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Politics as Victimhood, Victimhood as Politics

Abstract: The victim has become among the most important identity positions in American politics. Victimhood is now a pivotal means by which individuals and groups see themselves and constitute themselves as political actors. Indeed, victimhood seems to have become a status that must be established before political claims can be advanced. Victimhood embodies the assertion that an individual or group has suffered wrongs that must be requited. What seems new is that wounded groups assert a self-righteous claim that they stand for something larger than their particular injury. The article explores how and why victimhood has become such a powerful theme in American politics. It suggests that victimhood as politics emerged from the contentious politics of the 1960s, specifically the civil rights movement and its aftermath. Key factors include the reaction to the minority rights and women's movements, as well as internal dynamics *within* the rights movements.

Keywords: Victimhood, civil rights, group rights, U.S. politics, identity politics

> The 2009 vilification of the entire financial-services industry by the political powers went beyond the pale and struck at the self-image of the leaders of Wall Street.
> —Brad Hintz, former chief financial officer of Lehman Brothers

> There will be persecution time and time again against those people who disagree with the prevailing view that sodomy should be the law of the land and should be practiced openly and without any restraints whatsoever.
> —Pat Robertson, chairman of the Christian Broadcasting Network (September 1, 2015)

Obama-era progressives view white supremacy as something awful that happened in the past and the historical vestiges of which still afflict black people today. They believe we need policies—though not race-specific policies—that address the affliction. I view white supremacy as one of the central organizing forces in American life, whose vestiges and practices afflicted black people in the past, continue to afflict black people today, and will likely afflict black people until this country passes into the dust.

—Ta-Nehisi Coates, "Black Pathology and the Closing of the Progressive Mind," *The Atlantic* (March 21, 2014)

I was told left and right, "You are going to get so clobbered in the press. You are just going to get beat up, and chewed up, and spit out." And, like you all, I'm still standing. You know, they [the political establishment] stomp on our neck, and then they tell us, "Just chill, okay just relax."

—Sarah Palin, speech endorsing Donald Trump for President of the United States (January 19, 2016)

I

The victim has become among the most important identity positions in American politics. Victimhood is now a pivotal means by which individuals and groups see themselves and constitute themselves as political actors. Indeed, victimhood seems to have become a status that must be established before political claims can be advanced.

Victimhood embodies the declaration that a group or individual has suffered wrongs that must be requited. By its nature, victimhood is a claim on justice; victim status authorizes an aggrieved party to proclaim injury and demand recognition and reparation. Look again at the epigraphs at the beginning of this article. The wound of being acted upon by powerful, hostile forces has become a form of identification now performed by virtually all comers. Wall Street bankers see themselves as misjudged victims of fatuous, irresponsible anticapitalist reformers; evangelical Christians understand themselves as victims of an insolent, triumphant secular humanism; African Americans see themselves as victims of unrelenting, eternal white racism; Tea Party adherents and Trump supporters view themselves as victims of big government and smug self-serving elites. These examples hardly exhaust contemporary

claims of victimhood. Transgendered people see themselves as victims of biological norming; many straight people see themselves as victims of the gay activist agenda. The list could go on, for the performance of victimhood is how we now do politics.

The victim leitmotif goes something like this: we (whichever group that may be) are a beleaguered minority—perhaps even the virtuous majority—but nonetheless the victim of some broad social evil, some malevolent elite, some institutional authority that unfairly shapes or negatively determines our life-chances. American history is replete with winners and losers—victimizers, if you will, and victims. What feels new is the ubiquity of the claim of being a victim and the self-righteous assertion that victimized groups stand not simply for their own wounds and innocence, but for something larger. They stand for the promise of America (or "making it great again"), or the mission to secure fundamental justice, or some other grand calling. The Tea Party, for example, stands for the restoration of America to its original compact of liberty. These are rather bold claims. Where do they come from? How did the victimhood trope become such a feature of American politics?

II

This article suggests that victimhood as a primary feature of American political life emerged from the contentious politics of the 1960s, specifically the civil rights movement and its aftermath. The victim is an old and historically mutable category, and a distinction between two forms of victimhood needs to be drawn at the outset. Recall that white Southerners considered themselves victims of Northern aggression during the Civil War and the objects of the tyranny of Reconstruction afterward. In its efforts to deny the Armenian genocide, the Turkish state depicted Turks as the historical victims both of murderous Armenians and the depredations of the imperial powers. Other examples abound. Germans saw themselves as victims of the harsh terms of the Treaty of Versailles at the conclusion of World War I. Enough time has passed and now Germans call attention to their suffering in World War II—they, too, were victims of the war, casualties of Hitler's brutal leadership.

This form of victimhood—let us call it a state-centered or national form—is different from the group form of contemporary victimhood we observe in current U.S. politics and culture (and elsewhere, but that is beyond the scope of this article). The historian Carolyn Dean locates the state- or nation-centered form of victimhood in the discourses of memory and trauma that revolve around the patriotic and sacrificial rites of mourning for soldiers.

Soldiers were victims on behalf of the nation. Their victimhood is redemptive, for themselves and, more important, for the nation.[1] Memories, fictionalized or real, of shared victimhood or trauma formed the basis of much nineteenth-century nationalism.[2]

Our contemporary group form of victimhood in America hails from different sources (although not, perhaps, different psychological comforts). In the abstract, it is closer to what Friedrich Nietzsche spoke of as resentment, or *ressentiment* as he labeled it in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Writing on the legacy of Western religious thought on morals, Nietzsche maintained that Judaism and Christianity promoted a resentful affect that sharply reorganized the social world. Suffering became constitutive of self-understanding and produced a moral code validating hatred of the evil enemies who caused the suffering. In Nietzsche's view, *ressentiment* is a generalizable cultural/psychological phenomenon. The resentful are no longer actors per se; rather, they are defined passively by their victimhood. They become active only in their hatred of their purported oppressors. Their hatred is a mark of their moral goodness.[3]

In contemporary American political culture, resentment captures the emotion of feeling wounded, of we and ours being oppressed or excluded or marginalized or stigmatized; and that unworthy others are unjustly favored over our deserving selves.[4] Resentment is the feeling, victimhood the status.

