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MAC Arrow

Unitarian Universalist
Multiracial Unity Action Council
(UUMUAC)

“For the Unity of the
light and dark skinned
people of the world.”

Mailing Address: UUMUAC

1448 E. 52nd St., Box 267, Chicago, IL 60615

Editor’s email: uusj@sbcglobal.net

The Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus to carry out and foster anti-racist and multiracial unity activities both within and outside the Unitarian Universalist Association through education, bearing witness and other actions, and expansion of our membership both within and outside the walls of our congregations.

We also seek to defend our UU Principles against those who seek to undermine them.

The Vision Statement

We envision our congregations, denomination, and society as not being color blind but color appreciative; as judging and treating members of the world’s rank and file by the content of their character, not the color of their skin or their cultural heritage; and as treasuring diversity in the context of the “Beloved Community.” We call this vision Multiracial Unitarian Universalism.

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Note: Articles reflect their author's views. They do not necessarily reflect a position taken by the UUMUAC Board of Directors

A LAMENT

Rev. Richard Trudeau

The UUA has just announced that it is seeking nominations for the position of Moderator.

"The Moderator is the Chief Governing Officer of the UUA, chairs the Board of Trustees, and Presiding Officer at General Assemblies" (UUA website).

The poorly-worded description notwithstanding, it's an important job. But now it's being given an ideological focus. The description goes on to say that the Moderator's primary goal will be to "serve our faith in dismantling the white supremacy culture, and implementing the recommendations in the report of the Commission on Institutional Change, *Widening the Circle of Concern*."

Widening the Circle of Concern was published in June, 2020. The following month, I reviewed it for Amazon.

* * *

POORLY THOUGHT-OUT

A One-Star Review of *Widening the Circle of Concern*

Richard Trudeau

I'm a Unitarian Universalist (UU) minister, and have read this report twice. At the beginning of my first reading, I was hopeful, because I knew the report aimed to strengthen UU organizations and make them more welcoming to "Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and also people who are gender-expansive or living with disabilities" (p. viii). (In the sequel I will for simplicity say only "Black people"; while the report makes regular reference to the other categories, it speaks primarily of Black people.)

By the end of my first reading, I had suspicions that the report may not be well thought-out. For one thing, it endorses reparations for slavery (p. 73), without explaining why it rejects the disapproval of such prominent Black intellectuals as Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Barack Obama. For another, it explicitly judges an action's impact to far outweigh the

actor's intentions (p. 140), without explaining what justifies thus ignoring more than 2000 years of ethical thinking .

I needed to read the report a second time because its language is numbingly bureaucratic—for example, “We used an action-based research methodology that involved collection of materials, analysis, and two outside consultants” (p. xxiii) instead of simply “We did research and used two consultants”—which makes the report longer than necessary (more than 200 pages). Also, its main narrative is regularly interrupted with other material, making the train of thought hard to follow.

The report makes three major assertions. The first is that UU organizations need Black people. The very existence of UUism is at stake! (p. 5) One reason given is that the number of UUs is shrinking (p. 39). But if our attempts to attract our primary demographic (people who are “resourced, white, aging” [p. 4]) are inadequate, the report does not explain why we should expect better results attempting to attract a different demographic. A second reason given is that UU “integrity” requires that our numbers include Black people in proportion to their presence in the general population. But the report does not consider the possibility that lower numbers of Black people may be due to factors other than an unwelcoming reception. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said of his own congregation, “it is segregated but not segregating; it would welcome whites” (*Meet the Press*, April 17, 1960).

The second assertion is that Black people are regularly mistreated in UU organizations. But the question used to gather testimony was “In what ways have you or your group or community been hurt by current racist and culturally biased attitudes and practices within Unitarian Universalism?” (p. xxiv), which solicits only negative replies. The report does not give evidence that Black people are mistreated in UU organizations to a greater extent than other people. The report does include testimonies of Black people who have been treated rudely, but it assumes that the insensitivity and cluelessness that UUs share with other humans is particularly focused on Black people.

