## 1nc

#### Their naming of racism as the root cause of oppression is a symbol of their failing to recognize the true nature of domination—they only recognize one aspect of the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchal hegemony. We need to name the system appropriately in order to know how to effectively fight it—rather than framing oppression through a lens of dualism, we need to appropriately name dominator culture

hooks, b. (2013).*Writing beyond race: Living theory and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge. P 36-37

When I fi rst began to use the phrase imperialist white supremacist¶ capitalist patriarchy to characterize the interlocking systems that shape¶ the dominator culture we live within, individuals would often tell¶ me that they thought it was just too harsh a phrase. In the past ten¶ years, when I’ve used the phrase at lectures, more often than not audiences¶ respond with laughter. Initially, I thought this laughter was an¶ expression of discomfort, that the true nature of our nation’s politics¶ were being exposed. But as the laughter followed me from talk to talk¶ I began to see it as a way to defl ect attention away from the seriousness¶ of this naming. Time and time again critical theory has taught us the¶ power of naming accurately that which we are challenging and hoping to transform. But one way to silence accurate naming is to make it¶ appear ridiculous, too strident, too harsh. Rarely am I asked the value¶ of calling attention to interlocking systems of domination. Yet when¶ we examine the cultural circumstances that provided the groundwork¶ for fascism in the twentieth century ( looking particularly at the roots¶ of fascism in Germany, Spain, and Italy), we fi nd similar traits in our¶ nation (i.e., patriarchal, nationalistic, racist, religious, economic power¶ controlled by a minority in the interests of wealth, religion, etc.). In¶ fascist regimes, teaching populations to fear “terrorism” is one way¶ the system garners support. Concurrently, dissident voices challenging¶ the status quo tend to be silenced by varied forms of censorship. Most¶ recently in our nation, the use of media to suggest that anyone who¶ criticizes government is a traitor deserving of condemnation and even¶ arrest eff ectively silences many voices.¶ Meaningful resistance to dominator culture demands of all of us¶ a willingness to accurately identify the various systems that work together¶ to promote injustice, exploitation, and oppression. To name¶ interlocking systems of domination is one way to disrupt our wrongminded¶ reliance on dualistic thinking. Highlighted, these interlocking¶ systems tend to indict us all in some way, making it impossible for any¶ of us to claim that we are absolutely and always victims, calling attention¶ to the reality of our accountability, however relative. When we are¶ accountable, we eschew the role of victim and are able to claim the¶ space of our individual and collective agency. For many folk, especially¶ those who are suff ering exploitation and/or oppression, that agency¶ may seem inadequate. However, asserting agency, even in small ways,¶ is always the fi rst step in self-determination. It is the place of hope.

####  We need to start by recognizing our role in the dominator culture. Bethany and I have been imprinted since birth by society to implicitly affirm white supremacy. By recognizing our role in the imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchal hegemony, we create a starting point that allows us to have a more open conversation about race. Analyzing dominator culture as a whole is key because it doesn’t privilege one system of oppression over another, but recognizes that they affect one other.

hooks, b. (2013).*Writing beyond race: Living theory and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge. 3-6

Signifi cantly, despite class diff erences, as a group, white people (whether consciously or unconsciously) maintain some degree of bonding despite diversities of standpoint. White supremacist thinking continues to be the invisible and visible glue that keeps white folks connected irrespective of many other diff erences. Politically, white supremacist thinking was created to serve this purpose. Imprinted on the consciousness of every white child at birth, reinforced by the culture, white supremacist thinking tends to function unconsciously. This is the primary reason it is so diffi cult to challenge and change. In order to talk openly and honestly about race in the United States it is helpful to begin with the understanding that it is white supremacist thinking and practice that has been the political foundation undergirding all systems of domination based on skin color and ethnicity. When describing the political system that we live within here in the United States, more often than not, I use the complicated phrase imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. This phrase is useful precisely because it does not prioritize one system over another but rather off ers us a way to think about the interlocking systems that work together to uphold and maintain cultures of domination. However, in talking and writing about these systems for more than thirty years, I have found that most citizens of the United States resist the notion that ours is a nation founded and colonized on a foundation of white supremacist thought and action. And yet, as a nation we have always had a public discourse about race and racism. And, when leaders of our nation have called for a national dialogue on these issues, there has been little resistance. The United States was colonized and founded by a white supremacist politics that necessitated endless thinking, writing, and discussion about race. White folks from all places and classes, speaking all manner of languages, migrated here in the hopes of creating a better, more prosperous, freer life for themselves. They, for the most part, collectively, accepted a national identity based on the fi ctions of race and racism created by white supremacist thought and action. Bonding on the basis of shared whiteness provides the foundation for a sense of shared meaning, values, and purpose. With the battle cry of preserving whiteness, imperialist colonization became the belief system that supported the mass murder of indigenous natives, the blatant stealing of their lands, and the creation of segregated reservations. Despite the presence of African individuals who came to the so-called new world before Columbus—as documented in Ivan Van Sertima’s seminal work They Came Before Columbus—white supremacist thinking and action condoned the enslavement of black Africans, supporting their brutal exploitation and oppression. Living as they did in close proximity with enslaved black folks, relying on them to serve obediently and subserviently, white dominators needed a psychological mode of colonization that would keep everyone in check, that would teach everyone their place in the race-based hierarchy that is the aim of white supremacist thinking and practice. At this point, notions of white supremacy were fl uid and constantly changing to meet the needs of dominating white colonizers. When white supremacist logic decreed that all black folks were diseased and unclean, that train of thought then had to be shifted a bit to leave just enough room for it to be deemed acceptable for some black folks to cook for white owners and to care for their children. When white supremacist logic decreed that the brains of black folks were smaller than those of whites, thus rendering them intellectually inferior, and then well-educated black genius asserted itself, there had to be space made within the theory of white superiority for exceptions. Clearly, one of the awesome aspects of white supremacist logic has been its fl uidity, its ability to adjust and change according to need and circum stance. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, dialogues about white supremacy were common. Few, if any, white folks would have found it odd for there to be silence on the subject. Yet talk of white supremacy in our society is deemed not only taboo, but also irrelevant. When addressed openly there is always a listener eager to insist that the term white supremacy has little meaning in the contemporary United States, that it is too harsh a reality to be relevant to discussions of race and racism. When I speak with audiences about imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, the one piece of these interlocking political systems that individuals most resist acknowledging is white supremacy. And yet if we cannot as a culture accept the way white supremacist thinking and practice informs some aspect of our lives irrespective of skin color, then we will never move beyond race. Unlike race and racism, which does not overtly harm masses of folk in ways that causes direct damage, white supremacy is the covert ideology that is the silent cause of harm and trauma. Think of the black children, both rich andpoor, who watch long hours of television that imprints their young minds with the notion that white is good and black is bad. All over the United States, parents who assume they have taught their families to be actively anti-racist are shocked when they discover that their children harbor intense anti-black feelings. This is just one example. Another example might be the interracial couple in which the white individual proclaims their undying love for a black partner but then later in conversation talks about their belief that black people are intellectually inferior. This is not an expression of conventional racial prejudice. It does however remind us that one can be intimate with black folks, claim even to love us, and yet still hold white supremacist attitudes about the nature of black identity.

