TDR

Comment

Orthography Is Political

Richard Schechner

"My grandfather was colored, my father was Negro, and I am black," Henry Louis Gates, Jr., wrote in 1994 (201). Other words, awful words, also historically described black people in America (and elsewhere, too, throughout the British Empire, and beyond, wherever english is spoken). The "n word" is so well known that all I need do to call it to your ear is write "n[...]r" or one of its cognates. Today many black youths, and some blacks not so young, use the "n[...]ga" variant in speech and song, defiantly and affectionately. Language has its ways of guiding as well as describing. Language evolves, language matters.

With this issue, *TDR* begins working with our new publisher, Cambridge University Press, after 40 years with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press. As part of our new start, we are mulling over orthography. What words may we use, which abhor; which should be capitalized, which lowercased? In searching for a policy, I consulted scholars both among and beyond *TDR*'s contributing and consortium editors; and I discussed vocabulary and orthography with *TDR*'s editorial staff: associate editor Mariellen Sandford, managing editor Sara Brady, and assistant editor Sarah Lucie.

Before sharing a key communication that led to my decision regarding the "n word," let me cut to the chase. We will use "n[...]r" and "n[...]ga" to designate the n word and its well-known variant even when quoting sources that spell out the words. If, however, a black author wants to spell out n[...]r or n[...]ga, *TDR* will do that.

With regard to capitalization, TDR's default will be to lowercase "black," "white," and other racial designations. My rationale is that uppercase literally and conceptually elevates, while lowercase equalizes. I prefer at this point to tamp the fire heating up identifiers, to orthographically equalize. But I also understand that many disagree with me, strongly. I respect their feelings and reasoning, and will use uppercase when authors explicitly request it. This deferring to individual preference will mean inconsistencies in *TDR*'s orthography. But, as Ralph Waldo Emerson aptly noted in 1841, "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds" ([1841] 1908:23).

Making this non-decision regarding capitalization came after consulting with many *TDR* editors and other scholars whose input was diverse and dynamic (see "About Orthography" below). My own preference is to lowercase everything but proper nouns. The move from capitals to lowercase is the trend; over the long run it is both logical and ineluctable. So, for example "Martin Luther King," "Egypt," "Bengal," "Russia," and "America," but "egyptian," "bengali," "russian," and "american." But what about "Indigenous," "First Nations," or "Native American" where the words point to stolen nations as legitimate as England or Japan? At the moment, there is too much disagreement to go whole hog for lowercase. *TDR* will embrace, or suffer (depending on your point of view), inconsistency in this matter.

Turning to the "n word," the turbulence is strong. The word and its variants have a long history, much of it painful.[1] Like it or not, it is widely used in english-language literature, theatre, and popular culture. Uprooting a word, or quarantining it, runs against my areopagitican inclination to free, unlicensed speech. Laundering hateful speech uttered by racists cleanses them of their hate and regressive politics, making them look and sound better than they are. Nor do I want to deprive scholars, artists, and freedom fighters of their own words or limit

1. See Kennedy (2002), Price (2011), Perdue and Parks (2014), Pryor (2016), and Brown (2018).

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them when they quote others. Frederick Douglass, Mark Twain, James Baldwin, Zora Neale Hurston, William Faulkner, Adrienne Kennedy, Joseph Conrad, Richard Pryor, Spike Lee, dozens of rappers, and many more, use n[...]r and/or n[...]ga across many modes of discourse. Fifty-five articles or plays, many by black authors, published in *TDR* from 1963 through 2019 use the n word.[2] Knowing that, and respecting both creative work and scholarship, I first decided to spell out the word—no ellipses. But the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others both recently and earlier, driving home (again) the stark actuality of structural racism in the USA (and elsewhere), along with the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement, change the way things are.

As with upper- vs. lowercase, I asked *TDR*'s editors and others for their opinions (again, see "About Orthography" below). I went back and forth over many weeks. What cemented my decision was an email I received from african american historian Jeffrey T. Sammons:

> Using such a painful word is not necessary to showing how evil and dangerous Bilbo and Talmadge[3] and countless other haters were. Showing what they did is far more important. I am sure you are aware of arguments about reproducing and reinforcing. I think there is power in refusing to use, what I believe to be, the single most hurtful and degrading term in the history of mankind. Listen to black folks on this issue as this is not an intellectual matter but a psychological one.

