# ASU CR Cards Round 2 Districts

## 1NC

### 1

#### The aff isn't topical:

#### Resolved and should means that the debate is about hypothetical government action

Jon M Ericson 3, Dean Emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts – California Polytechnic U., et al., The Debater’s Guide, Third Edition, p. 4

The Proposition of Policy: Urging Future Action In policy propositions, each topic contains certain key elements, although they have slightly different functions from comparable elements of value-oriented propositions. 1. An agent doing the acting ---“The United States” in “The United States should adopt a policy of free trade.” Like the object of evaluation in a proposition of value, the agent is the subject of the sentence. 2. The verb should—the first part of a verb phrase that urges action. 3. An action verb to follow should in the should-verb combination. For example, should adopt here means to put a program or policy into action through governmental means. 4. A specification of directions or a limitation of the action desired. The phrase free trade, for example, gives direction and limits to the topic, which would, for example, eliminate consideration of increasing tariffs, discussing diplomatic recognition, or discussing interstate commerce. Propositions of policy deal with future action. Nothing has yet occurred. The entire debate is about whether something ought to occur. What you agree to do, then, when you accept the affirmative side in such a debate is to offer sufficient and compelling reasons for an audience to perform the future action that you propose.

#### Vote negative:

#### 1. Topical fairness requirements are key to effective dialogue—monopolizing strategy and prep makes the discussion one-sided and subverts any meaningful neg role

Galloway 7—Samford Comm prof (Ryan, Contemporary Argumentation and Debate, Vol. 28, 2007)

**Debate as a dialogue** sets an argumentative table, where all parties receive a relatively fair opportunity to voice their position. Anything that fails to allow participants to have their position articulated denies one side of the argumentative table a fair hearing. **The affirmative side is set by the topic and fairness requirements**. While affirmative teams have recently resisted affirming the topic, in fact, the topic selection process is rigorous, taking the relative ground of each topic as its central point of departure.¶ **Setting the affirmative reciprocally sets the negative**. The negative crafts approaches to the topic consistent with affirmative demands. The negative crafts disadvantages, counter-plans, and critical arguments premised on the arguments that the topic allows for the affirmative team. According to fairness norms, each side sits at a relatively balanced argumentative table.’s¶ **When** one side takes more than its share, **competitive equity suffers**. **However, it also undermines the respect due to the other involved in the dialogue. When one side excludes the other, it** fundamentally denies the personhood of the other participant (Ehninger, 1970, p. 110). **A pedagogy of debate as dialogue takes this respect as a fundamental component. A desire to be fair is a** fundamental condition of a dialoguethat takes the form of a demand for equality of voice. **Far from** being **a banal request for links to a disadvantage, fairness** is a demand for respect**, a demand to be heard, a demand that a voice backed by literally months upon months of preparation, research, and critical thinking** not be silenced.¶ **Affirmative cases that suspend basic fairness norms operate to exclude particular negative strategies. Unprepared, one side comes to the argumentative table unable to meaningfully participate in a dialogue.** **They are unable to “understand what ‘went on…’” and are left to the whims of time and power** (Farrell, 1985, p. 114). Hugh Duncan furthers this line of reasoning:¶ **Opponents not only tolerate but honor and respect each other because in doing so they enhance their own chances of thinking better and reaching sound decisions**. Opposition is necessary because it sharpens thought in action. We assume that argument, discussion, and talk, among free an informed people who subordinate decisions of any kind, because **it is only through such discussion that we reach agreement which binds us to a common cause…If we are to be equal…relationships among equals must find expression in many formal and informal institutions** (Duncan, 1993, p. 196-197).¶ **Debate compensates for the exigencies of the world by offering a framework that maintains** equality for the sake of the conversation(Farrell, 1985, p. 114).¶ For example, **a**n affirmative **case** on the 2007-2008 college topic **might defend neither state nor** international **action** in the Middle East, andyet claim to be germane to the topic **in some way. The case essentially denies the arguments that state action is oppressive or that actions** in the international arena **are philosophically or pragmatically suspect. Instead of allowing for the dialogue to be modified by the interchange of the affirmative case and the negative response, the affirmative** subverts any meaningful role to the negative team**, preventing them from offering effective “counter-word” and undermining the value of a meaningful exchange of speech acts.** Germaneness and other substitutes for topical action do not accrue the dialogical benefits **of topical advocacy**.

