



UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURE WARS: HOW THE 60S EXPLAIN OUR DIVIDED AGE



“WE ARE IN A CULTURE WAR. IF THE REPUBLICANS DON’T TOUGHEN UP AND GET SMART AND GET STRONG AND PROTECT OUR HERITAGE AND PROTECT OUR COUNTRY, I THINK THEY’RE GOING TO HAVE A VERY TOUGH ELECTION”

Donald Trump, Interview with *Real Clear Politics* 2020

“POLITICS IS DOWNSTREAM FROM CULTURE”

Andrew Breitbart (mantra + mission statement for his news website Breitbart, adopted by Steve Bannon when he took over as owner, before organising Donald Trump’s 2016 election campaign)

“THE CONQUEST OF CULTURAL POWER COMES BEFORE POLITICAL POWER”

Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 1926 (Marxist response to Fascist Control)

MY AIMS

- Learn about the transition from hard fought battles for Civil Rights to the assimilation of their tenets into the mainstream; and the backlash against them in 2016.
- Learn about the Right's presentation of itself as **FREE SPEECH COUNTERCULTURE**.
- Learn about confusion, anger, disagreement over politics of identity by going back to the decade when they took centre stage in Western politics.



MILO YIANNPOLOUS

- 2017 "Free Speech Week", University of California, Berkeley
- Response to "No Platforming" of Trump supporting conservative speakers





OPEN LETTER TO HARPERS' BAZAAR JULY 7 2020

'resistance must not be allowed to harden into its own brand of dogma or coercion'

(signed by Noam Chomsky, J.K. Rowling, Cornel West, Margaret Atwood)

TRANS ACTIVISTS VS. "TRANS EXCLUSIONARY RADICAL FEMINISTS"





FUENTES

McINNES

YE



MY QUESTIONS

- How have we got here? How have we ended up in a place where rancour around race, gender and sexuality permeates everything?
- How have we gone from Trump's populist nationalist revolt against 'wokeness' to ugly battles between feminists and Trans activists?
- To a black, liberal rapper joining forces with a racist crypto-fascist?

