E Pluribus Unum: Liberalism's March to Be the Singular Influence on Civil Rights at the Supreme Court

Aaron J Shuler

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/aaron_shuler/34/
E PLURIBUS UNUM: LIBERALISM’S MARCH TO BE THE SINGULAR INFLUENCE ON CIVIL RIGHTS AT THE SUPREME COURT

PART I: LIBERALISM
A. Introduction: Rogers Smith’s Multiple Traditions at the Supreme Court
B. The Liberal Tradition
   1. Liberalism and the State
   2. Liberalism at the Supreme Court
C. Liberalism and the Fourteenth Amendment
   1. Liberalism v. De Jure Discrimination
   2. Privacy as Property

PART II: NEO-LIBERALISM
A. Arrested Development: Neo-Liberalism’s Equal Protection of Ascription
   1. Reports of the State’s Demise Have not Been Greatly Exaggerated
   2. Equal Protection as Entrenchment: Intent over Impact
   3. Disavowal as Ironic Innocence
   4. Equal Protection as Inversion
   5. Willful Blindness
   6. The Way to Stop Discriminating
B. An Island, Alone
   1. Illiberal Redux: Liberalism v. Homophobia

CONCLUSION: Out of Many, One

OVERVIEW

Rogers Smith writes that American political culture can best be understood as a blend of liberal, republican and illiberal ascriptive ideologies. The U.S. Supreme Court’s constitutional jurisprudence has largely reflected this thesis. While the Court moved away from permitting laws that explicitly construct hierarchies in the 20th century and made tepid references to egalitarian principles during the Warren Court, liberalism has prevailed in the majority of the Court’s decisions. Gains in civil rights through the Fourteenth Amendment’s Equal Protection and Substantive Due Process clauses were achieved primarily through liberal notions of de-regulation, a market economy and individual freedom. Conversely, State action, both invidious and benign, has been curtailed by the Court’s invalidation of illiberal practices and its neo-liberal intent over
impact and color-blind doctrines that strike down remedial State programs. For explicitly constructed hierarchies such as race, the result is an illusory equal opportunity-not-equal results approach that solidifies the vestiges of past illiberal practices, converting the neo-liberalism of the present into an ascriptive ideology that preserves the hierarchies of the past. For indiscrete minorities not subject to the same comprehensive and pervasive hierarchies, a neo-liberal approach to individual freedom uncompromised by illiberal State animosities toward groups may help to serve the promise of civil rights.

**PART I: LIBERALISM**

**A. INTRODUCTION: Rogers Smith’s Multiple Traditions**

Rogers Smith writes in *Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America*\(^1\) that American politics has been frequently described as being predominately shaped and defined by liberal democratic principles. Scholars from Hector St. John Crevecoeur\(^2\) in the eighteenth century to Harriet Martineau\(^3\) in the nineteenth to Gunnar Myrdal\(^4\) and Louis Hartz\(^5\) in the twentieth and up to the more recent work of legal scholars such as Kenneth Karst\(^6\) follow this basic model launched by Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*.\(^7\) Smith’s Multiple Traditions view, however, asserts that “American politics is best seen as expressing the interaction of multiple political traditions including liberalism, republicanism, and ascriptive forms of

---

\(^3\) *Society in America* (1837; Saunders and Otley reissued by Cambridge University Press 2009).
\(^6\) *Belonging to America: Equal Citizenship and the Constitution* (1989).
\(^7\) (1835 Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, trans., ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2000).
Americanism, which have collectively comprised American political culture, without constituting it as a whole.”

Smith sees this blend of disparate traditions resulting in drastic, pervasive and persistent hierarchies that define American political culture. He takes issue with the narrow Tocquevillian conclusion that the United States was more egalitarian than Europe because it lacked the traditional ascriptive hierarchies of monarchy and hereditary. Smith instead highlights a United States that favored a minority of propertied white men at the country’s inception and ascription based on race, sex and religion going forward. Moreover, these hierarchies were not sequestered among “the poor and uneducated white people in isolated and backward rural areas of the deep South” as asserted by Gunnar Myrdal, but implemented and defended by “American intellectual and political elites elaborat[ing] distinctive justifications…based in inegalitarian scriptural readings, scientific racism of the “American school” of ethnology, racial and sexual Darwinism, and the romantic cult of Anglo-Saxonism in American historiography.” As a result, “for over 80% of U.S. history, its laws declared most of the world’s population to be ineligible for full American citizenship” and a firmly-entrenched hierarchy with white Protestant men sitting atop justified by “creditable intellectual and psychological reasons…based in nature, history, and God” prevailed.

This article seeks to apply Smith’s Multiple Traditions thesis to the United States Supreme Court’s treatment of the Fourteenth Amendment to uncover the influences behind its major civil rights decisions. It will argue that liberalism dominates at the Court

---

8 Smith, Multiple Traditions at 550.
9 Smith at 551.
10 Id. at 549.
11 Id.
12 Id. at 550.
after mostly but not completely shedding its illiberal tendencies. Specifically, it will
discuss how tepid and mostly abandoned overtures to republicanism and egalitarianism
during the Warren Court have resulted in Smith’s warning about how “the possibility that
novel intellectual, political, and legal systems reinforcing racial, ethnic, and gender
inequalities might be rebuilt in America in the years ahead” has come to fruition in the
Supreme Court’s Equal Protection doctrine.\textsuperscript{13} This article will argue that the Court’s
focus on intent over impact and its “color-blind” approach to racial classifications in the
era of subterranean prejudice and indifference or ignorance to inequality solidifies and
perpetuates the hierarchies created by ascriptive forms of Americanism under the Court’s
liberal notions of “equal laws, not equal results.”\textsuperscript{14} In addition to Smith’s warning, the
Court’s unwillingness to confront its complicity in the perpetuation of hierarchy recalls
James Baldwin’s indictment of the “disavowal of domination,” an “ironic innocence” due
not to “excusable ignorance but a blindness that is culpable because it is willful.”\textsuperscript{15} It is
this ironic innocence about the Court’s ascriptive past that renders intent-neutral and
color-blind approaches in the present illiberal reinforcements of old ascriptive orders.

This article will also discuss how regardless of whether the Equal Protection
Clause traditionally associated with equality or the Substantive Due Process Clause
generally identified with liberty is invoked, liberal conceptions of rights as opposed to
egalitarian notions of equality are the driving force behind the Court’s jurisprudence.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Personnel Administrator of Massachusetts v. Feeney}, 442 U.S. 256 (1979), discussed post at 35.
\textsuperscript{15} George Shulman, \textit{American Prophecy} at 143 (2008), discussing James Baldwin, \textit{The Fire Next Time} in
\textsuperscript{16} Despite the likely great expectations that John Bingham and the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment
had and scholarly calls for long overdue recognition, the continued irrelevancy of the Privileges and
Immunities Clause after the \textit{Slaughter House Cases}, 83 U.S. 36 (1873) means that it will be left out of this
article. For an insightful, comprehensive analysis of the historical underpinnings and appropriate modern
Under this analysis, landmark civil rights decisions appearing to vindicate principles of equality under the Equal Protection and Substantive Due Process clauses are better understood as a validation of individual rights in an unregulated market economy. Out of many competing traditions informing the Court’s decisions over time: liberalism, illiberal ascription based on race, sex, religion and sexuality, and to a lesser and briefer extent republicanism and egalitarianism, one tradition emerges as dominant at the Court: liberalism.

B. THE LIBERAL TRADITION

1. Liberalism and the State

In *Liberalism and American Constitutional Law*, Rogers Smith explains that “[a]lthough their priorities varied, proponents of the political vision of the moderate [Lockean] Enlightenment, including most of America’s founding generation, accepted that government should be redirected away from prescribing religious, moral, or martial virtue to secular ends of peace, economic growth and prosperity, intellectual progress, and personal liberty.”17 Although there was no singular conception of liberalism, “not only the founding Federalists but even the Anti-Federalists, who were influenced by the civically oriented republican tradition, still were liberals in the “decisive sense” of seeing “the end of government as the security of individual liberty, not the promotion of virtue or the fostering of some organic common good.”18 While the republican tradition of civic engagement that Smith discusses in *Liberalism and American Constitutional Law* and

________________

The Multiple Traditions in America provoked debates about the “fundamental contradiction of modern (if not human) existence—the impossibility of realizing our conflicting aspirations for both personal and communal freedom,”¹⁹ American constitutional rights have been primarily defined by liberal and illiberal ascriptive tendencies.

Similarly, Mary Ann Glendon argues that the triumph of Lockean liberalism over notions of republican virtue has led to a rigid zero-sum rights discourse that demands that rights be “absolute, individual, and independent of any necessary relation to responsibilities.”²⁰ Glendon attributes our rights discourse to the heavy influence of Anglo natural rights theorists John Locke and Thomas Hobbes²¹ unleavened by the continental concern for responsibility espoused by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant.²² Moreover, William Blackstone’s out-sized influence²³ on American jurisprudence and his fixation on property as the “cardinal symbol of individual freedom and independence in the United States”²⁴ goes a long way in explaining the bedrock of American liberalism and its later influence on constitutional rights.

While English notions of freehold over real property “stirred [Blackstone’s] lawyerly soul,”²⁵ the principle if not the exact form would resonate centuries later.

¹⁹ Smith at 8.
²¹ See also Richard Primus, The American Language of Rights at 49 (1999), discussing the four moments of liberal rights being Hobbes, Locke, Nozick and Rawls.
²³ Glendon explains that Blackstone’s Commentaries was often the only legal source available to colonial and post-colonial lawyers in 18th century America before decisions of American courts became available early in the nineteenth century. Glendon at 23.
²⁴ Glendon at 24.
²⁵ Id. at 23.
Although a “decline in overt legal solicitude for traditional types of property rights” may have occurred in the twentieth century, classical liberal notions of real property’s influence on American constitutional jurisprudence have been replaced by liberal conceptions of profit and privacy as property that continue to dominate American constitutional rights jurisprudence. “Privacy was,” Glendon argues, “quite literally, pulled from the hat of property” by Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis arguing that property rights decisions protecting private letters and lecture notes rested on notions of “inviolable personality” contained within the writings. The “right to be let alone” combined “the traditional idea of property as marking off a sphere around the individual which no one could enter without permission…*a fortiori* [that sphere] must surround the man [in that sphere] and his interior life.”

The United States Supreme Court’s civil rights decisions largely reflect Smith and Glendon’s explication of liberalism’s origins and continued hold on American political and legal life. Smith’s assertion that illiberal ascriptive policies played a prominent role in American political culture are consistently illustrated in the Court’s thinking well into the twentieth century, while the few victories for civil rights in the nineteenth and early twentieth century were provided by liberal conceptions of property and individualism. Less persuasive is Smith’s claim that republicanism is a significant part of the multiple traditions that comprise American political culture, at least with respect to the Court’s civil rights decisions. With the exception of a brief foray into tepid republican and egalitarian concerns by the Warren Court, the broader picture of the Court’s approach to civil rights is more accurately characterized by Glendon’s absolutist rights rhetoric.

---

26 Glendon at 30.
27 _Id._ at 51.
28 Glendon at 52.
Moreover, regardless of whether the Court relied on the Equal Protection or Substantive Due Process clauses, civil rights are best understood, and more effectively secured, through the language of liberalism. A survey of the Court’s major civil rights decisions over the past one hundred years\(^\text{29}\) illustrates a nearly monolithic liberal approach to civil rights that promises to strike down barriers to equal opportunity in the present while preserving those of the past.

2. Liberalism and the Supreme Court

While Substantive Due Process can arguably be found in the Fourteenth Amendment, the concept of due process in general dates back much further than its enshrining in the Constitution.\(^\text{30}\) The doctrine’s development in the United States,\(^\text{31}\) both before and after its appearance in the Fourteenth Amendment, has led to the understanding that it consists of two parts. Procedural due process ensures that an individual is afforded meaningful court processes before her life, liberty or property is taken. The second component, Substantive Due Process, derives from liberal principles that have evolved into a doctrine that protects individual rights not specifically listed in

---

\(^{29}\) Civil rights have certainly been achieved through other constitutional clauses, not to mention statutory schemes, but the focus of this article will be on the Fourteenth Amendment’s Equal Protection and Substantive Due Process clauses. The broader point, that American political culture, specifically the Court’s jurisprudence, is best viewed as a creature of liberalism, is also of course not limited to the Fourteenth Amendment or civil rights. To note just one example, *Heart of Atlanta v. U.S.*, 379 U.S. 241 (1964) persuasively demonstrates how the Civil Rights Act of 1964, an act ostensibly passed to address racially-constructed ascription, was validated by the Court not through the Reconstruction Amendments that had been previously gutted in the *Civil Rights Cases*, 109 U.S. 3 (1883) as an endorsement of racial equality, but through the Commerce Clause as legitimate federal legislation eliminating local illiberal regulation of the national economy.


the text of the Constitution against State encroachment, no matter how democratically enacted. Its name then is misleading, or even contradictory, considering that no amount of process—due or otherwise—can extinguish certain rights guaranteed by liberalism. Despite Substantive Due Process’ ambiguous language, it nevertheless is thought to give the due process clause a substantive component that encompasses unenumerated—fundamental or something akin to fundamental—rights.

