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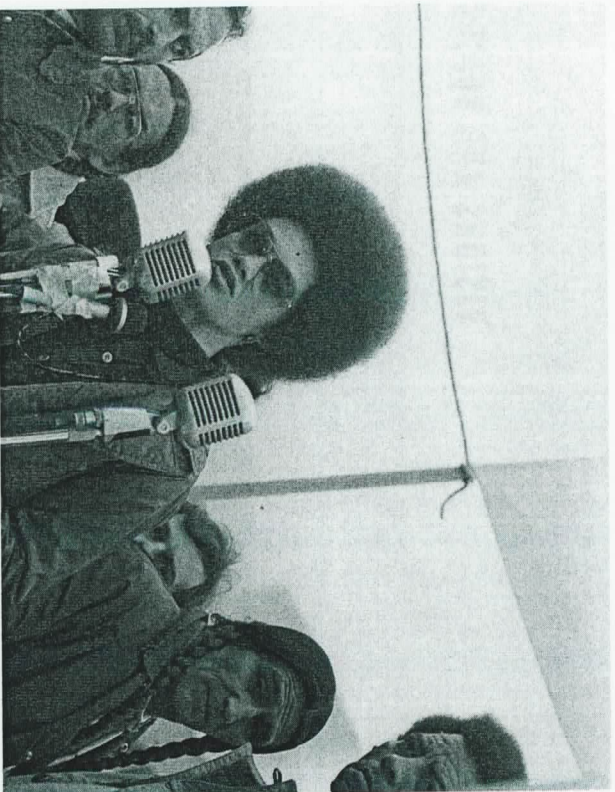
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Presupposing the Acculturated Subject: Analyzing Identity in Practice

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Kathleen Cleaver, Black Panther Party, at No Extradition rally for Dennis Banks. At right (with braids) Lehi Brightman. San Francisco, 1975. © Ika Hartmann 2008

VISIONS AND VOICES

AMERICAN
INDIAN
ACTIVISM
AND THE
CIVIL
RIGHTS
MOVEMENT

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"Survivance is more than just survival. Survivance means doing what you can to keep your culture alive. Survivance is found in everything made by Native hands, from beadwork to political action.

In the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, survivance went public. After nearly 500 years of occupation and subjugation, Indians broke out culturally, spiritually, and politically. It was a time of Red Power, the American Indian Movement, *Akwesane Notes*, and a world of possibilities. Our consciousness shifted from Native tribes to Native Nations. Native intellectuals told our history while poets and artists imagined our future."

—Jolene Richard, Guest Curator, and Gabrielle Tayac, National Museum of the American Indian, 2004

"Crossbloods are communal, and their stories are splendid considerations of survivance."

—Gerald Vizenor, *Interior Landscapes*

"I started to educate myself while in solitary and found that there was a lot of social and political unrest happening on the outside. I began to follow the anti-war movement, the marches and protests, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Weathermen, and the Black Panthers. Inside Stillwater, I made a commitment to myself that there would be an Indian movement."

—Dennis Banks

- Wilkinson, C. 2005. *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations*. New York, Norton.
- Woodhouse, Charles 1969. "Minorities and Politics" in Henry J. Tobias and Charles Woodhouse *Minorities and Politics*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Presupposing the Acculturated Subject

Analyzing Identity in Practice

SHIERA S. EL-MALIK

"Politically correct metropolitan multiculturalists want the world's others to be identitarians..."¹

"[C]ulture' [i]s a terrain in which politics, culture, and the economic form an inseparable dynamic."²

Culture has emerged as a major topic in academic research. A search of archived papers for the major academic social science conferences in the last decade points to an explosion of culture in the academy.³ In 1993, Samuel Huntington effectively mapped politics onto culture with his idea that we had entered a new era in which all action can be determined by civilizational (broadly cultural) fault lines.⁴ For Huntington, these fault lines are based on long historical trajectories and are strongly deterministic. The Clash of Civilizations thesis has permeated the public imagination and news outlets to the extent that the commonsense response to Huntington is that his explanation rings true.⁵ Indeed, this thesis has largely been held up to explain the events of 9/11. In this current state of affairs, culture becomes forced on the agenda. At the same time, the agenda has been discursively limited by the Clash thesis.⁶ The result is that cultural, ethnic, and racial identities become the most meaningful criteria in the interaction between individuals,

the groups in which they find themselves members, and the central government. As one of the above quotes suggests, politically correct multiculturalists are peddling an ideological perspective that requires the world's others to be understood and to understand themselves in terms of cultural, racial, and ethnic identities. This "politics of identity" is a useful tool when one considers that individuals have been impacted in different ways on the basis of socially recognized identities which in turn politicizes those identities. At the same time, however, in requiring that interactions with the state become mediated through group membership, this politics of identity also serves to divide, isolate, and differentiate groups from each other. This often occurs as a result of privileging not just different cultures, but also the different historical trajectories of their relationships with the state.

