# Ableism

#### To be silent about our privilege is what makes us bad allies. We need to be open about politics.

hooks 3(bell Gloria Jean Watkins, better known by her pen name bell hooks, is an American author, feminist, and social activist. “Teaching Community A Pedagogy of Hope”)

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While it is a truism that every citizen of this nation, white or colored, is born into a racist society that attempts to socialize us from the moment of our birth to accept the tenets of white supremacy, it is equally true that we can choose to resist this socialization. Children do this everyday. Babies who stare with wonder and bliss at caretakers, not caring whether they are white or colored, are already actively resisting racist socialization. Whether or not any of us become racists is a choice we make. And we are called to choose again and again where we stand on the issue of racism at different moments in our lives. This has been especially the case for white people. Few white people make the choice to be fundamentally anti-racist and consistently live the meaning of this choice. These are the white folks who know intimately by heart the truth that racism is not in their blood, that it is always about consciousness. And where there is consciousness there is choice. In Pedagogy of the Heart, Paulo Freire reminds us that racism is not inherent declaring: “We are not racist; we become racist just as we may stop being that way.”¶ If we fail to acknowledge the value and significance of individual anti-racist white people we not only diminish the work they have done and do to transform their thinking and behavior, but we prevent other white people from learning by their example. All people of color who suffer racial exploitation and oppression know that white supremacy will not end until racist white people change. Anyone who denies that this change can happen, that one can move from being racist to being actively anti-racist is acting in collusion with the existing forces of racial domination.¶ Maybe I would have despaired about the capacity of white people to become anti-racist if I had not witnessed firsthand individual Southern white folks (older people), born and bred in a culture of white supremacy, resist it, choosing anti-racism and a love of justice. These were folks who made their choices in circumstances of great danger, in the midst of racial warfare. To honor their commitment rightly we have to fully accept their transformation. To ask folks to change, to surrender their allegiance to white supremacy, then to mock them by saying that they can never be free of racist thinking is an abomination. If white folks can never be free of white-supremacist thought and action, then black folks/colored folks can never be free. It is as simple as that. We must accept that black folks/people of color are as socialized to embrace white-supremacist thinking and behavior as our white counterparts. If we can resist, if we can refuse to embrace racist thinking and action, so can they.

#### Dis/ability is produced relationally - the military industrial complex reifies categories of health, injury and dis/ability - excluding the aff reduces dis/ability to a representation of victimhood. This is why we must include a critique of military industrial complex.

Trappen 13

[Sandra "War and Disability" The Feminist Wire Nov 25 2013 CUNY Queens College] MI

Yet even still, the body itself remains elusive. For the anatomical logic of war is such that, regardless of how many rifles, bullets, bayonets, and knives might render skin from bone, not even a mountain of casualties can imprint the psyche of the uninitiated in such a way that they might fully grasp the brute nature of slaughter—that alone remains an exclusive possession of those who are witness to war. Consequently, representational narratives and practices that focus simply on identity inevitably fall short of well-intentioned aims that purport to help us know how to see and to feel (Kaplan, 2013). They are precluded from accounting for the embodied nature of wounded and disabled subjectivity. Thus, we are only ever left with a lingering sense of what happens to a body that is wounded in war.¶ Presently, simplified analysis that merely takes into account binary understandings of “abled/disabled” and “male/female” bodies renders it nearly impossible to understand how war objectifies and produces bodies across a more diverse relational spectrum. One way to overcome these limitations is to combine identity critique with more dynamic non-representational thought paradigms. The turn to affect in critical theory, body theory, psychoanalytic theory, and the new materialism theories might all be called upon to explore how knowledge and power continue to imbricate the complex topographies of mind and body bound up in disability studies and the political economy of bodies produced by war. Training a feminist lens on the problem of prevailing dualisms here makes it possible to see how injury, illness, and disability potentially engender new and different forms of oppression, as recovery and rehabilitation are often achieved through enhanced means of bioscientific and biotechnological control. In this instance, embodied contradiction is both the marker and the result of contemporary power configurations investing in the making of gendered bodies to organize society for the production of ongoing war. Feminist scholars might thus continue to debate the entanglement of body politics and state politics by effectively linking issues of health, injury, and disability to larger issues of militarization and the social organization of violence.

#### Using identity as a frame for understanding ableism reduces it to a set of binaries rather than an ontology through which we understand the world.