The notion of fundamental rights in the United States, similar to due process’ long documented existence, has also been around since its inception, including appearing in

---

32 While the 14th Amendment prohibits States from infringing upon a person’s procedural and substantive due process rights, the 5th Amendment is directed at the Federal Government. Guarantees from both date back to protection against arbitrary action from the King in the Magna Carta. James W. Ely Jr., The Oxymoron Reconsidered: Myth and Reality in the Origins of Substantive Due Process, 16 Const. Commentary 315 (1999).

33 The term “substantive due process” is thought to have been first used in 1948. Rebecca Brown, Liberty, the New Equality, 77 N.Y.U. L. Rev. 1491 (2002) (Footnote 22) (emphasis added), citing Republic Natural Gas Co. v. Oklahoma, 334 U.S. 62, 90 (1948) (Rutledge, J., dissenting) (“The basic question here is really one of substantive due process.”); See also again generally James Ely, Oxymoron. The concept under a different name—or no name at all—goes back much further, including in the infamous decision of Dred Scott v. Sandford, 60 U.S. 393 (1857) (Chief Justice Taney holding that “[a]n act of Congress which deprives a citizen of the United States of his liberty or property, merely because he came himself or brought his property into a particular Territory of the United States, and who had committed no offense against the laws, could hardly be dignified with the name of due process”). But see James Ely, Oxymoron at 318 (use of doctrine goes back much further than Dred Scott, repudiating Professor Bork’s assertion that Dred Scott is “the fountainhead of substantive due process”). Other arguments based in substantive due process before the Civil War and the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment inverted Justice Taney’s conception and argued that “slavery was a deprivation of liberty without a proper basis in law (such as conviction for crime).” Kathleen M. Sullivan and Gerald Gunther, Constitutional Law, Sixteenth Edition at 364) (2007).

34 See generally John Hart Ely, Democracy and Distrust 18 (1980) (referring to substantive due process as on par with saying “green pastel redness”); Robert H. Bork, The Tempting of America: The Political Seduction of the Law 31 (1990) (describing substantive due process as a “momentous sham”); Richard A. Posner, Ellis v. Hamilton, 669 F.2d. 510 (7th Cir. 1982) (referring to substantive due process as that “ubiquitous oxymoron”). And contrast again with James Ely, Oxymoron at 320, arguing that the notion of due process having both a procedural and substantive component goes all the way back to 1215 England. The Court’s experience in discerning, declaring and explaining the nature of rights—fundamental or otherwise—has been as muddled as its adventures in clarifying the substantive due process doctrine, unsurprising considering the two areas overlap greatly. This work will discuss many of the fundamental rights cases but it will not specifically broach the topic in a descriptive or normative manner.

the country’s founding document. Calder v. Bull was the first decision of the United States Supreme Court that discussed the idea of “implied rights.” Howard Gillman writes that these “implied” or unenumerated rights have always been controversial, but going all the way back to Calder, Justice Chase wrote about “certain vital principles in our free Republican governments that were not expressly restrained by the Constitution.” Justice Chase refused to “subscribe to the omnipotence of a State Legislature,” or accept that “it is absolute and without control.” Fletcher v. Peck is another early case that considered vested rights that had not been enumerated in the Constitution. Justice Marshall alluded to these “unwritten constitutional principles as an alternative basis for his decision in Fletcher.” And Corfield v. Coryell is thought to be the first decision to explicitly use the term “fundamental rights” in the American constitutional tradition. Justice Washington’s Corfield opinion explained that these fundamental rights belonged to citizens of free government. Although unenumerated, they could be described as amongst other things “the enjoyment of life and liberty” and considered to be “privileges and immunities.”

Advocates of the preservation and protection of fundamental rights would later seek to ground their arguments in the Constitution after the Court’s early and uncertain jurisprudence exemplified by Calder, despite the lack of express textual support within

---

37 The Declaration of Independence specifically mentions “inalienable rights.”
38 3 U.S. 386 (1798).
40 Calder at 4-6. See also Sullivan at 363.
41 10 U.S. 87 (1810).
42 Gillman, Regime Politics at 110.
43 6 F.Cas. 546, 551-52 (C.C.E.D.Pa.1823).
45 Vogel, Rhetorical Art at 1479. The privileges and immunities referred to in this particular opinion being from Article IV of the Constitution as opposed to that of the Fourteenth Amendment.
the document itself. Initially it was thought that unenumerated rights would find refuge in the Privileges and Immunities Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The decision in *The Slaughterhouse Cases* rejected and effectively ended this idea over Justice Bradley’s dissent, arguably stripping the Fourteenth Amendment of one of its primary purposes. Despite rejection of the Privileges and Immunities Clause being a home for Substantive Due Process arguments, the doctrine continued to be utilized, based in the Fourteenth Amendment generally. The use of the Ninth Amendment’s catchall language reserving rights not expressly given to the Federal Government for the people appealed to some but never enjoyed an abundance of support. The Substantive Due Process Clause would later stand in its place to guarantee those rights.

---

46 “No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States.” See Park, *Defining One’s Own Concept* at 841-43 (Representative John Bingham, author of the Fourteenth Amendment, “used the words privileges and immunities as a shorthand description of fundamental or constitutional rights that state legislatures could not abridge,” citing Randy E. Barnett, *Restoring the Lost Constitution: The Presumption of Liberty* (2003). This is again in contrast to the Clause found in Article IV §2 which reads: “The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States.”

47 83 U.S. 36 (1873).

48 Justice Bradley argued that a citizen’s right to choose was an element of liberty that could not be arbitrarily assailed.

49 Karst, *Liberties of Equal Citizens* at 105-07. See also Park, *Defining One’s Own Concept* at 843-44 (*Slaughter-House Cases* “eviscerated” Privileges and Immunities Clause).

50 *Saenz v. Roe*, 526 U.S. 489 (1999) breathed some new life into the clause but it has yet to—and likely never will—fulfill what many considered to be its equal citizenship purpose. See David H. Gans, *The Unitary Fourteenth* at 908-09.

51 See e.g. *Budd v. New York*, 143 U.S. 517 (1892) (“The paternal theory of government is to me odious. The utmost possible liberty to the individual, and the fullest possible protection to him and his property, is both the limitation and duty of government.”) (Brewer, J., dissenting); *Munn v. Illinois*, 94 U.S. 113 (1877) (“[In matters] in which the public has no interest, what is reasonable must be ascertained judicially”) (Waite, J.); *The Railroad Commission Cases*, 116 U.S. 307 (1886) (Power of State to regulate is limited) (Waite, J.); *Santa Clara County v. Southern Pac. Railroad*, 118 U.S. 394 (Reasonableness of State action is “eminently a question for judicial investigation”); *Mugler v. Kansas*, 123 U.S. 623 (1887) (Court may examine substantive reasonableness of state legislation).

52 “The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.” (emphasis added)


54 See again Park, *Defining One’s Own Concept* at 844-45.
C. LIBERALISM AND THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT

1. Liberalism v. De Jure Discrimination

The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment was never as effective and exacting as its strongest proponents may have wanted it to be but it did enjoy qualified success after its ratification in 1868. It was most successful in striking down blatant, unexplainable on any grounds other than invidious discrimination in statutory language or application by State actors. It was far less capable of addressing barely subtle discrimination or outright hostility by pseudo-State actors that frequently fell outside of a scope that was quickly strangled after ratification in the *Civil Rights Cases*. Justice Bradley’s 8-1 majority opinion declared that “[i]ndividual invasion of individual rights is not the subject matter of the [Fourteenth] Amendment,” and instead denials to public inns, conveyances or places of amusement are mere acts of individuals that would be subject, if at all, to any laws the State might make. The victories for civil rights that it did achieve against over State discrimination—notwithstanding titular assumptions about Equal Protection being about “equality”—came through liberalism’s language of individual rights.

Thus the Equal Protection Clause was able to invalidate a facially-biased statute in *West Virginia v. Strauder* that prohibited blacks from serving on juries. West Virginia’s law fell not because of concerns for equal representation in the jury box, nor was it a matter of blacks and whites being equal arbiters of the law. The law was struck

---

55 13th and 14th Amendments not meant to redress “ordinary civil injuries.” 109 U.S. 3, 24 (1883).
56 *Id.* at 11.
57 *Id.* at 24.
58 100 U.S. 303 (1880).
59 *See also Swain v. Alabama*, 390 U.S. 202 (1965) (rejecting a constitutional entitlement to racial proportionality in juries).
down because the Court found that a black man had a right to not have the possibility of having other blacks hear his case completely and expressly foreclosed by law. *Strauder* may appear to be a tepid repudiation of de jure racial banishment from the jury box but instead is best seen as a meek expression of the constitutional right to a jury of one’s peers, or at least recognition that the State cannot interfere and outright prohibit blacks from having the right to the possibility of racial peers judging them.60 In *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* 61 a statute ostensibly governing the safety of dry cleaning establishments was facially-neutral but had been enforced every time against Chinese Americans and not once against eighty Caucasians.62 The Court’s ruling focused not on the equality of Chinese Americans, but on striking down dual illiberal violations of individual rights and overregulation to vindicate the right to operate a business in a free market.

In the twentieth century, a victory against overt State racial segregation laws previously hampered by the State Action doctrine from the *Civil Rights Cases* was achieved in *Buchanan v. Worley*.63 *Buchanan* involved an ordinance seeking to maintain segregation of Louisville’s neighborhoods. The ordinance was challenged by a white resident whose attempt to sell his property was frustrated by a black man to whom he was to sell the property refusing to perform the contract because the ordinance forbade him from living in the home he was to purchase. The Court, in sound Blackstonian logic,64

60 Other interpretations argue that *Strauder* was about the right to serve on a jury regardless of race. See Richard Primus, *The American Language of Rights* (1999), discussing Akhil Amar, *The Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment*, Yale. L. J. at 271 (1992), characterizing jury service as a “right,” despite the West Virginia statute’s language.

61 118 U.S. 356 (1886).

62 280 permits to operate a dry cleaning business in a wood based structure (as opposed to the safer brick or stone structures) were requested: the 200 denied were all requested by Chinese, the 80 granted were all requested by Caucasians (although some sources indicate that one Caucasian was denied a permit to operate in a wooden structure).

63 245 U.S. 60 (1917).

64 See ante at 6, discussing Glendon’s treatment of Blackstone.
found that the ordinance interfered “with the civil right of a white man to dispose of his property,” and thus was an unconstitutional interference with property rights guaranteed in the Fourteenth Amendment. By bringing the Court’s attention to the economic interference attendant to segregation laws, the NAACP’s lawyers were able to neutralize a powerful tool of racial oppression by speaking the Court’s liberal language.

While *Buchanan* massaged the Court’s liberal economic fetish with freedom of contract language to reach public discrimination, *Shelley v. Kraemer* relied on the Equal Protection Clause to make the Court—and thus the State—complicit in private discrimination. Thurgood Marshall circumvented the *Civil Rights Cases*’ antipathy to rooting out private acts of discrimination in real estate by noting that while the Constitution may not have forbidden inserting racially-restrictive covenants into private property contracts, enforcing those contracts should a party not abide the discriminatory language would require State actors. In both *Buchanan* and *Shelley*, major weapons of discrimination used to ghettoize blacks were dismantled by summoning the Fourteenth Amendment in service of ridding the real estate market of State-interference and ensuring that the rights to contract and freely alienate one’s property were left unmolested.

While *Shelley* was a liberal victory for the free market that allowed a measure of racial equality in through the back door, it did not overrule the *Civil Rights Cases*. The Court thus found itself stuck between vindicating two possibly conflicting pillars of liberalism: the State should not regulate individual behavior, but nor should it allow inefficiencies—illiberal animosities in this case—to interfere with the market either. The

---

65 Id. at 81.
66 Id. at 81.
67 334 U.S. 1 (1948).
Court was forced to reconcile this tension—and in the process demonstrate its commitment to liberalism over illiberal animosities—in *Burton v. Wilmington Parking Authority*.

In order to reach private discrimination, Justice Clark’s “murky opinion” overcame the State Action doctrine by tying a discriminating restaurant to the State through its lease of State property. *Evans v. Newton* stretched even further to connect the State to private illiberal actors through the Public Function doctrine that deems private citizens public actors if they are performing duties traditionally assumed by public officials. In a similar “novel and potentially far-reaching” entanglement of public and private, *Reitman v. Mulkey* was able to construe “public authorization or encouragement of racial discrimination [as] State action.”

