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Contesting Harmful Representation Using Community of Inquiry Model

Recent events in the United States point to the dire need to counter harmful unconscious bias. Reams of evidence now exist that literal pre-judgement in regards to race, sex, ethnicity, age and religion among other categories, strongly affects our behavior in ways that when we consciously contemplate them, we would condemn. The way we use language often encodes unconscious value systems. While this field of research is new, many now suggest the way to combat unconscious bias involves bringing the bias to consciousness through discussion. Much research has established the value that using Community of Inquiry methods in developing critical reasoning and empathy. The very structure of this form of philosophical inquiry also makes it a promising opportunity to begin the arduous task of displacing and interrupting harmful unconscious representations such as stereotypes. However, a number of central problems remain in regards to using a Community of Inquiry model to dispel such bias.

In order to analyze how implicit cognition and its accompanying bias relate to language, we first need to establish the ways in which language codes values and to explore the notion of representation. Following this, we'll track recent work on unconscious thought processing, how it works, how it's tested, and most importantly how it affects our behavior. Finally, then, we'll see what suggestions have been made about how to modify these "mindbugs"[1]

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[1] Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People. Banaji and Greenwald. 2011.

Numerous perspectives converge on the notion that in process of signification or representation in language and in the broader understanding of semiotics that includes cultural signs, signification "floats"[2]. Due to what Saussure refers to the "arbitrary" nature of the relationship between a sign and its meaning, there is an opening to allow displacement of meaning.   In the space of play between the connotative and denotative value of words and signs, there exists an opening to be able to alter the meanings of words. Words are never neutral; they condition how we think. Bakhtin puts it as, "For any individual consciousness living in it, language is not an abstract system of normative forms but rather a concrete heteroglot conception of the world. All words have the taste of a profession, a genre. a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life: all words and forms are populated by intentions."[3]

Two pioneers in the study of implicit cognition, Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald, suggest that words not only encode these things, but that they solidify value systems unconsciously and at a very young age. They describe it this way: "Surface differences...spur the beginnings of the ability to recognize similarity and difference. But once language comes into play the sheer force of words can rapidly "stamp in" the meaning of group identities."[4] Essentially, from the time we begin to understand language, words help us not only differentiate between things but also to let us know which differences are significant. On a mundane level, it answers the question my child asked me at an early age why dogs all have names but squirrels

[2] Hall, Stuart. *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Stuart Hall. Sage, 1997.
[3] Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhaĭlovich. *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*. p. 293.
[4] Blindspot, p. 131.

don't. Of greater importance, it tells children about their own in-group membership, singling out

which features of their identity merit weight. Down the road, then, through the culture at large,

these categories come to be filled with associative meanings, culturally defined.[5]

Collectively, these culturally-defined associative meanings come to unconsciously affect

the way we see members of particular categories. Most of this categorization is not only not

harmful, but is absolutely necessary for any basic cognition and survival. We categorize in order

to see the forest through the trees. Unconscious bias goes by a lot of names. Psychologists refer

to it as schemas or implicit associations. Sociologists call it statistical discrimination. Most of us

know it as stereotyping. Unconscious bias and assumptions are neither negative nor positive.

They actually play an important role in helping us manage information. As Applied Social

Psychology journal describes it, "Without them, we'd never move forward with anything, always

having to question what something is used for, will it work or will it harm us."[6]

The fascinating phenomenon arrives when we hold unconscious associations with a

group that we consciously reject, what psychologists refer to as dissociation: "dissociation

represents a state in which a person possesses conflicting attitudes, one reflective, the other

automatic."[7] Two serious question then arises then about this. Can we assume that someone

who has an unconscious attitude endorses or supports it? And more disturbingly, is there any

difference between them at the automatic (or associative) level? In Blindspot, a recently-

published summary of much of the field concerning unconscious bias, the authors frame it as,

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[5] Implicit cognition is measured using an Implicit Associations Test which measures relative speed processing images and words connoting different social groups and operates on the premise that those who consciously reject their unconscious biases slow down considerably when matching images with words. These tests have now been taken on computers by tens of thousands of people, often with upsetting results. Most people with unconscious biases don't expect that they have them.
[6] "Gender Diversity: Long Live the Queen - Applied Social ..." 2011.
[7] Blindspot, p. 97.