Trappen 13

[Sandra "War and Disability" The Feminist Wire Nov 25 2013 CUNY Queens College] MI

A number of problems surface here, the most obvious of which is the near erasure of women’s experiences. But there are other problems too, which remain hidden in the background because conventional narratives that “celebrate” wounded soldiers preclude critical thinking about these issues, which are complex. One finds beyond the simple homilies a story that unites the history of the “great men of war” with the “great men of medicine.” Feminist methods can write a different narrative and in the process potentially raise awareness regarding the degree to which injuries and disabilities from war and militarism imbricate violence within social spaces and social logics not traditionally linked. Psychological terror, street violence, incarceration, human slavery, trafficking in women—all offer testimony to the permeability of boundaries where war is concerned. Ultimately, I want to suggest we think about war as a relational ontology; one that organizes violence and bodily experiences through various means and practices distributed across social locations.¶ Another problem is that disability studies is far too restricted theoretically in its approach to understanding “the body” that is disabled. Identity critiques with regard to ableism characterize the vast majority of literature, which in spite of its many contributions overall, fail to escape the ossifying tendency to frame issues through competing dualisms like abled/disabled, normative/non-normative, and public/private. Intersectionality theories thus appear almost edgy by comparison.¶ The fact that I am a woman, a former Army officer and female soldier, should be incidental; however, gender is not incidental among the cadre of writers, experts, and critics who claim war as their realm of expertise. Notwithstanding recent legislative efforts to legitimize women’s participation in direct combat, war is understood to be the ultimate proving ground for men. Men, as such, are historically associated with the realms of life and mind, and women are confined to the lesser domestic realms, including the body. Traditional war studies and histories of disability have favored male subjectivity, thereby occluding female subjectivity. Masculine epistemologies thus tend to dominate how we think and feel about war, injury, and disability.¶ In the interest of full disclosure, as one whose body continues to adjust to injury, I should add that I draw from some of my own experiences to reflexively consider what it feels like to be and live in a body that is wounded and disabled by war; for I too find that I am at times simultaneously empowered and disempowered by experiences of pain, suffering, estrangement, and ambiguous embodiment, as are the wounded soldiers whose stories comprise my study. Issues of gender and disability thus are unavoidably implicated in my interest to pursue this project. This adds yet another dimension to my analysis of combat injury and disability that looks at how not only gender but also race and class differences travel on the body and enter domains of social control.¶ In the years following the attacks of 9/11— years that mark what is thought to be the beginning of the “war on terror” — the United States deployed more than 2.5 million soldiers into combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Like those who departed for war throughout history, large numbers of military men and women did not return home in a state of health and well-being comparable to their pre-deployment health status. When we look at this problem strictly in terms of casualty statistics, it is apparent that many were injured and disabled rather than killed. But more than this, a preponderant number of the losses reflect civilian casualties that consist of women and children. In spite of these outcomes, injured soldiers as a group still comprise a significantly large and regrettably “fresh” population that might be studied so we might learn more about the social dimensions of injury, as well as illness and disability.¶ Thus, we might ask: How are injury and disability experienced by this group? How do the experiences of this group compare to the population of disabled people who are not soldiers and veterans? How are masculine epistemologies reflected in the processes of “making war” and “making bodies?” What can disability tell us about what it means to be a man or woman who is at war? And finally, why do “parts” matter?¶ I should clarify that in pursuing a line of questioning that privileges a narrative singling out soldiers’ bodies, it is not my intention to diminish the experiences and losses of non-soldier identified individuals; nor do I mean to reify bodies and subjects, and thus by extension privilege the human. I am not arguing that wounded soldiers’ bodies are essentially different or more worthy of study than other disabled bodies. On the contrary, my analysis illustrates how conceptual and identity categories, as they relate to war, are in many respects inherently unstable. Disabling injuries that are the result of war, furthermore, are clearly not “new” developments. But this is not to say that war, injury, and disability have remained the same. Recent trends indicate that combat injuries among soldiers have decreased over time; incidents of wounding are not the life-threatening events they once were.¶ Addressing the long-term costs associated with physical and mental disability poses a greater challenge now compared to previous wars, because many among the wounded (soldiers in particular) are surviving injury, due to improvements in battlefield medicine and technology. Facilitating their rehabilitation and social reintegration thus ranks among the significant social problems that countries will face in the coming decades. Such a process, in my view, suggests the bodily changes wrought by war are fundamentally ontological—the wounded soldier is the classic “canary in the coal mine”—and while they might not be statistically representative, we still might look to them as a means to prognosticate developments in other bodies and populations.¶ Questions remain about how one might theorize the complex ontologies of subjectivity produced in war, including disabled subjectivities; ontologies characterized by intersecting material and immaterial relations that are further distinguished by boundaries and borders between bodies, human and non-human, which are no longer fixed, but rather are dynamic, fluid, and permeable (Blackman, 2012). In pursuing my own research, I found it necessary to step outside the bounds of traditional disability identity critiques in order to address what was missing from the conversation: namely, a critical vocabulary that did not rely on linguistic oppositions to talk about disability; likewise, one that did not limit discussion to issues of identity, but could express the complexity that distinguishes people disabled by war wounds. For such bodies are not mere containers or signifying objects that are fashioned (and re-fashioned) to make identity claims; they are people who inhabit their bodies as fully embodied beings.¶ Thus, without reifying the opposition of domestic/public, masculine/feminine, mind/body, human/non-human, self/other, and inside/outside, I want to shift the focal point of discussions about war and the body away from more traditional state-centric conflict approaches focused on battlefields, to a feminist critique that looks at how war’s powers of invasion simultaneously inhabit the intimate spaces of the body. In other words, I am suggesting it is possible to achieve a richer understanding of war, combat casualties, and disability by considering the different ways the body might be received given its intimate relationships to war.¶ The challenge, I think, from the perspective of disability theory and critique, is how to go about theorizing disability in connection with war in such a way that one might avoid mind-body traps, competing dualisms, and other limitations bound up with representational discourses that focus on identity. This task is made more difficult by the fact that there is no single literature that deals with the issue of combat injuries and disability. Gerber (2012), among others, has argued that in opting for a direction driven by the focus of cultural studies on critical race theory, queer theory, literary theory, and gender theory, the genre has privileged issues of identity to the detriment of critiquing disability in connection with the social history of war. In some cases, as Gerber points out, disabled veterans have themselves been problematized. This pattern is similarly reproduced in the socio-medical literature, where empirical studies tend to be driven by a policy focus. Empirical studies are limited and when they do occur, the focus leans more toward informing government program initiatives (i.e., veterans’ social welfare benefits, housing, substance abuse, rehabilitation, and social reintegration).

