**Hermann Hesse explains our vision of identity in his book Siddhartha –**

"I'm not kidding. I'm telling you what I've found. Knowledge can be conveyed, but not wisdom. It can be found, it can be lived, it is possible to be carried by it, miracles can be performed with it, but it cannot be expressed in words and taught. This was what I, even as a young man, sometimes suspected, what has driven me away from the teachers. I have found a thought, Govinda, which you'll again regard as a joke or foolishness, but which is my best thought. It says: The opposite of every truth is just as true! That's like this: any truth can only be expressed and put into words when it is one-sided. Everything is one-sided which can be thought with thoughts and said with words, it's all one-sided, all just one half, all lacks completeness, roundness, oneness. When the exalted Gotama spoke in his teachings of the world, he had to divide it into Sansara and Nirvana, into deception and truth, into suffering and salvation. It cannot be done differently, there is no other way for him who wants to teach. But the world itself, what exists around us and inside of us, is never one-sided. A person or an act is never entirely Sansara or entirely Nirvana, a person is never entirely holy or entirely sinful. It does really seem like this, because we are subject to deception, as if time was something real. Time is not real, Govinda, I have experienced this often and often again. And if time is not real, then the gap which seems to be between the world and the eternity, between suffering and blissfulness, between evil and good, is also a deception." "How come?" asked Govinda timidly. "Listen well, my dear, listen well! The sinner, which I am and which you are, is a sinner, but in times to come he will be Brahma again, he will reach the Nirvana, will be Buddha—and now see: these 'times to come' are a deception, are only a parable! The sinner is not on his way to become a Buddha, he is not in the process of developing, though our capacity for thinking does not know how else to picture these things. No, within the sinner is now and today already the future Buddha, his future is already all there, you have to worship in him, in you, in everyone the Buddha which is coming into being, the possible, the hidden Buddha. The world, my friend Govinda, is not imperfect, or on a slow path towards perfection: no, it is perfect in every moment, all sin already carries the divine forgiveness in itself, all small children already have the old person in themselves, all infants already have death, all dying people the eternal life. It is not possible for any person to see how far another one has already progressed on his path; in the robber and dice-gambler, the Buddha is waiting; in the Brahman, the robber is waiting. In deep meditation, there is the possibility to put time out of existence, to see all life which was, is, and will be as if it was simultaneous, and there everything is good, everything is perfect, everything is Brahman. Therefore, I see whatever exists as good, death is to me like life, sin like holiness, wisdom like foolishness, everything has to be as it is, everything only requires my consent, only my willingness, my loving agreement, to be good for me, to do nothing but work for my benefit, to be unable to ever harm me. I have experienced on my body and on my soul that I needed sin very much, I needed lust, the desire for possessions, vanity, and needed the most shameful despair, in order to learn how to give up all resistance, in order to learn how to love the world, in order to stop comparing it to some world I wished, I imagined, some kind of perfection I had made up, but to leave it as it is and to love it and to enjoy being a part of it.—These, oh Govinda, are some of the thoughts which have come into my mind." Siddhartha bent down, picked up a stone from the ground, and weighed it in his hand. "This here," he said playing with it, "is a stone, and will, after a certain time, perhaps turn into soil, and will turn from soil into a plant or animal or human being. In the past, I would have said: This stone is just a stone, it is worthless, it belongs to the world of the Maja; but because it might be able to become also a human being and a spirit in the cycle of transformations, therefore I also grant it importance. Thus, I would perhaps have thought in the past. But today I think: this stone is a stone, it is also animal, it is also god, it is also Buddha, I do not venerate and love it because it could turn into this or that, but rather because it is already and always everything— and it is this very fact, that it is a stone, that it appears to me now and today as a stone, this is why I love it and see worth and purpose in each of its veins and cavities, in the yellow, in the gray, in the hardness, in the sound it makes when I knock at it, in the dryness or wetness of its surface. There are stones which feel like oil or soap, and others like leaves, others like sand, and every one is special and prays the Om in its own way, each one is Brahman, but simultaneously and just as much it is a stone, is oily or juicy, and this is this very fact which I like and regard as wonderful and worthy of worship.