The third assertion is that UU organizations must change. The suggested changes include: change in worship style and music; mandatory cultural sensitivity training for leaders; “centering” Black testimony and experience; financially supporting all-Black groups where Black UUs can support one another; “reduc[ing] the barriers to entry for those who seek to serve as religious professionals” (p. 82); and many others. The overall implication of these recommended changes is that Black people are not warriors or survivors, but victims—so fragile and powerless that they are unable thrive without elaborate mechanisms of support. If I were a Black person, I would find this report condescending.

I was not the only one to criticize *Widening the Circle of Concern*. Here in the pages of the *Arrow*, Dick Burkhart found it to be “An Embarrassment” (Late Summer 2020), and Allan Pally wrote an eviscerating critique of its research methodology (Spring 2021).

(All past issues of the *Arrow* are on our UUMUAC website, and these two articles can also be found in our book *Toward Multiracial Unity: Fighting Neoracism in Unitarian Universalism*, available on Amazon.)

During this year's General Assembly, I was stunned by the extent of the dishonesty of UU national officials, and the degree of corruption of so many UU ministers. Now, with national officials plunging ahead with their neoracist agenda, as their job-description for Moderator makes perfectly clear, I feel that the battle has been lost, and the bad guys have won. Though I am confident that the slow-motion train-wreck of the UUA will eventually sort itself out, and a new association of liberal congregations will arise, it is not clear to me that this will be accomplished during my lifetime. For the moment, I feel like a man without a country .

“Identity Politics is How the Cultural Elite Seeks Dominance”

a 2024 review by Dick Burkhardt of

“How the Woke Won: The Elitist Movement that Threatens Democracy, Tolerance, and Reason” by Joanne Williams, 2022

Williams is a UK journalist and academic who dares to critique her own milieu – the “cultural elite”. In her view, this elite includes not just the ruling class but the professionals and well-educated middle class who support it. The old ruling class, or “establishment”, got a bad rap in the 1960s so Williams sees the new cultural elite as seeking a new moral purpose that will divert attention from resurgent issues of class and inequality. To her the term “woke” codifies this new ideology of victimhood and cancel culture:

“Woke describes a moral sensibility that insists on putting people into identity boxes and then arranging these boxes into hierarchies of privilege and oppression, with some groups in need of ‘uplifting’ while others must beg atonement...woke privileges performative displays and linguistic correctness above material change”. “Cancel culture describes woke’s censorious approach to dissenters”, especially against celebrities such as J.K. Rowling. It “demands that transgressors be removed from social media and public life more broadly”.

Yet this cancel culture is denied by the woke themselves: “Arguing that this is a right-wing plot to win votes has become a boilerplate response from woke’s advocates”. This denial “reveals the fundamental lack of confidence that woke’s advocates have in the values they espouse”.

The bottom line is that “claiming to act on behalf of the oppressed allows wealthy people to morally justify their own privileged position...what’s more, woke helps maintain elite rule by dividing the masses into more easily manageable groups.” But in the process “woke hijacks progressive rhetoric” and “breathes new life into old forms of prejudice”, especially racial prejudice. “Woke is how the

professional-managerial class maintains its position”.

The rest of the book digs more deeply into the history and mechanisms of “woke” in modern society. There are chapters that lay out the intractability of woke in the ideology and politics of race and gender, in schools and higher education, business and media, and more. But Williams ends on a note of hope, despite noting that woke “resists accountability and avoids public debate”.

This hope lies with the people – the vast majority “who do not identify with the goals and aspirations of the cultural elite”. Already the working class has begun to fight back - the Brexit vote being the prime example in the UK, with the Trump vote being its counterpart in the US. Williams rejects the blaming of such votes on bad identity politics (racism, sexism, bigotry, etc). Instead she sees them as a rejection of elitism – the cumulative economic inequality and its associated social inequality, or woke itself. She identifies the cultural war as the backlash to the blaming and shaming instigated by the woke.

Misinformation from Rev. Dr. Betancourt May 4, 2024 by 5th Principle Project WebMaster

[Our First Principle Has an Evil Source](#)

At a recent event held by the UU Women’s Federation, the Rev. Dr. Sofia Bentancourt, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association, responding to a question about the role of the UUA in the current controversies over abortion, used the occasion to condemn our first principle with misinformation about its source. With the minor exception of asserting that the first principle, “the inherent worth and dignity of every person”, has little to do with personhood and embryos, she did not, as one might expect of a theologian, address how the first principle applies to the issue of abortion. Instead, she disparaged the first principle by misinterpreting and attacking Immanuel Kant.

