

Troy Duster: The shift to the right of the political train in America has been substantial the last few years. Uh...whether this reflects the mood of the people is, of course, subject to contestation, but the shift in political institutions, um, is not open for debate. The executive branch, the uh, judiciary, the House and the Senate um, have all shifted sharply rightward. Now, sociology has many sections, many uh, allied organizations, and this year we are going to keep a tradition going of co-sponsoring coming together uh, sessions that are of great interest to sociologists of all particular traditions. And this is one of those sessions. We are co-sponsored by: the Association of Black Sociologists, Sociologists for Women in Society, Society for the Study of Social Problems. We are going to begin, appropriately, with the historical perspective. Our first speaker uh, will be Dan T. Carter, the distinguished historian, University of South Carolina. He is the co-author of a pivoting book on the way the south and George Wallace deployed race politics, and has shifted rightward in the last three decades. He will be followed by Lani Guinier and Gerald Torres, who will share their time. They do that because they are co-authors of a book called, *The Miner's Canary*, and are now about to co-author a second book, which I am sure you will hear about. Lani and Gerald are both legal scholars and their work is more about contemporary deployment of race through institutions affected by the law. Lani is a professor of law at Harvard. Gerald is professor of Law at the University of Texas, Austin. Our last speak will be Thomas Frank. By training a historian, he is the author of 'What is the matter with Kansas?', a book about the differing appeals um, to white, male voters among other interesting topics. Each will have about 30 minutes or so. Afterwards we will take a few questions from the audience if we have the time. Let's begin with Dan Carter, history of the problem.

Dan Carter: I feel a little bit of a fraud here. As my wife pointed out. I have never even taken a sociology course. But as I looked over the list of presidents...past presidents of this organization, I realized that beginning with Rupert Vance and E. Franklin Frazier, on through C. Martin Lipset, Troy Duster, and eventually to Frances Fox Piven, that I have probably read and am at least partially familiar with the work of well over half of your past presidents. Which is more than I can say for my own profession, I think. So, not completely a fraud. A little over a week ago, I posted the title of this session on the bulletin board above my computer. "Comparative Perspectives on the Rightward Trend in American Politics," and written in parenthesis I added "30 minutes". And then, double exclamation points. So, 30 minutes. Even though I am a historian, let me begin with as story, as they say, ripped from today's headlines. Or, at least, relatively recent ones. Many of you may be aware from uh, news coverage, Georgia's Republican-controlled legislature recently enacted a bill requiring all voters to appear at their polling place, beginning in 2006, carrying either a Georgia drivers license or an official photo I.D. issued by the Georgia Department of Motor Vehicles. Now, a survey of the American Association of Retired Persons found there were over 150,000 Georgians over the age of 60 who cast their vote in 2004, but lacked a drivers license. The League of Women Voters pointed out the particularly onerous impact the measure would have on poor, minority, and rural voters. In the state of Georgia, for example, there are 159 counties. There are 56 DMV offices. As an aside, having lived in Atlanta for 25 years, I might add that there is not a single DMV office in the city of Atlanta. There are a dozen in the white

suburban counties surrounding the city. Applicants for these identity cards would have to have obtained their birth certificate at a cost of \$10 to \$32 depending upon where they were born, travel an average of 15 miles usually to locations lacking public transportation, wait as long as three hours, pay an \$8 fee. This impact was particularly onerous upon African Americans of voting age, who are four times as likely not to have a drivers license as whites, and are five times as likely as whites not to have access to a car. And, it is a problem compounded by the fact that many older Georgians were often delivered by midwives before the state required a birth certificate or official registration. According to Republican Governor Sunny Purdum and his House and Senate leaders, this reform measure, as it was always described, was a necessary state safeguard to stop individuals from assuming the identity of illegitimate voters, casting illegal ballots, and therefore corrupting the political process. There is just one problem in this argument: no one was able to cite a single example from which this had taken place. There were instances, numerous instances, of voter fraud in Georgia. But most of those involved the use of absentee ballots. And, yet the same legislation that required a photo I.D. explicitly rejected any such requirements for absentee voters and, in fact, made it easier to vote by absentee ballot. Now, you don't have to be a syndic to see the purpose of the Georgia photo I.D. requirement. The individuals most negatively affected by this legislation were likely to vote Democratic. People who cast absentee ballots are more likely to vote Republican. The only corruption here is the naked abuse of political power by the majority party. Now, it is possible the justice department will intervene against the measure under the preclearance provision of the Voting Rights Act. But, I can't...particularly after an email exchange with Lani...I can't help but uh, point out the John Roberts uh, administration's current nominee to the Supreme Court was a young lawyer in the Reagan Administration, when that uh, voting rights act came up for renewal in 1982. And uh, Mr. Roberts sent a memo vehemently argued against any language that would make it possible to intervene in voting rights cases. The only exceptions, he said, was when it could be shown that officials deliberately set out to engage in racial discrimination. A meaningless kind of requirement. Now, no single vignette of contemporary American politics can fully capture um, what is going on today. But I think here, dealing with the most fundamental right of a democracy, we can see this rightward shift. As a historian, I can't say that I agree with Santayana's famous aphorism that those who do not know the past are doomed to repeat it. I'm much more inclined to like what Mark Twain said: "History may not repeat itself, but it rhymes a lot." And this certainly rhymes a lot, as I think about the disenfranchisement of black voters in the South and poor whites as well in the 1880s and the 1890s. And I've certainly heard earlier variations on this story. In 1989 I set out to write a study of the improbable career of Alabama's George Wallace, the four-time candidate for the presidency who at one point had the express support, according to three major polls, of a quarter of America's white voters. A man who very nearly threw the 1968 election into the House of Representatives. Now, initially I was intrigued by the fact that he had been relegated to the sidelines of American history. When I began in the 1980s studying George Wallace, most accounts, historical accounts of the 1960s, gave far more attention to Eugene McCarthy than George Wallace. As I examined his career, however, I came to believe that his role was even greater than I had thought, primarily as one of the principal originators of a new and inverted form of populist politics. Now I realize I'm walking on

shaking ground here when I talk about populism. Writing in the early 1970s, historian C. Van Woodward acknowledged that there was a great distance, a leap between the politics of the 1960s, which he was writing about, and the provincial language, sometimes cranky ideas that shaped the grievances of late 19th century farmers. But there was a connection here. The original populist spoke for the little man against the establishment, a quote from Van, the provinces against the metropolis. The poor and deprived against the rich and privileged. The issues they address centered on the unequal distribution of wealth and income. The unjust distribution of power. These issues included prices, wages, money, taxes, unemployment, monopoly and big business corruption of government and their ideas resonated long after the movement itself had disappeared. Now Woodward was perfectly aware that there were many you might say from our perspective, unattractive aspects of the populists. They were sometimes racist, anti-Semitic, xenophobic. They were afflicted at times by conspiratorial delusions and nostalgic dreams of a golden age that never was. Whatever their multiple personalities, however, none of them ever embraced bankers, oil companies, free market capitalism and government policies that slavishly catered to big business. In the late 1960's and early 1970's however, Governor Wallace and others, but I think particularly Wallace helped to transform this longstanding tradition. Now for the most part we still remember George Wallace through the prism of race, you know his famous 1958 defeat for the governorship which afterwards he said my opponent out-niggered me I am never going to be out-niggered again. 1962, when he runs as an out and out racist campaign for governor, 1963 when he has inaugurated "segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever," actually it was only five months, but nevertheless Wallace and the schoolhouse door of course, Wallace running for President in 1964 attacking the pending Civil Rights Bill. That is what we remember mostly and even the latter part of his career, the coda, I call it. He is near death in 1972 at the hands of an assassin, his so called redemption, in which he repented at least in part of his earlier racist sins and appealed to Black voters in Georgia, rather successfully. Won in fact with overwhelming Black support. All of that is viewed through the prism of race. But I think his candidacy, particularly in 1968, was more than that. Of course it fed upon racial issues, the urban race riots of the mid-1960's. The fact that the Civil Rights Movement had begun moving out of the South, addressing issues of de facto segregation in housing, unemployment is fine as long as they were dealing with the Southerners down there but not in our backyard. But it was more than just race in the mid-1960's. There were the enormous tensions caused by the war in Vietnam, the divisions that it brought to home. There was a beginning of the development of the women's movement, the feminist movement, there was a rejection of traditional sexual mores, a sense that America was coming apart. Now, Americans might live in a very safe and secure neighborhood, but the other thing that was striking was that in the 1960's all of this came into the homes, into the living rooms of Americans through television. Now, even when Wallace continued to explore racial tensions he did so by the use of what we now call coded language. Unlike his earlier campaigns for example. When he talked about marauding rioters or criminals on the street, he did not directly mention race, of course he did not have to, but he did not mention race and even when he dealt with explicit racial issues, affirmative action, bussing, he always insisted that his complaints about this had nothing to do with anything except achieving fairness for white as well as black Americans. But the most important

