

“The Eight Semantics of Oppression”

by William Brennan
Dehumanizing the Vulnerable

	DEFICIENT HUMAN	NON HUMAN	ANIMAL	PARASITE	DISEASE	INANIMATE OBJECT	WASTE PRODUCT	NONPERSON
NATIVE AMERICANS	“INDIANS [ARE]...INFERIOR TO THE ANGLO-SAXON.” (HENRY CLAY, SEC. OF STATE, 1825)	“THE LIFE OF THESE [ABORIGINES] IS...NOT HUMAN.” (ARTHUR HUGH BRACKENRIDGE, 1779)	“THE INDIAN...IS AN UNTAMABLE, CARNIVOROUS ANIMAL.” (DR. JOSIAH NOTT, 1847)	“CLEAR THE COUNTRY OF THAT VERMIN [INDIANS].” (COLONEL HENRY BOUQUET, 1763)	“THE IROQUOIS HAD PROVED MORE DEADLY...THAN THE PESTILENCE.” (HISTORIAN FRANCIS PARKMAN, 1902)	“[INDIANS ARE] ANTHROPOLOGICAL SPECIMENS.” (AMERICAN PRESS COVERAGE, 1904)	“[INDIANS ARE] THE VERY DREGS, GARBAGE...OF EARTH.” (POET CRISTOPHER BROOKE, 1622)	“AN INDIAN IS NOT A PERSON WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE CONSTITUTION.” (GEORGE CANFIELD, AM. LAW REV., 1881)
AFRICAN AMERICANS	“A SUBORDINATE AND INFERIOR CLASS OF BEINGS.” (U.S. SUPREME COURT, 1857)	“THE NEGRO IS NOT A HUMAN PERSON.” (BUCKNER PAYNE, PUBLISHER, 1867)	“THE NEGRO IS ONE OF THE LOWER ANIMALS.” (PROFESSOR CHARLES CARROLL, 1900)	“THEY [NEGROES] ARE PARASITES.” (DR. E.T. BRADY, 1909)	“FREE BLACKS IN OUR COUNTRY ARE...A CONTAGION.” (AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOC., 1815-30)	“A NEGRO OF THE AFRICAN RACE WAS REGARDED...AS AN ARTICLE OF PROPERTY.” (U.S. SUPREME COURT, 1857)	“THE NEGRO RACE IS...A HERITAGE OF ORGANIC AND PSYCHIC DEBRIS.” (DR. WILLIAM ENGLISH, 1903)	“IN THE EYES OF THE LAW...THE SLAVE IS NOT A PERSON.” (VIRGINIA SUPREME COURT, 1858)
SOVIET ENEMIES	“THE UNCIVILIZED, STUPID, TURGID PEOPLE IN THE RUSSIAN VILLAGES.” (AUTHOR MAXIM GORKY, 1922)	“KULAKS ARE NOT HUMAN BEINGS.” (LENIN AND STALIN, 1918-34)	“[PEASANTS ARE] BEASTS OF BURDEN.” (GEORGE PLEKHANOV, 1823)	“THE KULAK, THE PARASITE.” (LENIN, 1918)	“EVERY RELIGIOUS IDEA [IS] ‘CONTAGION’ OF THE MOST ABOMINABLE KIND.” (LENIN, 1913)	“[GULAG SLAVE LABORERS ARE] RAW MATERIAL.” (AUTHOR MAXIM GORKY, 1934)	“A FOUL-SMELLING HEAP OF HUMAN GARBAGE [PURGE TRIAL DEFENDANTS].” (PROSECUTOR ANREI VYSHINSKY, 1938)	“UNPERSONS WHO HAD NEVER EXISTED.” [DESIGNATION FOR PEOPLE PURGED BY THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT]