“Um, I will say. Oh, I struggle with our first principle, I do. Um, you know, if you will forgive me briefly, [the the] language of the inherent worth and dignity of every person comes from Immanuel Kant, the literal father of modern racism.”

Neither of these remarks are true. First, while there is overlap in some of the language in Kant’s moral philosophy and the UU first principle, there is no direct evidence that the first principle came from Kant. The idea that undergirds the first principle, the eternal value of the human soul, originated in Platonic/Christian thought centuries before Kant. Secondly, and more importantly, Immanuel Kant is not the father of modern racism. There is no scholarly support for this accusation. Racism has deep historical roots that extend far before and beyond Kant. It has been perpetuated by various cultural, social, and economic factors throughout history. And while it is true that Kants views on race largely reflected the unfortunate attitudes of his time, something critical to understand, it is also according to some scholars true that his racist premises are more likely those of his interlocutors, to whom he addresses his counterarguments. Kant, in contrast, argues in favor of the unity

of humanity. This fact runs completely counter to Betancourt's insistence that Kant's moral universalism was intended only for "landed, educated, wealthy German cis men." As the philosopher Susan Neiman wrote in her recent article in the NYTimes on Kant, "Some of his remarks are undeniably offensive to 21st-century ears. But it's fatal to forget that his work gave us the tools to fight racism and sexism, by providing the metaphysical basis of every claim to human rights." One would think that someone with Betancourt's academic background should know this.

Misinterpretation

Her evidence for disparaging our first principle through attacking Kant consists in her misinterpretation of two of his works, both written in the same year. One is "On the Beautiful and Sublime," which is primarily concerned with aesthetics and the nature of our subjective experiences of beauty and awe. Betancourt believes that this book is "literally" the source of our first principle. It is not. The other work is his "Anthropology," which delves into the study of human nature, behavior, and the diversity of cultures. She hyperbolically insists that this book contains "the defining point of some of the worst racist stereotypes in modern Western history." What it contains, according to most scholars, are racial views common to the period. Kant's racial classifications in "Anthropology" reflect the racial attitudes prevalent in 18th-century Europe. These attitudes were characterized by hierarchical classifications of races and the belief in the superiority of certain races over others.

Our First Principle is Racist

What Rev. Betancourt does is to judge the value and verity of "Sublime" by the worst of "Anthropology". This is in order to judge the value and verity of our first principle in the same manner. *"But I think that actually our, our first principle came originally from a source that could not be more flawed"*. Briefly put, according to Rev. Betancourt, our first principle is racist. She further insists that since both of these works were written in the same year, then two things follow. One, no argument can be made that Kant evolved in his views and two, the value the world has put on his moral philosophy is a mistake.

"And he wrote them in the same year. So you can't even argue that he, like, I don't know, you know, evolved and had a new value set like they're, they're it's evil. Um, and so the, the, the positive expression over time, the way people have read him is different from what he meant."

But again, her notions here are questionable, to put it charitably. As argued by some scholars, Kant's thought on these matters did evolve (See for example "Kant's Second Thoughts on Race," by Prof. Pauline Kleingeld). Moreover, scholars have both severely criticized Kant's views on race while being perfectly capable of appreciating the contribution he made to moral thought and ethical practice in the West.

Our First Principle is a Mistake

Of course, if Rev. Betancourt's views here are accepted, then our first principle is also a mistake, and should be discarded, which is the point she is driving at, all on the basis of some exceedingly dubious notions about the source and real intent of our first principle. These views are a reflection of the UUA's willingness to consider suspect anything of merit uttered by a white person, particularly white males, which is the basis of their wholesale rejection of Enlightenment thought in the re-write of A2. We can in response paraphrase a question asked by Prof. Neiman in her NYTimes article. Should we discard our Enlightenment legacy because it has never been fully realized? Or would we rather celebrate the fact that we can and have made moral progress, an idea which Kant and all the Enlightenment figures would wholeheartedly applaud.