#### White and non-black persons of color should acknowledge that the most intense forms of racial assault and discrimination have been directed at black people – decolonization of our minds from the grasp of white supremacy is key to see the value in identification with blackness rather than competition for white supremacist attention which seeks to divide and conquer difference in order to maintain the status quo

hooks, b. (2013).*Writing beyond race: Living theory and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge. P. 13

Certainly it serves the interest of dominator culture to promote a shallow understanding of race politics that consistently makes it appear that the issues of race in the United States solely rest on the status of darker skinned people. It may well be that the growing Hispanic population (which too is invested heavily in white supremacist aesthetics) will help push the discourse of race past issues of black and white and toward the issue of white supremacist thought and action. Every black person who talks about race has an experience where they have been interrogated about their focus on issues of black and white. Rarely does a person of color who is non-black acknowledge that the most intense forms of racial assault and discrimination in our nation have been directed primarily at black people. Professing this understanding and allegiance with black anti-racist struggles would do more to affi rm challenges to white supremacy than competing for the status of who will receive more attention. The fact is when black people receive that greater attention from the dominant white society it is usually negative. Despite gains in civil rights a huge majority of white Americans and some non-black people of color continue to believe that black people are less intelligent, full of rage, and more likely to express anger with violence than all other groups. Even though negative racist stereotypes about Asian identities abound, there is no overwhelming consensus on the part of white Americans that they are incapable of intelligent rational thought. It is troubling that so many of the hateful negative stereotypes the dominant culture uses to characterize black identity are endorsed by non-black people of color. Their endorsement is an expression of collusion and solidarity with white supremacist thought and action. If all people of color and even our white allies in struggle were decolonizing their minds, challenging and changing white supremacy, they could see value in identifi cation with blackness rather than feeling there must always be competition over who will receive the most attention from white folks. They would see clearly that the system of domination that remains oppressive and exploitative is ever ready to recruit and train as many black, brown, red, and yellow people as are needed to maintain the status quo. A thorough understanding of the complex dynamic of white supremacist thought and action would provide all citizens with a way to understand why this nation can elect a black man to be its leader and yet resist any system-wide eff orts, both public and private, to challenge and change racial inequality. From the moment he entered the oval offi ce, Obama’s actions have been continually subject to policing to ensure he does act in any way that brings particular benefi ts to African American citizens. Sadly, even though there have been wonderful advances in anti-discrimination–based civil rights laws and public agendas, there has been no profound eff ort to destroy the roots of racism. Instead we live in a society that claims via our government and public policy to condemn racial discrimination even as imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy shapes our politics and culture.

#### The aff promotes a victim/oppressor dichotomy which necessitates a politics of blame and victimization that stifles change and makes them complicit in dominator culture

hooks, b. (2013).*Writing beyond race: Living theory and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge. P 28-31

