

*Two Kinds of Discrimination*<sup>1</sup>  
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The two kinds of discrimination I want to talk about are political discrimination and cognitive discrimination. By *political discrimination*, I mean what we ordinarily understand by the term "discrimination" in political contexts: A manifest attitude in which a particular property of a person which is irrelevant to judgments of that person's intrinsic value or competence, for example his race, gender, class, sexual orientation, or religious or ethnic affiliation, is seen as a source of disvalue or incompetence; in general, as a source of inferiority.<sup>2</sup> I will call any such arbitrary property so perceived a *primary disvalued property*; and conversely, any such arbitrary property perceived as a source of value or superiority a *primary valued property*.

By *cognitive discrimination*, I mean what we ordinarily understand by the term "discrimination" in cognitive contexts: A manifest capacity to distinguish veridically between one property and another, and to respond appropriately to each. When we say of someone that she is a discriminating person, for example, or that she has discriminating judgment, we mean, in part, that she is a person of refined tastes or subtle convictions; that she exercises a capacity to make fine distinctions between properties of a thing, and bases her positive and negative valuations on these actual properties.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Thus I shall not be considering cases in which race, gender, etc., are relevant to judgments of a person's value or competence, e.g., as a role model in a classroom, or to provide a unique and needed perspective in a business venture or court of law. I restrict the discussion to consideration of *intrinsic* value or competence as determined by principles of justice and equality. The contrast is with *instrumental* value or competence in furthering some specified social or institutional policy, of the sort that would figure in arguments that would justify, e.g., refusing to sell real estate in a certain neighborhood to a black family solely because doing so would lower property values, or hiring a woman to a professional position solely in order to meet affirmative action quotas, or refusing to serve Asians at one's family diner solely because it would be bad for business. Whether these should be included under the rubric of first-order political discrimination, hypocrisy, prudence, or mere moral pusillanimity is too large a topic to address here.

<sup>3</sup> Notice that the veracity of the discrimination - and hence the reality of the properties - is presupposed in this use of the term. Someone who draws such distinctions in their absence is said to draw a "distinction without a difference;" or to be "seeing things." Of such a person we say not that he is discriminating, but rather that he is deluded. See my "Seeing Things!" *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 29, *Supplementary Volume: Moral Epistemology* (1990): 29-60.

I want to explore the relation between these two kinds of discrimination, and to argue that the first type of discrimination depends upon a failure of the second. Judging a person as inferior because one perceives his race as a primary disvalued property depends upon failing to distinguish finely enough between properties he has and those he does not have, and between those which are relevant to such a judgment and those which are not. I begin by arguing that, on a Kantian conception of the self, we instinctively resist the challenge of cognitive discrimination by confining our range of judgments to those objects and properties that conform to preexisting categories and concepts that structure not only our experience, but thereby our selves. I suggest that we are compelled either to conceptualize the objects of our experience in familiar terms, or else not to register them at all; and that this is a necessary condition of preserving the unity and internal coherence of the self against anomalous data that threaten it. I invoke this model of the self to explain the phenomenon of xenophobia, i.e., fear of another who fails to satisfy our provincial preconceptions about *bona fide* persons; and xenophobia, in turn, to explain the phenomenon of political discrimination. I distinguish between two kinds of political discrimination: *first-order political discrimination* as defined above, and *higher-order political discrimination* as a refinement introduced by pangs of conscience that result in even more radical failures of cognitive discrimination: of the other, of oneself, and of the situation. Finally, I conclude by suggesting some ways in which works of art might combat political discrimination by cultivating cognitive discrimination.

### I. The Kantian Rationalism Thesis

In the first *Critique*,<sup>4</sup> Kant tells us repeatedly that if a perception does not conform to the fundamental categories of thought that ensure the unity and coherence of the self, they cannot be part of our experience at all (A 112, 122,

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<sup>4</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, herausg. Raymund Schmidt (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1976). All references to this work are parenthecized in the text. Translations from the German are my own. Cognoscenti will find my translations to be generally more literal than Kemp Smith's, and (I think) more accurate in conveying not only the substance of Kant's claims, but his manner of expression. Despite Kant's tendency to indulge in run-on sentences, he is by and large a plain speaker with a fondness for the vernacular, not the stilted, pretentious Prussian Kemp Smith makes him out to be. But the major objection to Kemp Smith's translation is that he obscures important philosophical issues by overinterpreting Kant so as to resolve them before the monolingual reader can become aware that there is anything to dispute.

and B 132, 134).<sup>5</sup> Kant describes these fundamental categories as "a priori transcendental concepts of understanding," by which he means innate rules of cognitive organization that any coherent, conscious experience must presuppose. The table of transcendental categories he offers in the *Metaphysical Deduction* are drawn largely from Aristotle, with considerable additional tinkering by Kant. They include substance, totality, reality, possibility, causality, and community, to name just a few. Some commentators have rightfully concluded that the most significant candidate for this elevated cognitive status is the subject-predicate relation in logic, from which Kant derives the relational category of substance and property in the *Table of Categories* (Kant regards this as the result of fleshing out the subject-predicate relation or "judgment form" with "transcendental content," i.e., the sensory data our experience presupposes rather than the sensations we perceive as a result of them (A 70/B 95 - A 79/B 105)).<sup>6</sup> The idea, then, would be that organizing sensory data in terms of this relation is a necessary condition of experience. On this view, if we do not experience something in a way that enables us to make sense of it by identifying properties of it - for example, in propositions such as,

That car is dark red,

or

I am tired,

we cannot consciously experience that thing at all.

This thesis - call it the *Kantian Rationalism Thesis* - has the merit of plausibility over the archaic list of categories Kant originally furnished. It does not seem too controversial to suppose that any viable system of concepts should enable its user to identify states of affairs by their properties, since concepts just are of corresponding properties, and to ascribe a property to an object just is to subsume that object under the corresponding concept. So any system of concepts should enable its user to ascribe to objects those properties

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<sup>5</sup> This thesis may be viewed as the resolution of a *Gedankenexperiment* Kant earlier conducts at A 89-91, in which he entertains the possibility of unsynthesized appearance. In any case, his ultimate commitment to this thesis is clear. See Robert Paul Wolff, *Kant's Theory of Mental Activity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968) for a discussion.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, P. F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense* (London: Methuen, 1968), Chapter II.2. In hindsight Kant himself grudgingly admits that hypothetical and disjunctive syllogisms contain the same "matter" as the categorical judgment, but refuses to budge on their essential difference in form and function. See Kant's *Logic*, trans. Robert Hartman and Wolfgang Schwarz (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1974), Paragraphs 24-29, 60, note 2., especially pages 111 and 127.

of which she has concepts. The Kantian Rationalism Thesis - henceforth the KRT - is so weak that it may even be defensible in the face of anthropological evidence that languages considerably remote from Indo-European ones evince a cognitive structuring to the user's experience that is so different from our own as to be almost unintelligible to us. It would be an argument in favor of the KRT if it could be shown that the subject-predicate relation held regardless of the other ways in which culturally specific conceptual organizations of experience differed among themselves.

More precisely formulated, then, the KRT says that if we do not experience something in such a way as to allow us to make sense of it in terms of a set of coherent concepts that structure our experience, *whatever those concepts are*, we cannot consciously experience that thing at all. On this thesis the innate capacity would consist in a disposition to structure experience conceptually as such, but not necessarily to do so in accordance with any particular list of concepts,<sup>7</sup> provided that the particular, culturally specific set S of concepts  $c_1, c_2, c_3, \dots, c_n$  that did so satisfied the following requirements:

- (A) S observes the law of noncontradiction, i.e. the members of S are I internally and mutually consistent in their application;
- (B) Any particular  $c_n$  in S is either
  - (1) an instantiation of some other  $c_j$  in S; or
  - (2) instantiated by some other  $c_k$  in S;
 i.e. S is minimally coherent;
- (C) For any cognitively available particular p, there is a  $c_j$  in S that p instantiates.

The suggestion would be that we can understand particular states of affairs only if (A) the concepts by which we recognize them are neither internally nor mutually contradictory; (B) those concepts are minimally coherent with one another in that each particular identified by them satisfies the subject-predicate relationship with respect to at least one other of them; and (C) that particular itself instantiates at least one of them. I develop this suggestion at length elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> It says, roughly, that in order for something to register as a

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<sup>7</sup> This thesis is elaborated in the contemporary context by Gerald M. Edelman, *Neural Darwinism: The Theory of Neuronal Group Selection* (New York: Basic Books, 1987) and *The Remembered Present: A Biological Theory of Consciousness* (New York: Basic Books, 1989). See the review of Edelman and others by Oliver Sacks in "Neurology and the Soul," *The New York Review of Books* 37. 18 (November 22, 1990): 44-50.

<sup>8</sup> Piper, "Rationality and the Structure of the Self," excerpted from *Rationality and the Structure of the Self* and delivered to the Association for the Philosophy of the

conscious experience at all for us, we have to be able to make sense of it in terms of some such concepts in the set; and that if we can't, it won't.

Suppose, for example, that we were to be confronted with some particular such that the concepts it instantiates satisfied (A) but violated (B), i.e., such that we could invoke a concept in identifying it consistently with the application of our other concepts; but that that concept itself bore no instantiation-relation to others in the set (i.e., aside from that of being a concept in the set). In this case, that which we invoked as a "concept" would in fact not be one at all, since the corresponding predicate would by definition denote only the single state of affairs it had been invoked to identify. Since there would be no further concepts in terms of which we might understand the meaning of that denoting term, it could not enter into any analytic truths. In short, this would be like cooking up a special noise to denote only one state of affairs on the single occasion of its occurrence. The enterprises of denotation and meaning themselves would fail.

Alternately, imagine what it would be like to be confronted by a particular such that its concept satisfied (B) but not (A), i.e., such that it enabled us to identify its properties in terms of concepts in the set, but the application of those concepts themselves was internally or mutually inconsistent. In that event, it would be possible to ascribe to the thing the conjunction of some predicate F and some other one, G, that implied the negation of F.<sup>9</sup> Again the enterprise of identification itself would fail. If we were finally to fail to identify the thing or state of affairs in question as having a consistent set of properties, we would fail to identify it altogether. And then it could not be part of our conscious experience. If such cases characterized all of our encounters with the world, we would have no experiences of it at all and therefore no unified sense of self either.

These are the sorts of failures Kant has in mind when he avers, in the A Deduction, that

without such unity, which has its rule *a priori*, and which subjects appearances to it, thoroughgoing, universal, and therefore necessary unity of consciousness would not be found in the manifold of perceptions. These would then not belong to any experience, therefore would be without object, and nothing but a blind play of representations, that is, less even than a dream. (A 112)

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Unconscious, American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Convention, Boston, Mass., 1986.

<sup>9</sup> Piper, "Rationality and the Structure of the Self."

Kant is saying that if we do not organize cognitively the data of our senses according to consistent and coherent rules, we cannot be rationally unified subjects. "For otherwise," he adds in the B Deduction, "I would have as many-colored and diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious" (B 134). I would, that is, lack a sense of myself as the subject in whose consciousness those representations occur. For a Kantian rationalist, then, the cognitive organization of experience according to consistent and coherent concepts is a necessary condition of being a rationally unified subject. Anomalous particulars or properties that fail to satisfy (A)-(C) cannot be objects of experience for us at all.

Elsewhere I have argued that the resistance to integrating anomaly is a general feature of human intellection that attempts to satisfy a Kantian requirement of rational self-preservation.<sup>10</sup> And Thomas Kuhn has documented the inherent impediments to paradigm shift in the natural sciences - their conservatism and constitutional insensitivity to the significance of new data, and their resistance to revising deeply entrenched theories in light of experimental anomaly.<sup>11</sup> Relative to this scheme, xenophobia is a particular example of a perfectly general disposition to defend the self against anomalous informational assaults on its internal coherence. Xenophobia is fear, not of strangers generally, but rather of certain kinds of strangers, namely, those who do not conform to one's preconceptions about how persons ought to look or behave. In what follows I want to argue that xenophobia explains political discrimination in the sense defined above. Our inability to make fine-grained cognitive discriminations in judging a person is the result of a fear reaction to the anomalous perceptual data that person presents, and the cause of a corresponding inability to evaluate her veridically as a person.