In addition to State support of private discrimination, Thurgood Marshall, Charles Hamilton Houston and other NAACP lawyers similarly attacked the apparatus of racial segregation in education one buttress at a time in *Gaines v. Canada*, *Sweatt v. Painter* and *Mclaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* through the language of liberalism before *Plessy v. Ferguson* and separate but equal collapsed in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

*Brown* is popularly viewed as an endorsement of racial equality but as Michael Klarman

---

72 See also *Amalgamated Food Employees Union Local 590 v. Logan Valley Plaza*, 391 U.S. 308 (1968) (finding a private shopping mall to be a State actor).
74 387 U.S. 369 (1967).
75 Klarman at 272, citing *Reitman* at 375-76, 380-81.
76 305 U.S. 337 (1938) (right to attend an in-state law school).
77 339 U.S. 629 (1950) (right to attend a “substantively equal” law school).
78 339 U.S. 637 (1950) (right to attend graduate school, decided on the same day as *Gaines*).
79 163 U.S. 537 (1896).
writes. Justice Warren’s opinion appears careful not to state a racial classification rule. Instead, Justice Warren elevates education to a fundamental right. His discussion of Brown starts by announcing the Court’s intention of considering “public education in the light of its full development and place in American life,” because “only in this way can it be determined if segregation in public schools deprives these plaintiffs of equal protection of the laws.” Given that education is compulsory and “the foundation of good citizenship,” the State must make it available on equal terms when it undertakes to provide it. Justice Warren’s language, while at first blush seemingly indicative of egalitarian concerns, does not stray too far from liberalism’s mandates. Brown did not promise equal schools or equal education for white and blacks students. It instead prohibited States from treating students differently based on race after it mandated that the public avail itself to the right that the State was providing.

The Court reiterated its concern for “equal educational opportunities” in its discussion of the Sweatt and McLaurin right to education cases. Justice Warren’s Brown opinion did contain language that could be construed as egalitarian. He noted a concern for feelings of inferiority attendant to racial segregation, although even this issue was quickly linked back to how separation affects opportunity. Brown was a delicately crafted 9-0 decision that sewed together Northern, Southern, New Deal and post-New

---

82 Brown at 492.
83 Brown at 493.
84 Id. at 493.
86 Id.
87 Brown at 493-4.
Deal justices under the guidance of a new Chief Justice sympathetic to measures of racial justice. It did so through the liberal language of rights and equal opportunity.

Professor Klarman also argues that the Court first fully embraced a racial classification rule in *McLaughlin v. Florida*. *McLaughlin* struck down a Florida law that criminalized cohabitation between unmarried interracial couples. The holding was applied three years later to invalidate the country’s thirteen remaining anti-miscegenation laws in *Loving v. Virginia*. *McLaughlin* and *Loving*, similar to *Brown*, both demonstrate the apex of the Court’s concern with equality and its employment of egalitarian language. The two racial classification rulings, also like *Brown*, however, are replete, arguably dispositively so, with liberal rights language. While *Brown* might not pass muster without elevating education—at most “equal opportunity to an education”—to a fundamental right, *McLaughlin* and *Loving* are better understood as rulings not affirming the equality of whites and blacks, but as defenses of the right to property and the right to marry. *McLaughlin* specifically dealt with the right to cohabitate. In more general classical liberal terms, *McLaughlin* is a vindication of the castle doctrine. A man’s home is his castle. While *Buchanan* celebrated free alienation of property, *McLaughlin* addresses absolute enjoyment of freehold. Combined with the privacy concept conjured out of property by Warren and Brandeis years earlier that would expressly manifest to protect other behavior in the bedroom a year later in *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the State’s illiberal racial animosities were overcome. *Loving* relied on both the Equal Protection and Substantive Due Process clauses. Justice Warren wrote

---

88 Chief Justice Fred Vinson died in September of 1953 after *Brown’s* first argument, leaving newly-appointed Earl Warren to be steward of the Court’s seminal desegregation case.
89 379 U.S. 184 (1964).
90 388 U.S. 1 (1967).
91 381 U.S. 479 (1965), discussed post at 28-29.
about the impermissible use of race to discriminate. But in both the Equal Protection and Substantive Due Process sections of the opinion, the fundamental right to marry, the *right* of an *individual* to choose free from a State’s illiberal racial restrictions, was emphasized as opposed to the equality between white and black citizens.

While cases like *Brown* and *Loving* undoubtedly provided measures of equality, the most persuasive evidence of Justice Warren’s short-lived “egalitarian revolution” is not in its approach to racial equality but its brief stint into addressing income inequality. The Court’s first “wealth discrimination” ruling came in *Griffin v. Illinois* in which a divided Court held that a “State-created right of appeal against criminal convictions could be conditioned upon production of a trial transcript only if indigent defendants were provided free ones.” Justice Black’s plurality opinion announced that “[t]here can be no justice where the kind of trial a man gets depends on the amount of money he has.”

Klarman notes that *Griffin* is striking because not only does the Court show an unprecedented concern for poverty, but its egalitarian language goes beyond just prohibiting a State from proactively discriminating on the basis of income to requiring it to accommodate someone based on a lack of wealth. The Court’s concern for the indigent continued in the landmark *Gideon v. Wainwright* ruling guaranteeing counsel for defendants facing jail time and the right to counsel at a first appeal in *Douglas v. California*.

---

92 *Id.* at 257.
93 Racial justice and solicitude for the poor are related and overlap given the relationship between racial hierarchy and income inequality but the two classes are also separate and distinct.
95 *Griffin* at 19.
96 Klarman at 266.
The Warren Court’s concern for the poor was extended beyond the criminal rights context in *Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections*. Harper invalidated a State poll tax with the Equal Protection Clause, reasoning that “wealth, like race, creed, color, is not germane to one’s ability to participate intelligently in the electoral process.” Boddie v. Connecticut followed Harper’s rationale but also simultaneously tried to limit just how far the Court’s concern for the poor could be extended. While divorce filing fees applied to the indigent were struck down, Justice Harlan attempted to confine the Court’s solicitude for the poor to areas in which the State exercised a monopoly (such as the court system or education as discussed in *Brown* above).

While *Griffin* and its progeny no doubt speak to egalitarian concerns and arguably represent the height of the Supreme Court’s concern for economic equality, Klarman rightly but incompletely sets this concern within the context of individual rights. While Justices Warren and Black made explicit overtures to the equality of the poor, those platitudes were undergirded by liberal notions of constitutional rights of individuals, not the equality of the indigent as a group. Much like *Brown* found that the right to education could not be denied to an individual based on race, wealth discrimination was only addressed in *Griffin* because the State was threatening an individual’s Sixth Amendment right to trial and Fourteenth Amendment right to due process. The same is true for *Gideon, Douglas, Harper* and *Boddie*. The indigent had no standing to bring a case before the Court because they were poor. They could not petition the Court for economic

---

100 Klarman at 266, citing Harper at 668.
101 401 U.S. 371 (1971). While Justice Warren left the Court in 1969, the Boddie ruling still reflects the Warren Court’s approach to the rights of the indigent. See also *Zablocki v. Redhail*, 434 U.S. 374 (1978) (striking down Wisconsin statute prohibiting persons with non-custodial children from marrying without first obtaining a court order showing they were financially supporting children).
equality. They could only argue that the State could not infringe upon their individual rights to due process and voting because they were poor.

The Warren Court’s need to stretch the connection between private behavior and State action was somewhat relieved by the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that expressly forbade the private discrimination that the Court had been trying to link to public accommodation. The Commerce Clause seems a better fit to champion the liberal causes of freedom to contract and an unregulated market in a national economy than a Reconstruction Amendment ostensibly concerned with black equality. That the Warren Court tried to apply the Fourteenth Amendment to income inequality and circumvent the Civil Rights Cases’ strict State Action doctrine to reach private acts of discrimination is highly suggestive of egalitarian concerns. It bears repeating, however, that these concerns had to arrive at the Court on the backs of individual constitutional rights. Moreover, egalitarian language usually if not always was accompanied by the liberal language of individual rights. Nevertheless, cases such as Jones v. Alfred Mayer Co.\footnote{392 U.S. 409 (1968).} illustrating the “Justices’ willingness to compromise traditional legal canons in their apparent quest to eradicate private racial discrimination” demonstrate a sincere concern for equality.\footnote{Klarman at 278.} Or, in the case of Justice Harlan, perhaps his begrudging assent to the Court’s constitutional jiu jitsu in order to reach the “right” result stemmed more from a sense of necessity in the wake of Martin Luther King’s assassination with “a good deal of Washington on fire as a result of race riots.”\footnote{Id.} However, as discussion of explicit illiberal animosities began to recede in the Court’s decisions, so too did an espousal of egalitarian concern, leaving a newly resurgent neo-liberalism to reign mostly unimpeded

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{footnote}{392 U.S. 409 (1968).}
\end{footnote}
\begin{footnote}{Klarman at 278.}
\end{footnote}
\begin{footnote}{Id.}
\end{footnote}
\end{footnotesize}
at the Court. While the Warren Court had stretched the State Action doctrine to its breaking point, it quickly snapped back as the Burger Court assembled.

2. Two Feathers of the Same Liberal Bird

Substantive Due Process has been Equal Protection’s Fourteenth Amendment companion in many civil rights decisions. The differences between the two clauses, often thought to rest on a liberty versus equality distinction, are muddled, spawning a cottage industry of scholarship attempting to “untangle the strands of the Fourteenth Amendment.”105 The distinctions, while promising academically and still often promoted jurisprudentially, are arguably moot when viewing the clauses as two feathers of the same liberal bird. Regardless of whether Equal Protection or Substantive Due Process or both were invoked, successful civil rights decisions, consciously or not, demonstrate liberalism’s influence on the Constitution and the Fourteenth Amendment, and employed the language and logic of liberalism to overcome illiberal State interference.

Substantive Due Process’ first judicial incarnation in the United States was as an explicit liberal tool used to strike down State economic regulations “in the name of liberty of contract and vested property rights.”106 The maiden appearance of Substantive Due Process in the Court’s jurisprudence as a ground in and of itself to strike down interfering State legislation after a century of allusions to what the doctrine might mean107 was likely in Allgeyer v. Louisiana.108 The Court held that an individual

---

107 The term “substantive due process” is thought to have been first used in 1948. Rebecca Brown, Liberty, the New Equality, 77 N.Y.U. L. Rev. 1491 (2002) (Footnote 22) (emphasis added), citing Republic Natural Gas Co. v. Oklahoma, 334 U.S. 62, 90 (1948) (Rutledge, J., dissenting) (“The basic question here is really one of substantive due process.”); See also James W. Ely Jr., The Oxyoron Reconsidered: Myth and Reality in the Origins of Substantive Due Process, 16 Const. Commentary 315 (1999). The concept under
citizen’s liberty to enter into a contract in furtherance of business invalidated a State law requiring insurance to be procured through a company that had complied with that particular’s state’s insurance laws, thus creating an impermissible oligopoly for that State’s insurance companies. Striking down economic regulation with the Substantive Due Process Clause reached its apex in the “Lochner era,” ushered in by the era’s seminal case of *Lochner v. New York.*

*Lochner* involved the state of New York’s prohibition of bakers working more than sixty hours in a week. The Court struck the statute down as improperly interfering with an individual’s right to contract as part of the liberty protected by the Substantive Due Process Clause in the Fourteenth Amendment. The following decades saw Substantive Due Process strike down economic legislation that the Court viewed as impermissible restraints on economic liberties. It also, most notably in *Adkins v. Children’s Hospital,* hinted at Substantive Due Process’ latent capability to address civil rights matters through liberalism’s distaste for interfering with individual freedom in a women’s minimum wage case.

---

a different name—or no name at all—goes back much further, including in the infamous decision of *Dred Scott v. Sandford,* 60 U.S. 393 (1857) (Chief Justice Taney holding that “[a]n act of Congress which deprives a citizen of the United States of his liberty or property, merely because he came himself or brought his property into a particular Territory of the United States, and who had committed no offense against the laws, could hardly be dignified with the name of due process”). *But see* James Ely, *Oxymoron* at 318 (use of doctrine goes back much further than *Dred Scott,* refuting Bork’s assertion that *Dred Scott* is “the fountainhead of substantive due process”). Other arguments based in substantive due process before the Civil War and the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment inverted Justice Taney’s conception and argued that “slavery was a deprivation of liberty without a proper basis in law (such as conviction for crime).” Kathleen M. Sullivan and Gerald Gunther, *Constitutional Law,* Sixteenth Edition at 364 (2007).