— But let me speak no more of this. The words are not good for the secret meaning, everything always becomes a bit different, as soon as it is put into words, gets distorted a bit, a bit silly—yes, and this is also very good, and I like it a lot, I also very much agree with this, that this what is one man's treasure and wisdom always sounds like foolishness to another person." Govinda listened silently. "Why have you told me this about the stone?" he asked hesitantly after a pause. "I did it without any specific intention. Or perhaps what I meant was, that love this very stone, and the river, and all these things we are looking at and from which we can learn. I can love a stone, Govinda, and also a tree or a piece of bark. This are things, and things can be loved. But I cannot love words. Therefore, teachings are no good for me, they have no hardness, no softness, no colours, no edges, no smell, no taste, they have nothing but words. Perhaps it are these which keep you from finding peace, perhaps it are the many words. Because salvation and virtue as well, Sansara and Nirvana as well, are mere words, Govinda. There is no thing which would be Nirvana; there is just the word Nirvana." Quoth Govinda: "Not just a word, my friend, is Nirvana. It is a thought." Siddhartha continued: "A thought, it might be so. I must confess to you, my dear: I don't differentiate much between thoughts and words. To be honest, I also have no high opinion of thoughts. I have a better opinion of things. Here on this ferry-boat, for instance, a man has been my predecessor and teacher, a holy man, who has for many years simply believed in the river, nothing else. He had noticed that the river's spoke to him, he learned from it, it educated and taught him, the river seemed to be a god to him, for many years he did not know that every wind, every cloud, every bird, every beetle was just as divine and knows just as much and can teach just as much as the worshipped river. But when this holy man went into the forests, he knew everything, knew more than you and me, without teachers, without books, only because he had believed in the river." Govinda said: "But is that what you call `things', actually something real, something which has existence? Isn't it just a deception of the Maja, just an image and illusion? Your stone, your tree, your river— are they actually a reality?" "This too," spoke Siddhartha, "I do not care very much about. Let the things be illusions or not, after all I would then also be an illusion, and thus they are always like me. This is what makes them so dear and worthy of veneration for me: they are like me. Therefore, I can love them. And this is now a teaching you will laugh about: love, oh Govinda, seems to me to be the most important thing of all. To thoroughly understand the world, to explain it, to despise it, may be the thing great thinkers do. But I'm only interested in being able to love the world, not to despise it, not to hate it and me, to be able to look upon it and me and all beings with love and admiration and great respect." "This I understand," spoke Govinda. "But this very thing was discovered by the exalted one to be a deception. He commands benevolence, clemency, sympathy, tolerance, but not love; he forbade us to tie our heart in love to earthly things." "I know it," said Siddhartha; his smile shone golden. "I know it, Govinda. And behold, with this we are right in the middle of the thicket of opinions, in the dispute about words. For I cannot deny, my words of love are in a contradiction, a seeming contradiction with Gotama's words. For this very reason, I distrust in words so much, for I know, this contradiction is a deception. I know that I am in agreement with Gotama. How should he not know love, he, who has discovered all elements of human existence in their transitoriness, in their meaninglessness, and yet loved people thus much, to use a long, laborious life only to help them, to teach them! Even with him, even with your great teacher, I prefer the thing over the words, place more importance on his acts and life than on his speeches, more on the gestures of his hand than his opinions. Not in his speech, not in his thoughts, I see his greatness, only in his actions, in his life." For a long time, the two old men said nothing. Then spoke Govinda, while bowing for a farewell: "I thank you, Siddhartha, for telling me some of your thoughts. They are partially strange thoughts, not all have been instantly understandable to me. This being as it may, I thank you, and I wish you to have calm days." (But secretly he thought to himself: This Siddhartha is a bizarre person, he expresses bizarre thoughts, his teachings sound foolish. So differently sound the exalted one's pure teachings, clearer, purer, more comprehensible, nothing strange, foolish, or silly is contained in them. But different from his thoughts seemed to me Siddhartha's hands and feet, his eyes, his forehead, his breath, his smile, his greeting, his walk. Never again, after our exalted Gotama has become one with the Nirvana, never since then have I met a person of whom I felt: this is a holy man! Only him, this Siddhartha, I have found to be like this. May his teachings be strange, may his words sound foolish; out of his