CIVIL RIGHTS → BLACK POWER → BLACK LIVES MATTER





STRUCTURE

1. SPIRITUAL ELITISM
2. WORDS AS VIOLENCE
3. EXPANDING BIGOTRY
4. COMPASSIONATE DOUBLE STANDARD

1. SPIRITUAL ELITISM (THE COUNTERCULTURE)

RACE



GENDER



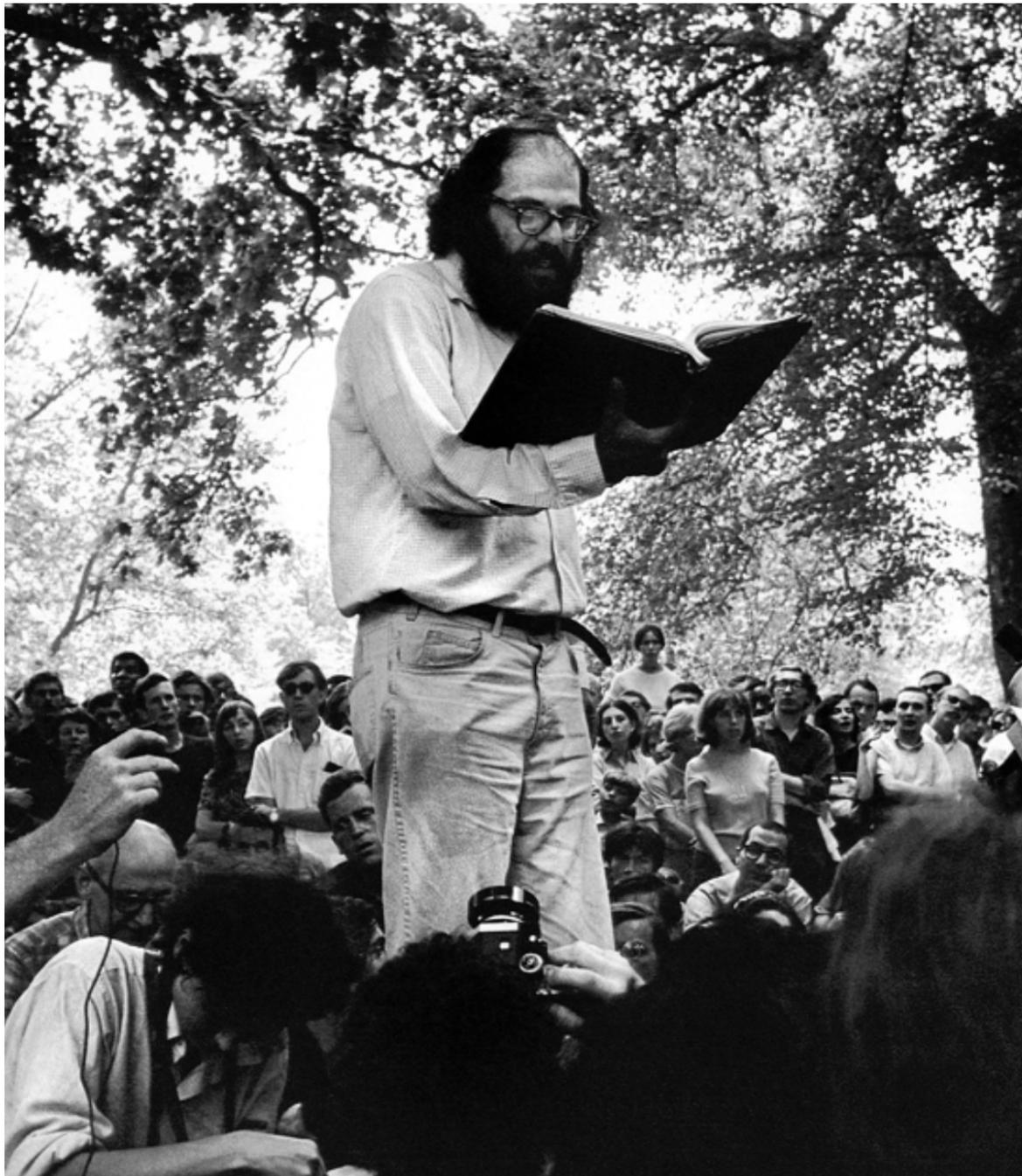
WAR + IMPERIALISM





LYNDON B JOHNSON SIGNING THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT 1964 (ending segregation) ; FOLLOWED BY THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT 1965 (ending race-related impediments to voting)

- But they also saw the birth of a new kind of elitism.
- To do with who was authentic and who wasn't.
- Who was awake to their true selves, and able to break free of the system that oppressed them, and who remained asleep.
- Existentialist inspired – trend for Soren Kierkegaard.
- Jung-inspired – trend for psychoanalysis.
- Nietzsche inspired.



IN LITERATURE

- The influential, Romantic vision of ‘The Beat Generation’.
- Allen Ginsberg (left), Jack Kerouac.
- Yearning for a purer America, free from industrialization, from puritanical, bourgeois values.
- A vision that divided the country into: **the saintly few**, beaten down and beatific enough to see clearly and the square, **9 to 5 majority**, spiritually impoverished by conformity.