Clearly the future of diversity lies in creating greater awareness and greater critical consciousness about the importance of ending domination, of challenging and changing white supremacy. Riane Eisler urges in her partnership model that we shift from an us-versus-them attitude to a worldview where we place the “same standards of human rights and responsibilities provided by the partnership model to all cultures.” She contends: “In a world where technologies of communication and destruction span the globe almost instantaneously, creating a better world is a matter of enlightened self-interest.” Now more than ever we need to create learning communities that make learning the theory and practice of diversity essential aspects of curriculum. In my recent book Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom, I call attention to the way in which issues of diversity both inside and outside the classroom are slowly being pushed back into the realm of silence and misinformation. As I wrote: “More than ever before, students need to learn from unbiased perspectives, be they conservative or radical. More than ever before, students and teachers need to fully understand diff erences of nationality, race, sex, class, and sexuality if we are to create ways of knowing that reinforce education as the practice of freedom.” Learning to challenge and change binary thinking—the us-and-them paradigm—is one way to create a foundation that can be sustained. Holding onto binary thinking actually keeps dominator culture in place, for one aspect of that culture is the projection outward onto an enemy, an “other,” whenever things go wrong, and this casting of blame in turn helps to promote a culture of victimization. When we are more energized by the practice of blaming than we are by eff orts to create transformation, we not only cannot fi nd relief from suff ering, we are creating the conditions that help keep us stuck in the status quo. Our attachment to blaming, to identifying the oppressor stems from the fear that if we cannot unequivocally and absolutely state who the enemy is then we cannot know how to organize resistance struggle. In the insightful book Ruling Your World: Ancient Strategies for Modern Life, Mipham Rinpoche talks about learning to understand others rather than blaming them. He shares: “I remember my father and others of the older generation of Tibetan lamas saying that they did not blame the Communist Chinese for the destruction of Tibet. They felt that blaming the Chinese would not solve anything. It would only trap Tibetans in the past.” Similarly, any critical examination of the history of the civil rights struggle in the United States will show that greater progress was made when leaders emphasized the importance of forgiving one’s enemies, working for reconciliation and the formation of a beloved community, rather than angry retaliation. Casting blame and calling for vengeance was an aspect of militant movements for black power that have really failed to sustain the climate of unlearning racism previously forged by nonviolent anti-racist struggle. In the aftermath of sixties rebellion, the more black folks were encouraged to vent rage, to “blame” all white folks for race-based exploitation and domination, and to eschew any notion of forgiveness, the more an internalized sense of victimhood became the norm. Tragically, today many black folks are more despairing of any possibility that racism can be eff ectively challenged and changed than at other similar historical moments when white supremacist aggression was more overtly life threatening. Unenlightened white folks who proclaim either that racism has ended or that they are not responsible for slavery engage a politics of blame wherein they disavow political reality to insist that black folk are never really victims of racism but are the agents of their own suff ering. Dualistic thinking, which is at the core of dominator thinking, teaches people that there is always the oppressed and the oppressor, a victim and a victimizer. Hence there is always someone to blame. Moving past the ideology of blame to a politics of accountability is a diffi cult move to make in a society where almost all political organizing, whether conservative or radical, has been structured around the binary of good guys and bad guys. Accountability is a much more complex issue. A politics of blame allows a contemporary white person to make statements like, “My family never owned slaves,” or “Slavery is over. Why can’t they just get over it?” In contrast, a politics of accountability would emphasize that all white people benefi t from the privileges accrued from racist exploitation past and present and therefore are accountable for changing and transforming white supremacy and racism. Accountability is a more expansive concept because it opens a fi eld of possibility wherein we are all compelled to move beyond blame to see where our responsibility lies. Seeing clearly that we live within a dominator culture of imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, I am compelled to locate where my responsibility lies. In some circumstances I am more likely to be victimized by an aspect of that system, in other circumstances I am in a position to be a victimizer. If I only lay claim to those aspects of the system where I defi ne myself as the oppressed and someone else as my oppressor, then I continually fail to see the larger picture. Any eff ort I might make to challenge domination is likely to fail if I am not looking accurately at the circumstances that create suff ering, and thus seeing the larger picture. After more than thirty years of talking to folks about domination, I can testify that masses of folks in our society—both black and white— r esist seeing the larger picture.

#### Even if they have a good starting point for one aspect, they fail to recognize their role in larger dominator culture—race is only one aspect. There are masses of people of color whose religions actively teach modes of patriarchal thinking. We are taught this in our families and in our holy spaces and in debate

hooks, b. (2013).*Writing beyond race: Living theory and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge. P 33-36

And patriarchy begins at home. Again, it is the one aspect of¶ dominator culture that we tend to learn from family, from folks who¶ purport to care about us. In the past, patriarchal thinking learned in¶ the family was mirrored in the patriarchal teachings of the church¶ or other religious institutions. But, while religion was once a major¶ forum for the teaching of racist thought, this is no longer an accepted¶ norm. Christian white people are not overtly taught in church settings¶ that god has ordained that they are superior to people of color and¶ should rule over them. Indeed, even among the most fundamentalist¶ Christians, there is a widespread eff ort to recruit people of color to¶ join with them in worship. This welcoming stance is present even¶ though churches in the United States are primarily racially segregated.¶ Yet all the major religions of the world continue to openly teach¶ patriarchal thinking. Concurrently, masses of people of color globally¶ denounce white supremacy and racism while actively perpetuating¶ patriarchy.¶ Nowadays many of our nation’s citizens no longer attend church¶ so the family has become the primary institution for the dissemination¶ of patriarchal thought to children. Patriarchal females as primary¶ caregivers of children are the people who teach patriarchal gender¶ roles. Yet most males and females in our society rarely if ever use the¶ word patriarchy or even understand its meaning. Patriarchy is a political¶ and social system that insists males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and¶ endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak as well as¶ the right to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological¶ abuse and violence. No contemporary movement for social¶ justice has changed the nature of how we live other than the feminist¶ movement. Acknowledgment through law and public policy that¶ women are the equals of men and deserve equal rights changed the¶ nature of work, of economics, of home life. And while much is blamed¶ on the feminist movement, the truth remains that females and males¶ have greater access to gender equity in all spheres of life because of¶ the feminist movement. It is precisely the myriad successes of feminist¶ reform that have led to anti-feminist backlash.¶ Challenging and changing patriarchy threatens a core foundation¶ of dominator culture. If boys are not socialized to embrace¶ patriarchal masculinity and its concomitant violence, then they will¶ not have the mindset needed to wage imperialist war. If females and¶ males are taught to value mutuality, then partnership rather than¶ the ethics of domination will be valued. Since patriarchal thinking¶ creates psychological distress, new models of partnership off er¶ the promise of well-being and therefore undermine the capitalist¶ consumer culture, which exploits psychological pain. The positive¶ changes created by the feminist movement were so widespread that¶ the backlash has been fi erce. Mass media, especially media targeting¶ young children, teenagers, and young adults, continually reinscribes¶ sexist thinking about gender roles. It has been the primary tool portraying¶ feminists and/or powerful women in negative ways. In The¶ Power of Partnership, Eisler emphasizes that one form anti-feminist¶ backlash in media has taken is promoting “domination and submission¶ in the relations between parents and children and between¶ women and men.” Explaining further she contends:¶ The reason is that these intimate relations are where we fi rst¶ learn to accept domination and control as normal, inevitable, and right. . . . This is why many of the most repressive modern regimes . . . have sprung up where family and gender relations¶ based on domination and submission are fi rmly in place.¶ It is also why, once in power, these regimes have vigorously¶ pushed policies that have as their goal the reinstatement of¶ a punitive father in complete control of his family. We see¶ this pattern all too clearly in one of the most serious aspects¶ of the dominator regression of our time: the rise of so-called¶ religious fundamentalism. I say so-called because, if we look¶ closely, it’s clear that what many fundamentalist leaders¶ preach—be it in the Middle East or the United States—is not¶ religious fundamentalism but the domination/control model¶ with a religious spin.¶ Given the role patriarchy plays as a system that exploits familial¶ relationships in order to teach dominator values, there are clear benefi ts¶ to everyone—female and male, adult and child—when patriarchy is¶ challenged and changed. Yet changing patriarchy will not bring an end¶ to dominator culture as long as the other interlocking systems remain¶ in place. When the feminist movement was bringing revolutionary¶ changes to the status of women and men, imperialism, capitalism, and¶ racism were all systems gaining strength globally.