gaze and his hand, his skin and his hair, out of every part of him shines a purity, shines a calmness, shines a cheerfulness and mildness and holiness, which I have seen in no other person since the final death of our exalted teacher.) As Govinda thought like this, and there was a conflict in his heart, he once again bowed to Siddhartha, drawn by love. Deeply he bowed to him who was calmly sitting. "Siddhartha," he spoke, "we have become old men. It is unlikely for one of us to see the other again in this incarnation. I see, beloved, that you have found peace. I confess that I haven't found it. Tell me, oh honourable one, one more word, give me something on my way which I can grasp, which I can understand! Give me something to be with me on my path. It it often hard, my path, often dark, Siddhartha." Siddhartha said nothing and looked at him with the ever unchanged, quiet smile. Govinda stared at his face, with fear, with yearning, suffering, and the eternal search was visible in his look, eternal not-finding. Siddhartha saw it and smiled. "Bent down to me!" he whispered quietly in Govinda's ear. "Bend down to me! Like this, even closer! Very close! Kiss my forehead, Govinda!" But while Govinda with astonishment, and yet drawn by great love and expectation, obeyed his words, bent down closely to him and touched his forehead with his lips, something miraculous happened to him. While his thoughts were still dwelling on Siddhartha's wondrous words, while he was still struggling in vain and with reluctance to think away time, to imagine Nirvana and Sansara as one, while even a certain contempt for the words of his friend was fighting in him against an immense love and veneration, this happened to him: He no longer saw the face of his friend Siddhartha, instead he saw other faces, many, a long sequence, a flowing river of faces, of hundreds, of thousands, which all came and disappeared, and yet all seemed to be there simultaneously, which all constantly changed and renewed themselves, and which were still all Siddhartha. He saw the face of a fish, a carp, with an infinitely painfully opened mouth, the face of a dying fish, with fading eyes—he saw the face of a new-born child, red and full of wrinkles, distorted from crying— he saw the face of a murderer, he saw him plunging a knife into the body of another person—he saw, in the same second, this criminal in bondage, kneeling and his head being chopped off by the executioner with one blow of his sword—he saw the bodies of men and women, naked in positions and cramps of frenzied love—he saw corpses stretched out, motionless, cold, void— he saw the heads of animals, of boars, of crocodiles, of elephants, of bulls, of birds—he saw gods, saw Krishna, saw Agni—he saw all of these figures and faces in a thousand relationships with one another, each one helping the other, loving it, hating it, destroying it, giving re-birth to it, each one was a will to die, a passionately painful confession of transitoriness, and yet none of them died, each one only transformed, was always re-born, received evermore a new face, without any time having passed between the one and the other face—and all of these figures and faces rested, flowed, generated themselves, floated along and merged with each other, and they were all constantly covered by something thin, without individuality of its own, but yet existing, like a thin glass or ice, like a transparent skin, a shell or mold or mask of water, and this mask was smiling, and this mask was Siddhartha's smiling face, which he, Govinda, in this very same moment touched with his lips. And, Govinda saw it like this, this smile of the mask, this smile of oneness above the flowing forms, this smile of simultaneousness above the thousand births and deaths, this smile of Siddhartha was precisely the same, was precisely of the same kind as the quiet, delicate, impenetrable, perhaps benevolent, perhaps mocking, wise, thousand-fold smile of Gotama, the Buddha, as he had seen it himself with great respect a hundred times. Like this, Govinda knew, the perfected ones are smiling. Not knowing any more whether time existed, whether the vision had lasted a second or a hundred years, not knowing any more whether there existed a Siddhartha, a Gotama, a me and a you, feeling in his innermost self as if he had been wounded by a divine arrow, the injury of which tasted sweet, being enchanted and dissolved in his innermost self, Govinda still stood for a little while bent over Siddhartha's quiet face, which he had just kissed, which had just been the scene of all manifestations, all transformations, all existence. The face was unchanged, after under its surface the depth of the thousandfoldness had closed up again, he smiled silently, smiled quietly and softly, perhaps very benevolently, perhaps very mockingly, precisely as he used to smile, the exalted one. Deeply, Govinda bowed; tears he knew nothing of, ran down his old face; like a fire burnt the feeling of the most intimate love, the humblest veneration in his heart. Deeply, he bowed, touching the ground, before him who was sitting motionlessly, whose smile reminded him of everything he had ever loved in his life, what had ever been valuable and holy to him in his life.

(Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha* pg 99-106 ebook copy, dml)

**Land '12** Nick, former Lecturer in Continental Philosophy at Warwick University, *Fanged Noumena* ed. Ray Brassier and Robin Mackay "Shamanic Nietzche" in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader* 1993

The death of God is a religious event - a transgression, experiment in damnation, and stroke of antitheistic warfare - but this is not to say it is preeminently a crime. **Hell has no interest in our debauched moral currency.** To confuse reactive dabblings in sin with expeditions in damnation is Christian superficiality; the Dantean error of imagining that one could earn oneself an excursion in Hell, as if the infernal too was a matter of justice. **Our crimes are mere stumblings on the path to ruin; just as every projected *Hell on Earth* is a strict exemplar of idolatry. Transgression is not criminal action, but tragic fate; the intersection of an economically programmed apocalypse with the religious antihistory of poetry. It is the inevitable occurrence of impossibility**, which is not the same as death, but neither is it essentially different. This ambivalence responds to that of death 'itself', which is not ontological but labrynthine: a relapse of composition that is absolute to discontinuity, yet is nothing at the level of immanence. **The very individuality that would condition the possibility of a proprietary death could only be achieved if death were impossible. One dies because discontinuity is never realized, but this means that there is never 'one' who dies. Instead there is an unthinkable communication with zero, immanence, or the sacred. 'There is no feeling that throws one into exuberance with greater force than that of nothingness.** But **exuberance** is not at all annihilation; it is the surpassing of the shattered attitude, it **is transgression'**. (Bataille, *Oevres*)

**Poetry is a good method of engagement – it is a delirium in the ruins of the 1ac**

**Land '12** Nick, former Lecturer in Continental Philosophy at Warwick University, *Fanged Noumena* ed. Ray Brassier and Robin Mackay "Shamanic Nietzche" in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*1993

**Yes, the poet must be a visionary. The East knows a true lucidity, but to be an inheritor of the West is to hack through jungles of indiscipline, devoured by vile ands and words unstrung from sense, until the dripping foliage of delerium opens out onto a space of comprehensive ruin. This has never been understood, nor can it be. The foulness of our fate only deepens with the centuries, as the tracts of insanity sprawl. From bodies gnawed by tropical fevers we can swim out through collapse to inexistence forever, destined for Undo.**

**Trying to overthrow whiteness is based on futile opposition—this makes unity and justice imposible—only respect for others and interconnectedness can solve**

**Malkin 4** [John, social activist, "Buddhism is the Most Radical and Civilized Choice", http://www.shambhalasun.com/index.php?option=com\_content&task=view&id=1528]