Our Heritage is a Mistake

With this it is worthy to touch upon a disturbing assumption or consequence of Betancourt's views, and by implication that of the UUA. If embracing Kant, and by association the entire Enlightenment, was a mistake, then the entire rights based political culture we have developed from it is also a mistake. If we listen to Bentacourt and the UUA then our rights based political culture is really nothing more than a method to maintain the privileged position of white people. In short, we've been living in a collective delusion. We can consider this to be among the fundamental realizations the UUA seeks to ignite in all UU's through the "spiritual discipline of love," as they call it.

Martin Luther King was very fond of saying that the moral arch of the Universe is long, but it bends toward Justice. He was quoting or paraphrasing the transcendentalist Theodore Parker, among the most famous of UU theologians who was himself, by some accounts, every bit a racist, despite his commitment to Abolitionism. But did MLK suggest that Parker's quote was itself racist because he was white? No. I think MLK is far and away a better guide here than Rev. Betancourt will ever be.



9 UUMUAC—Chicago Area Chapter members visited the Pullman National Historic Park, with a special focus on the Pullman Porters and their Ladies Auxilliary, plus the role of race in the Pullman Company.

Report on the Cass Review

by Nancy Haldeman

The Cass review (388 pages) published April 10th in the UK was a commissioned 4-year study on treatment of minors in the UK for gender dysphoria. See reports in the NYT, WA Post, Boston Globe, and others in UK newspapers.

The Review, an independent investigation of gender services for children and young people, concludes that there is no evidence that affirmation and medicalization of children experiencing unhappiness and trauma around their developing bodies is beneficial to them, and is indeed likely to be harmful.

It also found that the practice of prescribing puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones to minors was based on “remarkably weak evidence.”

It has been legal since 2015 for minors in Oregon to access cross-sex hormones, puberty blockers, and surgeries for gender transition at age 15 without parental permission. HB 2002 passed by Democrats in 2023, with total opposition from Republicans, added that minors from other states can access transitions in Oregon and will be covered by the Oregon Health Plan for free. There are many other laws incorporated within this 46-page bill. This is part of the trans activists’ agenda, but does not represent the views of many trans people.

This is a human rights issue for children, not a political position. Children are too young to give informed consent to medical treatments that have lifelong consequences, especially given that their brains are not fully developed. Our lawmakers made a big mistake in passing this legislation. Minors who are having mental health issues need assistance, not medicalization.

Following are more comments on the Cass Review from UK writers:

[Kathleen Stock on Cass Report:](#)

Pity poor Dr Hilary Cass, the eminent paediatrician charged with managing an independent review of NHS gender services for young people, whose [final report](#) was published this week. Given the hair-trigger sensibilities of interested parties, she seems to have been unable to state unambiguously that now-popular treatments for young people confused or distressed by their sexed bodies are blatant quackery: keeping pre-pubescent kids in suspended chemical animation on the basis of a single, [discredited](#) study; dosing teenagers liberally with opposite-sex hormones; or — when a child reaches the tender age of 18, though even earlier in other countries — empowering her to have major body parts cut off.

Instead, time and again in Cass’s report she is forced back into the conceit that the most pressing problem for contemporary gender medicine is the lack of good evidence for such interventions either way. It is as if a modern-day medic had been tasked with reviewing the efficacy of trepanning, and then ordered to defend her findings in front of fanatical fifth-century devotees. “It’s not that drilling a hole in a child’s skull to release demons is necessarily harmful, you understand — indeed, it may be the best outcome in some cases. The main issue is the lack of long-term follow up.”

Alongside Cass’s cumulatively devastating account of reckless decision-making, poor evidential standards, and patchy record-keeping at Gids and elsewhere, a whole section of the report gently attempts to educate its readership about “the components of evidence-based medicine” — complete with basic explainers about randomised controlled trials, blinding processes, and the possibility of bias. She might as well be addressing an archaic people who have just emerged blinking from a time capsule, still convinced that disease is God’s punishment for insufficient acts of propitiation.

[Hadley Freeman on the girls failed by GIDS:](#)

These questions about why so many teenage girls suddenly didn’t want to be female, to the point that they eventually outnumbered the boys at Gids by six to one, and why this didn’t give pause to anyone in charge at Gids (the clinicians there who dared to question it were silenced and even pushed out) are at the heart of the final report from the senior paediatrician Dr Hilary Cass on the NHS’s treatment of gender-confused young people, which was published last week. And yet some still don’t get it. A [leader in The Guardian](#) on Friday said the Cass review had made “a connection between the rise in girls experiencing a mental health crisis and the rise of girls developing gender-related distress. Such an assumption lays Dr Cass open to the charge that her suggestions are tantamount to talking people out of their desired gender change.”

