here](http://www.colorlines.com/articles/masked-racism-reflections-prison-industrial-complex) or visit:

<http://www.colorlines.com/articles/masked-racism-reflections-prison-industrial-complex>

Imprisonment has become the response of first resort to far too many of the social problems that burden people who are ensconced in poverty. These problems often are veiled by being conveniently grouped together under the category “crime” and by the automatic attribution of criminal behavior to people of color. Homelessness, unemployment, drug addiction, mental illness, and illiteracy are only a few of the problems that disappear from public view when the human beings contending with them are relegated to cages.

Prisons thus perform a feat of magic. Or rather the people who continually vote in new prison bonds and tacitly assent to a proliferating network of prisons and jails have been tricked into believing in the magic of imprisonment. But prisons do not disappear problems, they disappear human beings. And the practice of disappearing vast numbers of people from poor, immigrant, and racially marginalized communities has literally become big business.

The seeming effortless magic always conceals an enormous amount of behind-the-scenes work. When prisons disappear human beings in order to convey the illusion of solving social problems, penal infrastructures must be created to accommodate a rapidly swelling population of caged people. Goods and services must be provided to keep imprisoned populations alive. Sometimes these populations must be kept busy and at other times – particularly in repressive super-maximum prisons and in INS detention centers – they must be deprived of virtually all meaningful activity. Vast numbers of handcuffed and shackled people are moved across state borders as they are transferred from one state or federal prison to another.

All this work, which used to be the primary province of government, is now also performed by private corporations, whose links to government in the field of what is euphemistically called “corrections” resonate dangerously with the military industrial complex. The dividends that accrue from investment in the punishment industry, like those that accrue from investment in weapons production, only amount to social destruction. Taking into account the structural similarities and profitability of business-government linkages in the realms of military production and public punishment, the expanding penal system can now be characterized as a “prison industrial complex.”

### **The Color of Imprisonment**

Almost two million people are currently locked up in the immense network of U.S. prisons and jails. More than 70 percent of the imprisoned population are people of color. It is rarely acknowledged that the fastest growing group of prisoners are

black women and that Native American prisoners are the largest group per capita. Approximately five million people -- including those on probation and parole -- are directly under the surveillance of the criminal justice system.

Three decades ago, the imprisoned population was approximately one-eighth its current size. While women still constitute a relatively small percentage of people behind bars, today the number of incarcerated women in California alone is almost twice what the nationwide women's prison population was in 1970. According to Elliott Currie, "[t]he prison has become a looming presence in our society to an extent unparalleled in our history -- or that of any other industrial democracy. Short of major wars, mass incarceration has been the most thoroughly implemented government social program of our time."

To deliver up bodies destined for profitable punishment, the political economy of prisons relies on racialized assumptions of criminality -- such as images of black welfare mothers reproducing criminal children -- and on racist practices in arrest, conviction, and sentencing patterns. Colored bodies constitute the main human raw material in this vast experiment to disappear the major social problems of our time. Once the aura of magic is stripped away from the imprisonment solution, what is revealed is racism, class bias, and the parasitic seduction of capitalist profit. The prison industrial system materially and morally impoverishes its inhabitants and devours the social wealth needed to address the very problems that have led to spiraling numbers of prisoners.

As prisons take up more and more space on the social landscape, other government programs that have previously sought to respond to social needs -- such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families -- are being squeezed out of existence. The deterioration of public education, including prioritizing discipline and security over learning in public schools located in poor communities, is directly related to the prison "solution."

### **Profiting from Prisoners**

As prisons proliferate in U.S. society, private capital has become enmeshed in the punishment industry. And precisely because of their profit potential, prisons are becoming increasingly important to the U.S. economy. If the notion of punishment as a source of potentially stupendous profits is disturbing by itself, then the strategic dependence on racist structures and ideologies to render mass punishment palatable and profitable is even more troubling.

Prison privatization is the most obvious instance of capital's current movement toward the prison industry. While government-run prisons are often in gross violation of international human rights standards, private prisons are even less accountable. In March of this year, the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the largest U.S. private prison company, claimed 54,944 beds in 68 facilities under contract or development in the U.S., Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Following the global trend of subjecting more women to public punishment, CCA recently opened a women's prison outside Melbourne. The company recently identified California as its "new frontier."

**Wackenhut Corrections Corporation (WCC), the second largest U.S. prison company, claimed contracts and awards to manage 46 facilities in North America, U.K., and Australia. It boasts a total of 30,424 beds as well as contracts for prisoner health care services, transportation, and security.**

**Currently, the stocks of both CCA and WCC are doing extremely well. Between 1996 and 1997, CCA's revenues increased by 58 percent, from \$293 million to \$462 million. Its net profit grew from \$30.9 million to \$53.9 million. WCC raised its revenues from \$138 million in 1996 to \$210 million in 1997. Unlike public correctional facilities, the vast profits of these private facilities rely on the employment of non-union labor.**

### **The Prison Industrial Complex**

**But private prison companies are only the most visible component of the increasing corporatization of punishment. Government contracts to build prisons have bolstered the construction industry. The architectural community has identified prison design as a major new niche. Technology developed for the military by companies like Westinghouse is being marketed for use in law enforcement and punishment.**

**Moreover, corporations that appear to be far removed from the business of punishment are intimately involved in the expansion of the prison industrial complex. Prison construction bonds are one of the many sources of profitable investment for leading financiers such as Merrill Lynch. MCI charges prisoners and their families outrageous prices for the precious telephone calls which are often the only contact prisoners have with the free world.**

**Many corporations whose products we consume on a daily basis have learned that prison labor power can be as profitable as third world labor power exploited by U.S.-based global corporations. Both relegate formerly unionized workers to joblessness and many even wind up in prison. Some of the companies that use prison labor are IBM, Motorola, Compaq, Texas Instruments, Honeywell, Microsoft, and Boeing. But it is not only the hi-tech industries that reap the profits of prison labor. Nordstrom department stores sell jeans that are marketed as "Prison Blues," as well as t-shirts and jackets made in Oregon prisons. The advertising slogan for these clothes is "made on the inside to be worn on the outside." Maryland prisoners inspect glass bottles and jars used by Revlon and Pierre Cardin, and schools throughout the world buy graduation caps and gowns made by South Carolina prisoners.**

**"For private business," write Eve Goldberg and Linda Evans (a political prisoner inside the Federal Correctional Institution at Dublin, California) "prison labor is like a pot of gold. No strikes. No union organizing. No health benefits, unemployment insurance, or workers' compensation to pay. No language barriers, as in foreign countries. New leviathan prisons are being built on thousands of eerie acres of factories inside the walls. Prisoners do data entry for Chevron, make telephone reservations for TWA, raise hogs, shovel manure, make circuit boards, limousines, waterbeds, and lingerie for Victoria's Secret -- all at a fraction of the cost of 'free labor.'"**

### **Devouring the Social Wealth**

**Although prison labor -- which ultimately is compensated at a rate far below the minimum wage -- is hugely profitable for the private companies that use it, the penal system as a whole does not produce wealth. It devours the social wealth that could be used to subsidize housing for the homeless, to ameliorate public education for poor and racially marginalized communities, to open free drug rehabilitation programs for people who wish to kick their habits, to create a national health care system, to expand programs to combat HIV, to eradicate domestic abuse -- and, in the process, to create well-paying jobs for the unemployed.**

**Since 1984 more than twenty new prisons have opened in California, while only one new campus was added to the California State University system and none to the University of California system. In 1996-97, higher education received only 8.7 percent of the State's General Fund while corrections received 9.6 percent. Now that affirmative action has been declared illegal in California, it is obvious that education is increasingly reserved for certain people, while prisons are reserved for others. Five times as many black men are presently in prison as in four-year colleges and universities. This new segregation has dangerous implications for the entire country.**

**By segregating people labeled as criminals, prison simultaneously fortifies and conceals the structural racism of the U.S. economy. Claims of low unemployment rates -- even in black communities -- make sense only if one assumes that the vast numbers of people in prison have really disappeared and thus have no legitimate claims to jobs. The numbers of black and Latino men currently incarcerated amount to two percent of the male labor force. According to criminologist David Downes, "[t]reating incarceration as a type of hidden unemployment may raise the jobless rate for men by about one-third, to 8 percent. The effect on the black labor force is greater still, raising the [black] male unemployment rate from 11 percent to 19 percent."**

### **Hidden Agenda**

**Mass incarceration is not a solution to unemployment, nor is it a solution to the vast array of social problems that are hidden away in a rapidly growing network of prisons and jails. However, the great majority of people have been tricked into believing in the efficacy of imprisonment, even though the historical record clearly demonstrates that prisons do not work. Racism has undermined our ability to create a popular critical discourse to contest the ideological trickery that posits imprisonment as key to public safety. The focus of state policy is rapidly shifting from social welfare to social control.**

**Black, Latino, Native American, and many Asian youth are portrayed as the purveyors of violence, traffickers of drugs, and as envious of commodities that they have no right to possess. Young black and Latina women are represented as sexually promiscuous and as indiscriminately propagating babies and poverty. Criminality and deviance are racialized. Surveillance is thus focused on communities of color, immigrants, the unemployed, the undereducated, the homeless, and in general on those who have a diminishing claim to social resources. Their claim to social**

resources continues to diminish in large part because law enforcement and penal measures increasingly devour these resources. The prison industrial complex has thus created a vicious cycle of punishment which only further impoverishes those whose impoverishment is supposedly “solved” by imprisonment.

Therefore, as the emphasis of government policy shifts from social welfare to crime control, racism sinks more deeply into the economic and ideological structures of U.S. society. Meanwhile, conservative crusaders against affirmative action and bilingual education proclaim the end of racism, while their opponents suggest that racism’s remnants can be dispelled through dialogue and conversation. But conversations about “race relations” will hardly dismantle a prison industrial complex that thrives on and nourishes the racism hidden within the deep structures of our society.

The emergence of a U.S. prison industrial complex within a context of cascading conservatism marks a new historical moment, whose dangers are unprecedented. But so are its opportunities. Considering the impressive number of grassroots projects that continue to resist the expansion of the punishment industry, it ought to be possible to bring these efforts together to create radical and nationally visible movements that can legitimize anti-capitalist critiques of the prison industrial complex. It ought to be possible to build movements in defense of prisoners’ human rights and movements that persuasively argue that what we need is not new prisons, but new health care, housing, education, drug programs, jobs, and education. To safeguard a democratic future, it is possible and necessary to weave together the many and increasing strands of resistance to the prison industrial complex into a powerful movement for social transformation.

## **Safe Diversity: Black Is Beautiful... But Not Too Black**

**By Katrina Richardson**

The Daily Show has a new Asian Correspondent. It’s a lady. Her name is Olivia Munn. A woman most famous for her cheesecake photos and hosting the live TV program *Attack of the Show* on the G4 channel.

In theory this feels like it should be good news. Another woman on The Daily Show and a woman of color at that. It feels like I should be writing a different article entirely, praising the show’s bold move. But I just can’t get excited and I’m disappointed in their choice.

Munn’s mother is Chinese and her father is of German-Irish descent. Munn is Asian, but she is also white.

Before we get our delicates in a bunch, let me make one thing clear:

I am multiracial (African American & Malaysian). I am more than familiar with hurtful and misguided efforts made to discredit both my black and Asian identities. I have no interest in doing the same. I am not attempting to challenge her Asian “authenticity” or dismiss her identity. However, Munn’s new position on The Daily Show deserves closer examination. Why did they choose her? They claim it’s because she’s funny. We all know it’s because she’s hot. She’s famous for her hotness. Part of this is because she happens to be a good looking lady. But there’s

something else at work: she's an Asian woman that looks less like an Asian woman and more like a white girl. Jackpot!

The media devours palatable representations of "ethnic" beauty. It allows them to truly believe they're celebrating diversity while continuing to maintain a certain aesthetic. This is certainly no new revelation, but Munn's presence in the news last week offers us another opportunity to consider the media's habitual white washing of color.

No where has this practice been more noticeable than in images of African American women in film, television, and music. Black women come in a multitude of different shades: Freckly yellow, copper, blacker than black, and even ::whisper:: ashy gray. We have a multitude of different ass sizes and a plethora of hair textures. If, however, you grew up in a small and dark cave with nothing but the glow of a television to light your way, you would never know this.

The problem is, many of us have unconsciously allowed the media to be our only light. No person is immune to the ideas of beauty American culture celebrates. It affects the world. And though we have taken enormous strides and made great progress (Barry Obams!), a quieter method of oppression remains quietly in place.

You might not see it. It moves in and out of shadows.

It slinks. It hides.

It clings to Halle Berry's legs and peeks through Beyonce's hair. Hangs on a Lena Horne note and makes figure eights around Rihanna and Alicia Keys. It is a tricky thing. Conniving. It doesn't shout like Jim Crow. It whispers. It hisses.

*Light skin is soft and sexy.*

*Dark skin is unfeminine.*

*Dark eyes are boring.*

*Light eyes are sexier.*

*Thin noses are pretty.*

*Wide noses are ugly.*

*Straight hair is professional.*

*Straight hair is beautiful.*

*Natural hair is unruly.*

*Natural hair is clear evidence of activist leanings.*

*Black is beautiful...but keep the blackness to a minimum.*

It is significant that the majority of our most famous black actresses and musical artists represent one small corner of the color spectrum. It didn't end with Josephine Baker or Dorothy Dandridge. It continues with Halle Berry, Beyonce, Rihanna, Jessica Alba, Thandie Newton, Eva Mendes, Salma Hayek, Jennifer Lopez, and dear Olivia Munn.

These are women of color with tremendous talent, but who are also admired for a particular kind of beauty. They are ethnic enough to titillate, but not too ethnic to offend the white aesthetic. Yellow...but not too yellow. Brown...but not too brown. Black...but not too black.

***Kartina Richardson is a writer, filmmaker and playwright. She runs the sites [thismoi.com](http://thismoi.com) and [mirrorfilm.org](http://mirrorfilm.org) where she explores race, gender, pop culture and her love of film.***

## **How to Deal with the Police | Parents Explain**

**View video [here](#)**

# **BLACK PARENTS EXPLAIN HOW TO DEAL WITH THE POLICE**

## **Excerpts from “Paper Tigers”**

**By Wesley Yang**

**To read the full article, click [here](#) or visit:**

**<http://nymag.com/news/features/asian-americans-2011-5/>**

**Sometimes I’ll glimpse my reflection in a window and feel astonished by what I see. Jet-black hair. Slanted eyes. A pancake-flat surface of yellow-and-green-toned skin. An expression that is nearly reptilian in its impassivity. I’ve contrived to think of this face as the equal in beauty to any other. But what I feel in these moments is its strangeness to me. It’s my face. I can’t disclaim it. But what does it have to do with me?**

**Millions of Americans must feel estranged from their own faces. But every self-estranged individual is estranged in his own way. I, for instance, am the child of Korean immigrants, but I do not speak my parents’ native tongue. I have never called my elders by the proper honorific, “big brother” or “big sister.” I have never dated a Korean woman. I don’t have a Korean friend. Though I am an immigrant, I have never wanted to strive like one.**

**You could say that I am, in the gently derisive parlance of Asian-Americans, a banana or a Twinkie (yellow on the outside, white on the inside). But while I don’t believe our roots necessarily define us, I do believe there are racially inflected assumptions wired into our neural circuitry that we use to sort through the sea of faces we confront. And although I am in most respects devoid of Asian characteristics, I do have an Asian face.**

**Here is what I sometimes suspect my face signifies to other Americans: an invisible person, barely distinguishable from a mass of faces that resemble it. A conspicuous person standing apart from the crowd and yet devoid of any individuality. An icon of so much that the culture pretends to honor but that it in fact**

patronizes and exploits. Not just people “who are good at math” and play the violin, but a mass of stifled, repressed, abused, conformist quasi-robots who simply do not matter, socially or culturally.

I’ve always been of two minds about this sequence of stereotypes. On the one hand, it offends me greatly that anyone would think to apply them to me, or to anyone else, simply on the basis of facial characteristics. On the other hand, it also seems to me that there are a lot of Asian people to whom they apply.

Let me summarize my feelings toward Asian values: Fuck filial piety. Fuck grade-grubbing. Fuck Ivy League mania. Fuck deference to authority. Fuck humility and hard work. Fuck harmonious relations. Fuck sacrificing for the future. Fuck earnest, striving middle-class servility.

I understand the reasons Asian parents have raised a generation of children this way. Doctor, lawyer, accountant, engineer: These are good jobs open to whoever works hard enough. What could be wrong with that pursuit? Asians graduate from college at a rate higher than any other ethnic group in America, including whites. They earn a higher median family income than any other ethnic group in America, including whites. This is a stage in a triumphal narrative, and it is a narrative that is much shorter than many remember. Two thirds of the roughly 14 million Asian-Americans are foreign-born. There were less than 39,000 people of Korean descent living in America in 1970, when my elder brother was born. There are around 1 million today.

**Asian-American success is typically taken to ratify the American Dream and to prove that minorities can make it in this country without handouts. Still, an undercurrent of racial panic always**

Interested in hearing some perspectives on the Asian American identity and the affirmative action debate? Look up the Crimson article: “Supporting Affirmative Action as Asian Americans” by Brenadette Lim and (FUP class) Jay Yee! Don’t ever

**accompanies the consideration of Asians, and all the more so as China becomes the destination for our industrial base and the banker controlling our burgeoning debt. But if the armies of Chinese factory workers who make our fast fashion and iPads terrify us,**

**and if the collective mass of high-achieving Asian-American students arouse an anxiety about the laxity of American parenting, what of the Asian-American who obeyed everything his parents told him? Does this person really scare anyone?**

Earlier this year, the publication of Amy Chua’s *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* incited a collective airing out of many varieties of race-based hysteria. But absent from the millions of words written in response to the book was any serious consideration of whether Asian-Americans were in fact taking over this country. If it is true that they are collectively dominating in elite high schools and universities, is it also true that Asian-Americans are dominating in the real world? My strong suspicion was that this was not so, and that the reasons would not be hard to find. If we are a collective juggernaut that inspires such awe and fear, why does it seem that so many Asians are so readily perceived to be, as I myself have felt most of my life, the products of a timid culture, easily pushed around by more assertive people, and thus basically invisible?

A few months ago, I received an e-mail from a young man named Jefferson Mao, who after attending Stuyvesant High School had recently graduated from the

University of Chicago. He wanted my advice about “being an Asian writer.” This is how he described himself: “I got good grades and I love literature and I want to be a writer and an intellectual; at the same time, I’m the first person in my family to go to college, my parents don’t speak English very well, and we don’t own the apartment in Flushing that we live in. I mean, I’m proud of my parents and my neighborhood and what I perceive to be my artistic potential or whatever, but sometimes I feel like I’m jumping the gun a generation or two too early.”

One bright, cold Sunday afternoon, I ride the 7 train to its last stop in Flushing, where the storefront signs are all written in Chinese and the sidewalks are a slow-moving river of impassive faces. Mao is waiting for me at the entrance of the Main Street subway station, and together we walk to a nearby Vietnamese restaurant.

Mao has a round face, with eyes behind rectangular wire-frame glasses. Since graduating, he has been living with his parents, who emigrated from China when Mao was 8 years old. His mother is a manicurist; his father is a physical therapist’s aide. Lately, Mao has been making the familiar hour-and-a-half ride from Flushing to downtown Manhattan to tutor a white Stuyvesant freshman who lives in Tribeca. And what he feels, sometimes, in the presence of that amiable young man is a pang of regret. Now he understands better what he ought to have done back when he was a Stuyvesant freshman: “Worked half as hard and been twenty times more successful.”

Entrance to Stuyvesant, one of the most competitive public high schools in the country, is determined solely by performance on a test: The top 3.7 percent of all New York City students who take the Specialized High Schools Admissions Test hoping to go to Stuyvesant are accepted. There are no set-asides for the underprivileged or, conversely, for alumni or other privileged groups. There is no formula to encourage “diversity” or any nebulous concept of “well-roundedness” or “character.” Here we have something like pure meritocracy. This is what it looks like: Asian-Americans, who make up 12.6 percent of New York City, make up 72 percent of the high school.

This year, 569 Asian-Americans scored high enough to earn a slot at Stuyvesant, along with 179 whites, 13 Hispanics, and 12 blacks. Such dramatic overrepresentation, and what it may be read to imply about the intelligence of different groups of New Yorkers, has a way of making people uneasy. But intrinsic intelligence, of course, is precisely what Asians don’t believe in. They believe—and have proved—that the constant practice of test-taking will improve the scores of whoever commits to it. All throughout Flushing, as well as in Bayside, one can find “cram schools,” or storefront academies, that drill students in test preparation after school, on weekends, and during summer break. “Learning math is not about learning math,” an instructor at one called Ivy Prep was quoted in the New York *Times* as saying. “It’s about weightlifting. You are pumping the iron of math.” Mao puts it more specifically: “You learn quite simply to nail any standardized test you take.”

