



Black rage and the anger police:

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#BlackRageHarvard

The Philosophers

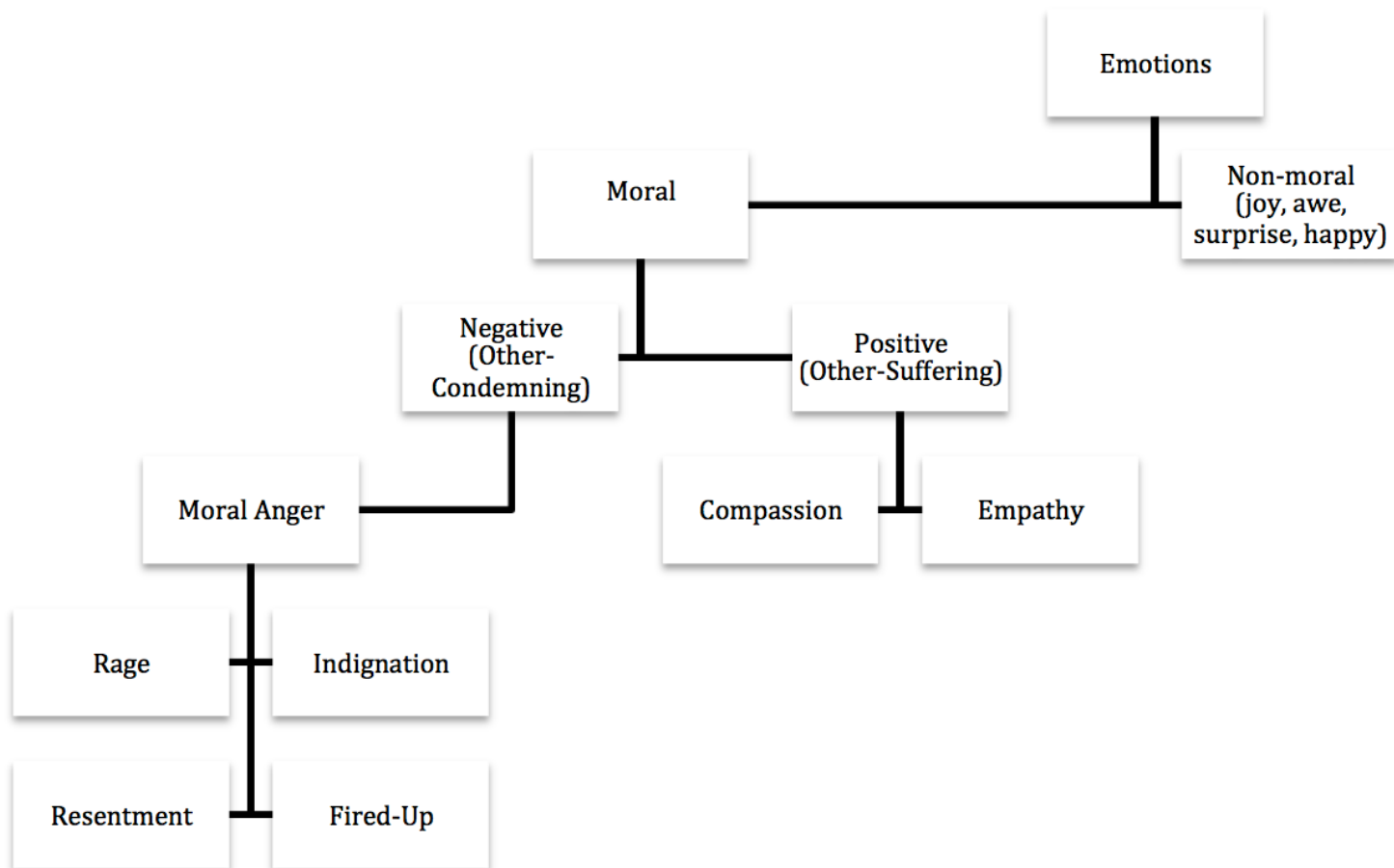


ROADMAP

- 1. What is black rage?
- 2. What black rage is not & what are its features?
- 3. Who are the anger police & what are their criticisms?
- 4. Hill, Hooks, & Lorde's defense of black rage
- 5. Final points

What is Moral Anger?