That “people” is telling: for too long, too many have argued that enabling children to change their body is part of the wider drive for acceptance of trans adults. But the two things are very different. A teenage girl who suddenly fears becoming a woman has nothing to do with, say, a middle-aged male who decides to live as a woman. Yet activists have energetically pushed the line that all gender-confused people should be seen as analogous, just as they say trans people should be seen as akin to gay people, and therefore any questions about why a teenage girl might not want to be female are as verboten as asking a gay man why he doesn’t fancy women.

Teenage girls have always expressed unhappiness through their body, and feared becoming women. Some starve themselves (generally starting at 12 to 16), shrinking their breasts and stopping their periods. Some cut themselves. And, increasingly, some insist they are a boy. Gids's largest patient group? Girls aged — yup — 12 to 16. In my 2023 book about anorexia, *Good Girls*, one former Gids psychologist described gender dysphoria in teenage girls as “the new anorexia”.

...

No child and certainly no teenage girl should be told they were born in the wrong body, any more than they should be told that losing weight or having bigger breasts would make them happier. The only way to get girls through the physical discomfort of puberty is not to block it but to reassure them — repeatedly — that there isn't one way to look, have sex and live as a woman, but many; and their body isn't who they are, but it is what they are — female — and that will never change. Their feelings about it will, though, and one day they will see their body not as the enemy, but as a miracle.

[Janice Turner on the Cass report:](#)

Imagine if 9,000 children who began treatment at the Tavistock Gids clinic (the NHS Gender Identity Development Service) were interviewed as adults. How did their lives pan out? What proportion are thriving as trans? How many now regret their youthful decisions? Has their mental health improved? Is their physical health affected by hormones? How many de-transitioned, and why? A longitudinal study of this size would benefit not just NHS England but gender medicine worldwide.

Surely anyone who cares about these troubled adolescents, two thirds teenage girls, would leap to assist. The study's key barrier, that a trans person acquires a new NHS number making it impossible to link a female child to an adult with a male gender marker, had been removed by special legislation for the purposes of the review.

So the flat refusal by six out of seven adult clinics to participate is the most revealing thing [in Cass](#). The Nottingham clinic head, Dr Derek Glidden, wouldn't comply despite being the NHS's most senior adviser on trans health. Relations between the adult service and the University of York team grew so hostile, meetings were abandoned. And in this we see future problems for implementing Cass's recommendations: that was just one skirmish; what lies ahead is a war.

Gender medicine is hugely suspicious of data. Clinics are noted for professional incuriosity and institutional sloppiness. I recall judges at the Keira Bell judicial review flabbergasted by Gids's derelict record keeping. So no wonder they feared what Cass's researchers might find. Even without the adult data, Cass coolly blew apart everything from suicide myths to the claimed benefit of social transition. With the data, what might she have found? Perhaps de-transition rates far higher than the claimed 1 per cent, or that female misery is unalleviated by amputated breasts. Then the whole clinical edifice might crumble — which it still could, now adult services face their own independent review.

On My Privilege

by Allan Lindrup

In recent year some on the progressive left have claimed that all people, who modern American society sees as white, are privileged. I do not accept that claim, though I do believe the majority of “white” Americans have had many privileges. I acknowledge that I am privileged, for the reasons I enumerate below (and maybe some other that are not so obvious to me).

1. I was born in an economically developed democratic country. Those born in underdeveloped countries, or those countries with undemocratic governments, face more difficulties and hardships, with fewer freedoms. Many of those born in underdeveloped, and/or undemocratic countries, will go to great lengths to move to places like America, Canada, the countries of the EU, Australia or New Zealand. (Japan, S. Korea, Singapore and Taiwan are also economically developed democracies, but are not so open to migrants from other countries). Individuals born in economically developed democracies have this privilege regardless of race, ethnicity or most identifying characteristics.
2. I am blessed to have generally good genes, passed on to me by my parents. Both my mother and her mother lived to 95, so I have longevity on that side of my family. My dad's side is less clear, seems to be okay. We have been blessed with generally good health and no serious hereditary diseases. My mom was the valedictorian of her high school class and my father, a Norwegian immigrant, was a journalist who spoke six languages. So they passed on high intelligence, which is a privilege.
3. When I was young I had two loving parents to help guide my growing up, and after my father died in an accident when I was 9, my mom was capable of being both a good provider and providing all the parenting I needed. Not all young people have that privilege.