It is also a moral and political matter. What we write, read, and say affects who we are, how we act in the world. Sometimes—and especially during the Covid-19 pandemic—masking, social distancing, and quarantining are necessary prophylactics. In the case of n[...]r and n[...]ga, we, *TDR* included, should choose caution in order to safely and constructively get from a here we need to leave to a there we even more urgently need to arrive at.

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2. I searched *TDR*'s MIT Press website, JStor, and Project Muse to arrive at this number.

3. Theodore Bilbo and Eugene Talmadge are subjects of Weston Twardowski's and Gary A. Fine's "Entertaining the Forgotten: Southern Governors and the Performance of Populism" in this issue of *TDR*. It was the frequent use of n[...]r in quotations in that article that prompted this discussion and the decisions flowing from it.

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About Orthography

A Discussion

Below is a compilation of a minimally edited discussion conducted via email about how to deal with the "n word" and whether or not to capitalize or lowercase identifiers. To show the dynamics of the thread, I've put the responses in date order, which means some people appear more than once.

I sent the following email to Tavia Nyong'o and Fred Moten and then, slightly later, I sent essentially the same email to all of *TDR*'s contributing and consortium editors and several other scholars.

1 July 2020

Dear [Name]:

Mariellen [Sandford], Sara Brady, and I are discussing word usage in *TDR* regarding "black" vs "Black" and "white" vs White."

Currently *TDR* allows each individual author to use capitals or not, as they choose. But *TDR*'s default is lowercase.

What is your opinion on this? Should "Black" be capitalized as the default? Should we change what authors write? And if the default is "Black" should the default also be "White"?

I hope you can give us some guidance.

2 July 2020

Tavia Nyong'o, Chair and Professor of Theater and Performance Studies, Professor of American Studies, Professor of African American Studies, Yale University

Perhaps surprisingly, I have *no* opinion on capitalizing (or not) black and/or white. Without disrespecting those who feel passionately about this one way or the other, and recognizing that we are engaged in an editorial enterprise for which decisions have to be made, I have found this entire debate to be a tedious waste of time.

That said, we should probably start capitalizing Black as a standard practice, but allow an author to revert to lowercase if *they* have a strong preference (which many black [Black] authors do).

I do not think that Black and White need to be symmetrical in our style guide, since the reasons for capitalizing Black are precisely that black and white are not symmetrical in social life. But again, if an author wants to capitalize White, I wouldn't stop them.

2 July 2020

Jeffrey T. Sammons, Professor of History, New York University

I referred your query to a black colleague [Michele Mitchell]. [...] She addressed the matter briefly in a recent meeting and stressed its complexity, which you clearly understand.

[...]

Here is my colleague's response. Whatever decision you make, you will not please all. [...]

2 July 2020

Michele Mitchell, Associate Professor of History, New York University

[...] Some of the key objections to capitalizing "Black" are that it can actually work to enforce, enable, and/or entrench problematic racialization and that such a move can ultimately be reductive. And, capitalizing "Black" can inevitably lead to calls to capitalize "White"; some people rightly point out that the impetus behind capitalizing "black" is notably distinct from any impulse to capitalize "white."

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In her magisterial book, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America*, Peggy Pascoe made the decision to capitalize both. Here's her argument:

> [...T]o show the pervasiveness of racial categories then and now, I have departed from the usual grammatical practice and decided to capitalize the words "Black" and "White" as well as more routinely capitalized words such as "Japanese," "Chinese," and "Filipino." My hope here is to show "Black" Americans as a group of men and women with a wide variety of skin colors and backgrounds rather than to let the word "black" slide into physical description. And by capitalizing "White," I hope to help mark the category that remains unmarked, and taken for the norm, when the fact that, in American history, to be "White" is often an aspiration as well as an entitlement. (2009:14)

I admire Pascoe's book so much and I definitely see her point. I certainly understand why many colleagues and students feel it imperative to capitalize "black" for political as well as intellectual reasons. In my teaching and editorial work, I do not feel compelled to insist that either a student or an author use a lowercase "b"; indeed, at varying points in my academic career, I have capitalized "Black" in my own writing as well. Ultimately, however, I fall on the side of thinking that, as much as capitalizing "black" can be a pointed and meaningful political move, such capitalization can—unwittingly, perhaps—work to facilitate problematic and even reductive racialization.