We have to understand that violence is not just physical, which is the way it comes off in the newspaper. Before it was physical, violence was psychological. There’s violence in the way that we speak to each other—with disrespect. There’s violence in our comedies—the humor is often at the expense of another human being. So we have to look inward and ask ourselves three questions before we speak. The first question: “Is what we are about to say true?” Second question: “Is what we are about to say necessary?” The third question: “Is what we are about to say something that will cause no harm?” If you answer affirmatively to all three of those—it is true, it is necessary and it will cause no harm—then we should speak. Otherwise, we should consider our speech before we utter it. Violence begins in the mind. It begins with anger. It begins with fear. And those things begin when we think dualistically. When we think in terms of “them versus us.” When we believe in our own separate ego, our separate life, not connected to anyone else. We have to meditate on this question, on the delusion of separateness and how it leads to psychological violence within us and then to external violence that causes so much harm in the world. John Malkin: Even in movements for social change, people have taken up arms to defend themselves. I think of the Black Panthers or the Sandanistas. What is your view of movements that have advocated violence or a defensive violence? Charles Johnson: I’m glad that you use that word “defensive.” Defensive about their position, right, and what they believe? One of the things critical to the Buddhist Eightfold Path is the first step: right view. Right view is the understanding that my view is not the only view that represents truth in the world. It’s understanding that other people’s views can be equally true. Martin Luther King, when he would talk to his staff and other civil rights workers, made a big point of asking them to consider the criticism that was coming their way. They knew that some of it was biased and not to be taken seriously. But if there was something that was truly critical and helpful, then that should be paid attention to. One of the things we have to do, I think, if we want to implement social change, is give up the ego. We have to be more concerned about truth than we are about maintaining or defending our position or our own ideas. Buddhism’s practices of meditation and mindfulness help us give up our sense that “my view is the only view,” and “I will kill others or impose my views on others, if they don’t accept them.” I think it is very important for people to look at that.

**The alt solves—Buddhist movements provide the framework for combating whiteness based on inclusion and higher consciousness**

**Resist Racism 7** [“On race and Buddhism”, http://resistracism.wordpress.com/2009/07/28/on-race-and-buddhism/]

So how does it feel to come to Zen practice as a person of color? And they will come; they do come. My friend Sala Steinbach says an African-American woman at SFZC says, “If it is about liberation, people of color will be interested.” They are. The Dalai Lama draws stadiums full of people in Mexico. In South America there are Zen and Tibetan teachers with very strong lay sanghas. So I ask my Asian, and Latino, and African-American friends about how it feels to come here, to San Francisco Zen Center or Spirit Rock. And I ask myself what feelings come up. Dogen suggests we take a step back to turn one’s light inward and illuminate oneself. What I see there in myself is then reflected back into the world. The answer to how it feels to anyone largely depends on two further inter-related questions. First, does one feel safe and seen in the community? Are the conditions of your life acknowedged, welcomed, explored in the sangha? I suspect that this is sometimes yes, sometimes no. Thoughtless words can turn people from the temple and from the practice. I have seen this happen here and elsewhere. An offhand comment is made about the white, middle class makeup of the community with people of color sitting right there. Again, through the unintended eye of white supremacy (hard words, I know) people are made to feel invisible and uncounted. Maybe I should say something about white supremacy. It is a building block of racism, part of my blindness to my own privilege as a white man. It is at once personal and systematic. If one wants to see it, the practice of individual mindfulness, of turning our light inward needs to be blended dialogue with friends and sangha members who don’t carry this very particular privilege. The same kinds of painful things happen if you are homosexual, or if because of injury or fact of birth you can’t get up the steps of the temple. These blindnesses hurt and turn people away. That’s what it might feel like from one side. On the other side, the Buddha’s understanding is “all beings have the wisdom and virtues of the enlightened ones, but because of misunderstandings and attachments they do not realize it.” This understanding is so precious that we are obligated to share it. I don’t mean proselytizing, but keep in mind, the Buddha never stopped preaching Dharma. But now we have centers and institutions. To make zazen and Dharma available, we need to tell people they are welcome and invite them to practice with us. Already we are taking practice to jails and hospitals, to people who might not be able to come to us. The next obvious step is to find ways to open our doors to those who can come to us. I hear that some San Francisco churches have created a kind of covenant of “open congregation.” This means that in their literature and at their services, classes, and events they make it known that they welcome people of color, gays and lesbians, and so on. Being pro-active rather than passive on questions of diversity and inclusion. This is necessary because in America, passivity means white supremacy. It’s subtle and pervasive, conditioned by and conditioning our magazines, movies, tv, our clothing, all the things we buy. It is a virus infecting my mind as a person with so-called privilieges, and the mind of someone who might not have such privileges. Last week I was invited to talk about Buddhism and race to a diverse group of teenagers doing an interfaith social action internship in San Francisco. Now maybe I did a good job talking to them, but I was the first Buddhist choice that came to mind for the organizers. There is some irony in that. Buddhism in America gets defined as and by people like me. I have to watch myself carefully not to buy into this.