#### 2. Our model for debate is better – There are four DA’s to their attempt to create a safe space

Barrett 2010 [Betty, University of Windsor, “Is "Safety" Dangerous? A Critical Examination of the Classroom as Safe Space,” *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 1.1]

In spite of the prominence of the notion of safety among educators, the safe classroom is not without cause for concern. These concerns centre on four theoretical criticisms of safe space in higher education, as it is currently commonly conceptualized in the pedagogical literature: (a) the impact of safety on student intellectual development; (b) the impossibility of safety for students in marginalized and oppressed populations, indeed, for all students; (c) the challenges of assessing student learning in safe environments; and (d) ambiguity in defining safety for students. Safety and Student Intellectual Development In his seminal work on safe space as an educational metaphor, Boostrom (1998) argues that the construction of the classroom as a safe space for students runs counter to the traditional mission of higher education: to promote student critical thinking and intellectual development. He notes that in the educational tradition of “Plato through Rousseau to Dewey,” education of students involved “not merely risk, but the pain of giving up a former condition in favour of a new way of seeing things” (p. 399). He goes on to argue that safety seemingly is undesirable in this historical vision of education, noting that “being interrogated by Socrates would evoke many feelings, but would a feeling of safety be among them?” (p. 399). He argues that students’ expectations for safety, comfort, and nonjudgmental acceptance of their contributions in the classroom, as well as teachers’ claims that they can assure such things, contradicts the essential role of the classroom as a space for critical dialogue and exchange: Understood as the avoidance of stress, the “safe space” metaphor drains from classroom life every impulse towards critical reflection. It’s one thing to say that students should not be laughed at for posing a question or for offering a wrong answer. It’s another to say that students must never be conscious of their own ignorance. It’s one thing to say that students should not be belittled for a personal preference or harassed because of an 5 Barrett: Is "Safety" Dangerous? Published by Scholarship@Western, 2010unpopular opinion. It’s another to say that students must never be asked why their preferences and opinions are different from those of others. It’s one thing to say that students should be capable of self-revelation. It’s another to say that they must always like what they see revealed. (p. 406) Boostrom (1998) further argues that students’ interpretation of safe space as an environment that is nonjudgmental, unbiased, and uncritically accepting of their unique individuality results in a form of intellectual relativism in which no knowledge, opinions, attitudes, experiences, and beliefs can be the object of judgment: When everyone’s voice is accepted and no one’s voice can be criticized, then no one can grow. . . . that we need to hear other voices to grow is certainly true, but we also need to be able to respond to those voices, to criticize them, to challenge them, to sharpen our own perspectives through the friction of dialogue. A person can learn, says Socrates, “if he is brave and does not tire of the search” (Plato, 81d). We have to be brave because along the way we are going to be “vulnerable and exposed”; we are going to encounter images that are “alienating and shocking.” We are going to be very unsafe. (p. 407) The concern that students’ interpretations of safe space are predicated on the notion that the classroom environment should be comfortable, unbiased, and uncritical of them is also expressed by Holley and Steiner: one must question whether students feel safe only in an environment where their beliefs go unquestioned and their ideas unchallenged. If this is the case, what feels safe for students might be antithetical to the discomfort that is sometimes necessary for true growth and learning to occur. (2005, p. 60) Thus, if we accept that a central component of safety is comfort, as is suggested by the previous review of the theoretical and empirical work on safe classrooms, we must question whether the safe classroom is conducive to (or counter to) the development of students as critical thinkers. Safety, Privilege, and Oppression A second line of criticism leveled at the safe classroom centres on the impossibility of safety for students, particularly racially, socially, and economically marginalized students, in the classroom context. Ludlow (2004) contends that instructors invoking the language of safe space convey both an overt and a covert definition of safety to students. Overtly, instructors are communicating that they want