#### Black men need feminist thinking—the only way to solve for race is by resisting all forms of domination—these matrices are interlocking

hooks, b. (2013).Writing beyond race: Living theory and practice. New York, NY: Routledge. P 182-183

Concurrently, we cannot heal the crisis in black life without incorporating in our struggle for black self-determination the struggle to end sexism and male domination. Family life (committed marriages and partnerships) in diverse black communities is daily undermined by patriarchal thinking that makes acceptable male domination in the forms of violence, psychological terrorism, betrayal, and abandonment. Adultery, child abuse, marital rape, and date rape are all expressions of black male sexism. And that sexism is often condoned by black women who support and embrace patriarchal thinking. Black on black male violence is a feminist issue. Black men need feminist thinking to resist being brainwashed by white supremacist patriarchal thinking into believing that being a man is about the will to do violence and coerce others. We have seen again and again that black men and women who oppose racism often support sexism and class exploitation, that white women who are outraged by sexism help perpetuate and maintain structures of racism and white supremacy, that progressive white men who critique capitalism do not challenge sexist and racist thinking and behavior. As long as any of us support domination in any form, we keep in place the structure which upholds racism and white supremacy. Racism and white supremacy cannot be effectively challenged and changed in our society until all of us learn to resist domination in all its forms. Loving justice means that we are willing to see the ways racism, sexism, and class exploitation are interconnected. It would serve us well to heed the warning posed by Martin Luther King when he prophetically declared in his “Beyond Vietnam” speech that we needed “a revolution of values in this society” emphasizing: “When machines and computers, profi t motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism”—and here I would add sexism— “are incapable of being conquered.” Our hope lies in facing these truths and rededicating ourselves to a vision of life where freedom and justice for all is no longer a dream but the reality to be embraced if we are to survive, if the planet is to survive. It is only as we work for change that we see clearly that change can happen, that our lives can be transformed, that we can always renew our spirits and rekindle our hope.

#### We need to reject the 1AC starting point and instead embrace a mindset of critical consciousness. Critical consciousness is the only way to solve for dominator culture because it is the only way that we can have honest discussions about race.

hooks, b. (2013).*Writing beyond race: Living theory and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge. P 193

Since all citizens of our nation are subjected to some form of indoctrination that socializes us to embrace, however unconsciously, aspects of white supremacist thought and action, however relative, we must consciously choose to acquire the necessary critical consciousness that empowers us to think and act diff erently, to resist. Resistance to white supremacy, to racism, requires constant critical vigilance because in every aspect of our society white supremacy is normalized. Therefore we (irrespective of racial identity) can only move beyond the prejudicial beliefs and assumptions racism off ers us by applying strategies of decolonization— that is, strategies aimed at strengthening our awareness of the true reality beyond domination and providing us with an oppositional liberating worldview. We change our minds and hearts by changing our habits of thinking and being. Internalized white supremacy and racism prevent everyone from achieving emotional well-being; this is especially the case for black people who lack critical consciousness. As long as most black folks are emotionally crippled by internalized white supremacist thinking, they are trapped in split-mind enacting behaviors that reinforce patterns of racist stereotypes even as they may voice anti-racist sentiments.

#### Bonding across borders and openness to difference is critical to cultivating an ethic of openness and love for everyone that fosters large collective resistence to the way domination occurs

hooks, b. (2013).*Writing beyond race: Living theory and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge. P 148-150