And so there is an additional concern accompanying the rise of the Tiger Children, one focused more on the narrowness of the educational experience a non-Asian child might receive in the company of fanatically preprofessional Asian students. Jenny Tsai, a student who was elected president of her class at the equally competitive New York public school Hunter College High School, remembers

frequently hearing that “the school was becoming too Asian, that they would be the downfall of our school.” A couple of years ago, she revisited this issue in her senior thesis at Harvard, where she interviewed graduates of elite public schools and found that the white students regarded the Asians students with wariness. (She quotes a music teacher at Stuyvesant describing the dominance of Asians: “They were mediocre kids, but they got in because they were coached.”) In 2005, *The Wall Street Journal* reported on “white flight” from a high school in Cupertino, California, that began soon after the children of Asian software engineers had made the place so brutally competitive that a B average could place you in the bottom third of the class.

Colleges have a way of correcting for this imbalance: The Princeton sociologist Thomas Espenshade has calculated that an Asian applicant must, in practice, score 140 points higher on the SAT than a comparable white applicant to have the same chance of admission. This is obviously unfair to the many qualified Asian individuals who are punished for the success of others with similar faces. Upper-middle-class white kids, after all, have their own elite private schools, and their own private tutors, far more expensive than the cram schools, to help them game the education system.

You could frame it, as some aggrieved Asian-Americans do, as a simple issue of equality and press for race-blind quantitative admissions standards. In 2006, a decade after California passed a voter initiative outlawing any racial engineering at the public universities, Asians composed 46 percent of UC-Berkeley’s entering class; one could imagine a similar demographic reshuffling in the Ivy League, where Asian-Americans currently make up about 17 percent of undergraduates. But the Ivies, as we all know, have their own private institutional interests at stake in their admissions choices, including some that are arguably defensible. Who can seriously claim that a Harvard University that was 72 percent Asian would deliver the same grooming for elite status its students had gone there to receive?

Somewhere near the middle of his time at Stuyvesant, a vague sense of discontent started to emerge within Mao. He had always felt himself a part of a mob of “nameless, faceless Asian kids,” who were “like a part of the décor of the place.” He had been content to keep his head down and work toward the goal shared by everyone at Stuyvesant: Harvard. But around the beginning of his senior year, he began to wonder whether this march toward academic success was the only, or best, path.

“You can’t help but feel like there must be another way,” he explains over a bowl of phở. “It’s like, we’re being pitted against each other while there are kids out there in the Midwest who can do way less work and be in a garage band or something—and if they’re decently intelligent and work decently hard in school ...”

Mao was becoming clued in to the fact that there was another hierarchy behind the official one that explained why others were getting what he never had—“a high-school sweetheart” figured prominently on this list—and that this mysterious hierarchy was going to determine what happened to him in life. “You realize there are things you really don’t understand about courtship or just acting in a certain way. Things that somehow come naturally to people who go to school in the suburbs and

have parents who are culturally assimilated.” I pressed him for specifics, and he mentioned that he had visited his white girlfriend’s parents’ house the past Christmas, where the family had “sat around cooking together and playing Scrabble.” This ordinary vision of suburban-American domesticity lingered with Mao: Here, at last, was the setting in which all that implicit knowledge “about social norms and propriety” had been transmitted. There was no cram school that taught these lessons.

Before having heard from Mao, I had considered myself at worst lightly singed by the last embers of Asian alienation. Indeed, given all the incredibly hip Asian artists and fashion designers and so forth you can find in New York, it seemed that this feeling was destined to die out altogether. And yet here it was in a New Yorker more than a dozen years my junior. While it may be true that sections of the Asian-American world are devoid of alienation, there are large swaths where it is as alive as it has ever been.

While he was still an electrical-engineering student at Berkeley in the nineties, James Hong visited the IBM campus for a series of interviews. An older Asian researcher looked over Hong’s résumé and asked him some standard questions. Then he got up without saying a word and closed the door to his office.

“Listen,” he told Hong, “I’m going to be honest with you. My generation came to this country because we wanted better for you kids. We did the best we could, leaving our homes and going to graduate school not speaking much English. If you take this job, you are just going to hit the same ceiling we did. They just see me as an Asian Ph.D., never management potential. You are going to get a job offer, but don’t take it. Your generation has to go farther than we did, otherwise we did everything for nothing.” The researcher was talking about what some refer to as the “Bamboo Ceiling”—an invisible barrier that maintains

**Glass Ceiling (related term) -**  
A glass ceiling is a political term used to describe “the unseen, yet unbreachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate

a pyramidal racial structure throughout corporate America, with lots of Asians at junior levels, quite a few in middle management, and virtually none in the higher reaches of leadership.

The failure of Asian-Americans to become leaders in the white-collar workplace does not qualify as one of the burning social issues of our time. But it is a part of the bitter undercurrent of Asian-American life that so many Asian graduates of elite universities find that meritocracy as they have understood it comes to an abrupt end after graduation. If between 15 and 20 percent of every Ivy League class is Asian, and if the Ivy Leagues are incubators for the country’s leaders, it would stand to reason that Asians would make up some corresponding portion of the leadership class.

And yet the numbers tell a different story. According to a recent study, Asian-Americans represent roughly 5 percent of the population but only 0.3 percent of corporate officers, less than 1 percent of corporate board members, and around 2 percent of college presidents. There are nine Asian-American CEOs in the Fortune 500. In specific fields where Asian-Americans are heavily represented, there is a similar asymmetry. A third of all software engineers in Silicon Valley are Asian, and

yet they make up only 6 percent of board members and about 10 percent of corporate officers of the Bay Area's 25 largest companies. At the National Institutes of Health, where 21.5 percent of tenure-track scientists are Asians, only 4.7 percent of the lab or branch directors are, according to a study conducted in 2005. One succinct evocation of the situation appeared in the comments section of a website called Yellowworld: "If you're East Asian, you need to attend a top-tier university to land a good high-paying gig. Even if you land that good high-paying gig, the white guy with the pedigree from a mediocre state university will somehow move ahead of you in the ranks simply because he's white."

Jennifer W. Allyn, a managing director for diversity at PricewaterhouseCoopers, works to ensure that "all of the groups feel welcomed and supported and able to thrive and to go as far as their talents will take them." I posed to her the following definition of parity in the corporate workforce: If the current crop of associates is 17 percent Asian, then in fourteen years, when they have all been up for partner review, 17 percent of those who are offered partner will be Asian. Allyn conceded that PricewaterhouseCoopers was not close to reaching that benchmark anytime soon—and that "nobody else is either."

Part of the insidious nature of the Bamboo Ceiling is that it does not seem to be caused by overt racism. A survey of Asian-Pacific-American employees of Fortune 500 companies found that 80 percent reported they were judged not as Asians but as individuals. But only 51 percent reported the existence of Asians in key positions, and only 55 percent agreed that their firms were fully capitalizing on the talents and perspectives of Asians.

More likely, the discrepancy in these numbers is a matter of unconscious bias. Nobody would affirm the proposition that tall men are intrinsically better leaders, for instance. And yet while only 15 percent of the male population is at least six feet tall, 58 percent of all corporate CEOs are. Similarly, nobody would say that Asian people are unfit to be leaders. But subjects in a recently published psychological experiment consistently rated hypothetical employees with Caucasian-sounding names higher in leadership potential than identical ones with Asian names. Maybe it is simply the case that a traditionally Asian upbringing is the problem. As Allyn points out, in order to be a leader, you must have followers. Associates at PricewaterhouseCoopers are initially judged on how well they do the work they are assigned. "You have to be a doer," as she puts it. They are expected to distinguish themselves with their diligence, at which point they become "super-doers." But being a leader requires different skill sets. "The traits that got you to where you are won't necessarily take you to the next level," says the diversity consultant Jane Hyun, who wrote a book called *Breaking the Bamboo Ceiling*. To become a leader requires taking personal initiative and thinking about how an organization can work differently. It also requires networking, self-promotion, and self-assertion. It's racist to think that any given Asian individual is unlikely to be creative or risk-taking. It's simple cultural observation to say that a group whose education has historically focused on rote memorization and "pumping the iron of math" is, on aggregate, unlikely to yield many people inclined to challenge authority or break with inherited ways of doing things.

At the AASA gathering at Yale, Chua made the connection between her upbringing and her adult dissatisfaction. “My parents didn’t sit around talking about politics and philosophy at the dinner table,” she told the students. Even after she had escaped from corporate law and made it onto a law faculty, “I was kind of lost. I just didn’t feel the passion.” Eventually, she made a name for herself as the author of popular books about foreign policy and became an award-winning teacher. But it’s plain that she was no better prepared for legal scholarship than she had been for corporate law. “It took me a long, long time,” she said. “And I went through lots and lots of rejection.” She recalled her extended search for an academic post, in which she was “just not able to do a good interview, just not able to present myself well.”

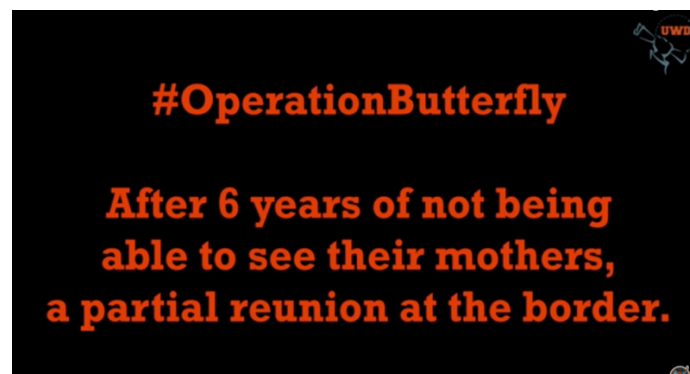
In other words, *Battle Hymn* provides all the material needed to refute the very cultural polemic for which it was made to stand. Chua’s Chinese education had gotten her through an elite schooling, but it left her unprepared for the real world. She does not hide any of this. She had set out, she explained, to write a memoir that was “defiantly self-incriminating”—and the result was a messy jumble of conflicting impulses, part provocation, part self-critique. Western readers rode roughshod over this paradox and made of Chua a kind of Asian minstrel figure. But more than anything else, *Battle Hymn* is a very American project—one no traditional Chinese person would think to undertake. “Even if you hate the book,” Chua pointed out, “the one thing it is not is meek.”

“The loudest duck gets shot” is a Chinese proverb. “The nail that sticks out gets hammered down” is a Japanese one. Its Western correlative: “The squeaky wheel gets the grease.” Chua had told her story and been hammered down. Yet here she was, fresh from her hammering, completely unbowed.

There is something salutary in that proud defiance. And though the debate she sparked about Asian-American life has been of questionable value, we will need more people with the same kind of defiance, willing to push themselves into the spotlight and to make some noise, to beat people up, to seduce women, to make mistakes, to become entrepreneurs, to stop doggedly pursuing official paper emblems attesting to their worthiness, to stop thinking those scraps of paper will secure anyone’s happiness, and to dare to be interesting.

## Operation Butterfly Reunion at the Border

To watch video click [here](#)



## **A Personal History of Islamophobia**

**By Lamya H**

To read the full article, click [here](#)

***Don't stay out past sunset.***

***Don't talk to people you don't know.***

***Speak only English when you're outdoors.***

***Don't talk about politics.***

***Don't talk about religion.***

***Study hard, and come back.***

**I'm 17 when I move to this country, anointed with a scholarship to a prestigious college.**

**I'm 17, and out of the arrogance of being 17 I am dismissive of my parents' advice. What do they know, my mother and father who live across an ocean? I'm in the liberal Northeast. It's been a whole two years since 9/11, and this can't be the America we talk about back home. This America isn't scary. This America is Doritos and discussion sections in which I'm still figuring out how to speak up. Fall colors and libraries galore, my first time seeing snow.**

**This America is also smiling white faces who want to be friends when they hear where I'm from. Tell us what it's really like back home, they say. What do you call that thing on your head? Do you sleep with it on? Do you really have to pray five times a day? Are your parents going to arrange your marriage? Are you sure you don't want to try beer just once? I laugh at these questions, indulge their curiosity, and move on. There is too much else to experience, too much novelty to drink in.**

### **II.**

**My freshman spring, I take a psychology class meant for juniors. I'm a good student, and in a class of more than 200 students, the professor — a bearded ex-hippie partial to flannels that stretch tight across his belly — knows me by name. I ask questions and score high on the tests, but I still get the feeling he doesn't like me.**

**This professor is supervising our lab one week. We've split up into groups of six and are doing electroencephalograms, attaching electrodes to each other's scalps and recording the data. The professor comes by to talk to my group, and as he's walking off he says, "I'll let you get back to your last reading."**

**"Oh, we're done," we say. "Just cleaning up here."**

**He stops, backtracks. "But there are only five readings?"**

**Everyone in my group looks at me.**

**"I didn't do one."**

**His mouth becomes noticeably small, stern. "You need a reading for your lab participation grade."**

**"I can't put the electrodes on my head because of my hijab. Religious reasons."**

**I can see his mental calculations, his frustration mounting. What comes is out is perhaps a little louder, a little more forceful than he intends.**

**"You need to stop using religion to make your own and everyone else's lives so hard."**

**The entire room goes silent, and I'm grateful for brown skin that hides my bone-deep flush.**

**III.**

**"Hey!"**

**The referee stops me as I'm about to be subbed into a soccer game.**

**"Hold on a second. You can't play like that."**

**I'm halfway onto the pitch, but I turn around, thoroughly confused. I've been playing club soccer at my college for almost a year now and have never had any problems wearing a hijab and sweatpants during games before.**

**"Division rules," he says.**

**But it's a friendly tournament. The scores aren't being reported. The extra clothing I'm wearing won't affect anyone but myself. Still, he stops the game. Calls over my coach and my captain, who argue with him loudly. Calls over the opposing team's captain to ask her if it's okay if I play dressed like this. She wants to get back to the game too, but spends a few moments looking me up and down, trying to be intimidating.**

**"Yeah, yeah, I guess it's fine."**

**The game restarts, and there are cheers of relief.**

**"Fucking Ay-rab," someone yells from the sideline. It sounds as if it came from a group of hooting men in the crowd. My teammate is standing closest to them on the pitch. She chews them out and they continue to laugh, but I don't remember very much through the fog of my embarrassment.**

**Later, I convince myself I must have heard wrong.**

#### IV.

There are **3.3 million** Muslims living in the United States. **Forty-eight percent** report personally experiencing discrimination. On average, **12.6** hate crimes against Muslims and those perceived to be Muslim are reported per month. After the Paris attacks, this number triples.

**Sixty-three** mosques are vandalized in 2015 alone.

There are as many as **15,000** paid FBI informants in the Muslim community, up to **one in 94** agents for every Muslim in the United States. There are **counterterrorism initiatives** that turn communities **against each other**. **No-fly lists** and **death threats** as consequences for refusing to spy on your neighbors. **Fourteen** Muslim-majority countries have been bombed or invaded by the United States since 1980; **23,144** bombs dropped in 2015 alone.

#### V.

I'm walking down the street one evening, on the way back from an old roommate's new apartment. It's still fairly early in spring, but the weather is beautiful, and I'm suffused with the kind of happy that comes from a lovely time with friends.

I pass by an older man, shaggy-looking and some shade of brown. "Hello," he says and I nod and smile at him because he's wearing a cap that reminds me of my grandfather.

Suddenly he's in step beside me. What's your name, honey? Where are you going? Can I come with you? Will you wear that thing on your head when we fuck?

I'm on a crowded street. I'm not worried, not really. I ignore him and walk faster to the beat of my heart in my head. But he doesn't stop. Are you Islamic? Where are you from, honey? Does your man make you wear that on your head? Why won't you answer me?

He gets louder. Don't you know that I could buy you? Isn't that what they do in your country? They sell women. I could just buy you if I wanted to. It's that easy.

No one around me intervenes; no one even slows down. I walk faster and slip between people until I'm sure I've lost him. I will myself not to look back until it's been a couple of blocks. When I check, he is standing at a corner, still yelling and waving his arms. I tell myself it was my mistake for smiling at him.

#### VI.

**I take up running. I do it to be fitter and faster and more disciplined in general, but in the back of my mind I think it would be a good skill to have. In case.**

**People like to yell things at runners, perhaps because the interactions are iterant. I've been warned about this particular absurdity by a friend. "Run, Forrest, run!" I hear a few times. It never fails to make me laugh.**

**What I'm less prepared for is the "God Bless America" that a lady in a fur coat hisses at me as I pass her one day. Or, "Take off your hijab! Be free!" courtesy of a graying grandmother parked on a bench.**

**I shout the first response that comes to mind: "I am free! Don't tell me what to wear!"**

**I feel terrible afterward. For not stopping to have a conversation, for not changing her mind. For yelling at a lonely old woman.**

## **VII.**

**Two bombs go off during the Boston Marathon.**

**I've spent a summer in Boston, run stretches of the marathon route, and I hurt as if I'm there. A friend's sister disappears near the finish line. She isn't heard from for a few tense hours, but she's safe. An acquaintance of my cousin loses his leg. My friend recognizes Tamerlan Tsarnaev from his mosque. And an international student who was watching the marathon, whose only crime was running away from the vicinity of the finish line, has his house searched while he is recovering from injuries in the hospital and immediately becomes [the Saudi Suspect](#).**

**Everything hits hard, and I find myself in the embarrassing position of crying at my desk at work. My work best friend notices, brings me water and tissues, and offers to run down to the vending machine for a pack of M&Ms. He sits with me and asks gently: "Are you okay? Are your Boston friends okay?"**

**I find myself blubbering. About the victims, the connections, the blowback the already marginalized Muslim community will face, the innocent international student caught in the crossfire.**

**"But that makes sense, though," he says. "About the international student. They have to follow all possible leads."**

**I am aghast. That's the point. There were no leads. Can he not see this? Can he not see that this could have been me? I could have been**

working in Boston. I could have been watching the marathon near the finish line.

I want to say these things, but all that comes out are angry tears. Everyone leaves me alone for the rest of the day.

### VIII.

"Um, you might want to change your shirt," she tells me, right before we're leaving for the airport.

"What's wrong with my shirt?" I say. It's a nice shirt, button-down with small skulls on it, loose and soft and perfect for traveling.

"You don't want to wear anything antagonistic while flying."

I remember my friend's friend who wasn't allowed to board his flight because he was wearing a sarcastic T-shirt about terrorists. The two imams who were escorted off a plane because they were wearing traditional clothes. I hate that she's right, but I change.

My plain T-shirt doesn't stop me from being singled out at the airport.

Ma'am, may I see your passport? What's the purpose of your trip?

What's your final destination? Can I see your boarding pass, please?

We round the corner en route to the bathroom and the process begins anew, blatantly directed at me while my bareheaded travel companion — who doesn't present as visibly Muslim — stands by and fiddles nonchalantly.

I am seething, and throw myself into a seat. "Did you see that?" I say.

"Did you see that back there? It's like he was testing me." We finally make it to our gate, and, anticipating a "random" search, I let her go ahead. The security guard stops me right before the metal detectors, gestures to my head, and asks me to take off my scarf.

I feign ignorance at first. "What?" I say. "I don't understand."

"That," he says loudly, pointing to my hijab. "You can't wear that through security. Please take it off."

The line is growing exasperated behind me.

"No."

"All right." And just like that, waves me through.

I am seething, and throw myself into a seat. "Did you see that?" I say.

"Did you see that back there? It's like he was testing me."

"He's just doing his job," she says, this woman I have made the mistake of traveling with while we're rapidly falling out of love. "Why do you have to make everything about Islam? It's exhausting."

We never acknowledge it, but this is the moment that breaks us.

**IX.**

**My parents come to visit, and we drive up to Canada to see my cousins. It's a tense trip: a lot of time spent in each other's company in confined spaces.**

**We finally pull up to the border after an hour-long wait in line. We're exhausted. In general, and of each other.**

**The border agent flips through our foreign passports, looks at all of us in turn, and then spends some time looking hard at my brother. My brother, who is in the driver's seat: a male in his mid-20s with messy black curls and a hint of stubble. In a voice both polite and urgent, the border agent asks my brother to pull up to the side, to parking spot 3.**

**We know what that means. Secondary questioning; this is going to take a while. We collectively sigh and bust out snacks in anticipation of a long wait.**

**We drive up to the spot, and as soon as my brother kills the engine, we are surrounded by uniformed cops with drawn guns. One cop is telling my brother to get out of the driver's seat with his hands up. My brother complies calmly. He gets out of the car and is whisked away by two cops with guns still drawn. My brother is taken into the secondary questioning building, and only then, after he is inside the building, do the other cops who are still surrounding us lower their weapons. You'll have to wait a little while, they tell us. You can lock up the car and wait inside if you want; we just need to ask your son a few more questions.**

**We get out of the car and walk into the low, prefab border building. We wait in hard chairs in a room with shiny linoleum floors and cheery "Information about Canada" signs, tense until they return my brother to us. An administrative mix-up, they say. There's a rule that all men on visas need to register before they exit the US, and my brother didn't know to do that. Everything's fine now, they say. He's filled out the right form, and you're all free to go on your way. Welcome to Canada. Hope you enjoy your stay.**

**X.**

**The Fort Hood shooting happens, Chattanooga happens; the Times Square bomb doesn't go off. My work colleagues want to know how come so many of these instances are connected to Muslims and not other minorities.**

Meanwhile, three Muslim students are shot in Chapel Hill, and the FBI is revealed to be infiltrating Muslim clubs in college campuses. There are anti-Islam ads in the subway and suspicious fires at mosques.