Beyond Nietzsche's abstract cultural observation, the idea of group victimhood first requires the widespread acceptance of the idea of rights that pertain to all, and the sense of collective obligation to recognize (if not actually fulfill) those rights. To recognize someone as a victim of injustice is to acknowledge that person as morally entitled to social concern, as a subject invested with inherent human dignity. The civil rights movement, with its struggle for the full inclusion of African Americans into the social contract, propelled the collective sense of obligation to recognize the rights of all. Its success set in motion the broader minority and women's rights revolution of the 1960s.

"Full inclusion in the social contract," as worded above, is an older way of comprehending the struggle for rights, and for the most part captures the way the civil rights movement understood what it was striving for at that time. As the minority rights and women's movements evolved from the successes of the civil rights movement, a newer way to understand those ambitions articulated a "politics of recognition." Now identified with multiculturalism, the politics of recognition denotes the struggles on the part of all individuals, particularly the disempowered or subordinated, to be considered free and

equal persons—not just abstractly before the law, but substantively, as valued participants in the culture, as well.[5]

Charles Taylor reminds us that forms of equal recognition have been essential to democratic culture ever since the collapse of the social hierarchies that served as the basis of status-derived honor. The politics of equal dignity rests on the notion (articulated most fully by Kant) that what commands respect is each human's potential as an autonomous, rational agent, capable of directing his or her life through principles. But we are not preformed persons, insists Taylor; we are constituted by recognition, in interaction with others. Individual identities are formed in groups, in communities, in particular cultures. The pursuit of equal dignity requires a democratic society to protect the cultural milieu in which different (and especially subordinate) individuals are formed. Thus recognition, born of the politics of liberal universalism and the concept of equal human dignity, demands the acceptance of specific aspects of identities that are neglected or demeaned by the dominant value and norm system of a society.[6]

That's the theory. In lived history, Taylor's "democratic culture" merely set the stage; recognition had to be won through political struggle, for which the civil rights movement established the successful template.[7] The success of the rights revolution launched its countermovement. The central component of the politics of victimhood in contemporary American culture is the *reaction* or backlash to the minority rights and women's revolution. But the origins of the politics of victimhood also are found in the dynamics *within* the rights movements. For a key element of those movements' demand for rights is the insistence on the recognition of their history of subordination, disempowerment, and disrespect—in other words, their historical status as victims. In the process of so insisting, the subordinated effectively empower themselves; they become central actors in their own emancipation.[8] Their suffering and its acknowledgment by the general culture are crucial steps in the overall evolution of the politics of victimhood.

III

One way to get at the phenomenon of contemporary victimhood is to examine the criticism of it. The arrival of victimhood as an emblematic politics in contemporary America has elicited considerable public scorn. For over three decades now, social commentators mainly, but not exclusively on the political right, have criticized the rhetoric and performance of victim politics. Victimhood, they charge, is a way of relieving an individual of personal accountability.

Critics bemoan how individuals now dodge responsibility for their actions by invoking some broad social ill—be it racism, sexism, neglectful parents, addiction and illness, the sway of advertising, what have you—as the source of their bad behavior or personal shortcomings. A culture of complaint has arisen since the 1960s, lament these observers, a culture that not only exculpates oneself from blame but also enables the projection of fault and guilt onto others. As Charles Sykes, Milwaukee radio talk-show host and author of several works exploring American culture, put it in a noted 1992 book, *A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character*, "The new culture reflects a readiness not merely to feel sorry for oneself but to wield one's resentments as weapons of social advantage and to regard deficiencies as entitlements to society's deference."[9]

In Sykes's and fellow critics' view, American culture has changed from one characterized by self-reliance to one in which everyone else is to blame. Some of the examples they cite as evidence of this shift are over-the-top, such as San Francisco Supervisor Dan White's "Twinkie defense" to account for his murder of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk in 1978; the distraught young man who sued his mother and father for "parental malpractice"; the woman who successfully sued McDonalds for her coffee being too hot. These examples, which achieved broad media notoriety, operate by a process we might label theory by caricature. Their aim is to effect indignation in the name of common sense and to galvanize the public shaming of unworthy self-anointed victims.

Over-the-top as they might be, such examples also serve to underscore the purported reasons for the broad cultural change bound up in the phenomenon of victimhood. Sykes is perhaps the most suggestive in this regard. He discusses the expectation since the 1960s of a *right* to happiness. Tied to that expectation is the triumph of the ethos of the therapeutic, in which everyone suffers from some socially induced psychological malady that prevents the realization of happiness (but can be treated by duly trained experts or assuaged by some government entitlement program). Finally, Sykes notes—and condemns—the presumed explosion of litigation through which the forlorn rights-bearing self seeks compensation for life's mundane disappointments.[10]

We have become, in the title of Sykes's book, "a nation of victims." As politics are practiced today, being a victim perversely confers advantages and benefits. The wielding of "one's resentments as weapons of social advantage," invoking again Sykes's phrase, secures results. Claims of victimhood are used for material advantage and for moral positioning in political clashes. Sykes is just one of scores of critics who warn of the proliferation of groups and

individuals who use their victim status to justify special privileges and/or excuse everything from criminal misconduct to their own personal failings. Dinesh D'Souza, author of the 1991 attention-grabbing *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, has made a career reviling those who deploy group oppressions to impose codes of acceptable speech and behavior on everyone else. Political correctness, for D'Souza, *is* the politics of victimhood.[11]