"the distinction between *knowing* and *endorsing* is meaningless because at the automatic level there's no capacity for endorsing."[8] It thus may be that being *aware* of stereotypes, biased claims and prejudiced views is enough to have them affect our unconscious views and therefore our behavior, even when we consciously reject them.

So what then is a stereotype in this conception? "Stereotyping as a signifying practice is central to the representation of racial difference...But what is a stereotype?...important distinction between typing and stereotyping...without the use of types, it would be difficult if not impossible to make sense of the world. We understand the world by referring individual objects, people or events in our heads to the general classificatory scheme into which, according to our culture, they fit...The difference between a type and a stereotype is then, stereotypes get hold of the few 'simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognised' characteristics about a person, reduce everything about the person to those traits, exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them and without change or development to eternity. So the first point is -stereotyping reduces, essentialises, naturalises, and fixes 'difference'...Secondly, stereotyping deploys a strategy of 'splitting'. It divides the normal and the acceptable from the abnormal and the unacceptable. It then excludes or expels everything, which does not fit, which is different. "[9]   When Stuart Hall defined racial stereotyping (and the same logic would apply to other kinds of stereotyping) in this way in 1998, it was only beginning to become clear then how we can simultaneously consciously know about and reject a particular stereotype and unconsciously employ the same one. This also helps to explain what Appiah calls *implicit* racism[10], a form of bias that he sees as

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[8] P. 98.
[9] Hall, p. 257
[10] In My Fathers House, p. 34.

immune to evidence. Conscious or explicit racism can be corrected when one sees

counterevidence. Implicit racism, sexism, ageism or any other bias is immune to disproof

because it is unconscious, but also because we may well consciously repudiate that particular

view and have no idea that we hold it on some level. This translates into disturbing behavior

which can become a disturbing politics. Responding to the seeming inability of factual evidence

to shake partisans in politics, particularly in the 2016 presidential primaries in the United States,

the New York Times claims that "Recently, a few political scientists have begun to discover a

human tendency deeply discouraging to anyone with faith in the power of information. It's this:

Facts don't necessarily have the power to change our minds. In fact, quite the opposite. In a

series of studies in 2005 and 2006, researchers at the University of Michigan found that when

misinformed people, particularly political partisans, were exposed to corrected facts in news

stories, they rarely changed their minds. In fact, they often became even more strongly set in

their beliefs. Facts, they found, were not curing misinformation. Like an underpowered

antibiotic, facts could actually make misinformation even stronger."[11]

When we start to add all of this together, from an early age we're surrounded by

discourses[12] which define social groups. We encounter these on both a conscious and

unconscious level. Over the past thirty years, too, much research has shown how remarkably

easily and quickly in-group preference forms, even when the groups are entirely arbitrary.

Groups like racial and sexual identity which get continually socially reinforced, then come to

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[11] "Trump's Asymmetric Warfare." 2016.

[12] One interesting perspective on this comes from an interview of David Foster Wallace where he describes artistic power this way: "Synecdoche's potency in art depends on a community as backdrop and context, audience, and referent: a definable world for the powerful, dual-functioning Part both to belong to and to transcend. And this community—slaves, fascists, beats, yippies, B-boys—requires compression by a real (or fancied) Threatening Other outside, in order to reach critical expressive mass." Costello, p. 97.

represent very strong associative power. A recent study found that "We now know that automatic White preference is pervasive in American society...almost 75% ...reveal automatic White preference...which predicts discriminatory behavior.[13]

What, then is the effect of a nation where most people when tested demonstrate unconscious racial bias? This has gotten a lot of news coverage lately. Just as a review, though here are a few examples where this may affect not only individual behavior but institutional practice:

- Police shootings of unarmed men of color tend to be followed by justifications of feelings of fear by the police officers. Blindspot shows strong unconscious linkages between black men, guns and violence in Americans, despite a lack of empirical evidence.[14] This unconscious bias has been found to exist in all demographics, and has been definitively shown to correlate to quicker use of force by police. Claudia Rankine describes it this way: "When white men are shooting black people, some of it is malice and some an out-of-control image of blackness in their minds. Darren Wilson told the jury that he shot Michael Brown because he looked "like a demon". And I don't disbelieve it. Blackness in the white imagination has nothing to do with black people." [15]