In response to unequal treatment, two types of claims are leveled at the state (at least two types that the state recognizes). The first is claims for civil liberties based on universal social justice aims. Social justice claims are often premised on social, political, economic egalitarianism.⁷ Civil rights are a component of social justice claims. The problem frequently leveled at social justice arguments is that they do not recognize difference in terms of experience. Moreover, in ironing out experiential differences, many groups argue that a neutral citizen is born, such that current difference cannot be accounted for. The second type of claim, identity-based rights, requires one to claim membership of a recognized identity group in order to make claims for benefits. These claims are premised on a politically recognized group—Muslims, Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, women, homosexuals, and so forth. One could argue that these are also civil rights based in the sense that a given group lobbies the government for civil benefits on behalf of its members. Thus, while one makes universal claims, the other makes particular claims. In the latter half of the twentieth century, demands on government that had been articulated in social justice terms moved to identity-based claims. This has been the case primarily in the industrialized Anglo-European world as well as third world countries in Asia and Africa.⁸

Having set up this neat dichotomy, it may seem that fourth world peoples (or indigenous groups) confound this model. For example, Native Americans joined groups making broad social justice claims on the state. Yet, their participation was short-lived. On the one hand, as social justice claims morphed into identity-based claims, Native Americans

were able to rely on their special status as "domestic nations"—a status that is supported by treaties negotiated with the U.S. government. Contrary to appearances, however, the material reality of fourth world peoples does not confound the central point of this essay: that actors negotiate their environment to best suit them and this environment is one that moves between social justice claims and identity based claims of the state. This perspective is necessary in order to avoid the apolitical acculturation of otherwise political bodies. In other words, while cultural identity appears natural and apolitical, the process of assigning or claiming a culture is itself a discursive process that takes place within a power dynamic. Thus, a generalizable picture emerges of claims against the state—a set of discursive relationships as it were. With this picture, we can begin to make some generalizations about how people and governments act as well as how analysts depict these actions.

This essay is, then, a preliminary exploration of the move from a predominance of social justice claims to the predominance of group identity claims that emerged out of the Civil Rights Movement. The story that explains this is difficult to pinpoint for three reasons. First, its development is inconsistent; the timeline is unclear even though a broad trend is discernable. For example, throughout the 1960s social justice claims were frequent. In the 1970s, some groups began to articulate their claims in terms of the group itself.⁹ On a global level, the 1980s political universe saw the coexistence of identity based claims and social justice claims in different contexts indicating that the power of discourses is contextually dependent.¹⁰ By the 1990s, identity-based claims came to predominate. One main reason for the explanatory difficulty is that geographic limitations are not analytically helpful; these fluctuations also took place globally in the post-World War II period. Some claims, like those in Gorbachev's Soviet Union, and Lech Walesa's Solidarity movement, captivated public imagination across the globe.¹¹ A second reason has to do with the question of claims themselves. A group does not make a claim in a vacuum; its relationship with a central authority is a dynamic one. The context within which these claims get made is complex. This leads to a third problem in pinpointing the move between social justice claims to identity-based claims. Any understanding of this move is premised on an analysis of the relationship between real events and the ideas utilized in those events. Thus, any disjuncture between the ideas on which social scientific analyses are based and their object

of study—real-world events—results in misunderstanding. In other words, the ideological underpinnings of the social sciences go a long way to limiting analytical potential.

Indeed, the picture that emerges here is that identity provides an analytic challenge to social science primarily because it is seen as a fundamentally apolitical reality.¹² This *a priori* approach—the starting assumption that identity is innate and not worth questioning—limits our understanding of identity politics. Yet, individuals make identity decisions with reference to their structural contexts and in a manner that confounds systematic analysis; ad hocery predominates on the ground. Thus, we must be similarly flexible in our analyses. This leaves us with the argument that we must study both *ad hoc* reality and how we explain *ad hoc* reality. Ultimately, if social science insists in presupposing the subject then we cannot see the discursive power of identity. Discursive phenomena protect structures of power even as they are also areas of contention. Furthermore, academic approaches are also discursive phenomena; a disjuncture exists between these approaches and the story of identity as tools of the state.

In order to overcome (or minimize) these problems, this essay takes a seemingly irregular approach. While the story is told with geographical and temporal irregularity, the discourse of social justice and identity-based claims provides regularity. This approach takes “[d]iscourse [to be] rule-governed and internally structured.”¹³ Three discursive components emerge from this. First, discourses frame the discussion by creating a boundary around what can be considered possible (the conditions of possibility). Discourses are powerful because they constitute legitimate speakers and legitimate speech. And finally discourses have continuity in that they set the stage for future discourses. They are, in fact, the conditions of possibility for future conditions of possibility.¹⁴ This should not be confused with a reliance on structural determinism. Indeed, the dispositions of the agent can allow for broadening the conditions of possibility.¹⁵ Ultimately, moves between social justice and identity-based claims must be viewed as discursive.