A central feature of the critique of victimhood is the dubious psychological appraisal: self-anointed victims are said to cling to their victim status in order to protect their innocence and relieve themselves of that which they fear. The defense of their innocence encourages both a personally damaging passive-aggressive dependence and a socially destructive dynamic of moral self-righteousness more generally. Shelby Steele, an African American scholar who is highly critical of the adverse psychological effects of affirmative-action policies, is perhaps the exemplar of this particular mode of analysis.[12]

There's something to this. No doubt most of us have come across some outlandish claim that ascribes culpability to some one or some thing other than the actual perpetrator, or that excuses bad behavior by pointing to some distant, abstract social force. Some of us have found ourselves chastised for exhibiting linguistic insensitivity, conscious or otherwise, toward some disfavored group. D'Souza *did* capture an element of the self-righteous posturing in how race, class, gender, and sexual identity politics sometimes play out on American college campuses. The critics are clearly onto a broad cultural phenomenon that sometimes has troubling features. There is some reason for dismay about these developments.

The irony is that even as conservative critics deplore the politics of victimhood, and reproach those whom they believe play the "victim card," they too engage in the exercise and claim the status of victim even as they disavow doing so—which only underscores how powerful and defining the dynamic of victimhood politics really is. D'Souza, for example, convicted of violating campaign finance laws in 2014, insisted that he was a victim of President Obama's discriminatory politics.[13] In her endorsement of Donald Trump for President in the 2016 Republican primaries, Sarah Palin revealed her entire political persona to be one of aggressive self-pity, a victim of the political establishment and the press.[14] Trump himself, confronted with the charge that his campaign manager had grabbed and shoved a reporter at a campaign event, countered with the insistence that *he* was the real victim of the incident.[15] Fox News host Bill O'Reilly, who incessantly rebukes those he accuses of ducking personal responsibility, responded to revelations of his extensive history as a sexual harasser that he was the target of partisan political attacks.[16]

This list goes on. Like Palin or Trump or O'Reilly, the Tea Party and many Trump voters engage in precisely the same politics of victimhood that they condemn. It's just that the latter—the hard-working, moral, tax-paying, noble, and innocent stalwarts of America—see themselves as *true* victims.[17]

The concept of true victimhood comes from an insightful book by the political scientist Alyson Cole. *The Cult of True Victimhood: From the War on Welfare to the War on Terror* shows how the critique of victimhood and the shaming of victims emerged as dominant features of conservative cultural commentary dating from the early 1990s.[18] Most of the victim-shaming was of individuals and groups that historically had been on the short end with regard to wealth, success, and power. It seems obvious that the critique of victimhood was primarily directed at the heritage of social reform and democratic openness of the 1960s. But the success of the politics of victimhood means that *all* now practice it, even as it elicits harsh condemnation. How did this come about?

IV

For much of American history, the idea of the free agent, standing on the foundation of political individualism, fed by the Protestant ethic and reinforced by the occasional realities of the Horatio Alger mobility parable, dominated American thought. After World War II, the social scientific (sociology in particular) study of the influence of structure and the power of institutions came to challenge the reigning ideology of individualism. This kind of social science thinking marked a significant break with free-agency individualism. It tended to root social problems not in individuals per se, but in structures and institutions. In this analytical framework, power was understood as a social relationship operating coercively in and through various institutions of social interaction: the economy, the workplace, the school, the home, the ballot box, law enforcement.

Seeing power in this social scientific way meant both a recognition that individual/group problems were intimately intertwined with institutions and how power coursed through them, and that such problems could be addressed through public policy.[19] In this reckoning, the problems of African Americans, to alight on perhaps the most important historical example, were due not to individual deficits or cultural/racial pathology, but rather to white oppression and systemic discrimination in education, housing, policing, and employment. Social science analysis posited afflicted groups, in complicated ways, as constituted and operated upon by forces larger than themselves.[20]

The *critique* of victimhood is thus in many respects a general rejection of the social science analysis of structures, institutions, and power. As we have seen, critics condemn the culture of victimhood as a corruption of long-standing American values of self-reliance and personal responsibility. The critics endeavor to restore, for lack of a better term, methodological individualism: individuals make themselves, choose (or fail) to seize their opportunities, and are responsible for their failures. But the critique of victimhood is historically specific as well. It embodies the rejection of the minority rights and women's revolution set in motion by the civil rights movement.

Here the general and the specific are bound up with each other. The rights revolution conceptualized injustice in social scientific ways and in so doing helped create political and legal mechanisms to recognize and rectify structurally rooted injustice. For conservatives, these political and legal mechanisms (in addition to the cultural shift that accompanied them) *have become* the problem. Indeed, in an astonishing twist that resurrects the ideology of individualism, for conservatives the historical wellspring of victimhood is also the contemporary source of African American pathology. That is to say, the problems of the African American community arise not from slavery or the caste system produced by racial discrimination, declare conservative critics, rather they derive from the liberal state and specifically the programs inaugurated by President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. In its (misguided) effort to refashion the social structure, the critics aver, the liberal state undermines the fundamental American principle of individual merit and offers, instead, dependency. This is the argument of, for example, Charles Murray's 1984 *Losing Ground*, and it is reiterated endlessly in contemporary conservative opinion.[21]

Critics such as Sykes and Steele suggest that the rise of victimhood was in part attributable to a shift in discourse in the civil rights movement from equality to black power. The transformation of protest rooted in the rhetoric of self-sacrifice and the pursuit of equal opportunity to one of racial indictment and demand for reparations (in crude form, the difference between Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X) is crucial in the emergence of the discourse of victimhood, say the critics.