Tarek Mehanna is [tried for thought crimes](#), and there are [disappearances](#) and [entrapments](#) and drone strikes and no one asks me how come it is my people who seem to be targeted. Dylann Roof opens fire in a church in Charleston, and I'm relieved, so relieved, to find out that it's a white man, and then immediately mortified at my joy.

The Paris attacks happen, San Bernardino happens, Donald Trump calls for banning people like me. Suddenly there are stories in the mainstream media: a woman in a hijab who gets pushed in front of a train. A Sikh man who is beaten and hit by a car. Anti-Islam signs in front yards, people not being able to board their flights because they made the mistake of praying in the airport or carrying white stringed boxes filled with baklava.

Suddenly people want to know if I'm okay; they tell me that they're worried about me, ask if I'm experiencing any Islamophobia now. "Don't worry about me," I say, but what I want to say is that this is not recent, this is not a trend, this is not going away because these incidents are being counted. Twelve years in this country, and I've switched to walking quickly down the middle of the subway platform, I've started pulling a hoodie up over my hijab and looking for exits when I enter a room. I've stopped being surprised, even stopped telling stories.

I was sitting at a museum with a highlighted map to make sure I saw everything important, and a security guard came up and asked to see my ID. "Where are you from?" he asked, "What are you doing with that map?"

I've started pulling a hoodie up over my hijab and looking for exits when I enter a room. I helped my friend move one fall evening with her distinctly Muslim-looking father. We clambered onto their car to wind rope around the mattress we affixed to the top. We were loading the rest of her stuff when the cops came by. What are you doing? Where are you going with that stuff? We silently raged, me and my friend, as her father put on a soothing voice to answer their unending questions.

**Some punk kid yelled, "Allahu akbar," as I passed by him, a block away from my home. It was a school night and he couldn't have been more than 15.**

**"Fuck you," I said quietly, in a rare slip.**

**"What was that?" He turned back. "Fuck *you*, you terrorist motherfucker. Fuck you."**

**XI.**

**I'm flirting with a cute girl restacking shelves in a bookstore.**

**I'm not good at this flirting thing usually, but somehow I've found myself in a playful, easy conversation about books. What we're reading now. Her favorites and my favorites. Hoping for a laugh, I admit that I always overpack my bag because I'm afraid of being caught having just finished a book and without another. "I would have guessed you had a bomb in there," she quips.**

**She's trying to be funny back; I get it. But how does she not grasp the gravity of her statement? Is anyone close enough to have overheard? Misunderstood? Are they calling the cops right now? I'm done. I just want to leave, and I do. Leave her a little confused with my quick goodbye and walk out with my friend who has overheard the tail end of the conversation.**

**"That is so fucked up," my friend says. "It was going so well, too. Who says that? Can you believe she said that?"**

**"It's fine," I say, and change the topic. But my friend, who is not visibly Muslim, is enthralled. She tells everyone this story. She repeats it over and over to everyone we meet that day. She makes them agree loudly and repeatedly that it was fucked up. Until, embarrassed, I pull her aside. And ask her to stop making such a big deal out of such a small, commonplace occurrence.**

## **Gender and Sexuality**

**Interested in Queer Issues on Campus?**  
Check out the Quoffice! Look out for it on the AWESOME tour of Harvard your FUP leaders will give you! It, along with the women's center, are two awesome

**Who Does Marriage Leave Behind?**

**By Drew Ambrogio**

**To read online, click [here](http://www.washingtonblade.com/2013/04/19/who-does-marriage-leave-behind-getequal-opinio/) or visit:**

**<http://www.washingtonblade.com/2013/04/19/who-does-marriage-leave-behind-getequal-opinio/>**

**Last month at rallies outside of the Supreme Court, the Human Rights Campaign asked protesters to move their trans pride flag from behind the podium**

and censored a speech given by the Queer Undocumented Immigrant Project (QUIP) so as not to reveal the immigration status of the speaker.

Later, HRC, GetEQUAL and United for Marriage issued public apologies for “offending” those groups, and reminded them that they are committed to their issues. But this is more than a matter of unintentional “offensive” incidents. These are people being told that they must conform or get out of the way. These are people being told that their needs and experiences aren’t relevant to those making decisions in their communities. Yet this is nothing new for the mainstream gay rights movement.

Our most effective arguments for marriage equality have been ones that mirror the values of those who are in a position to give us access to the rights we seek. We seem overjoyed to explain time and time again that, just like them, we too believe in the supreme value of marriage and the nuclear family. In order to support this argument and present ourselves as a non-threatening community of good citizens, we’ve actively excluded and suppressed those of us who depart from the values of the heterosexual majority, leaving our most marginalized brothers and sisters behind.

The actions of HRC, GetEQUAL, and United for Marriage at the rallies last month reflect these strategies, and remind us that in selecting marriage as its priority, the gay rights movement has also told us what issues should take a back seat.

Talking about marriage as if it is the most important issue for the LGBT community silences those of us with needs that access to marriage will not address. Marriage won’t provide adequate health care to those of us who are without it. Marriage won’t address the domestic violence many of us face in our relationships. It won’t save the one in four LGBT youth who are homeless, and it won’t help those of us living with HIV as crucial assistance programs face budget cuts. It won’t address the routine violence faced by trans people and it will do little for LGBT people who are undocumented. And it will probably make things more difficult for those of us living outside of nuclear family formations.

As non-heterosexual people, our existence is a fundamental threat to the organization of society. For decades we’ve lived in the margins where we’ve drawn strength from our difference and from our diversity as a community. As we built families on our own terms, we recognized the necessity of fighting oppression in all of its manifestations, and we envisioned radical alternatives to a society that wanted nothing to do with us. How have we come to see our uniqueness and our diversity as blemishes we must cover up while we try to win the respect of our oppressors?

As a goal, marriage equality reflects the needs of the members of our community with the most power and privilege — those who have access to resources that allow them to emulate the heterosexual lifestyle. As HRC, GetEQUAL and United for Marriage demonstrated, the rest of our concerns are merely distractions.

The priorities of our movement’s self-appointed leaders reveal their self-interested motivations. You can’t help but wonder whether they’ll still be around to help the rest of us out when marriage equality becomes a reality. In their apologies,

all three groups promised that they are committed to issues beyond marriage. In the weeks, months, and years to come, we must hold them accountable to this claim.

## **Trans Basics: Glossary Of Terms From the Gender Identity Project**

**To read online (and watch a video), click [here](#) or visit:**

**<https://lgbtlatestscience.wordpress.com/2009/12/20/transgender-basics-video-and-vocabulary/>**

### **TRANSGENDER-SPECIFIC TERMINOLOGY**

#### **Transgender**

**An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term may include but is not limited to: transsexuals, cross-dressers, and other gender-variant people. Transgender people may identify as female-to-male (FTM) or male-to-female (MTF). Use the descriptive term (transgender, transsexual, cross-dresser, FTM or MTF) preferred by the individual. Transgender people may or may not choose to alter their bodies hormonally and/or surgically.**

#### **Transsexual (Transexual)**

**An older term which originated in the medical and psychological communities. Many transgender people prefer the term “transgender” to “transsexual.” Some transsexual people still prefer to use the term to describe themselves. However, unlike transgender, transsexual is not an umbrella term, and many transgender people do not identify as transsexual. It is best to ask which term an individual prefers.**

#### **Gender Non-conforming**

**A term for individuals whose gender expression is different from the societal expectations based on their assigned sex at birth. Gender Non-conforming individuals may or may not pursue any physical changes, such as hormonal or surgical interventions. Gender non-conforming individuals may or may not identify as trans, male or female.**

#### **Genderqueer**

**A term used by some individuals who identify as between genders, or as neither man nor woman. Genderqueer identity may be seen as an identity under the gender non-conforming umbrella. Genderqueer individuals may or may not pursue any physical changes, such as hormonal or surgical intervention. Genderqueer individuals may or may not identify as trans.**

#### **Transition**

**Altering one’s birth sex is not a one-step procedure; it is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time. Transition includes some or all of the following**

**cultural, legal and medical adjustments: telling one's family, friends, and/or co-workers; changing one's name and/or sex on legal documents; hormone therapy; and possibly (though not always) some form of surgical alteration.**

#### **Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)**

**Refers to surgical alteration, and is only one small part of transition (see Transition above). Preferred term to "sex change operation." Not all transgender people choose to or can afford to have SRS. Journalists should avoid overemphasizing the importance of SRS to the transition process.**

#### **Cross-Dressing**

**To occasionally wear clothes traditionally associated with people of the other sex. Cross-dressers are usually comfortable with the sex they were assigned at birth and do not wish to change it. "Cross-dresser" should NOT be used to describe someone who has transitioned to live full-time as the other sex, or who intends to do so in the future. Cross-dressing is a form of gender expression and is not necessarily tied to erotic activity. Cross-dressing is not indicative of sexual orientation.**

#### **TRANSGENDER TERMINOLOGY TO AVOID PROBLEMATIC TERMINOLOGY**

**Problematic: "transgenders," "a transgender"**

**Preferred: "transgender people," "a transgender person"**

**Transgender should be used as an adjective, not as a noun. Do not say, "Tony is a transgender," or "The parade included many transgenders." Instead say, "Tony is a transgender person," or "The parade included many transgender people."**

**Problematic: "transgendered"**

**Preferred: "transgender"**

**The word transgender never needs the extraneous "ed" at the end of the word. In fact, such a construction is grammatically incorrect. Only verbs can be transformed into participles by adding "-ed" to the end of the word, and transgender is an adjective, not a verb.**

**Problematic: "sex change," "pre-operative," "post-operative"**

**Preferred: "transition"**

**Referring to a sex change operation, or using terms such as pre- or post-operative, inaccurately suggests that one must have surgery in order to truly change one's sex.**

**Problematic: "hermaphrodite"**

**Preferred: "intersex person"**

**The word "hermaphrodite" is an outdated, stigmatizing and misleading word, usually used to sensationalize intersex people.**

**"Call Me Caitlyn" Blog Post Response**

**By Laverne Cox**

**To read online click [here](#) or visit:**

<http://lavernecox.tumblr.com/post/120503412651/on-may-29-2014-the-issue-of-timemagazine>

On May 29, 2014, the issue of timemagazine magazine which proclaimed the “Transgender Tipping Point” was revealed with me on the cover. June 1, 2015 a year and 3 days later, Caitlyn Jenner’s vanityfair cover was revealed proclaiming #CallMeCaitlyn I am so moved by all the love and support Caitlyn is receiving. It feels like a new day, indeed, when a trans person can present her authentic self to the world for the first time and be celebrated for it so universally. Many have commented on how gorgeous Caitlyn looks in her photos, how she is “slaying for the Gods.” I must echo these comments in the vernacular, “Yasss Gawd! Werk Caitlyn! Get it!” But this has made me reflect critically on my own desires to ‘work a photo shoot’, to serve up various forms of glamour, power, sexiness, body affirming, racially empowering images of the various sides of my black, trans womanhood. I love working a photo shoot and creating inspiring images for my fans, for the world and above all for myself. But I also hope that it is my talent, my intelligence, my heart and spirit that most captivate, inspire, move and encourage folks to think more critically about the world around them. Yes, Caitlyn looks amazing and is beautiful but what I think is most beautiful about her is her heart and soul, the ways she has allowed the world into her vulnerabilities. The love and devotion she has for her family and that they have for her. Her courage to move past denial into her truth so publicly. These things are beyond beautiful to me. A year ago when my Time magazine cover came out I saw posts from many trans folks saying that I am “drop dead gorgeous” and that that doesn’t represent most trans people. (It was news to be that I am drop dead gorgeous but I’ll certainly take it). But what I think they meant is that in certain lighting, at certain angles I am able to embody certain cisnormative beauty standards. Now, there are many trans folks because of genetics and/or lack of material access who will never be able to embody these standards. More importantly many trans folks don’t want to embody them and we shouldn’t have to to be seen as ourselves and respected as ourselves . It is important to note that these standards are also infomed by race, class and ability among other intersections. I have always been aware that I can never represent all trans people. No one or two or three trans people can. This is why we need diverse media representstions of trans folks to multiply trans narratives in the media and depict our beautiful diversities. I started #TransIsBeautiful as a way to celebrate all those things that make trans folks uniquely trans, those things that don’t necessarily align with cisnormative beauty standards. For me it is necessary everyday to celebrate every aspect of myself especially those things about myself that don’t align with other people’s ideas about what is beautiful. #TransIsBeautiful is about, whether you’re trans or not, celebrating all those things that make us uniquely ourselves. Most trans folks don’t have the privileges Caitlyn and I have now have. It is those trans folks we must continue to lift up, get them access to healthcare, jobs, housing, safe streets, safe schools and homes for our young people. We must lift up the

stories of those most at risk, statistically trans people of color who are poor and working class. I have hoped over the past few years that the incredible love I have received from the public can translate to the lives of all trans folks. Trans folks of all races, gender expressions, ability, sexual orientations, classes, immigration status, employment status, transition status, genital status etc.. I hope, as I know Caitlyn does, that the love she is receiving can translate into changing hearts and minds about who all trans people are as well as shifting public policies to fully support the lives and well being of all of us. The struggle continues...

## **Heterosexual Questionnaire**

To read in full, click [here](https://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/gsc/downloads/resources/Heterosexual_Questionnaire.pdf) or visit:

[https://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/gsc/downloads/resources/Heterosexual\\_Questionnaire.pdf](https://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/gsc/downloads/resources/Heterosexual_Questionnaire.pdf)

**This questionnaire is for self-avowed heterosexuals only. If you are not openly heterosexual, pass it on to a friend who is. Please try to answer the questions as candidly as possible. Your responses will be held in strict confidence and your anonymity fully protected.**

- 1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?**
- 2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?**
- 3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?**
- 4. Could it be that your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?**
- 5. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how can you be sure you wouldn't prefer that?**
- 6. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?**
- 7. Why do heterosexuals feel compelled to seduce others into their lifestyle?**
- 8. Why do you insist on flaunting your heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep it quiet? 9. Would you want your children to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they'd face?**
- 10. A disproportionate majority of child molesters are heterosexual men. Do you consider it safe to expose children to heterosexual male teachers, pediatricians, priests, or scoutmasters?**
- 11. With all the societal support for marriage, the divorce rate is spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?**
- 12. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?**

- 13. Considering the menace of overpopulation, how could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual?**
- 14. Could you trust a heterosexual therapist to be objective? Don't you fear s/he might be inclined to influence you in the direction of her/his own leanings?**
- 15. Heterosexuals are notorious for assigning themselves and one another rigid, stereotyped sex roles. Why must you cling to such unhealthy role-playing?**
- 16. With the sexually segregated living conditions of military life, isn't heterosexuality incompatible with military service?**
- 17. How can you enjoy an emotionally fulfilling experience with a person of the other sex when there are such vast differences between you? How can a man know what pleases a woman sexually or vice-versa?**
- 18. Shouldn't you ask your far-out straight cohorts, like skinheads and bornagains, to keep quiet? Wouldn't that improve your image?**
- 19. Why are heterosexuals so promiscuous?**
- 20. Why do you attribute heterosexuality to so many famous lesbian and gay people? Is it to justify your own heterosexuality?**
- 21. How can you hope to actualize your God-given homosexual potential if you limit yourself to exclusive, compulsive heterosexuality?**
- 22. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed that might enable you to change if you really want to. After all, you never deliberately chose to be a heterosexual, did you? Have you considered aversion therapy or Heterosexuals Anonymous?**

### **Perfect Victims, Perfect Narratives**

**By s. e. smith**

**To read online, click [here](http://meloukhia.net/2012/05/perfect_victims_perfect_narratives/) or visit:**

**[http://meloukhia.net/2012/05/perfect\\_victims\\_perfect\\_narratives/](http://meloukhia.net/2012/05/perfect_victims_perfect_narratives/)**

**People involved in any sort of service, community, or activism work that involves interaction with the court system are well aware of the need for 'perfect victims,' people who can serve as adequate test cases in the legal environment because their narratives are flawless and beyond reproach. An attorney working with victims of domestic violence, for example, knows that it will be hard to get a conviction if the client fought back or has a criminal record. Rape victims are only good on the stand if they can tell the right kind of story, the one where they were innocently minding their own business and weren't trans, or poor, or sex workers, or people with any sort of history. Young men who are murdered by police or overzealous vigilantes are only public causes to rally around if they, too, were pure and innocent, with nothing to besmirch their reputations.**

The need for victims to be perfect is an awful bind to be caught in; even people who hate the perfect victim narrative may need to play by the rules in the interest of what they think of as the greater good. An attorney won't bring a case to court if the outcome is predetermined, or if it's likely to be traumatic and pointless for the client, for example, because it serves no function. People laying the groundwork for a precedent want to find the best possible representative to create a rock-solid foundation, so that the precedent will be unassailable. This narrative is advanced by the media, and reinforced by the media, in the way it reports on these issues, and conservatives are quick to take advantage of it. In any case where an unfairness and a wrongness is in the public eye, there is a rush to find something 'wrong' with the victim, some reason the case doesn't matter and can't be taken seriously. She was asking for it. He shouldn't have behaved suspiciously. She was a drug user. He was a rent boy. She had a history, you know. He shouldn't have been out in that neighbourhood.

An awareness of the perfect victim narrative is important, and it's critical to acknowledge that sometimes people are forced to sacrifice or make bad choices because of the predominance of this narrative in the system. We are doing no one any good if we pretend that it doesn't exist and isn't a problem. At the same time, though, it is important to avoid being consumed by it, and to prevent the tendency to play into it when it's not necessary; pushing back against the perfect victim narrative is the only way to abolish it.

In the Trayvon Martin case that burst into the public eye in March, many people reacted with outrage and horror to the initial story, of a young man shot to death while walking home with a pack of Skittles for his brother. The shooter's defense team quickly turned to smearing him, attempting to make the case out as an act of self-defense, but also specifically casting aspersions on Mr. Martin's character, making him seem like a suspicious kid with a bad history. This was deliberate, not just because they wanted to win their case, but because they know that by undermining Mr. Martin's character, they could weaken the outrage.

By turning him from a perfect victim into someone more nebulous, or at least creating the illusion of doing so, or suggesting that there might be more to Mr. Martin's life than was originally discussed, they created a ripple effect that slowly spread out. Questioning started to spread. They turned the victim into one of those boys people don't care about, the ones who don't provoke anger across race and class barriers because they die every day. They didn't just build a case for themselves; they reminded people about the perfect victim narrative and the need for all victims to be spotless if they want justice.

In the United States, there is a claim that justice is blind, and people can access it without prejudice if they have been mistreated or are victims of inequality. This is not upheld with the actual enforcement of justice in the United States, and the way justice really works on the ground, rather than in the halls of theory. One reason for this is social attitudes about perfect victims, and the responsibility of victims to society to meet their expectations about what a victim should look like, how victims should behave, and how a victim should testify about the experience of violence or abuse.

Progressives play into this by taking up the cause of perfect victims, rallying around them with their petitions and outcry while ignoring the less perfect victims. There are all sorts of excuses for this; some advocates, like people working directly in institutions to change them, argue that they want to create a precedent, a stepping stone or foundation block that can be used to progress to more systemic change in the long term. Others are ignorant of other cases, because they don't take the time to look, or they ignore these cases when they are presented, since they don't match their impression of what a victim should look like; they claim to be advocating for communities, but don't work with the people in those communities who are working full time for justice and a better chance at equality.

For every *cause celebre*, every perfect victim who captures media and political attention, scores of people go unremarked and are lost to the flow of time, remembered only by their families and a handful of community members. Because they weren't perfect victims, and only perfect victims garner attention. *All* of these cases represent a horrible wrongness, and *all* victims deserve justice.

## **I Want a 24-Hour Truce During Which There Is No Rape**

### **By Andrea Dworkin**

It is astonishing that in all our worlds of feminism and antisexism we never talk seriously about ending rape. Ending it. Stopping it. No more. No more rape.

This was a speech given at the Midwest Regional Conference of the National Organization for Changing Men in the fall of 1983 in St. Paul, Minnesota. One of the organizers kindly sent me a tape and a transcript of my speech. The magazine of the men's movement, *M.*, published it. I was teaching in Minneapolis. This was before Catharine MacKinnon and I had proposed or developed the civil rights approach to pornography as a legislative strategy. Lots of people were in the audience who later became key players in the fight for the civil rights bill. I didn't know them. It was an audience of about 500 men, with scattered women. I spoke from notes and was actually on my way to Idaho – an eight-hour trip each way (because of bad air connection) to give a one-hour speech on Art – fly out Saturday, come back Sunday, can't talk more than one hour or you'll miss the only plane leaving that day, you have to run from the podium to the car for the two-hour drive to the plane. Why would a militant feminist under this kind of pressure stop off on her way to the airport to say hi to 500 men? In a sense, this was a feminist dream-come-true. What would you say to 500 men if you could? This is what I said, how I used my chance. The men reacted with considerable love and support and also with considerable anger. Both. I hurried out to get my plane, the first hurdle for getting to Idaho. Only one man in the 500 threatened me physically. He was stopped by a woman bodyguard (and friend) who had accompanied me. I have thought a great deal about how a feminist, like myself, addresses an audience primarily of political men who say that they are antisexist. And I thought a lot about whether there should be a qualitative difference in the kind of speech I address to you. And then I found myself incapable of pretending that I

really believe that that qualitative difference exists. I have watched the men's movement for many years. I am close with some of the people who participate in it. I can't come here as a friend even though I might very much want to. What I would like to do is to scream: and in that scream I would have the screams of the raped, and the sobs of the battered; and even worse, in the center of that scream I would have the deafening sound of women's silence, that silence into which we are born because we are women and in which most of us die.