Moral Anger



What is Black Rage?



“Anger is a grief of distortions
between peers, and its object is
change.”(Lorde)

What is it founded on?

Black Rage is founded on draining and draining
Threatening your freedom to stop your complaining
Poisoning your water while they say its raining
They call you mad for complaining, complaining

Black rage is founded on blocking the truth
Murder and crime, compromise and distortion
Sacrifice, sacrifice who makes the fortune?
Greed, falsely called progress such human contortion
Black rage is founded on these kinds of things

(Hill, "Black Rage, 2014")

What is black rage founded on?

- Deadening silence
- Two thirds a person
- Rapings and beatings
- Blatant denial
- Victims of violence
(psyche & body)
- Having to justify existence
- Squeezed economics &
subsistence survival
- Made by unGodly control
- Fed us self-hatred
- Lies and abuse
- Suffering that worsens
- Social Control
- This grid and its cages
- Old time bureaucracy drugging
the youth

Two Types of Black Rage

Killing Rage

Directed at the way white supremacy exploits and/or oppress black people *collectively*.

Narcissistic Rage

Ideology of hierarchal privilege that says, “they” not “All” black people, should be treated better.

(Hooks, “Killing Rage”, 12-13)

What black rage is NOT...

- A Pathology
- Nihilism
- Powerlessness
- Not Victimization

(Hooks, "Killing Rage", 12-13,18)

“The secret of kindness for white people—
they had to pity a thing before they could
like it. [Black victimization] comforts
many whites precisely because it is the
antithesis of activism””

(hooks, “Killing Rage”, 18)

“When we embrace victimization, we
surrender our rage. My rage intensifies
because I am not a victim.”

(hooks, “Killing Rage”, 18)

What black rage is ...

1. Humanizing
2. Appropriate Response to Injustice
3. Necessary
4. Productive
5. Loaded with Information



1. It's Humanizing

“Racial Hatred is real. And it is humanizing to be able to resist it with militant rage.”

(hooks, “Killing Rage”, 17)

“Anger is better, there is a presence in anger. Perhaps then it is that ‘presence’, the assertion of subjectivity colonizers do not want to see, that surfaces when the colonized express rage.”

(hooks, “Killing Rage”, 12)



2. It's Appropriate

It's an Appropriate Response

“Anger is an **appropriate** reaction to racist attitudes, as is fury when the actions arising from those attitudes do not change.” (Lorde, UOA)

It's an Appropriate Response

“That rage ...it is an appropriate
response to injustice.”

(hooks, “Killing Rage”,)



3. It's Necessary

“My anger has meant pain to me but it has also meant **survival**, and before I give it up I’m going to be sure that there is something at least as **powerful** to replace it on the road to clarity.” (Lorde, UOA)

“I understand rage to be necessary aspect of resistance struggle. Rage can be a catalyst inspiring courageous action.” (Hooks, Killing Rage”, 16)

“So when the dogs bite/when the
beatings/and when I’m feeling sad/ I
simply remember all these kinds of
things/ and then I don’t **FEAR** so
bad.” (Hill, “Black Rage”, 2014)



4. It's Productive

“Everything can be used/except what
is wasteful/you will need to remember
this when you are accused of
destruction.” (Lorde, UOA)

“Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger **potentially useful** against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger in to being.” (Lorde, UOA)

“Anger between peers births change, not destruction, and the discomfort and sense of loss it often causes is not fatal, but a sign of growth.” (Lorde, UOA)

“But anger expressed and translated into action in the service of our vision and our future is a liberating and strengthening act of clarification.” (Lorde, UOA)



5. It's loaded with information

“When we turn from anger we turn from insight, saying we will accept only the designs already known, deadly and safely familiar.” (Lorde, UOA)

“We cannot allow our fear of anger to seduce us into settling for anything less than the hard work of excavating honesty.” (Lorde, UOA)

“My fear of anger taught me nothing.
Your fear of that anger will teach you
nothing, also.” (Lorde, UOA)

“It is not the anger of other[s] that will destroy us but our refusals to stand still, to listen to its rhythms, to learn within it, to move beyond the manner of presentation to the substance, to tap that anger as an important source of empowerment.” (Lorde, UOA)