part of his 1968 campaign was his success in skillfully appropriating classic populist language, claiming to speak for the forgotten Americans, what he called in every speech, the average man of the street, the man of the textile mill, the man of the steel mill, the barber, the beautician, the policeman on the beat. Speaking for what he called working in middle America, Wallace used the language of populism, its attacks on shadowy and evil conspirators, its sense of victimhood, but the villains were no longer Wall Street bankers and malefactors of great wealth, the target was that alien city on the Potomac, Washington, DC where a shadowy coven of Liberals, not malefactors of great wealth, these Liberals, bearded, briefcase carrying bureaucrats, cowardly politicians, arrogant judges, ran roughshod over the rights of the American people. Of course the liberals and no speech was complete without an attack on the liberals, those liberals who backed higher taxes for welfare abusers could afford to pay the bill, but out of touch judges ordered bussing, liberals could send their kids to private schools and live in communities in which they escaped the consequences of their left wing politics. The federal courts were a special target for Wallace, these were the judicial activists who used meaningless technicalities to turn criminals loose on the street, even as they forbade children from bowing their heads in school prayer. They turned around the next day, unleashed a flood tide of pornography upon the streets of America. All of this on the basis of a fatuous reading of the First Amendment. Come to think of it I do not think George Wallace ever used the word fatuous now that I think of it there. I would say however, that he was the very first politician to call for the enactment of a School Prayer Amendment. Now, as I said by the last month of the campaign, in October of 1968, major polls show him with a quarter of America's white voters, about 22% of all voters in America. He was actually ahead of Hubert Humphrey at that point in the 1968 campaign and only 9% behind Richard Nixon. Now, on election day, Wallace voters, many of them, who wanted to vote for Wallace returned to the two major parties, he only received about 14% of the vote and much of that was in the deep South, but I believe his success in that election was one of the factors that set in motion the major realignment of American politics and I base this on spending a lot of time reading Richard Nixon's memos and listening to his conversations which are now available. It was clear that Richard Nixon simply never took a single step dealing with domestic politics during this period in which he did not think about the impact of what he called the Wallace Phenomenon. By the strength that Wallace showed, Nixon became convinced the future of the Republican Party lay in building a solid Republican South and appealing to many of these voters outside the South, traditional Democratic voters, working class voters who were attracted to Wallace and thus began the Southern strategy or developed the Southern strategy. By the 1972 presidential campaign, Wallace seldom gave a speech without complaining that Nixon and his Vice President Spiro Agnew had cribbed all his best ideas. Now George Wallace disappeared essentially from American politics in 1972 after his near death at the hands of Arthur Bremer, the would be assassin. Richard Nixon was gone two years later in the wake of Watergate. But the revolution rolled on. In 1980, 1984, Ronald Reagan's sweep of the old Democratic South and his appeal to traditionally Democratic blue collar working class voters had laid the foundation for today's conservative Republican dominance in American politics. As a historian reading backward from the present it is all too easy to see this as an inevitable trend, from Goldwater to Wallace to Nixon to Reagan to Bush one to Bush two, the trajectory has its byways, Jimmy Carter, Bill

Clinton, but always veering to the right. There is nothing inevitable about this process. Beginning as early as the late 1960's and early 1970's there were a number of pocketbook issues that should have benefited the old populism. The purchasing power of the middle class and lower middle class families rose 40% between 1947 and 1966, but that steady ascension as many of you know, came to a stop between 1966 and 1972. Actual purchasing power remained stable, and failed to decline only because of the accelerating entry of women into the work force. By the 1980's moreover, a new entrepreneurial class and its ideological allies unapologetically practiced a ruthless form of capitalism that treated workers as simply another factor in production to be discarded when they were no longer useful. Even as these groups kept up a steady barrage of attacks against government, they bent the state to their own interest in a way that would have left the legendary robber barons gasping with envy. It is difficult to imagine a group of men, and they were mostly men, who were further away from the producer class of hard working Americans, extolled by the original populist. But there was magic in this new "rancid populism," to borrow William Greider's apt phrase, and the magic still works. Let us go back to the passage of the vote Georgia Voter ID law this past spring. Within hours after the Republicans introduced the measure in the Georgia House, the Black Caucus began pointing to the discriminatory consequence of the legislation as it moved through the House and Senate, as I said, they were joined by such civic groups as the American Association of Retired Persons of Georgia, the League of Women Voters. Immediately, however, it was on a dime, Republicans in their conservative allies went on the attack. The opponents of such good government reform were defenders of the tired old corrupt political system. They were subservient to the liberal elites. They were pandering as the House Republican and Majority Leaders said to special interest groups. Certain words began regularly appearing. The Democratic Minority Leader was labeled a notorious race baiter for suggesting the new ID law would disproportionately disenfranchise African Americans. The opponents of the measure were aggressors, okay, against needed reform. They were ruthlessly conspiring with liberal elites. They were nothing more than professional microphone grabbers who gained financially and politically by stoking the fears of the ignorant and the insecure, promoting victimhood. These quotes I might add, I am almost through promise there that, these quotes I might add were not from the foam at the mouth right wingers. Neal Boorzt, some of you may know the Dixie's own answer to Rush Limbaugh, the Mouth of the South as he is called, began calling for the further extensions of the law, it did not go far enough, we should disenfranchise, he said, all welfare recipients for example and other groups as well. These were from mainline conservative journalists and politicians who would learn the lesson first taught by Newt Gingrich in his famous seminars for aspiring young Republicans in the late 1980's. You may recall that he distributed to those young potential candidates a list of 58 words that were always to be used in referring to Democrats or liberals. Among them: sick, traitors, corrupt, bizarre, cheat, steal, devour, self-serving, criminal, criminal rights, soft on crime, freeloader, greed, I won't read you the full 58. Proponents of the new voter requirements had the added support of the legitimacy of that ideological apparatus of more than 500 conservative and right wing foundations and think tanks created that a cost of more than \$2 billion over the last 35 years, well before the introduction of the Georgia Voter ID Measure, the CATO Institute issued its position paper on election procedures insisting that any complaint or voter

discrimination was nothing more than the rhetoric of victimization. Scholars at other conservative think tanks have agreed deploying social science to prove that there is no evidence that African-Americans suffer from structural or deliberate or even unintentional discrimination. As Abigail Thernstrom, a Manhattan Institute Fellow has pointed out in a series of well placed op-ed pieces this summer, Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act was not only superfluous, she said done far more harm than good. She scolded liberals for insisting on renewing it. The era of redneck registrars, fraudulent literacy tests, violence and intimidations at the polls over, she said. The states should be free to make their own decisions about voting equipment and voter registration system without federal interference. Now the success of conservatives in framing the issue in Georgia was made easier because television stations in their state and local coverage gave the issue their usual short shrift. I spent some time going over these, it was a garbled 40 or 50 seconds at most following the now familiar he said/she said and then on to the latest multi-car accident or the Michael Jackson trial. The print media was a little better, I should say that *Atlanta Journal Constitution* was a little better, but if you look at the news coverage around the state, it was not. Listening to television, or reading the state's newspapers, the average consumer of news would have absolutely no sense that there are things we used to call facts. There were only opinions. And when asked to choose between the opinions of those who supported an honest ballot and defenders of the status quo who were pandering to special interest, there was no contest. By the time the issue came to a vote in the legislature, one survey touted by the bill's proponents claimed that four out five Georgians supported the new voter legislation. Truth, in philosopher Theodore Adorno's formulation, had simply become an artifact of power unless elevated language the outcome of the best marketing campaign. Now there was one mistake that the proponents of the Bill made. It would have been fine to go after the poor, the powerless, unfortunately by going after the geezers in the state, they antagonized the American Association of Retired Persons. That was not a good idea, as they are learning at this point. Now the circumstances surrounding the adoption of the Georgia Voter Identification Measure as I said, reflects some of the elements of the change in America. Conservative success in framing issues, in George Lakoff's formulation, and in skillfully using invective, verbal intimidation, and pseudo scholarship to overwhelm their opponents. Of course things can change. It is at this point that I come to what had been my conclusion and is now my new one. My original ending was a reminder that events can quickly change from William McKinley to Theodore Roosevelt; from Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover to Franklin Roosevelt. Who in the early 1950's could have anticipated the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965? I am an optimist: you have to be if you live in a red State. But my optimism is strained. I see the face of the future in my students and I know this is a conservative statement, but I see them, polite, anxious to please but debates over the relationship for example in an economic inequality and political power are as incomprehensible to most of them as the discussion of the colonial controversies surrounding Anne Hutchinson and the antinomians. That is one factor. The other is the fear factor. For a long time I could not quite understand this, and then recently I was reading a piece, an essay by Walter Littman written exactly 90 years ago and he noted the political advantages of creating what he called the fear economy by making voters fearful of losing their jobs, fearful their old age will not be secured, fearful their children will lack opportunity, voters became, in