V

Let us trace the origins of victimhood and its critique in a more empirical manner. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 established the legal framework for the extension of rights to African Americans and set in motion the minority rights revolution beyond black people in the decade following. All major

pieces of legislation require institutions—typically, government agencies—to bring specificity to broad legislative mandates and put in place the procedures to implement them. The Civil Rights Act created institutional loci to enforce the rights of African Americans. In the area of employment (governed by Title VII of the act), these included the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC), the Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), and the Office for Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Charged with fighting discrimination against African Americans and remedying past discrimination in employment, the EEOC was faced straightaway with complaints regarding hiring and workplace discrimination. Congress had not given the agency cease-and-desist powers. The EEOC found itself forced to develop a classification framework and procedures to assess complaints.[22]

To this end, the commission developed form EEO-1, a questionnaire obliging employers to send information on the racial makeup of their workforces. Such data would allow the agency to focus attention on the most serious discriminators, to wit, employers who hired almost no African Americans. The EEOC would look at the statistical breakdown of employment by race in a geographic area; it would require an explanation from employers if the data showed significant underemployment of blacks in a company's workforce. Notice was thereby served: if employers wanted to avoid problematic encounters with the federal government, they would be wise to hire qualified black workers in numbers that approximated their percentage of the local population. The Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs came up with similar pragmatic procedures with regard to government-contracted construction projects.

The key to John Skrentny's account in *The Minority Rights Revolution* is that minority classification was applied, almost as a bureaucratic matter of course, and without much outside social movement pressure (indeed, he claims, sometimes none at all), to Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. These were the "racial" categories the EEOC recognized. EEO-1 compiled statistics on these, and only these, groups. If spearheaded by black social movement activism, the expansion of minority rights beyond African Americans was not primarily the result of social movement activity. Rather, the expansion of rights was a project led by the establishment: presidents, Congress, government bureaucracies, and the courts, and was bipartisan across the two dominant political parties.

The impetus of declaring that certain groups were "minorities," and extending rights to them, came especially from the people who worked at

the agencies tasked with enforcing civil rights legislation. Their paradigmatic move was to apply a metric of disadvantage or discrimination as analogous to that of African Americans. The determination of such classification was not based on exacting study but on the simple intuitive prototype of groups and their histories in the United States. Later, women and the disabled were successful at calling upon this logic. White ethnics and gays were not.

Affirmative action, the policy that came out of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, seemingly departed from classical liberal, individual-based, difference-blind principles. It embraced an approach that divided the population in a reform-minded way into majority and minorities, historically privileged and historically disadvantaged. The logic of disadvantage reflected the considered judgment that American society had systematically embedded power and advantage in its laws, institutions, practices, and norms particularly on behalf of the original demo-graphically defined members of the social contract: white, male Protestant prop-erty owners. That systematic embeddedness of privilege persisted over time. What affirmative action did was to recognize, and reinforce, an already emerging ethos of difference that had wafted into American domestic politics. American culture had long been expected to operate according to the melting pot metaphor, according to which different groups eventually would assimilate into the civic republican, but underneath, normative WASP, culture. African Americans in particular, by virtue of the history of slavery and stigmatized skin color, were not assimilated, underscoring the defectiveness of the melting pot metaphor.

EEO-based affirmative action secured results, increasing black employment in some sectors and securing contracts for black-owned firms in government contracts.[23] The dynamic was quickly recognized. Affirmative action contributed to a mutually reinforcing dynamic of the politics of difference and government-bestowed benefits. Politics in part became the performance or assertion of historical group disadvantage. By the mid-1970s, even ethnic groups that his-torically had become "white" and had largely assimilated began to assert their difference via ethnic identities of national heritage. Indeed, they tried to become included in the EEOC's minority classification system.

White ethnics, particularly working-class Catholics, seeing black gains and anxious about their neighborhoods and workplaces, started revising the long-functioning melting pot discourse and lived assimilative practice in favor of resuscitating their ethnic heritages, languages, and customs. "Ethnicity" was embraced. In effect, in the wake of the success of the minority rights rev-olution, white ethnics endeavored to assert minority status. They wanted not just to ensure their piece of the pie; they wanted recognition as well. That Irish and eastern/southern European Americans had been victim to WASP culture,

with the expectation that they would melt into that culture, was the explicit assertion of Michael Novak's noteworthy 1972 book, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics*.[24] In Novak's formulation, the melting pot expectations within which ethnic Catholics lived and strived was a form of historical oppression. The historically victimized nature of their accommodation to WASP culture justified their claims before government.

White ethnics tried but could not get included in the EEO minority classification, largely because they were seen as not having met the discrimination threshold—they hadn't suffered enough—and because they were seen as having multiple, sometimes conflicting, identities. Moreover, their assertion of ethnic identity came late, after having more or less made peace with cultural accommodation.[25] When white ethnics were not successful in securing entree into the newly created institutionalized avenues of recognition and opportunity, they returned to the ideology of difference-blind legalism. They charged that they were being victimized by government policies that provided unfair advantages to African Americans and other designated minorities—thus violating universalistic, color-blind norms of individual merit. The rejoinder to the policies of racial redress was the condemnation of victimhood while asserting true victimhood.[26]

Let us bring the strands of this analysis together. The end of the period of the minority rights revolution—the mid-1970s—coincided with the end of the long postwar triumph of Cold War liberalism, that combination of anticommunism in foreign policy and state intervention in the domestic arena. At the broad level, the shift in intellectual preoccupation matched a corresponding shift in politics. The 1965–75 minority rights revolution rested upon an understanding of power that was fundamentally institutionally based, and thus was best captured by sociology. By the mid-1970s, the sociological understanding of power was challenged, if not replaced by, an individualistic, essentially economics-based conception of power: social life consisted of the play of individual preferences in the free competition between individual actors with individual capacities. This, in short, is what has been called neoliberalism, characterized by the return of methodological individualism. In this triumphant neoliberal worldview, almost all human activity is understood in purely economic terms. In the neoliberal worldview, it is state intervention that distorts the natural play of individual preferences and deforms the reward of individual merit.