## II. Xenophobia

I will use the terms *person* and *personality* to denote particular empirical instantiations of the concept of personhood, which I assume to be innate for

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<sup>10</sup> Piper, "Two Conceptions of the Self," *Philosophical Studies* 48. 2 (September 1985): 173-197, reprinted in *The Philosopher's Annual* 8 (1985): 222-246; see also "Pseudo-rationality," in Amelie O. Rorty and Brian McLoughlin, eds. *Perspectives on Self-Deception* (Los Angeles: University of Californian Press, 1988), 297-323.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971), Chapters 6-8.

purposes of this discussion.<sup>12</sup> Thus when we refer to someone as a person, we ordinarily mean to denote at the very least a social being whom we presume - as Kant did - to have consciousness, thought, rationality, and agency. The term "person" used in this way also finds its way into jurisprudence, where we conceive of a person as a rational individual who can be held legally and morally accountable for his actions. Relative to these related usages, an individual who lacks to a significant degree the capacities to reason, plan for the future, detect causal and logical relations among events, or control action according to principles applied more or less consistently from one occasion to the next is ascribed diminished responsibility for her actions, and her social and legal status as a person is diminished accordingly.

Similarly, when we call someone a "bad person," we communicate a cluster of evaluations that include, for example, assessing his conscious motives as corrupt or untrustworthy, his rationality as deployed for maleficent ends, and his actions as harmful. And when we say that someone has a "good personality" or a "difficult personality," we mean that the person's consciousness, thought, rationality, and agency are manifested in pleasing or displeasing or bewildering ways that are particular to that individual. We do not ordinarily assess a being who lacks any one of these components of personhood in terms of their personality at all. Persons, then, express their innate personhood in their empirical personalities.

With these stipulations in place, I now turn to an analysis of the concept of xenophobia. Xenophobia is not simply an indiscriminate fear of strangers in general: it does not include, for example, fear of relatives or neighbors whom one happens not to have met. It is more specific than that. Xenophobia is a fear of individuals who look or behave differently than those one is accustomed to. It is a fear of what is experientially unfamiliar, of individuals who do not conform to one's empirical assumptions about what other people are like, how they behave or how they look. Ultimately it is a fear of individuals who violate one's empirical conception of persons and so one's self-conception. So xenophobia is an alarm reaction to a threat to the rational coherence of the self, a threat in the form of an anomalous other who transgresses one's preconceptions about people. It is a paradigm example of reacting self-protectively to anomalous data that violate one's internally consistent conceptual scheme.

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<sup>12</sup> I defend this assumption at length in Sections II and III of "Xenophobia and Kantian Rationalism," *Philosophical Forum* 24.1-3 (Fall-Spring 1992-3): 188-232. The analysis offered in this and the following section of the present discussion is excerpted from Section V. of that article.

Recall that on the KRT, if we cannot make sense of such data in terms of those familiar concepts, we cannot register it as an experience at all. I have argued elsewhere<sup>13</sup> that *pseudorationality* is an attempt to make sense of such data under duress, i.e., to preserve the internal rational coherence of the self, when we are baldly confronted by anomaly but are not yet prepared to revise or jettison our conceptual scheme accordingly. It is in the attempt to make sense of anomalous data in terms of empirically inadequate concepts that the mechanisms of pseudorationality - rationalization, dissociation and denial - kick in to secure self-preservation. But they succeed in preserving only the appearance of rational coherence. In *rationalization*, we misapply a concept to a particular by distorting its scope, magnifying the properties of the thing that instantiate the concept, and minimizing those that fail to do so. So, for example, conceiving of a slave imported from Africa as three-fifths of a person results from magnifying the properties that appear to support this diminished concept of personhood - the slave's environmental and psychological disorientation, lack of mastery of a foreign language, lack of familiarity with local social customs, incompetence at unfamiliar tasks, etc.; and minimizing the properties that disconfirm it - her capacity to learn, to forge innovative modes of communication and expression, to adapt and flourish in an alien social environment, to survive enslavement and transcend violations of her person, etc. In *dissociation*, we identify something in terms of the negation of the concepts that articulate our theory: Identifying Jews as subhuman, blacks as childlike, women as irrational, gays as perverts, or working-class people as animals, for example, conceives of them as lacking essential properties of personhood, and so are ways of defining these groups of individuals out of our empirical concepts of people. In *denial*, we suppress recognition of the anomalous particular or property altogether, by ignoring it or suppressing it from awareness. For example, ignoring a woman's verbal contributions to a discussion, or passing over a black person's intellectual achievements, or forgetting to make provisions at a Christmas celebration for someone who is a practicing Jew are all ways of eradicating the anomalous other from one's domain of awareness.

Thus through the pseudorational mechanisms of rationalization and dissociation, xenophobia engenders various forms of stereotyping - racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, class elitism - that are discriminatory in both the perceptual and the political sense. It selects certain perceptually familiar properties of the person for primary disvalue, and distorts or obliterates those which remain. It thereby reduces the complex singularity of the other's properties to an oversimplified but conceptually manageable

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<sup>13</sup> Piper, "Two Conceptions of Self" and "Pseudorationality."



subset, and this in turn diminishes one's full conception of personhood. For the xenophobe, this results in a provincial self-conception and conception of the world, from which significant available data are excluded. And this provincial theory is sustained with the aid of denial, by enforcing those stereotypes through such tactics as exclusion, ostracism, scapegoating, tribalism, and segregation in housing, education or employment. My thesis is that xenophobia is the originating phenomenon to which each of these forms of political discrimination is a response.

Nevertheless, even if it is true that we are innately cognitively disposed to respond to any conceptual and experiential anomaly in this way, it does not follow that our necessarily limited empirical conception of people must be so limited and provincial so as to invite it. A person could be so cosmopolitan and intimately familiar with the full range of human variety that only *The Alien* would rattle him. On the other hand, his empirical conception of people might be so limited that any variation in race, nationality, gender, sexual preference, or class would be cause for panic. How easily one's empirical conception of people is violated is one index of the scope of one's xenophobia; how central and pervasive it is in one's personality is another. In what follows I will focus primarily on cases of political discrimination midway between such extremes: for example, of a white person who is thoughtful, well-rounded, and well-read about the problems of racism in the United States, but who nevertheless feels fearful at being alone in the house with a black television repairman. In all such cases, the range of individuals in fact identifiable as persons is larger than the range of individuals to whom one's empirical conception of people apply. In all such cases, I will argue, political discrimination can be understood in terms of certain corrigible cognitive errors that characterize prereflective xenophobia.

#### *A. The Error of Confusing People with Personhood*

Xenophobia is fueled by a perfectly general condition of subjective consciousness, namely the first/third person asymmetry: Although I must identify myself as a person because of my necessary, enduring first-personal experience of rationally unified selfhood, my experience of you as a person, necessarily lacking that first-personal experience, can have no such necessity about it:

Identity of person is... in my own consciousness unfailingly to be found. But when I view myself from the standpoint of another (as object of his outer intuition), this external observer considers me first and foremost in time... So from the I, which accompanies all representations at all times in my consciousness, and indeed with full identity, whether he imme-

diately concedes it, he will not yet conclude the objective continuity of my self. For because the time in which the observer situates me is not the same as that time to be found in my own, but rather in his sensibility, similarly the identity that is necessarily bound up with my consciousness, is not therefore bound up with his, i.e. with the outer intuition of my subject. (A 362-363)

Kant is saying that the temporal continuity I invariably perceive in my own consciousness is not matched by any corresponding temporal continuity I might be supposed to have as the object of someone else's consciousness. Since I am not always present to another as I am to myself, I may appear discontinuously to her consciousness in a way I cannot to my own. And similarly, another may appear discontinuously to my consciousness in a way I cannot to my own.

Thus although personhood is a necessary concept of mine, whether or not any other empirical individual instantiates it is itself, from my point of view, a contingent matter of fact - as is the concept of that particular individual herself. Though you may exhibit rationality in your behavior, I may not know that, or fail to perceive it, or fail to understand it. Nor can you be a necessary feature of my experience, since I might ignore or overlook you, or simply fail to have any contact with you. In any of these cases, you will fail to instantiate my concept of personhood in a way I never can. Because the pattern of your behavior is not a necessary and permanent, familiar concomitant of my subjectivity in the way my own unified consciousness and ratiocinative processes are, I may escape your personhood in a way that I cannot escape my own. For me the innate idea of personhood is a concept that applies necessarily to me, but, from my perspective, only contingently and empirically to you. Hence just as our experience of the natural world is limited relative to the all-inclusive, transcendent idea of its independent unity, similarly our empirical experience of other persons is limited relative to our all-inclusive, transcendent idea of personhood.

But there is an important disanalogy between them that turns on the problem of other minds and the first/third person asymmetry. For any empirical experience of the natural world we have, we must, according to Kant, be able to subsume it under the transcendent concept of a unified system of nature of which it is a part, even if we do not know what that system might be. By contrast, it is not necessarily the case that for any empirical experience of other people we have, we must be able to subsume them under the transcendent idea of personhood. This is because although they may, in fact, manifest their personhood in their personality, we may not be able fully to discern their personhood through its empirical manifestations,

if those manifestations fall outside our empirical conception of what people are like.

Suppose, for example, that within my subculture, speech is used to seek confirmation and promote bonding, whereas in yours it is used to protect independence and win status;<sup>14</sup> and that our only interpersonal contact occurs when you come to fix my TV. I attempt to engage you in conversation about what is wrong with my TV, to which you react with a lengthy lecture. To you I appear dependent and mechanically incompetent, while to me you appear logorrheic and socially inappropriate. Each of us perceives the other as deficient in some characteristic of rationality: you perceive me as lacking in autonomy and basic mechanical skills, whereas I perceive you as lacking in verbal control and basic social skills. To the extent that this perceived deficit is not corrected by further contact and fuller information, each of us will perceive the other as less of a full-fledged person because of it. This is the kind of perception that contributes to one-dimensional stereotypes, for example of women as flighty and incompetent or of men as aggressive and barbaric, which poison the expectations and behavior of each toward the other accordingly. This is how gender becomes a primary disvalued property.

Or take another example, in which the verbal convention in my subculture is to disclose pain and offer solace, whereas in yours it is to suppress pain and advert to impersonal topics; and that our only interpersonal contact occurs when I come to work as your housemaid. Again each of us perceives the other as deficient in some characteristic of rationality: you perceive me as dull and phlegmatic in my lack of responsiveness to the impersonal topics you raise for discussion, whereas I perceive you as almost schizophrenically dissociated from the painful realities that confront us. Again, unless this perceived deficit is corrected by further contact and fuller information, each of us will perceive the other as less of a person because of it, thereby contributing to one-dimensional stereotypes of, for example, blacks as stupid, or of whites as ignorant and out of touch with reality, that similarly poison both the expectations and the behavior of each toward the other. This is how race becomes a primary disvalued property.

In such cases there are multiple sources of empirical error. The first one is our respective failures to discriminate cognitively between the possession of rationality as an active capacity in general, and particular empirical uses or instantiations of it under a given set of circumstances and for a given set of ends. Because your particular behavior and ends strike me as irrational, I

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<sup>14</sup> This is the main thesis of Deborah Tannen's fascinating *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1990), a popularization of her research in linguistics on gender differences in language use.

surmise that you must be irrational. Here the error consists in equating the particular set of empirical behaviors and ends with which I am familiar from my own and similar cases with unified rational agency in general. It is as though I assume that the only rational agents there are are the particular people I identify as such. Kant might put the point by saying that each of us has conflated his empirically limited conception of people with the transcendent concept of personhood.

### *B. The Error of Assuming Privileged Access to the Self*

But now suppose we each recognize at least the intentionality of the other's behavior, if not its rationality. Since each of us equates rational agency in general exclusively with the motives and actions of her own subculture in particular, each also believes that the motives and ends that guide the other's actions - and therefore the evidence of conformity to the rule and order of rationality - nevertheless remain inaccessible in a way we each believe our own motives and ends not to be inaccessible to ourselves. This third-personal opacity yields the distinction between the appearance and the reality of the self: You, it seems, are an appearance to me behind which is hidden the reality of your motives and intentions, whereas I am not similarly an appearance that hides my own from myself. The less familiar you are to me, the more hidden your motives and intentions will seem and the less benevolent I will assume them to be.