The Problem of Presupposing the Subject

“Presupposing the subject” is a phrase taken from the work of Gayatri Spivak.¹⁶ It encapsulates the idea that the sovereign subject is created

within the intersection between the ideology of the ruling classes and the constitution of desire. In other words, dominant ideology influences the way that desire develops and the sovereign subject is the political agent created within the nexus of power and ideology.¹⁷ The discourse of identity obscures the ideological underpinning of multiculturalism by portraying identity as natural phenomenon. Thus, one approaches the subject having already foreclosed questions of how that subject comes to be. In presupposing this subject, both multiculturalists and social scientists avoid the link between the powerful discourse of identity and the context within which citizens make demands of their government. Yet, in social science, analysts often speak of the subject—they speak of the subject’s identity as a starting point for analyses rather than the shaky foundation that it is.¹⁸

Thus, social science has difficulty analyzing the complexity of real world events because it assumes *a priori* identities. Identity is presumed a fact and, as such, is understood as an apolitical variable in negotiations between actors and the larger structural context of their action. Presupposing *a priori* identities forecloses the option of tracing the ideological underpinnings of any identity. It prevents us from seeing the larger picture and from drawing thematic threads that exist in seemingly disparate events. What happens if we push these boundaries in the stories we tell about social-political interaction?

A Story of Culture and Identity

The story goes: culture and identity are back! The Behavioralist Revolution privileged the individual actor; identity as a biological fact is outside of the political thereby appearing uncontested. One argument holds that the post-World War II world had little tolerance for national identities.¹⁹ Identity became unpalatable once German and Italian fascisms staked their claims to specific historically and biologically based forms of group identity. On one hand this may be very true. On the other hand, ideologically based identities remained acceptable. In the 1950s, the American anti-Communist national ethos epitomized by McCarthyism reigned supreme, as did the Communist identity of the Soviet Union. This is not to say that identity was purely ideological. If we read postcolonial (it is probably more accurate to say third world) political literature, we know that within the American and So-

viet ideological identity formations, discourses of racism and elitism still permeated.²⁰ Moreover, while these third world theorists did not deny culture or identity, they formed their agendas around attempts to acquire or implement broad social justice agendas in the form of civil liberties rather than around attempts to achieve a discursive equality. Indeed, W. E. B. Du Bois lamented his naïveté in ever having had the hope of an end to racism.²¹ If third world (or the third world in the first world) thinkers' arguments are based on social justice, what changed?

There are two ways of explaining this. First, the theory of hegemony may allow us to explain how social justice claims for broadly conceived civil rights are threatening to the state, which leads to the inevitable dispersion of potential counter-hegemonic movements.²² The theory of hegemony incorporates the idea that positions of power tend towards centralization and "divide and conquer" strategies. The analytical result is, to a large extent, structurally deterministic. A second way of looking at this, and the way I favor as it seems to open more analytical avenues, is a simple story that begins with the triumph of liberalism. This is a story of culture and identity in the context of the state or as they mediate the relationship between government and citizens or individuals and authority.

Reaching a crescendo in the 1960s, and early 1970s, questions of social justice remained a strong challenge to the Behavioralism of the social sciences. Third world scholars writing on postcolonialism, on the issues involved with developing a new and inclusive nation-state, were prevalent. It is from this time that we receive the writings of Simone de Beauvoir, Chinua Achebe, Senghor, Fanon, Cabal, Guevara, Angela Davis, Malcolm X, and so on. These thinkers did not all agree, but they were part of an international global dialogue problematizing identity and privileging the nation-state. It is this dialogue in which fourth world peoples also participate. For example, even as they are dual citizens, Native Americans exist within a larger nation-state and so are structurally required to engage with it.²³

In the 1970s, events such as the oil crisis, Iranian revolution, and airline hostages destabilized domestic and international interaction. However, inflation (or resource redistribution) was the main culprit of a return to identity. At this time, movement to identity politics was underway. Or at least the perception of a move to identity politics was underway. The 1980s brought economics as the answer to the world's

problems. Thatcherism and Reaganomics fostered the idea that race and ethnicity did not matter.²⁴ Social justice was not going to put food on the table. The answer was ingenious: if one worked hard enough, one could generate wealth. Structural inequality was less of a concern than the illusion that agents were in full control of their fate. Because the economy was doing better, the illusion held strong. During this time, liberal economics trumped social justice. The concept of group cultural and ethnic identities challenged the individualism of the Behavioralist Revolution. Yet, even as Behavioralism was being challenged, the social sciences maintained the idea of individualism in the study of human behavior from the angle of the acculturated agent.

Scholars like Edward Said, Noam Chomsky, Chandra Mohanty, Gayatri Spivak, and bell hooks continued to write about this illusion—that we had transcended behavioralism—but they were fairly well marginalized in the humanities. In fact, even as identity politics was taking off, as scholars were articulating the need to study identity, it became marginalized into separate departments (women's studies and African diaspora studies are examples). But even in these isolated departments the specific agent was still a priori identified. The subject of women's studies was women. The subject of African diaspora studies was black and more often than not, American rather than Caribbean, French, British, and so on. The social science view of the agent was as a rational calculating individual—a free and rational agent—not only in the Rational Choice approach, but these same normative underpinnings also support functional and interpretivist approaches. All of these approaches assign a priori identities to their object of study.