After a decade or more of preoccupation with equality, by the mid-1970s the conceptual ballast shifted back to individual liberty. In this broad conceptual shift, the minority rights revolution—and almost all legislation and policy associated with it—came to be denuded of its public, institutional,

group-oriented reform impetus. The notion of minority rights as the embodi-
ment of the expansion of the social contract largely evaporated. Rather, affir-
mative action and like-minded policies were seen as the triumph of illegitimate
clientelist politics, entailing the cynical use of government for group advan-
tage. Conservatives spoke of a self-serving alliance between minorities and
the new class of liberal elites in and out of government (a trope that has gathered
great potency in conservative intellectual circles since then).[27] The extent to
which the politics of group redress took place through government bureau-
cracies and especially the courts, rather than in the political arena, may have
contributed to conservative backlash.[28]

In short, as white men especially began to lose some of their systemic
privileges in the wake of the minority rights and women's revolution, they
condemned the revolution as a politics of victimhood. And in this critique of
victimhood came the reattribution of black pathology: the state's welfarism
undermined individual self-reliance. Moreover, those programs made everyone
else the victims of a government engaged in "social engineering."

Foremost in the pantheon of true victims were those individuals who had
been pushed aside or cut in front of, castigated, censored, and punished in
other ways by affirmative action and minority preferences, political correctness,
hate-speech codes, and similar manifestations of injurious victim politics.
These individuals—often members of the groups that constituted the norm of
American society, and often conservatives—were the victims of victimhood.[29]
As Alyson Cole explains, their anguish was especially poignant because it
presumably exposed the sinister forces in American society that hid behind
the liberal mask of tolerance, inclusion, and equality.[30] Classifications and
remedies aimed at securing equality and nondiscrimination were thus not
only flipped, but swirled in a strange brew of antistatism and moral righ-
teousness.[31] The shift to the language of color-blindness, that is, the common,
level playing field of individual action, based on merit, was fully consonant
with the new neoliberal view of power.

VI

For all of the difficulties with affirmative action when the policy is imple-
mented on the ground, the analytical framework of the critique of victim-
hood rests on a particular kind of historical amnesia. The classifications and
remedies set in motion by the minority rights revolution and trashed by
critics as clientelist were in principle not much different from the raft of generally
lauded public policies enacted during the New Deal. In *When Affirmative*

Action Was White, Ira Katznelson has shown that the New Deal authorized an essentially affirmative action system for whites. During the 1930s the various New Deal relief programs pumped some $2 billion into the American South (a time when that was a significant amount of money). But the benefits of these programs were highly skewed against blacks, largely because the administration of these programs was controlled by local functionaries committed to the maintenance of Jim Crow and the system of white supremacy. The Social Security Act of 1935, which provided for old-age pensions, benefits for survivors, unemployment compensation, and assistance for the poor, specifically excluded farmers, domestic servants, and home workers—job classifications that encompassed most African Americans at the time.[32] The effect of these exclusions was not just limited to African Americans. Immigrant minorities that worked the "factories in the fields" in California for dismal wages and under terrible working conditions were cut out of consideration as well.[33] The Social Security occupational exclusions were not eliminated until 1954.

Other programs, such as Aid to Dependent Children and GI Bill benefits and subsidies, also reflected racial skewing to the benefit of whites and detriment of blacks and other minorities. The National Labor Relations Act, which extended the right to organize and collectively bargain, excluded agricultural and domestic workers from its provisions. The reason for this system of discrimination by design was the lock that southern Democrats held on Congress and the dependence of the national Democratic Party on the solid South to enact liberal legislation. The effective exclusion of minorities from these programs meant that whites (especially southern whites) were accorded, in Katznelson's words, "a privileged access to the political order."[34]

Add to this the suite of largely invisible federal policies since the New Deal that provide incentives, subsidies, or payments to private organizations and households, which Suzanne Mettler refers to as the "submerged state." Functioning beneath the surface of market institutions and hidden in the tax code, these benefits typically accrue disproportionately to the wealthy and to privileged industries. They are taken for granted and naturalized, essentially invisible.[35] What *are* visible are efforts that endeavor to alter those invisible benefits or, more salient for this article, that attempt to help particular, previously disadvantaged, constituencies. Such visible policy efforts engender opposition and resentment. Policies designed to address systemic privilege are perceived as engaging in unwarranted entitlement that violates the traditional presumed ethic of individual merit, hard work, and color-blindness.[36] The critique of victimhood shifts the debate from the structures of power that inscribe inequality to the question of personal character.

The amnesia of the white New Deal and the invisibility of structurally submerged benefits anchored the conservative conviction that the present's dues to the past had already been fully paid. The assertion of true victimhood conveys a whiff of Nietzsche's critique of Christianity, as if establishing one's status as a true victim is a baptism that washes away original sin. But political assertions of victim status must be more than the *feeling* of resentment; they require demonstrable grievance or miscarriage of justice, which in turn require rational claims. Because of the element of rationality, not all claims to victimhood are legitimate.[37]

VII

White reaction is a crucial strand in the construction of the contemporary politics of victimhood, but it is not the only one. Another component of the general cultural authorization to make claims on the basis of victim status emerged in the internal dynamics of the minority and women's movements. As suggested earlier, this may be inherent in the politics of recognition, but it does not describe the early civil rights movement. The question is whether a victim ethos arose in the discourse of protest and struggle as the civil rights movement shifted from victories in the South to tackle institutional racism and poverty in the North. Under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the movement practiced an ethic of religiously inflected sacrifice and nonviolent civil disobedience in the pursuit of justice. Nonviolence constituted both an internal organizational and personal moral discipline, and a coercive political strategy designed to force America live up to its social contract and include its African American citizens in the God-given blessings of freedom.[38] Did that ethos change?