Of course whom we happen to recognize as familiar determines whose motives are cause for suspicion and whose are not. There is no necessary connection between actual differences in physical or psychological properties between oneself and another, and the epistemic inscrutability we ascribe to someone we regard as anomalous. It is required only that the other seem anomalous relative to our familiar subculture, however cosmopolitan that may be, in order to generate doubts and questions about what it is that makes him tick. Stereotypes of women as enigmatic or of Asians as inscrutable or of blacks as evasive all express the underlying fear of the impenetrability of the other's motives. And someone who conceives of Jews as crafty, blacks as shiftless, or women as devious expresses particularly clearly the suspicion and fear of various third-personal others as mendacious manipulators that are consequent on falsely regarding them as more epistemically inaccessible to one than one is to oneself.

Thus our mutual failure to identify the other as a person of the same status as oneself is compounded by scepticism based on the belief that each of us has the privileged access to her own personhood that demonstrates directly and first-personally what personhood really is. The inaccessibility and

unfamiliarity of the other's conception of her own motives to our consciousness of her may seem conclusive justification of our reflexive fear and suspicion as to whether her motives can be trusted at all.

Now Kant argues (B 68-69, 153-156, 157-158a, A 551a/B 579a)<sup>15</sup> that from the first-personal relation I bear to my empirical self-conception which I lack to yours, it does not follow that my actual motives are any more accessible to me than yours are. Therefore, regardless of how comfortable and familiar my own motives may seem to me, it does not follow that I can know that my own motives are innocuous whereas yours are not. In fact, it is difficult to imagine how I might gain any understanding of the malevolent motives I reflexively ascribe to you at all, without having first experienced them in myself. Of course this is not to say that I cannot understand what it means to be the victim of malevolent *events* without having caused them myself. But it is to say that I must derive my understanding of the malevolent *intentionality* I ascribe to you from my own firsthand experience of it. Therefore your epistemic opacity to me furnishes no evidence for my reflexive ascription to you of malevolent or untrustworthy motives, although that ascription itself does furnish evidence for a similar ascription of them to myself. Thus Kant might put this second error by saying that we have been fooled by the first/third person asymmetry into treating the ever-present "dear self" as a source of genuine self-knowledge on the basis of which we make even faultier and more damaging assumptions about the other.

### C. *The Error of Failing Rationally to Conceive Other Minds*

These two errors are interconnected with a third one, namely our respective failures to imagine each other's behavior as animated by the same elements of personhood that animate our own, i.e., consciousness, thought, and rationality. Our prior failure to recognize the other's behavior as manifesting evidence of these properties - a failure compounded by conceptual confusion and misascription of motives - then further undermines our ability to bridge the first/third person asymmetry by imagining the other to have them. Since, from each of our first-personal perspectives, familiar empirical evidence of the presence of these properties is lacking in the other, we have no basis on which to make the ascription, and so no basis for imagining what it must be like from the other's perspective. Our respective, limited empirical conceptions of people, then, themselves the consequence of ignorance of others who are thereby viewed as different, delimit our capacity

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<sup>15</sup> See also "Xenophobia and Kantian Rationalism," Section IV: Self-Knowledge, for a fuller discussion.

for empathy. This is part of what is involved in the phenomenon feminists refer to as objectification, and what sometimes leads men to describe some women as self-absorbed. Kant might put this point by saying that by failing to detect in the other's behavior the rule and order of rationality that guides it, we fail to surmise or imagine the other's motives and intentions.

This error, of failing to conceive the other as similarly animated by the psychological dispositions of personhood, is not without deleterious consequences for the xenophobe himself. Elsewhere I have described the self-centered and narrowly concrete view of the world that results from the failure to imagine empathically another's inner states, and its interpersonal consequences.<sup>16</sup> From the first-personal perspective, this error compounds the seeming depopulation of the social environment of persons and its repopulation by impenetrable and irrational aliens. This is to conceive one's social world as inhabited by enigmatic and unpredictable disruptions to its stability, to conjure chimaeras of perpetual unease and anxiety into social existence. Relative to such a conception, segregation is no more effective in banishing the threat than is leaving on the nightlight to banish ghosts, since both threats arise from the same source. Vigilance and a readiness to defend oneself against the hostile unknown may become such intimately familiar and constitutive habits of personality that even they may come to seem necessary prerequisites of personhood.

### *III. First-Order Political Discrimination*

The three foregoing errors involve failures of cognitive discrimination for which a well-intentioned individual could correct. For example, someone who regularly confuses people with personhood might simply take a moment to formulate a general principle of rational behavior that both applies to all the instances with which she is familiar from her particular community and has broader application as well; and remind herself, when confronted by anomalous behavior, at least to try to detect the operation of that principle within it. Similarly, it does not require excessive humility on the part of a person who falsely assumes privileged access to the self to remind himself that our beliefs about our own motives, feelings, and actions are exceedingly fallible and regularly disconfirmed; and that it is therefore even more presumptuous to suppose any authority about someone else's. Nor is it psychologically impossible to gather information about others' inner states -

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<sup>16</sup> Piper "Impartiality, Compassion and Modal Imagination," *Ethics* 101. 4: Symposium on Impartiality (July 1991): 726-757.

through research, appreciation of the arts, or direct questioning and careful listening, so as to cultivate one's imaginative and empathic capacities to envision other minds.

Thus it is possible for someone to have such xenophobic reactions without being a full-blown xenophobe, in the event that she views them as causes for concern rather than celebration. She may experience these cognitive failures without being a first-order political discriminator in the event that she has no personal investment in the defective empirical conception of people that results; and is identifiable as a *bona fide* first-order political discriminator to the extent that she does. A person has a *personal investment* in a conception or theory if

- (1) that theory is a source of personal satisfaction or security to her;
- (2) to revise or reject it would elicit in her feelings of dejection, deprivation or anxiety; and
- (3) these feelings are to be explained by her identification with this theory.

She *identifies with* this theory to the extent that she is disposed to identify it as personally meaningful or valuable to her.<sup>17</sup> A person could make the first three cognitive errors without taking any satisfaction in her provincial conception of people ("Is this really all there is?" she might think to herself about the inhabitants of her small town), without identifying with it (she might find them boring and feel ashamed to have to count herself among them), and without feeling the slightest reluctance to enlarge and revise it through travel or exploration or research.

What distinguishes a first-order political discriminator is his personal investment in his provincial conception of people. His sense of self-preservation requires his conception to be veridical, and is threatened when it is disconfirmed. He exults in the thought that only the people he knows and is familiar with (whites, blacks, WASPs, Jews, residents of Waco, Texas, members of the club, etc.) are persons in the full, honorific sense. This is the thought that motivates the imposition of politically discriminatory stereotypes, both on those who confirm them and those who do not.

To impose a *stereotype* on someone is to view her as embodying a limited set of properties falsely taken to be exclusive, definitive, and paradigmatic of a certain kind of individual. I will say that a stereotype

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<sup>17</sup> The concept of personal investment is discussed in my "Moral Theory and Moral Alienation," *The Journal of Philosophy* 84. 2 (February 1987): 102-118. See also Piper, "Two Conceptions of Self" and "Pseudorationality."

- (a) equates one contingent and limited set of primary valued properties that may characterize persons under certain circumstances with the universal concept of personhood;
- (b) restricts that set to exclude divergent properties of personhood from it;
- (c) withholds from these who violate its restrictions the essential properties of personhood; and
- (d) ascribes to them the primary disvalued properties of deviance from it.

Thus a stereotype identifies as persons those and only those who manifest the primary valued properties in the set ((a) and (b)), and subsidiary ones consistent with it (such as minor personality quirks or mildly idiosyncratic personal tastes). Call this set the *honorific stereotype*, and an individual who bears such primary valued properties the *valuee*. And reciprocally, the honorific stereotype by implication identifies as deviant all those who manifest any properties regarded as inconsistent with it ((c) and (d)). Call this second set of primary disvalued properties the *derogatory stereotype*, and an individual who bears such primary disvalued properties the *disvaluee*.

So, for example, an individual who bears all the primary valued properties of the honorific stereotype as required by (a) may be nevertheless disqualified for status as a valuee according to (b), by bearing additional primary disvalued ones as well - being related by blood or marriage to a Jew, for example; or having bisexual inclinations; or, in the case of a black person, an enthusiasm for classical scholarship. In virtue of violating (b), one may then fail to qualify as a full-fledged person at all (c), and therefore may be designated as deviant by the derogatory stereotype according to (d). The derogatory stereotype most broadly includes all the primary disvalued properties that fall outside the set defining the honorific stereotype (i.e., "us versus them"), or may sort those properties into more specific subsets according to the range of individuals available for sorting.

A politically discriminatory stereotype generally is therefore distinguishable from an inductive generalization by its provincialism, its oversimplification, and its rigid imperviousness to the complicating details of singularity. Perhaps most importantly, a discriminatory stereotype is distinguishable from an inductive generalization by its function. The function of an inductive generalization is to guide further research, and this requires epistemic alertness and perceptual sensitivity to the possibility of confirming or disconfirming evidence in order to make use of it. An inductive generalization is no less a generalization for that: it would not, for example, require working-class blacks living in the Deep South during the 1960s to dismantle the functionally accurate and protective generalization that white



people are dangerous. What would make this an inductive generalization rather than a stereotype is that it would not preclude recognition of a white person who is safe if one should appear. By contrast, the function of a stereotype is to render further research unnecessary. If the generalization that white people are dangerous were a stereotype, adopting it would make it cognitively impossible to detect any white people who were not.

Thus Kant might describe the reciprocal imposition of stereotypes as the fallacy of equating a partial and conditional series of empirical appearances of persons with the absolute and unconditioned idea of personhood that conceptually unifies them. Whereas the first error - of confusing one's empirical conception of people with the transcendent concept of personhood - involves thinking that the only persons there are are the people one knows, this fourth error - of equating personality with personhood - involves thinking that the kind of persons one knows are all there can ever be. So unlike inductive generalizations, the taxonomic categories of a stereotype are closed sets that fundamentally require the binary operation of sorting individuals and properties into those who fall within them and those who do not.<sup>18</sup>

As a consequence of his personal investment in an honorific stereotypical conception of persons, a first-order political discriminator has a personal investment in an honorific stereotypical self-conception. This means that that self-conception is a source of personal satisfaction or security to him; that to revise or disconfirm it would elicit in him feelings of dejection, deprivation, or anxiety; and that these feelings are to be explained by his identification with this self-conception. In order to maintain his honorific self-conception, a first-order political discriminator must perform the taxonomic binary sorting operation not only on particular groups of ethnic or gendered others, but on everyone, including himself. Since his self-conception as a person requires him and other *bona fide* persons to dress, talk, look, act, and think in certain highly specific and regimented ways in order to qualify for the honorific stereotype, everyone is subject to scrutiny in terms of it.

This is not only prejudicial to a disvaluee who violates these requirements and thereby earns the label of the derogatory stereotype. It is also prejudicial to a valuee who satisfies them, just in case there is more to his personality than the honorific stereotype encompasses and more than it permits. Avoidance of the negative social consequences of violating the honorific stereotype - ostracism, condemnation, punishment, or obliteration - necessitates stunting or flattening his personality in order to conform to it (for example, by eschewing football or nightclubs, and learning instead to enjoy

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<sup>18</sup> I am indebted to Rüdiger Bittner for pressing this question in discussion.

scholarly lectures as a form of entertainment because one is given to understand that that is the sort of thing real academics typically do for fun); or bifurcating his personality into that part which can survive social scrutiny and that "deviant" part which cannot (as, for example, certain government officials have done who deplore and condemn homosexuality publicly on the one hand, while engaging in it privately on the other). One reason it is important not to equate personality with personhood is so that the former properties can flourish without fear that the latter title will be revoked.

Truncating his personality in order to conform to an honorific stereotype in turn damages the political discriminator's self-esteem and also his capacity for self-knowledge. Someone who is deeply personally invested in the honorific stereotype but fails fully to conform to it (as everyone must, of course) views himself as inherently defective. He is naturally beset by feelings of failure, inferiority, shame and worthlessness which poison his relations with others in familiar ways: competitiveness, dishonesty, defensiveness, envy, furtiveness, insecurity, hostility, and self-aggrandizement are just a few of the vices that figure prominently in his interpersonal interactions. But if these feelings and traits are equally antithetical to his honorific stereotype, then they, too, threaten his honorific stereotypical self-conception and so are susceptible to pseudorational denial, dissociation or rationalization. For example, a first-order political discriminator might be blindly unaware of how blatantly he advertises these feelings and traits in his behavior; or he might dissociate them as mere peccadilloes, unimportant eccentricities that detract nothing from the top-drawer person he essentially is. Or he might acknowledge them but rationalize them as natural expressions of a Nietzschean, *übermenschliche* ethic justified by his superior place in life. Such pseudorational habits of thought reinforce even more strongly his personal investment in the honorific stereotype that necessitated them, and in the xenophobic conception of others that complements it. This fuels a vicious downward spiral of self-hatred and hatred of anomalous others from which it is difficult for the political discriminator to escape. Thus the personal disadvantage of first-order political discrimination is not just that the discriminator devolves into an uninteresting and malevolent person. He damages himself for the sake of his honorific stereotype, and stunts his capacity for insight and personal growth as well.