the class to be a space where students are “free to self-explore, self-regulate, and self-express” (p. 44). Covertly, however, instructors are communicating a second meaning to students: that the classroom should be a space “for disempowered students to be free from persecution and harm” (p. 44). Ludlow argues that while these two meanings may appear on the surface to be complementary, they are actually contradictory. Frusciante (2008) notes, as does Ludlow (2004), that the classroom is a microcosm. As such, the social norms, structures, and processes that differentially confer power and privilege upon individuals based on their social position outside of the classroom also operate within the classroom. For this reason, the classroom is not (and cannot) be constructed as a community of 6 The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Vol. 1, Iss. 1 [2010], Art. 9 http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cjsotl\_rcacea/vol1/iss1/9 DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2010.1.9equals, as students enter the space with different degrees of power and privilege based on their membership in privileged (or oppressed) social categories. Students who belong to racially, socially, or economically marginalized groups live in a world which is inherently unsafe—a world where racialization, sexism, ableism, classism, and heteronormativity pose genuine threats to their psychological, social, material, and physical well-being. To contend that the classroom can be a safe space for these students when the world outside is not, is not only unrealistic, it is dangerous. As argued by Ludlow, I have learned that I cannot offer my less privileged students—students of color, LGBTI students, students from poor families—safety, nor should I try. In fact, it is a function of my own privilege that I ever thought I could. It is only from privileged perspectives that neutral or safe environments are viable and from empowered positions that protecting others is possible. (p. 45) Frusciante (2008) contends that her efforts to give voice to marginalized students in the classroom only served to reinforce the power structures that denied these students voice outside of the classroom walls. Although she could attempt to create a space where those students could speak, she was powerless to alter the reality of “whose voices were actually heard by the class” (p. 683). Ludlow (2004) challenges the notion of the safe classroom on the grounds that offering some students the privilege of safety and free self-expression comes at the cost of furthering the lack of safety experienced by marginalized and oppressed students. She states that to provide a safe environment for students to freely express thoughts, beliefs, opinions, and attitudes that further their own positions of power and privilege (as is the case when students are granted the safety to express homophobic, racist, sexist, or other derogatory remarks without challenge) is to, simultaneously, further the marginalization and oppression of those who are the target of such remarks. However, to contest such expressions, by definition, contributes to a lack of safety for students making such comments, who are now the objects of judgment and censure. This conundrum, in which safety cannot be simultaneously conferred to both privileged and oppressed students, raises the essential question of who the classroom is intended to be a safe space for. In Ludlow’s assessment, the notion of a safe space and its accompanying requirement that the classroom be an environment for free, unbridled, and uncriticized self-expression serves only to further reinforce the power of some students at the expense of others. For this reason, she contends that safety is a privilege, one that is often conferred on students who already occupy dominant and empowered positions, both inside and outside of the classroom. Safety and the Assessment of Student Learning Another problematic issue pertaining to safety in the classroom is the assessment of student learning. The primary purpose of safety in educational settings is to ensure that students are comfortable to freely express themselves as they critically engage with course material. The implicit purpose of such expression is not simply expression for expression’s sake but, rather, to demonstrate that learning has taken/is taking place. As such, the safe classroom is commonly constructed as one in which students are safe to reflect on their own attitudes, beliefs, and experiences as part of the learning process, with the intent that such self-reflection will result in the acquisition of the knowledge and/or skills embodied in specific educational outcomes. For 7 Barrett: Is "Safety" Dangerous? Published by Scholarship@Western, 2010this reason, Frusciante (2008) argues that “within the context of learning, issues of safety and reflection are inseparable” (p. 684). If the