If there is any group in America that can legitimately claim the status of victim, it is African Americans. Notwithstanding, King and his longtime adviser, Bayard Rustin, vigorously resisted the temptation to define black people simply as victims of white oppression. Instead they sought to encourage initiative, self-reliance, and responsibility. They believed that people who thought of themselves as victims were drained of self-respect and either remained helplessly passive or became bitter, self-righteous, and violent.[39] In "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," King wrote:

> I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of

oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."[40]

Reinhold Niebuhr, the mid-twentieth-century theologian whose thinking heavily influenced King, had warned that victimhood as politics creates an impossible political dynamic. Rooted in resentment, victimhood instills an attitude of moral superiority. Confronted by self-righteous moral superiority, the opponent has no honorable place to move. If opposition to an unjust system leads to personal insults of the system's representatives and beneficiaries, it is felt as an unjust accusation. The opponent generates his or her own resentment and feelings of injustice. For Niebuhr, although the powerful would never surrender their power without a struggle, and the pursuit of justice requires coercion, the politics of victimhood simply creates an endless cycle of injustice.[41]

Drawing on Niebuhr, the historian Christopher Lasch argued that in order to challenge the claim to natural predominance asserted by its white segregationist foes, the civil rights movement had to avoid taking on an ethos of moral superiority. Instead, work on behalf of social justice required the cultivation of hope (distinct from liberalism's optimism) and the habit of perpetual repentance. In this way, the redemptive meaning of suffering could overcome resentment. On a pragmatic level, nonviolence robs the opponent of the moral conceit by which he identifies his interests with the peace and order of society.[42] The civil rights movement succeeded, in Lasch's view, because nonviolent resistance in the South embodied what Niebuhr had labeled the "spiritual discipline against resentment." The movement, in Lasch's words, "renounce[d] the privileged status of victims."[43] In so doing, argued Bayard Rustin, blacks achieved a sense of dignity, a feeling of worth that derived from the ennobling nature of their struggle.[44]

We should beware the tendency of many whites *now* to appropriate and lionize King in what must be understood as a politically inspired effort to distinguish the "good" civil rights movement of history from bad-faith contemporary black activism.[45] Notwithstanding, the question about victimhood is a legitimate one. Rustin worried that resentment and victimhood would take hold of the civil rights movement as it transitioned from its success in securing the right to vote and the integration of public accommodations in the South. His worry surfaced when the movement faced the more difficult struggle to solve the problems of employment, housing, education—in his words, "to wrest human and economic rights out of the basic contradictions of American society."[46]

In contrast to the easier, "moral," period of civil rights in the South, Rustin saw this new period of struggle as a harder "political" slog. It required adjusting to the realities of black minority status in a political democracy defined by dominant interest groups competing in a complex field of institutional power, and developing an economic strategy that would unite blacks and whites in a new majority. Rustin saw the rising popularity of black separatism and black power as a no-win strategy, doomed to failure. In place of a strategy to reconstruct the institutions that mold collective sentiments and life-chances, they substituted militancy. But a militancy of a specific kind, built on resentment and violence. "They seek to change white hearts—by traumatizing them," Rustin wrote. "Frequently abetted by white self-flagellants, they may gleefully applaud (though not really agreeing with) Malcolm X because, while they admit he has no program, they think he can frighten white people into doing the right thing."[47] The trouble with this reasoning, Rustin argued, "is that it fails to recognize that fear is more likely to bring hostility to the surface than respect."[48]

As the civil rights movement went north, bereft of the institutional strength of the southern black church and a regional way of life that sustained the spiritual resources of courage, tenacity, forgiveness, and hope, Lasch suggests that King increasingly found himself having to appeal to a common feeling of marginality. King no longer addressed a constituency that cared to hear about self-help, the dignity of labor, the importance of strong families, and the healing power of *agape*. The civil rights efforts in Chicago in 1965–66 had pretty much been a disaster.[49] The outcast alliance assembled for the Poor People's Campaign march on Washington in 1968, for example, could be held together only by a common feeling of marginality. As sufferers of racism, exploitation, and neglect, King now argued, outcast groups had a right to compensatory treatment. They were victims.[50]

VIII

Another strand in the genealogy of the politics of victimhood was the internal splintering that played out in the politics of many of the identity groups emerging from the 1960s. This was perhaps most revealing in the women's movement, in large part because feminist theories of power and knowledge, developed in the effort to fight patriarchy, gave inadvertent ballast to identity-based factionalism and the politics of victimhood.

Against the traditional epistemological assumption that a general, universal, and abstract account of knowledge is possible, feminist standpoint theory claimed that knowledge is fundamentally socially situated. Indeed, marginalized groups are situated in ways that allow them to be aware of how power actually works with far more insight than those who are not marginalized. Feminist standpoint theory derived in large part from the feminist appropriation of Karl Marx's critique of capitalism. Marx maintained that because of its location within the division of labor as the exploited producer of capital, the proletariat understood the contradictions of capitalism most intimately and was thus uniquely positioned to overthrow the capitalist system. Social location shapes not only the way we understand the world, but also the ways in which the world is presented to us via concrete experience.[51]

Women, socially subordinate to men, are uniquely positioned to understand the system of patriarchy. Like the Marxist debate on whether a class is only constituted when it becomes conscious of itself, the feminist "standpoint" is not given; it is an achieved collective identity through the experience of political struggle. Feminist standpoint theory, then, challenged male dominance both as practices and the embedded nature of sexist practices in institutions, and as a way of knowing through collective political experience—that is, as an epistemology.[52] Radical feminism insisted that gender-based differences in experiences and life circumstances are fundamental. Differences in the opportunities to exercise individual liberties must be discussed in public debates about the appropriate interpretation of needs.[53]

In so doing, by its internal logic standpoint theory established a politics of knowledge based on a socially located politics of difference, and tended to privilege the groups understood to be the most marginalized. Standpoint theory theorized what often ensued in the women's movement in practice. The movement experienced battles over who got to speak, and who could speak for whom. Could white middle-class feminists speak for those women who occupied fundamentally different social locations and thus have fundamentally

different experiences of power? Whose experience was most pertinent? Whose voice was most legitimate?

