



**IILJ International Legal Theory Colloquium Spring 2009:
Virtues, Vices, Human Behavior and Democracy in International Law**

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Pollack Colloquium Room, Furman Hall 9th Floor, 245 Sullivan Street
Thursdays 4pm-5.50pm

[student seminar also meets separately, Tuesdays 4pm-5.50pm]

Note: speakers' topics listed are indicative of areas, not final titles, and may change

- January 15** - Derek Jinks, University of Texas Law School
Topic: *Humanization and Individualization in the Enforcement of International Humanitarian Law*
- January 22** - Anne van Aaken, University of St Gallen Law School, Switzerland
Topic: *International Investment Law and Rationalist Contract Theory*
- January 29** - Craig Calhoun, NYU Institute for Public Knowledge & President, SSRC
Topic: *The Idea of Emergency: Humanitarian Action and Global (Dis)Order*
- February 5** - Paolo Carozza, Notre Dame Law School and Chair, IACmHR
Topic: *Global Values, Local Virtues – Human Rights, Democratic Self-Governance and International Justice*

- February 12** - **Leigh Payne, Oxford University Sociology (Latin American Societies)**
Topic: *Performances of Power: Paramilitary Confessions in Colombia*

Chapter 1 and **Conclusion** of Leigh Payne's recent book titled: ***Unsettling Accounts: Neither Truth nor Reconciliation in Confessions of State Violence***

- February 26** - William Miller, University of Michigan Law School
Topic: *Messengers and Intermediaries: Insights from Ancient Law*
- March 5** - Moshe Halbertal, NYU Law School and Hebrew University
Topic: *Pre-Conditions for Forgiveness*
- March 12** - Joseph Weiler, NYU Law School
Topic: *Europe Against Itself: On the Distinction between Values and Virtues (and Vices) in the Construction and Development of European Integration*
- March 26** - Armin von Bogdandy, NYU Law School, Director MPI Heidelberg
Topic: *Problems of International Public Authority*
- April 2** - Pierre Rosanvallon, Collège de France
Topic: *The Metamorphoses of Democratic Legitimacy*
- Tuesday, April 7** - (SPECIAL SESSION, 4:00 pm to 5:50 pm)
Faculty Club, D'Agostino Hall, 110 West 3rd Street
Alexander Somek, University of Iowa
Topic: *Democracy-Enhancing International Law: The Argument for Transnational Effect*
- April 16** - Conference in Honor of Professor Andreas Lowenfeld
(For more information, go to www.iilj.org – all welcome!)
- April 23** - tbc
Topic: *Virtues, Vices, Human Behavior and Democracy in International Law*

Program and papers available at: <http://iilj.org/courses/2009IILJColloquium.asp>

CONCLUSION

CONTENTIOUS COEXISTENCE
CONVENTIONAL COEXISTENCE

People can die of an excessive dose of the truth, you know.
—Ariel Dorfman, *Death and the Maiden*

DEMOCRATIC THEORISTS AND GOVERNMENTS alike endorse the above-stated claim by Gerardo in Ariel Dorfman's play *Death and the Maiden*. The scholar Stephen Holmes quips, "Repression can be perfectly healthy for democracy" and "Tongue-tying . . . may be one of constitutionalism's main gifts to democracy."¹ With the exception of South Africa, the democracies analyzed in this book generally concurred with Gerardo and Holmes. Argentina, Brazil, and Chile have tried, mainly unsuccessfully, to keep contentious issues off the public agenda in order to protect fragile political systems from polarizing debate and to avoid provoking authoritarian reversals. Despite their failure to silence the past, these democracies have survived and flourished.

In *Unsettling Accounts* I have thus challenged the "fatal overdose of truth" notion prevalent in democratic theory and practice. But I have also disputed the opposite claim, espoused by Paulina in *Death and the Maiden* and some theorists and practitioners of transitional justice,



A bench sitting next to the Argentine dictatorship's former clandestine torture center Club Atlético calls on people to "never forget." Photo by author.

that the truth sets one free and settles accounts with the past. "Healing truths" have proved equally elusive. Most countries emerging from authoritarian rule have not adopted South Africa's model of reconciliation through truth, because they recognize the unlikelihood of establishing one truth about the past that will resolve the deep and enduring political divisions they confront.