Even as social justice frameworks seemed sidelined, the 1980s brought resurrected versions of such commitments in the form of Solidarity, Glasnost, and Perestroika. Lech Walesa's Solidarity, a Polish Worker's movement, reinvigorated the discussion of social economics. And as the cold war was losing its momentum, Gorbachev's commitment to the people seemed assured. Glasnost (openness) can be understood as not simply freedom of press or a freedom of information act. It is also a defense of leadership accountability, an attack on corruption. Perestroika was meant to allow for restructuring in order to invigorate the economy and develop new social, economic, and political forms of interaction. Both attempted to renegotiate the relationship between government and citizen. Thus, while Thatcher's and Reagan's individual and eco-

nomically oriented policies submerged discourses of social justice, in the Soviet Union and Poland, those discourses appeared to spearhead reform.

Then the Wall fell. It is not advisable to place all meaning on a single event, but for the world, this single event is a symbolic landmark in time and space. From this moment, liberalism won; ideological war was over (what Fukuyama declared as "the End of History").²⁵ An interested reader can find many faults with Fukuyama's ideas, but the framing of liberalism's victory as the beginning of the end of discussion, the beginning of vapidity, and vulgarity is fortuitous. Along with liberalism comes liberal economics. And so the story continues: everyone is happy and the result is the development of a class-free humanity since liberal economics will generate such wealth as to raise living standards across the board. But, this creation of wealth also operated as consolidation of wealth. It did not lead to democratic consolidation in what were considered newly-democratizing countries. In other words, while the cold war ended and the glorious buzzwords were capitalism, freedom, and democracy, this was framed as an end rather than a process that needed nurturing. The cold war had ended—we would never have to worry about poverty again!

But genocidal wars broke out taking everyone by surprise.²⁶ Sociopolitical analysts, social scientists included, used discursive slogans to explain this perplexing phenomenon. "These age-old conflicts have no end." "What we have is a problem of all the messy stuff of humanity." "People keep reverting to these primary loyalties." "These irrational identities must be dealt with and the best way is to devolve states." "Ethnically homogeneous states are the answer." Thus, from the analyst's perspective, the problem becomes one of power-sharing. People of different cultures/ethnicities/identities cannot be expected to share power within a nation-state. In other words, given the inevitability of identity conflict, we can effectively circumvent the inevitable and natural consequences of ethnic diversity by creating homogeneous political entities. This assumption frequently underpins negotiations between the state and indigenous communities. Comparative political analysts have come to debunk this response challenging the dominant foreign and domestic policy approach of isolating ethnic groups.²⁷ At any rate, as a result culture and identity seem to reemerge in 1990s social science.

However, in the aftermath of the liberalist victory, culture and identity take on criteria of race, gender, ethnicity; class is, by and large, left

out. Moreover, in this era of analyzing identity, very few scholars, mainly critical theorists and comparative political analysts, focus on resource distribution. Others consider identity a fundamental and eternal social cleavage, with questions of social justice and class as less important. The inclusion of identity relaxed those concerned with getting it on the agenda to the extent that no one noticed that it was only included as long as it was a biologically produced rather than a discursively-produced reality. Analysts, then, begin to consider identity as a given rather than entertain the idea that what gets obscured as pure identity has roots in economics and power. That identity made it on the agenda appeared to be a huge success. Groups began to make their individual demands of the state. Native Americans, for example, began to claim benefits based on their particular experience. This strategy was clever in one sense; they had control over territory and the state recognized it.²⁸

However, the discursive dilemma stands. Recourse to identity was recourse to only specific identities. Recalling the three components of discourse: discourse creates conversational boundaries regarding what can be said, how it can be said, how it will be understood; discourse creates legitimate speakers; and discourses set the stage for future discourses. Identity-based claims for government attention/benefits create a relationship of dependency between the group members and the government. Simultaneously, a relationship of dependency is also created between the group leaders and group members. Any group relies on cohesiveness in order to successfully make demands of the government. This raises concerns of the democratic character of the groups themselves. Ultimately, resource distribution remains a problem since some groups will inevitably be more successful than others. We can see that identity politics, as it stands, is a quagmire of contradictions, not least of which is that it is also ideologically constituted within the confines of liberalism. Since, it ignores the ideologically constituted subject, thereby supporting a specific form of resource distribution, it seems that identity politics and social justice cannot coexist—despite the discourse of multiculturalism's aim to foster a union.