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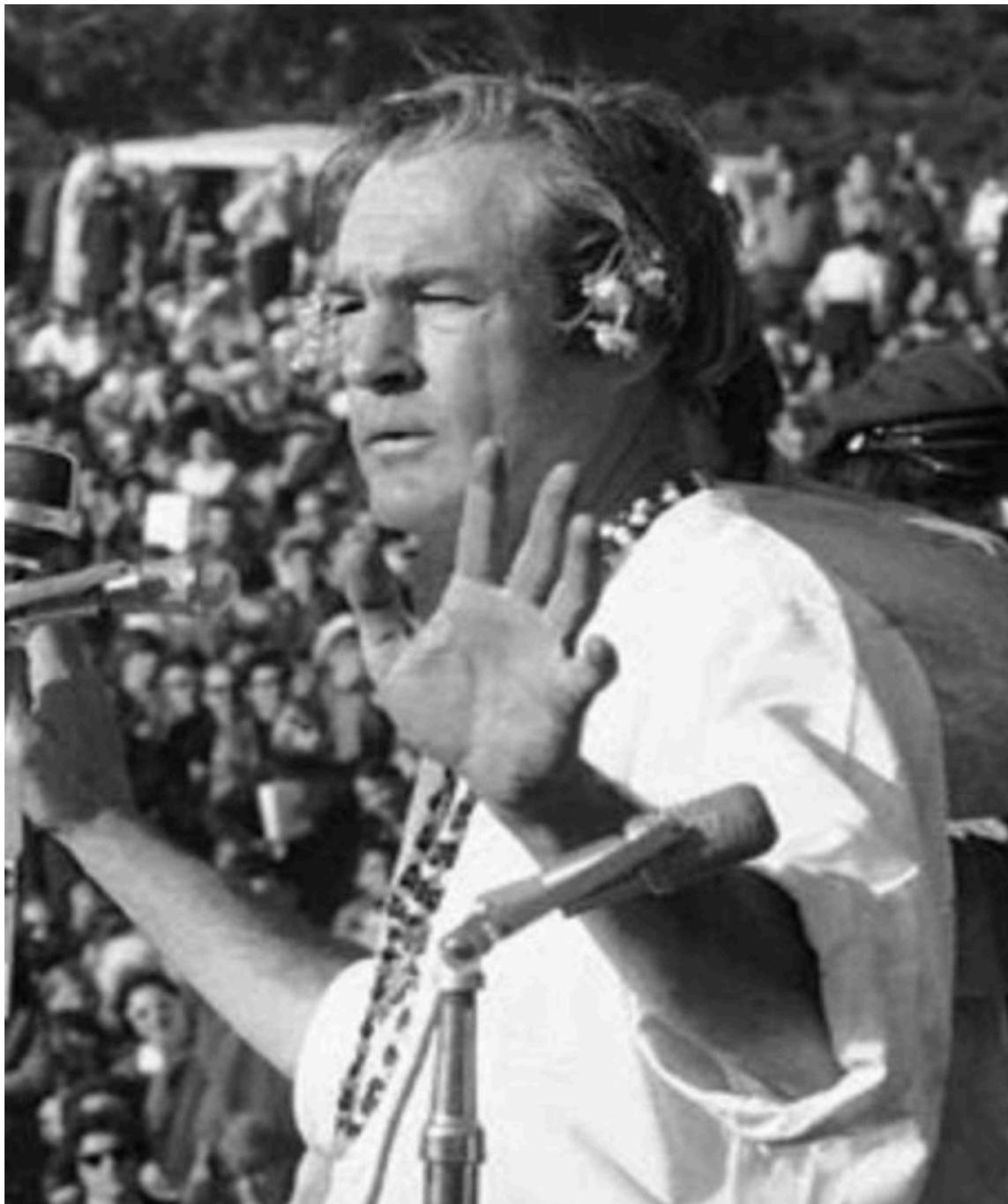
IN MUSIC

– Politically conscious (Beat influenced) folk music of Bob Dylan.

– Celebrated as political voice of his generation aged only 19.

– Set a precedent for leftist politics as a game old 'squares' couldn't understand.

“I know more about you just by looking than you ever know about me ... I could tell you, but you wouldn't really understand” (Dylan to *Time Magazine*, left)



IN LIFESTYLE

- Timothy Leary (High Priest of LSD): 'Turn on, tune in, drop out'.
- Struck-off Harvard scientist on a religious mission to wake the next generation up through acid.
- Big influence on the mass migration of young bohemians out of conventional society, onto communes (100,000).
- **The LSD awoken few vs. the sleeping masses, trapped in the nightmare of 'old men's politicking'**.

States of mind inherited from:

1. Small politically engaged bohemian art movements of the early 20th century (**DADAISTS, FUTURISTS, VORTICISTS**)

2. Radical Politics (**MARXIST ATTEMPT TO RAISE THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE MASSES**)



Johanna Fuentes 

@jfuentes



Shut it down. Today's best sign (via [@womensmarch](#)).









- For the 1st time, Left wing struggle was presented less in terms of class and more in terms of youth.
- Less working men's union.
- More student union.



- Encapsulated by the Marxist sociologist C. Wright Mills counselling a shift in focus from 'Victorian Marxism' to 'the cultural apparatus'.

- The emphasis on youth brought change and captured the media's attention.
- But it alienated exactly the demographic leftist politics had evolved to protect.
- Working class men and women who were put off progressive political ideas in the 1960s by their association with Woodstock, the Summer of Love, and rebellious Rock Music.
- With Free Love and Communal living rather than Material Class Conditions.