16 July 2020

Sharon Mazer, Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies in Te Ara Poutama, the Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Development at Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand

What a provocative question! I'm polling my Māori colleagues and friends, and have also asked my Native American collaborators their views. [...]

From Dr. Te Rita Papesch (Te Wānanga o Aotearoa), leader in Māori performing arts, most notably kapa haka:

> Interesting! First off, we use a capital for Māori as a race because without a capital the word means normal, natural, or fresh, as in wai māori—fresh water as opposed to salt water. We capitalise Indigenous and Pākehā, which we tend to use rather than White, as well as Black when referring to race. Native not such an issue. Hope I have been of help.

From Associate Professor Ella Henry, Auckland University of Technology:

> I have no views on capitalising blacks and whites.
>
> However, the Indigenous Permanent Forum of the UN published an interesting perspective a few years back, asking that Indigenous be capitalised, because we, Indigenous peoples, see it as a proper noun, like France, Italy, etc. The fact that we may be landless and/or stateless sovereign peoples, should not undermine our capacity to be seen as such, which is what a proper noun reflects. I also know that a number of Indigenous peoples in the US prefer to be known as Native Americans, and a number of Indigenous peoples in Canada prefer to be known as First National, whilst Indigenous peoples in Australia prefer to be called Aboriginal.

From Professor Pare Keiha, Dean of Māori and Indigenous Development, Auckland University of Technology:

> OH here is my penneth worth.
>
> My mother used to tell me often that I was not Māori I was Te Whanau a Taupara o T'Aitanga a Mahaki. In other words no one else was to define who I was other than my family.

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From Maryrose Casey, Associate Professor in the Indigenous Studies Centre, Monash University:

> To answer the question to use lowercase in reference to Aboriginal Australians or Indigenous Australians is actively offensive. It lumps the people in with animals and plants or as some generic type.

From Eddie Madril, Artistic Director of Sewam American Indian Dance and on the faculty of San Francisco State University, currently working on a PhD with Mazer.

> [...]
>
> [...W]e whose ancestors are from the United States can only, really, be satisfied by the names we call ourselves in our own language. This would undermine the need to lump us into the umbrella names we are referred to [which reflect] the hegemonic structures that govern us politically and socially. The terms—Indigenous, Indian, Native—have each satisfied the categories set up by those who need to categorize us in the simplest way. They are english terms. They are not ours. We have no true ownership or power with those terms. Most of us have been driven to use those terms because of necessity or to be able to navigate within a society that controls our access to resources (politically, professionally, academically, socially). We ourselves will even argue which of those terms is the correct one to describe us. Seems like a losing argument; like a fallacy argument. [T]hey are all correct according to those who created them at different moments in history, and they are all incorrect. They are in English, which would suggest that the embedded cultural value of the language itself is relative to those it describes/defines/names.
>
> This is my personal opinion and experience. Decades of trying to convince myself, my family, and some members of my community to [stop] using any of those terms is a daunting task. I am not the first to have this sentiment. It has been said before. Without the numbers, in a structure that pronounces "majority rules," we can almost never expect a change that reflects the need for identities to be recognized independently (as Nations perhaps). I do not speak for the Nations I am referring to—it is my own opinion.
>
> I completely understand the interest or need to change from being capitalized to lowercase. For the sake of not trying to control how...we...Native...people are titled, I would recommend continuing to capitalize the term Native. It may be a grace, honor, or respect given to the people, who in this country, have yet to name themselves as a whole.
>
> [...D]ifferent generations, different living conditions, different education levels, different blood quantums, different cultural participation, and different relationships with the federal government can all play into how a person or group argues for/against. [...]

After some further [...] polling on the fly in the hallway, I can say that my Māori, Pasifika, and Native American colleagues would not like to see their identifications lowercased. The reasons vary. Teena Brown Pulu (who identifies as a Tongan New Zealander with strong Māori connections) responded that lowercasing would reinstate a diminished status that she's been fighting against her entire life. The others, as you've seen, are some combination of bemused and corrective in their responses. Te Rita's cautionary note about the difference between Māori and māori is particularly instructive, as a reminder of the law of unintended consequences.