purpose of safety is to facilitate student reflection and expressions of learning, and a central task of educators is to evaluate the quality of that learning, what then are the appropriate boundaries of assessment in the safe classroom? As argued by Boostrom, the notion of safety in the classroom has commonly been understood by students as implying a general prohibition against critically assessing someone else’s work or even expressing the belief that some people’s achievements might be better (more meaningful, more beautiful, more lasting, more pervasive, wiser, etc.) than other people’s achievements. All discrimination (all choosing, all ranking, all evaluation) had come to be seen as equally evil. (1998, p. 406) Findings from Holley and Steiner’s (2005) research on students’ perception of safety confirm that students commonly perceive that a safe classroom is one in which both instructors and peers refrain from criticism, judgment, or bias. When the focus of safety is to facilitate classroom discourse that involves self-disclosure (of experiences, thoughts, attitudes, beliefs) on the part of students, and safety is commonly understood by students as carte blanche to share whatever they choose without risk of censure or judgment, a fundamental tension arises in the expectations of students and teachers as to what is the rightful focus of evaluation and grading when students engage in self-reflection. Instructors contend that it is the process of self-reflection, as a critical thinking skill, that is evaluated when assessing that learning has occurred (and thus the quality of the product of this endeavor serves as the foundation for a mark). Indeed, good educational practice indicates that educators use the subjective experiences of students as a point of departure for intellectual endeavours rather than as end points, in and of themselves, for evaluation. As such, when instructors encourage critical self-reflection in the classroom, it is with the intent to challenge students to apply a particular theoretical or conceptual lens to these experiences to further their knowledge and/or skill acquisition. Students, however, often interpret this as being graded on the personal experiences, thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs that are the source of their reflection, rather than the knowledge/skill acquisition that is its product. This invariably is a cause for student dissent when students in safe classrooms have been assured a blanket of safety, which they interpret as protecting them from having personal markers of their individuality (i.e., their experiences, thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs) judged, evaluated, or critiqued. As the act of grading is fundamentally an act of judgment, evaluation, and critique, it follows that grading and safety (as commonly interpreted by students) are seemingly incompatible from the perspective of students. This incompatibility is even more pronounced when students erroneously equate the source of self-reflection (their individual subjective experiences) with the process (critical thinking) and intended outcome (knowledge and skill acquisition) of this reflection in the safe classroom. Ambiguities in Defining Safety for Students A final concern regarding the creation of safe space in the classroom centres on the ambiguity inherent in the concept of safety. Central aspects of safety expressed in both educators’ and students’ accounts of safe classrooms are student comfort, and correspondingly, 8 The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Vol. 1, Iss. 1 [2010], Art. 9 http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cjsotl\_rcacea/vol1/iss1/9 DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5206/cjsotl-rcacea.2010.1.9the ability of students to take risks. However, the experience of comfort is largely intrapersonal and psychological. Thus, comfort and readiness to take risks are largely invisible and not readily observable by educators. The discourse of classroom safety centres on the creation of a social space that promotes a particular psychological experience on the part of students; however, how are educators to know when they have had this experience? Is participation, in and of itself, an accurate indicator of student comfort? Are students who do not participate, by definition, feeling psychologically unsafe in the classroom space? Conversely, can educators assume that simply because students are participating, the experience is psychologically safe for them? The safe space literature is full of claims that safe space provides a psychologically superior context for learning to occur, but the specification of observable behavioural indicators that this intrapersonal context has been achieved is largely absent. In the absence of clearly specified markers of safety, how are educators to even know if a safe space has (or has not) been created?