And if there would be a plea or a question or a human address in that scream, it would be this: why are you so slow? Why are you so slow to understand the simplest things; not the complicated ideological things, you understand those. The simple things. The clichés. Simply that women are human to precisely the degree and quality that you are.

And also: that we do not have time. We women. We don't have forever. Some of us don't have another week or another day to take time for you to discuss whatever it is that will enable you to go out into those streets and do something. We are very close to death. All women are. And we are very close to rape and we are very close to beating.

And we are inside a system of humiliation from which there is no escape for us. We use statistics not to try to quantify the injuries, but to convince the world that those injuries even exist. Those statistics are not abstractions. It is easy to say, "Ah, the statistics, somebody writes them up one way and somebody writes them up another way." That's true. But I hear about the rapes one by one by one by one, which is also how they happen. Those statistics are not abstract to me. Every three minutes a woman is being raped. Every eighteen seconds a woman is being beaten. There is nothing abstract about it. It is happening right now as I am speaking.

And it is happening for a simple reason. There is nothing complex and difficult about the reason. Men are doing it, because of the kind of power that men have over women. The power is real, concrete, exercised from one body to another body, exercised by someone who feels he has a right to exercise it, exercised in public and exercised in private. It is the sum and substance of women's oppression.

It is not done 5,000 miles away or 3,000 miles away. It is done here and it is done now and it is done by the people in this room as well as by other contemporaries: our friends, our neighbors, people that we know. Women don't have to go to school to learn about power. We just have to be women, walking down the street or trying to get the housework done after having given one's body in marriage and then having no rights over it.

The power exercised by men day-to-day in life is power that is institutionalized. It is protected by law. It is protected by religion and religious practice. It is protected by universities, which are strongholds of male supremacy. It is protected by a police force.

It is protected by those whom Shelley called "the unacknowledged legislators of the world": the poets, the artists. Against that power, we have silence.

It is an extraordinary thing to try to understand and confront why it is that men believe – and men do believe – that they have the right to rape. Men may not

believe it when asked. Everybody raise your hand who believes you have the right to rape. Not too many hands will go up. It's in life that men believe they have the right to force sex, which they don't call rape. And it is an extraordinary thing to try to understand that men really believe that they have the right to hit and to hurt. And it is an equally extraordinary thing to try to understand that men really believe that they have the right to buy a woman's body for the purpose of having sex: that that is a right. And it is very amazing to try to understand that men believe that the seven-billion-dollar-a-year industry that provides men with cunts is something that men have a right to.

That is the way the power of men is manifest in real life. That is what theory about male supremacy means. It means you can rape. It means you can hit. It means you can hurt. It means you can buy and sell women. It means that there is a class of people there to provide you with what you need. You stay richer than they are, so that they have to sell you sex. Not just on street corners, but in the workplace. That's another right that you can presume to have: sexual access to any woman in your environment, when you want.

Now, the men's movement suggests that men don't want the kind of power I have just described. I've actually heard explicit whole sentences to that effect. And yet, everything is a reason not to do something about changing the fact that you do have that power.

Hiding behind guilt, that's my favorite. I love that one. Oh, it's horrible, yes, and I'm so sorry. You have the time to feel guilty. We don't have the time for you to feel guilty. Your guilt is a form of acquiescence in what continues to occur. Your guilt helps keep things the way they are.

I have heard in the last several years a great deal about the suffering of men over sexism. Of course, I have heard a great deal about the suffering of men all my life. Needless to say, I have read Hamlet. I have read King Lear. I am an educated woman. I know that men suffer. This is a new wrinkle. Implicit in the idea that this is a different kind of suffering is the claim, I think, that in part you are actually suffering because of something that you know happens to someone else. That would indeed be new.

But mostly your guilt, your suffering, reduces to: gee, we really feel so bad. Everything makes men feel so bad: what you do, what you don't do, what you want to do, what you don't want to want to do but are going to do anyway. I think most of your distress is: gee, we really feel so bad. And I'm sorry that you feel so bad – so uselessly and stupidly bad – because there is a way in which this really is your tragedy. And I don't mean because you can't cry. And I don't mean because there is no real intimacy in your lives. And I don't mean because the armor that you have to live with as men is stultifying: and I don't doubt that it is. But I don't mean any of that. I mean that there is a relationship between the way that women are raped and your socialization to rape and the war machine that grinds you up and spits you out: the war machine that you go through just like that woman went through Larry Flynt's meat grinder on the cover of Hustler. You dick well better believe that you're involved in this tragedy and that it's your tragedy too. Because you're turned into little soldier boys from the day that you are born and everything that you learn about

how to avoid the humanity of women becomes part of the militarism of the country in which you live and the world in which you live. It is also part of the economy that you frequently claim to protest.

And the problem is that you think it's out there: and it's not out there. It's in you.

The pimps and the warmongers speak for you. Rape and war are not so different. And what the pimps and the warmongers do is that they make you so proud of being men who can get it up and give in hard. And they take that acculturated sexuality and they put you in little uniforms and they send you out to kill and to die. Now, I am not going to suggest to you that I think that's more important than what you do to women, because I don't.

But I think that if you want to look at what this system does to you, then that is where you should start looking: the sexual politics of aggression; the sexual politics of militarism. I think that men are very afraid of other men. That is something that you sometimes try to address in your small groups, as if if [sic] you changed your attitudes towards each other, you wouldn't be afraid of each other.

But as long as your sexuality has to do with aggression and your sense of entitlement to humanity has to do with being superior to other people, and there is so much contempt and hostility in your attitudes towards women and children, how could you not be afraid of each other? I think that you rightly perceive – without being willing to face it politically – that men are very dangerous: because you are.

The solution of the men's movement to make men less dangerous to each other by changing the way you touch and feel each other is not a solution. It's a recreational break.

These conferences are also concerned with homophobia. Homophobia is very important: it is very important to the way male supremacy works. In my opinion, the prohibitions against male homosexuality exist in order to protect male power. Do it to her. That is to say: as long as men rape, it is very important that men be directed to rape women. As long as sex is full of hostility and expresses both power over and contempt for the other person, it is very important that men not be declassified, stigmatized as female, used similarly. The power of men as a class depends on keeping men sexually inviolate and women sexually used by men. Homophobia helps maintain that class power: it also helps keep you as individuals safe from each other, safe from rape. If you want to do something about homophobia, you are going to have to do something about the fact that men rape, and that forced sex is not incidental to male sexuality but is in practice paradigmatic. Some of you are very concerned about the rise of the Right in this country, as if that is something separate from the issues of feminism or the men's movement. There is a cartoon I saw that brought it all together nicely. It was a big picture of Ronald Reagan as a cowboy with a big hat and a gun. And it said: "A gun in every holster; a pregnant woman in every home. Make America a man again." Those are the politics of the Right.

If you are afraid of the ascendancy of fascism in this country – and you would be very foolish not to be right now – then you had better understand that the root issue here has to do with male supremacy and the control of women; sexual access to women; women as reproductive slaves; private ownership of women. That is the

program of the Right. That is the morality they talk about. That is what they mean. That is what they want. And the only opposition to them that matters is an opposition to men owning women.

What's involved in doing something about all of this? The men's movement seems to stay stuck on two points. The first is that men don't really feel very good about themselves. How could you? The second is that men come to me or other feminists and say: "What you're saying about men isn't true. It isn't true of me. I don't feel that way. I'm opposed to all of this."

And I say: don't tell me. Tell the pornographers. Tell the pimps. Tell the warmakers. Tell the rape apologists and the rape celebrationists and the pro-rape ideologues. Tell the novelists who think that rape is wonderful. Tell Larry Flynt. Tell Hugh Hefner. There's no point in telling me. I'm only a woman. There's nothing I can do about it. These men presume to speak for you. They are in the public arena saying that they represent you. If they don't, then you had better let them know.

Then there is the private world of misogyny: what you now about each other; what you say in private life; the exploitation that you see in the private sphere; the relationships called love, based on exploitation. It's not enough to find some traveling feminist on the road and go up to her and say: "Gee, I hate it."

Say it to your friends who are doing it. And there are streets out there on which you can say these things loud and clear, so as to affect the actual institutions that maintain these abuses. You don't like pornography? I wish I could believe it's true. I will believe it when I see you on the streets. I will believe it when I see an organized political opposition. I will believe it when pimps go out of business because there are no more male consumers.

You want to organize men. You don't have to search for issues. The issues are part of the fabric of your everyday lives. I want to talk to you about equality, what equality is and what it means. It isn't just an idea. It's not some insipid word that ends up being bullshit. It doesn't have anything at all to do with all those statements like: "Oh, that happens to men too." I name an abuse and I hear: "Oh, it happens to men too." That is not the equality we are struggling for. We could change our strategy and say: well, okay, we want equality; we'll stick something up the ass of a man every three minutes.

You've never heard that from the feminist movement, because for us equality has real dignity and importance – it's not some dumb word that can be twisted and made to look stupid as if it had no real meaning.

As a way of practicing equality, some vague idea about giving up power is useless. Some men have vague thoughts about a future in which men are going to give up power or an individual man is going to give up some kind of privilege that he has.

That is not what equality means either.

Equality is a practice. It is an action. It is a way of life. It is a social practice. It is an economic practice. It is a sexual practice. It can't exist in a vacuum. You can't have it in your home if, when the people leave the home, he is in a world of his supremacy based on the existence of his cock and she is in a world of humiliation

and degradation because she is perceived to be inferior and because her sexuality is a curse.

This is not to say that the attempt to practice equality in the home doesn't matter. It matters, but it is not enough. If you love equality, if you believe in it, if it is the way you want to live – not just men and women together in a home, but men and men together in a home and women and women together in a home – if equality is what you want and what you care about, then you have to fight for the institutions that will make it socially real.

It is not just a matter of your attitude. You can't think it and make it exist. You can't try sometimes, when it works to your advantage, and throw it out the rest of the time. Equality is a discipline. It is a way of life. It is a political necessity to create equality in institutions. And another thing about equality is that it cannot coexist with rape. It cannot. And it cannot coexist with pornography or with prostitution or with the economic degradation of women on any level, in any way. It cannot coexist, because implicit in all those things is the inferiority of women.

I want to see this men's movement make a commitment to ending rape because that is the only meaningful commitment to equality. It is astonishing that in all our worlds of feminism and antisexism we never talk seriously about ending rape. Ending it. Stopping it. No more. No more rape. In the back of our minds, are we holding on to its inevitability as the last preserve of the biological? Do we think that it is always going to exist no matter what we do? All of our political actions are lies if we don't make a commitment to ending the practice of rape. This commitment has to be political. It has to be serious. It has to be systematic. It has to be public. It can't be self-indulgent.

The things the men's movement has wanted are things worth having. Intimacy is worth having. Tenderness is worth having. Cooperation is worth having. A real emotional life is worth having. But you can't have them in a world with rape. Ending homophobia is worth doing. But you can't do it in a world with rape. Rape stands in the way of each and every one of those things you say you want. And by rape you know what I mean. A judge does not have to walk into this room and say that according to statute such and such these are the elements of proof. We're talking about any kind of coerced sex, including sex coerced by poverty.

You can't have equality or tenderness or intimacy as long as there is rape, because rape means terror. It means that part of the population lives in a state of terror and pretends – to please and pacify you – that it doesn't. So there is no honesty. How can there be? Can you imagine what it is like to live as a woman day in and day out with the threat of rape? Or what it is to live with the reality? I want to see you use those legendary bodies and that legendary strength and that legendary courage and the tenderness that you say you have in behalf of women; and that means against the rapists, against the pimps, and against the pornographers. It means something more than a personal renunciation. It means a systematic, political, active, public attack. And there has been very little of that.

I came here today because I don't believe that rape is inevitable or natural. If I did, I would have no reason to be here. If I did, my political practice would be

different than it is. Have you ever wondered why we are not just in armed combat against you?

It's not because there's a shortage of kitchen knives in this country. It is because we believe in your humanity, against all the evidence. We do not want to do the work of helping you to believe in your humanity. We cannot do it anymore. We have always tried. We have been repaid with systematic exploitation and systematic abuse. You are going to have to do this yourselves from now on and you know it.

The shame of men in front of women is, I think, an appropriate response both to what men do do and to what men do not do. I think you should be ashamed. But what you do with that shame is to use it as an excuse to keep doing what you want and to keep not doing anything else: and you've got to stop. You've got to stop. Your psychology doesn't matter. How much you hurt doesn't matter in the end any more than how much we hurt matters. If we sat around and only talked about how much rape hurt us, do you think there would have been one of the changes that you have seen in this country in the last fifteen years? There wouldn't have been.

It is true that we had to talk to each other. How else, after all, were we supposed to find out that each of us was not the only woman in the world not asking for it to whom rape or battery had ever happened? We couldn't read it in the newspapers, not then.

We couldn't find a book about it. But you do know and now the question is what you are going to do: and so your shame and your guilt are very much beside the point. They don't matter to us at all, in any way. They're not good enough. They don't do anything.

As a feminist, I carry the rape of all the women I've talked to over the past ten years personally with me. As a woman, I carry my own rape with me. Do you remember pictures that you've seen of European cities during the plague, when there were wheelbarrows that would go along and people would just pick up corpses and throw them in? Well, that is what it is like knowing about rape. Piles and piles and piles of bodies that have whole lives and human names and human faces.

I speak for many feminists, not only myself, when I tell you that I am tired of what I know and sad beyond any words I have about what has already been done to women up to this point, now, up to 2:24 P.M. on this day, here in this place. And I want one day of respite, one day off, one day in which no new bodies are piled up, one day in which no new agony is added to the old, and I am asking you to give it to me. And how could I ask you for less – it is so little. And how could you offer me less: it is so little. Even in wars, there are days of truce. Go and organize a truce.

Stop your side for one day. I want a twenty-four-hour truce during which there is no rape.

I dare you to try it. I demand that you try it. I don't mind begging you to try it.

What else could you possibly be here to do? What else could this movement possibly mean? What else could matter so much?

And on that day, that day of truce, that day when not one woman is raped, we will begin the real practice of equality, because we can't begin it before that day. Before that day it means nothing because it is nothing: it is not real; it is not true.

But on that day it becomes real. And then, instead of rape we will for the first time in our lives – both men and women – begin to experience freedom.

If you have a conception of freedom that includes the existence of rape, you are wrong. You cannot change what you say you want to change. For myself, I want to experience just one day of real freedom before I die. I leave you here to do that for me and for the women whom you say you love.

Ableism – A form of discrimination or social prejudice against people with disabilities.

## #SolidarityIsForTheAbleBodied and Feminism's **Ableism** Problem

By Annamarya Scacci

To read online, click [here](#) or visit:

<http://rhrealitycheck.org/article/2013/12/19/solidarityisfortheablebodied-and-feminisms-ableism-problem/>

“The world, as imperfect as it is, it is not built for the disabled community,” Neal Carter said over the phone one late November morning.

At the time, it had been a few weeks since #SolidarityIsForTheAbleBodied trended on Twitter, and [Carter](#), who was born with spina bifida, was explaining the motivation behind the hashtag he created. Both an extension of his #Ableism101 tag and a play on [Mikki Kendall](#)'s work starting #SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen, #SolidarityIsForTheAbleBodied aimed to spark a conversation among people with disabilities who “have to fight, and *hard*, to adapt ... to fit into the world,” Carter, a political consultant who lives in Maryland, said.

More so, it was meant to uncover the ableism experienced daily by the [one in five people in the United States who has a disability](#). Just [take a quick scan](#) of the hashtag on Twitter, and you'll [read tweet after tweet](#) of inequitable treatment. Denied government benefits because you're not “disabled enough”? [Check](#). Confronted by a “take the stairs” campaign when you use a wheelchair? [Check](#). Avoided visiting the doctor's because it's inaccessible? [Check](#). Told your depression is nothing but temporary sadness and that you should “just smile”? [Check](#). While #SolidarityIsForTheAbleBodied shined a light on incidents of able-bodied privilege from across the globe, showing how ableism is a systemic issue in all political and societal respects, it also revealed something that has long been known by some, but that has been unrecognized by others: that [feminism has an ableism problem](#).

Plenty of well-known feminists have been known to use [ableist speech](#)—language invoking disability as a metaphor, typically in the pejorative. For instance, Caitlin Moran [described her teenage self](#) in her 2011 memoir, *How to Be a Woman*, as having “all the joyful ebullience of a retard.” On December 14, Lizz Winstead [tweeted that](#) President Obama is “surrounded by so many wildly gesturing loonies” in his day-to-day life, in response to the [controversy surrounding the sign language interpreter](#) at Nelson Mandela's memorial. And last year Jezebel editor Jessica Coen defended against [allegations](#) that the blog is ableist by [tweeting](#), “[T]he word ‘ableist’ is crazy and lame.”

**In an article published earlier this year, Indiana University gender studies grad student Sami Schalk found that indirect ableism is “problematically habitual and historically consistent” in feminist texts, with feminists and women’s rights activists often invoking disability metaphors (such as “crippled,” “handicapped,” “lame,” “crazy,” and “insane”) to “represent inability, loss, and lack in a simplistic and uncritical way” for over a century.**

**“The continued use of mental health ableism, especially by progressives, is my personal bugbear,” Amadi Lovelace, an active participant in #SolidarityIsForTheAbleBodied, said earlier this month. She said she’s unfollowed “many major noted feminists” on social media because of it. “We’re acculturated to consider disability as always a negative. We’re acculturated to think [of] disability as conferring inferiority. We haven’t come to a place yet where we are accepting the equality of disabled people,” she said.**

**Ableist rhetoric is only an overt measure of feminism’s ableism problem, though. For many activists and feminists with disabilities, like Lovelace, able-bodied privilege within the feminist movement is more defined by disregard—a dearth of conversations happening in the most prominent feminist outlets and among some of the more well-known feminists.**

**Disregard for the barriers women with disabilities face accessing reproductive health care, especially in places like Texas, Arizona, Iowa, Michigan, and Ohio, where the number of reproductive health clinics has shrunk due to restrictive legislation.**

**Disregard for the higher rates of poverty, which both exacerbates and is exacerbated by disability. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that 21 percent of people with disabilities are living below the poverty level, which is 10 percent more than those who are able-bodied. And, according to the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, 13.7 percent of women with disabilities were unemployed in 2012, nearly 7 percent more than able-bodied women.**

**Disregard for how sexuality, relationships, and caregiving take shape for people with disabilities, continuing the ubiquitous belief that people with disabilities are asexual.**

**Disregard for the intersection of race and disability—disabilities are most prevalent among American Indians and Alaska Natives (29.9 percent), followed by Black and African-Americans (21.2 percent), whites (20.3 percent), Hispanics (16.9 percent), Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (16. percent), and Asians (11.6 percent).**

**Disregard for how feminist and social justice spheres are too often exclusive of or inaccessible to people with disabilities.**

**As Lovelace noted, there’s disregard for the higher rates of sexual violence experienced by people with disabilities.**

**And then there’s the fact that, as predicted by Twitter user @RobinsToyNet, the most prominent feminist blogs and news sites have given #SolidarityIsForTheAbleBodied little—if any—attention even a month after the topic trended.**

**“We have seen in some place[s] the rate of being victims of sexual violence is doubled for women with profound physical, and especially mental, disabilities,”**

Lovelace said. “If you aren’t verbal, and you can’t tell what happened to you, I don’t think we even know. I don’t think we would know how many people are in those situations, especially ones being cared for in institutional care [who] have been victimized.”

The Bureau of Justice Statistics found that, in 2011 alone, serious violence (including rape and sexual assault) accounted for [43 percent of non-fatal violent crimes](#) committed against people with disabilities; of that, 57 percent occurred against people with multiple disabilities. The bureau also found, from 2009 to 2011, the average annual percent of rape and sexual assault, robbery, and simple assault increased against persons with multiple disabilities.

Meanwhile, data collected by the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (WCSAP) reveals that [83 percent of women with disabilities](#) will experience sexual assault in their lifetime; only 3 percent of cases are ever reported. WCSAP also found that women with disabilities are more susceptible to having a history of intimate partner sexual violence, with a rate that is nearly two-and-a-half times higher than for women without disabilities. Population-based studies examining rates of sexual violence against men with disabilities are limited, but a [2011 report](#) published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* (the first of its kind) found that, in Massachusetts, 13.9 percent of men with disabilities reported lifetime sexual violence—a rate nearly four times higher than for men without disabilities.

And, according to the World Health Organization, children with disabilities [are nearly three times more likely to experience sexual violence](#) than children without disabilities, with children living with mental or intellectual disabilities at nearly five times the risk. WCSAP also found that 54 percent of boys who are deaf and 50 percent of girls who are deaf experienced sexual abuse.