- Growing evidence shows that judges, juries and lawyers also have their perspectives affected by these factors. Given the courts' emphasis on non-emotional, objective perspective, this is particularly troubling. According to one judge, "... three important points. First, bias may be the product of numerous underlying factors. Second, motivations are almost always directed at other individuals, some of whom may be connected to the case (e.g., the plaintiff and attorney) and some of whom may be unconnected individuals from the expert's past (e.g., Dr. A.'s grandmother) or present (e.g., Dr. A.'s husband). Third, experts may not recognize their biasing emotional motivations (which may be too difficult to acknowledge) or their nonemotional biases (which may be so ingrained that they are transparent). [16] Further studies show that, "Emotions such as anger, pity, guilt, affection, resentment, disdain, humiliation, and others may

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[13] Blindspot, p. 34.
[14] P. 103
[15] "Claudia Rankine: 'Blackness in the white imagination has nothing to ...'" 2015.
[16] Moule, Jean. "Understanding unconscious bias and unintentional racism." *Phi Delta Kappan* 90.5 (2009): 321.

give rise to unconscious motivations that conflict with the motivation to be objective. Sattar and colleagues have defined forensic countertransference as…all feelings, whether conscious, subconscious, or unconscious, that are evoked in forensic examiners during evaluation or testimony, in response to examinee and nonexaminee variables that have the potential to have an impact on the objectivity of their forensic opinions.*[17]

- School systems demonstrate elevated rates of suspensions, expulsions and dropping out for students of color. Social trust, or the extent to which the students, teachers, administrators, and parents of a school maintain relationships with each other characterized by respect, personal regard, competence, and personal integrity (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, pp. 41-42), is also affected. Social trust has been found to be more important to school improvement than many other frequently cited factors (Bryk & Schneider, 2003), and of course when teachers don't value or respect parents and their opinions or hold them in high regard, social trust is low.[18]

- In medical care, a doctor's unconscious bias affects how a patient's symptoms and treatments are viewed. The statistics here are pretty stunning. If you are African-American and have a broken bone, you are less likely to get pain medication than a White patient. Studies show the physicians can tell the severity of pain but give less pain medication to Black and Latino patients. This is a pattern that cuts across all areas of medicine. Of the 60 most common procedures reimbursed by Medicare, African-Americans receive fewer procedures than White patients even though they have a higher rate of illness. The only procedures that African-Americans get at higher rates are leg amputation, testicle removal, implantation of shunts for renal disease and tissue removed due to ulcers. All these procedures reflect the failure of early intervention and care or a lack of continuity in the quality of medical care…. What seems to matter is that you report you had the experience of being discriminated against. Of course, discrimination is more common against minorities, but it also occurs with other racial and social groups, and when it does, the evidence to date suggests that the effects are similar. When Whites report higher levels of discrimination, their health is also hurt. When we fail to treat every child with humanity, dignity and respect, there are consequences.[19]

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[17] Goldyne, Adam J. "Minimizing the influence of unconscious bias in evaluations: A practical guide." *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law Online* 35.1 (2006): 60-66.

[18] Puchner, Laurel, and Linda Markowitz. "Do Black Families Value Education? White Teachers, Institutional Cultural Narratives, & Beliefs about African Americans." *Multicultural Education* 23.1 (2015): 9.

[19] ""No, You're Not Imagining It" by Wilkerson, Isabel - Essence ..." 2014. 15 Mar. 2016

These are but a few examples and are only examples of one kind of bias. Clearly, its essential that something be done. However, the dilemma is that if harmful unconscious connotative representations are unconscious, then it's terribly hard to spot them. None of us know we have them and many of us have implicit cognition that we explicitly repudiate. The short story author George Saunders phrases it this way: "Sometimes when I read new fiction, I feel that the writers of it, myself included, have a somewhat dysfunctional relationship with our own culture. I don't mean we disapprove of it. I mean that we have absorbed so much habitual disapproval of it that we are no longer able to see it, and therefore are unable to disapprove of it properly. How can you disapprove (or approve) of something you no longer see? "[20] We need a better way of exploring our own poorly-arrived at beliefs: we need other people.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS?