Between the cautionary and utopian extremes of conflict resolution lies a more practical model: contentious coexistence. Contentious coexistence rejects ineffective gag orders and embraces democratic dialogue, even over highly factious issues, as healthy for democracies. It rejects infeasible official and healing truth in favor of multiple and contending truths that reflect different political viewpoints in society. Contentious coexistence does not require elaborate institutional mechanisms, but rather is stimulated by dramatic stories, acts, or images that provoke widespread participation, contestation over prevailing political viewpoints, and competition over ideas. Contentious coexistence, in other words, is democracy in practice.²

This book has explored unsettling accounts and the contentious coexistence they have spawned through perpetrators' confessions. Similar processes have unfolded in other countries at different stages of democratic development, suggesting the absence of inoculation from the assumed fatal dose of truth. Consider, for example, the dramatic accounts of honor killings and stoning of allegedly adulterous women in Iran, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, and elsewhere. These stories did not initiate friction over the interpretation and application of Sharia laws, which regulate public and aspects of private life, in contemporary Muslim societies. But nongovernmental organizations within and outside these countries used these stories to mobilize broad participation and debate and to demand political change. Similarly, while the banning of Muslim girls from French public schools did not instigate conflict over the secular state and religious freedom, it did heighten the political drama surrounding the debate and drew in a surprising range of perspectives. These examples of deep and seemingly unresolvable conflicts occurred without undermining democracy, but also without establishing a reconciling truth. Unsettling accounts unleash a society-wide probing into how to interpret the stories and what they mean for contemporary political life. Response to the photographs that exposed U.S. abuses in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq extends the arguments in this book to established democ-

racies. These photographs and perpetrators' confessions sparked contentious coexistence in different political contexts and affected democratic practice and outcomes.

"THE PHOTOGRAPHS DID NOT LIE"

After the September 11, 2001 bombing of the World Trade Center, preventing another terrorist attack obsessed the U.S. government and public. The scholar Alfred McCoy noted that "a growing public consensus . . . in favor of torture" prevailed at the time.³ That consensus hinged on a "ticking bomb" theory: torture provided an effective and necessary means of extracting information from terrorists to prevent planned attacks on civilian populations.⁴ The photographs from Abu Ghraib prison, however, changed that perception. They revealed depraved behavior by U.S. prison guards:

The photographs did not lie.

American soldiers, male and female, grinning and pointing at the genitals of naked, frightened Iraqi prisoners; an Iraqi man, unclothed and leashed like a dog, groveling on the floor in front of his female guard; a prisoner standing on a box with a sandbag over his head and wires attached to his body beneath a poncho. These were not enemy propaganda pictures; these showed real atrocities actually inflicted by Americans.⁵

Eroding the previous consensus, the images catalyzed a "serious nationwide political debate" and an "epic political struggle" that involved "ordinary Americans" among "a surprisingly diverse range of voices . . . breaking the public climate of timid compliance."⁶ The journalist Mark Danner attributed outrage not only to the photographs but also to the context in which they emerged: "Details of the methods of interrogation applied in Guantánamo and at Bagram Air Base, began to emerge more than a year ago. It took the Abu Ghraib photographs, however, set against the violence and chaos of an increasingly unpopular war in Iraq, to bring Americans' torture of prisoners up for public discussion."⁷ The public reaction to the photographs eroded consensus and challenged the Bush administration's strategies. As the essayist Susan Sontag wrote, "Apparently it took the photographs to get their attention, when it became clear they could not be suppressed; it was the photographs that made all this 'real' to Bush and his associates."⁸

The photographs from Abu Ghraib fit the definition of unsettling accounts: dramatic performances, speech, or events that rupture political silence or prevailing political consensus and engage a broad sector of society in the democratic practices of participation, contestation, and competition. These dramatic political spectacles prompt even cautious or complicit media outlets to cover them. By widely disseminating emotionally charged images and narratives, media portrayals draw out a diverse range of perspectives. Unsettling accounts obliterate passivity even among audiences otherwise reluctant to discuss politics. They spark debate in public and private sites: families, schools, barbershops, coffee shops, churches, neighborhoods, communities, blogs, on television, on the radio, and in the newspapers. Controversies, normally limited to a small, specialized sector of society, now reach individuals without any personal or direct connection to the underlying events. Moral outrage and political challenges to prevailing political views are aired publicly, sometimes for the first time. The unsettling photographs from Abu Ghraib have even prompted former prisoners of U.S. detention centers to speak out—voices not previously heard.⁹