“There’s a knowledge gap because we find young kids—especially [those] who have profound disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities—aren’t taught about being safe in their own bodies, and that people can’t touch them or shouldn’t touch them,” Lovelace said. “We act like this isn’t something that’s possible, that people with profound disabilities have no sexuality. Also, there’s that mindset of innocence. People ascribe innocence to people with profound disabilities and they expect everybody will see them that way.”

But those are just the statistics. The stories are even more traumatic. Early this month, a 30-year-old woman with a mental disability filed a federal lawsuit [against a West Sacramento police officer](#) for reportedly sexually assaulting her in two separate 2012 incidents. In an unrelated case, Sacramento police [arrested a veteran cop in December 2012](#) for the reported rape of a 76-year-old woman who experienced communication issues after suffering a stroke—a disability the defense [hoped would discredit the victim](#). And in August of this year, another Sacramento man was [sentenced to 11 years in prison](#) for raping his 14-year-old stepdaughter, who has cerebral palsy.

That’s just one city. In July, a 55-year-old Philadelphia man [confessed to raping a 15-year-old girl](#) with severe mental and physical disabilities. In 2012, a 33-year-old man [was charged with](#) sexually molesting two young girls and raping an 18-

year-old woman with a developmental disability at a care facility in Los Gatos, California. In 2011, a Des Moines, Iowa, woman who has an intellectual disability reported being [raped several times over five days by fellow residents](#) at a state-licensed facility. And, going back 13 years, Cobb County, Georgia, police arrested 20 suspects in [the repeated gang rape of a 13-year-old girl with a mental disability](#), which happened over two days at two apartments.

Yet, these occurrences of sexual violence against people with disabilities are rarely discussed in the majority of well-established feminists outlets and blogs—statistics living in the shadows of the “intersectional understanding of feminism,” said Lovelace—

despite [the large network of disability activists and feminists with disabilities](#) doing the work. It’s this exclusion that triggered disability rights activist Rachel Cohen-Rottenberg to [disassociate from the feminist movement](#).

But feminists have the opportunity to change this tide. As with the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality, the feminist movement still has an opportunity to be more inclusive of people with disabilities, both in addressing these sweeping issues more frequently and actively making spaces, materials, websites and other methods of outreach accessible. If #SolidarityIsForTheAbleBodied has taught us anything, achieving this inclusivity is just a matter of listening and broadening your horizons, Lovelace said.

Or, as African activist Agness Chindimba, the founder of the Zimbabwe Deaf Media Trust (and is herself deaf), [so eloquently put it](#): “Disability and issues affecting disabled women do belong to the feminist movement. ... We cannot afford to leave out other women because they are different from us. At the end of the day, whatever gains the movement may make will not be real and sustainable if millions of other women are still oppressed.”

## Harvard Life and Surrounding Communities

### Excerpts from Harvard’s Womanless History

By Lauren Ulrich

To read the full essay, click [here](#) or visit:

<https://harvardmagazine.com/1999/11/womanless.html>

In the opening pages of *A Room of One’s Own*, Virginia Woolf imagines her fictional self walking across the grass at a college she calls Oxbridge when a stern beadle in a cutaway coat intercepts her. His outraged face reminds her that only the “Fellows and Scholars” are allowed on the grass. A few minutes later, inspired by her reverie on a passage from Milton, she ascends the steps to the library. “Instantly there issued, like a guardian angel barring the way with a flutter of black gown instead of white wings, a deprecating, silvery, kindly gentleman, who regretted in a low voice as he waved me back that ladies are only admitted to the library if accompanied by a Fellow of the College or furnished with a letter of introduction.”

I thought of these passages late on a summer day in 1997, when I walked into the newly renovated Barker Center for the Humanities at Harvard. There was no living person to be seen in the grand public rooms, but everywhere I turned the eyes of long-dead men looked down at me from their portraits. "What are you doing here?" they seemed to be saying. "Have you a letter of down at me from their portraits. "What are you doing here?" they seemed to be saying. "Have you a letter of introduction?" There was no room on these walls for ladies. Nine eminences, bewhiskered and stiff-collared, asserted the power of Harvard past.

At the gala dedication a few weeks later, the ghosts were less formidable. There were as many women as men in the crowd, and some of them were faculty members. Porter University Professor Helen Vendler gave a graceful dedicatory reading that included lines from Elizabeth Bishop and Adrienne Rich '51, LL.D. '90, as well as Lord Tennyson and Seamus Heaney, Litt.D. '98. Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Jeremy Knowles said how pleased he was that both the chief architect and the project manager for the new Barker Center were women. The tone was light, but both speakers knew that something in the room needed exorcising.

I should have been reconciled, but as I started to leave the building, I felt a tug of something like responsibility. I was going to lecture on *A Room of One's Own* the following week, and I wanted to make sure I could come to terms with my own disquiet on my first visit to Barker Center. Seeing two young women with "Staff" badges near the entrance, I asked if there was someone who might be able to answer a question about the portraits. They pointed to a woman standing in a nearby doorway.

I approached her awkwardly, concerned about raising what might be perceived as a negative question on a day designed for celebration. The renovation was lovely, I told her, but I was puzzled by the portraits. Had the absence of women been discussed?

"Of course, it was discussed," she said briskly. "This is Harvard. Everything gets discussed."

Was she annoyed at me? At the question? Or at a situation that forced her to explain a decision she did not control?

I pushed on. If the issue had been discussed, I asked, what was said? She told me that there had been so much controversy about turning the old Freshman Union into the Barker Center that some people thought it was a good idea to keep some things just as they had been before.

"Besides," she continued, "Harvard doesn't have any portraits of women."

I was stunned by her certainty. "No portraits of women! Not even at Radcliffe?"

"No," she said firmly. "Nothing we could use."

As she walked away, she turned and said, over her shoulder, "*You can't rewrite history.*"

Maybe you can't, I thought, but that's my job description. You can blame the woman in Barker Center--and Virginia Woolf--for this essay. If I hadn't been preparing to teach *A Room of One's Own*, I might not have been so attuned to the subtle

discriminations around me. If the woman in Barker Center hadn't tossed off her quip about history, I wouldn't have been provoked into learning more about Harvard's past.

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Most people assume that history is "what happened" in the long ago. Historians know that history is an account of what happened based on surviving evidence, and that it is shaped by the interests, inclinations, and skills of those who write it. Historians constantly rewrite history not only because we discover new sources of information, but because changing circumstances invite us to bring new questions to old documents. History is limited not only by what we *can* know about the past, but by what we *care* to know.

When I came here in 1995, I naively assumed that female students had been fully integrated into the University. I soon discovered ivy-covered partitions that divided the imaginative as well as the administrative life of the institution. My encounter with the woman in Barker Center epitomized the problem. Obviously, if Harvard had no portraits of women, it couldn't integrate women into a vision of the past that required portraits. But the woman's allusion to history told me that the real problem was not missing artifacts but a curiously constricted sense of what belonged to Harvard's past. In the weeks that followed, I found the same narrow vision everywhere I turned.

The standard assumption was that female students were recent arrivals. Yet by any historical standard, that notion is absurd. Women were studying with Harvard faculty members at the "Harvard Annex" in 1879, 20 years before Henry Lee Higginson donated the money to build what was then called the Harvard Union (later to be transformed into Barker Center). Radcliffe College, chartered in 1894, predated the House system, the tutorial system, and most of the departments now resident in Barker Center. Because it never had its own faculty, its instructors--and sometimes its presidents--were drawn from the Harvard faculty. Radcliffe's history always has been an essential part of Harvard's history, yet few of our custodians of the past have acknowledged that.

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Part of the problem is that the history of women at Harvard is both extraordinarily long and exasperatingly complex. Does the history of undergraduate women at Harvard begin with the Women's Education Association in 1872, the establishment of the Harvard Annex in 1879, the chartering of Radcliffe College in 1894, the merging of classroom instruction in 1943, the awarding of Harvard degrees to Radcliffe students in 1963, or some time earlier or later?

Not long after the Barker Center dedication, Boston newspapers were full of plans for a gala event commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the integration of women into the Harvard freshman dormitories in 1972. Under the direction of Harry Lewis, dean of Harvard College, the College organized seminars for undergraduates, published an expensive picture book honoring recent alumnae, students, and faculty members, and--in a moving ceremony--dedicated a new gate into the Yard to women. Yet where was Radcliffe, some wondered, in this celebration of Harvard's past? The inscriptions on the new gate added to the puzzlement. To the right was a cryptic

quotation from the Puritan poet Anne Bradstreet, who died in 1672, to the left a statement, beautifully engraved in gold, explaining that the gate "was dedicated twenty-five years after women students first moved into Harvard Yard in September of 1972." Intentionally or not, the organizers left a gaping hole between Bradstreet's death and the integration of Harvard dormitories 300 years later.

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There is no conspiracy here, just collective complacency and an ignorance compounded by separatism. Writers and publicists at Harvard have never considered Radcliffe their responsibility. Radcliffe has been too busy negotiating its own status to promote its history.

Fortunately, in the past two years, some people have begun to think more creatively. Rather than take the "great man" approach to its past, the Afro-American studies department, housed on the second floor of Barker Center, embellished one wall with a roster of student photographs dating from the late nineteenth century to 1920. "I wanted our current students to know who came before them," explained Henry Louis Gates Jr., Du Bois professor of the humanities and chairman of the department. By including African-American students who attended Radcliffe as well as those at Harvard, Gates acknowledged the joint histories of the two institutions. He also offered an instructive history in interlocking discrimination. Not only are there fewer female than male students in the gallery, but more of them are represented by blank ovals where photographs are supposed to be.

In an exhibit mounted in November 1998 in conjunction with the conference "Gender at the Gates: New Perspectives on Harvard and Radcliffe History," Harvard archivists Patrice Donaghue, Robin McElheny, and Brian Sullivan took an even more innovative approach. Their introduction offers an expansive view of women's history:

**Q: Since when have there been women at Harvard?**

**A: From the establishment of the "College at Newtowne" in 1636 to the present, the Harvard community has included women.**

**Q: Then where can we find them?**

**A: Everywhere--from the Yard dormitories, where they swept the halls and made the beds, to the library, where they cataloged the books and dusted the shelves--and nowhere, their documentary traces hidden between the entries in directories that include only faculty and officers, or missing from the folders of correspondence that they typed and filed.**

Despite the obvious problem with sources, the archivists were astonished at how much they *could* document once they put their minds to it. "From our initial fear that an exhibition on women at Harvard would barely fill one display case," they wrote, "we found that we could amass enough evidence to fill twice as many cases as we have at our disposal." Vivid examples of such material turned up in the booklet *Women in Lamont* published last May by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences'

**Task Force on Women and Leadership. Using old *Crimson* articles, photographs, and "Cliffe" songs, the designers vividly recreated the controversy in the 1960s over admitting female students to Lamont Library.**

**Meanwhile, the difficulties of integrating women into an already established and overflowing narrative were strikingly displayed in the timelines published in 1998 in *Harvard Magazine's* centennial-year issues. Among the 45 historical events featured, nine mention women, clear evidence of a desire for a more inclusive history. Yet a close look at the actual entries is disappointing. In brief textual references we learn that the library named for *Titanic* victim Harry Elkins Widener was given "by his mother," that the Biological Laboratories built in 1931 are "guarded by Katharine Lane Weems's rhinos," and that Professor Howard Mumford Jones once described Memorial Church as "Emily Dickinson above, but pure Mae West below." Six entries include pictures of women, but in only one case--the photograph of Radcliffe president Matina Horner signing a "nonmerger merger" agreement with Harvard president Derek Bok in 1971--are women portrayed as actually doing anything. Harvard men build buildings, conquer disease, play football, appoint cabinets, give speeches, and confront the press, but the women pictured are apparently distinguished only because they were the "first" of something. In 1904, "Helen Keller became Radcliffe's first blind graduate."\* In 1920, the appearance of women in a photograph of students from the new Graduate School of Education underlines the fact that the school was "the first Harvard department to admit men and women on equal terms." In 1948, Helen Maud Cam "becomes the University's first tenured woman."**

**In the two other entries, there is a subtle--and no doubt unintentional--washing out of female activism. Here the contrast between the descriptions of women and related entries about men is striking. The "era of angry political activism" between 1966 and 1971 is symbolized in a photograph of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara trapped near Quincy House, but when the timeline pictures female students moving into Winthrop House in 1970, the prose turns cute. "The times, they are a-changing," it says, as though feminist agitation had nothing to do with this radical transformation in undergraduate life.**

**Most telling is the treatment of two incidents of labor conflict, one involving men, the other women. The male story from 1919 is all action. The verbs convey the drama: "Boston policemen strike. Lecturer Harold Laski, a political theorist, supports them. The Board of Overseers interrogates Laski. President A. Lawrence Lowell...defends him, but Laski departs for the London School of Economics." In contrast, the description of a 1954 labor conflict at Harvard is playful: "Biddies, more politely 'goodies,' cease making the beds of undergraduates. Their future has looked cloudy since 1950, when they mentioned a raise in pay. Former head cheerleader Roger L. Butler '51 had described daily maid service as Harvard's 'one last remnant of gracious living.'" Astonishingly, the illustration accompanying this entry appears to be from the nineteenth century. By the time we get to 1988 and the successful organization of the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers, women have disappeared entirely. The union is represented by its campaign button, reading "We**

**Can't Eat Prestige."** There is no clue in the text that the leader of the union, Kris Rondeau, and most of the members were female.

**Still, the decision to include Radcliffe students and female workers in the Harvard timeline is significant. Harvard Observed is also a great improvement on other recent Harvard histories. Bethell is best at pointing out the ironies in Harvard's treatment of women. Summarizing the achievements of Alice Hamilton, appointed to the medical-school faculty in 1919, he observes: "Hamilton's appointment did not entitle her to use the Faculty Club, sit on the Commencement platform, or apply for football tickets." His juicy tidbits from the old alumni magazines remind us that Harvard men, too, participated in the emancipation of women--though usually not with the support of the University**

If you get the chance, check out the portrait in Winthrop House's (upperclassmen house) Junior Common Room! Treasurer of the US, Rosie Rios, recently became the first Latina to have her portrait unveiled in the college!

**administration. In 1911, when the Harvard Men's League for Woman Suffrage invited British suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst to speak in Sanders Theatre, the Corporation refused them the use of the hall. In 1963,**

**undergraduate columnist Edward Grossman reported in the *Alumni Bulletin* that a reverse panty raid by Radcliffe students on John Winthrop House had "focused a cold, hard light on the most compelling problem in this community: the integration of Radcliffe into the academic and social company of Harvard, on equal terms and no eyebrows raised." The quote from Grossman is intriguing, but unfortunately we learn nothing at all about the Radcliffe women.**

### **"I Am Fine"**

**By Anonymous, a Crimson Staff Writer**

**To read online, click [here](http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2011/2/17/harvard-many-feel-out/) or visit:**

**<http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2011/2/17/harvard-many-feel-out/>**

**I feel like I should remember the first time I came close to committing suicide, as if it's something along the lines of a first kiss. I guess it should be one of those things that produces a rush of sensory imagery with the slightest trigger. You're meant to remember some soft noise humming in your ear, a faint trembling of the body, a detailed image of what was around you—even though your eyes were closed. It should be one of those moments, the kind that remains vivid even as the rest of your past blurs and fades away; it's the kind that you're supposed to remember, right? I don't.**

**I can only talk in generalities, what it was like every time I felt like this. There were always tears—lots of them—my shirt wet as they seeped down my cheeks, paused at my chin, dropped to my chest. I would be sitting on my bed, fixated on a single point in the room, my eyesight transitioning in and out of focus. At times I saw everything—my face smiling back at me from glossy pictures on the walls, the days on my hanging calendar, days I never wanted to face—at others, only my thoughts. There was always some reason to feel meaningless. Most importantly, it was always night.**

I played out scenarios in my head. My knife was on the top shelf of my bookcase, my fourth-floor window could be easily opened, my roommate wouldn't be back for another hour or so.

Eventually, I would begin to turn the knife over in my hand. It provided no guarantee. What if I didn't do it properly? I wasn't looking for a cry for help, I was looking for a way out. I would open my window, delicately balancing so that my torso leaned precariously near the tipping point. Then came the painful deliberation.

"All I would have to do is tilt a little farther forward."

"The fall would feel nice."

"But it's only the fourth floor, what if it doesn't work?"

"Am I really that worried about the pain?"

"What if I regret my decision just before it ends?"

It was this last question that saved me. Somehow, my lack of confidence in the future both made me desire to end my life and prevented me from doing so. Feeling all the more inadequate, I would turn on the shower, remove my damp clothes, and sit on the cold tiled floor. A thousand more water droplets washed away my own.

There were many nights like this. No matter how many times I reasoned my way out of it, the darkness always washed over me once more. I could not prevent night from falling. Tears, glossy pictures, misery—these are the things that consumed me. Without any faith in life beyond death, I saw no point in prolonging the inevitable. Why continue to exist?

For a number of reasons, returning to campus at the beginning of this year was very difficult for me. The end of freshman year had left me feeling abandoned by those I had considered to be my closest friends. I filled my schedule with clubs, activities, and classes to avoid the isolation I felt when I was idle. When you're running from one meeting to the next, it becomes easy to forget how alone you really are.

But while I could fill my days with meetings and work, I had little control over my nights. It's hard to escape the truth when you are left alone with it. It was a reality I continued to run from.

Terrified of being by myself, I spent all my time with my boyfriend. We ate meals together, took classes together, did the same activities. He was there for me every single night as I cried for no reason other than sadness. He gave things up, knowing that I would break down at the mere mention of most social events. He took the knife out of my hand. He picked me up off the shower floor. He was the one constant in my life.

I can only describe the feeling as physical, all-consuming. Any moment my mind began to idle, thoughts of suicide would consume me. Looking out of a window, I tried to feel the fall. Swimming laps, I would imagine fluid filling my lungs.

The worst part? I felt guilty.

You're not supposed to attend Harvard and get depressed. You're supposed to attend Harvard and take advantage of opportunities. Opportunities. "Isn't it amazing being there? There are so many things you can do!" "You go to Harvard? That's so wonderful, you must have so many options." "There are just so many things to take

advantage of there.” You’re not supposed to complain about the fact that you go to Harvard. It’s the dream. You are supposed to go to Harvard and do things, make the most of it.

“Yeah, it’s a great place. There are so many possibilities,” I would usually say.

But it wasn’t just the outsiders who made me feel ashamed. Even at school I was surrounded by thousands of other students—all of them able to manage the same difficulties that had rendered me hopeless. They wrote papers, chaired activities, networked, partied, all with an air of ease.

“Hey, how’s it going?”

“Ohmygodlamsoooobusylhavethreepsetsandtwopaperstowritetonightbutitistotallynfine.”

Effortless perfection. I was the exception. I was the one who was incapable of handling all the wonderful opportunities that Harvard presented me with.

At least that’s what I thought.

One day, I decided to talk to someone. Not as in talking to a professional, I had tried that already. I mean, I had an actual conversation with another student at work. Instead of joking about lack of sleep and 20-page papers, I opened up. For the first time, I discussed what was really going wrong in my life. I told her about what had happened, the constant physical pressure that I felt on every inch of my body, the apathy with which I now looked at every aspect of my life. I told her I wanted to die.

In turn, she opened up to me.

Here was someone with whom I sat in an office every single week yet knew very little about. Who else might be feeling what I was feeling? Who else might feel like they are the only one? I started talking to more people. I started to ask questions and I stopped accepting “psetclubactivitypaperNOSLEEP” as a response. The things I learned both allowed me to share what I was going through and helped me to realize that what I was experiencing did not warrant feelings of shame. By the time finals period came, my nights didn’t seem so daunting.

J-Term provided me with the time necessary to complete the process; leaving Harvard allowed me to reevaluate what I wanted out of my four years here. I strengthened ties with friends who were positive influences on my life and cut ties with those who weren’t. I built the support system I needed to face the veneer of effortless perfection once more. The pressure was finally starting to fade.

But returning to campus wasn’t easy. There are still days when I feel trapped by emotion. There are still days when I’m not sure if I can face other people. But there aren’t still days when I pick up the knife.

Harvard isn’t always the glossy ivy-covered utopia that many conceive it to be. There are moments of that place, yes. Walking past Memorial Church in the fall with reds and oranges on the ground around you, the first warm day in the spring when students on blankets adorn the Yard. Brochure Harvard does exist. The reality of the situation, however, is that this is not the Harvard that many students must wake up to and battle every single day. It is not always a place where conversations about mental health are necessarily encouraged. On a campus where the need for assistance is too often perceived as a flaw, the student body has a tendency to rely

on variations of “I’m fine.” And, at a college where so many students already have far too much on their plate, it’s understandable that most don’t press the question further.

I’ve learned the importance of doing just that. I have also learned to cut back—on friendships, on extracurriculars, on classes. By concentrating my energy on the people and activities that I care most about, I have gradually begun to get past all Harvard has taken and realized just how much it can give. The most important opportunity I’ve found here is the opportunity for happiness, though the place that lies between night and Brochure Harvard holds a happiness that can be hard to find.