#### 3. Engaging the law through in-depth debate is critical to solve their impacts

Harris, professor of law – UC Berkeley, ‘94

(Angela P., 82 Calif. L. Rev. 741)

CRT has taken up this method of internal critique. Like the crits, race-crits have tried to go beyond espousing Doctrine X over Doctrine Y, claiming instead to show that both doctrines are biased against people of color from the outset. n33 For example, as Brooks and Newborn note, the CRT critique of equal protection law challenges not only the "intent" test of Washington v. Davis, n34 but the understanding of racism on which that test is based. n35 And, as Farber notes, the CRT critique of affirmative action challenges the very notion of "merit." n36 This commitment to conceptual as well as doctrinal critique is CRT's radicalism - its attempt to dig down to the very roots of legal doctrine, in contrast with the more reformist bent of traditional civil rights scholarship. Following the first wave's announcement that law is not separate from politics, the second wave of CLS moved to the study of law as "rhetoric" - [\*748] the ways in which legal reasoning accomplishes its ideological effects. n37 Second wave crits have attempted to examine how binary thinking in the law is produced and how it reflects larger historical processes of bureaucratization and commodification. In so doing, the second wave of CLS has found no "there" there beneath the rhetoric of law. Where first wave crits assumed that beneath law's indeterminacy was a "fundamental contradiction" in the human condition itself, n38 or relied on the existence of moments of unalienated, authentic "being" in the world, n39 second wave crits have begun to question whether the very assumption of a human condition separate from the language we use to talk about it makes sense. I call this mood of profound doubt and skepticism "postmodernist." There are as many different definitions of postmodernism as there are postmodernists. n40 As law professors have understood the term, n41 however, [Postmodernism] suggests that what has been presented in our social-political and our intellectual traditions as knowledge, truth, objectivity, and reason are actually merely the effects of a particular form of social power, the victory of a particular way of representing the world that then presents itself as beyond mere interpretation, as truth itself. n42 Postmodernism's strength is in its corrosiveness. First wave crits insisted that law functions as a mask for power; second wave crits question the first wave's faith in "unmasking" itself. The effort to expose law as ideology assumed that it was possible, through the force of critique, to suddenly see the way things "really" are in a flash of enlightenment. But the [\*749] second wave crits doubt this very reliance on a "real reality" underlying ideology. Instead, they suggest that ideology is all there is. n43 Postmodernist critique is congenial to race-crits, who had already drawn from history the lesson that "racism" is no superficial matter of ignorance, conscious error, or bigotry, but rather lies at the very heart of American - and western - culture. In one of the foundational articles of CRT, Kimberle Crenshaw notes that the civil rights movement achieved material and symbolic gains for blacks, yet left racist ideology and race-baiting politics intact. n44 In Crenshaw's view, the crits' critiques did not go far enough to expose the racism in legal reasoning and legal institutions. Derrick Bell argues that racism is a permanent feature of the American landscape, not something that we can throw off in a magic moment of emancipation. n45 And in a moment of deep pessimism, Richard Delgado's fictional friend "Rodrigo Crenshaw" has suggested that racism is an intrinsic feature of "The Enlightenment" itself. n46 The deeper that race-crits dig, the more embedded racism seems to be; the deeper the race-crit critique of western culture goes, the more useful postmodernist philosophy becomes in demonstrating that nothing should be immune from criticism. By calling everything taken for granted into question, postmodernist critique potentially clears the way for alternative accounts of social reality, n47 including accounts that place racism at the center of western culture. Thus, Gerald Torres has identified postmodernism as a useful position from which to criticize both theories of interest-group and "communitarian" politics. n48 Anthony Cook sees deconstruction, a postmodernist method of reading texts, as potentially "liberatory" for progressive scholars of color. n49 [\*750] And Robert Chang argues that post-structuralism is useful in order to understand the interaction between Asian American political action and the law. n50 Postmodernist thought refuses to accept any concept, linguistic usage, or value as pure, original, or incorruptible. Postmodernist narratives, as used by race-crits, contend that concepts like neutrality and objectivity, and institutions like law, have not escaped the taint of racism, but rather are often used to perpetuate it. Postmodernist narratives emphasize the ways in which "race" permeates our language, our perceptions, even our fondest "colorblind" utopias. n51 CRT tells postmodernist narratives when it digs down into seemingly neutral areas of law and finds concepts of "race" and racism always already there. B. CRT and Modernist Narratives Even while it exposes racism within seemingly neutral concepts and institutions, however, CRT has not abandoned the fundamental political goal of traditional civil rights scholarship: the liberation of people of color from racial subordination. Although, like crits, race-crits have questioned concepts of neutrality and objectivity, they have done so from a perspective that places racial oppression at the center of analysis and privileges the racial subject. This commitment to antiracism over critique as an end in itself has created rifts between CRT and CLS. For example, in a symposium published by the Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review, race-crits broke with crits over the efficacy of "rights talk." n52 CLS writers had argued "that rights were malleable and manipulative, that in practice they served to isolate and marginalize rather than empower and connect people, and that progressive people should emphasize needs, informality, and connectedness rather than