- It also gave impetus to Conservatism
- To Nixon in 1970s, to Reagan in 1980s
- And to Trump in 2016
- Trump's populist right movement.

“Look at the liberals! They claim to care about ordinary working people, but all they really care about is keeping up with fashion and looking virtuous”.



- Alt Right Red Pilling, Socratic Method, Kanye West
- All part of the right's rebranding as transgressive, rebellious, provocative not safe

ALL SIDES TRAPPED IN A MANIA TO PROVE THAT THEY'RE ENLIGHTENED + THE REST ARE DUPED

2. WORDS AS VIOLENCE (FEMINISM)

1. Scribbled secret notebooks, and wild typewritten pages, for yr own joy
2. **Submissive to everything, open, listening**
3. Try never get drunk outside yr own house
4. Be in love with yr life
5. Something that you feel will find its own form
6. **Be crazy dumb saint of the mind**
7. Blow as deep as you want to blow
8. Write what you want bottomless from bottom of the mind
9. **The unspeakable visions of the individual**
10. No time for poetry but exactly what is
11. Visionary tics shivering in the chest
12. In tranced fixation dreaming upon object before you
13. Remove literary, grammatical and syntactical inhibition
14. Like Proust be an old teahead of time

THE
PERSONAL
IS
POLITICAL

OVER!
NASTY
WOMEN
SAVE
THE
PLANET



CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING



- Women gathered to share their experience of everything from ‘sexual harassment in the workplace [to] body image, menstruation and pregnancy’, as the sociologist Nancy Whittier wrote, and to purge themselves of a ‘toxicity’ ingested from the patriarchy.
- The goal, in the words of the journalist and early participant Susan Brownmiller, was to **use individual pain to ‘uncover ... collective truths’**
- **Baptist religious imagery + Marxist idea = New Politics of language**

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING



COUNTERCULTURAL SHIFT

- In their philosophy of speaking a personal truth and raising consciousness, they unwittingly effected a shift in countercultural thought.
- One that made freedom depend **not only on the expression of your own honest and messy self, but on prohibiting that mess in others.**
- The moment when the counterculture starts owning *but also policing* its hypocrisies about gender.