#### **This is a focus on personal empowerment which builds up the legitimacy of liberalism by providing venues for the subject to assert themselves IE their functioning of the ballot. Voting negative to create inclusive spaces doesn't change the fundamentally anti-black way those identities become redeployed. The disad is that we invade other countries because we’re able to say “look at how they treat disabled people”**

Brown 95—prof at UC Berkeley

(Wendy, States of Injury, 21-3)

For some, fueled by opprobrium toward regulatory norms or other modalities of domination, the language of "resistance" has taken up the ground vacated by a more expansive practice of freedom. For others, it is the discourse of “empowerment” that carries the ghost of freedom's valence ¶ 22¶. Yet as many have noted, insofar as resistance is an effect of the regime it opposes on the one hand, and insofar as its practitioners often seek to void it of normativity to differentiate it from the (regulatory) nature of what it opposes on the other, it is at best politically rebellious; at worst, politically amorphous. Resistance stands against, not for; it is re-action to domination, rarely willing to admit to a desire for it, and it is neutral with regard to possible political direction. Resistance is in no way constrained to a radical or emancipatory aim. a fact that emerges clearly as soon as one analogizes Foucault's notion of resistance to its companion terms in Freud or Nietzsche. Yet in some ways this point is less a critique of Foucault, who especially in his later years made clear that his political commitments were not identical with his theoretical ones (and un- apologetically revised the latter), than a sign of his misappropriation. For Foucault, resistance marks the presence of power and expands our under- standing of its mechanics, but it is in this regard an analytical strategy rather than an expressly political one. "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet. or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority to power. . . . (T]he strictly relational character of power relationships . . . depends upon a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations.\*39 This appreciation of the extent to which resistance is by no means inherently subversive of power also reminds us that it is only by recourse to a very non-Foucaultian moral evaluation of power as bad or that which is to be overcome that it is possible to equate resistance with that which is good, progressive, or seeking an end to domination. ¶ If popular and academic notions of resistance attach, however weakly at times, to a tradition of protest, the other contemporary substitute for a discourse of freedom—“empowerment”—would seem to correspond more closely to a tradition of idealist reconciliation. The language of resistance implicitly acknowledges the extent to which protest always transpires inside the regime; “empowerment,” in contrast, registers the possibility of generating one’s capacities, one’s “self-esteem,” one’s life course, without capitulating to constraints by particular regimes of power. But in so doing, contemporary discourses of empowerment too often signal an oddly adaptive and harmonious relationship with domination insofar as they locate an individual’s sense of worth and capacity in the register of individual feelings, a register implicitly located on some- thing of an other worldly plane vis-a-vis social and political power. In this regard, despite its apparent locution of resistance to subjection, contemporary discourses of empowerment partake strongly of liberal solipsism—the radical decontextualization of the subject characteristic of¶ 23¶ liberal discourse that is key to the fictional sovereign individualism of liberalism. Moreover, in its almost exclusive focus on subjects’ emotional bearing and self-regard, empowerment is a formulation that converges with a regime’s own legitimacy needs in masking the power of the regime. This is not to suggest that talk of empowerment is always only illusion or delusion. It is to argue, rather, that while the notion of empowerment articulates that feature of freedom concerned with action, with being more than the consumer subject figured in discourses of rights and economic democracy, contemporary deployments of that notion also draw so heavily on an undeconstructed subjectivity that they risk establishing a wide chasm between the (experience of) empowerment and an actual capacity to shape the terms of political, social, or economic life. Indeed, the possibility that one can “feel empowered” without being so forms an important element of legitimacy for the antidemocratic dimensions of liberalism.