Littman's 19th Century language, a servile and griming race, clingy desperately to the niche on which they precariously hung. He was right. But even that prescient Littman could not envision the political dividends of a permanent war on terror. Finally there is the corruption of both political parties by vested economic interest operating without restraint from an electorate increasingly adrift, cut loose from the anchors of old institutions that once bound them to an understanding of their self-interest. Even and this is the irony to me, even ironically, as millions of Americans accept an economic theology, that insists the market ruled by self interest is the magic elixir that will cure all ills and usher the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. You do not believe me, read Tom Franks book. And of course we are all being swept downstream into a political culture in which entertainment, politics, make believe and breaking news have become as indistinguishable from each other as from the commercials that separate each meaningless and disconnected factoid. Ah, as one of my conservative friends said to me just two weeks ago, so much indignation, so little time. But then I remind myself I am a historian, not a prophet, if I live long enough, I may be able to write the next chapter. In the meantime, my co-panelist will, I trust, be more optimistic and more successful in explaining where we are today and where we might go from here. I anxiously await their advice. Thank you very much.

Gerald Torres: Well I hesitate to suggest that we are going to give you any advice, you know. I also come from a red state, but in some ways I feel like I have said this before, many people either disagree or do not understand exactly what I mean, but we are living in the tail end of LBJ's America. I think that experiencing that leads me to reflect on many things LBJ said and being from Texas you learn about LBJ. But you know one time when he graduated from college he was a teacher, he graduated and became a school teacher and he went out and needed a job, he needed a job really bad and he went out to a small Texas town and the School Board was debating their theory of evolution and how it should be taught in school and they wanted to know what his views were. He said he needed the job so bad he said you know I can teach it round or flat. So I suspect maybe without suggesting that degree of relativism, maybe we will be more optimistic but Lani and I are going to divide our time and I am going to start out and frame our discussion a little bit and see if we cannot end up being a little more optimistic. The first point I think that we want to make is that analysts who look at the evolution of politics and the realignment of politics, if you look at the realignment of politics, have both on the right and the left have tended to bracket race, that is they see race as important in some ways, but in many ways peripheral to the central political realignment over the last generation. What Lani and I want to do is take issue with that formulation. We take issue with that formulation in a very simple way. One is I want to suggest to you and I suspect I should have had the diagram drawn out, that two different narratives of American history and the progress of race, I think what passes now for the standard narrative about the inevitability of progress, especially in matters concerning race, come from a discussion with some graduate students at the University of Kansas or KU who teach students about race. What they see is a fairly linear upward trajectory. At the bottom end you have slavery, then you have the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War, then you have Brown against the Board of Education, then you have the Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech, then you have the Voting Rights Act and finally you have the elevation

of color blindness as the ideal to which we all aspire and in fact which we all in fact have pretty much achieved except for the exceptions and you can find the exceptions, those in fact prove the rule but what these graduate students at KU said is that when they get to the end of that story, it always ends with the student saying, isn't this a wonderful country. And you know if that is the trajectory you believe we are in then in fact, that is quite a logical conclusion. Lani and I suggest that there is a different way of understanding the trajectory, we are going to call it trajectory, and we disagree about what to call it, she wants to call it a mobius strip and I want to call it a spiral so we are still fighting over that. But if you imagine something that moves like this, as opposed to a vector, a ray, something that moves like this and you have slavery at the bottom and you move up and you get the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence and the words there that declare the equality of man and then you slip back down to the bottom and you have the Constitution which most people would put at the top, but of course the Constitution enshrined the three-fifths clause which of course in many ways they should have had Governor Purdue, have to listen to him talk, because what the three-fifths clause did of course was to give the votes of people who were not part of the polity to people who needed them to ensure that there would be Southern slave holding dominance of the Republic as it emerged. That was we think kind of at the bottom, you cycle back up and you get the Civil War and reconstruction, then you get the Hayes-Tilden Compromise and Plessy against Ferguson. Go back up and you get Brown against Board of Education when then it repeals, it overturns Plessy and then you get the evolution of massive resistance, the development or the rediscovery of the Constitutional doctrine of Interposition which has a very strange history of its own. Then the Voting Rights Act and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream Speech", the Great Society slipping back down to what Dan referred to as the Southern Strategy of Nixon. And now we are wondering what if in fact this spiral, things are moving in this way, what is the response? What is the next emancipatory movement? Where is the culture, the politics, the polity going to go? What we are going to try to do is to sketch out where we think it is going to go. We will use some law, we are supposed to. But probably not as much as you might anticipate. So we are going to frame it with two questions and I will turn it over to Lani. One is the question that is going to frame the rest of the talk – why do we think race is so central? And how, taken the centrality of race, will we be able to construct an emancipatory movement that takes into account all of the things that Dan was talking about and that Tom is going to talk about, that George Wallace represented. What is that movement going to look like? So why the centrality of race and what is that movement going to look like?

Lani Guinier: I am a little afraid of this microphone. Okay, so the two questions that Gerald raised that are framing our talk, he described what I call a mobius strip, he insists is a spiral and why is that important? Why is it important to understand the role that race has played throughout our history and the fact that it keeps re-instantiating itself in new guises? Is this just some peculiarity of race or is this the story of American history and the way in which we have used race as the language of class? It is our argument that race is the language of class: we do not have a language for talking about class in the United States, so instead we use the language of race. Now, the problem with efforts thus far to produce racial inclusion or at least our argument about those efforts, and this is in part the

answer to the second question that Gerald raised, what is the next form of an emancipatory movement that could actually lift us from the pit that Dan Carter so eloquently described? If race is the language of class, then we need to hold onto race because it is the only language we have to talking about class but we cannot just talk about race, we also have to talk about class. Therefore, the next emancipatory movement has to be a movement that links race and class. And notice the word “and” it is not race or class, it is not race instead of class, it is not moving beyond race to get to class, it is race and class. That is the new grammar, what I have described, I am not sure if Gerald yet buys into this terminology, moving from racial liberalism to racial literacy. Moving from racial liberalism to racial literacy in which we understand the grammar of race and class and the role that they have both played in formulating that “rancid populism” that William Greider talks about and that Dan Carter sketched out for us. The metaphor that Gerald and I have agreed on, for describing the place where we are now, is the miners' canary, the idea that race has played the role of the canary in the mineshaft and that the canary was the fragile bird that the miners used to alert them when the atmosphere in the mines was too toxic to stay in the mines as miners. Race as the canary: it is yellow, highly visible, has served as a decoy rather than as the diagnostic tool that it really can be. So, the shift that we are advocating is moving from race as the decoy, race as the pathology where when the canary is gasping for breath, we locate the problem as a problem of the canary. All of the language that Dan was describing about freeloading and criminals, those are all words associated with undeserving Blacks. And those are words associated with undeserving Blacks: freeloading, criminality, not just because of recent rhetoric or framing, but I would go back even farther than George Wallace to the period right after Brown, the period of massive resistance, where the liberals, the racial liberals and the reason I am arguing and here today Gerald is too, that we have to move from the idea of racial liberalism to something else, not just the focusing on racial inclusion, but focusing on racial inclusion that also argues for economic security and economic opportunity for everyone. The reason we have to do that is because the focus only on racial inclusion will invariably lead to backlash. Since race is the language of class, if you do not also talk about class and only talk about race, you are ignoring the way in which poor and working class Whites have been made to understand integration, association with Blacks. The story I want to talk about is Little Rock, Arkansas, 1957, so this is before George Wallace and this is the period right after Brown when the city fathers of Little Rock had acceded to the idea of desegregation but they were able to sell their desegregation plan to the elites in Little Rock because at the same time they were going to desegregate Central High School, then the all White high school in Little Rock, they were building a new all White high school called Hall High School which opened September, 1957. Isn't that a nice coincidence since that was the same time when Central High School was going to be desegregated by the nine carefully chosen Black children? So you had Horace Mann High School, the all Black high school and Central High School, the all White high school and now all of a sudden there are two White high schools and Hall High School is built in the western part of Little Rock where the more affluent families lived and it was built to accommodate the sons and daughters of the lawyers and the doctors. At the same time, the nine Black children were being escorted by US Marshals and then ultimately the National Guard to attend class, the White elite were exiting Central High School to attend a different all White high school. And Beth