What's touched me in everyone's generous thinking through of the question with me is that choosing to forgo an uppercased identity itself enacts a kind of privilege and has the potential to affect an erasure that is, in its own way, more in keeping with the past than breaking with it.

When I'm working with Indigenous colleagues I tend to accept whatever conventions they've decided upon, usually after some discussion about the reasoning and implications. [...] My own recommendation would be to relax the rules far enough to make room for such discussions and to represent those discussions as part of the ongoing conversation about what the "post" in postcolonial might mean.

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21 July 2020

Carol Martin, Professor of Drama, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University

Thus far I have taken the advice of black colleagues and do not capitalize black or white. Negro I capitalize. This practice may change. I will revisit my thinking as our understanding of systemic racism continues to evolve.

Generally, I am not for lowercase French, Italian, African, or African American. Regarding proper names, *TDR* should follow the determinations people make for themselves. I am Carol Martin, Jewish. Not jewish. Lowercase Jewish seems in line with antisemitism. Democratic equality cannot be guaranteed by orthography but the sensitivity to it is heartening. *TDR* should continue focusing on the diversity of articles and authors for which it is renowned.

21 July 2020

Tracy C. Davis, Barber Professor of Performing Arts, Northwestern University

Ooh, grammar and style sheets at the forefront! I have adopted the practice of Indigenous (n.) and indigeneity (adj.) which is an important political acknowledgement of nationhood and the legitimacy of identity (along with Native Peoples and First Nations). There is wide consensus about this. Don't mess with it.

In my most recent edited book [Davis and Marx 2020], Black is the preferred designation in contemporary parlance for an ethnic or cultural identity embracing Africa, the African diaspora, and corresponding affiliations. White is not capitalized. It's not a parallel case.

21 July 2020

Kimberly Jannarone, Professor in the Practice of Dramaturgy and Dramatic Criticism, Yale School of Drama

Inspiring discussion, thanks, all.

I've read the recent capitalization of Black as a way of establishing it as a category of identity that differs in emphasis or quality from that of white. Although I'm not finding the words to express exactly how or what that is, I agree with the comment that the two words are not parallel (in usage, in reception, in grammar) at the moment, and I don't feel they need to be.

I'm also a fan of grammar rules when they help clarify, and in general I find that the common usage of capital letters does clarify sorts of identification for me.

So I'm fine with Black and white for now. Knowing that things change suddenly around here.

21 July 2020

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, University Professor Emerita, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University

We cannot adopt one uniform principle, all caps or no caps. I say we go with "accepted usage" and where there are options, opt for the more progressive. I would not invent.

21 July 2020

Amelia Jones, Robert A. Day Professor of Art and Design, Vice Dean of Academics and Research, Chair of Critical Studies, Roski School of Art and Design, University of Southern California

I'm with Tracy. That's the usage I'm familiar with, having just finished copyedits on a book addressing Indigenous performance and Black critical race theory extensively.

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21 July 2020

Fawzia Afzal-Khan, Professor of English and University Distinguished Scholar, Montclair State University

Alexandria Neason, in conversation with Mike Laws in the *Columbia Journalism Review* on why *CJR* decided to capitalize Black, said that capitalizing "Black" acknowledges that slavery "deliberately stripped" people "of all other ethnic/national ties." Neason further added:

> *African American* is not wrong, and some prefer it, but if we are going to capitalize *Asian* and *South Asian* and *Indigenous*, for example, groups that include myriad ethnic identities united by shared race and geography and, to some degree, culture, then we also have to capitalize *Black*. [Laws 2020]

Lori Tharps, writing in the *NYT* in 2014, makes a similar argument: "Black with a capital B refers to people of the African diaspora. Lowercase black is simply a color." And she goes on to state that Black should always be written with a capital B, because the word designates "a people, a race, a tribe" [Tharps 2014b]. Elsewhere (quoted in *The Atlantic*, more recently), Tharps has written, "when a copyeditor deletes the capital 'B,' they are in effect deleting the history and contributions of my people" [2014a]. I would say White, by the same token, should be capitalized. However, Ms. Price, of the Insight Center, would disagree:

> We strongly believe that leaving white in lowercase represents a righting of a long-standing wrong and a demand for dignity and racial equity. [...W]e cannot embrace equal treatment in our language. [in Appiah 2020]

In agreement with the above writers and their arguments, I say that we capitalize Black but not white.