**Their divisive strategy based on violent racial resistance fuels violence—it also causes racial binaries which make whiteness inevitable—only a focus on interconnectidness solves**

**Malalasekera and Jayatilleke 6** [“Buddhism and the Race Question”, G.P, Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies and Professor of Pali and Buddhist Civilization. University of Ceylon; H. N., Professor of Philosophy, University of Ceylon]

The Buddhist way of solving these problems is to seek for the causes and conditions which bring them about or accentuate them and then proceed to eradicate these causal factors. The Buddhist diagnosis would be that the causes are found in man as an individual as well as in society as an organisation. According to Buddhism the springs of action of human individuals are greed, hatred, and delusion (or erroneous beliefs) as well as their opposites. The Buddhist view is that unless the former are entirely replaced by their opposites—charity, love and wisdom—man is in need of salvation and that in any case unless the former are toned down no just society can be founded. The greed for economic and political power can be so great as to blind people to the nature, feelings and needs of individuals other than themselves or of human groups other than those they (erroneously) identify themselves with. Hatred can also find an easy outlet towards human beings or groups considered as alien or hostile to oneself or one’s group. And, as the Buddhist texts say, greed and hatred nurture erroneous beliefs or delusions (“rationalisations”) such as the racial and caste myths which we evolve out of our imagination with no basis in fact. These myths or erroneous beliefs in turn encourage our racial hatred and lust for power at the expense of our fellow men. Add to this the ignorance of the fact that we are prejudiced, as well as the costs of prejudice, and the process goes on within our minds, warping our personalities, shutting the door to spiritual experience and causing division and disharmony in human society. A change of heart and a change of outlook and attitude at the level of the individual is the solution to this problem. But such a transformation cannot be achieved by waiting for the operation of evolutionary processes or the grace of a divine being but only by putting forth effort on our own part. The erroneous beliefs that we entertain about race or caste have to be replaced by awareness of the facts before greed can give place to true charity and hatred to love. But if a change of heart and outlook is essential on the part of individuals who harbour such prejudices it is equally important that a change in the organisation of human society should be made. Buddhism conceives of society as a changing process subject to causal laws and it can change for better or worse. It is a popular misconception of Buddhism in the Western mind that it is only concerned about salvation and in the higher spiritual life and not in social reformation at all. The numerous sermons to laymen on the subject of their social well-being and the discourses on the nature of a righteous government and of a just society, coupled with the example of Asoka, leave no doubt that this aspect has received serious attention in Buddhism. While the importance of the ideological factor as a social determinant is recognised, the world is led by ideas or ideologies (cittena loko niyati), it is significant that social evils as well as the growth of hatred in society are ultimately traced to the presence of poverty in human society or the misdistribution of economic goods. It is said in a Sutta (sermon) which deals with the subject in an allegorical form and a prophetic tone: ”Thus, brethren, as a result of the misdistribution of goods, poverty grows rife; from poverty growing rife stealing increases, from the spread of stealing violence grows apace, from the growth of violence the destruction of life becomes common … lying … evil speaking … adultery … abusive and idle talk … covetousness and ill will … false opinions … incest, wanton greed and perverted lust … till finally lack of filial and religious piety … Among such humans keen animosity will become the rule …” [97] The elimination of economic inequalities inhuman society will therefore be an essential precondition for the emergence of harmonious relations among human beings, so that what is required is both a change of heart as well as a change of system. Such sweeping changes can however only be brought about by—as they are the responsibility of—those who at present wield economic and political power in the world. The individual can only make decisions for himself and employ in his own way the weapons of rational persuasion and example.