Certainly, active listening is essential to the process of learning and connecting across diff erence. When we stop making assumptions and allow folk the opportunity to share their backgrounds with us, to let us know how they see themselves, there is a much stronger will to connect. And that connection is central to the process of building community. Curiosity is a trait that strengthens all our eff orts to meet across diff erences. In dominator culture most of us have been taught from childhood on that curiosity is dangerous. Even the common childhood expression “curiosity killed the cat” suggests to children that there is a problem with seeking knowledge beyond what is deemed acceptable. In my work I write about the place of “radical openness” as a useful standpoint to approach the world of diff erence and otherness. Sharing humor is crucial to bonding across diff erence. Laughing together is always a way to intensify intimacy. When we can laugh at mistakes, laugh even in the midst of our tears, we affi rm that what keeps us together is always more important than what can separate us. Laughter often serves as a powerful intervention when the issues we are confronting are hard and painful. It off ers a way to change the channel, to let us “chill” for a moment and really cool down, returning to states of calmness that make communication possible. Shared laughter helps create the context for feelings of mutuality to emerge. When the feminist movement was at its peak, there was so much talk about the need for equality. It was presented as a basis for sisterhood. Of course as women began to speak our diff erences we were exposed to all that made relationships between females unequal. The theory had to change. Visionary feminists began to talk about the importance of mutuality, of a partnership. Using such a model as a basis for connection opened the possibility that there could be grave diff erences between people but that diff erence need not lead to domination. Knowing, for example, that a straight person has unearned heterosexual privilege can lead that person to mindful awareness about how to interact with gay folks in ways that affi rm that all our identities are acceptable. Mutuality calls us to respect one another. Since the root meaning of the word respect is “to look at it,” we can use our visions to learn one another, to see who we really are behind the mask of categories. We can move beyond diff erence. My early childhood was spent in the hills of Kentucky. Mama’s family were people from the backwoods. There was no welcoming of diff erence in our lives. We were taught to stay with the same and to fear the strange. Given that our world was one of racial apartheid, learning to fear white folks was crucial to survival. It compelled us to be ever vigilant. Even so, the hills were the only racially integrated places, poor whites living in isolated hollows where poor blacks also lived. It was there that I learned to be curious about folks not like myself, to move past fear. And in that movement I became someone my family saw as diff erent. To them it was not “natural” to want to move beyond relations with family and kin and to connect with strangers. Throughout my teen years I bonded with strangers who were, like me, deemed diff erent because we shared a common outsider status. I learned that it was possible to make a soul connection with someone; to move past race and all the other estranging categories. Meeting across all that might divide us showed me that a life of diversity was a more meaningful life. Just recently, one of my white students shared that she felt fearful of her longing to move beyond race and bond with people of color. She fears that even that desire is a small manifestation of unearned white privilege. Not wanting her to be afraid of this longing, instead, I encouraged her to trust in her capacity to be critically vigilant. That means she has to trust her knowledge of dominator culture so that she can have faith in her own strategies of resistance. We can all have confi dence in our strategies of resistance when we see the positive ways our lives and our habits of being are changed. I trust the white folks with whom I am allied because of their commitment to peace and justice, to ending domination. It was this will to work for change that motivated their bonding across diff erence. And it is our shared longing to live in solidarity with one another that helps us forge sustained bonds of fellowship and camaraderie.

### Case

#### Performance is not a mode of resistance – it gives too much power to the audience because the performer is structurally blocked from controlling the (re)presentation of their representations. Appealing to the ballot is a way of turning over one’s identity to the same reproductive economy that underwrites liberalism

Peggy Phelan 96, chair of New York University's Department of Performance Studies, Unmarked: the politics of performance, 146-9