Discourse of Multiculturalism: An Exercise in Tolerance

Multiculturalism is an exercise in tolerance with inherent limits. This is a very different animal than our multicultural reality or as Stanley

Fish puts it: the "demographic fact" of it. It is true to say that multiculturalism is a reality. This is certainly the case in modern capitalist liberal democratic countries. The realities of multiculturalism give us some clues as to how we should deal with the civic and political realities that come with them. In order to make sense of how we deal with the power dynamics that make different claims and have different effects on different groups, we should look at what has been occurring on the ground—that is, "inspired ad hocery," which "means . . . that the solutions to particular problems will be found by regarding each situation-of-crisis as an opportunity for improvisation and not as an occasion for the application of rules and principles."²⁹ In fact, *ad hoc* multiculturalism is what occurs whether or not we are watching. But, in classic hegemonic fashion, liberalism appropriated tolerance. It cannot take into account lived experience—the historical and ideological context—of subjects. The subject is neutral before the law and therefore cannot truly accommodate difference through tolerance.³⁰

Fish distinguishes between two types of multiculturalism, *boutique* and *strong*. Boutique multiculturalism views difference as a superficial layer over a common essential humanity (that is, a normatively defined "humanity"). Since this form is based on a politics of equal dignity, boutique multiculturalism is a superficial form whereby one respects a culture to the extent that it does not challenge these fundamental tenets of humanity. Strong multiculturalism, on the other hand (or the same hand as we will see), rests on a politics of difference. The politics of difference is based on a deep tolerance for plurality. Thus, "[i]f the politics of equal dignity subordinates local cultural values to the universal value of free rational choice, the politics of difference names as its preferred value the active fostering of the unique distinctiveness of particular cultures."³¹ Fish equates the politics of difference to an "endangered species act for human beings."³²

Since strong multiculturalism centers on tolerance, it is premised on the idea that all peoples have the right to develop their own ontological and epistemological frameworks and this difference must be protected at all costs. For Fish, however, this is an impossible position. It is impossible that one could be so tolerant as to be able to follow through on the strong multiculturalist agenda for tolerance. He gives us the example of the Rushdie Affair where Muslims who appeared Westernized and tolerant endorsed Khomeini's *fatwa*, an action inexplicable to both boutique

and strong multiculturalists who found themselves intolerant of the intolerance. This, along with other similar cases (female genital mutilation, corporal punishment, abortion, to name a few), creates a dilemma for the strong multiculturalist who has a deeper commitment to tolerance than the boutique multiculturalist. "[E]ither he stretches his toleration so that it extends to the intolerance residing at the heart of a culture he would honor, in which case tolerance is no longer his guiding principle, or he condemns the core intolerance of that culture . . . in which case he is no longer according it respect at the point where its distinctiveness is most obviously at stake."³³ Because the multiculturalist usually takes the latter position, Fish finds him/her to be nothing more than a less superficial boutique multiculturalist. In fact, because the boutique multiculturalist sees cultural phenomena as only significant of superficial difference and the strong multiculturalist focused on a universality of difference that is challenged by any particular difference, Fish argues that ultimately, multiculturalism is uniculturalism.

Here, Fish takes issue with positions that exclude that which does not gel with "rational" thought. As we saw above, both the boutique and the strong multiculturalist will be intolerant of positions that are outside of their sphere of tolerance. These positions are understood as irrational. Ideologically produced multiculturalism squeezes out its Other. The support many "educated Muslims" gave the *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie struck many tolerant multiculturalists as inexplicable and irrational. But, setting rationality as the criteria for respect results in the declaring of hate speech or fundamentalist rhetoric (of whichever variety) as outside of rational thought and therefore not worthy of respect or, more importantly, political engagement. In declaring any contradictory position as irrational, liberal ideology obscures its ideological commitments. The problem is that tolerating difference requires respecting not only the extreme positions, but also the positions far separated from one's self. "You respect a difference when you see it as a candidate for serious moral debate . . ." ³⁴ But, fundamental differences remain a challenge. Fish disdains the creation of what he calls a "community of mutually respectful disputants [that was] constituted by the simple strategy of exiling anything that might disturb it."³⁵ We cannot control the terms of the debate. Yet, multiculturalism does try to control it since *a priori* identity is one of the major ways in which individuals interact with each other and with their government. This is not only true in industrialized

democracies, but also in India, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Turkey, China, and in other places.

Adhockery—the Usual Process?

Adhockery describes the subjects' lived experience. Individuals on the ground do what they do depending on who they are; they do not wait for top down theory to catch up. Thus, Fish's view that academics prefer discussion where the terms have been already set for civilized debate is an anathema to both fairness and analytical rigor. His critique, founded as it is on the idea that politics is messy, insists that individuals will have disagreements that result in essential contestations. To these, the "tame" liberal multicultural response is woefully inadequate. In fact, Fish advocates taking a position and defending it vociferously. Perhaps the positions will change in the process of engagement. But, perhaps you will destroy your "enemy." In Fish's own words,

My phrase "the enemy" might suggest that I was referring to everyone's enemy and slipping back into a liberal universalism, in which anomalous monsters are clearly labeled and known to everyone; but my use of the phrase marks the point at which I come out from behind the arras of analysis and declare my own position, which rests not on the judgment that racism doesn't make any sense [it makes perfect sense if that's the way you think] but that it makes a sense I despise.³⁶

Stating this is not wrong or inappropriately combative as multiculturalists would have us believe. Instead, "switching back and forth between talking like a liberal and engaging in distinctly illiberal actions is something we all do anyway; it is the essence of adhockery. Perhaps if we did it with less anxiety, we might do it better."³⁷ In essence, we need to constantly critique, not only positions and perspectives that cross our path, but to critique and be tolerant of our own inconsistent tolerance. In insisting on adhockery, Fish is insisting that we allow our predisposed assumptions, our own subjectivity, to be challenged. It is an uncomfortable task, but one that is inevitable given our normative agenda to address injustice.³⁸ The problem with adhockery is that discourses are available to everyone, so the discourse of identity has already permeated the actions of those on the ground. However, in the event

that social science can theorize a more nuanced explanation, adhockery can open avenues for analysis.