Unsettling accounts do not merely amplify existing political views in society; they provoke new ways of thinking about politics among newly engaged sectors. Perpetrators' confessions, for example, did not only magnify the existing political demands of victims and survivors; they also presented new views from within the security apparatus and among former regime supporters. They challenged a prevailing view. Whether perpetrators confessed their remorse for past atrocities, bragged about their heroic accomplishments, or expressed salacious pleasure at having inflicted pain, they broke the regime's silence and denial of violence. Regime supporters who had previously believed, or wanted to believe, that victims and survivors had invented stories of atrocity for political gain could not easily ignore evidence to the contrary presented by the perpetrators of that violence.

Similarly, the Abu Ghraib photographs graphically revealed what the formerly abstract consensus around torture really meant. The Bush administration refused to label the acts portrayed in the photographs as "torture," using the language of "humiliation" instead. But even the administration's defenders ignored the euphemism. Senator Bill Frist (Republican, Tennessee) remarked, "What we saw is appalling."¹⁰ Rejecting President Bush's notion that only a "few rotten apples" had committed the abuses, Senator Lindsey Graham (Republi-

can, South Carolina) asserted, "Some of it has an elaborate nature to it that makes me very suspicious of whether or not others were directors or encouraging [the acts]."11 Senator John McCain (Republican, Arizona) blamed the photographs, and presumably what they depicted, for weakening national security: "I would argue the pictures, terrible pictures from Abu Ghraib, harmed us not only in the Arab World, . . . but . . . also harmed us dramatically amongst friendly nations, the Europeans, many of our allies."12 As a result of the photographs, McCain sponsored a "torture amendment" that would firmly ally the United States with the international ban on torture. President Bush, responding to pressure from within and outside his party, backed down from his initial decision to veto the amendment. As one journalist noted, "The American people spoke. Both chambers overwhelmingly passed this law [the torture amendment] by veto-proof majorities. It's shameful Bush had to be bullied into supporting it."13

Perpetrators' confessions and the Abu Ghraib photographs demonstrate that deeply contentious issues provoke debate without destroying or even threatening democracies. Unsettling accounts, while they do contest prevailing political views, do not replace them with an alternative, "healing" truth, however. Instead, political groups clash over how to interpret unsettling accounts and their meanings for contemporary political life.

"WITHHOLDING PANCAKES"

Unsettling accounts break down consensus because individuals dissociate themselves from the viewpoints represented in them. Not all audiences, however, reject the viewpoints represented in the unsettling accounts. Indeed, debate erupts because some individuals and groups maintain the prevailing view. These individuals and groups reinterpret unsettling accounts, trying to give them new political meaning in the hope of rebuilding political consensus. Political groups, in other words, compete over the interpretation of unsettling accounts. Reflecting on the Abu Ghraib photographs, a journalist remarked that their "ubiquity . . . suggests not only their potency but their usefulness and their adaptability."14 Unsettling accounts do not replace one consensus with another, but rather intensify public debate over political events and their meaning for contemporary life.

Regime supporters, therefore, neither defend nor endorse atrocities

or sadism; they reframe the confessions that depicted such acts using a variety of narrative techniques. They denigrate some perpetrators—particularly those who issue betrayal, remorseful, and sadistic confessions—as opportunists, liars, and psychopaths. If the confessed acts did occur, so they argue, they were carried out by a few rotten apples and did not represent either the noble security forces who defended the country or the regime’s war strategy. Regime supporters publicly defend human rights, arguing that the regime had to protect the country from “terrorists.” They use the language of “never again” to call on the country to remain vigilant against subsequent national threats. They also accuse the media and the left wing of misrepresenting, misinterpreting, or staging obscene confessions to slander the previous regime and its heroic accomplishments.