146

Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance’s being, like the ontology of subjectivityproposed here, becomes itself through disappearance.¶ The pressures brought to bear on performance to succumb to thelaws of the reproductive economy are enormous. For only rarely in this culture is the “now” to which performance addresses its deepest questions valued. (This is why the now is supplemented and buttressedby the documenting camera, the video archive.) Performance occursover a time which will not be repeated. It can be performed again, butthis repetition itself marks it as “different.” The document of a performance then is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present.¶ The other arts, especially painting and photography, are drawnincreasingly toward performance. The French-born artist Sophie Calle,for example, has photographed the galleries of the Isabella StewartGardner Museum in Boston. Several valuable paintings were stolen fromthe museum in 1990. Calle interviewed various visitors and membersof the muse um staff, asking them to describe the stolen paintings. She then transcribed these texts and placed them next to the photographs of the galleries. Her work suggests that the descriptions and memories of the paintings constitute their continuing “presence,” despite the absence of the paintings themselves. Calle gestures toward a notion of the interactive exchange between the art object and the viewer. While such exchanges are often recorded as the stated goals of museums and galleries, the institutional effect of the gallery often seems to put the masterpiece under house arrest, controlling all conflicting and unprofessional commentary about it. The speech act of memory and description (Austin’s constative utterance) becomes a performative expression when Calle places these commentaries within the¶ 147¶ representation of the museum. The descriptions fill in, and thus supplement (add to, defer, and displace) the stolen paintings. The factthat these descriptions vary considerably—even at times wildly—onlylends credence to the fact that the interaction between the art objectand the spectator is, essentially, performative—and therefore resistantto the claims of validity and accuracy endemic to the discourse of reproduction. While the art historian of painting must ask if thereproduction is accurate and clear, Calle asks where seeing and memoryforget the object itself and enter the subject’s own set of personalmeanings and associations. Further her work suggests that the forgetting(or stealing) of the object is a fundamental energy of its descriptiverecovering. The description itself does not reproduce the object, it ratherhelps us to restage and restate the effort to remember what is lost. Thedescriptions remind us how loss acquires meaning and generatesrecovery—not only of and for the object, but for the one who remembers.The disappearance of the object is fundamental to performance; itrehearses and repeats the disappearance of the subject who longs alwaysto be remembered.¶ For her contribution to the Dislocations show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1991, Calle used the same idea but this time she asked curators, guards, and restorers to describe paintings that were on loan from the permanent collection. She also asked them to draw small pictures of their memories of the paintings. She then arranged the texts and pictures according to the exact dimensions of the circulating paintings and placed them on the wall where the actual paintings usually hang. Calle calls her piece Ghosts, and as the visitor discovers Calle’s work spread throughout the museum, it is as if Calle’s own eye is following and tracking the viewer as she makes her way through the museum.1 Moreover, Calle’s work seems to disappear because it is dispersed throughout the “permanent collection”—a collection which circulates despite its “permanence.” Calle’s artistic contribution is a kind of self-concealment in which she offers the words of others about other works of art under her own artistic signature. By making visible her attempt to offer what she does not have, what cannot be seen, Calle subverts the goal of museum display. She exposes what the museum does not have and cannot offer and uses that absence to generate her own work. By placing memories in the place of paintings, Calle asks that the ghosts of memory be seen as equivalent to “the permanent collection” of “great works.” One senses that if she asked the same people over and over about the same paintings, each time they would describe a slightly different painting. In this sense, Calle demonstrates the performative quality of all seeing.¶ 148¶ I Performance in a strict ontological sense is nonreproductive. It is this quality which makes performance the runt of the litter of contemporary art. Performance clogs the smooth machinery of reproductive representation necessary to the circulation of capital. Perhaps nowhere was the affinity between the ideology of capitalism and art made more manifest than in the debates about the funding policies for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).2 Targeting both photography and performance art, conservative politicians sought to prevent endorsing the “real” bodies implicated and made visible by these art forms. Performance implicates the real through the presence of living bodies. In performance art spectatorship there is an element of consumption: there are no left-overs, the gazing spectator must try to take everything in. Without a copy, live performance plunges into visibility—in a maniacally charged present—and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control. Performance resists the balanced circulations of finance. It saves nothing; it only spends. While photography is vulnerable to charges of counterfeiting and copying, performance art is vulnerable to charges of valuelessness and emptiness. Performance indicates the possibility of revaluing that emptiness; this potential revaluation gives performance art its distinctive oppositional edge.3 To attempt to write about the undocumentable event of performance is to invoke the rules of the written document and thereby alter the event itself. Just as quantum physics discovered that macro-instruments cannot measure microscopic particles without transforming those particles, so too must performance critics realize that the labor to write about performance (and thus to “preserve” it) is also a labor that fundamentally alters the event. It does no good, however, to simply refuse to write about performance because of this inescapable transformation. The challenge raised by the ontological claims of performance for writing is to re-mark again the performative possibilities of writing itself. The act of writing toward disappearance, rather than the act of writing toward preservation, must remember that the after-effect of disappearance is the experience of subjectivity itself. This is the project of Roland Barthes in both Camera Lucida and Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes. It is also his project in Empire of Signs, but in this book he takes the memory of a city in which he no longer is, a city from which he disappears, as the motivation for the search for a disappearing performative writing. The trace left by that script is the meeting-point of a mutual disappearance; shared subjectivity is possible for Barthes because two people can recognize the same Impossible. To live for a love whose goal is to share the Impossible is both a humbling project and an exceedingly ambitious one, for it seeks to find connection only in that which is no longer there. Memory. Sight. Love. It must involve a full seeing of the Other’s absence (the ambitious part), a seeing which also entails the acknowledgment of the Other’s presence (the humbling part). For to acknowledge the Other’s (always partial) presence is to acknowledge one’s own (always partial) absence. In the field of linguistics, the performative speech act shares with the ontology of performance the inability to be reproduced or repeated. “Being an individual and historical act, a performative utterance cannot be repeated. Each reproduction is a new act performed by someone who is qualified. Otherwise, the reproduction of the performative utterance by someone else necessarily transforms it into a constative utterance.”4 ¶ 149¶ Writing, an activity which relies on the reproduction of the Same(the three letters cat will repeatedly signify the four-legged furry animalwith whiskers) for the production of meaning, can broach the frame of performance but cannot mimic an art that is nonreproductive. Themimicry of speech and writing, the strange process by which we put words in each other’s mouths and others’ words in our own, relies on a substitutional economy in which equivalencies are assumed and re-established. Performance refuses this system of exchange and resists the circulatory economy fundamental to it. Performance honors the idea that a limited number of people in a specific time/space frame can have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace afterward. Writing about it necessarily cancels the “tracelessness” inaugurated within this performative promise. Performance’s independence from mass reproduction, technologically, economically, and linguistically, is its greatest strength. But buffeted by the encroaching ideologies of capitaland reproduction, it frequently devalues this strength. Writing aboutperformance often, unwittingly, encourages this weakness and falls inbehind the drive of the document/ary. Performance’s challenge to writingis to discover a way for repeated words to become performative utterances, rather than, as Benveniste warned, constative utterances.

#### The very act of articulating why performance ought be attached to the ballot casts performance within the terms of liberalism’s discursive economy – this reduces their performance to a form of aesthetic formalism, this subordinates the political potential of performance to the narrow disciplinary concerns of academic knowledge production

Phelan ‘96—chair of New York University's Department of Performance Studies (Peggy, Unmarked: the politics of performance, ed published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005,

In his 1981 article Representation and the Limits of Interpretation, Eric E. Peterson delves into the problems of wedding post-structuralism and interpretation in terms of the limits of representation. He concedes that for oral interpretation “representation is a powerful force in the theoretical understanding of our practice. Not only does it allow us to distinguish oral interpretation from similar literary, theatrical, and speech arts; but it also provides a theoretical justification for the existence of oral interpretation as a discipline distinct from other disciplines” (24). Peterson formulated these arguments even before oral interpretation shifted to the broader term performance studies, but his predictions were insightful. Peterson maps out potential disciplinary costs of thinking representation in a certain way. He continues, saying that the cost of “securing this place for oral interpretation is the increasing objectification of our practice and subjectification of our practitioners. By objectifying our practice, we mean that the conceptualization of art as representation precludes the examination of the very activity of representing” (24). This causes the field to continually wrap itself up in disciplinary techniques for the “accumulation of knowledge and the exercise of power” (24) through interpretation, instead of focusing on the eroticization of performance practice itself. Peterson argues for reinvestigating the process of performance as art, not subject-object relations.