A sign that a person's self-conception is formed by an honorific stereotype is that revelation of the deviant, primary disvalued properties provokes shame and denial, rather than a reformulation of that self-conception in such a way as to accommodate them. For example, a family that honorifically conceives itself as white Anglo-Saxon Protestant may deny that its most recent offspring in fact has woolly hair or a broad nose. Similarly, a

sign that a person's conception of another is formed by a derogatory stereotype is that revelation of the other's nondeviant, primary valued properties provokes hostility and denial, rather than the corresponding revision of that conception of the other in such a way as to accommodate them. For example, a community of men that honorifically conceives itself in terms of its intellectual ability may dismiss each manifestation of a woman's comparable intellectual ability as a fluke.

These two reactions are reciprocal expressions of the same dispositions in the first- and third-personal cases respectively. Shame involves the pain of feeling publicly exposed as defective, and denial is the psychological antidote to such exposure: for example, if the purportedly WASP offspring does not have negroid features, there is nothing for the family to feel ashamed of. So a person whose self-conception is defined by an honorific stereotype will feel shame at having primary disvalued properties that deviate from it, and will attempt to deny their existence to herself and to others. By contrast, hostility toward another's excellence is caused by shame at one's own defectiveness, and denial of the excellence is the social antidote to such shame: for example, if the woman is not as intelligent as the men are purported to be, then there is no cause for feeling shamed by her, and so none for hostility toward her. So a person whose self-conception is formed by an honorific stereotype will feel hostility toward a disvaluee who manifests valued properties that violate the derogatory stereotype imposed on him; and will attempt to deny the existence of those valued properties in the other to herself and to others.

In the first-personal case, the objects of shame are primary disvalued properties that deviate from one's honorific stereotypical self-conception. In the third-personal case, the objects of hostility are valued properties that deviate from one's derogatory stereotypical conception of the disvaluee. But in both cases the point of the reactions is the same: to defend one's stereotypical self-conception against attack, both by first-personal deviations from it and by third-personal deviations from the reciprocal stereotypes this requires imposing on others. And in both cases, the xenophobic reactions are motivated in the same way: the properties regarded as anomalous relative to the stereotype in question are experienced by the first-order political discriminator as an assault on the rational coherence of his theory of the world - and so, according to Kant, on the rational coherence of his self.

Indeed, left untreated, all four of these cognitive errors more generally - the conflation of the transcendent concept of personhood with one's provincial conception of people that another happens to violate, the ascription to the other of malevolent motives on the basis of an epistemically unreliable self-conception, the inability to imagine the other as animated by familiar or recognizably rational motives, and the equation of personality with personhood inherent in the imposition of reciprocal stereotypes - combine to

form a conception of the other as an inscrutable and malevolent anomaly that threatens that theory of the world which unifies one's experience and structures one's expectations about oneself and other people. If this were an accurate representation of others who are different, it would be no wonder that xenophobes feared them.

#### IV. Reciprocal First-Order Political Discrimination

So far I have argued that first-order political discrimination involves the reciprocal imposition of honorific and derogatory stereotypes, on oneself and on the anomalous other respectively. But is it not possible to value properties ordinarily taken to be irrelevant to judgments of a person's value or competence without eliciting the charge of honorific stereotyping? Are such primary valued properties ever relevant to judgments of a person's noninstrumental value or competence? By *reciprocal first-order political discrimination*, I will mean a manifest attitude in which a particular property of a person that is irrelevant to judgments of that person's noninstrumental value or competence, for example her race, gender, class, sexual orientation, or religious or ethnic affiliation, is seen as a source of value or competence, in general, as a source of superiority. Primary valued properties are those perceived as elevating its bearers accordingly.

Take the case in which we are particularly drawn to befriend a valuee with whom we share a similar ethnic background, because we expect to have more in common (lifestyle, tastes, sense of humor), share similar values, or see the world from a similar perspective. In this kind of case the primary valued property is not, say, being Jewish; but rather having the same ethnic background, whatever that may be. Is similarity of ethnic background a property that is relevant to our judgments of how valuable the valuee is as a friend? No, for it does not form any part of the basis for such a judgment. That a friendship is better, richer, or more valuable in proportion to the degree of similarity of the friends' ethnic backgrounds is a judgment few would be tempted to make.

In these cases, it is not the valuee's similar ethnicity itself that is the source of value, but rather the genuinely valuable properties - for example, similarity of values or worldview - *with which we expect similar ethnicity to be conjoined*. Rather than making a normative judgment about his value or competence as a friend in this case, we in fact make an epistemic judgment about the probability that, given the valuee's ethnic identity, he will bear properties susceptible of such normative judgments. These epistemic rules of thumb are defeasible, and may have disappointing consequences for personal relationships. For they ascribe primary value to a kind of property at the

expense of others that are in fact more important for friendship - such as sensitivity, similarity of tastes or experiences, or mutual respect - with which that kind of property is only contingently, if ever, conjoined. (Presumably something like this may explain the malaise of someone who has chosen all the "right" friends, married the "right" spouse, and landed the "best" job, yet feels persistently unhappy, disconnected, and dissatisfied in his social relationships.)

If similarity of race, gender, sexual orientation, class background, or religious or ethnic affiliation are in themselves irrelevant to judgments of a person's noninstrumental value or competence, primary valued properties such as being of a particular race, gender, etc., are even more obviously so. At least it has yet to be demonstrated that any particular racial, ethnic, gender, class or religious group possesses the properties necessary for, e.g., friendship to an outstanding degree.<sup>19</sup> Epistemic probability judgments about the concatenation of any such primary valued properties with genuinely valuable traits, such as sensitivity or similarity of interests, also may bias our ability to perceive clearly the properties a particular individual actually has - as when a wife minimizes the reality and seriousness of her husband's physical abuse of her, because of the weight she accords his class background. This would be a case of reciprocal first-order discrimination, according to the above definition, because she sees a primary valued property - class background - that is irrelevant to judgments of the valuee's noninstrumental value or competence as a spouse as a (compensating) source of superiority.

It might be objected that such epistemic rules of thumb are inductive generalizations, however irrational or poorly grounded, that we need in order to survive in a world of morally opaque others: How ought one behave, for example, alone in a subway car with four black male teenagers carrying ghetto blasters and wearing running shoes? Even if it were true that most muggers were black male teenagers in running shoes, it still would not follow that most black male teenagers in running shoes were muggers. This epistemic rule of thumb is a stereotype, not an inductive generalization, if it leads one to react to every black male teenager in running shoes one encounters as though he were a mugger when there is no independent justification for thinking he is.

Alternately, one may make a judgment of value about some such property abstractly and independently considered. One may value being

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<sup>19</sup> The thesis that women make better friends is often supported by arguments to the effect that they *become closer confidantes more quickly*. But there are many other properties that contribute to friendship - trustworthiness, loyalty, dependability, honesty, mutual respect, etc. - that such arguments ignore.

black, or of working-class origins, for its own sake. Or one may choose a partner from the same religion because one views that religion and its traditions themselves as intrinsically valuable, independently of one's partner's compatibility with respect to lifestyle, values, or worldview. Here the judgment of value is directed not at the valuee's value or competence, but rather at the property he bears and to the preservation or affirmation of which one's choice of him is instrumental. Nothing in the following discussion addresses or precludes such judgments, although there is much to say about them. My target is judgments of noninstrumental value about individuals, not about properties of individuals abstractly and independently considered, to which individuals themselves are instrumental.

Is it humanly possible to value a person just and only because she bears some such primary valued property - not because of the further properties with which we expect that one to be conjoined, but just for the sake of that property in itself? It is difficult to make sense of this. Suppose I value Germanness because the Germans I have known tend to have deep passions and an amusingly fatalistic sense of humor; and that I then meet a shallow and phlegmatic German with no sense of humor at all. In the absence of other, unexpectedly attractive personality characteristics I may appreciate, just what is it about being German in itself that is supposed to confer worth on this particular individual? Either we must be able to spell out an answer to this question in terms of other properties that are only contingently connected, if at all, to this one - e.g., having been socialized within a certain culture "from the inside," being part of a certain historical tradition, etc. - or else we are appealing to a mysterious and ineffable, non-natural quality of Germanness.<sup>20</sup> Then suppose there are such qualities, and that we may arguably appeal to them. To what degree might Germanness outweigh the person's other properties that, by hypothesis, I deplore? Surely the mere fact of Germanness can provide no consolation at all, in practice, for other properties of the

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<sup>20</sup> For purposes of this discussion I ignore the range of cases in which my valuation of, e.g., Germanness is rooted in the status or worth I expect my choice of German friends to confer on *me*. This kind of case occurs both in situations in which the primary valued property is one shared by oneself, and in those cases in which it is not. Thus it may happen that one's choice of a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant spouse is made in part with an eye to reinforcing the primary value to others and to oneself of one's own status as a white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant; or alternately, that one's contrasting choice of an African-American spouse is made with an eye to proving to others and to oneself one's "cool," sophistication, or commitment to civil rights. These are all cases in which the property is valued as a source of *instrumental* value or competence, namely for its ability to confer value on the reciprocal first-order political discriminator. Therefore I leave them aside here.

person that offend me. It will not compensate, for example, for a failure to laugh at my jokes, or a tendency to discuss the weather at excessive length, or to fall asleep at the opera. And then it is hard to see in what its purported value consists.

Independently of the other, genuinely valuable properties with which they are only contingently, if at all, conjoined, properties such as race, gender, sexual orientation, class background, or religious or ethnic affiliation are in themselves always irrelevant to judgments of a person's noninstrumental value or competence. This holds whether they are considered as primary disvalued or valued properties, and even where they are used as epistemic rules of thumb for detecting such properties. We may in fact feel compelled to make such judgments, in the service of expediency, or what we imagine to be our self-interest, and screen our circle of associates accordingly. But it is nothing to be proud of.

#### V. Higher-Order Political Discrimination

Now I want to examine a more sophisticated manifestation of political discrimination that is supervenient on the first-order political discrimination just discussed. I shall call this *higher-order political discrimination*.<sup>21</sup> As in first-order political discrimination, a higher-order discriminator manifests in behavior the attitude in which a particular property of a person that is irrelevant to judgments of that person's intrinsic value or competence, e.g., her race, gender, class, sexual orientation, or religious or ethnic affiliation, is seen as a source of disvalue or inferiority, i.e., as a primary disvalued property. By *second-order political discrimination*, I will understand the attitude within which a primary disvalued or valued property in turn confers disvalue or value respectively on further properties of the disvaluee or valuee respectively. I shall refer to these latter as *secondary disvalued (or valued) properties*.

Second-order political discrimination works in the following way. A disvaluee's primary disvalued property, say, being a male homosexual, causes the second-order political discriminator to view some *further* property of the disvaluee, say, being an eloquent speaker, in a negative light. The respect in which this further property is seen as negative depends on the range of possible descriptions it might satisfy, as well as the context in which

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<sup>21</sup> The analysis of higher-order political discrimination in Sections V through VII is excerpted from "Higher-Order Discrimination," in Amelie O. Rorty and Owen Flanagan, eds. *Identity, Character and Morality* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 285-309.

it appears. Thus, for example, the second-order political discriminator might view the disvaluee's eloquence as purple prose, or empty rhetoric, or as precious, flowery, or mannered. These predicates are not interchangeable for the second-order political discriminator. Nor are they taken to be arbitrarily applied. The second-order political discriminator will choose from among them to express his disvaluation in response to contingencies of the situation and individuals involved. He may, in all sincerity, explain his disvaluation with reference to impartially applied aesthetic standards, or to his ingrown, native suspicion of big words. But the crucial feature of second-order political discrimination is that the actual explanation for his disvaluing the person's eloquence, *in whatever respect he disvalues it*, is the person's primary disvalued property of being a male homosexual.