The concept of intersectionality addressed these issues. Oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation were understood as intersecting, mutually constructing systems of power. Those at the intersections of the oppressive machinery of power—for example, women *and* racial minority, women *and* lesbian, women *and* poverty, women *and* non-Western—experience the world differently, experience power more acutely, and occupy different standpoints from which to speak.[54] As standpoint theory and its intersectionality addendum played out in feminist politics, the dynamic sometimes devolved into one in which the voice deemed most legitimate came from the intersectional splinter that was judged the most oppressed. In effect, the dynamic was who was the most compelling victim.

IX

In the effort to achieve justice for those who historically had been excluded from the American social contract, the social movements of the 1960s and beyond rejected the misleading universalism that underlay discourses such as the melting pot and color-blindness and abstract individual merit. The recognition of substantive difference concretized claims for justice. The insistence that the culture recognize difference and injustice was part of the self-emancipation of historically disadvantaged groups. However, this unleashed the political dynamic of victimhood that has become a double-edged sword in American political and cultural life. Victimhood has become the underlying currency of American politics. It is difficult to imagine American politics without it. Indeed, what would a non-victimhood-based politics look like?

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NOTES

1. Carolyn J. Dean, *Aversion and Erasure: The Fate of the Victim After the Holocaust* (Ithaca, 2010). See, of course, Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, which revered the soldiers who gave their lives so that the nation could live. http://www.gettysburg.com/bog/address.htm.

2. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1991); Ian Buruma, "The Joys and Perils of Victimhood,"

New York Review of Books (8 April 1999), http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1999/04/08/the-joys-and-perils-of-victimhood/.

3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* [1887], trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York, 1967). See also Jeremy Engels, *The Politics of Resentment: A Genealogy* (University Park, Pa., 2015).

4. See Katherine J. Cramer, *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker* (Chicago, 2016).

5. Nancy Fraser speaks of the central aim of social justice politics as "participatory parity." "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation," in *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, ed. Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, trans. Joel Golb, James Ingram, and Christiane Wilke (London, 2003).

6. Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition"* (Princeton, 1992). See also Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (New York, 1995).

7. In this respect, many theorists of the politics of recognition revisit Hegel's articulation of the struggle between master and slave as formulated in *The Phenomenology of Mind*.

8. The *ur*-text here may be Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York, 1963).

9. Charles J. Sykes, *A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character* (New York, 1992), 12. See also the denunciation of victimhood by the art critic Robert Hughes, *Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America* (New York, 1993). A parallel, but differently motivated critique of victimhood has been conducted within feminist scholarship. The most compelling presents the argument that, after struggling to achieve recognition and liberation, groups utilizing the state to protect them and other subordinated groups from discrimination can form "wounded attachments" to the injured identities so constructed. Referring to women in particular, Wendy Brown warns that they risk being inscribed as victims, weak and dependent on the state. "Wounded Attachments," in *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, 1995), 52–76.

10. Sykes, *A Nation of Victims*, 25–53. In a somewhat different but parallel vein, see Mary Ann Glendon, *Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse* (New York, 1991).

11. Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York, 1991).

12. Shelby Steele, *The Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America* (New York, 1990).

13. Bob Adelmann, "Dinesh D'Souza Pleads Guilty, Claims Selective Prosecution" (12 May 2014) http://lightfromtheright.com/2014/05/21/dinesh-dsouza-pleads-guilty-claims-selective-prosecution/.

14. https://et3.io/2016/01/sarah-palins-endorsement-of-donald-trump-for-president-the-full-text/.

15. "Victory press conference was over," Trump tweeted. "Why is she allowed to grab me and shout questions? Can I press charges?" Cited in http://reason.com/blog/2016/03/29/donald-trump-mystified-by-pen-responds-t.

16. "The worst part of my job is being a target for those who would harm me and my employer, the Fox News Channel." Emily Steele and Michael S. Schmidt, "Bill O'Reilly Thrives at Fox, Even as Harassment Settlements Add Up," *New York Times*, 1 April 2017.

17. For one recent ethnographic account, see Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (New York, 2016).

18. Alyson M. Cole, *The Cult of True Victimhood: From the War on Welfare to the War on Terror* (Stanford, 2007).

19. See Daniel T. Rodgers, *Age of Fracture* (Cambridge, Mass., 2011).

20. The social science perspective weighed heavily in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). In this instance, the perspective rested on a model of psychological damage—"stigma"—suffered by black people on account of white supremacy and segregation. The psychological ramifications of stigma due to segregation in education meant that separate could never be equal. The social science cited in *Brown* showed that black girls preferred white dolls, interpreted as an indicator of the black girls' ingrown sense of racial inferiority.

The relationship between racial politics and social science is complex, the contours of which change in different historical periods. In the period after World War II, liberal intellectuals used damage imagery to dispute widespread beliefs in the innate inferiority of African Americans. Slavery and racial segregation effected real damage on black lives. Operating within an integrationist worldview, liberals made psychologically based claims about the "impaired" black matriarchal family and the prevalence of black rage, including the rage of self-hatred, in the effort to induce race-conscious public policies. They attempted to do so by galvanizing the humanitarianism (and pity) of middle-class whites.

This included the (in)famous Moynihan Report. Written for the Department of Labor in 1965, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* noted very high rates of illegitimacy, welfare participation, and single-parent families among African Americans. Daniel Patrick Moynihan argued that the rise in single-mother families was not due simply to a paucity of jobs but rather to a destructive trend in ghetto culture that could be traced back to slavery, racism, and Jim Crow discrimination. These had produced a "tangle of pathology" of delinquency, joblessness, school failure, crime, and, most devastating, fatherlessness. To the extent that social policy provided welfare payments to families with fatherless dependent children, the policy added to the undermining of the basic socializing function of the family. Moynihan suspected that the risks were magnified in the case of African Americans due to the history of slavery and discrimination. "In essence," he wrote, "the Negro community has been forced into a matriarchal structure which, because it is so out of line with the rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole, and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male, and in consequence, on a great many Negro women as well." Blacks were *not* like every other immigrant group that had engaged in self-help to become, over generations, upwardly mobile. The ultimate aim (often forgotten in the contentious debate about the report) was to justify race-based preferences in the employment of black men.