22 July 2020

Branislav Jakovljević, Professor of Theater and Performance Studies, Stanford University

I agree with Tracy, and I think Kimberly is also saying something similar.

22 July 2020

Elise Morrison, Assistant Professor of Theater Studies, Yale University

Thanks for the research and reasoning that has been shared on this thread! I agree with Fawzia, Tracy, Carol, and Kimberly (and others expressing this viewpoint): Black, Inuit, Indigenous, Jewish, etc. And no caps on white.

22 July 2020

Uchino Tadashi, Professor of Performance Studies, University of Tokyo

Thanks for a very inspiring dialogue.

As for me, being not only physically but also in many other respects "away" from the US (us?) for some time now, it is difficult to say something definite here with my out-of-context-ness.

If it is ok, I would like to go with Barbara's "We cannot adopt one uniform principle, all caps or no caps. I say we go with 'accepted usage' and where there are options, opt for the more progressive. I would not invent."

22 July 2020

Ong Keng Sen, Artistic Director TheatreWorks, Singapore; independent scholar

I would go with quite a lot of what has been expressed by Fawzia and also by Tracy. Black (when used as part of a noun) and white (when used as an adjective).

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I do support using less caps, such as of french descent and yet the French Revolution seems to be more correct.

Overall, BKG's wisdom is very attractive.

22 July 2020

Rebecca Schneider, Professor of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies, Brown University

when i first got this email i responded right away off string to RS that I was fine with lowercasing. which i am. i prefer it actually. i would be especially eager to take down nationalities—so, canadian. so, french. i would also lowercase identities. i am of german descent. i was raised protestant in america. i am white. i am not jewish. but clearly this would wreak havoc with things like university mandates to structures of recognizable research (read legitimation machines, which is to read liberal humanist traditions which is, with sylvia wynter, to read white not Black). because tdr is not peer reviewed, it is already questionable for some tenuring committees. so my quick to flip to lowercase is not necessarily helpful to those making arguments before tenuring bodies, though it does take the long view toward changing our world. this is my hat off to bell hooks. maybe i would lowercase everything but uppercase Indigenous and Black. or maybe I would do the bkg route and have authors state their caps preferences like pronouns—there is at least as much at stake.

22 July 2020

André Lepecki, Professor of Performance Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University

apologies for my late arrival into the conversation.

i like what Tracy and BKG and Keng Sen and Branislav and many others have expressed. it seems that a certain flexibility that takes into account current and future political sensibilities regarding matters of editorial style is crucial.

as for nationalities, i would go with french, and portuguese, etc. but, yes: Black, Indigenous, etc.

(i find this conversation super interesting—at many levels. i am a lover of low caps, and can imagine a future language—or a past e.e. cummings one—where everything is low caps. rebecca's posting also made me think of how odd it is, for a romance-language native, that the first-person pronoun in english is capitalized. asking for the impossible, i would love to lower the "I" to just an "i." and not make it poetry, or maybe, make it all poetry, finally.)

24 July 2020

Petra Kuppers, Professor of English, Women's Studies, Art and Design, and Theatre, University of Michigan

thanks so much for your note!

I do not capitalize disabled, currently, though I do see the logic... but in disability culture circles, we do have Deaf and deaf: the first is a cultural formation, the second means that someone can't hear. So it's fully in keeping with the Black/White debates.

I do currently capitalize Black and White, after particular Black artists whose work I write about asked me to do so—and I just sent a book manuscript (*Eco Soma: Speculative Performance Encounters*) to the University of Minnesota Press, using that contemporary convention (and I mark a number of writers with different arguments). I agree, there is a lot of discussion around the issue of capitalization...

Anyway, that's my perspective. I think marking that this is a current contended issue is a very good thing, whatever you eventually go with.