Does second-order political discrimination as thus defined ever actually occur? Some familiar examples of it include attaching disvalue to a person's having rhythm, by reason of its putative connection with her being black; or attaching disvalue to a person's being very smart, by reason of its putative connection with his being Jewish. Both of these cases are examples of politically discriminatory stereotyping, in which some arbitrary property is falsely taken to be characteristic of persons of a particular race or ethnic or religious affiliation. But I mean to call attention to a slightly different feature of these examples. Someone who practices second-order political discrimination regards a black person who has rhythm as vulgar, salacious, or offensive; at the very least, undignified. Similarly, such a person regards a Jewish person who is very smart as sophisticated, glib, or crafty, or as subversive or ungentlemanly; at the very least, untrustworthy. In both cases, properties that are in themselves salutary, or at least neutral, are castigated by the second-order political discriminator, by reason of the disvalue conferred on them by the primary disvalued property. This is what makes them examples of second-order political discrimination.

These familiar, stereotypic examples of second-order political discrimination do not exhaust the repertoire of higher-order political discrimination, for many reasons. First, orders of discrimination can, in theory, be multiplied indefinitely. So, for example, a case of *third-order political discrimination* would involve what I shall call *tertiary disvalued properties*: The primary disvalued property (say, being black) confers disvalue on a further, secondary disvalued property (having rhythm), which in turn confers disvalue on yet a further property of the person (say, being a good dancer). Having rhythm is seen as vulgar, by reason of its association with being black, and being a good dancer is then seen as exhibitionistic (say), by reason of its association with having rhythm. In any such case, the primary property



is in fact irrelevant to judgments of a person's value or competence. Hence the value or disvalue it confers on secondary, tertiary, etc., properties is bogus.

The n-order disvalue relation is *transitive*, in that, for example, if being black confers disvalue on having rhythm, and having rhythm confers disvalue on being a good dancer, then being black confers disvalue on being a good dancer. The n-order disvalue relation is also *inclusive*, in that the primary disvalued property poisons the higher-order political discriminator's evaluations of all further properties of the disvaluee. For example, the primary disvalued property of being black may confer disvalue, alternatively, on a dancer's classical styling: Classical styling in a black dancer may be seen as inappropriate, or as an obscene parody of traditional ballet.<sup>22</sup> The primary disvalued property also confers disvalue on other, unrelated properties of the disvaluee: her appearance, accent, mode of dress, etc.<sup>23</sup>

The inclusiveness of the n-order disvalue relation underscores a second reason why stereotypical cases of second-order discrimination do not exhaust the repertoire of higher-order discrimination: Nonstereotypical traits are also recruited to receive value or disvalue from primary properties to suit

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<sup>22</sup> Of course there are other, more convoluted cases of higher-order political discrimination that represent epicyclic variations on the straightforward cases I shall be examining. For example, being black may wildly exaggerate the value attached to classical styling in a black dancer, if classical styling is perceived as something the person had to overcome great innate and cultural obstacles to achieve. In either case, being black functions as a primary disvalued property because it carries a presumption of inferiority into the evaluation of further properties of the person.

<sup>23</sup> Is it perhaps too strong to claim that a primary disvalued property poisons the higher-order political discriminator's evaluation of *all* of the disvaluee's other properties? Can't a higher-order political discriminator respect a disvaluee's traits of character in a certain restricted area, *despite* his disvalued status? I am inclined to think not. For this seems to occur almost exclusively when the "valued" property itself conforms to the higher-order political discriminator's stereotypes. For example, a black man may be admired for his athletic prowess but encounter hostility when he runs for political office. In such cases, the higher-order political discriminator's admiration and respect for the stereotypical trait is not unalloyed. It is tempered by a certain smug complacency at the disvaluee's confirmation of his disvalued status in the very cultivation and expression of that stereotypical trait. To sustain the above objection, we would need to see a higher-order political discriminator exhibiting *unalloyed* admiration and respect for *nonstereotypical* traits, such that *these positive feelings did not, in turn, positively reform the higher-order political discriminator's prejudicial attitude toward the person's primary disvalued property*: Someone who sincerely respects and admires a disvaluee for nonstereotypical reasons, without feeling threatened or invaded, has already begun to weaken the psychological edifice on which her politically discriminatory evaluation of the person as a disvaluee is based.

particular occasions. We do not ordinarily think of classical styling in dance as a property about which discriminators might have any particular attitude. But this may be mistaken. Higher-order discrimination is not concerned solely with *stereotypical* secondary, tertiary, etc., disvalued properties. It may be concerned with any further properties of the person on which the primary disvalued property itself confers disvalue. Thus, for example, being Jewish (or black, or a woman) may confer disvalue on being smart, which in turn may confer disvalue on being intellectually prolific: A person's intellectual prolificity may be seen as evidence of logorrhea, or lack of critical conscience, and may thus poison the evaluation of those intellectual products themselves. A first test for ascertaining whether the disvalue of some property of a person is to be explained as a case of higher-order political discrimination is to ascertain whether or not that property is disvalued uniformly across individuals, regardless of anything that might count as a primary disvalued property for a higher-order political discriminator. If someone is just as contemptuous of Fred Astaire's having rhythm as they are of Michael Jackson's, or just as contemptuous of intellectual prolificity in Balzac as in Isaac Asimov, then the charge of higher-order political discrimination may be defeated.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> It might be thought that this first test is inherently self-limiting for the case in which the person happens to dislike just the property that is most typically associated with, e.g., a certain race - say, dark skin - but nevertheless passes the first test in that she disvalues it uniformly across individuals, whether it occurs in blacks, East Indians, Jews, Arabs, Aborigines, or Coppertone-soaked Californians. I think what we should say about this kind of case is that it does not present a problem. The fact that someone is acquitted of being a racist doesn't imply that her evaluations are therefore admirable or enlightened. Any predicate or combination of predicates that *fails* the first test is either a rigged definite description of a particular disvalued group, e.g., "ova-producing featherless bipeds," or else describes a discriminatory stereotype, e.g., "dark-skinned, dark-eyed, woolly-haired individuals with rhythm." Of course, a person might just happen to disvalue only individuals who fit such a stereotype and not those who violate it. But since this disvaluation would not be independent of anything that might count as a primary disvalued property for such a person, it would not defeat the charge of higher-order political discrimination.

Note, however, that the first test does *not* work for identifying a distinct but related attitude, which we might call *generalized higher-order political discrimination*, in which a person comes to disvalue some constellation of higher-order properties across the board *specifically because of its original association with a primary disvalued property stereotypically ascribed to a certain group*. Someone who finds having rhythm vulgar in any dancer, regardless of racial or ethnic affiliation, because he associates having rhythm with blacks, whom he fears and despises, would exemplify such an attitude.

Stereotypes change in accordance with changes in the objects of political discrimination, as different populations seek access to the goods, services and opportunities enjoyed by the advantaged; and primary and higher-order disvalued properties change accordingly. For instance, the anti-Semitic response to the attempts of Jewish intellectuals to achieve full assimilation to the institutions of higher education in this country frequently found expression in the disvaluative description of assertively ambitious Jewish academics as pushy or opportunistic. Now similarly situated blacks and women frequently enjoy that title. Conversely, those with such primary disvalued properties who attempt to substitute diplomacy for assertion are characterized by higher-order political discriminators as manipulative, obsequious, or sycophantic. A second test for ascertaining whether or not the disvalue of some property of a person is to be explained as a case of higher-order political discrimination is to ascertain whether there is any alternative property, conduct or manner, directed toward the same goal - i.e. of gaining access to unjustly withheld social advantages, that avoids or deflects the disvalue conferred by the primary disvalued property. If there is not - if, that is, whatever your strategy, you're damned if you do and damned if you don't, then the charge of higher-order political discrimination is *prima facie* justified.

Other arbitrary properties, not just the familiar political ones, can function as primary disvalued properties to a higher-order political discriminator. Physical appearance, style of diction, social bearing, familial, educational, or professional pedigree, circle of associates, manner of dress, are among the more familiar, if less widely acknowledged, objects of higher-order political discrimination. Some of these properties are often assumed to go hand in hand with, or even be partially definitive of, more widely recognized primary disvalued properties. For example, higher-order political discriminators may tend to assume that ethnic identity is inherently connected with a certain physical appearance (Jews have dark, curly hair and long noses), that racial identity is connected with a certain style of diction and class background (blacks speak Black English and come from the ghetto), or that gender identity is connected with a certain social bearing (women are sympathetic, passive, and emotional). This is how a stereotype is formed. But again I mean to call attention to a slightly different point: These properties themselves may be seen as sources of disvalue, *independently* of their possible connection with such stereotypically primary disvalued properties. Someone who has all of the valued race, ethnic, religious, class, and gender properties, but lacks the valued style of diction, mode of self-presentation, or educational or professional pedigrees may be subject to higher-order political discrimination just as fully as someone who lacks all of the former properties but has all of the latter. In both cases, this means that their other properties - their personality characteristics, interests, or achievements - will be seen as

higher-order disvalued properties, by reason of their association with these equally arbitrary primary disvalued properties.

This shows that the first-order political discrimination with which we are familiar is merely a special case of a more general psychological phenomenon which is not limited to first-order *political* discrimination at all. However, higher-order political discrimination as defined above usually includes it; for it would be psychologically unusual, to say the least, to find an individual who is in general corrupt in his evaluations of a person's other properties in the ways just described, yet impartial and scrupulous in his evaluations of blacks, Jews, women, gays, etc. and *their* properties. Someone who is apt to dislike a person because of her hair texture or accent or mode of dress can hardly be expected to be genuinely judicious when it comes to judging her gender, race, class, sexual orientation, or ethnic or religious affiliation. Hence we can expect that first-order political discrimination and higher-order political discrimination in general are to be found together.<sup>25</sup>

#### VI. Reciprocal Higher-Order Political Discrimination

Higher-order political discrimination as so far described implies a companion phenomenon, which I shall call *reciprocal higher-order political discrimination*. Here properties irrelevant to judgments of a person's competence or worth are seen as primary *valued* properties, as sources of value which confer value on the person's secondary, tertiary, etc., properties. Any one of the primary properties enumerated so far may have this function. For example, a person's gender may be perceived as conferring value on secondary properties, such as his competence to hold a certain professional position. Or a person's familial lineage may be perceived as conferring value on her admissibility to an institution of higher education. Or a person's class background may be perceived as conferring value on his manner of dress. Or a person's educational pedigree may be perceived as conferring value on her political pronouncements, which in turn confers value on her personal lifestyle; and so on. Each of these examples have an arbitrary and irrational

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<sup>25</sup> There is another reason that favors retaining the label of higher-order *political* discrimination, despite its application to primary disvalued properties less widely recognized as political in nature, corresponding to a broader conception of political behavior. We can think of politically discriminatory stereotyping more generally as a means of sorting individuals into those with whom one is willing to share available power and resources versus those with whom one is not. In this broader sense, any disvalued property can become a criterion for excluding the disvaluee from the discriminator's circle of honorifically stereotyped valuees.

quality to them. That is because reciprocal higher-order political discrimination, like higher-order political discrimination itself, is an arbitrary and irrational attitude.

Higher-order political discrimination and reciprocal higher-order political discrimination are materially interdependent. If a person's having a particular racial identity is a source of disvalue for a higher-order political discriminator, then if someone lacks that racial identity, they are not seen as tainted by that disvalue. For example, if a person's being Asian confers disvalue on his attempts at tact, i.e., if he is therefore perceived as particularly evasive and inscrutable, then if he were white, he would not be perceived as similarly evasive and inscrutable. For if a higher-order political discriminator recognized that one can be just as evasive and inscrutable without being Asian, say, if one has a hidden agenda or lacks social skills, then it would have to be recognized that those properties, *rather* than his being Asian, might be conferring disvalue on his attempts at tact. Conversely, if a person's having a particular racial identity is a source of value for a higher-order political discriminator, then someone who lacks that racial identity is not blessed by that value. For example, if a person's being white confers value on his attempts at tact, i.e., if he is therefore viewed as sensitive and reasonable, then if he were Asian, he would not be perceived as similarly sensitive and reasonable. For if a higher-order political discriminator recognized that one can be just as sensitive and reasonable without being white, say, if one has no personal investment in the issue or has thought hard about it, then it would have to be recognized that those properties, rather than his being white, might be conferring value on his attempts at tact.