The Anger Police

- **Job Description:** To dismiss, encourage silence, and/or seek to control the anger of oppressed people.
- **RACE:** Blacks and Whites

The Tactics of the Anger Police

- Illicit Fear
- Paint the angry as Irrational
- Accuse defenders of “inflaming racial tensions and dividing America.”
- Focus on anger and not social conditions
- Blame anger and not social conditions
- Highlight pieces of anger and not the whole
- Perpetuate stereotypes
- Use the work of Martin King Jr. to create guilt & shame and to hide their intentions

WHITES

- To Maintain white supremacy
- “Part of perpetuating and maintaining white supremacy [is to] colonized blacks through process of teaching them to repress rage & never make them the targets of any anger they feel about racism.” (hooks)
- Policing is rooted in fear.

BLACKS

- Do not feel rage because their lives are comfortable
- “Live in comfort can come to see world differently, experience it less hostile to blackness than it actual is... Shift happens when buy into individual liberalism.
- Forgetfulness and denial
- Cautious black gatekeepers
- Gain ear of white listeners
“Repression of rage & their silencing of rage of other black people are sacrificial offering they make to gain the ear of white listeners.”
- Urge to be complicit in oppression
“To make demand that we repress and annihilate our rage for comfort or assimilation to to urge to be complicit in their efforts to colonize, oppress, & exploit.” (hooks 13-16)

Two Views



“Inappropriate” Views:

“Anger Is reserved for the powerful & inappropriate for others.”

- **Inappropriate View:** It polices and dismisses the anger of the oppressed and argues that it is not the right or virtuous response to injustice.
- It is informed by racist, sexist, or classist ideology.

Celebs

'Scandal' creator Shonda Rhimes slams NYT over 'angry black woman' label

Gael Fashingbauer Cooper
TODAY

Sep. 19, 2014 at 5:04 PM ET

In the battle of the New York Times vs. "Scandal" and "Grey's Anatomy" creator Shonda Rhimes, the Internet is solidly on Rhimes' side.

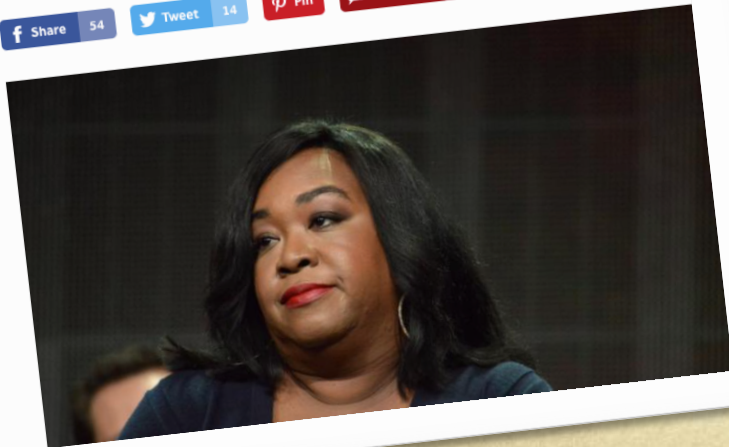
On Thursday, the Times published an [article about Rhimes](#) by TV critic Alessandra Stanley, and from the very first sentence, the piece seemed aimed at creating controversy.



Shonda Rhimes responded on Twitter to a controversial New York Times article about her. Richard Shotwell / AP file

The Angry Black Women of ShondaLand: What The New York Times (and Slate) Got Wrong

Share 54 Tweet 14 Pin Comment 24 Email



INAPPROPRIATE!

- **Minstrel Show Trope:** Used to show how different black women are from respectable white women (i.e. loud, controlling) and justify their mistreatment
- **Today:** She's just an angry black woman!

Barack Obama and the 'Wimp Factor'

Americans think the president lacks "toughness." But does showing strength really matter?

BY MICAH ZENKO

SEPTEMBER 10, 2014







Riots in Baltimore the Product of Anger, Deep Dysfunction

BALTIMORE — Apr 28, 2015, 6:10 PM ET

By JULIET LINDERMAN Associated Press

PostPartisan

Angry about the Baltimore riots



By **Jonathan Capehart** April 28   Follow @capehartj

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THE CORNER

THE ONE AND ONLY.