4. I went to college between 1966 and 1970, and attended an in-state public university, the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), while living at home. That was a time when such an education was inexpensive. So I was able to start my adult years without any student debt. That was another privilege.
5. I was in the 1970 draft lottery. I had the good luck and privilege to have my birthday get a fairly high number, high enough that I didn't get drafted.
6. I was able to qualify for an entry professional position with the Social Security Administration, due to getting a high score on the Federal Service Entrance Exam, having graduated with honors from UIC, and doing well on my in-person interview. That led to a good, secure, 35 year career with SSA. With that I had the privilege of a decent salary and good benefits, including a good, defined benefit retirement package.
7. In addition to having generally good health, I have had the privilege of having good health insurance, currently Medicare plus a Blue Cross Blue Shield supplemental package partially funded by my former employer. Plus I have had the privilege of living at a time when there have been many medical advances. Last year I needed to have my aortic heart valve replaced. Fifty years ago such an operation could not have been done. A few years ago it would have required open heart surgery. I was able to have it done by a minimally invasive process called TAVR, which only required that I be hospitalized for one night, had no after effects, and which allowed me to return to fully normal activity quickly.

Well, someone might ask, what about my white privilege? Being white saved me from being discriminated against when I was young, a privilege that people of color often lacked. On the other hand, when I applied for a supervisor position during the 1980s, I and other white male applicants were informed that we would not be considered, as only white women and people of color would be considered until all groups held appropriate percentages of the managerial positions. While some individuals might have been upset by that, I wasn't, as I recognized it as righting a wrong that had previously existed. I did not apply for any supervisory positions after that, but I had a good, meaningful career.

A Very Cogent, Common-Sense Rejection of Neoracism

A Review, by Dick Burkhardt, of

"The End of Race Politics: Arguments for a Colorblind America"

by Coleman Hughes, 2024

Coleman Hughes is an eloquent and thoughtful young man who brings a scientific mind to the culture wars, eschewing “woke” racial ideology in favor of evidence-based reasoning and practices. He points out that race by itself tells us almost nothing about a person. Growing up, racial identity was both unimportant and uninteresting to him – until society forced the issue on him by its curious reaction to his afro haircut in school and when, a few years later (2012) he was thrust into a workshop on critical race theory and intersectionality. This is what is today often called “woke” culture or ideology: systemic racism, safe spaces, white privilege, oppressor/victim hierarchy, microaggressions, etc.

Hughes’ “blackness” was no longer treated as a neutral fact of life but as a kind of magic “a slice of God in my soul”. But he was disturbed that his workshop teachers “enforced a strict orthodoxy” – no dissent allowed. He eventually “became convinced that the new race obsession that brands itself as ‘anti-racist’ is in fact the opposite - a social and political hellscape”. Especially with the popularity of the in-your-face neoracism promoted by Robin DiAngelo and Ibram Kendi. This book details all the ugliness he found and a far better way forward.

When Hughes asks “What is race?” he concludes that in practice racial dividing lines are arbitrary because “races” naturally overlap in the real world of DNA genetics. Thus the solution is not better racial categories but “to get rid of the business of racial classification altogether” (p 11). Note: Hughes has an appendix on “cluster analysis”, and as a professional mathematician who now specializes in this field, I see that he understands what he is talking about, unlike people like DiAngelo or Kendi. In addition, I found it entirely reasonable when Hughes identified income has a far better proxy for classifying people as “disadvantaged” than purported “race”.