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7 *August 2020*

Richard Schechner

I emailed Gary Alan Fine and Weston Twardowski, authors of "Entertaining the Forgotten: Southern Governors and the Performance of Populism," an article accepted for publication by *TDR*, published in this issue:

I [...] still have one unresolved question. In quoting the men you write about [Huey P. Long, Theodore G. Bilbo, and Eugene Talmadge] you write "n[...]r"[4] fairly often. I've asked two well-known and far from conservative black scholars about this, telling them the context (what you are writing about, without identifying you by name) and the centrality of racism to your essay.

Both scholars felt that the word should be written n*r or some other known representative orthography. I am deeply conflicted. After all, the pain of the word, and the system it enacts, is part of what you are writing about; and you are talking about performances where the use of "n[...]r" is an important part of the politicians' repertories, how they appealed to their voters.

At this point, I have not yet decided whether or not to write the word in its entirety. As a (nominally) white person (I am a Jew, and don't consider myself white in the classic sense, though in the USA I have had the benefits of white privilege), I am uncomfortable about making the decision without the wisdom of black scholar colleagues. But you are the authors. I need to know what you think.

7 *August 2020*

Gary Alan Fine, Professor of Sociology, Northwestern University

You raise a very interesting point. When this has come up before, I've responded that it is like oncologists not wanting to show images of carcinoma. Professionals should not have to be told that they wish to destroy cancer cells or racial malice. The word in context and in ink is not our enemy, the thought is. I worry that by not writing out the word, we give those who have used it a pass and have cleaned up their act.

Having said that, I also realize that there is a malign magic in the word. Decades ago, I would ask my students to stand before a mirror and repeat "n[...]r" 100 times as fast as they could. The performed word became air, deprived of power. The hope was to steal its meaning. That was then (35 years ago?), this is now, and I have long ago stopped that exercise. I will respect whichever decision you, Weston [Twardowski], and *TDR* make. I wouldn't want you or Weston to receive pushback.

I suspect that using n[...]r won't require a long explanation, but writing the word will and it might be along the lines of the first paragraph of this email.

7 *August 2020*

Jeffrey T. Sammons

Black graduate students have reported distress over the use of the n-word unfiltered. I am opposed to its use in any form as it reinforces and normalizes an abhorrent and harmful word no matter who uses it. I am sure you remember Richard Pryor's famous skit on *SNL* with Chevy Chase. Pryor even had a late-life conversion about the word and chastised Dick Cavett for saying it and believing he had a right because of the context. I always feel that there is some sense of entitlement and deceit among those who use it.

4. In my email, I spelled the word out. Here I am eliding it as per *TDR*'s policy.

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7 August 2020

Tavia Nyong'o

I appreciate the question. My own view, at least in the past, is that the [n]word does the most harm when spoken aloud (like in a classroom). Print is more ambiguous for me. I understand why authors in print would use n*r even when quoting, but also why they would want to retain n[...]r on the grounds of historical accuracy. The shock and offense to us today is precisely the point. I've seen both in recent publications. My sense is the tide is turning towards n*r or the n*word but I think it would also be possible to add an editor's note or content warning.

As a transnational intercultural publication, read and cited in plenty of linguistic and cultural contexts where its degree of offense ("fighting words") isn't always registered, it seems we could perhaps do a service and set a standard by deeming the n* word "unprintable" as the *Times* likes to say.

Hope that helps?

8 August 2020

Weston Twardowski, PhD Candidate Northwestern University, Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama, Northwestern University

I'm not opposed to using a representative form personally. While I understand the feeling that letting these men's [Bilbo, Talmadge, and Long] words damn them is valuable, and showing their rhetoric and how they relied on despicable language is important to the article, I don't know that meaning is lost in using n——or n*****. I have been conflicted throughout writing as to how much of the hate speech to include in order to show the scope of their racism. A concern I continually return to is how much airtime (and power) to give these viewpoints. If substituting n***** for the written-out word takes out some of that bite for readers, while still indicting the speakers, I'm in favor of offering that kindness. Especially with a note explaining the choice beforehand.

8 August 2020

Jeffrey T. Sammons

Using such a painful word is not necessary to showing how evil and dangerous Bilbo and Talmadge and countless other haters were. Showing what they did is far more important. I am sure you are aware of arguments about reproducing and reinforcing. I think there is power in refusing to use, what I believe to be the single most hurtful and degrading term in the history of mankind. Listen to black folks on this issue as this is not an intellectual matter but a psychological one.

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