108 165 U.S. 578 (1897).
109 198 U.S. 45 (1905).
110 Citing *Allgeyer.*
111 261 U.S. 525 (1923) (applying due process clause of Fifth Amendment).
112 Bernstein, *Bolling ESSAY* at 1261, also *citing Buchanan v. Warley,* 245 U.S. 60 (1917) (adopting Justice Harlan’s *Berea College* dissent to recognized liberty interests cannot be defeated by discriminatory rationales offered by State). *Id.* at 1270.
The *Lochner* era of preserving laissez-faire economics through the notion of economic liberty in the Substantive Due Process Clause ended in the late 1930’s in *West Coast Hotel Co. v. Parrish* after the Court began to accede to President Roosevelt’s New Deal. Howard Gillman writes that at the time, *Lochner* itself was not even considered important enough to expressly overrule. The fallout was substantial, however. *Lochner*-type reasoning, i.e. illegitimate judicial policy making, would be pilloried. Gillman further provides that “*Lochner* was transformed into the normative *Lochner*—that is, into the symbol of judges usurping legislative authority by basing decisions on policy preferences rather than law. *Lochner* became that symbol, not because the case itself was an especially good example of that vice, but because [Justice] Holmes’ aphoristic dissent proved politically convenient for later generations of lawyers and judges. New Dealers, intent on de-legitimizing the constitutional vision of early twentieth century judicial conservatives found cover under [Justice] Holmes’ dissent. Conservatives later resurrected the ghost of *Lochner* as a way of assaulting the civil liberties opinions of the Warren and Burger Courts. *Lochner* had finally become *Lochernized.*

Gillman’s assessment of the specific political and legal fallout after the “*Lochnerization*” of *Lochner* remains informative; however, it bears emphasizing that

---

114 *300 U.S. 379* (1937) (upholding minimum wage laws for women, overruling *Morehead*).
117 *Id.*
while judicial conservatives lost Substantive Due Process as an economic weapon against regulation in the midst of a depression, the clause would resurface shortly thereafter to continue to fight infringements on individual liberty. A scarcely regulated economy in the country’s worst economic moment may have been temporarily abandoned, but Substantive Due Process in the service of liberalism, albeit in a slightly different form, had not. *Lochner* was not overruled because it was inappropriate for the Court to safeguard liberty or liberalism, but because the valid public welfare purpose—laissez-faire economics in the midst of a crippling depression—had changed.\(^{118}\) During the Depression, liberty could not be protected adequately *without* regulation, and “the absence of governmental interference into the economic affairs of the working public was harmful to the public good—an irony in which the application of the principle undermines the value embodied in the principle itself.”\(^{119}\)

After its initial use in the area of economic legislation by conservatives to preserve the laissez-faire approach but before the sullying of the *Lochner* name, the Substantive Due Process doctrine was extended beyond economic rights to civil rights as well as liberalism’s preference for individual autonomy, and self-determination overcame competing illiberal animosities. *Meyer v. Nebraska*\(^ {120}\) and *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*\(^ {121}\) are two cases applying the Substantive Due Process Clause to protect decisions regarding the upbringing and education of children.\(^ {122}\) *Meyer*\(^ {123}\) struck down a World War I-era

---

\(^{118}\) *Id.* at 80-82.


\(^{120}\) 262 U.S. 390 (1923).

\(^{121}\) 268 U.S. 510 (1925).

\(^{122}\) Both *Meyer* and *Pierce* also analyzed the liberty involved through the prism of the teachers’ right to teach but both cases would later be seen as ensuring parental liberty in determining the upbringing of their children.

\(^{123}\) *Bartells v. Iowa*, 262 U.S. 404 (1923), *Bohning v. Ohio* and *Pohl v. Ohio* were the companion cases decided with *Meyer*. 
Nebraska law that prohibited schools that taught children in German, and *Pierce* similarly invalidated an Oregon law precluding private education. The statutes in both instances were facially neutral; however, Germans had been targeted with the statute in *Meyer* after the war ended, while Catholic schools were the aim of the law in *Pierce*.\(^{124}\) kenneth Karst points out that both laws were examples of the Temperance Movement to maintain the superior status of Anglo-Protestants over recent Irish and German Catholic immigrants.\(^{125}\) Both cases discussed and came to be understood as withdrawing important decisions with regard to one’s children from the State in favor of parents.\(^{126}\) While *Meyer* and *Pierce* may have resulted in better treatment of Germans, Irish and Catholics, the decisions were made pursuant to liberal notions of individual rights. The Court made no mention of the equality of new immigrants, and an egalitarian strategy on behalf of *Meyer* and *Pierce* emphasizing the equality of foreign Catholics in a still mostly-Protestant United States would not have likely had the same traction and success that framing their cases in the language of American liberalism had.

### 3. Privacy as Property

Most scholars mark *Griswold v. Connecticut*\(^{127}\) as the beginning of the United States Supreme Court’s resuscitation of the Substantive Due Process Clause.\(^{128}\) *Griswold’s* indispensable antecedent, however, came four years earlier in *Poe v.*

---


\(^{125}\) Karst, *Liberties of Equal Citizens* at 110-12.

\(^{126}\) The Court also invalidated a law from Hawaii similar to the one struck down in *Meyer* in 1927. Hawaii had not been granted statehood yet, and therefore the law’s prohibition of the teaching of certain foreign languages was found to be unconstitutional pursuant to the substantive due process clause in the 5\(^{th}\) Amendment. See *Farrington v. Tokushige*, 273 U.S. 284 (1927) (applying *Meyer/Pierce* reasoning to Federal Government through the due process clause of the 5\(^{th}\) Amendment to strike down law designed to shut down Japanese language schools). See also *Troxel v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57 (2000) (overturning State custody law in favor of parents’ discretion).

\(^{127}\) 381 U.S. 479 (1965).

\(^{128}\) See e.g. Park, *Defining One’s Own Concept*. 
Ullman.129 Poe did not hold binding authority over Griswold because Poe’s merits were never addressed by the majority opinion, but the dissents of Justice Douglas, and in particular Justice Harlan, laid the foundation for the future use of Substantive Due Process to secure individual rights—initially under privacy rhetoric and later through the language of individual rights. The dissents interwove—at times convoluted, Justice Douglas especially—privacy principles from the first eight amendments, most importantly the privacy concepts found in the Third and Fourth Amendments, with the Fourteenth Amendment’s guarantee of liberty and autonomy. In addition to that relationship, however, Justice Harlan confirmed that the guarantee of liberty as a safeguard of the most intimate and profound decisions an individual can make with regard to her personal life against State intrusion could be found in the Fourteenth Amendment as a separate and distinct concept from the fundamental rights expressly delineated in the first eight amendments.

What offended Justice Douglas in Poe most was the practical requisite in enforcing such a law. He warned that we could “reach the point where search warrants issued and officers appeared in bedrooms to find out what went on.”130 Making use of contraception a crime meant the intolerable to Justice Douglas: that “the State ha[d] entered the innermost sanctum of the home.” Such actions by the State constituted “an invasion of the privacy that is implicit in a free society,”131 as well as Warren and Brandeis’ property concept now on the verge of being operationalized in constitutional civil rights.

130 Id. at 520.
131 Id. at 520-21.
Justice Harlan dissented separately yet similarly and much more extensively to emphasize the gravity of the matter and further elucidate Justice Douglas’ Substantive Due Process argument. His opinion would profoundly influence and serve as the basis for the future of the Court’s application of Substantive Due Process. He too wrote that the Connecticut legislation violated the Fourteenth Amendment as an invasion of the most “intimate concerns of an individual’s personal life” despite there being “no explicit language [in] the Constitution” announcing as such.\textsuperscript{132} Nevertheless, Justice Harlan agreed with Justice Douglas that Substantive Due Process was a broad, flexible concept that protected individuals from otherwise democratic legislation enacted by the State that deprived them of life, liberty or property no matter the procedural fairness involved. Procedural due process, with its roots in the Magna Carta’s per legem terrae, “had in the [United States] become bulwarks also against arbitrary legislation,” thus establishing Substantive Due Process.\textsuperscript{133}

Justice Harlan noted that “long before the adoption of [the Fourteenth Amendment, the] concepts which are considered to embrace [the] rights which are fundamental, which belong to the citizens of all free governments”\textsuperscript{134} were of primary concern, a sentiment paralleling Rogers’ Smith account of the visions of both Federalist and Anti-Federalists.\textsuperscript{135} Further, Justice Harlan argued that the Court had a history of stating that the Fourteenth Amendment did not merely serve as enforcing the enumerated rights in the first eight amendments that were directed as the Federal Government against

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{132} \textit{Id.} at 539.
  \item \textsuperscript{133} \textit{Id.} at 541, citing \textit{Hurtado v. California}, 110 U.S. 516 (1884).
  \item \textsuperscript{134} \textit{Id.} at 541, citing \textit{Calder, Fletcher and Corfield}.
  \item \textsuperscript{135} See discussion of Smith at 5.
\end{itemize}
the States. Aside from making those expressly articulated rights applicable against the States, an extra component consisting of liberty, however ambiguously expressed, was enshrined. This ambiguity was bereft of formula or code to discern it in a precise fashion according to Justice Harlan. “[T]he best that could be said [was] that through [the] Court’s decisions it represented the balance which [the United States] built upon postulates of respect for the liberty of the individual.”

This concept of liberty as guaranteed vis a vis Substantive Due Process derived from “the imperative character of Constitutional provisions,” character that “must be discerned from a particular provision’s larger context...not of words, but of history and purposes.” Liberty was not “a series of isolated points pricked out” but instead was to be an inexhaustible “rational continuum” that protected individuals from “arbitrary impositions” and “purposeless restraints.” Just Harlan was certain that the Connecticut statute deprived the plaintiffs of substantial liberty “in carrying on the most intimate of all personal relationships, and that it [did] so arbitrarily and without any rational, justifying

---

137 Poe at 542.
138 See again Tribe, Levels of Generality at 1068-1069, expounding on Justice Harlan’s Poe opinion about “infer[ring] unifying principles at a higher level of abstraction, focusing at times upon rights instrumentally required if one is to enjoy those specified, and a times upon rights logically presupposed if those specified are to make sense.”
139 Poe at 542-43. See also Tribe, Levels of Generality at 1069, discussing example of freedom of speech and freedom of religion only making sense if connected by the broader, underlying principles of freedom of thought and conscience.
140 Poe at 543. The continuum is an extension of previous cases that collaboratively create a theme of preserving certain areas of liberty from State intrusion. Allgeyer; Holden v. Hardy, 169 U.S. 366 (1898); Booth v. Illinois, 184 U.S. 425 (1902); Nebbia; Skinner; Schware v. Board of Bar Examiners, 353 U.S. 232 (1957). It further makes more sense if “abstracted from the particular spheres of life they protect: free speech is an empty freedom if not possessed by a free mind.” Tribe, Levels of Generality at 1069. See also Tribe at 1072, discussing Ronald Dworkin’s chain-novel analogy to Justice Harlan’s rational continuum. Ronald Dworkin, How Law Is Like Literature from A Matter of Principle 57 at 146-66 (1985).
Moreover, the legislation and its enforcement offended the relationship an individual had with property and his free enjoyment thereof.

The *Poe* dissents became law four years later in *Griswold v. Connecticut*.\(^{142}\) Justice Douglas gleaned privacy principles, or “emanations” forming a penumbra of protection around an individual, from the Third, Fourth, Fifth and Tenth Amendments to strike down the Connecticut contraception law. He opted for an approach grounded in privacy derived from the Bill of Rights in consultation with Justices still wary of *Lochner’s* specter,\(^{143}\) while Justice Harlan reiterated his Substantive Due Process dissent from *Poe*. While Justice Douglas’ emanations and penumbras concept carried the majority in *Griswold*, protections for individual liberty and privacy, including *Griswold* itself, would later be subsumed under Substantive Due Process precedents as opposed to Justice Douglas’ short-lived metaphor.

Lest *Griswold* be considered an endorsement of marital privacy, Warren and Brandeis’ newly-minted general principle of privacy as property was extended to singles in *Eisenstadt v. Baird*\(^{144}\) and minors in *Carey v. Population Services International*.\(^{145}\) Justice Brennan emphasized the right of an individual to be free from State intrusion in both cases, and upheld “certain areas or zones of privacy” where individuals had an “interest in independence.”\(^{146}\) These zones of privacy, “pulled from the hat of

\(^{141}\) *Id.*

\(^{142}\) 381 U.S. 479 (1965).