These narrative techniques rarely persuade objective observers. They do provide rhetorical cover, however, for individuals seeking an excuse to defend prevailing political views against the damaging evidence provided by unsettling accounts. President Bush’s approach to the Abu Ghraib photographs, Sontag argued, aimed to “limit a public-relations disaster . . . rather than deal with the complex crimes of leadership and of policy revealed by the pictures.”¹⁵ Bush-administration supporters tried to reframe the images as “pranks,” rather than as abuses, as did the talk-radio host Rush Limbaugh: “This is no different than what happens at the Skull and Bones initiation, and we’re going to ruin people’s lives over it, and we’re going to hamper our military effort, and then we are going to really hammer them because they had a good time.”¹⁶ Another reframing device used by Bush-administration supporters involved emphasizing the threat of a terrorist attack and the importance in protecting U.S. citizens with “coercive interrogations,” “tough measures,” or other euphemisms for what the photographs depicted. Senator Trent Lott (Republican, Mississippi), for example, quipped, “Interrogation is not a Sunday-school class. . . . You don’t get information that will save American lives by withholding pancakes.”¹⁷

Unsettling accounts do not replace one prevailing political view with another. Instead, they generate political competition over how to interpret dramatic political events, how to use them, and what they mean for contemporary political life. Such a rhetorical war does not end by killing off democracy or saving it. Instead, it puts into practice the art of competition over ideas and the possibility of building consensus around democratic values.

“NUANCE, PASSION, AND . . . ERUDITION”

Political groups feel compelled to publicly associate or, more likely, disassociate, themselves from the repulsive acts represented in unsettling accounts. For those groups that had failed to successfully oppose prevailing opinion, unsettling accounts provide an opportunity to do so and thereby strengthen their political claims. Perpetrators' confessions, therefore, help victim and survivor groups raise public awareness of a regime's atrocities and the need for building rule of law to end impunity. Similarly, human-rights groups who condemned the use of torture by the United States employed the Abu Ghraib photographs to show the American public what torture looked like and why it should be outlawed. Such groups use unsettling accounts to persuade audiences to accept their political perspectives; they may even win over former opponents.

This is not, however, a one-sided battle: groups must compete with others' efforts to reframe unsettling accounts. The ensuing debate forces both sides to make more persuasive arguments in vying for political power. The result is often what McCoy described in the aftermath of the Abu Ghraib photographs: “a substantive public discussion . . . marked by nuance, passion, and even, at times, erudition.”¹⁸ Unsettling accounts thus render old shibboleths obsolete and demand new arguments to address a new reality.

Sometimes this process involves simply repackaging old ideas in new ways. That effort, however, requires understanding how various perspectives on politics will resonate with a society stunned by unsettling accounts. Groups thus weed out language that legitimates the atrocities depicted, even when those groups concur with the political perspective behind the unsettling accounts. To maintain their base of support, they must show that what they defend differs from atrocity. That process involves a capacity for nuance and rhetorical sophistication.

Simply coding language to hide support for atrocity will maintain support for the group among its most ideologically committed members. Others will see the coded language for what it is and withdraw their support. The latter implicitly endorse the perspectives held by their political enemies, building a broader public consensus around those viewpoints.

Perpetrators' confessions illustrate this process, with former regime supporters, scandalized by tales of atrocity, aligning themselves

in support of the protection of human rights. However, these groups do not always, or necessarily, condemn the authoritarian regime as a whole. In Chile, for example, some of Pinochet's former supporters condemned the human-rights violations committed by the regime, but endorsed the regime's economic strategies. In Argentina, the head of the navy decried officers who made, and soldiers who followed, illegal orders, but he did not condemn the "war against subversion."

Similarly, two years after the fact, President Bush declared Abu Ghraib the "biggest mistake" in the war on global terror, stating, "We've been paying for that for a long period of time."¹⁹ The fog of war—a strategy Vice President Dick Cheney advocated five days after 9/11, when he said, "A lot of what needs to be done here will have to be done quietly, without any discussion"—failed to shield the administration's policies from public scrutiny.²⁰ The Pentagon and the Defense Department rejected Cheney's strategy of creating secret manuals on interrogation techniques, a move that implicitly allied them with the position on torture held by human-rights groups. As Elisa Massimino, the Washington director of Human Rights First, stated, "If the Pentagon is stepping back from that, it's a welcome sign that they now understand the need for transparency and clarity."²¹ The unsettling photographs from Abu Ghraib and resulting widespread outrage no doubt contributed to this policy shift.