—The writer can be reached at [studentx.harvard@gmail.com](mailto:studentx.harvard@gmail.com).

*Editors’ Note: We made the decision to run this piece anonymously due to the private and intensely personal nature of its material. However, we, and the writer, feel very strongly that open lines of communication and the simple act of talking are immensely important. We understand that the content of this article may be upsetting to many of our readers but decided to run this piece in the belief that talking openly about our emotions and feelings is a good thing. Mental health issues should not go unnoticed. We publish this article in the hope that it will make our readers more aware of the fact that these issues affect many members of our community.*

**We would also like to note the availability of resources such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK, the UHS 24-Hour Urgent Care number 1-617-495-5711, and Room 13, reachable 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Mon. through Sat. at 617-495-4969.**

Keep these handy! Also – FUP stays with you ALL FOUR YEARS! FUP Fam is life and all the FUP leaders will be here for you if you ever need anything! Never hesitate to reach out <3

## **Affiliates Raise Hands, Snarl at Harvard’s Protests** **By Michael Rothberg and Steven Watros, for the *Harvard Crimson***

To read online, click [here](#) or visit:

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2014/12/13/march-on-harvard-protest/?page=2>

Hundreds of Harvard affiliates from across the University’s schools brought traffic in and around Harvard and Central squares to a standstill Friday evening as they marched through Cambridge streets in protest of racial prejudice in the criminal justice system.

After lying down shortly after 6 p.m. for what activists have called a “die-in” that stretched several hundred feet along Mass. Ave., protesters rose and marched from Harvard Square to Memorial Drive, continuing east to Western Ave. They turned there, marching through stopped traffic toward Central Square before ultimately

returning to Harvard Square. Along the way, the protesters staged three other die-ins, halting traffic on Western Ave. as well as in Central Square and for a second time in Harvard Square.

The “March on Harvard,” as the demonstration was billed, was the latest in a series of protests on campus and around the country in recent weeks prompted by the decisions of two separate grand juries not to indict white police officers who had killed unarmed black men, Michael Brown and Eric Garner.

The Cambridge Police Department hired additional traffic and patrol officers to monitor the protest, according to an email from CPD spokesperson Jeremy Warnick. He said that no arrests were made during the nearly two and half hours demonstrators were active on campus and in Cambridge.

Dozens of Cambridge and Massachusetts state police officers were present throughout the evening, with some escorting the protesters and others stationed at a number of intersections along the route clearing their way. Before converging upon the Square for the first die-in, protesters gathered in the Science Center Plaza at 5 p.m., where they heard from a series of speakers, including Cambridge City Councillor Leland Cheung, who addressed the crowd, intermittently joining in with chants such as “No justice, no peace,” common to similar protests that have sprung up around the country.

Before concluding the hour-long string of speeches, poetry, and songs, Victoria I. White-Mason, a Law School student who organized the demonstration, told fellow protesters to remain peaceful as their demonstration proceeded into the Square.

White-Mason also invited representatives from other Harvard schools to a stage organizers had set up, asking them to read “oaths” that vowed commitment to fighting racial inequality in their respective disciplines and professions.

As part of the series of speeches and poems, Kimiko M. Matsuda-Lawrence ’16 read a poem she wrote inspired by a [protest during Primal Scream](#) two nights before, in which protesters attempted a moment of silence during a college tradition that involves running naked around the Yard. She said that facing the “mob of angry drunk white men” that stood juxtaposed to the protesters had been the scariest instance of her time at Harvard, and accused Primal Scream participants of “running away from race” when they turned away from the protesters.

As of 5 p.m., more than 1,700 individuals had indicated that they were attending the demonstration on its Facebook page. The crowd on hand at the Science Center appeared to be significantly smaller than that estimate, though still at least several hundred people.

College Dean of Student Life Stephen Lassonde sent an email to undergraduates Friday afternoon acknowledging the demonstration, but asking participants to refrain from gathering in the Science Center Plaza before 5 p.m., when final exams concluded for the day.

Although protesters began gathering before the permitted 5 p.m. start time, they remained quiet until exams concluded.

Among the first demonstrators to arrive was Timothy C. Devine ’17, who said that although the campus movement would lessen when students left campus for the

winter break, its momentum would be “spread to a thousand hometowns across the country.”

Lassonde, Dean of the College Rakesh Khurana, and other College administrators would be present for the demonstration, Lassonde said earlier Friday.

More than two hours after they began, shortly after 7 p.m., the protesters returned to Harvard Square, where they staged the final die-in along Mass. Ave. in front of the Smith Campus Center.

After the die-in, one of the march’s organizers asked the protestors to sit where they were.

“Thank you all for inviting yourselves. Look to the left and right. Tell your neighbor, ‘Welcome to the movement.’ This is the moment. Don’t wait. Tell them you won’t stop until you see justice. This is our Selma,” she said.

### **Primal Scream 2015 Coverage by the *Harvard Political Review***

*A few short minutes before midnight on December 10, hundreds of Harvard undergraduates gathered in the center of Harvard’s campus to partake in a semiannual tradition called Primal Scream. This year the tradition, which involves students taking a naked lap through campus in order to relieve end-of-semester stress, was interrupted by a much smaller group of undergraduates who asked for four a half minutes of silence from their peers to demonstrate Harvard’s solidarity with Michael Brown. In this HPRgument, four students voice their opinions on the efficacy of the demonstration, and the meaning of the conversation that followed.*

To read these and other online, click [here](#) or visit:

<http://harvardpolitics.com/harvard/hprgument-primal-scream-blacklivesmatter-protest/>

### **“There Is No More Convenient Season”**

**By Sasanka Jindasa**

*We asked for four and a half minutes of silence to symbolize the four and a half hours that an unarmed, facedown, dead Michael Brown was left in the streets of Ferguson, MO. A police officer had shot him six times. And we asked for four and a half minutes of respect, four and a half minutes of silence. Often, white silence is deafening. Last night, I could have only wished for it.*

Trust me, I understand if people were confused and expected to go to Primal Scream, get drunk, and have a good time running naked around the Yard. It sounds liberating and it sounds fun. People want to have fun, and I get that.

The day after the protest people tell me: well, we would have supported you if we had known. Or, why can’t we have our fun and protest too? Protest later? Protest anywhere but here? Why didn’t you tell me? If you had told me nicely, maybe I would have joined you.

To that I say: it’s cute that black lives matter when it doesn’t inconvenience you. I find it fascinating that people are willing to march around Boston, through Back Bay and Roxbury, shut down the T, shut down the highways, shut down

intersections, make society stop working for a night. It's fine when it's not us. Tell me, is Primal Scream more valuable than someone's commute home? For parents, for children, for taxi drivers, for people with real jobs? It is the ultimate in elitist snobbery to say that inconveniencing the Boston working class is more useful than inconveniencing Harvard "fun."

*"Over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season."*

**-Martin Luther King, Jr. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"**

Let me tell you something about Primal Scream: it is a symbol of all the glorious decadence we get to enjoy by being Harvard students. Break as many laws as you want on Harvard's campus. Administration will ignore you, the police will shut down the Yard for you, and everyone will get to bathe in each other's hedonism. It is a night of debauchery that we get to enjoy with all the privilege that we have.

So for everyone who said, "I didn't know about it"—would all of you have protested with us had you known? Would you have given up your privilege to run wild that night to have a die-in with us? Or would you have then said, "it is not the right time or place"? Would you have then said, how is this my fault, and why should I have to give anything up? Why me? Why sacrifice?

*I am angry that you are having fun. I am angry that we get to have fun while every 28 hours another black person is shot by the police. And I'm so angry that we don't see it that way.*

The truth is, it's giving things up that upsets people. To get justice, it might take the interruption of their own lives. True allies actually give things up. They give up money, they give up time, and they give themselves. They bail protestors out of jail, they go to jail, they get an arrest record, they refuse to work for racists, they call out their racist friends, they don't let anyone get away with anything in front of them. They work.

It's too easy to say #BlackLivesMatter. Of course they matter. But if the only time you talked about it this week was when we delayed your fun for a full five minutes, this protest did more than its job. It shamed you. And if it didn't shame you, you're not an ally—you're part of the problem.

The thing is, Harvard is part of the problem. I'm part of the problem because all non-black students are. We enjoy privilege more than we can imagine, we feed off the decadence the Harvard name gives us, and we revel in the whiteness this institution is steeped in. Harvard could not exist without slavery, yet almost no black

people are celebrated throughout this University's [halls and portraits](#). For hundreds of years, black students have experienced [harassment](#), [discrimination](#), [violence](#), [profiling](#), [disgust](#), [ignorance](#), [dismissal](#) and so much more. So I, frankly, don't care if you had to wait five minutes longer for your Primal Scream. We only asked for four and a half.

*Being drunk is not an excuse.*

*Being unaware is not an excuse.*

*It's never been an excuse.*

*It's time for all of us to do better.*

## The Local 26 Strike at Harvard University

View video [here](#)



After 22 days on strike, Harvard University Dining Hall workers won a big victory in October 2016, having all their demands met.

## Our Approach to Support First Generation and Low-Income Students By Thomas A. Dingman and Rakesh Khurana

To read online, click [here](#).

We are responding to last week's Harvard Crimson [editorial](#) calling for Harvard College to create a bridge program for first generation and low-income students. The proposal for a summer bridge program stems from real concerns, and as the Dean of Harvard College and the Dean of Freshmen we can state unequivocally that the College is committed to supporting students from a variety of backgrounds. To that end, while the proposed program certainly has merit, we believe that an opt-in, three-day pre-matriculation program would be too narrowly focused to address the complex needs of these students. Our decision not to pursue an early program at this time reflects our informed judgment that a holistic post-matriculation approach is better suited to address the multiple challenges many of these students face in transitioning to life at Harvard.

**Our decision is rooted in our commitment to creating an inclusive campus where students of all backgrounds can thrive, and is informed by discussions and data that suggest that many of the concerns expressed by first generation and low-income students can be addressed effectively through post-matriculation academic support initiatives that lead to deeper and more broad-based change at the College.**

**Research conducted by the College's institutional research team has guided our approach. They have compiled and analyzed Harvard student data on high school experiences, academic preparation, and academic performance, as well as qualitative reports of student experiences that suggests that sustained support in the early college years would help students attain their academic goals.**

**Based on this review, the College has identified four areas of focus for improving our support to first generation and low-income students:**

**First, we need to do a better job of helping students access the many resources available to support them. First-year students regularly report to us that they “don't know what they don't know” until they have had direct experience with classes and with their peers. With this in mind, the College is creating a single point of contact in the Freshman Dean's Office who understands the first-year experience and can help students traverse the numerous resources available to them. This person will also work with others at the College to improve our resources. In the same vein, the Advising Programs Office and FDO co-sponsored a Wintersession program for freshmen to reflect on their fall semester, familiarize themselves with the College's academic and support resources, and plan for their spring semester. With a semester of experience at Harvard, students are in a better position to understand their academic, social, and personal needs. We plan to further support this Wintersession transition experience by opening it to more students.**

**Second, we must continue to increase academic support, especially in the foundational areas of writing and mathematics. In recent years, we have increased academic support through our tutoring programs. This year, the Harvard College Writing Program introduced a new curriculum for Expos 10 that more responsively helps students learn and practice the fundamental steps in academic writing. The Mathematics Department has also piloted the Emerging Scholars Program, offering students the opportunity to work in a personalized classroom setting alongside math faculty to develop key problem solving skills.**

**Third, we are working to shift Harvard College's dominant culture from one that is experienced as exclusive to one that feels inclusive and welcoming. The FDO and APO work with students to help make the transition from home and high school to the Harvard community by matching first generation and low-income students to a network of academic, residential, and peer advisors who are providing integrated layers of support during this transition. Mather House piloted a First Gen specialty tutor this year, and other Houses are considering similar positions. Working with the First Generation Student Union, members of the Bureau of Study Counsel have been building an informal network of faculty members who were first generation students themselves to work with students. The BSC also produced a wonderful compilation of first generation student stories for [StoryCorps](#). Ongoing student input is essential**

to the success of our work to create an environment in which all of our students thrive.

Finally, we are reviewing existing programs, including how we provide greater financial access to existing pre-orientation programs which create a sense of connection between first-year and upper-class students. Recent initiatives include funding for meal stipends for low-income students who are on campus during spring and winter breaks when dining halls are closed, an expanded Host Family Program, financial support to the Ivy+ First Gen conference, and funding to support expanded programming through the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and the Harvard Foundation. We continue to work to identify sustainable resources to support new programs and strengthen existing ones.

The work we have done thus far is not a panacea for every challenge first generation and low-income students face. We understand that our students' needs will continue to evolve, and we are committed to evolving with them. Certainly, we have more work to do—work that will be informed by our mission and educational philosophy, student input and feedback, and by the best available data to identify solutions that make the biggest impact for our students.

*Rakesh Khurana is the Danoff Dean of Harvard College, the Marvin Bower Professor of Leadership Development at Harvard Business School, Professor of Sociology, and Co-Faculty Dean of Cabot House. Thomas A. Dingman '67 is the Dean of Freshmen and a member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.*

## **The Right Approach to Support First Generation and Low-Income Students**

**By The Crimson Editorial Board**

To read online, click [here](#).

Last week, we [published](#) a staff editorial criticizing Dean of the College Rakesh Khurana for his decision to reject a proposed pre-matriculation bridge program for low-income and first generation College freshmen. In our editorial, we asked Dean Khurana to explain his reasons for rejecting the program; he and Dean of Freshman Thomas A. Dingman '67 have done so in their recent [op-ed](#).

We thank Dean Khurana and Dean Dingman for responding to student [criticism](#) surrounding this decision, but we remain confident that a pre-matriculation program would be invaluable for first generation, low-income, and under-resourced students throughout their transition.

We support administrators' new initiatives to expand post-matriculation resources, but we do not believe these resources negate the need for pre-matriculation support. Dean Khurana and Dean Dingman argued that bolstered post-matriculation resources, including a [new](#) "First Gen, Low-Income Student Advocate" in the Freshman Dean's Office, would be sufficient to help support these students. They correctly note that post-matriculation resources are often underused.

In our view, however, the problem is not a lack of demand but a lack of awareness. Students do not know these resources are available or do not know how to access them. A pre-matriculation bridge program could help resolve the problem of

underutilization, as it would teach incoming freshmen about these resources. While the Deans acknowledge the need to further support first generation, low-income students, they have yet to explain why expanding post-matriculation resources would be incompatible with a summer bridge program. Post-matriculation and pre-matriculation are not mutually exclusive, and they should not be viewed as such. Furthermore, we believe that a summer bridge program would be able to provide preventative rather than remedial measures for these students on campus. Programming should be designed so that if students face academic and emotional struggles, they already know how to seek help from the FDO, Bureau of Study Counsel, or the First Gen Low-Income Advocate. It would ensure that these students do not feel alone in their challenges and have the tools to succeed before they even know they need them.

Many first generation, low-income, and minority students have been [vocal](#) about their desire for pre-matriculation support. They have worked hard to propose a solution to the problems they faced. Though the FDO has internal polling data about the success of pre- and post-matriculation support, these students' views should be taken into account as well. We also urge administrators to be transparent, providing students with access to the data so they can help suggest solutions.

Given that the College has decided to focus its resources on post-matriculation support, we call for student involvement in the selection and hiring of the Advocate position in the FDO. First generation and low-income students can help ensure the new Advocate understands the experiences of those they are there to help. Further, the College should actively reach out to the would-be beneficiaries of the bridge program instead of placing the burden on the students to seek them.

We appreciate Dean Khurana and Dean Dingman's commitment to providing resources for post-matriculation support. But we also hope that the bridge program is not forgotten and the dialogue continues, especially so that that pre-matriculation resources may be expanded in the future.

*This staff editorial solely represents the majority view of The Crimson Editorial Board. It is the product of discussions at regular Editorial Board meetings. In order to ensure the impartiality of our journalism, Crimson editors who choose to opine and vote at these meetings are not involved in the reporting of articles on similar topics.*

## **Faust Says Harvard Will Not Be a 'Sanctuary Campus'**

**By Hannah Natanson**

To read online, click [here](#).

**UPDATED:** December 7, 2016, at 12:12 a.m.

University President Drew G. Faust said Harvard will not designate itself a "sanctuary campus" at a Faculty of Arts and Sciences meeting held Tuesday afternoon in the Science Center.

Faust said she is worried calling Harvard a "sanctuary campus," a term she argued has no legal significance, could actually further endanger undocumented students at Harvard. She said she has met with members of Congress and other federal officials to discuss protections for undocumented students .

**"It also risks drawing special attention to the students in ways that could put their status in greater jeopardy," Faust said. "I believe it would endanger, rather than protect, our students, and that is not something I am willing for this institution to do."**

**Faust spoke on the subject in response to questions history professor Walter Johnson raised during the meeting. He asked what steps the University will take to protect its undocumented students and other minority groups he said are threatened by President-elect Donald Trump's proposed policies.**

**Johnson urged Faust to support labeling Harvard a sanctuary campus, citing the University's global prominence and insisting the decision presented an opportunity for Harvard to demonstrate moral leadership.**

**"Given the importance of the word 'sanctuary' in the national discussion, the opportunity that Harvard has to take up moral leadership in that discussion, and the immense importance of the word to our students, [most] specifically to their sense that the University is willing to stand... by their side, why not use it," Johnson said. In her response, Faust noted [initiatives](#) the University has undertaken to support undocumented students in recent weeks, including hosting immigration experts and appointing Lars Madsen, Faust's chief of staff, as a coordinator for advising efforts for undocumented students. Last month, Faust, in an email to Harvard affiliates, reiterated a message from Harvard University Police Department Chief Francis D. Riley indicating that the department will not ask about the immigration status of Harvard affiliates or enforce federal immigration laws.**

**At the meeting, Faust also discussed how the University would continue to lobby for federal research funding and a tax-exempt endowment under the Trump administration. She rejected the idea of sanctuary campus status, however, arguing that the name lacks a clear definition.**

**"Sanctuary campus status has no legal significance or even clear definition. It offers no actual protection to our students. I worry that in fact it offers false and misleading assurance," Faust said.**

**Faust's statements came just minutes after students and faculty wrapped up a rally held in support of Johnson's motion outside the building. Roughly 100 Harvard affiliates gathered in the Science Center Plaza to urge administrators to designate Harvard a sanctuary campus.**

**"I'm here to be a witness to your patriotism and to your love of this university," Johnson said at the rally. "And I'm here to ask this nation and this university to fulfill the promise that you all represent."**

**"Let America be America again," he added, referencing both Trump's famed campaign slogan and a poem by Langston Hughes that celebrates America's immigrant history and diverse population.**

**Over the course of the hour-long rally, speakers from across campus—ranging from Harvard freshmen to tenured professors—discussed the pain and fear they said undocumented students have felt in the wake of the election.**

**Romance Languages and Literature associate professor Sergio Delgado said at the rally that designating Harvard a sanctuary campus would allow the University's undocumented population to "thrive" again.**

**“When we as faculty and when we as administrators admit these students as our students, we make a fundamental commitment to support these students so that they can thrive,” Delgado said to cheers. “And whenever we fail at that commitment we’re not just failing those students, we’re failing this institution and we’re failing ourselves.”**

**Daishi Tanaka ’19, an [undocumented student](#), echoed Delgado’s sentiments. He said his life on campus has “definitely” changed for the worse since Trump won the presidency, and that the idea of a sanctuary campus is “personally important” to him because it would grant him a “mental security” he now lacks.**

**As Delgado and others wrapped up their speeches and the assembled crowd chanted slogans like “No justice, no peace!”, Faculty of Arts and Sciences professors began to file into the Science Center ahead of the Faculty-wide meeting. Some stopped to listen, others hurried past.**

**Dean of the College Rakesh Khurana paused for a moment to watch the protesters before entering the building.**

**“We are committed to making an inclusive environment for our students,” he said. “We are looking forward to working with our students, and have been working with our students.”**

**As the rally neared its conclusion, Anastacia M. Valdespino ’18, one of the event’s organizers, grabbed the microphone and eyed the stream of professors entering the Science Center.**

**“I’ve seen multiple professors, some whom I’ve had, walking into the Science Center for their meeting,” she said. “We hope they know that Harvard needs to be a sanctuary campus.”**

**Faust’s decision not to name Harvard a sanctuary campus comes less than a month after Princeton University President Chris Eisgruber and Brown University President Christina Paxson both declined to adopt the label. The University of Pennsylvania remains the only Ivy League school to designate itself a sanctuary campus.**

### **Dissent: Undocumented Students Deserve Better**

**By Zoe D. Ortiz, Ruben E. Reyes Jr., and Laura S. Veira-Ramirez**

**To read online, click [here](#).**

**On Dec. 6, University President Drew G. Faust [announced](#) that she would not declare Harvard a sanctuary campus because “it would endanger, rather than protect, our students.” The claim that calling the campus a sanctuary campus would endanger its students is misguided. It’s common knowledge that undocumented students [attend](#) Harvard, and nothing about designating the campus a sanctuary campus would force individual students to disclose their immigration status. Those students who are already vocal about their status can be traced through coverage they have received in the media, and the declaration of Harvard as a sanctuary campus will only reassure them of the University’s commitment to them.**

**Furthermore, this decision by Faust is in direct contrast with [the demands](#) that have been made by many undocumented student organizers and their allies. Students have repeatedly called for the administration to take the safety and mental health of**

all undocumented students into account by declaring Harvard an official sanctuary campus in addition to meeting [other demands](#) outlined in the petition “Protect Undocumented Students at Harvard.”