The Baltimore Rioters Aren't 'Angry.' They Are Having the Time of Their Lives.

It's an Appropriate Response

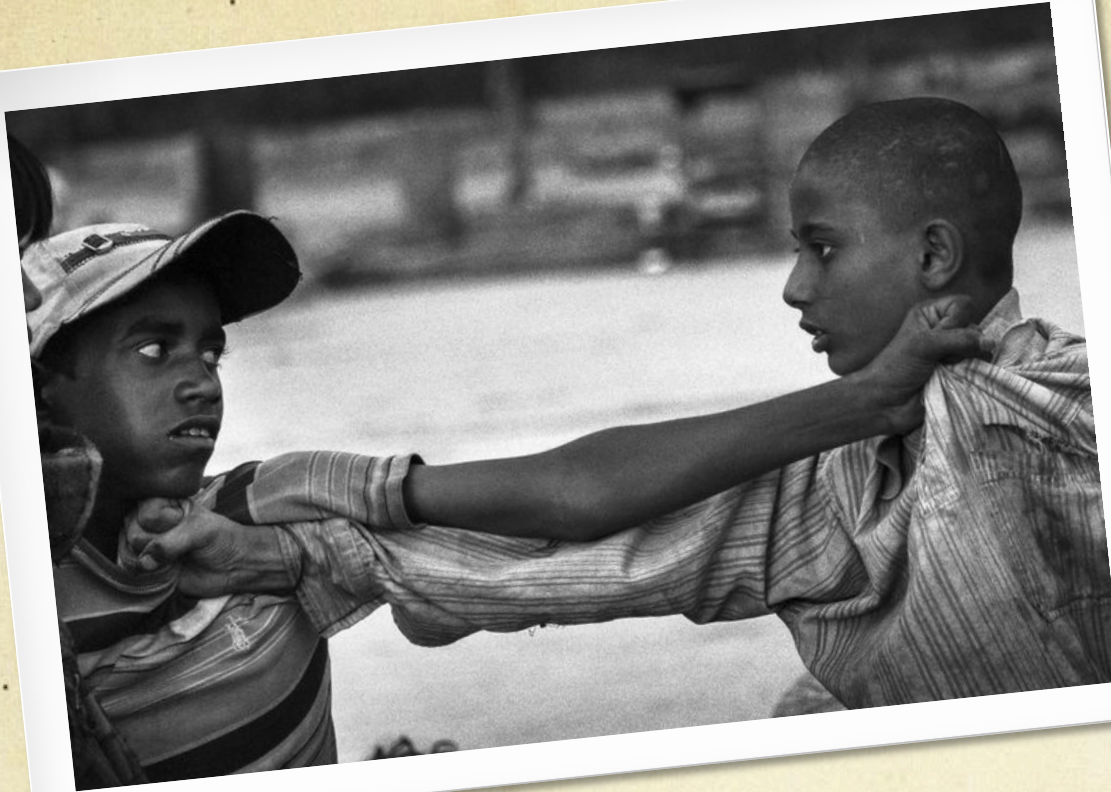
“Anger is an **appropriate** reaction to racist attitudes, as is fury when the actions arising from those attitudes do not change.” (Lorde, UOA)

“The Counterproductive View”

- Turns On It's Neighbor
- Turn Off Others
- Turns on Fears

Turn on Neighbor?