To sum up, then, there is overwhelming evidence both for the existence of extensive unconscious bias in nearly everyone and more distressingly, for the fact that there is also strong evidence that this bias affects how we perceive and act, even when we don't want it to. So, what can be done? While a lot has been written about this, very little suggests a solution. Those that do focus around two different approaches, unfortunately, both rather anemic.

The first of these involves Anti Bias training. Famously instituted by Facebook among other corporations, this method aims to use meetings, some even described as communities of inquiry in some of the literature to bring these biases to awareness and beyond. An evaluation of Facebook's program describes it like this: "In fact, just raising *awareness* of unconscious

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[20] Saunders, George. "Death By Icicle", *Harper's Magazine*, July 2011, pp. 24-26.

biases is not sufficient to end them in organizations (as I discussed in this post). To effectively

combat them, training programs also need to help people *accept* that biases affect them, stress

their *concern* about the consequences, and assure people are willing to learn *to replace* those

tendencies with ones that more closely match their values (e.g., not having prejudice)."[21]

Stressing that even smart, well-intentioned people are influenced by biases "usually helps them

feel more accepting of the fact that they may have discriminated against others based on gender,

race or other factors in the past."[22] While the Facebook manual doesn't overtly mention it, this

approach on its own doesn't shift bias at all; however, if it manages to identify some biases,

solutions described in Blindspot as No Brain solutions[23] can be tried. These don't attempt to

undermine unconscious bias but to circumvent it. One famous example of this involves a

number of prominent orchestras instituting auditions from behind a curtain starting in the late

1980's. Almost immediately following this practice, these orchestras became more diverse.

Practices like checklists for doctors serve a similar purpose.

      The second primary method comes from Nilanjana Dasgupta (of the University of

Massachusetts Amherst) and Anthony Greenwald (of the University of Washington). It found

that it is possible to at least temporarily reduce people's prejudices by showing pictures of iconic

examples of individuals who do not fit common stereotypes—such as African-American icons

like Martin Luther King, Jr., in conjunction with infamous white villains like serial killer Jeffrey

Dahmer.[24] Another approach that proved effective in reducing unconscious racial bias was tested

in research studies where people listened to stories, told in the second person (the "you" voice),

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[21] "What Facebook's Anti-Bias Training Program Gets Right." 2015.
[22] "What Facebook's Anti-Bias Training Program Gets Right." 2015.
[23] P. 150-151
[24] Blindspot, p. 151.

in which a white assailant was attempting to hurt them and a black man came to their rescue. A longer and more vivid version of the story that increased its emotional pull was doubly effective at reducing bias. Yet another approach that worked well involved telling participants to imagine a scenario in which they were playing a game of dodgeball in which everyone on their team was black and everyone on the opposing team was white.

These might sound like short-term mind games, but some evidence suggests the effects of these interventions could be long lasting. In one experiment, carried out over 12 weeks, non-African-American students in a psychology course were first alerted to their prejudice (90% of them showed anti-black bias) and taught a range of de-biasing strategies they could employ on their own time.   For instance, one strategy was *perspective taking*: adopting the perspective of a member of a stigmatized group. A second was *contact*: increasing exposure to members different on dimensions such as race and gender. Yet another was *individuating*: viewing others according to their personal characteristics rather than stereotypical ones.[25] As part of this intervention, in some instances run by Facebook itself, participants in the study were prompted to report and reflect on their use of these strategies. The results: With the participants' sustained effort, prejudicial attitudes decreased and stayed down for at least two months. Of course, the fact that this was done in a work setting and that progress was reported to a supervisor casts a great deal of suspicion on the Facebook data. There is very little data about the effects of other programs. What does seem to be emerging however is that some amount of awareness and consciously redirecting emotions can reduce unconscious bias. The big question mark here involves how

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[25] "Managing Bias | Facebook." 2015. 15 Mar. 2016.

sustained an effect that can be achieved. So far, the evidence would suggest that the effects are not particularly long term.

In thinking about this topic, and as someone who tries to establish community of inquiry models in my classes and in evening philosophy sessions at my school, the final question here is how well this method would work in responding to implicit cognition. While there are many theories and versions of community of inquiry, a few generalizations may help us both see where it could be useful and where it would be challenging.