The role of administrators is to ensure that the needs of all Harvard students are met. This includes the right for students, regardless of any component of their identity, to feel safe on their own campus. By refusing to declare Harvard a sanctuary campus and failing to ensure their safety, President Faust is standing in direct opposition to that responsibility. She is treating Harvard’s undocumented students differently on the basis of their immigration status. This is unacceptable. The term sanctuary campus was recently created in response to President-elect Donald Trump’s [hateful rhetoric](#) against immigrants, his [discriminatory policies](#) towards Muslims, as well as his threats to [deport millions of undocumented Americans](#). It is a term that carries not only symbolic significance, but also provides peace of mind and a guarantee that the University will protect its students in any case where they are under threat due to policies of the Trump administration. By refusing to call itself a sanctuary campus, Harvard is choosing to ignore its students who fear for their livelihoods under an unpredictable Trump administration by refusing to meet their needs.

In addition, while Faust has come out [in support of the DREAM Act](#) in the past, it is not enough to cite that as justification for her failure to take into account the unique needs of the undocumented students who attend schools across the University. Now more than ever, it is important for undocumented students to feel as though they belong and are safe on this campus, and that they are no different from any other student. It is also imperative that the administration do everything in its power to fulfill its commitment towards supporting these students by ensuring they have access to affordable legal services, culturally competent mental health services, and administrators who are familiar with immigration issues.

Instead of fearing the possible repercussions of declaring itself a sanctuary campus, Harvard should use its influence to set an example for other campuses as we approach the inauguration of a new president who has been very vocal about his views on the undocumented and Muslim communities. It’s not up to Harvard to dictate what is best for its students. Instead, Harvard must actively listen to their concerns and fulfill its duty to ensure that students can fully participate as members of the Harvard community. As part of its responsibility to meet the needs of the students, Harvard is obligated to provide administrative, legal, financial, and moral support to its undocumented students. The future we face is uncertain and unprecedented, and it is this institution’s responsibility to ensure that it is on the right side of history in combating bigotry by upholding the standards we’ve already set for ourselves as an institution.

While the immigration policies of Donald Trump will not be known until he takes office, the administration must take this moment to display complete support for protecting its undocumented students. Should they choose to shirk that responsibility, then they should at the very least provide a reasoning for not taking on the sanctuary campus label that does not unreasonably and inaccurately say that

it would endanger the very students who have expressly demanded it in order to feel safe.

They should attempt to explain why the administration has deemed it okay to push undocumented students into the shadows and fail them in the time of their greatest need. While President Faust may not have intended for her statements to be construed in this manner, what her words clearly show is that Harvard is failing to stand in solidarity with the undocumented students on this campus. Those students deserve far better from their administration.

*Ruben E. Reyes Jr. '19, Zoe D. Ortiz '19, and Laura Veira-Ramirez '20 are Crimson Editorial writers. Ruben lives in Leverett House, Zoe lives in Mather House, and Laura lives in Canaday Hall.*

**DISSENTING OPINIONS:** Occasionally, The Crimson Staff is divided about the opinion we express in a staff editorial. In these cases, dissenting staff members have the opportunity to express their opposition to staff opinion.

## Harvard's Not-So-Quiet Embarrassment

By David Lynch

To read online, click [here](#).

Two Saturdays ago, [April 15](#), was National American Sign Language Day, a day that commemorates the 1817 establishment of the first school designed specifically for deaf students in the United States. This day embraces the often forgotten culture of the deaf, a people whose history—and current situation—consists of discrimination, isolation, and harassment.

Just this [past September](#), Alex Hernandez, a deaf senior high school student in Nebraska, was severely bullied; two students dumped the school supplies, debit card, and cochlear implants in his backpack into a toilet, leaving him helpless during school hours. Ultimately, fellow students and, eventually, the internet, showed compassion for Alex, but these stories are all too common—especially for the deaf community.

In order to prevent more tragedies like Alex's, the unique needs of the deaf must be recognized. Teaching American Sign Language to those who can hear is an important first step not only because it increases the hearing population's ability to communicate with deaf people, but also because it allows them to understand the often-ignored struggles that deaf people face on a daily basis.

Thankfully, [many schools](#) across the country and in the Boston area have promoted ASL's importance by legitimizing it academically. [Boston University](#) and [Northeastern](#) are among these, each offering potential degrees in deaf studies and hosting a multitude of events specifically designed for interactions between the hearing and the deaf. By recognizing deaf language and culture as a worthwhile academic pursuit, these schools have put their backing behind those who cannot hear.

Harvard has not.

Although Harvard offered introductory American Sign Language classes [for the first time this year](#), the College still refuses to recognize ASL as a real language by not

permitting sign language to fulfill the mandatory language requirement. Harvard argues that, for a language to fulfill this requirement, it must have “[a written component](#).”

At its core, the purpose of language is communication and doubting a people’s language merely because one cannot “write it” is fundamentally discriminatory. By instilling within students’ minds that ASL is a fun elective but not a legitimate language due to its failure to have a stereotypical “written component,” Harvard is essentially claiming that those who use American Sign Language are not actually using language. Harvard is positioning itself as an institution that, on the whole, does not see ASL as a “proper” form of communication.

But in reality, [100,000 to 500,000 Americans](#) use ASL as their primary language. The argument that ASL is simply a “derivative” of English is also incorrect, as ASL is a complex language with its own unique syntactical and grammatical structures. Furthermore, deaf people have a drastically different culture from the hearing, with their own abundant literature ([as a simple YouTube search will prove](#)). ASL studies thus have the possibility to adhere to the academic norms that are often associated with other linguistic studies.

The purpose of the language requirement is to inspire students to think about the meaning of communication and to learn how to communicate in a new way. As one of the students in the new ASL class, I can confidently say that, through this course, I have challenged myself academically in an unprecedented manner. Not only have I garnered an understanding of a language that communicates in a medium like none other, I have also had the incredibly rewarding experience of learning ASL from a deaf professor. In addition, I have gained insight into a community that is largely ignored in regular academic settings. This is the true purpose of learning another language: to gain a new toolset that allows you to answer challenging problems in a new fashion and converse with those who are different from you. New languages permit you to explore your intellectual boundaries in extremely innovative ways, a feat that, no doubt, ASL allows for.

Harvard needs to end its prejudice towards the deaf community and eliminate its outdated view of language. Students who pursue ASL for a year should have the opportunity to utilize these linguistic studies to fulfill the language requirement. Any other solution is simply insulting to the deaf community and a huge embarrassment for the school. It’s time for Harvard to finally listen—and not just with their ears.

*David Lynch '20 lives in Thayer Hall.*

**Harvard Heat Week: Why We Act for Fossil Fuel Divestment**

View video [here](#)



## Activism and Organizing

**The Revolution Will Not Be Polite**

**By Rachael, from the Social Justice League**

**To read online, click here or visit:**

**<http://www.socialjusticeleague.net/2012/04/the-revolution-will-not-be-polite-the-issue-of-nice-versus-good/>**

A while ago, tumblr user “iamateenagefeminist” compiled [a list of non-oppressive insults](#), a public service that will never be forgotten. The people of tumblr wept with joy and appreciation (although it should be noted that the people of tumblr will literally weep over a drawing of an owl). The list is not perfect, and “ugly” should NOT be on there as it reinforces beauty hierarchies. Still, I was happy to find it, because I am always looking for more insults that don’t reinforce oppressive social structures.

But if you scroll through the reblogs you’ll see that not everyone was enamoured of the idea of creating this list at all. In particular, several people said that trying to find non-oppressive ways to insult other people is “missing the point” of social justice. Those people seem to think that being nice is a core part of social justice. But those people are wrong.

Social justice is about destroying systematic marginalisation and privilege. Wishing to live in a more just, more equal world is simply not the same thing as wishing to live in a “nicer” world. I am not suggesting niceness is bad or that we should not behave in a nice way towards others if we want to! I also do not equate niceness with cooperation or collaboration with others. Here’s all I am saying: the conflation of ethical or just conduct (goodness), and polite conduct (niceness) is a big problem.

Plenty of oppressive bullshit goes down under the guise of nice. Every day, nice, caring, friendly people try to take our bodily autonomy away from us (women, queers, trans people, nonbinaries, fat people, POC...you name it, they just don’t think

we know what's good for us!). These people would hold a door for us if they saw us coming. Our enemies are not only the people holding "Fags Die God Laughs" signs, they are the nice people who just feel like marriage should be between a man and a woman, no offense, it's just how they feel! We once got a very nice comment on this site that we decided we could not publish because its content was "But how can I respect women when they dress like – sorry to say it, pardon my language – sluts?". This is vile, disgusting misogyny and no amount of sugar coating and politeness can make it okay. Similarly, most of the people who run ex-gay therapy clinics are actually very nice and polite! They just want to save you! Nicely! Clearly, niceness means FUCK ALL.

On an even more serious note, nice people also DO horrible bad things on an individual level. In [The Gift of Fear](#) by Gavin De Becker, he explicitly says that people who intend to harm others often display niceness towards them in order to make them feel safe and let their guard down. This trick only works because we have been taught that niceness indicates goodness. What is more, according to De Becker, women have been socially conditioned to feel indebted to men who are "nice" to them, which is often exploited by abusers. If this doesn't seem obvious to you, I suggest you pick up the book – it talks a lot about how socialisation of men and women makes it easier for men to abuse women.

How many more acts that reinforce kyriarchy have to be done nicely and politely before we stop giving people any credit for niceness? Does the niceness of these acts make them acceptable? It does not. An even bigger issue is that if people think social justice is about niceness, it means they have *fundamentally* misunderstood privilege. Privilege does not mean you live in a world where people are nice to you and never insult you. It means you live in a world in which you, and people like you, are given systematic advantages over other people. Being marginalised does not mean people are always nasty to you, it means you live in a world in which many aspects of the cultural, social and economic systems are stacked against people like you. Some very privileged people have had awful experiences in life, but it does not erase their privilege. That is because privilege is about groups of people being given different rights and opportunities by the law and by socio-cultural norms. Incidentally, that is why you can have some forms of privilege and not others, and it doesn't make sense to try to "tally up" one's privilege into a sum total and compare it against others'.

By the way, the first person who says "But then why are TV shows a social justice issue?" in the comments will have their head put on a pike as an example to others. Cultural narratives are part of what builds and reinforces social roles, and those determine what opportunities a person has – and the rights they can actually exercise, even if they have them in the law. If you don't believe me and don't want to accept this idea, you will now google "stereotype threat", you will read [Thinking, Fast and Slow](#) by Daniel Kahneman, you will watch [this speech by Esther Duflo on women and development](#) (which talks about stereotypes and outcomes), and THEN you may return to this blog.

The conflation of nice and good also creates an avenue of subtle control over marginalised people. After all, what is seen as "nice" is cultural and often even

class-dependent, and therefore the “manners” that matter get to be defined by the dominant ethnic group and class. For example, the “tone” argument, the favourite derailing tactic of bigots everywhere, is quite clearly a demand that the oppressor be treated “nicely” at all times by the oppressed – *and they get to define what “nice” treatment is*. This works because the primacy of nice in our culture creates a useful tool – to control people and to delegitimise their anger. A stark example of this is the stereotype of the desirably meek and passive woman, which is often held over women’s heads if we step out of line. How much easier is it to hold on to social and cultural power when you make a rule that people who ask for an end to their own oppression have to ask for it nicely, never showing anger or any emotion at being systematically disenfranchised? (A lot easier.)

Furthermore, I think the confusion of meanness with oppression is the root cause of why bigots feel that calling someone a “bigot” is as bad as calling someone a “tranny” or taking away their rights. You know, previously I thought they were just being willfully obtuse, but now I realise what is going on. For example, most racists appear to feel that calling POC a racist slur is a roughly equal moral harm to POC calling them a “racist fuckhead”. That’s because they do not understand that using a racist slur is bad in any sense other than it hurts someone’s feelings. And they know from experience that it hurts someone’s feelings to be called racist douche.

So if you – the oppressed – hurt someone’s feelings, you’re just like the oppressor, right? Wrong. Oppression is not about hurt feelings. It is about the rights and opportunities that are not afforded to you because you belong to a certain group of people. When you use a racist slur you imply that non-whiteness is a bad thing, and thus publicly reinforce a system that denies POC the rights and opportunities of white people. Calling a white person a racist fuckhead doesn’t do any of that. Yes, it’s not very nice. And how effective it is as a tactic is definitely up for debate (that’s a whole other blog post). But it’s not oppression.

Being good and being nice are totally unrelated. We need to get serious about debunking this myth, because the confusion between the two is obfuscating our message and handing our oppressors another tool with which to silence us. In some cases, this confusion is putting people (especially women) in real danger. This social movement can’t achieve its goals if people think it’s essentially some kind of niceness revolution. And anyway, social justice is not about making the world a nicer place. It’s about taking back the rights and opportunities denied to us by law or by social and cultural norms – and breaking out of the toxic mindset that wants us to say please and thank you when we do.

## **The Rise of Native-Rights Based Strategic Framework**

**By Clayton Thomas-Muller**

To read in full, click [here](https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/the-rise-of-the-native-rights-based-strategic-framework) or visit:

<https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/the-rise-of-the-native-rights-based-strategic-framework>

**Years ago I was working for a well-known Indigenous environmental and economic justice organization known as the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN). During my time with this organization I had the privilege of working with hundreds of Indigenous communities across the planet who had seen a sharp increase in the targeting of Native lands for mega-extractive and other toxic industries. The largest of these conflicts, of course, was the overrepresentation by big oil who work— often in cahoots with state, provincial First Nations, Tribal and federal governments both in the USA and Canada—to gain access to the valuable resources located in our territories. IEN hired me to work in a very abstract setting, under impossible conditions, with little or no resources to support Grassroots peoples fighting oil companies, who had become, in the era of free market economics, the most powerful and well-resourced entities of our time. My mission was to fight and protect the sacredness of Mother Earth from toxic contamination and corporate exploration, to support our Peoples to build sustainable local economies rooted in the sacred fire of our traditions.**

**My work took me to the Great Plains reservation, Three Affiliated Tribes of Fort Berthold to support a collective of mothers and grandmothers fighting a proposed oil refinery, which if built would process crude oil shipped in from a place called the tar sands in northern Canada. I spent time in Oklahoma working with Sac and Fox Tribal EPA under the tutelage of the late environmental justice warrior Jan Stevens, to learn about the legacy of 100 years of oil and gas on America's Indian Country—Oklahoma being one of the end up points of the shameful indian relocation era...**

**During my five years as an IEN Indigenous oil campaigner (2001–2006) I learned that these fights were all life and death situations, not just for local communities, but for the biosphere; that organizing in Indian Country called for a very different strategic and tactical play than conventional campaigning; that our grassroots movement for energy and climate justice was being lead by our Native woman and, as such, our movement was just as much about fighting patriarchy and asserting as a core of our struggle the sacred feminine creative principal; and that a large part of the work of movement building was about defending the sacredness of our Mother Earth and helping our peoples decolonize our notions of government, land management, business and social relation by going through a process of re-evaluating our connection to the sacred.**

**In the early years I often struggled with the arms of the non-profit industrial complex and its inner workings, which were heavily fortified with systems of power that reinforced racism, classism and gender discrimination at the highest levels of both non-profit organizations and foundations (funders). It was difficult to measure success of environmental and economic justice organizing using the western terms of quantitative versus qualitative analysis. Sure, our work had successfully kept many highly-polluting fossil fuel projects at bay, but the attempts to take our land by agents of the fossil fuel industry—with their lobbyist's pushing legislation loop holes and repackaging strategies—continued to pressure our uninformed and/or economically desperate Tribal Governments to grant access to our lands.**

The most high profile victory came during the twilight of the first Bush/Cheney administration when our network collaborated with beltway groups like the Natural Resources Defense Council and effectively killed a harmful US energy bill containing provisions that would kick open the back door to fossil fuel companies, allowing access into our lands. The Indian Energy Title V campaign identified that if the energy bill passed, US tribes would be able, under the guise of tribal sovereignty, to administer their own environmental impact assessments and fast track development in their lands. Now this sounds like a good thing, right? Well, maybe for Tribal governments that had the legal and scientific capacity to do so, but for the hundreds of US Tribes without the resources, it set up a highly imbalanced playing field that would give the advantage to corporations to exploit economically disadvantaged nations to enter into the industrialization game.

Through a massive education campaign and highly-negotiated and coordinated collaborative effort of grassroots, beltway and international eNGOs—as well as multiple lobbying visits to Washington DC, lead by both elected and grassroots Tribal leaders—we gained the support of the National Congress of American Indians who agreed to write a letter opposing the energy bill to some of our champions in the US Senate, most notably the late Daniel Akaka who was Hawaii's first Native Senator. Under the guidance of America's oldest Indian Advocacy group he would lead a vote to kill the energy bill in the Senate. This was my first view into the power of the Native rights-based strategic and tactical framework and how it could bring the most powerful government on Earth (and the big oil lobby) to their knees...

For example with the passing of the US energy bill under the second US Bush/Cheney administration the US climate movement began to ramp up its attempts to have the administration pass a domestic climate bill... Citizen groups like the US Public Interest Research Group (US PIRG) received millions of dollars to try and organize people to put pressure on President Bush, and later President Obama, to adopt some form of climate policy... The groups that ended up receiving resources from that limited pot of climate funding... did not focus on mobilizing the masses to get out in the streets; to target and stop local climate criminals or build a bona fide social movement rooted in an anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-oppressive foundation to combat the climate crisis. Instead, it kept the discourse focussed on voluntary technological and market-based approaches to mitigating climate change—like carbon trading and carbon capture and storage.

I would argue that this frame is what kept this issue from bringing millions of Americans into the streets to stop the greenhouse gangsters from wrecking Mother Earth. Groups like the Indigenous Environmental Network, Southwest Workers Union and others fought tooth-and-nail to try and carve out pieces of these resources to go towards what we saw as the real carbon killers, which were local campaigns being lead by Indigenous Nations and communities of colour to stop coal mining, coal-fired power and big oil (including gas)...

**Stop Trying to Save Africa**  
**By Uzodinma Iweala**

To read online, click [here](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/13/AR2007071301714.html) or visit: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/13/AR2007071301714.html>

Last fall, shortly after I returned from Nigeria, I was accosted by a perky blond college student whose blue eyes seemed to match the "African" beads around her wrists.

"Save Darfur!" she shouted from behind a table covered with pamphlets urging students to **TAKE ACTION NOW! STOP GENOCIDE IN DARFUR!**

My aversion to college kids jumping onto fashionable social causes nearly caused me to walk on, but her next shout stopped me.

"Don't you want to help us save Africa?" she yelled.

It seems that these days, wracked by guilt at the humanitarian crisis it has created in the Middle East, the West has turned to Africa for redemption. Idealistic college students, celebrities such as Bob Geldof and politicians such as Tony Blair have all made bringing light to the dark continent their mission. They fly in for internships and fact-finding missions or to pick out children to adopt in much the same way my friends and I in New York take the subway to the pound to adopt stray dogs.

This is the West's new image of itself: a sexy, politically active generation whose preferred means of spreading the word are magazine spreads with celebrities pictured in the foreground, forlorn Africans in the back. Never mind that the stars sent to bring succor to the natives often are, willingly, as emaciated as those they want to help.

Perhaps most interesting is the language used to describe the Africa being saved. For example, the [Keep a Child Alive](#)/"I am African" ad campaign features portraits of primarily white, Western celebrities with painted "tribal markings" on their faces above "I AM AFRICAN" in bold letters. Below, smaller print says, "help us stop the dying."

Such campaigns, however well intentioned, promote the stereotype of Africa as a black hole of disease and death. News reports constantly focus on the continent's corrupt leaders, warlords, "tribal" conflicts, child laborers, and women disfigured by abuse and genital mutilation. These descriptions run under headlines like "Can Bono Save Africa?" or "Will Brangelina Save Africa?" The relationship between the West and Africa is no longer based on openly racist beliefs, but such articles are reminiscent of reports from the heyday of European colonialism, when missionaries were sent to Africa to introduce us to education, Jesus Christ and "civilization."

There is no African, myself included, who does not appreciate the help of the wider world, but we do question whether aid is genuine or given in the spirit of affirming one's cultural superiority. My mood is dampened every time I attend a benefit whose host runs through a litany of African disasters before presenting a (usually) wealthy, white person, who often proceeds to list the things he or she has done for the poor, starving Africans. Every time a well-meaning college student speaks of villagers dancing because they were so grateful for her help, I cringe. Every time a Hollywood director shoots a film about Africa that features a Western

protagonist, I shake my head -- because Africans, real people though we may be, are used as props in the West's fantasy of itself. And not only do such depictions tend to ignore the West's prominent role in creating many of the unfortunate situations on the continent, they also ignore the incredible work Africans have done and continue to do to fix those problems.

