

1Hr Discussion plan

Definition

- 1) **Tone argument:** A tone argument is a logical fallacy that occurs when an argument is dismissed or accepted based on its presentation, usually its perceived hostility, crassness, or hysteria. (rational wiki) Drawing attention to the tone rather than content of a statement can allow other parties to avoid engaging with sound arguments presented in that statement, thus undermining the original party's attempt to communicate and effectively shutting them down.
- 2) **Tone policing (oppressive):** Tone arguments are also often entwined with privilege, especially when a member of an oppressor group (oftentimes in a position of power) abuses said power to shut down concerns raised by a marginalized group, irrespective of whether the concerns are valid through invoking the tone argument. The tone argument is also used as a silencing tactic, where someone invariably becomes angry due to their opponent (often in a position of power) dismissed or ignores their repeated requests or well-reasoned arguments, and said anger is then used to justify removing them from the discussion, thereby silencing them.
 - a) The tone argument presents one end of a common double bind that members of marginalized groups face. If they speak out in a measured or deferential way about oppressive behaviours, their concerns are often ignored. Should they raise their concerns in a more pointed or incisive manner, they are berated for being "incivil".
 - b) **Correctly applied, 'Tone policing' is a term used for a particular kind of oppression, and not just a particular kind of rudeness**
- 3) **Respectability Politics:** *"It's generally defined as what happens when minority and/or marginalized groups are told (or teach themselves) that in order to receive better treatment from the group in power, they must behave better."*
 - a) First described: Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham in 1993 book *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920*

Chanda Quote: "People engaging in tone policing are often having a difficult time distinguishing between discomfort due to a potentially emotional person communicating about their experiences of oppression versus discomfort due to someone's malicious behavior. When someone communicates the factual and emotional truth of their experiences with oppression to you, it is not a malicious attack on you or your existence. Your discomfort is not their fault either; it is the fault of the oppressive structure they are responding to, one which you may be benefiting from."

Brainstorm Questions:

- **What is the difference between a tone argument and tone policing as oppression?**
- **Why do people tend to tone police?**
- **Share? Do you have a story?**

Example 0: Niki Minaj + Miley Cyrus

Minaj (via tweet): "If your video celebrates women with very slim bodies, you will be nominated for vid of the year. I'm not always confident. Just tired. Black women influence pop culture so much, but are rarely rewarded for it."

Cyrus: "You know what I always say? Not that this is jealousy, but jealousy does the opposite of what you want it to — that's a yoga mantra. People forget that the choices that they make and how they treat people in life affect you in a really big way. If you do things with an open heart and you come at things with love, you would be heard and I would respect your statement. But I don't respect your statement because of the anger that came with it."

And it's not anger like, "Guys, I'm frustrated about some things that are a bigger issue."

You made it about you. Not to sound like a bitch, but that's like, "Eh, I didn't get my V.M.A."

If you want to make it about race, there's a way you could do that. But don't make it just about yourself. Say: "This is the reason why I think it's important to be nominated. There's girls everywhere with this body type."

What I read sounded very Nicki Minaj, which, if you know Nicki Minaj is not too kind. It's not very polite.

Minaj: "And now back to this b-tch that had a lot to say about me the other day in the press—Miley, what's good?"

Minaj (later): "The fact that you feel upset about me speaking on something that affects black women makes me feel like you have some big balls," Minaj said. "You're in videos with black men, and you're bringing out black women on your stages, but you don't want to know how black women feel about something that's so important? Come on, you can't want the good without the bad. If you want to enjoy our culture and our lifestyle, bond with us, dance with us, have fun with us, twerk with us, rap with us, then you should also want to know what affects us, what is bothering us, what we feel is unfair to us. You shouldn't not want to know that."

Example 1: Kitchener Somali man rejected from job

"I have read stories about how Somalia has a culture of resistance to authority. Such a culture would be quite different than the Canadian culture sees makes cutting ahead in a lineup as a great social error.

"The investment industry is a subculture with its own rules and traditions. It is normal for people to train for entry into this field. While your academic career suggests the training would be well within your competence, there is no demonstrated enthusiasm in past experience for entering this subculture.

"Due to lack of background, I must decline your application.

"Good luck with finding a suitable position."

Waterloo Record:

"I thought about it for a year, and it still bugged me and it still affected me, and I decided to file the application," Hagi-Yusuf said.

Hagi-Yusuf said he wants a written apology, changes in the hiring practices at Intergral Wealth and a financial settlement. Hagi-Yusuf and his lawyer have not decided on the amount of financial damages they will seek.

At first, he said, he was worried a complaint to the human rights body would make it harder to find another job.

"Having my name in the media and going after this investment firm as a recent graduate of university, I had to think a lot about that," Hagi-Yusuf said.

Hagi-Yusuf calls the experience of receiving that email traumatic and dehumanizing.

"It was demoralizing," he said.

He said he thought about changing his name to James from Jama, and to Joseph from Yusuf. He removed all references on his resume about speaking Somali, and working with Somali youth.

"It was frustrating," Hagi-Yusuf said. "The fact that I had to go through my resume and hide valuable work that I did with the community in Kitchener-Waterloo was frustrating."

From Huffington Post:



Hazel Quimby

Fake story. Every few weeks the left wing media make up a story like this. It's suppose to make it appear how discriminatory we all are. Nice try, next fairy tale please.

Like · Reply ·  3 · Jul 9, 2016 9:26am



David Zimmerly

Quintessential passive-aggressive Canadian racism - but it is rare to see someone leave a written record of it.