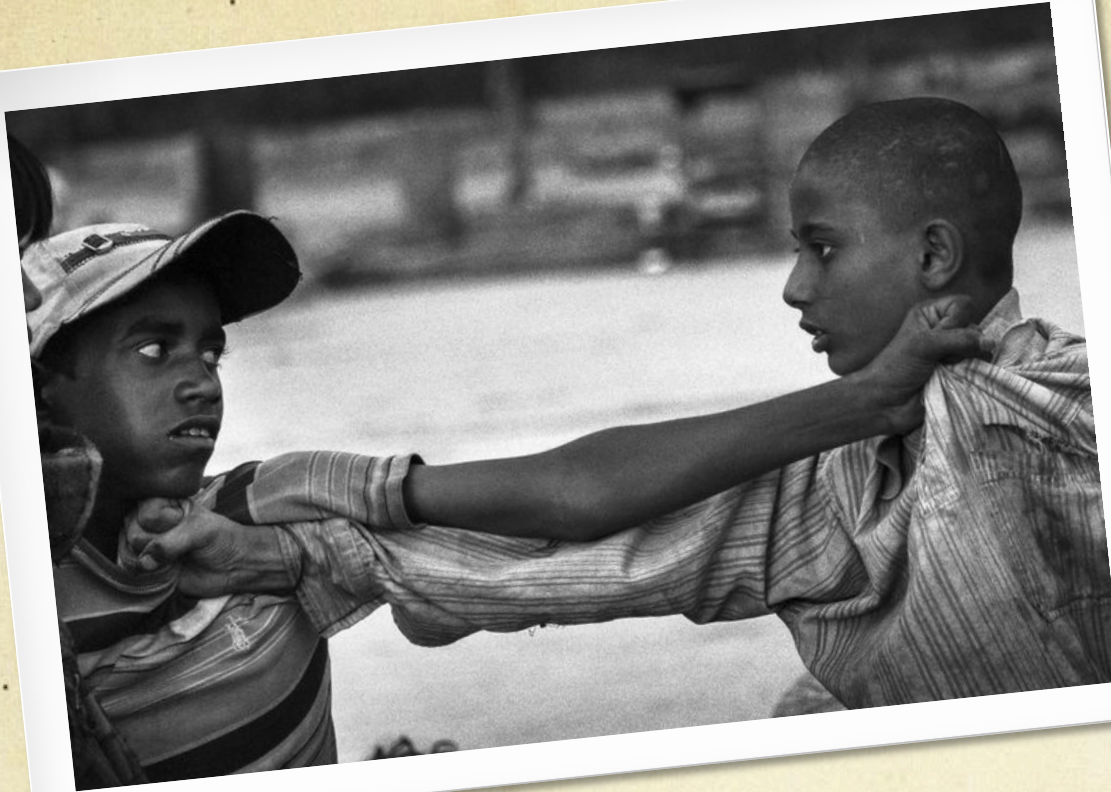
Anger at oppression is turned on others who are also oppressed.



“Internalized racism,... [can] lead us to feel self-hate, to vent anger and rage at injustice at one another rather than oppressive forces.” (hooks, “Feminist Theory”, 57)

Turn on Neighbor?

Anger at oppression is turned on others who are also oppressed.



- “That **unexpressed** anger...usually hurled at the first woman of Color who talks about racism...but **anger expressed and translated into action** in the service of our vision and our future is a liberating and strengthening act of clarification...**we identify** who are our allies with whom we have grave differences, and who are our genuine enemies.” (Lorde UOA)

Turn off Enemies?

Love changes enemies' hearts, anger turns them off.



○ “My anger is no excuse for not dealing with your blindness, no reason to withdraw from the results of your own actions.” (Lorde, UOA)

“Oppressed peoples are always being asked to stretch a little more, to bridge the gap between blindness and humanity. Black women are expected to use our anger only in the service of other people’s salvation or learning. But that time is over.” (Lorde, UOA)

“No woman is responsible for altering
the psyche of her oppressor.” (Lorde,
UOA)

Turn on fear?

People are afraid
of anger



“To turn aside from the anger of Black women with excuses or the pretexts of intimidation is to award no one power—it is merely another way of preserving racial blindness, the power of unaddressed privilege, unbreached, intact.”

(Lorde, UOA)

“White supremacy is frightening. It promotes mental illness and various dysfunctional behaviors on the part of whites and non-whites. It is the real and present danger--not black rage.”
(hooks, Killing Rage, 30)

“For it is not the anger of Black women which is dripping down over this globe like a diseased liquid. It is not my anger that launches rockets... slaughters children... sodomizes our daughters and our earth.” (Lorde, UOA)

Final Thoughts

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Don't repress anger, express anger!
- Be in solidarity with others
- Create productive goals
- Refused to be policed & Resist policing others
- Listen to other people's anger and give it uptake, you may *learn* something & then *Change* something.





Thanks For Engaging With Me

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH

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