Next he asks, “What is racism?” Whatever it is, he contrasts it with the gold standard of Martin Luther King, Jr: “I have a dream – that one day right there in Alabama little black boys and girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and girls as

sisters and brothers”. That is, King is saying that race will no longer matter, so the racists are those who see it as an enduring and deep fact of life. The old style race supremacists saw it as imposed by genetics or by God. Today’s neoracists “believe that race matters for societal or historical reasons” and call for reverse racial discrimination to rectify the severe issues that they presume.

The problem with this neoracist ideology is two-fold: (1) evidence from the social sciences is that the societal racism of today has been grossly exaggerated and (2) historical racism from centuries past cannot be rectified, though descendants who still suffer from this legacy could be assisted if they could be identified. A big problem with reparations is accomplishing this identification, since there has been substantial racial mixing after only a few generations and since the growing black middle class does not suffer from this legacy. Another big problem is that mistakes or inequities in reparations lead to growing resentment by those who lose out from reverse discrimination, increasing racial conflict and political backlash. In fact, this is happening right now, especially resentments from certain Asian populations who are losing out in university admissions and the like.

Therefore Hughes endorses the “colorblind principle”, following the lead of the great abolitionists and civil rights leaders: an ethical principle that “we should treat people without regard to race, both in our public policy and in our private lives” (p 19). More specifically, he strongly opposes “stereotyping” people based on contrived identities, such as “whiteness” or “blackness”. He cites these as a DiAngelo specialty (Ta Nehishi Coates too) and a core feature of neoracism, likening it to “being accused of a crime you didn’t commit”.

Furthermore, Hughes takes the neoracists to task for saying that race is just a “social construct” but then acting as if it is both powerful and persistent, directly contrary to historical trends since the 1960s. This aligns with the Wikipedia article on neo-racism, which describes it as culturally determined racism versus the old fashioned biological determinism. As he says, “neoracists and white supremacists are committed to different flavors of race supremacy”, based on stereotypes, ignoring that “we don’t experience our lives in terms of averages” but as individuals with vastly different histories.

To show the craziness of neoracism, Hughes cites cases where they have opposed practices which have actually benefited blacks, such as traffic cameras in Chicago, which have led to major reductions in fatalities in both black and white areas. In this case, the automated cameras did not see race but ended up giving more tickets to black drivers.

Apparently these drivers were simply less careful on the average but the neoracists, in the absence of a clear explanation, blamed it on “systemic racism”. An even better known example is how crime surged in Minneapolis after neoracists called for defunding the police, when, according to surveys, most people in the black community wanted better policing, not less.

Hughes came to realize that this was a general pattern: When there is no evidence that a racial disparity comes from actual racism, then the phrase “systemic racism” is invoked to blame it on racism anyway. I note that a more recent version of this is to blame any disparity or dysfunction on a mythical “white supremacy culture”. And in all these cases neoracists falsely claim to represent the larger black community even as they harm it, just as they promote racism while claiming to fight it. Bigotry always coats itself in the guise of a righteous cause.

Another tactic of neoracism is to misrepresent the past, such as ignoring or downplaying the support for “colorblind” law by 19th century luminaries such as Wendell Phillips and Frederick Douglass. Hughes laments that their efforts failed to get this principle into the 14th amendment, paving the way for Jim Crow segregation (“separate but equal”). The one beacon of hope came in 1896 when Justice John Marshall Harlan dissented in *Plessy vs Ferguson* by proclaiming that “our Constitution is color-blind” (p 50).

The early civil rights movement likewise fell short in 1954 with *Brown vs Board of Education*. Instead of following Harlan’s lead, the Court asserted that segregated schools were “inherently unequal” for psychological reasons. Hughes read the original research cited by the court and concluded that it was deeply flawed – that a color-blind policy favoring equal allocation of resources would have been far more on-target. And, in fact, this landmark decision did not have much practical effect until the Civil Rights movement really took off in the 1960s. Hughes thinks that the Court had avoided the color-blind principle because they feared it was asking too much of society at that time.

Where Hughes really comes down hard on neoracism is when he denounces racial supremacy. Quoting King, “Black supremacy would be equally as evil as white supremacy”, and Randolph, “Both black and white racism are indefensible” so we need “a moratorium on inflammatory racist propaganda against white people merely because they are white”. Instead Hughes renews the call to honor our common humanity, quoting Douglass: “I conceive that there is no division of races. God Almighty made but one race”. Likewise King called for “Power for Poor People”, not “Black Power”, and noted that “nonviolent

resistance is not aimed at oppressors but at oppression” (p 85).