\(^{143}\) This right to privacy approach is thought to have come at Justice Brennan’s suggestion and was hoped to gain favor with Justice Black, a staunch believer since 1947 in the incorporation of the first eight amendments of the Bill of Rights against the states. See Karst, *Liberties of Equal Citizens* at 124. Justice Black nevertheless dissented in *Griswold* at length against what he saw as impermissible “*Lochner*” type decision making.

\(^{144}\) 405 U.S. 438 (1972).


\(^{146}\) *Id.*
property” by Warren and Brandeis decades earlier to cordon off an individual’s thoughts, beliefs and intellectual property, were extended by the Court out of the bedroom to not just birth control but whether to give birth. *Roe v. Wade* was decided on Substantive Due Process grounds instead of Justice Douglas’ penumbras and emanations doctrine. While Justice Douglas’ inartful attempt to avoid *Lochner’s* Substantive Due Process taint with metaphorical allusions to the Bill of Rights was quickly abandoned, *Griswold* and its progeny still live on as precedential embodiments of the Warren-Brandeis privacy as property construct. The language has changed from “privacy” to liberalism’s preferred “liberty,” and the constitutional clause has shifted back to the Fourteenth Amendment’s Substantive Due Process Clause after a brief stay in the penumbras of the Bill of Rights. But while the particular terms and clause briefly varied, the principle and theory being vindicated did not: liberalism’s protection of individual rights and property from State intrusion and interference.

**PART II: NEO-LIBERALISM**

**A. Arrested Development: Neo-Liberalism’s Equal Protection of Ascription**

1. **Reports of the State’s Demise Have not Been Greatly Exaggerated**

   Political scientists seeking to dispel the notion that the United States is “stateless” have produced ample scholarship in the last thirty years seeking to “bring the state back in.” While it is persuasive that American statelessness relative to European democracies is exaggerated given the depth and scope of the American regulatory

---

147 See again Glendon at 7.
machine, a resurgent American neo-liberalism starting in the 1970s took the State out of the egalitarian business that it had waded into during the Warren Court. A retreat from a proactive approach to equality is perhaps most acutely visible in the Court’s significant contraction of the State Action doctrine.

Michael Klarman argues that the Warren Court’s willingness to circumvent the State Action doctrine to reach arguably private discrimination augurs in favor of conjecture that it also would have addressed segregation as a result of de facto discrimination in addition to de jure mandates.\(^{151}\) Klarman points to \textit{Green v. County School Board}\(^{152}\) in addition to other evidence\(^{153}\) to contend that the Warren Court would have interpreted the Equal Protection Clause to require actual racial integration. Klarman is a convincing scholar but we are only left with what did happen, namely the Burger Court’s announcement in \textit{Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education}\(^{154}\) that the Equal Protection Clause would not be in the business of solving de facto segregation.

The end of Johnson’s Great Society and a resurgent neo-liberalism under Nixon was soon reflected at the Court with the replacement of Justices Warren and Fortas with Warren Burger and Harry Blackmun.\(^{155}\) Much has been written about the Burger Court’s “revolution that wasn’t.”\(^{156}\) This thesis appears to be largely true, particularly if the

\(^{151}\) Klarman at 279-280.
\(^{152}\) 391 U.S. 430 (1968).
\(^{153}\) Klarman cites “lower court resolutions of the de facto segregation issue, and internal evidence from the first northern school desegregation case (\textit{Keyes v. School District No. 1}, 413 U.S. 189 (1973)).” Klarman at 280.
\(^{155}\) Powell and Rehnquist arrived a short time after to make up the Burger Court.
Burger Court is viewed in the larger context of the history of liberalism at the Court as opposed to the more conventional understanding that Justice Burger largely failed to roll back or even halt the Warren Court’s expansion of civil liberties. What is remarkable is not that a conservative counterrevolution to combat the Warren Court’s egalitarian revolution is thought to have failed, but that the idea itself that a counterrevolution was needed even existed.

One specific difference between the Warren and Burger Courts, however, was the Burger Court’s nearly immediate retraction of the State Action doctrine. *Evans v. Abney*\(^{157}\) was the first decision in thirty-five years that rejected an Equal Protection challenge for failing to implicate the State in purposeful racial discrimination.\(^{158}\) The Court continued to deny challenges to racial discrimination for lack of direct State involvement in *Moose Lodge No. 107 v. Irvis*\(^ {159}\) as well as enforcing the doctrine against challenges to racial discrimination based in other constitutional clauses.\(^ {160}\) The Burger Court quickly and decisively took the State out of ostensibly private behavior. It also stepped in to thwart State attempts at confronting the hierarchies that the states themselves had constructed in the past.

As the Civil Rights movement gained more traction and public sympathies turned against overt racial discrimination, the Equal Protection Clause continued to be limited but effective at removing explicit illiberal animosities. To be useful going forward, Equal Protection would not be needed so much to confront the fading existence of illiberal legislation that constructed hierarchies, but instead would have to be able to

\(^{158}\) Klarman at 292.
\(^{159}\) 407 U.S. 163 (1972).
ferret out “sophisticated doctrines of racial inequality [that] were dominant in American public opinion”\textsuperscript{161} in order to dismantle them. Liberalism alone, now largely free from competing ideologies, became not the tool to eradicate the vestiges of its former illiberal competitors, but their replacement.

2. Equal Protection as Entrenchment: Intent over Impact

The Burger Court’s doctrinal announcement in \textit{Washington v. Davis}\textsuperscript{162} delivered anything but the tool to dismantle hierarchies.\textsuperscript{163} \textit{Davis} involved a test given by the District of Columbia to prospective police officers that ended up disqualifying four times as many black applicants as their white counterparts. Justice White found that tests that resulted in a disparate impact were not unconstitutional even if the tests bore a tenuous relationship with the ability to perform the job in question so long as the test administered was not given in pursuance of a racial animus.\textsuperscript{164} While the animus may not have been as overt as Henry Cabot Lodge’s literacy tests in 1896 that were ostensibly only concerned

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[161] Smith, \textit{Multiple Traditions} at 555.
\item[162] 426 U.S. 229 (1976).
\item[164] \textit{Davis} stands in stark contrast to \textit{Griggs v. Duke Power Co.}, 401 U.S. 424 (1971), a Title VII case invalidating employer-administered tests without any “business necessity” that disproportionately excluded black workers from promotions. Justice White’s \textit{Davis} opinion expressly declined to adopt the “more rigorous standard” announced in \textit{Griggs}. Both Title VII and the Fourteenth Amendment were ostensibly passed in response to racial hierarchy yet Justice White was “not disposed to adopt” the more probing—and more egalitarian—judicial standard that contemplated how arguably neutral legislation in the present maintains the invidious laws of the past. The Court’s convoluted distinctions between the two standards used for cases arising from the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Protection Clause continued throughout the 1970’s in cases such as \textit{Pasadena v. Spangler}, 427 U.S. 424 (1976) and \textit{Columbus Board of Education v. Penick}, 443 U.S. 449 (1979). The Roberts Court’s decision in \textit{Ricci v. DeStefano}, 129 S.Ct. 2658 (2009), in which the Court ruled that the Title VII rights of nineteen whites and one Hispanic were violated when New Haven threw out tests that disqualified every black employee for a promotion for fear of facing a Title VII lawsuit…from the black employees along with its decision in \textit{Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1}, 551 U.S. 701 (2007) discussed post at 19, and its revisit to \textit{Grutter v. Bollinger}, 539 U.S. 309 (2003) discussed post at 19, may finally clear up the confusion in favor of neo-liberalism’s preference of banning the use of race altogether. \textit{See also Richard Primus, Equal Protection and Disparate Impact: Round Three}, 117 Harv. L. Rev. 493 (2003), for an admirable attempt at clearing up the Supreme Court’s muddled distinctions between its Title VII and Equal Protection doctrines.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
with intellectual merit but worked to exclude “the Italians, Russians, Poles, Hungarians, Greeks and Asiatics, thereby preserving the quality of our race and citizenship,” the District of Columbia’s test was similarly proffered as a way to ensure strong communication skills in the police ranks. Lodge’s design in 1896 barely obscured its animating illiberal purpose. While illiberal motivations cannot be discounted in the Davis case, the opinion’s language is a testament to liberalism, championing equal opportunity over equal results, de-regulation of the job market and the free market’s ability to pick the best option. Lodge’s literacy test and D.C.’s communication skills exam may have intended different things, but the effect of illiberal tendencies in 1896 and those that failed in 1976 to reckon with them were largely the same.

In Rogers Smith’s metaphor, although Civil Rights campaigners, some Johnson Administration legislation and a few Supreme Court decisions “work[ed] to erode [the steep] mountains [of hierarchy] over time, broadening the valley, many of the peaks prove[d] to be volcanic, frequently responding to seismic pressures with outbursts that harden[ed] into substantial peaks once again.” The Court’s announcement in Davis that the impact of a law or State practice, however racially disparate it may be, is subordinate to its intent, was a volcanic reaction of neo-liberalism by the Burger Court in the Nixon era against egalitarian notions espoused by the Warren Court. This shift would be continued by Reagan’s Rehnquist Court and Bush’s Roberts Court that would prove to be a hardening of racial hierarchy.

---

165 Smith at 560.
166 Smith at 555.
The Court’s neo-liberal approach to its Equal Protection doctrine continued to contract and harden in *Arlington Heights v. Metropolitan Housing Corp.*\(^{167}\) *Arlington Heights* concerned a suspect denial to rezone a residential property from single detached homes to multi-unit buildings that would have housed lower to middle income families in a predominately white Chicago suburb. Forty percent of the residents that would have been eligible to live in the multi-unit buildings were black despite comprising only eighteen percent of the area’s population.\(^{168}\) The Court relied on *Davis* to deny the Equal Protection challenge,\(^{169}\) finding that State action disproportionately affecting a [racial] group was not enough absent an invidious intent or purpose.\(^{170}\) A disparate impact could be “an important starting point” to prove an Equal Protection violation but egalitarian notions were not enough in light of the [race] neutral reason of protecting the property values of the individuals already living in the area in single family residences,\(^{171}\) a familiar echo from *Buchanan’s* 1917 Blackstonian property rights ruling removing a segregation ordinance that interfered with “the civil right of a white man to dispose of his property.”\(^{172}\)

The Court further explicated its neo-liberal preference for intent over impact two years later in *Personnel Administrator of Massachusetts v. Feeney.*\(^{173}\) Justice Stewart explained that neutral laws with disparate impacts could only be invalidated if the impact


\(^{168}\) *Id.* at 259.

\(^{169}\) The Court’s myopic constitutional approach in *Davis* and continued in *Arlington Heights* under its intent over impact doctrine was rejected on remand in favor of *Griggs*’ more searching statutory inquiry under the Fair Housing Act that invalidated the zoning denial for the constructive violation of civil rights in housing that it was. *See Arlington Heights*, 558 F.2d 1283 (7th Cir.1977).

\(^{170}\) *Id.* at 265.

\(^{171}\) *Id.* at 266.

\(^{172}\) *Buchanan* at 81, *see ante* at 13.

\(^{173}\) 442 U.S. 256 (1979). There are few better examples of how well the *Davis* doctrine of intent over impact preserves hierarchy considering that Massachusetts’ automatic preference for veterans all but inevitably excluded women because 98% of veterans were male—a well preserved vestige of gender hierarchy initially defended by élite scholarship.
“can be traced to a discriminatory purpose.” He acknowledged that unconstitutional purposes could have been at work in Davis and Arlington Heights against groups that had been historically discriminated against, as was a possibility in Feeney. However, Equal Protection only guaranteed “equal laws, not equal results.” Justice Stewart maintained that mere intent as volition or intent as awareness of consequences was not enough to prove an Equal Protection violation. State actors were free to implement policies that they knew would burden historically disadvantaged groups so long as there was no “discriminatory purpose,” as opposed to an acceptable awareness of a disparate effect. This required that the State actor chose a policy “because of, not merely in spite of, its adverse effects upon an identifiable group.” Justice Stewart reasoned that “discriminatory intent is simply not amenable to calibration. It either is a factor that has influenced the legislative choice or it is not.” While Justice Stewart acknowledged the possibility that ascriptive Americanism could be at work in the present, and that it had been at work in the past, he was unwilling or unable to bridge the past to the present. His demand for a discernible intent to discriminate not only failed to reckon with how unequal results reaffirm hierarchies constructed in the past, but he also gave license to the reconstituted hierarchies Smith warns about.