Roy, who is a sociologist, went back and interviewed the members of the graduating class of 1958, as well as some of the students who graduated in 1959 of Central High School and she interviewed them 20 and 30 years later to begin to understand their violent, angry reaction to this desegregation by nine Black middle class kids. She describes a sense of betrayal and unfair sacrifice that was still overt 20 to 30 years later. In fact, what she describes is the experience of downward economic mobility that was articulated in racial terms. So, what had been the opportunity to rub shoulders with the White elite was now becoming the opportunity to rub shoulders instead with the people that they had always been told were less than human. Now, part of this obviously is racism, racism in the most ugly form. But another part of this is racism in what Gerald and I called in the book, the miner's canary, the acquiescence and the cooperation with racialized hierarchies. Racism is not just about prejudice, it is not just about psychological or aberrational thinking, it is not just about irrationality, racism is about power and the use of race as an instrument of social and economic control not just of Blacks, but also of Whites. The use of race so that poor and working class Whites do not look at the malefactors of great wealth as the source of their problems, but instead redirect their gaze to the Blacks and now the Latinos who are somehow taking their jobs and occupying their schools and indeed when Beth Roy interviewed these graduates of Central High School she said even 30 years later, her interviewees criticized the disruption that desegregation brought into their lives "I became very disenchanted with the whole thing, I just kept thinking this is my senior year and this is not what I was looking forward to. This is just unfair." Another searching for a way to explain the hatred she still felt, for one of the Black students who had entered Central High School in 1957 exclaimed, and I quote "she walked the halls as if she belonged there." "She walked the halls as if she belonged there." And part of what Beth Roy concluded in her conversations with these White informants is that even 30 years later, they were dissatisfied with their lives, they had not been able to realize the American Dream that had been promised to them, they had not been able to buy that house in the suburbs, their jobs were not providing the kind of security that they had anticipated, their children were not being admitted to colleges where they could actually afford the tuition and they had no explanation for their failure. Because the American Dream articulates its optimistic trajectory in the language of individual success. If you work hard, you play by the rules, you will succeed. But it has no language for failure, except and here is where race becomes central, Black people stole the American Dream and that was the move that her informants kept making. They would look to various Blacks, name them criminals, name them welfare cheats and use them to explain their present disenchantment. So racial resentment became the explanation for class dissatisfaction. Then to expand on that in the sense that the new conservative movement was willing to forego the racial hatred in the overt sense began to redirect that racial resentment away from just Blacks to the federal government itself. So that it was the blackening of social policy at the national level, Dan alluded to this when he talked about Wallace decrying the bureaucrats and the liberals on the Potomac and I would add the pointy-headed intellectuals in the academy as well. So, the federal government began to stand for racial redistribution for people who were freeloaders and that became the explanation for class dissatisfaction. Race as the language of class. Now, there are two frames here that Gerald and I are working with in terms of this miner's canary. One is that we have tended to pathologize the canary. We see the canary gasping for breath and

we locate all of the problems that the canary is experiencing in the canary. And indeed if we had more time, we would argue about the ways in which civil rights advocates have played into that agenda by arguing for gas masks for the canary. Little pint size respirators to address the problems of the canary. In some ways, in some ways, I would say affirmative action has become a gas mask for the canary. So our argument is: One – race is central because it has been used to locate problems in a specific community in order to obscure the general nature of social inequality and thus the White backlash has been inevitable unless, and here is the second move which Gerald will now talk about, efforts are made to link racial inclusion with economic opportunity for everyone, not just for people of color. So racial inclusion has to be forefront on the agenda but it has to be linked to issues of class and opportunity more generally in order to see that upward trajectory realized. So Gerald will now talk about a way in which race can become a diagnostic tool, not just a decoy.

Gerald Torres: So I am going to try to summarize it quickly and I am going to do it a couple of ways. One thing: if you are in law, one thing you notice is that the language of states' rights has become the language of the new federalism in terms of the doctrinal development in law, that it is the class resentment which gets put in racial terms allows you to keep class resentment from being raised to the level of actual real policy concerns and there are a couple of examples like that and I will talk about two really quickly. One – one point I want to make, I do not know who is from California here, but you all know Proposition 209, right, the fact that we're going to notice from Proposition 209 was enacted was a very simple fact. It was the first year in California history where spending on prisons, jails and basically lock-ups exceeded all spending on education at every level in California. So it was a public decision. The idea that people were feeling scarcity was in fact real, this was not made up. But the question is who do you blame for the scarcity, the scarce position that the university – do you blame the public decisions about the distribution of resources or do you blame affirmative action and the Black and Brown kids who are taking the places? Well, in Texas, we had the Hopwood Decision which eliminated affirmative action and what happened there was a coalition of Mexican-American and African-American Legislatures got together and created something called the Ten Percent Plan. I will talk about that for about three minutes and then I will call it a day. The Ten Percent Plan actually turned out to be kind of a jujitsu move. It took race and it said you know what? The University has not been educating Black and Brown people in Texas the way it ought to and let us see if we cannot figure out how to improve it. One, what they did, some people, I was one of them did, was to look at the history of Texas. What we discovered was that in fact Texas already had a Ten Percent Plan. The Ten Percent Plan was this – 75% of every freshman seat at the University of Texas at Austin was historically filled by 150 high schools out of the 1,500 high schools in Texas, surrounding... in suburban Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and Austin. So, there were counties in fact that we had identified in the entire history in the State of Texas that had never sent a student to the University of Texas. Never. So we sat down and talked to these legislators, and commiserated with them on the quality of their constituents. And suggested that maybe since their constituents had been paying taxes, they ought to question this distribution. But it was only by looking at race did we find out how the resources of the University of Texas were actually distributed. So what got created was

the Ten Percent Plan. Now the Ten Percent Plan was roundly criticized as being unfair and it is unfair because high schools are unequal. You know that is right. It is absolutely right. But, guess what, the kids that are in those unequal high schools, especially the ones that graduate in the top 10%, are doing exactly what they are asked to do in whatever high school they find themselves. So people can chose to punish them for following the rules, working hard and keeping their shoulder to the wheel or they can choose to reward them and after all one of the virtues we want to reward is hard work and playing fair. In fact we did. But the critical insight is that by using race as a diagnostic tool, we were able to see how the resources of the State of Texas, through the University of Texas, the distribution of that resource, were being distributed to a small subset. In fact, the Ten Percent Plan would not have passed but for one vote by a conservative rural west Texan who broke with his party and said, "You know this is not fair." The poster children who are going to save the Ten Percent Plan if it continues to work is to work in Texas are not the Black kids from the Fifth Ward in Houston, they are not the Brown kids from the Valley or San Antonio, they are the kids from rural Texas, White kids from rural Texas who now have a chance to come to the University of Texas which is a gateway institution in Texas. So that the other institutions in Texas are opened if you have a degree from the University of Texas, the people you rub shoulders with for example, that the people were complaining about at Central High gets reformulated at that university level. It is not a panacea and I am not suggesting it is a panacea for this kind of problem, what I am suggesting is that if you notice race, it may lead you to notice other things. If you look at how institutions are not working for people of color, chances are good, they are not working for other people who are similarly situated and those are where the allies are going to be found. That is where the emancipatory moment is going to emerge.