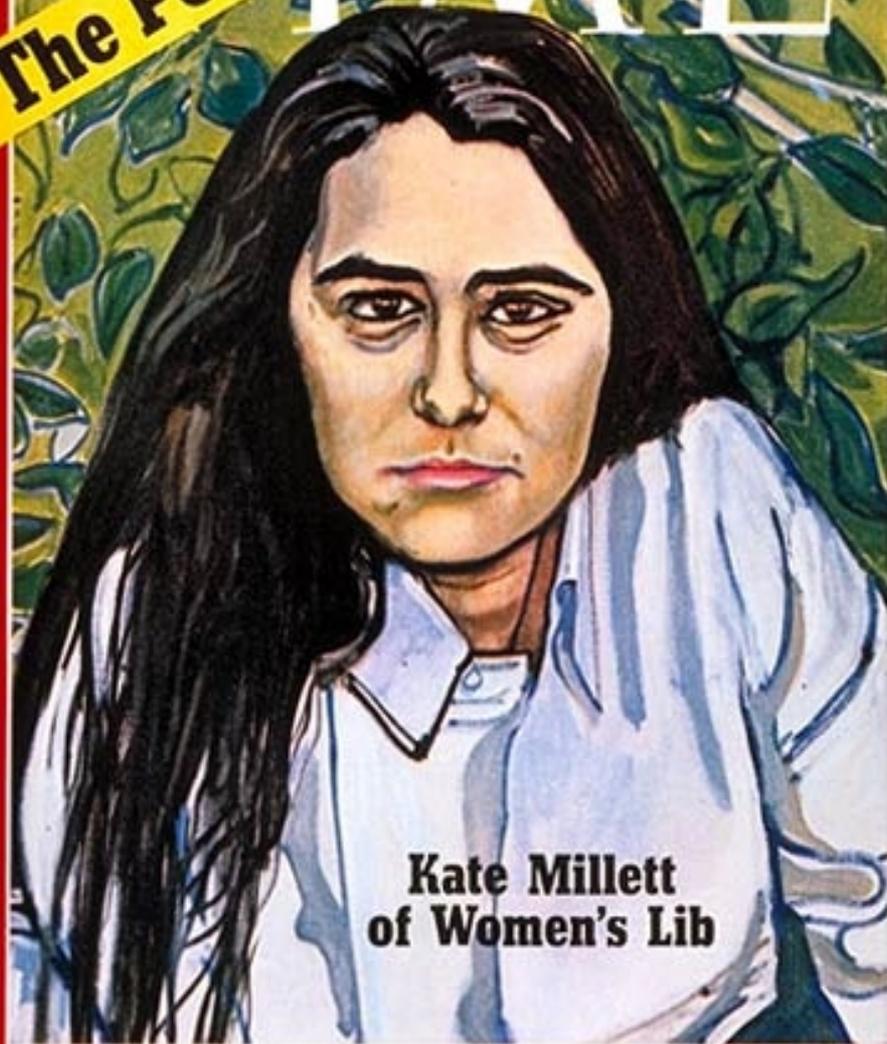


1970 (L&L)

AUGUST 24, 1970

The Politics of Sex

TIME



**Kate Millett
of Women's Lib**

3. EXPANDING BIGOTRY (CIVIL RIGHTS/BLACK POWER)

CIVIL RIGHTS → BLACK POWER → BLACK LIVES MATTER

Baptist → Marxist/Existentialist → Social-Media Marxist

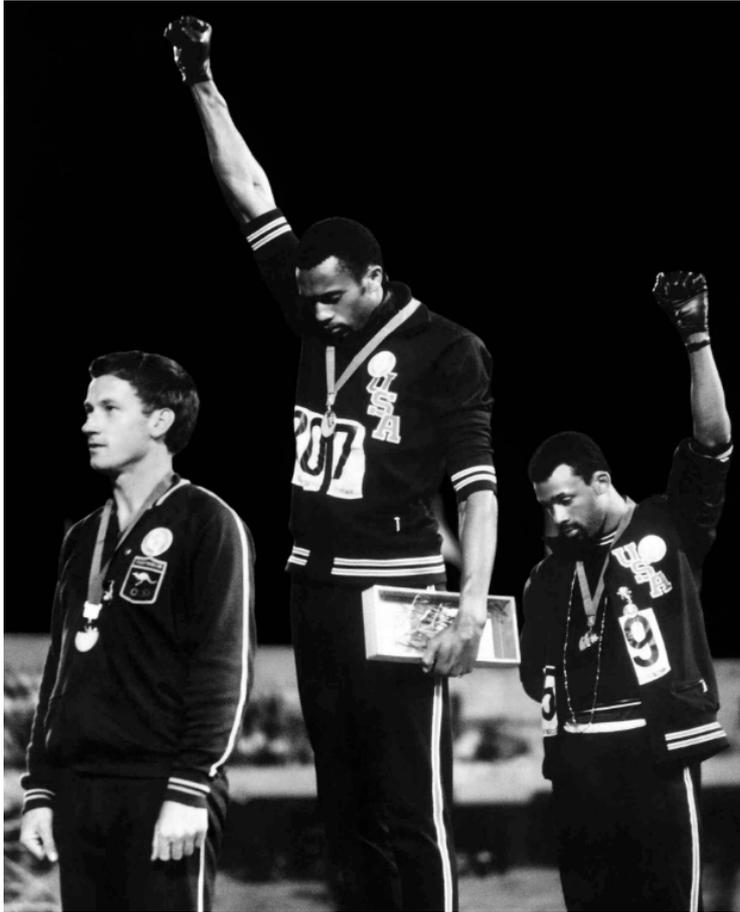
CIVIL RIGHTS



BLACK POWER



BLACK POWER → #BLM



- BLACK LIVES MATTER. HASHTAG + A COLLECTION OF “CHAPTERS”
- Going viral, capturing the imagination of many, that symbolism looks good but lacks a concrete story.
- Disconnected from tangible demands (whether radical or practical).
- Demands that can be wrestled with, understood, responded to.



RACISM REDEFINED

- Shift in both the meaning of racism and methods for detecting it.
- From racism defined as the individual belief in the superiority of one race over another, to a belief perpetuated by a whole system.
- From violence manifested through action, to violence manifested through:
 - discriminatory **words and images**.
 - subtler unconscious harm through **insensitive language**, **underrepresentation** in film, TV, adverts, books and newspapers.