The two tests for higher-order political discrimination apply analogously to reciprocal higher-order political discrimination: (1) Ascertain whether or not the higher-order valued property is valued uniformly across individuals, regardless of anything that might count as a primary valued property for the discriminator. If a person's perceived competence to hold a certain professional position would not be in any way diminished if she were black - if, that is, blacks with comparable competence have been hired to such positions, then the charge of reciprocal higher-order political discrimination may be defeated. (2) Ascertain whether there is any alternative property, conduct or manner, directed toward the same goal - of gaining access to some social advantage - that avoids or deflects the value conferred by the primary valued property. If there is not - if, for example, whether you are assertively ambitious or carefully diplomatic, intellectually prolific or intellectually fallow, you can do no wrong, then the charge of reciprocal higher-order

political discrimination is *prima facie* justified.<sup>26</sup> Henceforth I shall take higher-order political discrimination to include reciprocal higher-order political discrimination. These two phenomena demonstrate that one need not be a blatant racist, sexist, anti-Semite, or homophobe - let us describe such an individual as a *simple first-order political discriminator* - in order to practice political discrimination. Higher-order political discrimination is given fullest expression indirectly, by implication, in seemingly unrelated tastes, preferences, and behavior.

#### VII. Higher-Order Political Discrimination: A Case of Pseudorationality

So far I have used locutions such as, "seen as conferring value/disvalue on" and "by reason of its association with" to describe the relation between primary and higher-order disvalued or valued properties, without saying in any detail in what I take that relation to consist. It does *not* consist in the set of beliefs held by the higher-order political discriminator to the effect that

- (A) (1) agent A has primary disvalued property P;  
 (2) agent A has n-ary property N; and  
 (3) P confers negative value on... N.

(A) is faulty because of (3): Only the most perverse and unrepentant higher-order political discriminator would admit - even to herself - that it is P that confers negative value on N. On the other hand, only the most absurdly consistent higher-order political discriminator would affirm the belief that, in virtue of (A.1) and (A.2),

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<sup>26</sup> Here it might be objected that the second test is inadequate to ascertain the existence of reciprocal higher-order political discrimination, since the explanation for why "you can do no wrong" may be, not that all such higher-order properties receive value from primary valued properties, but rather that all such higher-order properties are in any case irrelevant to judgments of a person's competence. However, remember that the second test applies specifically to properties directed toward that goal of gaining access to some social advantage. This includes not only properties irrelevant to the question of one's entitlement to that advantage, such as those pertaining to the manner or quality of one's self-promotion, but also properties directly relevant to that question, such as those pertaining to one's status, potential, training, experience, etc. The second test sifts out those cases in which irrelevant higher-order properties are made the basis for conferring the advantage, e.g., one's manner of self-promotion, and in which relevant higher-order properties are discounted as the bases for conferring the advantage, e.g., one's previous professional experience. In both kinds of cases, higher-order political discrimination is marked by the *relaxation or modification* of the criteria of competence for receiving the advantage, in order to accommodate the particular properties of the valuee.

(3') therefore N is of negative value, period.

This would be the plight of the higher-order political discriminator who, in virtue of his contempt for Isaac Asimov's intellectual prolificacy, would feel compelled to abjure Balzac as well. Instead, (3) must be replaced by

(3'') N, in the way in which it is borne by A, is of negative value.

(3'') is better because it incorporates that locution that scrupled higher-order political discriminators are so reluctant or unable to further define: For the higher-order political discriminator, there is just something about *the way in which* a person dances rhythmically that is vulgar; something about the way in which a person manifests their intelligence that is glib or sophisticated; something about the way in which they attempt to gain access to social advantages that is unctuous or opportunistic. The higher-order political discriminator would vehemently reject the suggestion that this "something" might have anything to do with the person's race, gender, class, sexual orientation, or ethnic or religious affiliation. But in fact, it is precisely this primary disvalued property from which the blemish spreads. Let us then take the following set of beliefs

(B) (1) agent A has primary disvalued property P;

(2) agent A has n-ary property N; and

(3'') N, in the way in which it is borne by A, is of negative value,

plus the following stipulation

(4) For the higher-order political discriminator, A's possession of P is what in fact confers negative value on N

as characteristic of the typical, i.e. scrupulous higher-order political discriminator.

What makes higher-order political discriminators so scrupulous? What, that is, explains the higher-order political discriminator's tendency to suppress (B.4)? Part of the answer lies in the nature of first-order political discrimination. As we have seen, first-order political discrimination can be understood as a species of pseudorationality which relies heavily on the mechanisms of rationalization and dissociation. The perception of someone's race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnic or religious affiliation, etc., as a source of disvalue or value is the consequence of applying value concepts like "person," "human being," "citizen," "member of the community," "rational and responsible agent," etc., too narrowly, to include only those individuals who have the primary valued property, and exclude those individuals who lack it. And similarly, dissociating Jews as subhuman, blacks as childlike, gays as perverts, working-class people as animals, or women as irrational are ways of obscuring one's identification of these individuals as fully mature, responsible

human beings, and thereby obscuring one's recognition of these individuals as full members of the community with which one identifies.<sup>27</sup>

Higher-order political discrimination then adds to this the pseudorational mechanism of *denial*, in which we suppress recognition of an anomalous thing or property altogether, in order to preserve the internal consistency of our beliefs or theory about the world, ourselves, and other people. I have already argued that typically, higher-order political discriminators are likely to be first-order political discriminators as well; that is, they have the same prejudices that incline them to view individuals with the primary disvalued properties as inferior, not fully members of their community. The simple first-order political discriminator experiences no conflict in categorizing disvaluees as inferior beings to be suppressed and exploited. Therefore, she has no need to exercise denial, either of her own discriminatory responses or of the disvaluees' existence. By contrast, higher-order political discriminators must deny both, in order to preserve the consistency of their beliefs. Because they are deeply affected, but not fully reformed, by arguments and experiences that suggest that political discrimination is unjust, both their own discriminatory responses and the objects of those responses are anathema to higher-order discriminators. Because they do not want to believe that their responses are politically discriminatory, they deny them altogether. The higher-order political discriminator may deny, for example, that the primary disvalued property in question is a disvalue at all, and yet helplessly deplore the "fact" that nevertheless there are no competent or worthy candidates bearing this

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<sup>27</sup> The irony in the case of racism is that there is a substantial literature in biology and the social sciences that indicates that almost all purportedly white Americans have between five and twenty percent black ancestry - hence are, according to this country's entrenched "just one trace" convention of racial classification, black. See F. James Davis, *Who Is Black?* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); Virginia R. Dominguez, *White By Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986); Joel Williamson, *A New People* (New York: Free Press, 1980); L. L. Cavalli-Sforza and W. F. Bodmer, *The Genetics of Human Populations* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1971), 490-499; T. E. Reed, "Caucasian Genes in American Negroes," *Science* 165 (1969): 762-768; P. L. Workman, B. S. Blumberg and A. J. Cooper, "Selection, Gene Migration and Polymorphic Stability in a U.S. White and Negro Population," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 15. 4 (1963): 429-437; Bentley Glass and C. C. Li, "The Dynamics of Racial Admixture - An Analysis of the American Negro," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 5 (1953): 1-20; and in general, *Genetic Abstracts* from about 1950. For these references and discussion on this matter I am indebted to Professor Monro S. Edmonson of Tulane University's Department of Anthropology.



property to be found; or hold any such candidate to a much higher standard of acceptance or performance than that he ordinarily applies, relative to which her secondary properties can be disparaged. He may denigrate her intelligence as cleverness; or ridicule her for working too hard when she exhibits energy and commitment to her work; or disparage her professional recognition as achieved through hustling or connections.

These discriminatory responses suggest that the higher-order political discriminator in fact categorizes such members of the disvalued group themselves in similarly demeaning terms with respect to their primary properties, but experiences a conflict of conscience about doing so. Faced with the conflict between first-order politically discriminatory habits of thought and the dictates of conscience, the higher-order political discriminator exercises denial, above all in order to avoid this conflict, by eradicating its source from awareness. The higher-order political discriminator often fails to acknowledge the very existence or presence of members of the disvalued groups, in order to circumvent his own, first-order politically discriminatory responses to them.<sup>28</sup> For instance, he may ignore or fail to acknowledge a disvaluee's contribution to a general discussion, or respond to that contribution as though someone else had made it. Or he may relegate a disvaluee to marginal or peripheral tasks in a professional setting. Or he may simply ignore the disvaluee altogether, avoiding all social interaction not strictly required by social or institutional obligations. In behaving in this fashion, the higher-order political discriminator does not give vent to any sort of malevolent impulse. His aim is not to insult or injure the disvaluee in any way. Rather, his aim is to avoid the painfully conflicting feelings - of disgust or contempt on the one hand, and the pangs of conscience on the other - that acknowledgment of the disvaluee provokes.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> This may contribute to an explanation of the phenomenon, noted by Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo (*Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), that in the last twenty years, white support for the *principles* of equality and fairness for blacks have increased, concurrently with white opposition to the *implementation* of those principles.

<sup>29</sup> Here the joke characterizing the difference between first-order racism in the South and in the North is relevant: In the South, it is said, whites don't mind how close a black person gets, as long as he doesn't get too big; whereas in the North, whites don't mind how big a black person gets, as long as he doesn't get too close. Only the higher-order political discriminator of either region is compelled to deny the existence of the black person altogether.

Denial of a person's presence as a way of avoiding conflicting feelings about them is fairly common. A very handsome man may be the object of denial, when others' feelings of attraction to him conflict with their conviction that these feelings are

When social or institutional obligations make denial of the disvaluee's presence impossible, denial of (at the very least) her primary disvalued property, and of its perceived disvalue, supplies a second-best resolution to this conflict of conscience: Denial of the disvaluee's primary disvalued property suppresses from awareness the discriminatory habits of thought elicited by it, hence similarly preserves consistency, by placating the requirements of conscience. Thus the higher-order political discriminator is guilty of an even greater failure of cognitive discrimination than that of the simple first-order political discriminator. For whereas the latter fails merely to perceive the disvaluee's personhood through her difference, the former fails to perceive either her or her difference altogether. This is why the higher-order political discriminator tends to suppress (B.4). Unfortunately, to suppress habits of thought from awareness is not to eradicate their influence, any more than to suppress the disvaluee's existence from awareness is to eradicate her influence. Higher-order political discrimination is characterized by that attitude in which a certain habit of thought, namely first-order political discrimination, poisons one's evaluations and behavior, whether one acknowledges this or not.

The higher-order political discriminator is inclined, moreover, not to acknowledge this, no matter how obviously incriminating his evaluations and behavior may be to a disinterested observer. For this would expose the painful conflict of conscience the higher-order political discriminator's behavior attempts to suppress. To acknowledge this conflict, in turn, would be to acknowledge the need to resolve it, i.e., the need to work through and overcome the first-order prejudices that gave rise to it. But it is precisely in virtue of those first-order prejudices themselves that such a project of self-improvement stands very low on the higher-order political discriminator's list of priorities. Unlike the resolution of Oedipal conflicts, emotional problems, tensions in one's personal relationships, or career dilemmas, coming to terms with one's prejudices and learning not to inflict them inadvertently on others just is not, in the last analysis, seen as terribly important by the higher-order political discriminator. That is part of what makes him a political discriminator in the first place.<sup>30</sup>

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inappropriate; a very fortunate or charismatic person may be the object of denial, when others' feelings of envy or resentment conflict with a similar conviction. Or a homely person may be the object of denial when others' feelings of repugnance conflict with their kindness or social good will. Higher-order political discrimination is most analogous to this last-described case.

<sup>30</sup> Here I think it would be wrong to interpret the higher-order political discriminator as concerned only with personal problems and not with social ones. Rather, the higher-

As I have painted it, then, higher-order political discrimination is peculiarly the sickness of thoughtful, well-intentioned and conscientious individuals who nevertheless have failed adequately to confront and work through their own prejudices, or who perhaps have been too quickly satisfied by their ability to marshal arguments on behalf of doing so. Such individuals are being neither disingenuous nor hypocritical when they deny that a person's race, gender, class, sexual orientation, or ethnic or religious affiliation affects their judgment of her competence or worth. They vehemently insist that this is so, they want it to be so, and they genuinely believe it to be so. They are, nevertheless, mistaken. Their efforts to explain away each manifest expression of higher-order political discrimination on different and inconsistent grounds are unconvincing. And their behavior exhibits a degree of otherwise inexplicable arbitrariness and idiosyncrasy that severely strains our attempts to apply the principle of charity in making sense of it. Hence, in order to understand the behavior of higher-order political discriminators, we must watch what they *do*, not what they *say*.<sup>31</sup>

For example, these attitudes may find expression in an expectation of greater deference or genuflection from a member of the devalued group. The simple first-order political discriminator expresses his anger at the violation of this expectation in certain familiar stereotypes: the "uppity nigger" whose refusal to behave subserviently is seen as impudence or disrespect; or the "Jewish-American Princess," whose assertiveness, presumption of self-worth, and expectation of attention and respect are seen as signs of being spoiled, selfish, or imperious. But for the higher-order political discriminator, such anger is displaced into more subtle but similar reactions: Such an individual may just feel angered or personally affronted by a woman's presumption of equality - in personal, social, or intellectual status, or professional worth, or as

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order political discriminator belittles the importance of addressing a certain *personal* problem.