#### Footnoting is infinitely regressive, that permutations are not footnoting, because Our affirmative creates a possibility of rethinking the body to reframe its meaning – their refusal to be incorporated denies meaning to bodies and lives.

Creal 99 – Their author

(Lee Davis, “THE "DISABILITY OF THINKING"

THE "DISABLED" BODY”, Course Paper for Ambiguous Bodies: Studies in Contemporary Sexuality, York University, http://www.broadreachtraining.com/advocacy/artcreal.htm)

Lennard Davis' statement is provocative and a direct challenge to theorists to include the "much more transgressive and deviant" disabled body in their discourse. Disability, he says, is part of a historically constructed discourse, an ideology of thinking about the body under certain historical circumstances. At the same time, many academic disciplines are now recognizing the importance of narratives in the production of a more embodied understanding of ourselves and our world. Self-narration or life-writing is a cognitive site from which we can learn to take the texts of our own lives and world as seriously as we do "official narratives" about ourselves and our world.. Individually and collectively they can be read as resistance narratives that reveal discriminatory practices embedded in our culture. As Donna Haraway says, feminist scholars "need an earth-wide network of connections, including the ability to translate knowledges among very different--and power-differentiated--communities. We need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meaning and bodies, but in order to live in meanings and bodies that have a chance for the future." (Haraway, 1991: 187)

#### also, their alternative functions as a footnote to the round, imagining that they didn't have to read the 1NC is a footnote

#### Focusing on discourse directly trades off with material change.

Churchill 96

 Ward Churchill, Professor of American Indian Studies at the University of Colorado, 1996 (“Semantic Masturbation on the Left: A Barrier to Unity and Action,” *From A Native Son: Selected Essays in Indigenism*, 1985-1995, Published by South End Press, ISBN 0896085538, p. 460 (MI)

There can be little doubt that matters of linguistic appropriateness and precision are of serious and legitimate concern. By the same token, however, it must be conceded that such preoccupations arrive at a point of diminishing return. After that, they degenerate rapidly into liabilities rather than benefits to comprehension. By now, it should be evident that much of what is mentioned in this article falls under the latter category; it is, by and large, inept, esoteric, and semantically silly, bearing no more relevance in the real world than the question of how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. Ultimately, it is a means to stultify and divide people rather than stimulate and unite them. Nonetheless, such “issues” of word choice have come to dominate dialogue in a significant and apparently growing segment of the Left. Speakers, writers, and organizers of all persuasions are drawn, with increasing vociferousness and persistence, into heated confrontations, not about what they’ve said, but about how they’ve said it. Decisions on whether to enter into alliances, or even to work with other parties, seem more and more contingent not upon the prospect of a common agenda, but upon mutual adherence to certain elements of a prescribed vernacular. Mounting quantities of progressive time, energy, and attention are squandered in perversions of Mao’s principle of criticism/self-criticism – now variously called “process,” “line sharpening,” or even “struggle” – in which there occurs a virtually endless stream of talk about how to talk about “the issues.” All of this happens at the direct expense of actually understanding the issues themselves, much less *doing* something about them. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the dynamic at hand adds up to a pronounced avoidance syndrome, a masturbatory ritual through which an opposition nearly ~~paralyzed~~ by its own deeply felt sense of impotence pretends to be engaged in something “meaningful.” In the end, it reduces to a tragic delusion at best, cynical game playing or intentional disruption at worst. With this said, it is only fair to observe that it’s high time to get *off* this nonsense, and on with the real work of effecting positive social change.