The Culture of Social Science

When it comes to culture the social sciences have a problem. Aside from its having been isolated as a variable, culture is generally avoided. The main explanation that resonates is that culture cannot be operationalized and so is inimical to scientific method.³⁹ It is a result of the different ways that Anglo-Saxon and French political thought have dealt with social studies. The Anglo-Saxon approach, influenced by "taxonomic" framing of the natural and social worlds, aimed to develop a single theory of politics, while the French approach considers the political in dynamic relations with human activity more broadly. In other words, one intellectual trajectory takes a broader view of the political than the other. In both, however, identity is understood as a given.

Thus, while it is correct to say that the Reformation, Enlightenment, and Scientific and Industrial revolutions ushered in the modern era, in the study of politics, many arguments over the problematic new forms of social organization that accompanied them get simplified. For example, postmodernists have proposed that the Enlightenment project placed too much emphasis on reason and the scientific method. But the problem is not simply one of privileging rationality; the problem lies in ineffective challenges to dynamics of power. Recent work indicates that, in fact, the Enlightenment project was "insufficiently radical."⁴⁰

Enlightenment thought challenged dogma, superstition, and intellectual intolerance; it undermined the claims of hereditary privilege and rigid social hierarchies; it popularized the idea of human equality. . . . Nevertheless, it failed to see that the scientific rationality that it was championing . . . was not a socially neutral engine of human progress but a weapon in the service of new forms of class domination, exploitation, and oppression.⁴¹

That the Enlightenment was not radical enough is not particularly an Anglo-Saxon problem. Yet, as political science, and its subdisciplines, stem from the Anglo-Saxon tradition, scholars in these disciplines often understand culture in taxonomic terms as a single phenomenon with a list of components—as a variable rather than a dynamic form of consti-

tuting community identity and maintaining group continuity. Instead, "culture is best understood as an environment, a constantly evolving setting, within which human behavior follows a number of particular courses—many of which are contradictory."⁴² Here is where ad hocery can broaden the boundaries of conversational possibilities.

Regardless of the method, then, social scientists (and theorists) tend to deal with culture in two ways reminiscent of the two approaches to multiculturalism. First, cultural difference is a superficial difference; all humans are the same underneath. For example, one analysis argues that women's identity or women's cultural difference took a back seat to women's goal of defeating patriarchy and this is why they were successful.⁴³ In fact, identity other than their identity as women was unimportant because the fundamental similarities outweighed any superficial differences. In the second approach, cultural difference is fundamental; groups of people have few to no similarities.⁴⁴ This depiction of inherent difference is reminiscent of the argument that both Al Qaeda and the West share this second position of the fundamental character of identity; both totalize identity.⁴⁵ Neither of these positions is tenable. The first depoliticizes culture by pointing to its superficiality. If everyone is effectively the same, and culture is superficial, then it cannot be as deeply meaningful as to warrant serious attention. On the other hand, the second position makes difference a question of nature. If culture is in our genes, then it becomes a question of biology rather than politics. The main problem, then, for theorizing the politics of culture and identity is a result of presupposing the acculturated subject.

For others the turn to culture and identities heralded the beginning of a new era. Johannes Fabian suggests that the turn toward the study of culture in anthropology was a positive move. It took theorizing out of racist ethnography. At the same time, however, anthropological culture refuses to capture the negativity; the predominant view is that culture is something inherently positive.⁴⁶ Culture, then, has become colonized by modern liberalism to enhance its image of tolerance. This obscures the political reality of culture as a concept available for assessment like any other aspect of human activity. This makes it difficult to say, for example, that female circumcision should be abolished. Instead, we are corrupted by the norm of relativist positioning. Indeed, for C. Vann Woodward, the idea of culture presumes that adherents to a specific culture must agree to the same identifying criteria.⁴⁷ In other words,

privileging culture as "positive" obscures the inevitability of a group's undemocratic processes.⁴⁸

From the vantage point of discourse, one can perceive debates in flux. Discursive analysts look at both the ad hoc reality and the ways that social scientists explain that reality. Ultimately, if one considers identity to be innate then it becomes less likely that explanation will capture how strategies evolve. In this case, any change will appear jarring and, more likely than not, excluded as an outlier. At the same time, a discursive approach can allow us to avoid presupposing the subject, thus illuminating the ad hoc reality—that culture and identity become tools utilized in negotiations between individuals and authority.