#### Resistance via the ballot can only instill an adaptive politics of being and effaces the institutional constraints that reproduce structural violence

Brown 95—prof at UC Berkeley (Wendy, States of Injury, 21-3)

For some, fueled by opprobrium toward regulatory norms or other mo- dalities 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 resis- tance: 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, contem- porary 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’ emotionalbearing 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 eco- nomic 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.

## 2nc

### Link

#### The affirmative gets swept away by the idea of an anti-black racist agenda and renders themselves victims making coping in predominately white world impossible

hooks, b. (2013).*Writing beyond race: Living theory and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge. P 153

The bottom line of race and racism is white supremacy. One can be mindful of the impact of white supremacy while working consciously with mindful awareness to create a life where wholeness of self and identity stand as the powerful counter-hegemonic resistance to engulfment by racialized identity. Black folks, young and old, who are swept away by the idea of race and its concomitant anti-black racist agenda tend to end up seeing themselves as victims, living with depleting psychological states of fear and paranoia, states of mind that make coping in a predominately white world diffi cult, if not downright impossible.

#### Identity politics ignore intra-group differences – ignoring intersections.

Crenshaw 94

[Kimberlé Williams, teaches Civil Rights and other courses in critical race studies at UCLA, Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color, Jan, http://www.wcsap.org/Events/Workshop07/mapping-margins.pdf, MAD]

**The embrace of identity politics**, however, **has been in tension with dominant conceptions of social justice.** Race, gender, and other identity categories are most often treated in mainstream liberal discourse as vestiges of bias or domination-that is, as intrinsically negative frameworks in which social power works to exclude or marginalize those who are different. According to this understanding, our liberatory objective should be to empty such categories of any social significance. Yet implicit in certain strands of feminist and racial liberation movements, for example, is the view that the social power in delineating difference need not be the power of domination; it can instead be the source of political empowerment and social reconstruction. **The problem with identity politics is not that it fails to transcend difference**, as some critics charge, **but rather the opposite- that it frequently conflates or ignores intra group differences**. In the context of violence against women, **this elision of difference is problematic, fundamentally because the violence that many women experience is often shaped by other dimensions of their identities, such as race and class**. Moreover, **ignoring differences within groups frequently contributes to tension among groups, another problem of identity politics that frustrates efforts to politicize violence against women**. Feminist efforts to politicize experiences of women and antiracist efforts to politicize experiences of people of color' have frequently proceeded as though the issues and experiences they each detail occur on mutually exclusive terrains. Al-though racism and sexism readily intersect in the lives of real people, they seldom do in feminist and antiracist practices. And so, when the practices expound identity as "woman" or "person of color" as an either/or proposition, they relegate the identity of women of color to a location that resists telling.

#### Self-reflexive analysis of white privilege is critical in the debate space – we as white women examine our subject positioning to turn the gaze inward—this is the only way for us to challenge white supremacy

Green ’06

(Meredith, Edith Cowan University, “Problematizing the discourses of the dominant: whiteness and reconciliation,” 2006)

We suggest that getting people to problematize their whiteness through discourse analysis may be a useful form of engagement with whiteness that allows awareness raising of dominance and privilege. This may be through those in dominant and privileged positions listening to and reflecting on analyses such as the one presented in this article; discussing, critiquing and arguing about these interpretations; and/or being involved in conducting similar analyses of texts and talk about race relations in Australia. Rather than only focus on the experiences of those in marginalized positions; there would be engagement with positions of dominance that turns the gaze inward as part of the process of explicating the dialectical nature of race relations and dynamics of power. We argue that the approach to discourse analysis we adopted and its attention to power and subjectivity provides what is necessary for a complex and more complete understanding of whiteness to develop, as has been developed with oppression and which can provide a basis from which whiteness can be challenged.

### alt

#### Critical consciousness and active listening are the only way to bond across borders—the politics of blame and exclusion of the 1AC necessitate both ignoring critical consciousness and preventing coalition building necessary to overthrow dominator culture.

hooks, b. (2013).*Writing beyond race: Living theory and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge. P 148-150