174 Feeney at 272.
175 Id. at 273.
176 See again Primus, American Language of Rights at 230, discussing liberalism’s neutrality toward outcomes and Michael Sandel’s criticism of the same.
177 Id. at 279.
178 Id. at 277.
179 Feeney is an example of the possibility of different liberal goals conflicting: Justice Stewart prevented the State from addressing gender inequality continuing to operate in the present at the expense of allowing the free market to find the best applicant regardless of preference for veteran status.
180 See ante at Note 6, “novel legal systems reinforcing racial…inequalities might be rebuilt in America in the years ahead.” Smith’s warning came in 1993, likely cognizant of the Burger Court’s reconstruction vis a vis its intent focus, and the Rehnquist Courts’ color-blind approach to proactive State measures to address past discrimination discussed herein.
3. Disavowal as Ironic Innocence

The Court’s fixation on the present intent betrays an unwillingness to consider Faulkner’s aphorism that “[t]he past is never dead, it’s not even the past.” It also evokes James Baldwin’s discussion of “ironic innocence.” Justices White, Powell and Stewart have knowledge of the rigid racial ascription constructed that resulted in severe and pervasive inequality in employment and housing. A failure to acknowledge how that inequality persists in the present by disregarding the disparate impacts that manifest from ostensibly neutral State action in the present is to be complicit in the perpetuation of hierarchy.

To Baldwin, the “nation was founded in genocide and slavery, whose ideals have never been practiced, or have been practiced only in exclusionary ways.” It is a “tragic story in which a nightmarish racial past imprisons everyone in barren repetition.” Baldwin addresses what the Court’s Equal Protection jurisprudence will not: a “hear no evil, see no evil” liberal approach to legislative intent in the present ignores “the persistence of racial domination among whites who celebrate democratic ideals, and the traps that white supremacy creates for those marked as black.” Participation in this barren repetition—to ignore how education, housing and employment inequalities constructed through ascription in the past manifest in a drastically uneven playing field in the present, even under liberalism’s promise of uniform rules—works to continue to “destroy hundreds of thousands of lives and [the Court] do[es] not know it and do[es] not

181 Requiem for a Nun, Act I, §3 (1951).
182 Justice Powell wrote the majority opinion in Arlington Heights.
183 Shulman, American Prophecy at 142.
184 Id.
185 Id.
want to know it.”  

While ostensibly serving the liberal democratic ideal of equal laws, “it is not permissible that the authors of devastation should be innocent. It is the innocence that constitutes the crime.”

The Court has full knowledge of the Black Codes, Jim Crow and the “inegalitarian scriptural readings, the scientific racism of the American school of ethnology, racial Darwinism and the romantic cult of Anglo-Saxonism in American historiography” that implemented the steep racial hierarchy operating in the United States. To be blind to how that hierarchy operates presently in education, employment and all other facets of American life “is culpable because it is willful,” because what is at issue “is not a lack of knowledge but a ‘refusal to acknowledge’ the reality of others and [the Court and States’] conduct toward them.” This “disavowal of domination is the innocence [Baldwin] denounces as criminal. Innocence means refusing not only to acknowledge the other but to acknowledge that [the Court] enacts this denial; it is disowning ([its] connection to) social facts [it] in some sense know[s], such as the exercise of power, the practice of inequality, or their benefits.”

The Court’s ironic innocence in refusing to acknowledge how neo-liberalism’s promise of neutral intent in the present ratifies the invidious intent of the past is a Court that is “professing but violating democratic norms,” maintaining an ascriptive form of Americanism in its perfection of neo-liberalism that refuses to acknowledge its complicity in the preservation of that ascription. Justice Stewart’s insistence that Equal

---

186 Id., citing The Fire Next Time at 334.
187 Id.
188 Smith at 549.
189 Shulman at 143.
190 Id.
191 Id.
Protection demands only “equal laws, not equal results,” serves to deny the existence of white supremacy, which means denying the meaning of our history, the impact of [the Court’s intent over impact doctrine], the truth of [the Court and the ostensibly neutral legislators’] intentions, and the reality of those that we racialize.”¹⁹² The doctrine as expressed is an “affirmation of racial equality that nevertheless disavows the very historical conditions and contemporary practices that continue to reproduce racial stratification.”¹⁹³

4. Equal Protection as Inversion: [Color] Blindness

While the Court’s intent over impact doctrine entrenches and perpetuates ascription through indifference or willful ignorance, its neo-liberal color-blind companion in Equal Protection prohibits benign attempts by States to acknowledge and dismantle hierarchies. The post-Warren Courts have met State programs seeking to proactively address acute disparities in areas of life previously foreclosed to racial minorities with increasing opposition. They have done so by applying the doctrine of strict scrutiny—a heightened level of skepticism created to shield racial minorities historically discriminated against from hostile legislation¹⁹⁴—to any law contemplating any race regardless of an ascriptive past. Under these constructions of the Equal Protection doctrine, intent is relevant but the validity of the legislation varies depending on its relationship to racial minorities: if the law is indifferent to them and the resulting disparate impact they feel, it is nevertheless valid, whereas if the law seeks to aid them it is invalid. Such is the inversion of a doctrine passed to protect and assist black

¹⁹² Shulman at 143.
Americans accomplished by the neo-liberalism of the Burger, Rehnquist and Roberts Courts.

In *Wygant v. Jackson Board of Education* the Court struck down a policy of preferential protection against layoffs for minority teachers. In sustaining a white teacher’s Equal Protection attack on the Board of Education’s policy of preferring to retain minority teachers, Justice Powell emphasized that “the level of scrutiny does not change merely because the challenged classification operates against a group that historically has not been subject to governmental discrimination.” He cited Equal Protection cases invalidating the facially-ascriptive anti-miscegenation laws of Virginia (struck down to preserve the right to marriage) in *Loving* and restrictive covenant laws of Missouri (struck down to protect the freedom to alienate property) in *Shelley* enacted to maintain rigid racial hierarchies as foundational precedents to strike down a State’s effort to maintain racial minorities in an educational workforce that had lacked such representation because of previously constructed ascription.

Justice Powell rejected addressing if not atoning for past societal discrimination as a sufficient basis to discriminate based on race unless the specific entity using race in the present could be shown to have specifically created the disparity in the past that it was now seeking to alleviate. While Justice Powell appeared here to consider addressing egalitarian concerns, he declined his own invitation to racial justice in *Wygant*. Instead, in reasoning again reminiscent of Baldwinian disavowal, Justice Powell asserted

---

196 *Wygant* at 273.
199 Nor was he interested in the School Board’s offer to establish a specific connection after finding that regardless of specific past discrimination, the preferential layoff remedy was too broad. *Wygant* at 278.
that “there are numerous explanations for a disparity between the percentage of minority students and minority faculty, many of them unrelated to discrimination of any kind,”\textsuperscript{200} a statement betraying his knowledge that there are discriminatory factors at play in the disparity and a refusal to acknowledge those factors by doing anything about their operation.\textsuperscript{201}

The Court struck down another affirmative action plan seeking to award thirty (30) percent of sub-contracting work for contracts between a city and general contractors to minority-owned companies three years later in \textit{City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Co.}\textsuperscript{202} Justice O’Connor took issue with States undertaking remedial measures to address past discrimination because the Fourteenth Amendment was meant to be a constraint on State power.\textsuperscript{203} Her opinion invalidated the city of Richmond’s plan because it could not demonstrate to a convincing degree that it had a history of discrimination against African Americans specifically within the construction industry. To consider past discrimination in general “would be to open the door to competing claims for remedial relief for every disadvantaged group.”\textsuperscript{204}

Justice O’Connor emphasized that the Fourteenth Amendment guarantees that Equal Protection shall not be denied to \textit{any person}, that “preferential programs may only reinforce common stereotypes” and thus “the standard of review under Equal Protection is not dependent on the race of those burdened or benefitted.”\textsuperscript{205}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Wygant} at 276.
\item Using the incomplete term “many” and not the complete term “all.” \textit{Id}.
\item 488 U.S. 469 (1989).
\item \textit{Id}. at 490-91.
\item \textit{Id}. at 505.
\item \textit{Croson} at 494.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
inquiry.” Legislation with an intent to dismantle racial hierarchy would therefore be afforded the same heightened scrutiny as the ascriptive laws that create it because otherwise “race will always be relevant in American life, and the ultimate goal of eliminating entirely from governmental decision-making such irrelevant factors as a human being’s race will never be achieved.”

Seen through neo-liberalism’s lens, Justice O’Connor’s opinion validates the ideas that the Fourteenth Amendment was passed to stop illiberal State interference with the marketplace and protect blacks’ freedom to participate in it. The city of Richmond’s plan was similarly invalidated because the Fourteenth Amendment prohibited the City, a State entity, from regulating the construction industry’s free market or the subcontractors’ freedom to pursue economic opportunities in the name of racial egalitarianism. The Equal Protection Clause did not protect groups, an egalitarian concern, but neo-liberalism’s preferred singular unit, “any person.” It also worked in the service of another neo-liberal goal: removing the State and eliminating governmental decision-making entirely.

Justice Scalia wrote separately to concur that all racial classifications regardless of benign or invidious intent required strict scrutiny, which when applied to race should next to always be fatal regardless of how well correlated a specific invidious and pervasive practice of discrimination in the past was to a remedial plan in the present. He cited Justice Harlan’s Plessy dissent to highlight liberalism’s dismissal of groups, noting that “our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among

---

206 Id. at 495.
207 Id.
208 Or “strict in theory, fatal in fact.” Croson at 552 (Marshall, J., dissenting), (citations omitted)
citizens.”209 While Justice Scalia left the door open a crack for federal remedies, he agreed to curtailing States’ rights210 in addressing past discrimination because “the Civil War Amendments were designed to take away all possibility of oppression by law because of race or color, and to be limitations on the States.”211

Justices O’Connor and Scalia distinguished the limited power of States to address racial hierarchies relative to the federal government in Wygant and Croson. They justified their distinctions based upon the Fourteenth Amendment’s intent to curb the power of states to trample the civil rights of black Americans. However, Justice O’Connor’s majority opinion also required that the entity seeking to remediate past discrimination demonstrate a specific history of discrimination against a specific racial minority in a specific industry. Read together then, the Court rationalizes reducing the power of states to dismantle hierarchies in the present because the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified to stop states from constructing them in the past. Conversely, the federal government—albeit an entity certainly far from having clean hands—is given the most power in the present to remedy past discrimination because it did less discriminating in the past. With this exercise in federalism, the Court’s inversion of power and privilege, and culpability and responsibility, is complete. As Darren Lenard Hutchinson writes:

209 Croson at 521, citing Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537, 539 (1896) (Harlan, J., dissenting).
210 Although not necessarily as ardent a federalism champion as his colleague Justice Rehnquist, neoliberalism’s influence is demonstrated in its ability to overcome Justice Scalia’s preference for states’ rights.
211 Croson at 522, citing Ex parte Virginia 100 U.S. 339 (1879) (emphasis added).
[B]y design or effect, the Court equality doctrine reserves judicial solicitude primarily for historically privileged classes and commands traditionally disadvantaged groups to fend for themselves in the often hostile majoritarian branches of government. It its equal protection decisions, the Court has effectively inverted the concepts of privilege and subordination; it treats advantaged classes as if they were vulnerable and in need of heightened judicial protection, and it views socially disadvantaged classes as privileged and unworthy of judicial solicitude. This paradoxical jurisprudence reinforces and sustains social subjugation and privilege.212

The Court reiterated its unwillingness to distinguish between hundreds of years of laws that sought to burden racial minorities and recent attempts to lessen the burdens of those ascriptive practices in Adarand v. Peña.213 It also ended its brief flirtation214 with allowing the federal government more latitude in addressing dismantling hierarchy. Neo-liberalism reached the federal government by extending the Court’s application of strict scrutiny for all races for any intent to federal programs because “the Fifth215 and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution protect persons, not groups,” and thus the need for a “detailed judicial inquiry to ensure that the personal right to equal protection of the laws has not been infringed.”216

Adarand found that differentiating between invidious and benign classifications “does not square” with the Court’s longstanding central understanding of Equal Protection. This is because “a free people whose institutions are founded upon the doctrine of equality should tolerate no retreat from the principle that government may

214 See e.g. Metro Broadcasting, Inc. v. FCC, 497 U.S. 547, 564-65 (1990) (applying intermediate scrutiny to race-conscious federal program).
215 In order to apply Brown’s holding that Separate but Equal violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the federal government and Washington, D.C. schools, Bolling v. Sharpe, 347 U.S. 497 (1954), “discovered” a companion Equal Protection Clause in the Fifth Amendment to apply against federal action.
216 Adarand at 227 (emphasis in original).
Adarand served then to apply Justice O’Connor’s neo-liberal conceptions of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Fifth. Despite the histories of the two amendments being different, they are, once again, unified by classic liberal principles. They were both ratified as bulwarks against State power and conceived their protections on an individual basis. Moreover, beyond the language and motivations of the amendments, their applications are most illustrative of what really animates them. Scholars may contend that the Fourteenth Amendment was ratified to protect newly-freed African Americans—as a class—but the language—“no person” and the interpretation in subsequent precedents is best seen as addressing the equal protection of individual rights, or, the putatively equal opportunity to freely exercise those rights.