Thomas Frank: It's a great honor to be here. You all notice how these things are on a slight delay? Look at that. I've never been on a Jumbotron before. It's my first time. Now, Dan Carter pointed out how many opportunities there have been in the last twenty or thirty years for a genuine populist revival. He talked about the mistreatment of workers -- we all know about that -- and the always growing gap of the rich and poor. We all know about that. By the way, I was just looking at the statistics the other day. At the beginning of the sort of conservative revolution back in 1980, CEO's made about 40 times as much as our average blue collar worker here in America which is a pretty standard figure for the rest of the Western world. By the end of the 1990's they made 500 times as much as our average blue collar worker here. I read the New York Times the other day. The CEO of Walmart makes as much, I won't say earns, but makes as much in two weeks as his average worker on the shop floor does in an entire lifetime. Those are the raw facts about class in America. And, it's often thought that Americans don't like to talk about these things. That class is kind of an alien category. But in fact, we love to talk about class. We talk about it all the time. We are a nation divided, our media loves to tell us about how divided we are. We are at each other's throats here in the United States. But the real divide, the real class divide they tell us is between those Republican red states, where dwell the humble, patriotic, and God-fearing common people. Then on the other hand, the blue states like this one. This is a blue state isn't it? The one I live in is anyway. But the blue states where reside the wicked know-it-alls. The two coasts that affect French manners, as they steer their Volvos around their degraded, boutique, latte

towns, right? That's class in America. As for the politics that go along with social class, well as we all know, the elite blue state snobs are said to be the kind of people that put their trust in government. While the common folk of the Great Plains, the prairie populists who burn with such a righteous Limbavian fire, are said to trust the people. Which means in the parlance of the day, that they trust The Market. And the man that they elected, George W. Bush, heard the vox populi and saw that it was good, and moved swiftly and surely to shower his corporate donors with favors of every kind, to roll back workplace safety requirements, to deregulate in every way, to privatize Social Security and crack down on those tenured radicals. Because in America when we talk about social class, that's just the way it is. That's just how we understand the terms. What the common people want is more power to General Electric, right? And more power to CitiBank. They want to see that Dow Jones hit 36,000, damn it. They want another crack at that dot com bubble. They want to pile up their money at the feet of Bill Gates, Larry Ellison, Sam Walton, or whoever the hero CEO happens to be this year. And should it turn out that they don't want those things, you know if they go out there and protest, or strike, or vote for the wrong guy, then our Op-Ed pages stand ready to call them elitists. Despicable, self-absorbed snobs, who by their failure to believe in the goodness of market forces are helping them to trample down the unfortunates of the Third World. And a thousand corporate PR departments stand ready to chime in to insist that business is just an altruistic operation dedicated to raising up the Little People of the World. Every time they bust a union in America, a worker somewhere cries out for joy. Now, that's sarcasm. We call that sarcasm in my line of work. And, it's not even that much of an exaggeration. You all know this, they say this all the time. The world is flat or whatever the hell it is; we live in a flat world. By the way, could I have water? I left my water glass over there. I'm a big water drinker. Thank you. Now this word elitist, this is the key. This is the word that we have to think about. And this is if we want to understand what is the matter with Kansas and what's the matter with America. And there is something the matter with us, don't be mistaken. There is something wrong with the areas that are hardest hit by conservative economic policy are also the areas that are most enthusiastic for conservative politicians. You know, for capital gains tax cuts and for laws cracking down on bankruptcy. When the poorest state in America, these days I believe it's West Virginia. And it's a place, I should point out by the way, that is home to a particularly ferocious species of class consciousness. But when West Virginia votes for the Republican by 13 points, which it did last year, there is something the matter. And when the poorest county in America, which this year is up in North Dakota, goes for Bush by 78 percent, there's something wrong. By the way, the second poorest county in America is in Nebraska, and it went for Bush by 81 percent. Now, it's not that people out in these places have suddenly become complacent and satisfied like the Republicans of old. On the contrary, as we all know they are hopping mad, and they are red with rage. They are participating in what I call a "Great Backlash." Who are they angry at? Who are they mad at? You know the answer: it's liberals. It's people like me and its people like you guys. That's who they are pissed off at. And this I think is the great historical fact of our time. If you want to understand American history in the last thirty years, this is the fact that you have to grapple with. Millions of average Americans vote for politicians that only make their economic situation worse. Sometimes I think it's like kind of a French Revolution in reverse, in which the sans-culottes come pouring down the street

screaming, “More power to the Aristocracy!” So, how are we supposed to explain all of this? How is it that conservatives in these places can profess to hate elites, which you know they do? But at the same time, excuse from their fury the corporate world even when it has so manifestly screwed them over. How can you sign up for an uprising of the common people that only winds up making the upper Crust even Crustier than ever? How do they figure out that one man is a Frenchified snob for being rich, and here of course I’m referring to John Kerry, yachtsman? And the riches of another man show him to be a regular fellow, now here I’m of course talking about George W. Bush, humble man of prayer. How do they make that distinction? How do they figure that out? And yes, that is the way that we talk in Kansas. Now at the center of it all, I want to suggest that the center of this whole paradox is a way about thinking about class. By the way, I noticed there are no panels being held on this way of thinking about class here at the American Sociological Association, maybe next year some of these can get some Wallaceites here and they can have their own panel. Anyway, it’s a way about thinking about class that simultaneously encourages class hostility and at the same time denies economic basis of the grievance. Class, conservatives will tell you, isn’t really about money, birth, or even occupation. What is it? It is primarily a matter of authenticity, that most valuable, cultural, commodity. Class is about what kind of a car you drive, where you shop, and how you pray. And only secondarily about the kind of job that you do or the income you make. What makes you a member of the noble proletariat, according to this way of looking at things, is not work per se, but unpretentiousness, humility and all the rest of those virtues that our pundits never tire of finding out in red state America. So, according to this way of looking at the world, the producer class doesn’t care about unemployment, or a dead-end life, or a boss that makes 500 times as much as they do. No, out of places like my home state of Kansas, workers and their bosses are supposed to be united in righteous disgust at those affected college boys over at the next table. You know, prattling on about French cheese, villas in Tuscany, and the big ideas for running things that they read about in books. These are the real parasites, not Enron, Halliburton, and not Merrill Lynch. It’s you guys. It’s people like me, that’s who it is. The key element in this repackaging of social class is the notion of a liberal elite. You all have heard this term before, right? It’s an idea that has been around for years now. But in its basic outlines, the grievance has always remained pretty much the same. It goes like this. Our culture, and our schools, and our government, conservatives will tell you, are controlled by this over-educated ruling class that is contemptuous of the beliefs in the folkways of regular people. Those who run America, the theory holds, are despicable, self-important showoffs. They are effete, to use one of Spiro Agnew’s favorite terms. They are arrogant. They are snobs. They are in a word, “Liberals.” Now conservatism, on the other hand, according to this way of looking at the world, conservatism is supposed to be the doctrine of the oppressed majority, unlike your classical 19th century conservatism. The backlash conservatism that I write about doesn’t defend some established order of things. What it does is it accuses, it rants, it points out hypocrisies, and it gleefully pounces on contradictions. Now, while liberals are supposed to be using their control of the airwaves, newspapers, and schools to persecute average people, the Republicans tell us that they are the true party of the disrespected, the down-trodden, the forgotten man. They are always the party of dissent and always in rebellion against a haughty establishment, always rising up from below. And by the way this is a trick that they stole from Wallace; it all goes