Why do the media frequently refer to African countries as having been "granted independence from their colonial masters," as opposed to having fought and shed blood for their freedom? Why do Angelina Jolie and Bono receive overwhelming attention for their work in Africa while Nwankwo Kanu or Dikembe Mutombo, Africans both, are hardly ever mentioned? How is it that a former mid-level U.S. diplomat receives more attention for his cowboy antics in Sudan than do the numerous African Union countries that have sent food and troops and spent countless hours trying to negotiate a settlement among all parties in that crisis?

Two years ago I worked in a camp for internally displaced people in Nigeria, survivors of an uprising that killed about 1,000 people and displaced 200,000. True to form, the Western media reported on the violence but not on the humanitarian work the state and local governments -- without much international help -- did for the survivors. Social workers spent their time and in many cases their own salaries to care for their compatriots. These are the people saving Africa, and others like them across the continent get no credit for their work.

Last month the Group of Eight industrialized nations and a host of celebrities met in Germany to discuss, among other things, how to save Africa. Before the next such summit, I hope people will realize Africa doesn't want to be saved. Africa wants the world to acknowledge that through fair partnerships with other members of the global community, we ourselves are capable of unprecedented growth.

## **The Limits of Charity**

**By David Hilfiker**

**THE WORDS OF THE PROPHET MICAH ARE FAMILIAR:**

*What does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God, (8 : 6)*

*But what if our love of mercy chokes out our ability to act justly?*

Since 1983, I have worked as a doctor with poor people in the inner city of Washington, D.C. I began at Community of Hope Health Services, a small church-sponsored clinic, and at Christ House, a thirty-four-bed medical recovery shelter for homeless men. In 1990, I founded Joseph's House, a ten-bed community for homeless men with AIDS where I work now. I intend to continue working there. But I've been having misgivings.

I have begun to see some "side effects" to the kind of work I do, and they concern the important difference between justice and charity. Justice has to do with fairness, with what people deserve. It results from social structures that guarantee moral rights. Charity has to do with benevolence or generosity. It results from people's good will and can be withdrawn whenever they choose.

**To put the question most bluntly: Do our works of charity impede the realization of justice in our society?**

**This is not a question of our personal commitment to justice. Throughout all of my years in Washington, I have yearned for justice and felt ready to sacrifice for it. I have hoped that my work brings attention to the plight of the poor and thus contributes to justice.**

**What I actually do, however, is offer help to poor people. Though I believe God calls me to do this, I could leave at any time. The poor people I have served over the past seventeen years have had no "right" to what I was giving them. While I believe in justice for the poor and in challenging the structures of our society that deprive them of that justice, in fact I have offered charity.**

**My overall concern is this: Charitable endeavors such as Joseph's House serve to relieve the pressure for more fundamental societal changes. In her book *Sweet Charity*, sociologist Janet Poppendieck writes that charity acts as "a sort of a 'moral safety valve'"; it reduces the discomfort evoked by visible destitution in our midst by creating the illusion of effective action and offering us myriad ways of participating in it. It creates a culture of charity that normalizes destitution and legitimates personal generosity as a response to [injustice] ."**

**I was reminded of this recently when I attended a Walk for the Homeless in Washington, one of those many good and important efforts to raise money for Joseph's House and similar organizations. Before we began to walk, a nationally known sports star gave a little pep talk, exhorting the walkers to "go out and do your part to end homelessness." I have nothing against the walk, and I suspect the sports star did not really intend the implication. But walking five kilometers on a beautiful Saturday morning is not "doing your part to end homelessness."**

**Something similar happens at Joseph's House itself. How many of our contributors and volunteers end up feeling that their participation with us fulfills their responsibilities to the poor? It will not be a conscious thought, of course. But you come down and volunteer for a while, or you write a check, and it feels good. Perhaps you develop a close relationship with a formerly homeless man with AIDS, and you realize your common humanity. You feel a real satisfaction in that. You bring your children. But in the process you risk forgetting what a scandal it is that Joseph's House or your local soup kitchen is needed in the first place, forgetting that it is no coincidence that your new friend is black, poor, illiterate, and unskilled. It is easy to lose an appropriate sense of outrage.**

**I am also concerned that places like Joseph's House may reassure voters and policy makers that the problem is being taken care of. Joseph's House gets a fair amount of publicity; we are well known around the city. So when the issue of AIDS and homelessness arises in people's mind, it can be mentally checked off: "Look at Joseph's House! Isn't it wonderful? I guess things aren't as bad as we thought."**

**Soup kitchens and shelters started as emergency responses to terrible problems--to help ensure that people do not starve, or die from the elements. No one, certainly not their founders, ever considered these services as appropriate permanent solutions to the problems. But soup kitchens and food pantries are now our standard response to hunger; cities see shelters as adequate housing for the**

homeless. Our church-sponsored shelters can camouflage the fact that charity has replaced an entitlement to housing that was lost when the federally subsidized housing program was gutted twenty years ago. Our soup kitchens can mask unconscionable cuts in food stamps.

Furthermore, if we are busy caring for the poor, who is going to do the time-consuming work of advocacy, of changing the system? Lots of "people power" goes into running Joseph's House: We have board members, staff, and volunteers. Even those of us who understand that our charity does not satisfy the demands of justice have little time or energy left for advocacy work. Day-to-day responsibilities and frequent emergencies leave few opportunities to picket, to write letters to the editor, to testify before a commission. Those of us who care the most may be the least able to get involved.

For most of us, the work of advocacy is less rewarding than day-to-day contact with needy people. It is less direct. As an advocate, I may never see significant change; I would rather immerse myself in direct service. And so the desperately needed work of advocacy is left undone.

A more subtle problem is that many social ministries may unwittingly contribute to the perception that governmental programs for the poor are inefficient and wasteful, and are better "privatized." The last twenty years have seen a harsh turn against government. People in our society who oppose justice for the poor have used the inevitable organizational problems within some government programs to smear any kind of governmental action. One of their favorite tools is the supposed "efficiency" of nonprofit organizations.

It is true that nonprofits can often do things with relatively little money--primarily because of all the volunteered hours, the donated goods, the low or non-existent salaries, the space donated by churches, and so forth. Government programs do not ordinarily get these enormous infusions of free time and materials, so of course they are more expensive than ours. But "expensive" is different from "inefficient."

Only the government--that is, "we the people," acting in concert locally, state-wide, or nationally--can guarantee rights, can create or oversee programs that assure everyone adequate access to what they need. Because government can assure entitlements while Joseph's House cannot, comparing the two is not even appropriate. Still, the comparison is used to rail against government action for justice.

And what of charity's toll on the recipients' human dignity? Charity may be necessary, but charity--especially long-term charity--wounds the self-worth of its recipients. Try as we might to make our programs humane, it is still we who are the givers and they who are the receivers. Charity thus "acts out" inequality. Poppendieck writes that charity excuses the recipient from the usual socially required obligation to repay, which means sacrificing some piece of that person's dignity.

We hear much talk these days about "faith-based organizations" as appropriate tools for dealing with social ills--perhaps even replacing government as

the primary provider of services to the needy. But while they certainly play a useful role, faith-based organizations cannot be a substitute for government.

Consider, for example, Joseph's House. In our care for homeless people with AIDS, Joseph's House depends on the good will of an enormous number of people. We were founded only with the extraordinary support of a nationally known faith community (Washington D.C.'s Church of the Saviour), plus the gifts of many people. Even now, local foundations and several thousand individuals and churches across the country provide support, and most of our professional staff have salaries considerably below what they could earn elsewhere. All this is certainly not unique to Joseph's House, but it is hardly commonplace.

So what happens in a place that does not have a faith community with a national list of donors? What happens when the people who want to start a house such as ours already spend all their time working in soup kitchens and health clinics or providing food and shelter to homeless people in their churches? What happens if the local populace is not interested in caring for homosexuals or drug users? In all those cases, nothing happens--because society has said that homeless men with AIDS do not have an entitlement to food, shelter, and appropriate medical care.

Even if there were enough well-intentioned people in every community, where would the money come from? Like most nonprofits, Joseph's House receives much of its funding (in our case almost two-thirds) from the local and federal governments. Even with that funding, we share the lament of other similar nonprofits: There is so much more we could be doing, so many more people who need help. But no one who is implying that faith-based organizations should take over the care of homeless persons with AIDS is also talking about increasing taxes to fund them. And without those increases, charity is not going to replace taxes as a solution for this problem.

As for faith-based organizations providing for all the needs of the poor, the chances are even more remote. Some idea of the magnitude of the problem comes from Rebecca Blank, a government economist during the Bush administration and author of *It Takes A Nation*, an excellent, balanced look at U.S. poverty. She points out that if we asked churches to pay the costs of only three government programs--welfare for families, disability payments for the poor, and food stamps--every single church, synagogue, mosque, and other religious congregation would have to come up with \$300,000 a year. For the average congregation, this would mean tripling its budget and spending all of the increase on the poor. If, instead, we asked the nonprofit charitable institutions that currently serve the poor to foot this bill, they would need their contributions to increase seven-fold. Add in Medicaid, and the need for additional funding more than doubles!

Our charitable works, then, simply cannot provide care for all who need these services. Yet our projects can give the illusion that charity is the solution.

At another level, the fundamental problem for the poor in our country is, not homelessness or AIDS or hunger or the like--or even any combination of these. They are just symptoms; the problem is injustice. In promoting our institutions, it is natural to emphasize the importance of our own project, But this can lead to subtle impressions that if we just distribute enough food, or create enough bed space, or

find enough homes--that is, if we just treat the symptoms--we will have solved "the problem."

Injustice, however, is more deep-seated. It is the inevitable result of the structures of our society--economic, governmental, social, and religious--that undergird inequality. The way things stand now, poverty is built into these systems.

Consider just the economics. Despite the U.S. poverty rate being the lowest since the 1970s, despite the lowest unemployment rate in thirty years and the rise in the minimum hourly wage to \$5.15, one out of eight Americans is still poor. Among children below the age of six, one out of every four lives in a poor family.

What are the economic structures that keep poor people trapped in their poverty?

The first is low wages. The big change in U.S. poverty over the last twenty years has been the decline in wages among the less skilled, leaving many full-time workers in poverty. Of the people who are below the poverty line, 30 percent live in families with at least one full-time worker. In 1970, a single mother working full-time at minimum wage could pull herself and two children out of poverty. Today, a minimum-wage job leaves a parent and one child below the poverty line. Another is unemployment. The national unemployment rate is just 4 percent, but this figure is deceptive. It does not include involuntary part-time workers (increasingly common as employers avoid paying benefits); those who have dropped out of the work force altogether (for example, those who are so discouraged they are no longer even looking for work); those who are incarcerated; or those with jobs that do not pay them enough to stave off poverty.

Yet another is lost or inadequate unemployment benefits. Fewer than half of the unemployed still collect unemployment benefits. For those who do, the average benefit is 40 percent of one's previous earnings--not much if the previous earnings were minimum wage.

Also dragging down the poor is the high cost of housing. Of all the U.S. households with incomes below the poverty line, nearly half (45 percent) spend more than 70 percent of their of their money on rent and utilities.

Other developed countries have put into place economic safety nets for people who fall into poverty. But the "safety net" in the United States is so shredded it no longer deserves the name.

Charity does little to change the wider social and political systems that sustain injustice. In fact, most charities depend heavily on the very volunteers, individual donors, and institutions that have prospered under the current systems. And people who have done well in a system are usually not interested in changing it drastically--in fact, they may be diametrically opposed.

So even if we ourselves perceive the need for systemic changes, we may feel compelled to whisper those perceptions rather than shout them for fear of alienating those on whom we most depend. Charity offends almost no one; at one point or another, justice offends practically everyone.

I am not, of course, suggesting that we abandon charity. As an adjunct to justice, charity is both necessary in our current situation and a requirement of our faith. But we must acknowledge the broader implications of our charity and

recognize that it alone is not enough. That done, we need to start thinking, about ways for our charitable organizations to support those who work for justice.

Our promotional materials, for example, must at least refer to systemic factors, recognizing that charity is not the solution.

We must be careful about comparing our work to, or even alluding to, the "inefficiency" of government programs. We must offer our volunteers reading materials, seminars, and discussion opportunities about the systemic issues. By putting themselves into face-to-face contact with the poor, they have taken an important first step. We need to encourage them to continue the journey.

We must include education as part of our mission. This can mean talking about larger issues in our newsletters and donor appeals. Perhaps it will result in a few people dropping their financial support, but that is the type of risk our organizations need to take.

We must engage in political advocacy. By law, tax-exempt organizations are able to use portions of their budget for advocacy. What if every social ministry dedicated 5 percent of its budget to advocacy, freeing up time for staff to preach sermons, to speak on justice issues in small groups at our churches, to testify before government commissions, to write letters to their newspaper, to call or write our elected representatives?

We must get behind the effort to drastically change campaign financing. Though barred from supporting individual candidates, nonprofits can use this election year to emphasize that the United States will not be an effective democracy until the enormous influence of money on government decisions is reduced. "We the people" currently have little power to persuade our representatives to vote for justice.

Working for justice is messier and far less rewarding than charity. There are no quick fixes, and the most common reason for quitting is discouragement. But we have little choice. Within an unjust society, there are limitations to our charity; we need to join others in the struggle for justice as well. It is a fundamental requirement of our faith.

## Glossary of Terms

**Ableism:** A system of oppression that includes discrimination and social prejudice against people with intellectual, emotional, and physical disabilities, their exclusion, and the valuing of people and groups that do not have disabilities.

**Ageism:** A system of oppression that works against the young and the old and values individuals in their 30s to 50s.

**Ally:** a person who is a member of an advantaged social group who takes a stand against oppression, works to eliminate oppressive attitudes and beliefs in themselves and their communities, and works to interrogate and understand their privilege.

**Anti-Semitism:** the systematic discrimination against and oppression of Jews, Judaism, and Jewish culture and traditions.

**Asexual:** an identity term for a people who either do not feel sexual attraction or do not feel desire for a sexual partner or partners. Some asexual individuals may still have romantic attractions.

**Biphobia:** the irrational hatred or fear of people who identify as bisexual, pansexual, or fluid.

**Bisexual:** An identity term for people who are attracted to people of more than one gender, whether romantically, sexually, or both. Bi\* is often used as an inclusive abbreviation for the bisexual, pansexual, non-monosexual, and fluid community.

**Birth Assigned Sex:** the designation that refers to a person's biological, morphological, hormonal, and genetic composition. One's sex is typically assigned at birth and classified as either male or female.

**Cisgender:** individuals whose gender identity and expression line up with their birth-assigned sex.

**Cissexism:** The system of oppression that values cisgender people, upholds the gender binary, and marginalizes, oppresses, and makes invisible the lives and experiences of transgender people.

**Classism:** The institutional, cultural, societal, and individual beliefs and practices that assign value to people based in their socio-economic class. Here, members of more privileged socio-economic classes are seen as having a greater value.

**Collusion:** Thinking and acting in ways that support dominant systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Both privileged and oppressed groups can collude with oppression.

**Coming Out:** the process by which LGBTQI individuals recognize, accept, typically appreciate, and often celebrate their sexual orientation, sexuality, or gender identity/expression. Coming out varies across culture and community.

**Discrimination:** When members of a more powerful group behave unjustly or cruelly to members of a less powerful group (Qkit: LGBTQ Residence Hall Programming Toolkit, UC Riverside)

**Ethnocentrism:** judging another culture solely based on the standards and values of one's own culture. Also, a belief in the inherent superiority of one's own nation or ethnic group.

**Gay:** an identity term for a male-identified person who is attracted to other male-identified people.

**Gender:** Socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society deems masculine or feminine. This social construct is often linked to and confused with the biological construct of sex.

**Gender Binary:** a social construction of gender in which there are two distinct and opposite genders: male/masculine/men and female/feminine/women.

**Gender Expression:** a person's presentation of their gender. These outward expressions of gender can be intentional or unintentional and involve one's mannerisms, clothing, hair, speech, clothing, and activities (and more!).

**Gender Identity:** a person's innate sense of their own gender: being a man, a woman, a girl, a boy, in between, or outside of the gender binary.

**Genderqueer:** an identity term for a person who may not identify with and/or express themselves within the gender binary.

**Heterosexism:** the individual, societal, cultural, and institutional beliefs and practices that favor heterosexuality and assume that heterosexuality is the only natural, normal, or acceptable sexual orientation. This creates an imbalance in power, which leads to systemic, institutional, pervasive, and routine mistreatment of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. (UT Austin Gender and Sexuality Center)

**Heterosexual:** an identity term for a female-identified person who is attracted to male-identified people or a male-identified person who is attracted to female-identified people.

**Homophobia:** the fear, hatred, and intolerance of people who identify or are perceived as gay or lesbian.

**Horizontal Oppression:** When people from targeted groups believe, act on, or enforce dominant systems of oppression against other members of targeted groups.

**Internalized Oppression:** the fear and self-hatred of one's own identity or identity group. Internalized oppression is learned and is based in the acceptance of oppressive stereotypes, attitudes, and beliefs about one's own identity group.

**Intersectionality:** A feminist sociological model and/or lens for critical analysis that focuses on the intersections of multiple, mutually-reinforcing systems of oppression, power, and privilege. Intersectional theorists look at how the individual experience is impacted by multiple axes of oppression and privilege. Variables include, but are not limited to: race, gender, ethnicity, religion ability, education, sexual orientation,

**sexuality, gender identity, gender expression, class, first language, citizenship, and age. (J. Beal 2011)**

**Intersex: A person whose genitals, secondary sex characteristics, chromosomes, and/or hormone levels do not fit into the medical/societal definition of male or female. This is the preferred term to hermaphrodite.**

**Islamophobia: the irrational fear or hatred of Islam, Muslims, Islamic traditions and practices, and, more broadly, those who appear to be Muslim.**

**Lesbian: an identity term for a female-identified person who is attracted to other female-identified people.**

**Oppression: The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Oppression fuses institutional and systemic discrimination, personal bias, bigotry, and social prejudice in a complex web of relationships and structures that saturate most aspects of life in our society.**

- **Oppression denotes structural and material constraints that significantly shape a person's life chances and sense of possibility.**
- **Oppression also signifies a hierarchical relationship in which dominant or privilege groups benefit, often in unconscious ways, from the disempowerment of subordinated or targeted groups.**
- **Oppression resides not only in external social institutions and norms but also within the human psyche as well.**
- **Eradicating oppression ultimately requires struggle against all its forms, and that building coalitions among diverse people offers the most promising strategies for challenging oppression systematically. (Adams, Bell, and Griffin, editors. Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook. New York: Routledge.)**

**Pansexual: an identity term for a person who is attracted to people of all genders: men, women, transgender individuals, and genderqueers.**

**Power: the ability to get what you want (The GLSEN Jumpstart Guide: Examining Power, Privilege, and Oppression).**

**Prejudice: A pre-judgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics. (Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative. A Community Builder's Tool Kit. Claremont, CA: Claremont Graduate University.)**

**Privilege: A group of unearned cultural, legal, social, and institutional rights extended to a group based on their social group membership. Individuals with**

**privilege** are considered to be the normative group, leaving those without access to this privilege invisible, unnatural, deviant, or just plain wrong. Most of the time, these privileges are automatic and most individuals in the privileged group are unaware of them. Some people who can “pass” as members of the privileged group might have access to some levels of privilege (J. Beal 2009).

**Queer:** a term for individuals whose gender identity/expression and/or sexual orientation does not conform to societal norms. This reclaimed term is increasingly being used as an inclusive umbrella term for the LGBTQIA community.

**Pronouns:** a word that substitutes for a noun. Most people have pronouns that they expect others to use for them. Most cisgender individuals use pronouns that line up with their birth-assigned sex. Many GenderQueer and Trans\* folks have selected pronouns that best suit who they are and sometimes generate new terms.

**Racism:** oppression against individuals or groups based on their actual or perceived racial identity.

**Religious Oppression:** oppression against individuals or groups based on their religious beliefs and practices.

**Sexism:** a system of oppression that privileges men, subordinates women, and devalues practices associated with women.

**Sexual Orientation:** a person’s sexual and emotional attractions, not necessarily dependent on behavior. Terms associated with sexual orientation include: gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, heterosexual, and more!

**Social Justice:** a process and a goal. A commitment to a socially just world and the committed actions to make that world a reality. Or, “The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure... Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others, their society, and the broader world in which we live.” (Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice)

**Transgender:** an umbrella term for people who do not identify with their birth-assigned sex and/or whose gender expression does not conform to the societal expectations. Trans\* is used as an inclusive abbreviation.

**Transsexual** – people who change their presentation to express their gender identity. Examples of these transitions might include: changing one’s name, pronouns, hair, or manner of dress, and medical transitions, like gender affirmation surgery, hormone replacement therapy.

**Transphobia:** the fear and hatred of transgender people.

**White Privilege: The concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to share the norms and values of society that Whites receive, tacitly or explicitly, by virtue of their position in a racist society. (Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, Second Edition, Routledge, 2007)**

**Xenophobia: the fear and hatred of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange. Please note that many of these definitions have been influenced by multiple sources. Some terms have specific roots in communities of color, the LGBTQ communities, and other marginalized groups. We thank everyone out there who does social justice work and has contributed to our understanding of the above terms.**