Justice Scalia concurred again in Adarand to stress that the concept of “either a debtor or creditor race” is alien to “the Constitution’s focus upon the individual,” highlighting the Equal Protection’s prohibition against States denying to “any person the equal protection of the laws.” The concept of “racial entitlement” found in benign State practices “preserves for future mischief the way of thinking that produced race slavery, race privilege and race hatred.” It is a flawed approach because “[i]n the eyes of government, we are just one race here. It is American.”

---

217 Id., citing Hirabayashi v. U.S., 320 U.S. 81 (1943), a case upholding the constitutionality of racial curfews.
218 See e.g. David H. Gans, The Unitary Fourteenth Amendment, 56 Emory L. J. 907 (2007).
219 Adarand at 239 (Scalia, J., concurring). Similarly, Justice Thomas wrote that “benign prejudice is just as noxious as discrimination based on malicious prejudice.” Adarand at 241.
220 Adarand at 239.
4. Willful Blindness

The post-Warren Courts’ neo-liberal color-blind doctrine is a logical companion to its free market intent over impact approach within Equal Protection. Intent is the focal point in both doctrines, but as noted above, laws intending to aid racial minorities will be struck down while laws without a clearly discernible intent to burden yet nevertheless with a disparate impact will be preserved. The two comprise a formidable intellectual trend within the American political and legal systems that reinforce racial inequalities. Color-blindness, for all of its irony, is nevertheless aptly named, and may exhibit Baldwin’s concept of disavowal of domination through willfully blind practices even better than the Court’s unwillingness to address impact. The irony is thicker, and the blindness even more willful, because while intent over impact results in the Court passively allowing the perpetuation of ascription, color-blind strict scrutiny requires a willful, proactive obstruction by the Court of State attempts to dismantle the hierarchies they created.

Not only is the color-blind doctrine a willful attack on State efforts to dismantle the hierarchies they created, but the building blocks utilized to mount the attacks and preserve ascription are the very cases that were initially used to dismantle them. Justice Powell commandeered precedents that struck down racial segregation in marital and real estate contracts to invalidate a contract seeking to avoid continued segregation in education. Precedents are also stripped of context and purpose and refashioned in not just a disavowal of history but an inversion. Justice O’Connor uses a platitude about only using race for compelling purposes from a case justifying racial curfews in order to

221 See again Smith at 550.
222 Hirabayashi.
strike down efforts to address why there is a dearth of black representation in the seat of the Old Confederacy’s construction industry. The absence of a specific documented history of discrimination against racial minorities in the construction industry in Richmond to her is thus explained by a lack of discrimination, and not complete foreclosure to that industry based on race that would have precluded even the chance of having a business to be discriminated against in the first place.

Justice Scalia’s use of Justice Harlan’s Plessy dissent is perhaps even more illustrative of disavowal because it is comprehensively “innocent” of precedent, history and intent. Whereas Justice Harlan dissented alone in furtherance of a color-blind Constitution against the majority’s endorsement of an illusory equality that specifically contemplated the separation of two distinct races, Justice Scalia re-imagined the majority’s illusion while inverting Justice Harlan’s doctrine in the creation of a race that neither one conceived of: the so-called American race. Moreover, Justice Scalia disavowed a constitutional history of systematically discriminating against racial minorities because of their status in that group in favor of a willfully innocent celebration of a conjured record of neo-liberal constitutional protection for individuals regardless of racial group. Along with erasing distinctions between white and black in favor of a newly recognized “American” race, he also merged benign practices and race hatred into one monolithic mischievous concept of racial entitlement that the neo-liberal Constitution would not tolerate.

---

223 Croson.
5. The Way to Stop Discrimination

The Roberts Court’s decision in Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1\(^{224}\) was another significant nail in any so-called Warren Court egalitarian revolution. The Court announced that efforts to ameliorate drastic racial imbalances firmly in place that replicate hierarchy over time and space were not the way to confront discrimination, but instead the solution lie in refusing to confront it at all. Justice Roberts concluded his PICS opinion by striking down efforts to integrate Seattle schools with the would-be dictum: “the way to stop discrimination based on race is to stop discriminating based on race.”\(^{225}\)

Justice Roberts’ opinion also confirmed that imbalances concerning racial groups were not unconstitutional.\(^{226}\) Instead, “the entire gist of the Grutter\(^{227}\) analysis” was that the Court’s focus would be on the student or “applicant as an individual and not simply as a member of a particular racial group.”\(^{228}\) “The importance of this individualized consideration in the context of a race-conscious admission[s] programs is paramount”\(^{229}\) because “at the heart of the Constitution’s guarantee of equal protection lies the simple command that the Government must treat citizens as individuals.”\(^{230}\)

Finally, Justice Roberts continued the trend of inverting and re-purposing precedent to better coincide with neo-liberal aims. In 1954, Justice Warren made education akin to a fundamental right that the State had to provide to individuals with

\(^{224}\) 551 U.S. 701 (2007).
\(^{225}\) Id. at 748.
\(^{226}\) Id. 721, citing Milliken v. Bradley, 433 U.S. 267 (1977). To seek racial balances was instead “patently unconstitutional,” according to Justice Roberts. PICS at 723, citing Grutter at 330.
\(^{228}\) PICS at 722-23. (emphasis supplied)
\(^{229}\) PICS at 723, citing Grutter at 337.
ostensibly equal access regardless of race, thus resulting over time in some integration and improvement in opportunity for black school children. In 2007 Justice Roberts cited *Brown* to defeat a desegregation plan “because government classification and separation on grounds of race denote inferiority.”

Justice Roberts’ preference for a restrained incrementalist approach likely led to him employing one of the Court’s few precedents that permitted the use of race as a tool to dismantle educational ascription. He did so in *PICS* to distinguish why diversity’s role was not constitutionally recognized in high schools like it had been for higher education in *Grutter v. Bollinger*. His restraint—or perhaps his inability to make Justice Kennedy the fifth vote to sink affirmative action in public higher education for good—likely led to a loss for Texas and a ratcheting up of strict scrutiny of admissions criteria yet kept affirmative action on life support in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*.

While Justice Kennedy has been less hostile to the use of race than Justice Roberts has been in his early Supreme Court career, Justice Kennedy’s opinion contains the same neo-liberal language likely to have anchored Justice Roberts’ opinion. Justice Kennedy’s opening discussion of precedent reiterates the core liberal color-blindness principle that “equal protection admits no artificial line of a ‘two-class theory’ that permits the recognition of special wards entitled to a degree of protection greater than that accorded others.” Instead, admissions decisions need to be based solely on an individual basis. Moreover, if Fisher added anything to constitutional affirmative action

---

231 *PICS* at 746, citing *Brown* at 493-4, expressing the same concern for the impact of integration “when it has the force of law” that Justice Warren had about segregation 53 years earlier, a “cruel irony” discussed by Justice Stevens in his dissent. *See PICS* at 798-99 (Stevens, J., dissenting).
jurisprudence it was emphasizing that the State carried the burden—a burden arguably increased by the Court’s decision—of establishing that the individual rights of white persons were not infringed by increasing the diversity of the classroom by expanding the representation of groups of color.

The rationale of diversity as beneficial to the classroom and its students as opposed to the groups that actually constitute the diversity appears palatable if not ideal for a neo-liberal Court that cherishes the individual and ignores the collective. It is also consistent with the shift made in response to attacks on affirmative action, many spearheaded by neo-liberal arguments, made in the 1990s. In a description of inversion similar to that made by Professor Hutchinson,235 Aida Hurtado details the shift from race-based affirmative action as a means to redress historical disadvantage to taking advantage of the benefits that come from a diverse classroom.236 In order for affirmative action to survive, its benefits had to be recast as favoring white students, and thus the focus became emphasizing how a diverse classroom benefits not all students, but white students who can learn something from hearing diverse viewpoints in their classrooms. Hurtado expresses this paradox by explaining that “[t]he irony in the argument is that, while both [w]hite students and students of color would benefit from a more diverse education at all levels, the only diversity worthy of consideration is that which research documents as beneficial to [w]hite students. In this vein, the burden of establishing positive returns from the diversification of our campuses is placed on students of color,

---

235 See ante at 43.
not on [w]hite students.” With Fisher, the Court tightens this burden: historically disadvantaged students must now add convincing the Court that their presence in the classroom is going to help those already on top of the hierarchy remain there to the already daunting task of catching up to those already so far ahead.

Like the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era before it, “intellectual systems and political forces defending racial inequalities” have increased in the post-Civil Rights Era with the Burger, Rehnquist and now Roberts Courts’ use of Equal Protection. While the intent behind a system to effectuate “Conservative desires [to keep] blacks in their place” with “complex registration systems, poll taxes, and civics tests” was “little masked in the heyday of Jim Crow,” the post-Warren Courts’ Equal Protection doctrine requires intent to be surreptitious enough to not be discernible. Facialy neutral statutes can ostensibly comport with liberalism’s promise of “equal laws if not equal results” while historically revisionist platitudes about free people in our nation’s equal institutions and our “one American race” scrub the past of ascription to place the blame for unequal results elsewhere.

Inequality is conceded by intent only/color-blind practitioners, but the nascent anti-subordination jurisprudence started by the Warren Court soon gave way to the anti-classification approach that stabilizes change, neutralizes efforts to dismantle hierarchy

---

237 Hurtado at 276.
238 Smith at 563.
239 Id. at 561.
240 Adarand at 227.
and instead perpetuates ascription.\textsuperscript{241} The Court has steadily moved away from race-conscious laws, reconstructing if not new systems of hierarchy, at least a doctrine that maintains them by favoring the laissez-faire approach of self-help to combat inequality.\textsuperscript{242} Further, most of the Warren Court’s precedents attempting to confront both de jure and de facto inequality have been eroded or outright overruled.

With the exception of attempts by the Warren Court to break the “barren repetition of a nightmarish racial past,”\textsuperscript{243} the neo-liberal Burger, Rehnquist and Roberts Supreme Courts have utilized novel conceptions of an Equal Protection Clause ratified to aid newly freed slaves to instead “reinvigorate (or at least preserve) the hierarchies [esteemed (or tolerated) by Americans] in modified form.”\textsuperscript{244} The clause has largely not, as Cass Sunstein has asserted, looked forward to dismantle engrained prejudices,\textsuperscript{245} but instead maintained them by enabling Justices to disavow a history based on color in order to repeat it.

\textbf{B. An Island [of which the State May not Enter], Alone}

The Substantive Due Process Clause proved to be a major if imperfect tool for civil rights litigators in the second half of the twentieth century. Its current status as the bête noir of judicial conservatives\textsuperscript{246} overshadows its initial use as one of their favored

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{241} For a thoughtful analysis discussing the Court’s preference for an anti-classification approach over an anti-subordination principle in the interest of institutional stability, see Stuart Chinn, \textit{Race, the Supreme Court, and the Judicial-Institutional Interest in Stability}, 1 Journal of Law and Commentary 95 (2011).
\bibitem{242} Smith at 563, referencing Richard Epstein, Thomas Sowell, Booker T. Washington and color-blind jurist Clarence Thomas.
\bibitem{243} Shulman at 142.
\bibitem{244} Smith at 558.
\bibitem{246} See again e.g. the recently departed Robert Bork, \textit{The Tempting of America: The Political Seduction of the Law} 31 (1990) (describing substantive due process as a “momentous sham”).
\end{thebibliography}
weapons to combat economic regulation in the first half of last century. While judicial conservatives enjoyed its service in the first half of the century to preserve the Gilded Age and judicial liberals re-purposed it for civil rights in the second half, it has been consistently faithful to liberalism’s preference for an unregulated economy, property and individual rights free from State intrusion.

In Cleveland Board of Education v. LaFleur the Court struck down illiberal State paternalism that required pregnant school teachers to take unpaid maternity leave five months before their due dates and permitted a return to work only after their children were at least three months old. The Court instead ruled in favor of an individual’s freedom to choose when to leave and when to return to the workforce. In Moore v. City of East Cleveland the Court rejected zoning ordinances in favor of the free exercise of property and the protection of the “private realm of family life which the [S]tate cannot enter.” A year later the Court struck down a Wisconsin law that prohibited persons with non-custodial children from marrying without first obtaining a court order demonstrating that they were financially supporting their children in Zablocki v. Redhail. Wisconsin may have had an interest in promoting and protecting the welfare of children within the state but those concerns gave way to the personal right to enter into a marriage contract. The freedom to marry was an extension of the right to privacy, once again combining liberalism’s favored sons of contract and property.

---

247 See again the Lochner era generally, briefly discussed ante at 22-23.
251 Zablocki at 386.
The Court’s fidelity to neo-liberalism was severely tested in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, a case pro-life forces had been working on for nearly two decades.