back to him. Now all claims on the right, in other words, advance today from victimhood. And this is important to remember, especially if you're watching O'Reilly. I was actually on a conservative talk radio show and one of the guy's recorded announcements that he would play was, "The Victimization Stops Here." And then he'd come on again and start whining again about how Liberals are oppressing us, and you know... This is not an exaggeration; they live in this world of persecution mania. In fact they revel in fantasies of their own marginality and persecution. As a matter of fact, Rush Limbaugh's brother David Limbaugh has written a book with one of those one word titles that the conservative movement loves. In this case the title book is, "Persecution." And you get one guess who is being persecuted in this book and who is doing the persecuting. That's right; it's conservative Christians here in America that are suffering religious persecution right here, right now in our country. On a conservative listservs where I spent a lot of time while I was writing this book, it's common to see conservatives greet their colleagues with phrases like, "Fellow Rubes of the Fly-over." They love to speculate about the many, many ways that liberals are supposed to look down on them. There's an ad for Laura Ingram's last book. By the way, this is an ad trying to get you to buy a copy of the book and trying to make the book sound attractive to you. And the headline of the advertisement says, "Are You Stupid, The Elites Think So?" There's an article that appeared in the American Enterprise Magazine, this is the organ of the American Enterprise Institute that sort of lists the virtues of the red states. And this is the first sentence of the article, "I'm stupid. And if you're reading this, you probably are too." Another thing that the movement conservative loves to do is to boast of their own subversiveness. They love this phrase, "Politically Incorrect." It's even the title of a book by Ralph Reed, the former leader of the Christian Coalition. John Leo is a conservative columnist for a U.S. News and World Report. By the way, he's a guy who loves to talk about a class, as long as you are making fun of people that drink Chardonnay and eat brie, and stuff like that. Another other reference to class is totally inadmissible. You can't talk about the economics of it, that's Marxist, and that's class war and that sort of thing. But when it comes to making fun of people who drink lattes, hey, rock and roll." Anyway, in 1994 John Leo wrote a book called, "Two Steps Ahead of the Thought Police." Right, because the liberal Gestapo is right after him, he's just barely staying out of their grasp. And this is a columnist for U.S. News and World Report, just barely ahead of the police. In 2001, he wrote what he calls, "Incorrect Thoughts." Which ironically as it turns out, is also the title of an album by the punk rock band, "The Subhumans." Remember them? I'm the only guy in America that owns both John Leo's book, "Incorrect Thoughts," and the punk rock album, "Incorrect Thoughts." Now what's astonishing to me is that they are able to persist in this sort of a persecution mania, even after the election of 2004. For example, look at what we're going through right now, the war over the Supreme Court, which is going to get much hotter as the weeks go on. The right believes that the Supreme Court is the power that keeping them down, the liberal oppressors and all this. Do you guys know how many of the current nine Justices on the Supreme Court were named to their jobs by Democrats? Two, two out of seven. And yet, this is the court that is oppressing them and all the rest of it. There's even a comic book that just came out, a conservative comic book that just came out about life under the liberal tyranny. Like Sean Hannity is kind of a superhero rescuing everybody? I'm not making that up. Now the object of all this breast beating underdoggerly on the right is not

to un-victimize the average Americans for whom conservatism claims to speak. They rule that out basically from the get go. While most of us here in this room probably think of politics as kind of a Machiavellian enterprise, in which actors make alliances and then take practical steps to advance their own material interest, the backlash is something very different. It is a crusade in which your material interests are suspended in favor of vague, cultural grievances that are both supposed to be all important and yet at the same time, incapable of ever being assuaged. Now, I am not exaggerating. Because if you think about it, when the movement's leaders pick their cultural battles, now remember the conservative movement leaders are very intelligent, very canny, and very Machiavellian people. Karl Rove I am told reads and rereads Machiavelli once a week. It's a true fact, well a true rumor. I don't know if it's a real fact. I have no way of knowing. Although I have seen the man in person twice, he was wearing a flaming orange tie last time I saw him. Anyhow, a very intelligent man, and yet when conservatives choose their cultural battles, they almost always choose ones where victory is impossible. Where their followers' feelings of powerlessness will simply be dramatized and their alienation aggravated. For example, the backlash fury object du jour while I was writing a lot of this book: the Alabama Ten Commandments Monument. Do you remember that in the Supreme Court building in Alabama? A judge down there put up deliberately to draw a lawsuit from the ACLU. And which everyone knew as soon as he put it up how that whole sad story was going to end with that monument being pried loose and being carted away. But, that didn't stop thousands of their supporters with candlelight vigils and all of that. Or think about the tragic and awful Terri Schiavo case where Bush came back from his ranch, it was the most important possible thing ever, and everybody knew that the measure that they passed in Congress was going to be instantly struck down by the courts. Everyone knew it. Or the Federal Marriage Amendment, which Bush campaigned on, which they introduced to the U.S. Senate last year and went down in defeat after three days of debate. Everybody knew it was going to go down in defeat and they talked about it for three days anyway. Bush campaigned on it like, "Get me reelected and by God I'll get the Federal Marriage Amendment passed." The Washington Post interviewed him one month into his second term and asked him what was he going to do about the Federal Marriage Amendment? And the guy said, and I'm paraphrasing here, "nothing." Or, think about what's going on now in my home state, the Great Crusade Against Darwin. How many paleontologists do you think they are going to convince with that one, huh? Look, as culture war the backlash was born to lose. Its goal is not to win cultural battles, but to take offense conspicuously, vocally, flamboyantly, getting mad. This is where conservatism spends its energy. Indignation is the great aesthetic principal of backlash culture. And I mean everything pisses these people off. And the way that they react is not by getting un-pissed off, but by documenting and cataloging their disgust. You know, generating these endless piles of petty, unrelated beefs with the world. Amassing thousands of stories about the many, many, tiny ways that the world that surrounds them assaults family values, uses obscenities, disrespects parents, and foments revolution, and on and on. Now the implication of this conservative culture of offense taking is that liberalism, or what they call liberalism, it's kind of a folk demon, liberals. Liberalism can be held responsible for the world around us. That each of these objections of the way people drive, to the way people cut in line, to the way people talk with their mouths full, that each of these is somehow an indictment of the left. Now it doesn't

matter that liberals have long since lost their power over American government. In fact, there hasn't been a proper liberal elected president in this country since before I was born. But it doesn't matter: in the backlash mind, liberalism is still what changes our mores, what determines what's on TV, what's in the magazines, and what makes, or I should say interprets, the laws. There is nothing, not the Constitution, not guns, not even sweeping electoral victories. There's nothing that can protect them from liberalism or even slow it down. It is an alien, conspiratorial force that can't be held accountable and that doesn't care when its projects go awry. So, viewed through the eyes of the backlash, liberalism's impositions are so intolerable and so bizarre and taken with so little regard for the sensibilities of the regulated that it will literally stop at nothing. I mean who knows what precedent the Supreme Court is going to pull out of its ass next. Or which figure of everyday speech the commissars of political correctness are going to criminalize. Even as they enlarge the list of swear words permissible for broadcast on TV. The conservative movement culture abounds with this kind of bizarre speculation about what atrocity the liberals are going to inflict on us tomorrow. Each wild suggestion made and received with complete seriousness. Check it out. The liberal elite is going to outlaw major league sports. They're going to forbid red meat, and they're going to mandate special holidays for transgendered war veterans. By the way, I am not making any of these up. These all came up on this listserv that I was on. They are going to hand our neighborhood over to an Indian tribe. They are going to decree that only gay couples can adopt children and they are going to ban the Bible. When I first saw it, I was like, "Hah, hah, hah. Who would ever believe that?" You know, this was actually used in Republican campaign literature in the last go around in Arkansas and West Virginia. It was actually mailed out to thousands of voters that if Kerry is elected, the Bible will somehow be banned. And since I wrote about this, I've talked to people who have talked to voters who believe that and cast their vote for Bush on that basis. Now let me remind you before we go on that all of this is a class-based complaint, or something like a class-based complaint. It's always supposed to be the hard working, honest people of middle America against this tiny self-righteous band of snobs like us lording over the rest of them with their fancy college degrees. Culture war is class war, or it's a kind of form of class war. And insofar as they claim to be taking on the liberal elite, conservatives will represent themselves the true leaders of the working class. And they actually do this. Do you all remember Gary Bauer who ran for president in 2000? Today he's the head of something called the, "Campaign for Working Families." And the New York Times a while ago asked him about the enduring power of the culture wars and here's what he said. And I thought this was very profound. He said, "Joe Six Pack doesn't understand why the world and his culture are changing and why he doesn't have a say in it." And when I read that, I said, "My God, that's what liberals used to say." That's what people like me used to say. We were the ones that spoke up for Joe Six Pack against a world that really, honestly, doesn't give a damn about his views. That was liberals that spoke up for that feeling. Today, that is something that is captured almost completely by the right, that sensibility. Now one way of understanding, am I going too long? Okay. One way of understanding, this is sort of the half way point. If you want me to stop, I'll stop now. Two thirds, okay I'll speed it up. Now one way of understanding the conservatives' class war is as a campaign against professionals and professionalism. I thought I would talk about this because here I am at a very well known professional association at your