Mikhail Bakhtin provides a useful way of thinking about language and meaning the potentially opens up a space to reframe unconscious damaging representation. His notion of dialogic understanding allows meaning to be created through the process of discussion. It gets particularly interesting when this idea combines with the notion of a "floating signifier." If the implicit unconscious meanings of terms can be made conscious and "played with," they could potentially be supplanted. Perhaps a discussion could alter the connotative value of words/ signs/ concepts through making what had been hidden overt. The value in doing so through conversation is the need for other people to establish linguistic meaning. Baktin phrases it like this: "The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic expressive intention . Prior to this .. . the word does not exist in a neutral or impersonal language .. . rather it exists in other people's mouths , serving other people's intentions : it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own'...Everything we say and mean is modified by the interaction and interplay with another person . ...The 'Other', in short, is essential to meaning. ..., therefore meaning cannot be

fixed and that one group can never be completely in charge of meaning. What it means to be 'British' or 'Russian' or 'Jamaican' cannot be entirely controlled by the British, Russians or Jamaicans , but is always up for grabs, always being negotiated, in the dialogue between these national cultures and their 'others' . [26] As a result of the work done by all these stratifying forces in language, there are no "neutral" words and forms-words and forms that can belong to "no one. Bakhtin concludes that, "Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life: all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones (generic, tendentious, individualistic) are inevitable in a word.[27] Essentially a community has the power to define these connotative meanings. Can the community re-define these if it consciously rejects them?

This question then, involves how damaging discourse which leads to the described stereotypes could be altered. Given that much of the limited discussion of undoing unconscious bias emphasized discussion, what benefits and challenges could a community of inquiry offer here? The hope offered by a community of inquiry model is that connotative meanings can be made explicit. It also points to the challenge: unveiling hidden bias only becomes possible in a setting of great diversity.

While there is much debate about specifics, here is a classic way of describing a community of inquiry: "Early in the formation of a community of inquiry, the teacher facilitates discussion and scaffolds appropriate forms of participation in the community...Ideally, as the community becomes more skilled and begins to gain confidence, the teacher takes a less active

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[26] *Dialogic Imagination*, pp . 293-4.
[27] *Dialogic Imagination*, p. 293.

role in the inquiry.... In other words, an inquiry is a sustained exploration of a topic or issue that

is of interest to students; community members participate in inquiries in the hope of

understanding the many ways of thinking about an issue and the production of knowledge about

the self and the world."[28] Ideally, the strengths that this could offer would include trust, open

dialogue and an ability to discuss difficult, uncomfortable and emotionally fraught topics.   The

idea of "group solidarity through dialogical inquiry"[29] implies that through careful and patient

community building, a system of trust could be developed that would allow for this. Given how

hard it is for us to spot our own implicit bias, the trust would need to be deep, as in this case it

would involve needing to hear from others our own bias. This would also demand teachers who

were both well trained and possessed good instincts and demeanor. It's clear that, "a community

that works together, has mutual respect and concern, and a recognizable and agreed upon set of

assumptions and procedures is something that takes a long time to develop, and may not be

essential at the outset of a process of inquiry."[30] Starting from a premise of "articulation of

disagreements and the quest for understanding in ...joining together in cooperative reasoning

(e.g., building on each other's ideas, offering counterexamples or alternative hypotheses, etc.)[31] a

community of inquiry around unconscious bias would aim to both identify and refute these.

        Of course, a room full of children talking about stereotypes is a scary idea. The

students would need to be provided with an education about the way implicit cognition works

[28] Pardales, Michael J, and Mark Girod. "Community of inquiry: Its past and present future." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 38.3 (2006): 299-309.
[29] Pardales, Michael J, and Mark Girod. "Community of inquiry: Its past and present future." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 38.3 (2006): 299-309.
[30] Pardales, Michael J, and Mark Girod. "Community of inquiry: Its past and present future." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 38.3 (2006): 299-309.
[31] Pardales, Michael J, and Mark Girod. "Community of inquiry: Its past and present future." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 38.3 (2006): 299-309.

along with reinforcement about how common associated biases are. Further they would need to be provided with factual counterevidence. Finally, since "an autonomous community of uninitiated students may construct understandings and values at odds with disciplinary standards, and verify those understandings to themselves with utter conviction, there must always be an ineradicable element of authority in the practice of even constructivist pedagogy."[32] In this case, one would need "teachers to mediate between communities of students and communities of experts, by being active participants in both."[33] Of course, the dilemma here too is that the teachers themselves are statistically likely to also hold the same biases.