Identity and Culture: Tools of the State, of the Actor, and of the Analyst

Culture and identity are discourses of power that delimit claims for emancipation to arguments for identity-based rights rather than social justice claims. A group impacted by the state on the grounds of a politicized group identity becomes forced to engage with the state in terms of that group identity regardless of group cohesion. Within available discourses, individuals do consider their perceived position, their desired position, and make demands within the constraints of the discourse. In other words, how they perceive of their interests often influence their bid for power. One is forced to act within specific constraints. From the point of view of discursive reality and perceivable options, the move from broad social justice claims to identity-based claims appears logical.

This brings us back to culture in social science. If we recall that in social science, identity and culture are understood as either superficial or fundamental, then social justice and the language of civil rights appears to be the radical language of the Enlightenment. Both well-known in postcolonial politics, Frantz Fanon and Léopold Senghor argue that the most important criterion for social justice is the state.⁴⁹ Senghor, even, shares the reasons for his change of mind with his readers. Initially, he promoted Pan-Africanism as a response to colonialism; he thought that uniting oppressed people under one banner would address the exclusionary nature of the nation-state. Yet, he came to realize that without the state, civil rights do not and cannot exist. It seems, however, that

civil rights talk is not radical enough; or rather that it does not actually displace other discourses of power. The only way to displace discourses of power is to privilege other discourses of power—a task that analysts are in a unique position to attempt. In fact, multiculturalism and identity politics successfully displaced discourses of social justice, but perhaps only for a time.

Thus, as the political realities changed in the post 1990s era, both culture and identity reemerged in political analyses. They seemed to carry greater currency as events were explained and justified in terms of politicized identities. No longer are Civil Rights Movements like that in the United States and more recently South Africa, articulating their positions in terms of the universalist arguments of democracy and participation and ones that are, such as in Iraq and Iran, are without discursive power and so misrecognised. Instead, social scientists are hearing groups requesting, demanding even, succession and self rule. A discursive approach would allow us to see that this group self protection is not the result of any inherent politicization. In fact, the idea of inherent politicization—that identity makes for automatically politicized groupings where the state as well as individuals view that group identity as fact—becomes ridiculous.

The Native American story provides a unique position to illustrate these contradictions. A historiography of Native American interaction with the U.S. government—including the different discursive contexts such as tribal rights, pan-Indian organization, the Rainbow Coalition, and as a component of multicultural America—might show how tenuous these categories are and how, ultimately, claims against the state are multifaceted as well as strategically considered. It might illuminate what the emphasis on the acculturated subject hides—the many ways human politics organize themselves in relation to their environment and interact with authority.

Notes

1. Gayatri Spivak (2003). *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia University Press. Page 55.
2. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (1997). *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Late Capital*. Durham: Duke University Press. Page 1
3. With some exceptions, 'culture' is limited to race, ethnic, and national identities. Some social science conferences include: American Political Science Association, Midwest Political Science Association, International Studies Association, British Inter-

national Studies Association, American Sociological Association, and the Middle East Studies Association.

4. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*. NY: Touchstone Books, 1996.
5. Cavarrotta, el-Malik, and Perstram, 'The Clash and "Civilisation" Policy, Populace, and International Legitimacy', in El-Mostafa Chadli and Lise Garon (eds.), *Et puis vint le 11 septembre... Remise en question de l'hypothèse du choc des civilisations*, Quebec City: Laval University Press, 2003. Trans. Nadege Broustau.
6. For example, UNESCO dedicated one of its themes to 'culture' with the aim of promoting cultural interaction so as to prevent the inevitable clash of civilisations.
7. See, for example, Pablo Freire. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.
8. Arguably, this change has been least prevalent in Latin America.
9. In the U.S., Native American and African Americans are case in point, but the transition is not a purely American phenomenon. In South Africa, Steve Biko had begun to doubt the possibility of achieving social justice by uniting with white liberals to the extent that he started to argue for Black rights even as he attempted to maintain a broad social justice agenda. See Biko (2002). *I Write What I Like*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Originally published in 1978 by Bowerdean Press.
10. While Thatcherism and Reaganomics supported group-based demands of government, Soviet and Eastern Bloc discussions of government accountability and social justice infiltrated local, state, and global debates.
11. Dryzek, Peter. 'Revolutions Without Enemies: Key Transformations in Political Science', *American Political Science Review*, 100:4 2006, 487-492.
12. By 'social science', I am in the main referring to political science and sociology since those are my areas of deeper familiarity. However, since I am making broad methodological claims, the social sciences I am actually referring to include those areas of study that deal with culture and identity as well as those areas of study that analyse the behaviour of agents using any pre-assigned identity.
13. Sara Mills (1997). *Discourse*. London: Routledge. Page 49.
14. These three components of discourse are adapted from Mills, 51. These same components can be found, for example, in an illustration of the trajectory of the discourse of democracy in America. As a response to theoretical problems in developing a democratic relationship between citizens and government in America, arguments emerged in favour of republicanism. Despite America's republican characteristics, the normative privileging of democracy resulted in a new idea of democratic pluralism. This is a simplistic account of otherwise complex story of the discourse of democracy and its relationship with political science in America over many years. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this essay, the trajectory between the ideas of democracy and democratic pluralism is weighted. See John Gunnell, *Imagining the American Polity*. Political Science and the Discourse of Democracy, Penn State Press, 2004.
15. See Pierre Bourdieu, (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
16. Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in Cary Nelson and Larry Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988, p 27-33.
17. This is similar to Judith Butler's concept of materialization in Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. NY: Routledge, 1993.
18. For example, in Paris, on 27th October 2005, street riots erupted en masse and without internal cohesion. The deaths of two young people involved in a police chase provided the impetus. The riots lasted more than three weeks, resulted in damage worth hundreds of millions of Euro, almost 3000 arrested and many injured. Public discussion