centennial, your centenary meeting... ugh, your 100th one. The war isn't just against all elites. It's against some elites: the intellectuals. Each of the particular culture war complaints if you think about it is directed at this sort of haughty over class. And, if you can get the conservatives to define that over class, to tell you who those people are, what you'll see is that they are talking about meritocracy. About the white collar people who went to fancy colleges and answer to some professional code rather than to public opinion. The media bias issue, for example, comes back obsessively to the fact that these days, journalist go to professional schools instead of arising organically from the working class like they were supposed to have done in the days of yore. And this is always cited as a reason why journalists don't pay enough heed to the Almighty. And instead feel so sympathetic towards their fellow Volvo drivers and latte swillers in the Democratic Party. Or, take the rights war on academia which has been running for almost twenty years now. It's basically a reaction in some ways the a newfound academic professionalization that we see in fields like Literary Theory where scholars have sort of invented this kind of impenetrable, professional jargon in recent years. Or take my favorite, the evolution issue which is now going on in Kansas. The idea here and it's a brilliant idea if you think about it, is to set up a confrontation between professional opinions as we all know among biologists is almost unanimous in support of the theory of evolution, between that and public opinion which is more skeptical. So, you can claim to be speaking for the good, humble people of Olathe, Kansas who just want some control over what their kids are told in school. And then you call some biologist from KU, the University of Kansas, up to the stand and you know what he's going to say even before he says it. It doesn't matter what you little people believe. I am an expert, I am a professional, and I know the truth and you do not. You know that's what he's going to say. And the biologist might even be right about that, even, in terms of science. But as politics, this is suicidal. And the right knows this and they know that the professional community will always react in that way and that's why they keep going back to this preposterous issue. Or you take the gay rights, the gay marriage issue. In his dissenting opinion on the Texas sodomy case two years ago, Justice Scalia plainly said that what he called the anti-anti homosexual culture of the legal profession, was the real reason that his colleagues were striking down sodomy laws. Not any provision of the Constitution, they were doing it as a professional courtesy almost. Or finally take the abortion issue, which is the granddaddy of them all. Most of us here probably don't remember the original Roe v. Wade decision was cast as a victory, not for the women's right to choose, but for the doctor's right to choose. For him to prescribe whatever treatment he in his professional wisdom thought to be best. And this represented in the minds of conservatives, an unholy alliance between the medical profession and the legal profession pressing down upon, you know, their oh-so-sophisticated views on the little humble people of the heartland. And pro-life literature persists in this interpretation to this day. You might even say they are obsessed with the interpretation. And they rail constantly against the professional medical community. And they are always asking if they can do that to us, you know if they can force that on us, what are they going to do next? Euthanasia, infanticide, who knows? What can we ever do to stop them? Now none of this stuff that I've been talking about would ever make any sense were it not for a critical rhetorical move that conservatives do, which is the systematic erasure of the economic. Now we all know there is a species of conservative that is happy to talk economics with you. They are meeting across town at the American

Economics Association. No, I'm just kidding about that. But we all know they are in the management schools, in the economics department, in business magazines, and CNBC, prattling on about the mystical inerrancy of the free market and the benevolence of global capitalism. But the social conservatives basically, don't have anything to say about the business world. They don't go there, and they don't like to talk about it. The erasure of the economic is a necessary pre-condition for most of your basic culture war ideas. For example, it's only possible to think that the news is slanted to the left if you never take into account who owns the news media and if you never turn your critical eye on something like, CNBC, or the business section of every newspaper in America. The university campus can only be imagined as a place dominated by leftists if you never think about those economic departments, those business schools, or the university administration, of course. Oh. Sorry, did I step on anyone's toes? Dude. Most importantly, it's only possible to think about pop culture as the product of liberalism if you have blinded yourself to the most fundamental of economic realities. Namely, the networks, the movie studios, and the ad agencies, the publishing house, and the record labels are in fact commercial enterprises. In fact, sometimes I think that the backlash vision of life is nothing more than an old fashioned, and I mean a real old fashioned, leftist vision of the world. Only with the economics drained out of it. When your muckrakers 100 years ago used to always blame capitalism for botching this institution, today's conservative thinkers just changed the script to blame liberalism. Otherwise, it's the same stuff. Up until the late sixties, for example...by the way complaining about bias in the media used to be a standard you always heard in American politics, but you always heard it from the left. That's where this came from, it was a standard criticism and everyone from Upton Sinclair to A.J. Liebling, remember the press columnist for the New Yorker would make this critique that newspapers tilted to the right, serving the interest of the capitalist that advertised in them and the capitalist that owned them. Such sterling liberals as William Randolph Hearst and Colonel McCormick out in Chicago. Today though as everybody knows, it's supposed to be liberal reporters and liberal editors that twist the news to match their own elitist personal preferences. Basically, the same treatment that has been administered to all the old things that the muckrakers used to write about. Higher education, the legal establishment, the foundations, the foreign policy establishment, the world of architecture, and even the government itself. Each of them now said to be slavish servant, not of the interest, but of liberalism. I'm going to skip to the end. Don't you think that's wise, because we are running out of time? I have a watch, I can tell. Geez, I've been skipping a lot. But this represents a serious dilemma for the right. They want to rail against popular culture, and yet they can't talk about the economic forces that make culture what it is. And this is where, the greatest contradiction, the greatest crack, if you wanted to take apart the movement, this is where you would begin. When you have, as these people do, when you have rejected all of the social science methods for understand the way the world works, which they do, you can't talk straight about social class which they cannot. When you can't acknowledge that free market forces might not always be for the best and when you can't admit the validity of the most basic historical truths, these blunt tools are all that you are left with. Journalists, sociologists, historians, musicians, photographers, and even paleontologists, do what they do because they are liberals. And liberals lie, liberals cheat, liberals will do anything, as a matter of fact, that promises to advance their larger partisan project. You know, to create

more liberals and thus somehow to win. So in the backlash mind, liberalism is not a product of social forces. You know, the labor movement, the environmental movement, and the civil rights movement. It's not a product of social forces. Liberalism is a social force. It's a juggernaut moving according to a logic all its own. As rigid and as mechanical as anything dreamed up by the Stalinists of yesterday. Now the great conservative backlash that we've been discussing in this panel began back in the late 1960's with the coming together of two very different political factions. On the one hand your traditional, corporate style Republicans with their faith in the free market. These are the kind of people that I was brought up around. And then on the other hand, your working class middle Americans who signed on to preserve family values. For the first group, the corporate Republicans, the conservative revival that has resulted since the early 1970's has been fantastically rewarding. I mean, they are wealthier as a class today, than ever before in their lifetimes. But for the other group, the aggrieved middle Americans, the experience has been a bummer all around. I mean, all they have to show for their decades now of Republican loyalty are lower wages, more dangerous jobs, a new overlord class that comports itself like King Farouk, and of course, a crap culture whose moral free-fall continues without any significant interference from the grand-standing Christs that they send triumphantly back to Washington every couple of years. By all rights, the charm of Republicanism should have worn off for this part of the conservative coalition a long, long, time ago. I mean after all, how can you lament the shabby state of American life, while absolving business of any responsibility for it? How can you complain so bitterly about culture and yet neglect to mention the main factor making American culture what it is? How can you reconcile, by which I mean of course the business rationality, the two clashing halves of the conservative mind? Well it's easy, by believing in an all-powerful liberal elite, that's how. Alone among the many, many, industries of the world, conservative thinkers will tell you, the culture industry just does not respond to market forces. It does the ugly things that it does because it is biased. That's always the word, isn't it? Bias. it solves all your problems. The culture industry does the horrible things that it does because it's biased by these kind of alien, robotic, liberals. They are always trying to drip their corrosive liberalism into our ears. Liberal biases exist because it must exist in order for the rest of contemporary conservatism to be true. As in Saint Anselm's proof of the existence of God, see I went to graduate school. It simply cannot be any other way. Liberal bias has to be, therefore it is. Thank you very much.

Troy Duster: There seems to be an interesting tension in these presentations, which I want to crystallize and maybe get a comment from Dan Carter. Now here's the tension. The agreement is that the economics have been obscured, smoke and mirrors. There's a kind of magical transformation of our understanding of class. But if you listen to the presentations, you saw two very different versions of how this occurs. One is from the last frame with Thomas Frank is that culture and class are in a dance macabre. Liberalism is the bete noir and class becomes obscured. And with Lani and Gerald, it's class and race that are in the dance macabre. It's not that either one is right or wrong, but I do hear a tension between the ways in which obscurantism around the economy as in Tom's talk about liberalism elite and culture. And then Lani and Gerald's talk, it's about race and class. So Dan, do you want to take a stab?

Dan Carter: No.

Troy Duster: Okay, anybody in the back? There's actually a microphone here. We have time for maybe two or three. Would you come forward? Okay, we'll have two questions, and then we'll have Tom's response.