Pulling all of this together, there are some the significant problems and challenges of using a community of inquiry model of open discussion to combat implicit bias. First, biases are social. As so many studies have shown there is usually even a significant portion of groups who are defined using negative stereotypes who unconsciously employ these. Particularly if a group is relatively homogenous, the expectation would be that they would tend to be shared by all the members of the group.

Even more challenging is the very nature of what it means to be an unconscious bias. As discussed above, dissociation shows that people consciously reject stereotypes they themselves implicitly hold. In talking in a group, then, they would likely and honestly claim to not have these biases. It's possible that no one would see them. In the course of a discussion, there could be universal disavowal of a set of connotative meanings that everyone in the group held. This

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[32] Pardales, Michael J, and Mark Girod. "Community of inquiry: Its past and present future." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 38.3 (2006): 312
[33] Gregory, Maughn Rollins. "Constructivism, standards, and the classroom community of inquiry." *Educational Theory* 52.4 (2002): 397-408.

downside is even described as an essential part of a community of inquiry ("Internalization of the overt cognitive behavior of the community[34]").

Finally, and perhaps the most disturbing involves what could be termed the Paradox of Stereotypes. Dissociation involves a disconnect between conscious and unconscious beliefs. The more evidence one encounters through evidence, the more the conscious disavowal. However, this is where Appiah's idea of implicit racism (and other forms of bias) are helpful and shattering...because the same evidence that re-convinces conscious rejection of stereotypes can unconsciously reinforce them. It seems that simply learning that these stereotypes exist could cause them even if you learn about them while learning that they're false!

Given all of these problems, what role could a community of inquiry play in combatting unconscious bias? Firstly, it seems most promising as a follow-up to an Implicit Associations Test. These tests are universally described as upsetting and dismaying, but are probably needed for us to see what we may well possess connotative understandings that we consciously disdain. It is for this reason that a thoughtful, trusting community could be useful to explore what they mean and how we can consciously combat them using methods that are akin to daily exercise to keep one's body fit. For example, Mahzarin Banaji, one of the pioneers in the field, keeps a screensaver on her desktop computer filled with images meant to counteract harmful stereotypes. Henry Louis Gates' concept of signifyin(g)[35] is interesting here as well. Through a discussion of the historical ways the African American community in the United States contested power through word play (here he gives examples from literature, popular culture, old traditions of

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[34] Pardales, Michael J, and Mark Girod. "Community of inquiry: Its past and present future." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 38.3 (2006): 299-309.
[35] *Signifying Monkey*, p. 34

playing the dozens and other ways of intentionally displacing connotative meanings of words),

he shows how harmful connotative associations can be combatted and contested. As

straightforward an example as the Michael Jackson song "Bad" forces language users to attend to

the ways in which values attach to words. More importantly, connotative language involving

racial, sexual, religious, ethnic, class and other social categories also "floats." Intentionally

disrupting and undermining these can cause one to at least consciously rethink these categories.

Unfortunately, we now know that it's unlikely to do so unconsciously as well. Gates also shows

the way in which for this to work, it needs to be an ongoing endeavor that has a life in a

community.

The stakes are large. Two final points are worth thinking about. Harry Frankfurt,

in talking about free will, gives us the concept of second order volition. To be free, we must be

able to make real our desires for our desires. In this case, am I free if I am unable to enact my

desire to not have unconscious bias, to remove those I may have? More and more it appears that

there's a deep challenge for all of us to rid ourselves of unwitting stereotypes and associations.

If we reject them but can't be rid of them, can we be free? In talking about the notion of double

consciousness (a different concept, but one with resonance here), WEB DuBois phrases it with

these words that we'll end on:

This waste of double aims, this seeking to satisfy two unreconciled ideals, has wrought sad
havoc with the courage and faith and deeds of ten thousand thousand people,--has sent them
often wooing false gods and invoking false means of salvation, and at times has even seemed
about to make them ashamed of themselves.[36]

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[36] Souls of Black Folk, p. 124.

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