Like · Reply · 10 · Jul 8, 2016 5:12pm



Sheila Cunningham

Yes it is rare to see someone come right out and state that race was the reason

So rare that I'd tend to think they were offering an explanation of his lack of preparedness rather than discriminating based on race

Like · Reply · 6 · Jul 9, 2016 12:48am



Sheila Cunningham

Jay Mann It's easy to explain away all failures by playing the race card isn't it

He'd be better off getting some relevant experience and/or finding a job where he already fits. He's clearly smart enough. And qualified "in his field"

This is like me applying to be an accountant and then claiming they rejected me because I'm not Jewish ... never mind that my education and experience is engineering not accountancy

Like · Reply · 5 · Jul 9, 2016 1:18am



Susan A'hearn

It is blatantly obvious that the first paragraph was not written by the same author as the remainder of the letter. This man was not rejected for his ethnicity or culture. He was turned-down because he had apparently demonstrated a sense of entitlement by his lack of regard for the hierarchical protocol in this company, which is the standard in all large firms, today. Racism is real and should NOT be used by anyone, anywhere, to FALSELY claim discrimination for personal gain. It is an insult and betrayal to those who have truly suffered discrimination.

Example 2: BLM protesters interrupt Bernie Sanders rally

If you do not listen ... your event will be shut down,” one of the protesters told organizers, who offered to let them speak after Sanders. After a back and forth with the screaming protesters, organizers relented and said the demonstrators could go first.

Some in the largely white audience booed and chanted for protesters to let the senator talk. A few yelled for police to make arrests.

Marissa Johnson, one of the protesters, shot back, “I was going to tell Bernie how racist this city is, filled with its progressives, but you did it for me,” accusing the audience of “white supremacist liberalism.” She cited Seattle’s own police problems, including an ongoing Justice Department consent decree over use of force.

The activists demanded 4½ minutes of silence in memory of Brown, to symbolize the 4½ hours his body lay on a Ferguson street. While rally organizers raised their hands in support, some in the crowd yelled profanities.

Quiz: How many of the 2016 presidential candidates can you name?

Are you good with names at parties? Because we've got a lot of names and two parties here.

After the few minutes of silence, the protesters said they wanted to confront Sanders for failing to address their concerns when he was similarly interrupted at a town hall for liberal activists in Phoenix last month. Johnson beckoned Sanders to stand closer as she spoke — he refused.

0.234053011873

Mar 6, 2016

You know, I do not care who supports who... Each person has the right and if you don't agree, at least respect an individual's right to support who they choose.

In the case of these ladies who took to the stage, rudely taking the microphone away and holding said microphone hostage and asking sanders to come closer... Closer to these ladies who took the microphone, was yelling, what the hell do people think is gonna happen... I don't care who or what the cause is/was, stepping on a stage, taking a microphone, and holding an entire event hostage is just plain disrespectful to ALL PEOPLE REGARDLESS of affiliation. These ladies took to the stage like thugs rob a store, they took what they wanted, disrespected everyone... Even their own cause (which is so messed up to begin with) and forced those people gathering peacefully to be denied what they came for. Disrespecting someone over their affiliation just is bad form and these two ladies sent a message out to everyone... BLM has zero respect for diplomacy and uses tactics used by thugs the world over. BLM!?? What do they even... How can anyone... Don't people know... BLM was born out of lies by so called witnesses. BLM burned down buildings, destroyed property, looted stores... Holy hell... What's wrong with people behind BLM?

Now, I DO WHOLE HEARTEDLY THAT THEIR IS CLEAR INJUSTICE TO PEOPLE IN THIS COUNTRY... But it's just not against blacks people, injustice is everywhere, injustice knows no color, gender, it's everywhere. Something does need to be done however, taking over a stage, holding a rally hostage... These ladies just gave more fuel to those who despise BLM... Not because of the cause, but because it shows how low they will go. BLM!?! It's a joke. Why don't these people protest peacefully, people will hear you if you all (I mean everyone who protests a cause, not just BLM) just approach your cause with class, diplomacy, and fairness. How can folks behind BLM say they are fighting for equality when they themselves don't proactive equality?

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GMC from Everett WA

Aug 10, 2015

The protesters were wrong. Very low class. It's not what MLK-Jr would have done.

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10 | Like

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Barb Jones

Aug 11, 2015

I wonder how these "ladies" (and I use that term loosely) would have reacted had Martin Luther King been speaking and Native American citizens refused to let MKLK speak until they had their say about the killing of

John Williams, the totem pole carver. Hi death mattered. ALL LIVES MATTER "LADIES"!

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More subtle points:

- Tone policing as a concept does not give everyone the right to abuse, harass, threaten people because they are oppressed.
- You don't need to always engage someone who is angry if you feel you are unable to.
- How to respond to oppression as an ally? Is it okay to be really angry?
- Group strategize: So I'm being tone policed.
- Group strategize: Someone I'm talking to is getting really angry!

Sources:

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http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Tone_argument

Everyday Feminism comic

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/12/tone-policing-and-privilege/>

Steven Salaita as potential example

<https://www.thenation.com/article/new-thought-police/>

Chanda's Medium pieces

<https://medium.com/@chanda/what-s-the-harm-in-tone-policing-e933d90af247#.y0hdlkb4s>

<https://medium.com/@chanda/being-marked-for-speaking-truth-to-power-there-s-a-physical-and-emotional-cost-to-this-398ba98e3f36#.xoepIpadI>