The understanding generated by unsettling accounts and contentious coexistence, in turn, leads to fragmentation within formerly entrenched political poles. Thus, rather than there being only two contending perspectives in society, a range of views and cross-cutting alliances develop. Some authoritarian-regime supporters in South Africa and Latin America, for example, unambiguously condemn the atrocities those regimes committed, thereby allying themselves with victims and survivors. On the other hand, some victims and survivors share with authoritarian security forces the desire to censor perpetrators' confessions. Still others persist in their original condemnation of or support for those regimes. But all of these political perspectives reflect growing consensus around the importance of protecting human rights, even as they diverge on how to define those rights and who has historically abused them.

"THE PICTURES WILL NOT GO AWAY"

Unsettling accounts and contentious coexistence lead to political transformations. Perpetrators' confessions contributed to the reversal of amnesty laws in Argentina and Chile, thus eroding the culture of impunity by making those criminal abuses undeniable. Perpetrators' confessions in South Africa's TRC also erased previous denials of apartheid state violence. The Abu Ghraib photographs compelled the White House to retract its earlier definition of torture as only "serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death."²² It also investigated, tried, and found guilty those who had committed the Abu Ghraib abuses. It signed the torture amendment. The uproar over the photographs no doubt contributed significantly to these developments.

Some contend, however, that these political changes mark only superficial, and not fundamental transformations of policies. Unsettling accounts in Brazil, for example, have not contributed to any changes in its amnesty laws. Perpetrators denied amnesty by the TRC have not faced prosecution in South Africa. Changes in amnesty laws have brought few perpetrators to prison for their violations in Argentina and Chile. And the Bush administration has found ways to circumvent the constraints on its policies imposed in the aftermath of the debate over the Abu Ghraib photographs. Specifically, none of those responsible for preparing the legal memos bypassing international bans on torture have lost their positions in the Bush administration, and some have even received promotions.²³ The commanders of those who committed the atrocities have avoided investigation, trial, or even criticism. President Bush tried to sneak past the U.S. public a measure granting him the power to interpret the torture amendment as needed.²⁴ The new consensus that emerged from the Abu Ghraib photographs, some cynics contend, was to hide torture better, not ban its use. Even without such cynicism, evidence suggests that the uproar over the Abu Ghraib photographs failed to end the use of torture in prisons in Guantánamo Bay, Afghanistan, and third-party accomplice states as part of the war on terror.²⁵ Danner asks, "Is what has changed only what we know, or what we are willing to accept?"²⁶

Unsettling accounts and contentious coexistence do not heal democracies. Indeed, they cannot even guarantee particular policy changes. What they do is change the political context and put into

practice the democratic art of participation, contestation, and competition. The political scientist David Art concisely summarizes the ambiguous results of the democratic processes they engender: "Public debates create new frames for interpreting political issues, change the ideas and interests of political actors, restructure the relationships between them, and redefine the limits of legitimate political space. These changes do not occur because the better argument carries the day, but rather because public debates set in motion a series of processes that reshape the political environment in which they occur."²⁷

In other words, some unsettling accounts and forms of contentious coexistence may prove more successful than others in transforming the political landscape. The performative analysis I have adopted in this book identifies the factors that constrain and enhance the role of unsettling accounts and contentious coexistence in democracies. Some performances fare better than others in catalyzing responses from individuals. Thus, any response to the fictional text written by an unknown pilot who witnessed, but did not commit, violence and who could not remember key details in Brazil cannot compare with the outrage when someone confesses to having killed thirty people by dropping them from a plane in Argentina, or expresses pleasure at sexually torturing women in Chile, or demonstrates the wet-bag torture technique in a media circus in South Africa. The power of unsettling accounts varies with the power of the performance: who makes it (actor), what they recount (script), and how they recount it (acting).

Factors external to the perpetrators' confessional speech—institutional mechanisms (staging), political context (timing), and public response (audience)—also shape the power of unsettling accounts to stimulate debate and engender political change. Governments that control the staging of unsettling accounts may also limit the participation and contestation they create. These controls take the form of censorship, speech laws, and limiting access to information. In addition, media that share political perspective with the government or political actors challenged by unsettling accounts tend to provide thin and highly edited coverage of those accounts, thus dampening their political impact. The Chilean media fits this description, with its limited coverage of perpetrators' confessions and its decision to present an edited version of Romo's only after it had provoked an uproar outside the country. The success of the Bush administration in keeping the unedited file of photographs from Abu Ghraib out of the

mainstream media helped its efforts in minimizing the acts portrayed as “humiliations,” rather than torture.