<sup>31</sup> One implication of characterizing higher-order political discrimination as a sickness rather than a fault is that higher-order political discriminators are, in the last analysis, not morally responsible for their behavior. This conclusion seems unpalatable in many respects. Nevertheless, I am reluctantly pessimistic about the efficacy of direct appeals to reason in higher-order political discriminators. Because their reason - or rather, their dogged pseudorationality - is so inherently a part of the problem, I am inclined to think that the solution should be sought in the adoption of some version of Strawson's "objective attitude" toward them; i.e. that higher-order political discriminators must be *managed* - perhaps psychotherapeutically - rather than *addressed*. I suggest an explanation for this kind of intractability in "Two Conceptions of the Self" and "Pseudorationality," *op. cit.* note 10, and suggest certain artistic strategies that may have a beneficial effect on higher-order political discriminators in Section VIII, below.

a competitor for social or professional rewards; or unduly irritated by her failure to defer or back down in argument. She may be viewed as forward in conversation, when in fact she contributes no more and no less than anyone else; or stubborn, unresponsive, or impervious to well-intentioned criticisms, when in fact the only acceptable response to those criticisms, in the eyes of the higher-order political discriminator, would be for her to concur with them wholeheartedly and apologize for her dereliction. Or, to take another example, the higher-order political discriminator may feel invaded or compromised by a black person's jocularity or willingness to trade friendly insults that one accepts as a matter of course from those considered to be one's peers. The black person may be viewed as overly familiar, insolent, or presumptuous. In all such cases, the disvaluee's behavior is seen as a *presumption*, not a right or an accepted practice.<sup>32</sup> The higher-order political discriminator is tortured by the suspicion that he is somehow being ridiculed, or shown insufficient respect, or that the disvaluee's conduct bespeaks contempt.

In a recent compelling analysis of anger,<sup>33</sup> N. J. H. Dent suggests that anger is based ultimately on feelings of personal inferiority: These lead one to overestimate the importance of others' expressions of regard and esteem for one, which in turn multiplies the number of occasions upon which one feels slighted or demeaned when such expressions are not forthcoming, or are of insufficient magnitude relative to one's importunate requirements. This oversensitivity to being slighted in turn provokes the desire to rectify one's situation through retaliation, by lashing out at the offender. This analysis by itself does not, I think, cover all cases of anger; nor does it explain the origins of simple first-order political discrimination. But it does provide insight into why higher-order political discriminators, like simple first-order political discriminators, are apt to become so angry, so often, at imagined slights from seemingly arrogant disvaluees. The more inferior one feels, the more expressions of esteem one requires. And the more inferior one perceives a disvaluee to be, the more elaborate the disvaluee's expression of esteem of one is required to be. Whereas a friendly nod from a perceived superior is sufficient to transport one to a state of grace, anything less than a full-length

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<sup>32</sup> The view of the disvaluee's assumption of equality as a presumption may explain the higher-order political discriminator's otherwise inexplicable umbrage at being complemented by a disvaluee: An inferior is in no position to confer favors of any kind.

<sup>33</sup> N. J. H. Dent, *The Moral Psychology of the Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 155-160.

obedience from a perceived inferior appears to be an insult.<sup>34</sup> In all such cases, irascibility regularly directed at particular members of disvalued groups should not be dismissed as simply an idiosyncrasy of character, even if it is not intentionally directed at members of disvalued groups *as such*. It is, nevertheless, an overt expression of higher-order political discrimination.

A second, related example of behavior and judgments distorted by higher-order political discrimination is the treatment of disvaluees in a way that would constitute a clear insult or *faux pas*, if the person so treated were one's recognized peer. For example, a white Gentile may privately make an anti-Semitic remark to a black colleague, in a misguided effort to establish rapport, when such a remark would be seen as a serious social lapse even among other white Gentiles. Or a heterosexual may make gratuitous disparaging remarks to a gay colleague about her work or job performance, of a sort designed to "cut her down to size" rather than provide constructive criticism. Or a man may make offensively personal remarks to a woman colleague about her physical appearance, personal life, or manner of dress, of a sort that would be highly inappropriate if they were made to another man. Or he might expect from a woman colleague extra forbearance for fits of temper, irresponsible conduct, or extraordinary professional demands that he would not from a man. The higher-order political discriminator, in other social contexts, may be acclaimed quite rightly as a "prince among men," to disvaluees, however, he reveals himself as Mr. Hyde.<sup>35</sup> Yet unlike former President Lyndon Johnson, who conferred with his cabinet through an open bathroom door, while uninhibitedly and indiscreetly performing his morning ablutions, the higher-order political discriminator cannot be supposed to commit these boorish excesses with any offensive intent. Rather, he regards his response to a person's disvalued properties as socially innocuous; as an

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<sup>34</sup> In the deep South up to the mid-1960s, for example, for a black person to meet the gaze of a white person was perceived as an offense; and for a black man even to look at a white woman was to invite lynching.

<sup>35</sup> This often creates additional difficulties in identifying cases of higher-order political discrimination for what they are. The testimony of a disvaluee suffers a credibility problem at the outset. This problem is severely exacerbated if the testimony concerns a higher-order political discriminator whom others have every reason to regard as a saint. Under these circumstances, any charge of inconsistency - whether it comes from others and targets the disvaluee, or comes from the disvaluee and targets the higher-order political discriminator - is in the eye of the beholder. For higher-order political discriminators regard coarse, tasteless, or brutal behavior toward disvaluees as called forth by them and so warranted; hence as fully consistent with the most highly refined manners and courtly civility toward others.

acceptable variation in social etiquette, keyed to the variations among the personality traits of different individuals.

A third example of such distorted behavior is the implicit treatment of disvaluees as being obligated by different rules of conduct than the ones which govern oneself and those considered to be one's peers. One may apply different criteria of interpretation to the behavior of disvaluees: Whereas enigmatic behavior by valuees is excused, overlooked, or given the benefit of the doubt, similar behavior on the part of disvaluees is interpreted as proof of vice or malevolence. This interpretation motivates the higher-order political discriminator not only to avoid, but also to justify the avoidance of direct interaction with the disvaluee, and thus avoid the conflict of conscience described earlier. Or one may apply rules of honor, loyalty, and responsibility only to those considered to be one's peers, but have no scruples about betraying the trust or confidentiality of a disvaluee, who is implicitly viewed as unentitled to such consideration. Alternately, one may hold disvaluees to far more stringent moral standards than the members of one's own community in fact practice among themselves. Any violation of these standards by the disvaluee then creates an irradicable moral blemish to which the valuees are invulnerable, by reason of their status as valuees. These cases express quite clearly the conviction that disvaluees just do not have quite that same status, hence are not to be subject to the same standards of treatment, as members of one's recognized community - at the same time that the higher-order political discriminator vehemently and in all honesty denies that any such discrimination is taking place. Indeed in all of these examples, the higher-order political discriminator may sincerely deny that the person's race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or religious affiliation, etc., arbitrarily influences his evaluations, when his behaviors shows patently that they do.

#### *VIII. Failures of Cognitive Discrimination: Causes and Cures*

There are many forces that may intensify higher-order political discrimination and its social consequences. Among them are, first and foremost, complicitous institutional practices. Individuals in positions of responsibility often rank their personal and social allegiances ahead of their professional obligation to protect disvaluees from the pernicious effects of higher-order political discrimination. Or they effectively reward it, by regularly interpreting instances of it as expressions of professional autonomy, and refusing in principle to scrutinize suspected instances of it, on the grounds that doing so would be unwarranted interference in an organization's internal affairs. These institutions often comply with the letter of antidiscriminatory policies, by hiring members of disvalued groups to

temporary positions of high public visibility. Since such individuals are regularly replaced by other, equally competent but equally transient members of the same disvalued group, that group's visibility within the institution can be maintained, without infiltrating the entrenched system of political discrimination through permanent or seniority status. This is to abdicate the responsibility for enforcing those antidiscriminatory policies to which such institutions publicly claim to be committed.

Second, there is the intellectual resourcefulness of the higher-order political discriminator: Someone who is in fact deeply invested in the disvaluational status of some primary property may always recruit some further, equally irrelevant property to explain her seemingly irrational judgment, and thus deflect the charge of higher-order political discrimination. It may be said, for example, that the disvalued property is not a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnic or religious affiliation, etc., but rather his inability to "fit in," to "get along with others," or to "be a team player." This is a particularly familiar and dependable response, because the evidence for ascribing this property may be materially coextensive with the evidence for disvaluing the primary property at issue: Since the disvaluee is in theory held to the same standards of conduct that govern others in the community, but in fact expected to conform to different ones, tailored to his disvalued status, his inability to "fit in" can be guaranteed at the outset.<sup>36</sup>

A third force that intensifies higher-order political discrimination are the repressive pseudorational habits of rationalization, dissociation, and denial already discussed. Earlier I suggested that higher-order political discriminators were generally well-intentioned individuals who had failed to come to terms with their own prejudices. I also mentioned some possible reasons for this failure: avoidance of conflicts of conscience, feelings of personal inferiority, and first-order political discrimination being among them. Another reason that should not be neglected is that higher-order political discriminators tend to rationalize, dissociate, or deny the very existence of higher-order political discrimination itself. They might claim, for example, that the phenomenon I have described is in truth perceptual sensitivity to subtle variations and qualities among individuals, all of which might be relevant to questions of value or competence in a sufficiently broad

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<sup>36</sup> Under these circumstances, the disvaluee, too, may be accused rightly of pseudo-rationality, if his personal investment in the theoretical standards of equal treatment is so great that he rationalizes, dissociates, or denies the facts of discrimination that blatantly confront him. But I argue elsewhere ("The Meaning of 'Ought' and the Loss of Innocence," unpublished paper, 1989) that self-preservation *requires* that, although such ideals ultimately must die, they must not do so without a long and painful struggle.

sense. Or they might agree that higher-order political discrimination exists, but dissociate it from their own motives and behavior, as an anomalous phenomenon that is too rare to merit further scrutiny. Or they might just flatly deny the existence of anything like what I have described as higher-order political discrimination, and deny as well the undeniably familiar instances of it which I have invoked to anchor the foregoing analysis. These tactics reinforce the tendencies of higher-order political discriminators to deny their own collusion in the practice of higher-order political discrimination, and to deny or minimize their need to come to terms with it. Higher-order political discriminators are adept at the tactics of pseudorationality because they have so much self-esteem to lose by modifying their beliefs. But *we* must not be taken in. For above all, higher-order political discriminators need to understand that no one is fooled by their tactics. With the aid of this understanding, they may someday learn to stop fooling themselves.

How might higher-order political discriminators come to such an understanding? How might they achieve self-awareness of the pseudorational tactics that buttress their political discrimination? In closing, I want to limn a set of strategies for cultivating more fine-grained cognitive discriminations in general, through exposure to contemporary works of art, and suggest some ways in which these might provide an antidote to higher-order political discrimination in particular.<sup>37</sup> I will not mean to suggest that works of art are capable of *curing* higher-order political discrimination. As we have seen, higher-order political discrimination is supervenient on first-order political discrimination; and first-order political discriminators are ashamed, not of their political discrimination, but of themselves as inadequate to the honorific stereotypes they reciprocally impose on themselves. In so far as a higher-order political discriminator retains a personal investment in that honorific stereotype, she will be unpersuaded by its deleterious effects on others to renounce it. This means that it is not just her cognitive habits that are in need of reform, but her more central conception of herself. This is a task for social reconditioning or psychotherapy, not art. Nevertheless, art has an important role to play in intensifying a viewer's self-awareness of these matters. Art can highlight pseudorational failures of cognitive discrimination as themselves objects of aesthetic examination; and it can heighten a viewer's

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<sup>37</sup> None of my remarks here should be construed as an account of my own motivations, which are generally obscure to me, in producing the type of art I produce. Instead they should be regarded as providing a rationale for a certain kind of work, an interpretation that situates it in the context of my own conscious concerns.



level of cognitive sensitivity to a wide range of complex situations, of which political discrimination is only one.