Certainly, active listening is essential to the process of learning and connecting across diff erence. When we stop making assumptions and allow folk the opportunity to share their backgrounds with us, to let us know how they see themselves, there is a much stronger will to connect. And that connection is central to the process of building community. Curiosity is a trait that strengthens all our eff orts to meet across diff erences. In dominator culture most of us have been taught from childhood on that curiosity is dangerous. Even the common childhood expression “curiosity killed the cat” suggests to children that there is a problem with seeking knowledge beyond what is deemed acceptable. In my work I write about the place of “radical openness” as a useful standpoint to approach the world of diff erence and otherness. Sharing humor is crucial to bonding across diff erence. Laughing together is always a way to intensify intimacy. When we can laugh at mistakes, laugh even in the midst of our tears, we affi rm that what keeps us together is always more important than what can separate us. Laughter often serves as a powerful intervention when the issues we are confronting are hard and painful. It off ers a way to change the channel, to let us “chill” for a moment and really cool down, returning to states of calmness that make communication possible. Shared laughter helps create the context for feelings of mutuality to emerge. When the feminist movement was at its peak, there was so much talk about the need for equality. It was presented as a basis for sisterhood. Of course as women began to speak our diff erences we were exposed to all that made relationships between females unequal. The theory had to change. Visionary feminists began to talk about the importance of mutuality, of a partnership. Using such a model as a basis for connection opened the possibility that there could be grave diff erences between people but that diff erence need not lead to domination. Knowing, for example, that a straight person has unearned heterosexual privilege can lead that person to mindful awareness about how to interact with gay folks in ways that affi rm that all our identities are acceptable. Mutuality calls us to respect one another. Since the root meaning of the word respect is “to look at it,” we can use our visions to learn one another, to see who we really are behind the mask of categories. We can move beyond diff erence. My early childhood was spent in the hills of Kentucky. Mama’s family were people from the backwoods. There was no welcoming of diff erence in our lives. We were taught to stay with the same and to fear the strange. Given that our world was one of racial apartheid, learning to fear white folks was crucial to survival. It compelled us to be ever vigilant. Even so, the hills were the only racially integrated places, poor whites living in isolated hollows where poor blacks also lived. It was there that I learned to be curious about folks not like myself, to move past fear. And in that movement I became someone my family saw as diff erent. To them it was not “natural” to want to move beyond relations with family and kin and to connect with strangers. Throughout my teen years I bonded with strangers who were, like me, deemed diff erent because we shared a common outsider status. I learned that it was possible to make a soul connection with someone; to move past race and all the other estranging categories. Meeting across all that might divide us showed me that a life of diversity was a more meaningful life. Just recently, one of my white students shared that she felt fearful of her longing to move beyond race and bond with people of color. She fears that even that desire is a small manifestation of unearned white privilege. Not wanting her to be afraid of this longing, instead, I encouraged her to trust in her capacity to be critically vigilant. That means she has to trust her knowledge of dominator culture so that she can have faith in her own strategies of resistance. We can all have confi dence in our strategies of resistance when we see the positive ways our lives and our habits of being are changed. I trust the white folks with whom I am allied because of their commitment to peace and justice, to ending domination. It was this will to work for change that motivated their bonding across diff erence. And it is our shared longing to live in solidarity with one another that helps us forge sustained bonds of fellowship and camaraderie.

## 1nr

#### There is ONLY a risk that the alternative is able to resolve a reimagination of black identity by breaking away from victimhood. Our pedagogy is not based in shared victimization, but recognizes our compliance in enforcing systems of oppression. We assure accountability in our whiteness and allow the development of new models of thinking, creating integrated and innovative movements.

Smith 6

(Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy, from Color of Violence: the INCITE! Anthology, coolest activist)

Under the old but still potent and dominant model, people of color organizing was based on the notion of organizing around shared victimhood. In this model, however, we see that we are victims of white supremacy, but complicit in it as well. Our survival strategies and resistance to white supremacy are set by the system of white supremacy itself. What keeps us trapped within our particular pillars of white supremacy is that we are seduced with the prospect of being able to participate in the other pillars. For example, all non-Native peoples are promised the ability to join in the colonial project of settling indigenous lands. All non-Black peoples I are promised that if they comply, they will not be at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. And Black, Native, Latino, and Asian peoples are promised that they will economically and politically advance if they join US wars to spread "democracy." Thus, people of color organizing must be premised on making strategic alliances with each other, based on where we are situated within the larger political economy. Thus, for example, Native peoples who are organizing against the colonial and genocidal practices committed by the US government will be more effective in their struggle if they also organize against US militarism, particularly the military recruitment of indigenous peoples to support US imperial wars. If we try to end US colonial practices at home, but support US empire by joining the military, we are strengthening the state's ability to carry out genocidal policies against people of color here and all over the world. This way, our alliances would not be solely based on shared victimization, but where we are complict in the victimization of others. These approaches might help us to develop resistance strategies that do not inadvertently keep the system in place for all of us, and keep all of us accountable. In all of these cases, we would check our aspirations against the aspirations of other communities to ensure that our model of liberation does not become the model of oppression for others. These practices require us to be more viligant in how we may have internal70

#### The very act of articulating why performance ought be attached to the ballot casts performance within the terms of liberalism’s discursive economy – this reduces their performance to a form of aesthetic formalism, this subordinates the political potential of performance to the narrow disciplinary concerns of academic knowledge production

Phelan ‘96—chair of New York University's Department of Performance Studies (Peggy, Unmarked: the politics of performance, ed published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005,

In his 1981 article Representation and the Limits of Interpretation, Eric E. Peterson delves into the problems of wedding post-structuralism and interpretation in terms of the limits of representation. He concedes that for oral interpretation “representation is a powerful force in the theoretical understanding of our practice. Not only does it allow us to distinguish oral interpretation from similar literary, theatrical, and speech arts; but it also provides a theoretical justification for the existence of oral interpretation as a discipline distinct from other disciplines” (24). Peterson formulated these arguments even before oral interpretation shifted to the broader term performance studies, but his predictions were insightful. Peterson maps out potential disciplinary costs of thinking representation in a certain way. He continues, saying that the cost of “securing this place for oral interpretation is the increasing objectification of our practice and subjectification of our practitioners. By objectifying our practice, we mean that the conceptualization of art as representation precludes the examination of the very activity of representing” (24). This causes the field to continually wrap itself up in disciplinary techniques for the “accumulation of knowledge and the exercise of power” (24) through interpretation, instead of focusing on the eroticization of performance practice itself. Peterson argues for reinvestigating the process of performance as art, not subject-object relations.

#### Resistance via the ballot can only instill an adaptive politics of being and effaces the institutional constraints that reproduce structural violence

Brown 95—prof at UC Berkeley (Wendy, States of Injury, 21-3)

For some, fueled by opprobrium toward regulatory norms or other mo- dalities 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 resis- tance: 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, contem- porary 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’ emotionalbearing 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 eco- nomic 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.