on these riots centred overwhelming on the fact that many of the rioters were Muslim, although not all. Commentators were forced to take a stand on the relevance of their identity: foreigners, Muslim, scum (in Nicolas Sarkozy's famous statements), etc. As a result of this emphasis, the riots were said to be the failure of France's assimilation policy, which is arguably accurate. However, this failure becomes articulated as the fault of an identity rather than the problem of an ineffective state. As commentators respond to this analysis with the claim that this is the problem of an ineffectual state, the discussion is sedimented by the discursive boundaries of identity and economics. Thus, while many of the Paris rioters hold Muslim identities with varying degrees of fervour, commentators begin to speak of Muslims without unpacking what contextual boundaries this designation places on any analysis. Presupposing 'Muslims', along with all that it means, led many to miss the language of the riots, the demands for democratic inclusion rather than simply economic welfare.

19. Schöpfli, George, *Nations, Identity, Power: The New Politics of Europe*. London: Hurst and Company, 2002.

20. See for example DuBois, W. E. B. *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*. The Franklin Library: Franklin Centre Pennsylvania. 2006. 13th edition; George Padmore *Pan-Africanism or Communism*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co. 1972; Senghor *On African Socialism*. NY: Praeger Publishers. 1964.

21. W. E. B. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn*, p. 297

22. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. London: Verso 2001, 2nd Edition.

23. It would be interesting to analyse how relations between Native citizens and Native structures of governance are characterised – if they would look different compared with the characterisation of Native citizens and the non-Native structures of the U.S. Government.

24. Late 70s and 80s American sitcoms are evidence of this overcoming of racism and disgust of poverty along with the idea that 'different strokes for different folks' was normal. See also bell hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters*. NY: Routledge, 2000.

25. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*. NY: Harper 1993.

26. See for example, Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine 'Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas', *International Security*, 21, 2 (Fall 1996), pp 5-40; Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We will be Killed with Our Families: Stories From Rwanda*; Slavenka Drakulic, *They Would Never Hurt a Fly: War Criminals on Trial in The Hague*, London: Abacus, 2004.

27. Collier, Paul, 'Ethnic Diversity: An Economic Analysis' *Economic Policy*, 32, April 2001, pp. 127-66.

28. This is not to say that Native Americans ever stopped using their experience as a foundation for claims. The existence of treaties means that Native Americans have a stronger legal standing than those without. For example, in the Southeast United States, the Gullah also made territorially based claims albeit without the benefit of treaties to support them.

29. Stanley Fish 'Boutique Multiculturalism' in Arthur Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinnman (eds.) *Multiculturalism and American Democracy*. Kansas: University of Kansas, 1998. Pp. 69-88, p. 76.

30. Iris Marion Young addresses the need to mediate between the ideal of the community and the politics of difference. She comes down on the side of difference, and argues for the need to account for different space and temporal locations between subjects, but she is still focused on supporting and allowing for pre-existing difference rather than how she is implicated in the ideological creation of difference. 'The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference' in Linda Nicholson, *Feminism/Postmodernism*, London: Routledge, 1990, pages 300-323.

31. Fish, page 72. See also Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Especially the chapter on Multiculturalism.

32. Fish, p. 73.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid. p. 81.

35. Ibid. p. 80.

36. Ibid. p. 83.

37. Ibid. p. 84.

38. Of course, this is the assumption I am making.

39. Chabal and Daloz, *Culture Troubles: Politics and the Interpretation of Meaning*. London: Hurst and Company, 2006, p. 10-11

40. Judith Blackwell, Murray Smith, and John Sorenson *Culture of Prejudice: Arguments in Critical Social Science*. NY: Broadview Press, 2003, Page 14.

41. Ibid. pp 14-15.

42. Chabal and Daloz 21

43. Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity: The Information Age – Economy, Society, and Culture*. London: Blackwell, 1997.

44. Chabal and Daloz, p. 58

45. John Gray, *Al Qaeda and What it Means to be Modern*. NY: W. W. Norton and Co. 2003.

46. Johannes Fabian, *Anthropology with an Attitude: Critical Essays*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2001. p. 88.

47. C. Vann Woodward 'The Meaning of Multiculturalism' in Arthur Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinnman (eds.) *Multiculturalism and American Democracy*. Kansas: University of Kansas, 1998. Pages.

48. Some may take issue with the idea that group identity politics is inevitably undemocratic. The logic of group-based identity claims requires a group to maintain a recognised identity in order for it to interact viably with the state. To this end and out of necessity, any group must police its boundaries making potential undemocratic characteristics realities the minute a member disagrees or develops another viewpoint.

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