By the late 1960s with the rise of black power discourse (echoing the earlier interwar period of black pride of the Harlem Renaissance), damage imagery was denounced as racist. The liberal depiction of blacks as damaged and thus in need of succor was seen as itself a form of paternalistic racism. What black power advocated instead was both the purge of the image of the oppressed imposed by the oppressor (following Fanon) and the introduction of a system of preference as reparation for past and current injustices. See Daryl Michael Scott, *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche* (Chapel Hill, 1997). Of course, direct reparations would constitute *group* preference—anathema to the always-powerful ideologies of individualism, difference-blindness, and personal merit.

21. Charles Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950–1980* (New York, 1984). Speaker of the House Paul Ryan regularly couches proposed cuts to government "entitlements" by warning of recipients' dependency. See, e.g., Arthur Delaney and Michael McAuliff, "Paul Ryan Wants 'Welfare Reform Round 2,'" *Huffington Post* (20 March 2012), at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/20/paul-ryan-welfare-reform_n_1368277.html.

22. John D. Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002).

23. Note that discrimination was not the basis for *all* affirmative action. According to Skrentny, policies to aid minority capitalists were animated also by the desire to halt urban black rioting in the 1960s.

24. Michael Novak, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics: Politics and Culture in the Seventies* (New York, 1972).

25. Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution*, 262–327.

26. See Thomas J. Sugrue and John D. Skrentny, "The White Ethnic Strategy," in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, ed. Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer (Cambridge, Mass., 2008), 177–92; Dennis A. Deslippe, "'Do Whites Have Rights?' White Detroit Policemen and 'Reverse Discrimination' Protests in the 1970s," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 3 (December 2004), 932–60. The failure of white ethnics to be included in affirmative action presented new political opportunities. President Richard Nixon used the affirmative-action mandate that federal construction projects reflect the racial composition of their localities to drive a wedge between historically white construction unions and the Democratic Party.

27. See, among others, Irving Kristol, *Two Cheers for Capitalism* (New York, 1978), 3–70.

28. A court-centered approach to progressive activism easily allows opponents to rebuke judges and bureaucrats as unaccountable elites. See Michael J. Klarman, *From the Closet to the Altar: Courts, Backlash, and the Struggle for Same-Sex Marriage* (New York, 2013).

29. The crime victims' rights movement is another manifestation of this general dynamic. The liberal effort to afford arrestees basic constitutional rights by the Warren Court sparked a reaction that they received more solicitousness than their victims—thus triggering the crime victims' movement. Here again, those who suffered from crime were seen as *true* victims. This move was more politically complicated, however, inasmuch as it was fed also by a feminist critique of how rape victims typically were treated. Notwithstanding the feminist angle, the main ideological thrust of the crime victims' rights movement was the righteous call for vengeance on behalf of the victims of crime.

30. Cole, *The Cult of True Victimhood*, 6.

31. Here I borrow the language of Wendy Brown, "Neoliberal Jurisprudence and Evangelical Christianity in *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*," unpublished talk to the London School of Economics (June 2015).

32. Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York, 2005).

33. Kathryn S. Olmsted, *Right Out of California: The 1930s and the Big Business Roots of Modern Conservatism* (New York, 2015).

34. Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*, 51.

35. Suzanne Mettler, *The Submerged State: How Invisible Government Policies Undermine American Democracy* (Chicago, 2011).

36. The late Justice Antonin Scalia perfectly articulated this logic in his comments from the bench in oral argument in Shelby County v. Holder (570 U.S. __, 2013), the case

that struck down the central part of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Addressing Solicitor General Donald Verrilli, Scalia said, "I think it [the absence of congressional votes against the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act] is attributable, very likely attributable, to a phenomenon that is called perpetuation of racial entitlement. It's been written about. Whenever a society adopts racial entitlements, it is very difficult to get out of them through the normal political processes." http://www.supremecourt.gov/oral_arguments/argument_transcripts/12-96.pdf (at 47). In this view, protecting the right to vote is equivalent to a racial entitlement.

37. For example, the resentful rural Wisconsinites who backed Governor Scott Walker were certain that they were the victims of massive inequities in the provision of state government programs and benefits. According to Katherine Cramer, the objective measures showed there was no basis for this conviction. *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker.*

38. Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (16 April 1963), http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html. See also David L. Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (Chapel Hill, 2004).

39. Bayard Rustin, *Down the Line: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago, 1971).

40. King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

41. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* [1932], (Louisville, 2001), 231–56.

42. Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York, 1991), 386–411.

43. Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, 248; Lasch, The One and Only Heaven, 378.

44. Bayard Rustin, *Strategies for Freedom: The Changing Patterns of Black Protest* (New York, 1976), 1.

45. This point is made forcefully by Brandon M. Terry, "MLK Now," *Boston Review* (9 January 2018).

46. Rustin, "The Lessons of the Long Hot Summer" [1967], in *Down the Line*, 197.

47. Rustin, "From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement" [1965], in *Down the Line*, 117.

48. Rustin, "'Black Power' and Coalition Politics" [1965], in *Down the Line*, 157.

49. David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York, 1986), 431–526.

50. Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven,* 401–9.

51. See Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989).

52. See Sandra Harding, ed., *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader* (New York, 2004).

53. Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Minneapolis, 1989).

54. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston, 1990); Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," 43 *Stanford Law Review* 1241–99 (1991); Barbara Ryan, ed., *Identity Politics in the Women's Movement* (New York, 2001).