4. COMPASSIONATE DOUBLE STANDARD

TROPIC OF CANCER
BY HENRY MILLER
FOURTH PRINTING

A VERY REMARKABLE BOOK, WITH PASSAGES OF
WRITING IN IT AS GOOD AS ANY I HAVE SEEN
FOR A LONG TIME T. S. ELIOT
AT LAST AN UNPRINTABLE BOOK THAT IS FIT
TO READ EZRA POUND

**LADY
CHATTERLEY'S
LOVER**

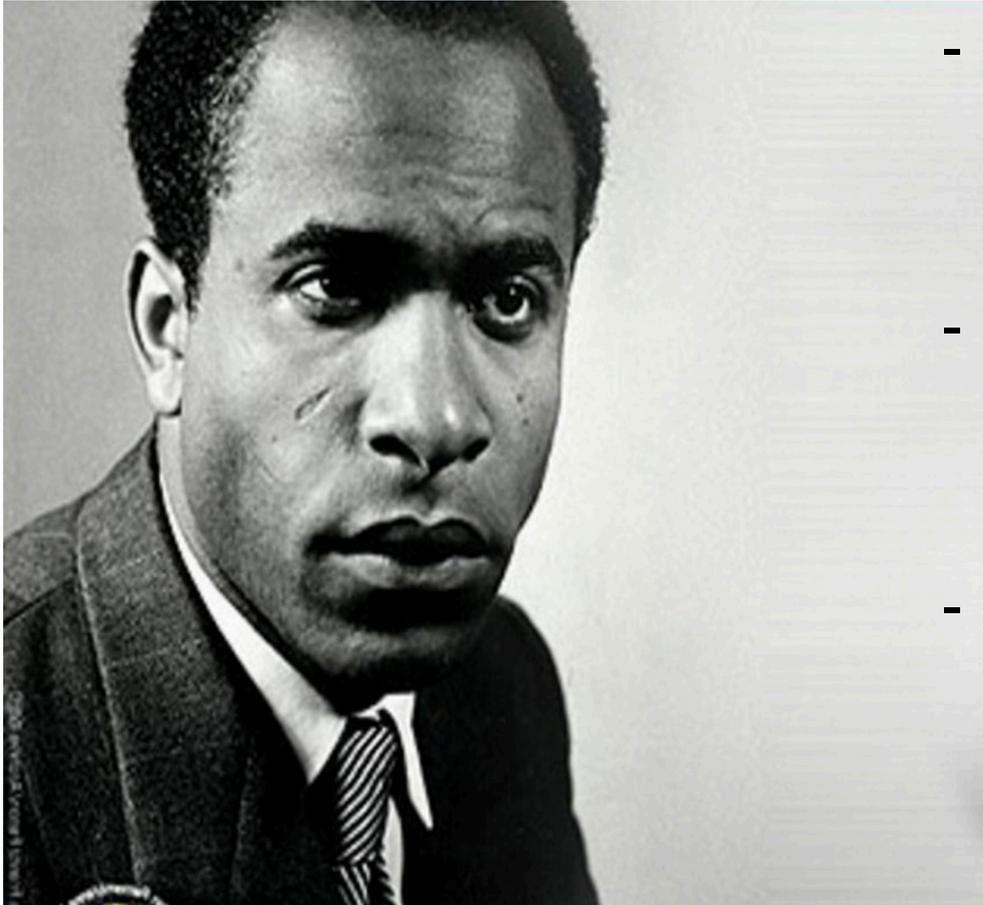


**D. H.
LAWRENCE**

NEW RULES

- Minority art is permitted its mess, its self-contradiction, its right to be received as experimental expression only.
- Whereas art made by people from majority groups is taken to signify the maker's historical privilege, checked for its damaging politics, and required to tread carefully.
- **Black hip-hop** is celebrated for its raw artistic honesty even if it breaks moral codes that would lead white artists to be cancelled.
- **Women** are allowed to tell jokes against men that would get men into serious trouble if the roles were reversed.
- **Trans performers** – who exaggerate some of the most toxic stereotypes about women for entertainment – are given a free pass on the basis of their marginality.