Hughes sums up his critique of neoracism by exploring several common fallacies: the “Disparity Fallacy” (that racial disparities are necessarily due to racism), the “Myth of Undoing the Past” (that reverse discrimination today can undo past discrimination), the “Myth of No Progress” (no racial progress since the civil rights era), the “Myth of Inherited Trauma” (black people today inherit the trauma of their enslaved ancestors), the “Myth of Superior Knowledge” (black people automatically have superior knowledge of racism), the “Racial Ad Hominem” (what white people say or do about race can be dismissed), the “Myth of Black Weakness” (only white people have social power). Here is where Hughes’ background in the social science shines through.

In conclusion, Hughes calls for race-neutral policies as both far more effective and just than euphemisms like “affirmative action”. Instead give people a helping hand based on need (socio-economic status or class) not purported race. And start early, even pre-K. To him, neoracism “is racism in anti-racist clothing”. Failure to restore the race-neutral approach will only feed anti-black resentment.

Women’s and Children’s Rights Under Attack

by Nancy Haldeman

I am a member of the Women's Liberation Front (WoLF). It’s mission is "to restore, protect, and advance the rights of women and girls using legal argument, policy advocacy, and public education." This organization is not open to men and one is vetted to become a member.

This has been a very unsettling year for me so far. In January I was temporarily banned from my local UU church for asking the board of directors (BOD) to consider removing the trans (Progress Pride) flag from the social hall that was prominently displayed there during the holiday season and remains today. The decision was made without consultation or discussion with the total membership but rather by a small sub-group who promote unquestioned trans “rights”. Instead of the BOD making a decision, they sent me to the Right Relations Committee, a newly established committee charged with resolving conflicts of policy and purpose among members. I was roundly condemned for my request to remove the flag and recommended to the BOD that I not be allowed to attend any events at our church for 3 months and then I would be scrutinized for any future grievance which would probably result in a permanent ban. They were already set in their opinion related to the issue at hand and no meaningful discussion was allowed – rather I was berated for being out of right relationship by making such a request. Once they reported their suggestion to the board no further discussion of these issues was allowed.

Since that time, I have been in search for community. Who can I discuss issues with freely? Who has some similar concerns? I have been enjoying some of the groups with the North American Unitarian Association. I have met with other lesbians who have been ostracized from their UU churches. I attended workshops in California for women who call themselves “Gender Critical”, meaning opposed to gender/trans ideology. I have just returned from a gathering of intergenerational lesbians in the Pacific Northwest. What I have found over and over is women being ostracized for being opposed to trans activists taking away women’s rights and pushing gender-changing surgeries on minors too young to understand the full consequences of these changes. Increasing numbers of those who underwent transition are now speaking out, some filing lawsuits, that it was a bad decision that they cannot undo and must live with the consequences for the remainder of their lives.

Trans activists have disrupted and destroyed women’s only spaces. Women now have to meet secretly to confront and plan how to challenge such decisions. The only way I could attend these events is by a personal recommendation. The Biden Administration added “gender” to Title IX, which means allowing men, who *say* they are women, into women’s only spaces. Young lesbians report they cannot use dating sites established for them since men, who claim to be lesbians, are using the sites to meet and date lesbians. Surprisingly, many lesbians and straight women take the position of being for “trans rights” over women’s rights. A woman is “an adult human female” around the world, but this is now challenged in our laws, schools, and institutions. How did this happen? I am still searching for the answers.

I started an email group of WoLF members last year for us to support each other. Each woman is busy in her own way challenging the gender/trans ideology. For example, one works in the therapy community and another in California politics. We write letters to our politicians and newspapers, speak before school boards, raise funds for de-transitioners, and file lawsuits against doctors who remove the breasts of minors and medicalize them for life with cross-sex hormones. For our work we are called names and ostracized in our communities.

Check out Substack writers such as Lisa Selin Davis, Julie Bindel, Eliza Mondegreen, and Colin Wright for more information on these issues. Also look up the Cass Report from the UK and the WPATH files, both of which have been censored in the U.S., and provide significant researched validation of the errors in the unchallenged trans-rights arguments.