Others blame the public’s preoccupation with another terrorist attack on U.S. soil for its acceptance of the Bush administration’s strategy in the “war on terror.” The journalist Joseph Lelyveld, for example, argues that “when it comes to imminent threats of terrorism, the democratic process doesn’t demand open debate.”²⁸ Danner, however, remains baffled by the muted response from U.S. audiences to the Abu Ghraib photographs: “It is not about revelation or disclosure but about the failure, once wrongdoing is disclosed, of politicians, officials, the press, and, ultimately, citizens to act. The scandal is not about uncovering what is hidden, it is about seeing what is already there—and acting on it. It is not about information; it is about politics.”²⁹ Abu Ghraib suggests that political timing, particularly when more pressing political issues prevail, limits the power of unsettling accounts to catalyze political participation and contestation. Similarly, perpetrators’ confessions that occur long after the end of the abuses, as in Brazil, may shock audiences without mobilizing them behind political change.

This is particularly true if there are few politically mobilized sectors in society capable of keeping unsettling accounts on the democratic agenda. The further back in time the political events occurred, and the fewer the sectors of the population they affected, the harder it will be to keep political actors mobilized to fight for political change. Sontag wrote, “The pictures will not go away,” referring to the enduring images from Abu Ghraib.³⁰ But for those pictures to be used effectively to promote specific political ends, an organized group or set of individuals must use them. Mobilized groups, as perpetrators’ confessions have illustrated, can transform even inauspicious unsettling accounts into catalysts for political action. In Argentina human-rights activists turned heroic confessions into evidence of atrocities committed and thus were able to demand justice. In Chile and in South Africa they filled in details missing from denials and amnesia confessions to challenge impunity. They even overcame silence in Brazil, using a mere whisper of a confession to reveal hidden atrocities.

The success of these groups also depends on their ability to overcome other organized sectors of society poised to combat the political change they advocate. In this battle, the best, most ethical, democratic, or even legal argument will not necessarily win. Unsettling

accounts may bring forth previously silenced views, but they do not guarantee that those views will prevail in a power struggle with the opposition.

“GOOD COUNTERSPEECH IS ONE REMEDY FOR BAD SPEECH”

In *Unsettling Accounts* I advocate political participation to contest prevailing views that have impeded the promotion of democratic values, like human rights and rule of law. I recognize that political competition means that groups advocating those values will not always succeed in achieving the specific policy outcomes they desire. But by provoking participation, contestation, and competition, unsettling accounts contribute to building stronger democratic practices, if not policies.

The contentious-coexistence model, moreover, proves more realistic and effective than its alternatives. Both the “fatal overdose of truth” and “healing truth” theories suffer from the same utopian assumption that democracies can successfully gag contentious issues. Little evidence supports this assumption. Efforts by the Bush administration to run the global war on terror in secret failed to stifle the photographs from Abu Ghraib or other abhorrent tales of U.S. abuses. Strategies to impose one official truth to reconcile conflict over the apartheid state in South Africa or military regimes in Latin America also failed. Perpetrators’ confessions broke the pact of silence among the military in Latin America. They even defied speech laws aimed at protecting society from harmful justifications by perpetrators for their past crimes. South African government officials, most famously the former president P. W. Botha, publicly denounced the TRC and the healing truth it imposed. A reluctant media in the United States and in Chile, wary of exposing an unfavorable view of past and present governments and their policies, still presented enough of the unsettling accounts to unleash outrage. Powerful political groups defending the status quo—like the militaries in Latin America—could not even keep their own members from defying gag rules.

Not only are such efforts at stifling debate infeasible, but they also prove dangerous. They drive strongly held, but silenced, views underground and beyond the scrutiny and judgment of public debate. Certainly some forms of speech require prohibition, specifically direct and credible threats of violence aimed at specific individuals, or inju-

rious speech that violates individuals' right not to listen.³¹ For other kinds of speech, however, democracies benefit most from unfettering them, compelling them to compete with better—more democratic—ideas. As the adage goes, "Good counterspeech is one remedy for bad speech."³²

What I have described is a messy process. It involves coping with heightened tensions, sometimes at very early stages of democratic development. It exposes citizens to uncomfortable facts and perspectives that they would rather avoid, and indeed have sometimes managed to avoid for some time. And the outcomes, at least in terms of specific policies, are uncertain. But this messy process is unavoidable and healthy in new and established democracies.