Unidentified Female Speaker: I really enjoyed your presentation about the demonization of the liberal elite. One of the concerns that I have is how to overcome this game? How to get out of this sort of vicious, rotten populism? And one of the problems I face, is that in my experience with the liberal elite at an Ivy league university, is that the liberal elite, or at least the people who are supposed to be the liberal elite, really do have as much contempt for middle America as middle Americans think they do. I grew up hearing about the secular elite who hate God-fearing Americans, and I thought it was propaganda. Then I got to Harvard and discovered that in fact, secular elite really do hate God-fearing Americans and they have contempt for their culture.

Troy Duster: Okay, in the interest of time I want you to crystallize a question.

Unidentified Female Speaker: My question is, "Do you disagree with me perhaps, I would like to be dissuaded?" And, "How do we get around this?"

Troy Duster: Okay, before you answer, Tom, I'm going to take two more and then I'm going to close off the questions from the audience and we'll have a response. Okay, two more.

Unidentified Male Speaker: I think it's really an acute observation that conservatives have taken over the language of the left but just erased economics from it. But, has that not happened also on the left? Because if you look at the arguments against Enron, it's all posed in terms of greed and in terms of personal qualities, rather than in terms of the operation of the market. In terms of finance capital or in terms of you don't have criticisms of capitalism on the basis of exploitation and on the basis that profit comes from that portion of labor that's not paid for. So my question is, "Is it possible to put those economics back in without having the Marxist analysis, or not?"

Troy Duster: Last question, and then some responses.

Unidentified Male Speaker: My question basically has to do with, why do you think it is that the poorest counties, the poorest people, the people most at loss, have accepted a particular way of thinking, a way of thinking which basically represents in almost every case by every speaker here, a form of simplification? Life is made simple. Life is made simple. And the issue then is how does and when it is in fact, at some level complex and what us professionals are doing is making life complex. And maybe, that may be part of the reason why in our heart of hearts we're not satisfied with the simplifications made otherwise. Is there something about the life that makes this necessary?

Troy Duster: Thank you. Okay, response, Tom?

Thomas Frank: Is this on, I guess it is? Either that or they're turning on Ride of the Valkyries. I'm sorry, I listen to that stuff too much. The last question first, "Why have people in these poor counties accepted this stuff?" And by the way, the contradiction between their interest and that of the Republican corporate elite is sometimes incredibly upfront. I was on a radio show and I tell these anecdotes, and I apologize, okay? I'm sorry, but I was on a radio show in Denver once, and the host was... Most of the conservative radio shows that you'll be on, they're social conservatives railing against the liberal elite. This guy was a Libertarian; he's from the other side. He was a free market, Chicago School true believer, and a very intelligent guy. And we were talking about what the free market was doing to farmers. You know, small farmers everywhere in the Midwest are being wiped out. And he said, "Well, big deal. That's the free market in full effect. I don't care if they all go to the wall. That's just tough luck. That's the way markets are." And I said, "Now wait a minute, stop a second. You are expecting these people to turn out and vote for your candidate for president." This was before the election. But, "You are expecting these people to come out and vote for your candidate for president in record numbers?" He's like, "Yeah, what do I care?" So, it's a contradiction. And you know what, they did come out and vote for the guy in record numbers, and yes, they are going to go to the wall and are going to be destroyed. Why did they buy it? First of all and this is going to be the answer to all of the questions, because of the erasure of the economic is not just a right wing thing. This is part of culture, generally. Liberals, as well as conservatives have done it. And liberals don't speak that old Franklin Roosevelt language of economic liberalism. They don't do it. This is the great move to the center among Democrats going all the way back to the 1970's has deleted that language. I mean, the last Democrat to really try to speak to farmers on a national scale, was Jesse Jackson in 1988. And that was regarded as a hopeless candidacy. But by God, he won Iowa didn't he? I'm sorry, I'm getting way off track. Second of all--

Troy Duster: You promised to speak to the question about the smoke and mirrors versus class?

Thomas Frank: Yes I did. So the other reason that they do it is because it's comfortable. That's one thing about this ideology you've got to remember. It is comforting to imagine yourself as this victim who is put upon by the haughty people here in this room. Your first question about whether it's race or whether it's liberalism... in some ways, it's both. One of the sort of foundational texts in this regard is Tom Edsel's book, *Chain Reaction*, about how the backlash is basically in every aspect of it, is racism by proxy. And that is certainly true. His research is...you have to read it if you want to understand the right. However, these days, it certainly goes beyond that. I mean, look at the roots of this movement that I am describing comes straight from George Wallace. It comes from the segregationist days. But, it has been secularized if you will. And it's been extended and, I mean, the Republicans want nothing more than to rope in minority voters. This is totally what Karl Rove is after these days. And the way that they are going to do it is not by

talking about the free market. They are going to invent backlash issues for those voters, as well. In fact in some ways, that's what the gay marriage thing was.

Troy Duster: Okay, Tom, I'm going to have to...

Thomas Frank: Okay, time to shut up.

Troy Duster: Lani and Gerald, do you want to respond?

Gerald Torres: Dan?

Dan Carter: I was actually going to respond to this notion of elitists who really are contemptuous of middle America. And of course that's really just Harvard, we don't have that. It is a difficulty. And it's come home to me in the last couple of years, I've decided that any kind of change that takes place always takes place at the grassroots. And I've become very involved in local, Democratic politics in western North Carolina, which is where my home really is. There is a very conservative Democratic Party there, and I've joined along with a number of other people and it is often, it's not so much contempt, it's very painful. Because you sit next to someone in my precinct who is a Pentecostal Holiness preacher and he goes back to the days of real economic liberalism. But we often have to dance around issues that are very important to him: abortion, for example. We have to talk about these social issues. And I can't sit there and tell him, "You are really dumb because you think that this is absolutely critical." Because he does think that they are important and all we can end up doing is trying to reach out to each other, find common ground, and agree in the end that the other guys are worse than us. That there is enough that we have in common that we can build a kind of movement together. And that's always the way it's going to be in the Democratic Party. And I'm not a partisan Democrat in that respect, because I have a great deal of hostility toward the party. But at the grassroots, that's always the way it's going to be. We're never going to be, as liberals like conservatives. It's like belonging to a Unitarian Church which I belong to. It's a few witches, I'm sorry, Wiccans, pagans, and everybody else. But you still discover there's enough that can bind you together. And that I think helps bridge that gap that you're talking about. But it is there, there's no question.

Troy Duster: Last word from either Gerald or Lani, or if you want to both go?

Gerald Torres: As to Dan's last comment, as Garrison Keillor said, "You never want to piss off a Unitarian, because then they'll burn a question mark on your front lawn." I'm sorry. First, I want to underline what Dan said, is that it's easy to be comfortable in your own verities. And so what you need to do is, if you're, you're all sociologists, right? You all go out and get data and look at stuff. I'm a lawyer and Lani is a lawyer too. You get in the world and you talk to people and you realize that there are actual, serious differences in beliefs. So, my mother votes against stem cell research in California, because she's a Catholic and really thinks it's a Catholic issue. She'll vote liberal on every other issue except for that one. That's a real thing that she and I have to tussle with. But take the environmental justice movement for a minute. The environmental justice movement, if

you look at that and the thing that you discover is that it's the most racially integrated grassroots environmental movement in the country. Because at root, poor people know who is getting poisoned and they know who they have to make common cause with. There's a study by a mental researcher and economist at Santa Cruz that said, the communities that are most at risk for environmental burdens are not all Black communities, and they're not all Brown communities, and they're not all poor, White, communities. They are communities that are in transition, because the racial script that gets written in the United States prevents political solidarity from emerging in communities that are transitioning from White to Black or from Brown to Black or from White to Brown. The people on the ground know this. And if you get out there and talk to folks, you realize that there's more, as much wisdom out there as there is idocy that some people like to believe.

Troy Duster: Okay, Lani. Do you want the last word?

Lani Guinier: Well, I think it's both liberalism and racism that are cooperating to obscure class consciousness, and I have to tell you Tom that I agreed with most of your descriptions of elites. I work with them, I am one of them. And I think that we look down on other people. We are very patronizing. We are anti-democratic. And in some ways, we too have become too comfortable and are unwilling to make common cause with people whose lives are really in jeopardy. So, I think it's about liberalism, but I would like to hear you talk about racism, as well.

Troy Duster: But there's no time. Thank you, thank you.