EUROPEAN JEWS	“THE INFERIOR JEWISH RACE.” (DR. RUDOLPH RAMM, 1943)	“JEWS ARE UNDOUBTEDLY A RACE, BUT NOT HUMAN.” (ADOLF HITLER, 1923)	“THE PRISONERS HERE ARE ANIMALS.” (NAZI ANATOMY PROF. DR. AUGUST HIRT, 1942)	“THE JEW IS A PARASITE.” (NAZI PROPAGANDA BOOKLET, 1944)	“SOME DAY EUROPE WILL PERISH OF THE JEWISH DISEASE.” (JOSEPH GOEBBELS, 1939)	“TRANSIT MATERIAL.” (PORTRAYAL OF JEWS DISPATCHED TO NAZI DEATH CAMPS, 1942-44)	“WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THIS GARBAGE [JEWS]?” (CHRISTIAN WIRTH, EXTERMINATION EXPERT, 1942)	“THE REICHSGERICHT ITSELF REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE JEWS...AS ‘PERSONS’ IN THE LEGAL SENSE.” (GERMAN SUPREME COURT, 1936)
WOMEN	“THEY [WOMEN] FORM... THE SECOND SEX, INFERIOR IN EVERY RESPECT TO THE FIRST.” (A. SCHOPENHAUER, 1851)	“WOMEN ARE NOT SEEN AS HUMAN.” (REPORT BY WOMEN’S GROUP ON PORNOGRAPHIC IMAGES, 1980)	“WOMEN ARE DOMESTIC ANIMALS.” (19TH-CENTURY POET CHARLES BAUDELAIRE)	“WOMEN’S SEXUAL PARASITISM IS INNATE.” (PHILOSOPHER RENE GUYON)	“THE WORST PLAGUE ZEUS MADE--WOMEN.” (ANCIENT GREEK POET SEMONIDES)	“I CONSIDERED MY WIFE...MY PROPERTY.” (FORMER WIFE ABUSER, 1989)	“EMPTYING REFUSE INTO A SEWER [THE WOMAN’S BODY].” (AUTHOR HENRY MILLER, 1965)	“THE STATUTORY WORD ‘PERSON’ DID NOT IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES INCLUDE WOMEN.” (BRITISH VOTING RIGHTS CASE, 1909)
UNWANTED UNBORN	“THE FETUS, AT MOST, REPRESENTS ONLY THE POTENTIALITY OF LIFE.” (U.S. SUPREME COURT, 1973)	“A FETUS IS NOT A HUMAN BEING.” (RABBI WOLFE KELMAN, 1984)	“LIKE...A PRIMITIVE ANIMAL THAT’S POKED WITH A STICK.” (DR. HART PETERSON ON FETAL MOVEMENT, 1985)	“THE FETUS IS A PARASITE.” (PROF. ROSALIND POLLACK PETCHESKY)	“PREGNANCY WHEN NOT WANTED IS A DISEASE...IN FACT, A VENEREAL DISEASE.” (PROF. JOSEPH FLETCHER, 1979)	“PEOPLE’S BODY PARTS [EMBRYOS] ARE THEIR PERSONAL PROPERTY.” (ATTORNEY LORI ANDREWS, 1986)	“AN ABORTED BABY IS JUST GARBAGE...JUST REFUSE.” (DR. MARTTI KEKOMAKI, 1980)	“THE WORD ‘PERSON’ AS USED IN THE 14TH AMENDMENT DOES NOT INCLUDE THE UNBORN.” (U.S. SUPREME COURT, 1973)
DEPENDENT DISCARDS	“A LIFE...DEVOID OF THOSE QUALITIES WHICH GIVE IT HUMAN DIGNITY.” (DR. HARRY HARTZELL, 1978)	“NO NEWBORN INFANT SHOULD BE DECLARED HUMAN UNTIL IT HAS PASSED CERTAIN TESTS.” (DR. FRANCIS CRICK, 1978)	“UNTIL A LIVING BEING CAN TAKE CONSCIOUS MANAGEMENT OF LIFE...IT REMAINS AN ANIMAL.” (PROF. GEORGE BALL, 1981)	“THAT’S A REAL PARASITE.” (MEDICAL STAFF CHARACTERIZATION OF A DEBILITATED PATIENT, 1989)	“THOSE ‘SICKLERS.’” (DOCTORS’ PORTRAYAL OF PATIENTS WITH SICKLE CELL ANEMIA, 1986)	“I CAME TO SEE THE PATIENTS AS WORK OBJECTS.” (NURSING HOME STAFF MEMBER, 1977)	“THERE’S A LOT OF RUBBISH [PATIENTS] THIS MORNING.” (ER DOCTOR, 1979)	“NEW-BORN HUMANS ARE NEITHER PERSONS NOR EVEN QUASI-PERSONS.” (PHILOSOPHER MICHAEL TOOLEY, 1983)