FRANTZ FANON



- MARXIST WEST INDIAN PSYCHIATRIST, POST-COLONIAL PIONEER.
- DIAGNOSED PATHOLOGY IN COLONIAL RELATIONS (WHITE GUILT)
- USED EXISTENTIALIST PHILOSOPHERS TO UNPICK WHITE IDEAS OF BLACK “PRIMITIVISM”
- BIG INFLUENCE ON “BLACK POWER”

TRANS VS. FEMINISTS

'Gender is culturally formed but it's also a domain of agency or freedom. It's most important to resist the violence that is imposed by ideal gender norms, especially against those who are gender different, who are non-conforming in their gender presentation'

Judith Butler



J.K. Rowling 

@jk_rowling



If sex isn't real, there's no same-sex attraction. If sex isn't real, the lived reality of women globally is erased. I know and love trans people, but erasing the concept of sex removes the ability of many to meaningfully discuss their lives. It isn't hate to speak the truth.

11:02 PM · Jun 6, 2020



 218.2K  42K  Copy link to Tweet

TO RECAP ...

1. SPIRITUAL ELITISM

- “Us and Them” inherited from 60s.
- Enlightened/Benighted; Woke/Napping.

2. WORDS AS VIOLENCE

- Inherited from 2nd Wave Feminism.
- The moment the Counterculture started policing itself.

3. EXPANDING BIGOTRY

- Racism redefined, expanded to include discriminatory words, unconscious harm, representation.

4. COMPASSIONATE DOUBLE STANDARD

- Minority art is permitted its mess, its self-contradiction, its right to be received as experimental expression only.

The Personal Is Political

by CAROL HANISCH

For this paper I want to stick pretty close to an aspect of the Left debate commonly talked about—namely “therapy” vs. “therapy and politics.” Another name for it is “personal” vs. “political” and it has other names, I suspect, as it has developed across the country. I haven’t gotten over to visit the New Orleans group yet, but I have been participating in groups in New York and Gainesville for more than a year. Both of these groups have been called “therapy” and “personal” groups by women who consider themselves “more political.” So I must speak about so-called therapy groups from my own experience.

The very word “therapy” is obviously a misnomer if carried to its logical conclusion. Therapy means that someone is sick and that there is a solution, e.g., a personal solution. I am greatly offended if I or any other woman is thought to need therapy in the first place. Women are messed over, messed up! We need to change the objective conditions, not adjust to them. Therapy is adjusting to a bad personal alternative.

We have not done much trying to solve important personal problems of women in the group. Mostly picked topics by two methods: In a round robin it is possible for us to take turns bringing up the meeting (like, Which do/did you have a girl or a boy baby or no children, and how much more money than you? Less than you?). Or we go around the room answering the questions about our personal experiences. Everybody gets a turn. At the end of the meeting we try to generalize from what’s been said and

strong, selfless, other-oriented, sacrificing, and I am not in general pretty much in control of my own life. I don’t admit to the problems in my life is to be deemed weak. So I want to be a strong woman, in more political terms, and not admit I have any real problems that I can’t find a personal solution to (except those directly related to the capitalist system). In fact, at this point a political action to tell it like it is, I would say what I really believe about my life instead of what I’ve always been told to say.

So the reason I participate in these meetings is not to solve any personal problem. One of the things we discover in these groups is that personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution. I went, and I continue to go to these meetings because I have gotten a political understanding which all my reading, all my “political discussions,” all my “political action,” all my four-odd years in the movement never gave me. I’ve been forced to take off the rose-colored glasses and face the awful truth about how grim my life really is as a woman. I am getting a gut understanding of everything as opposed to the esoteric intellectual understandings and *noblesse oblige* feelings I had in “other people’s” struggles.

This is not to deny that these sessions have at least two aspects that are therapeutic. I prefer to call even this aspect “political therapy” as opposed to personal therapy. The most important is getting rid of self-blame. Can you imagine what would happen if women

There is no way out of such a dilemma but to rebel and be broken, stigmatized, and cured. Until the radical spirit revives to free us, we remain imprisoned in the vast gray stockades of the sexual reaction. Our subject is now some of those who helped to build these structures—writers, who, after the usual manner of cultural agents, both reflected and actually shaped attitudes. So we proceed to the counterrevolutionary sexual politicians themselves—Lawrence, Miller, and Mailer.