Emboldened by adding Reagan and Bush appointees to Chief Justice Rehnquist’s Court, *Roe* had been given its last rites by social conservatives while parts of the women’s equality movement were resigned to the demise of a woman’s right to choose. The decision, however, written by the Republican-triumvirate of Justices O’Connor, Kennedy and Souter, reported that the Court’s duty was to “define the liberty of all, not to mandate [its] own moral code.”

Instead of bowing to the Right’s call for the State’s regulation of an individual’s reproductive health, Justice O’Connor’s opinion relied on the familiar string citation of liberal precedent elevating an individual’s right to privacy as property developed in *Griswold* and later styled as liberty protected under Substantive Due Process, and found in favor of individual choice free from State intrusion. This was because “[i]t is a promise of the Constitution that there is a personal realm of liberty which the government cannot enter,” which explained why the Court had an established history of “recognize[ing] the right of an *individual*, married or single, to be free from unwarranted government intrusion.”

1. Illiberal Redux: Liberalism v. Homophobia

While neo-liberal decisions have achieved a measure of equal opportunity if not equal results for traditionally discrete groups, there remain indiscrete groups that must still confront facially-discriminatory State action. Unlike the reconstituted system of racial ascription at work in the Court’s intent over impact and color-blind doctrines that

---

253 *Casey* at 850.
254 *Poe, Griswold, Roe, Eisenstadt, Carey*.
255 *Casey* at 847.
256 *Id.* at 851 (emphasis in original).
Rogers Smith warns about, anti-gay State action represents not a neo-liberal 
etrenchment of an old ascriptive order, but the vestiges and different manifestations of 
illiberal animosities yet to be confronted by liberalism.

Ten years after illiberal State regulation targeting homosexuals narrowly 
prevailed in Bowers v. Hardwick,257 neo-liberalism overcame the State of Colorado’s 
naked hostility in Romer v. Evans.258 Justice Kennedy’s opening paragraph took the 
State to task for violating its “neutrality where the rights of persons are at stake.”259 His 
opinion does evince a concern with “a bare desire to harm…a group,” yet Romer is 
driven not be the equality of homosexuals but by the State’s unreasonable interference 
with gay individuals’ rights to access the market.

While the state of Colorado proffered First Amendment freedom of association 
justifications for its exclusion of legal protection for homosexuals, Justice Kennedy’s 
opinion traced an unregulated market and unfettered access to public goods back to a 
common law prohibition on “innkeepers, smiths and others who made a profession of 
public employment [from refusing] without good reason to serve a customer.”260 The 
State’s attempt at precluding homosexuals from full participation in “housing, sale of real 
estate, insurance, health and welfare services, private education and employment” was a 
“severe consequence” that a neo-liberal Court could not abide.261

---

257 478 U.S. 186 (1986) (Bowers’ decisive fifth vote to permit Georgia’s criminalization of sodomy was 
quickly—yet still belatedly—retracted by Justice Powell, remarking “I think I made a mistake in the 
259 Id. at 623. (emphasis supplied)
260 Id. at 627, citing Hurley v. Irish-American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group of Boston, Inc., 515 U.S. 
261 Romer at 629.
While Romer’s neo-liberal rationale was reminiscent of a Blackstonian Buchanan concern for the free alienation of property, Lawrence v. Texas\textsuperscript{262} was a victory for the rights of gays and lesbians achieved through the Warren-Brandeis property as privacy paradigm. Lawrence relied again on the same individual-liberty\textsuperscript{263}-over-State-intrusion string cite found in Casey to bar the government from entering a person’s bedroom, straight or gay.\textsuperscript{264} Justice Kennedy’s opinion revisited the castle doctrine, noting that “in our tradition the State is not omnipresent in the home.”\textsuperscript{265}

Similarly to Romer where Justice Kennedy was also the author of the Court’s opinion, Lawrence discusses “equality of treatment…[the] right to demand respect,” stigmas and how homosexuals are demeaned by anti-sodomy laws.\textsuperscript{266} The crux of the opinion; however, as it was in Romer, is that “[t]he Texas statute furthers no legitimate state interest which can justify its intrusion into the personal and private life of the individual.”\textsuperscript{267} While Romer relied on the Equal Protection Clause and Lawrence exclusively on Substantive Due Process, both of Justice Kennedy’s opinions made overtures to gay equality but rested on the vindication of neo-liberal rights to liberty and real property; \textit{viz.}, what to do with it\textsuperscript{268} or what can be done inside it.\textsuperscript{269}

\textsuperscript{262} 539 U.S. 558 (2003).
\textsuperscript{263} Formerly and briefly known as privacy.
\textsuperscript{264} Justice Kennedy and the majority resisted Justice O’Connor’s approach in her concurrence advocating the application of the law—and thus allowing the State into the bedroom—to both “straight” and “gay” sodomy.
\textsuperscript{265} Lawrence at 562.
\textsuperscript{266} Id. at 575.
\textsuperscript{267} Id. at 578.
\textsuperscript{268} Renting or buying real property was one of many liberties involved in Romer.
Through the logic and language of neo-liberalism, homosexuals were afforded greater access and opportunity to housing, commerce and education, i.e., the market. Moreover, the discrete nature of sexuality as opposed to race could mean that legitimate equal opportunity free from illiberal animosities could translate into more equality in results and status for homosexuals. A neo-liberal equal opportunity approach divorced from the past that continues to operate in the present merely hits pause on the stratification of wealth and opportunity for blacks. However, neo-liberalism for indiscrete groups not facing steep hierarchies built easily in the past on readily identifiable characteristics, and unburdened in the present from illiberal animosity, could hasten the march toward full civil rights.

The most recent and visible example of this march to expand civil rights for homosexuals can be seen in *U.S. v. Windsor.* While the Court passed on *Hollingsworth v. Perry* and the bigger question of a federal constitutional right to marriage to seemingly allow the right to marry to continue to expand on a state level, Justice Kennedy wrote his third opinion favorable toward rights for gay Americans in 17 years. Windsor contains even more language discussing the equality, dignity and respect involved in affording the same constitutional rights to homosexuals that heterosexuals enjoy than *Romer* and *Lawrence.* It is once again anchored, however, by a discussion of “the right to marry” and notably commences by mentioning a significant $363,053 tax bill levied by the government against Edith Windsor as a result of her being

---


272 *See again Romer and Lawrence* ante at XX
273 At 17
denied the right to legally marry her partner of 36 years. Justice Kennedy’s federalism/Equal Protection hybrid analysis of precedent begins with Loving for the liberal principle of limiting the State’s interference with individual rights, noting that “state laws defining and regulating marriage, of course, must respect the constitutional rights of persons.”

Justice Kennedy emphasizes the unique and singular role that States have played in defining marriage to the exclusion of the federal government. The crux of his opinion, however, as lamented by Justice Scalia’s dissent, is that States should regulate less and defer to the individual rights of all citizens, gay or straight, in marriage contracts. Despite Justice Kennedy’s assertion that “[t]he State’s power in defining the marital relation is of central relevance in this case quite apart from principles of federalism,” his emphasis instead focuses on a “resulting injury and indignity (from denying marriage to same-sex couples) [that] is a deprivation of an essential part of the liberty protected by the Fifth Amendment.”

The terms used cast the federal government as a discriminating agent against the 5th Amendment rights of liberty guaranteed to individuals; Justice Kennedy’s analysis, however, also applies to the 38 states that still define marriage as only being valid between one man and one woman, thus implicating

---

274 Windsor at 20.
275 “Consistent with this allocation of authority, the Federal Government, through our history, has deferred to state law policy decisions with respect to domestic relations,” Windsor at 21; “The significance of state responsibilities for the definition and regulation of marriage dates to the Nation’s beginning,” Windsor at 22.
276 “[T]oday’s prohibition of laws excluding same-sex marriage is confined to the Federal Government (leaving the second, state-law shoe to be dropped later, maybe next Term,” a bemoaning similar to a prediction made in Lawrence 10 years previous that invalidation of sodomy laws would beget invalidation of laws banning same-sex marriage. Windsor at 49-50 (Scalia, J., dissenting).
277 Windsor at 23.
those States as interfering with the rights of individuals to marry as a violation of the 14th Amendment.278

Justice Kennedy acknowledges as much, repeating that “[t]he States’ interest in defining and regulating the marital relation, subject to constitutional guarantees, stems from the understanding that marriage is more than a routine classification.”279 While he mostly maintains throughout the opinion that his analysis concerns DOMA’s interference with “the States in the exercise of their sovereign power,”280 Justice Kennedy’s proclamations of federalism are routinely followed—in most cases immediately—by stressing the importance of the freedom of choice for same-sex couples to marry.281 The 5th Amendment’s Due Process and Equal Protection clauses are offered as the applicable constitutional provisions in Windsor and nominally this would appear correct given that DOMA was a federal statute. Justice Kennedy’s reasoning, however, with all of his references to the freedom to choose, the right to marriage and dignity and respect, make Windsor not a States rights opinion but an individual rights against State regulation of marriage contracts decision. These individual—or two individuals joined as a couple—rights, stemming from the marital contract are largely financial burdens found with respect to healthcare benefits, bankruptcy protection, taxes, social security, financial aid,

278 See again Windsor at 50 (Scalia, J., dissenting) (“the only possible interpretation of [the majority’s opinion] is that the Equal Protection Clause, even the Equal Protection Clause as incorporated in the Due Process Clause, is not the basis for today’s holding. But the portion of the majority opinion that explains why DOMA is unconstitutional (Part IV) begins by citing Bolling v. Sharpe, Department of Agriculture v. Moreno, 413 U. S. 528 (1973), and Romer v. Evans—all of which are equal protection cases. And those three cases are the only authorities that the Court cites in Part IV about the Constitution’s meaning, except for its citation of Lawrence v. Texas (not an equal-protection case) to support its passing assertion that the Constitution protects the “moral and sexual choices” of same-sex couples.” (internal citations omitted) See also Windsor at 56, citing Lawrence 539 U.S. at 604 (referring to the assertion that the majority’s holding is confined to those already married as “bald and unreasoned”). (Scalia, J., dissenting)
279 Windsor at 23.
280 Id. at 25.
281 Id. at 25.
as well as disparate consequences in criminal law.\textsuperscript{282} Whether provided by the liberty protected in the Due Process and Equal Protection guarantees of the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} Amendments of which Justice Kennedy does not clearly specify, perhaps purposefully to the chagrin of Justice Scalia, what is discernible is once more liberalism’s preference of withdrawing State regulation—federal or state—in favor of individual rights to freely contract is vindicated.

Further, as noted in previous cases,\textsuperscript{283} at stake is not only a State’s denial of an individual’s right to contract with another individual, but also her ability to contract with the vendors, merchants and proprietors involved in goods and services attendant to formally wedded couples. The vast economic incentives and advantages enmeshed in the American marriage contract have unsurprisingly become the basis for some conservative support for permitting same-sex marriage.\textsuperscript{284}

**CONCLUSION: Out of Many, One**

Rogers Smith’s Multiple Traditions thesis persuasively characterizes American political culture as a historical blend of liberal, illiberal ascription based on race and sex, and to a lesser extent, republican traditions. The Supreme Court’s application of the Fourteenth Amendment to civil rights decisions has largely illustrated these competing ideologies. While evidence of each political theory can be found in the Court’s civil rights’ jurisprudence, some more heavily than others depending on the period, liberalism is virtually omnipresent. While it competed against virulent strands of American ascription at the country’s inception into the twentieth century and a nominal egalitarian revolution during the Warren Court, a resurgent neo-liberalism in the wake of the Civil

\textsuperscript{282} *Id.* at 28.
\textsuperscript{283} *See again Romer v. Evans.*
\textsuperscript{284} *See e.g.* David Brooks
Rights Movement saw a near singular and dispositive preference for liberal notions of individual rights and de-regulation take hold.

The Court’s neo-liberal fixation on an atomized colorblind intent-over-impact approach in the present leaves the steep hierarchies of the past intact. Discrete minorities that were victims of illiberal animosity toward entire groups in the past are now viewed by neo-liberalism as individuals expected to achieve the same results under the guise of an equal opportunity scrubbed of the past. While neo-liberalism dominates at the Court, vestiges of illiberal Americanism in race and sex along with different manifestations that the Court is beginning to grapple with more and more remain. Indiscrete groups, homosexuals in particular, may be able to call on the Court’s inclination toward individual rights and de-regulation to strike down illiberal State homophobia. While the neo-liberal American State abdicates its duty to remediate the damage its illiberal tradition has done to its discrete groups, a hands-off equal opportunity approach could be what indiscrete groups such as homosexuals need to move toward full equality.