In the contemporary setting, galleries and museums announce themselves to the public as arenas in which cognitive alertness is required, and in which the viewer's capacity to understand and situate an anomalous object in its singularly appropriate context will be tested. In earlier historical periods, galleries and museums had different roles: pedagogical or inspirational, for example. But in this one, their primary role, and the role of the artworks they exhibit, is to challenge the limitations of the viewer's conceptual scheme - her presuppositions about reality, the human condition, and social and personal relationships, as well as her presuppositions about what art is and what an exhibition space is supposed to do. By introducing into a specialized cognitive context singular objects that defy easy categorization, galleries and museums signal themselves to their audience as purveyors of heightened awareness through the objects and artifacts they display. Generated by a culture that values innovation for its own sake as well as for its ability to create its own market, these contemporary artifacts function primarily to provoke or stimulate in the viewer more flexible and inclusive conceptualizations of reality that can encompass them. In this sense, contemporary art is a paradigmatic experience of cognitive anomaly. It offers one the opportunity to reorganize the conceptual structure of the self in order to accommodate it, and to test and develop one's capacity for cognitive discrimination in order to grasp it.

Some works of art satisfy this *desideratum* better than others. Some choose instead to reaffirm traditional values, or the social and political *status quo*, or prevailing comfortable convictions and perceptions of human nature. But since Impressionism and perhaps before, but most explicitly since Duchamp, the most significant works of art in the Western tradition<sup>38</sup> have taken seriously the challenge of heightened cognitive discrimination, i.e., the challenge to compel the viewer to see what he did not see before, and to add these anomalous, newly discovered properties of objects and events to his permanent cognitive repertoire. Contemporary artists who are serious about art take seriously their responsibility to question and extend the limits of knowledge by offering anomalous objects, innovative in form, content, or both, as an antidote to provincial and conventional habits of thought.

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<sup>38</sup> By "the Western tradition" in art, I understand not only the Euroethnic canon itself, but also the contributions of colonialized, marginalized, or non-Western cultures to it (as for example, Tahitian art influenced Gauguin, Japanese art influenced Van Gogh, African art influenced Picasso, or American jazz influenced Stuart Davis).

Minimal art of the 1960s offers a particularly compelling example of this. For the first time in the history of Modernism, artists were taken seriously as critics and theorists of contemporary art. And what many Minimal artists explicitly averred in their writings was that no such theory was adequate to an understanding of the work; that the point of presenting geometrically, materially, and formally reductive objects was to draw the viewer's attention away from extrinsic associations and toward the specificity and materiality of the particular object itself. In its aesthetic strategies, Minimalism repudiated the imposition of abstract theory - psychoanalytic, social, or aesthetic - as cognitively inadequate to a full comprehension of the work. Instead it emphasized the uniqueness, singularity, and indexical immediacy of the art object itself. The category of art itself functioned as a catchall term signifying the object's inherent resistance to extrinsic conceptualization, and so its aesthetic interest as an otherwise anomalous entity in its own right. This stance itself was, of course, a theoretical one. But Minimalism differed from earlier theoretical stances in stipulating the properties of the specific object in question as the origin and locus of theorizing about it. It embedded the object in an abstract symbolic system of its own making.

Conceptual and Performance Art of the late 1960s and early 1970s extended this strategy further, by subordinating the medium in which the work was realized to the concepts it embodied or explored. It was even more clearly the intrinsic meaning of the work, and not the cognitive preconceptions the viewer brought to it, that dictated its appropriate conceptualization. In subordinating medium to concept, Conceptual Art not only reaffirmed the conceptual fluidity and inclusiveness of art, as originally introduced by Duchamp's urinal. It also opened the door to the use of any medium, event, or object deemed appropriate to the particular concepts the artist chose to explore. Thus Conceptual Art repudiated all remaining traditional restrictions on content and subject matter as well as on medium. And in so doing, it created the possibility of seeing any object as a conceptual anomaly relative to the conceptual scheme within which it was conventionally embedded. Any such object became a potential locus of original conceptual investigation, and all such objects became potential threats to the conceptual unity of a rigidly or provincially structured self.

Under these circumstances, the role of the gallery or museum as a site of cognitive provocation has become clear. Beyond a few extremely vague and uninformative terms of classification, such as "installation art," "performance art," "object art," etc., there are no longer any expectations or preconceptions a viewer may legitimately bring to such work regarding what kind of viewing experience is in store - except that she will be required to discriminate cognitively a variety of elements, and fashion for herself a coherent

interpretation of the experience that at the same time respects the intrinsic conceptual integrity of the work. A viewer of contemporary art must be prepared for media that include foodstuffs, bodily fluids, chemical compounds, and industrial materials, as well as traditional art media; and for content that may be highly autobiographical, social, sexual, political, or philosophical, as well as realistic or abstract. No viewer who insists on maintaining excessively rigid, provincial, or philistine views about art will survive in the contemporary art world for very long.

This is to suggest that the contemporary art-going public is self-selected to consist, not in a specialized educational and economic elite (as though there were no working-class artists, self-made millionaire collectors, or scholarship students among the art critics!); but rather of those individuals who are psychologically prepared and sophisticated enough to engage in the hard work of cognitive discrimination in general. For all of the above reasons, the contemporary art-going public is likely to be particularly receptive to the conceptual challenge presented by cognitively anomalous objects or properties in general, and, *a fortiori*, by cognitively anomalous persons in particular. The arena of contemporary art, then, is a particularly apt one for addressing the cognitive failures of political discrimination.

Now to return to the plight of the higher-order political discriminator, taken in by his own pseudorational attempts to eradicate awareness of his xenophobic attitudes and behavior. With its latitude in the use of media, content, and subject matter, contemporary art may offer a variety of approaches for reducing this cognitive disingenuity and enhancing self-awareness. Take, for example, *mimesis*: A work of art may incorporate into its subject matter these very pseudorationalizations as an ironic commentary or distancing device. These pseudorationalizations not only impose politically discriminatory stereotyping on others. They are themselves stereotypical reactions, conditioned habitual responses that are part of a behavioral repertoire as limited as that which the political discriminator imposes on anomalous others. Indeed, they embody such stereotypes even as they express them. It is in the nature of deeply instilled habits of thought and action to seem, not only deeply private and individualized; but also fixed, natural, and part of the objective order of things - so much so that voluntarily bringing them to light as objects of self-conscious scrutiny on one's own is exceedingly difficult. One scarcely knows what to question or scrutinize. But hearing or seeing them echoed back to one by an impersonal art object can make it clear to one that these phrases or habits of reasoning are not uniquely one's own, but rather crude and common slogans that short-circuit the hard work of self-scrutiny. Thus *mimesis* can be an effective way of distancing oneself from such pseudorational slogans, and of illuminating their stereotypical character and function. By demonstrating their indiscriminate

and simplistic application to a range of circumstances that clearly demand great sensitivity to specifics, such a work can encourage greater cognitive discrimination of particular persons and circumstances for what they are.

A second device that may be useful as an antidote to higher-order political discrimination is *confrontation*: As we have seen, a higher-order political discriminator escapes from the meaning of her behavior into a thicket of abstract pseudorational theorizing that detaches her from the actual personal and social consequences of her actions. Because she denies the existence of the object of her higher-order political discrimination, in addition to her own responses to it, the higher-order political discriminator often lacks a sense of the hurtfulness of her behavior, or of the harmfulness of its consequences for others. An art object that confronts a higher-order political discriminator with the human repercussions of these consequences can help restore to the higher-order political discriminator a sense of reality, and a sense of cognitive responsibility for the human effects of her unreflective stereotyping of anomalous others. Moreover, a confrontational art object can draw the higher-order political discriminator's attention away from the abstract realm of theoretical obfuscation, and back to the reality of her actual circumstances at the moment. It can help resituate her in the indexical present of her immediate, one-to-one relation to the object and the issues it embodies.

Finally, consider the strategy of *naming*: We have seen that pseudorationality for the higher-order discriminator consists in the construction of an elaborate edifice of euphemisms designed to obscure from himself and others the true meaning of his attitudes, actions, and policies toward others, and of the painful social realities to which his behavior in fact responds. This willed unconsciousness can be penetrated by concepts and symbols that speak plainly to the ugly realities these euphemisms conceal. An art object that draws the viewer's attention to these realities, and leaves no room for ambiguity in their identification, can be an assaultive and disturbing experience. It blocks escape into abstract speculation concerning the denotations and connotations of the terms or symbols deployed as referents, and may reinforce the vividness and objectivity of the realities brought forward through confrontation, with the legitimating imprimature of linguistic or representational acknowledgement. At the same time, through repetition and repeated viewing, it can help accustom the higher-order political discriminator to the existence of these realities, and conceptually defuse them to psychologically manageable proportions.

Of course each of these strategies, as well as many others I have not mentioned, can be deployed outside the contemporary art context as well as within it: in psychotherapy, encounter groups, or organizational training sessions, for example. But one benefit of utilizing art objects in this role is that,

unlike psychotherapists, group leaders, or other human subjects, an art object can elicit different reactions from different viewers *while maintaining exactly the same phenomenological presence to all of them*. It does not itself react personally to any particular viewer, or differently to one viewer than it does to another, or alter its presentational aspect to suit the tastes or dispositions of particular viewers. Because the logic of its internal structure and external appearance depends on its personal history and interactive relationship with the artist rather than with the viewer, its final form is fixed and immutable relative to any particular viewer in a way other human subjects cannot be. Thus a viewer's relation to an art object can be both direct and individual on the one hand, and *impersonal* on the other.

The impersonality, impenetrability, and inherent internal equilibrium of an art object can be a distinct advantage in attacking political discrimination through cognitive discrimination. A human subject who deploys these strategies in other interpersonal contexts is vulnerable to criticism by a participant who feels that the leader, trainer, or therapist is "reacting personally" to her: just doesn't like her, is personally attacking her, manipulating her, or projecting his own problems onto her. And in this type of situation, such criticisms may be justified. But in an art context, they cannot be. For unlike human subjects, an art object cannot have reactions to, intentions toward, or designs of any kind on a viewer; and *a fortiori*, cannot have *personal* reactions, intentions or designs on any *particular* viewer. So although it may happen that a particularly insecure or provincial viewer initially may feel moved to accuse the work of art of manipulating him, ridiculing him, trying to pull the wool over his eyes, guilt-tripping him, attacking him, etc., it will not require too much reflection on the viewer's part to conclude, finally, that this is not the kind of thing an art object, unlike a human subject, has the capacity to do. Nor will it require much more reflection of the viewer's part to conclude that, if he does indeed feel that the work is doing these things to him, these feelings can only be the result of magical thinking and personal projection of his own emotions onto the object; and that this response itself is worth his scrutiny.<sup>39</sup> An important benefit of

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<sup>39</sup> Can the same claims be made for media advertising? Is it not clearly manipulative in intent? Here I think we need to distinguish, in the case of art as well as of advertising, between the creator's intentions in producing the work, and its psychological effects on its viewers. Like advertisers, artists of course have intentions in producing a particular work. Typically, an advertiser's intention in producing a commercial is to get the consumer to buy the product, whereas an artist's intention in producing a work of art may be to get the viewer to reflect on his political or aesthetic attitudes. In both cases, these intentions can be distinguished from the psychological effects of the work on its recipient. An advertiser who pairs a beautiful woman with a certain make of car in

utilizing art objects to combat higher-order political discrimination, then, is that they enable the viewer to discriminate cognitively between what he sees and what he is.

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order to get consumers to buy that make of car may intend to enhance the appeal of that make of car to consumers. That a particular consumer comes to hate his wife because he has a different make of car is not necessarily part of the advertiser's intention. Similarly, an artist who pairs depiction of the homeless with standard stereotypical rationalizations for ignoring them may intend to get viewers to reflect on their economic priorities. That a particular viewer feels guilt-stricken because she has been contributions to her alma mater instead of to the homeless is not necessarily part of the artist's intention. Any individual who engages in an act of communication of any kind intends to have an effect on her audience, at least minimally that it understand her. This does not imply that she intends the actual effect on her audience her communication has. A consumer as well as an art viewer may examine their reactions to a commercial and a work of art respectively, in order self-consciously to discern and differentiate their personal areas of vulnerability or uncertainty from the intended act of impersonal communication the object represents.