rights." n53 Patricia Williams, Richard Delgado, and Mari Matsuda, however, all rejected this yearning to go beyond rights to more [\*751] direct forms of human connection, arguing that, for communities of color, "rights talk" was an indispensable tool. n54 This argument between CRT and CLS was more a matter of strategy and tactics than of fundamental disagreement. Both sides agreed that progressive political action should be antiracist and that human connection was a good thing. But a comparison of CRT work with the second wave of CLS work also indicates a more serious tension. In its commitment to the liberation of people of color, CRT work demonstrates a deep commitment to concepts of reason and truth, transcendental subjects, and "really-out-there" objects. Thus, in its optimistic moments, CRT engages in "modernist" narratives. n55 Modernist narratives assume three things: a subject, free to choose, who can be emancipated or not; an objective world of things out there (a world "the way it really is" as opposed to the way things appear to be in a condition of false consciousness); and "reason," the bridge between the subject and the object that enables subjects to move from their own blindness to "enlightenment." Modernist narratives thus call on a particular intellectual machinery, a methodology Brian Fay describes as "critical social science." Critical social science requires the following: First, that there be a crisis in a social system; second, that this crisis be at least in part caused by the false consciousness of those experiencing it; third, that this false consciousness be amenable to the process of enlightenment ...; and fourth, that such enlightenment lead to emancipation in which a group, empowered by its new-found self-understanding, radically alters its social arrangements and thereby alleviates its suffering. n56 [\*752] In its optimistic moments, CRT is described very well by "critical social science." The crisis in our social system is our collective failure to adequately perceive or to address racism. This crisis, according to CRT, is at least in part caused by a false understanding of "racism" as an intentional, isolated, individual phenomenon, equivalent to prejudice. This false understanding, however, can be corrected by CRT, which redescribes racism as a structural flaw in our society. Through these explanations, readers will come to a new and deeper understanding of reality, an enlightenment which in turn will lead to legal and political struggle that ultimately results in racial liberation. Under CRT, as Fay remarks of critical social science in general, "the truth shall set you free." n57 This project fits well with the kind of scholarship most often found in law reviews. As several scholars have recently argued, one characteristic of conventional legal scholarship is its insistent "normativity": the little voice that constantly asks legal scholars, "So, what should we do?" n58 Normativity is both a stylistic and a substantive characteristic. At the stylistic level, normativity refers to how law review articles typically are structured: the writer identifies a problem within the existing legal framework; she then identifies a "norm," within or outside the legal system, to which we ought to adhere; and finally she applies the norm to resolve the problem in a way that can easily translate into a series of moves within the currently existing legal system. n59 At the substantive level, normativity describes the assumption within legal scholarship of a coherent and unitary "we" - a legal subject who speaks for and acts in the people's best interest - with the power to "do" something. Legal normativity also confidently assumes "our" ability to reason a way through problems with neutrality and objectivity: to "choose" a norm and then "apply" it to a legal problem. n60 Whereas second-wave CLS work sits very uneasily with this scholarly method, n61 both traditional civil rights scholarship and CRT adhere for the [\*753] most part to stylistic and substantive normativity. Although the "we" assumed in these articles and essays is often "people of color" and progressive whites rather than a generic "we," the same confidence is exhibited of "our" ability to choose one norm over another, to apply the new principle to a familiar problem, to achieve enlightenment, and to move from understanding to action. n62 Even when the recommended course of action goes beyond adopting Doctrine X over Doctrine Y, as CRT makes a point of doing, the exhortation to action often still assumes that liberation is just around the corner. CRT's commitment to the liberation of people of color - and the project of critical social science (generally) and normative legal scholarship (in particular) as a way to further that liberation - suggest a faith in certain concepts and institutions that postmodernists lack. When race-crits tell modernist stories, they assume that "people of color" describes a coherent category with at least some shared values and interests. They assume that the idea of "liberation" is meaningful - that racism is something that can one day somehow cease to exist, or cease to exert any power over us. Modernist narratives assume a "real" reality out there, and that reason can bring us face to face with it. And modernist narratives have faith that once enough people see the truth, right action will follow: that enlightenment leads to empowerment, and that empowerment leads to emancipation. Modernist narratives, then, are profoundly hopeful. They assume that people of color and whites live in the same perceptual and moral world, that reason speaks to us all in the same way despite our different experiences, and that reason, rather than habit or power, is what will motivate people. Modernist narratives also can be profoundly romantic. They imagine heroic action by a formerly oppressed people rising up as one, "empowered" to be who they "really" are or choose to be, breathing the thin and bracing air of freedom. This optimism and romanticism, though easy to caricature, cannot be easily dismissed. As Patricia Williams and Mari Matsuda have pointed out, faith in reason and truth and belief in the essential freedom of rational subjects have enabled people of color to survive and resist subordination. n63 Political modernism, more generally, has been a powerful force in the lives of subjugated peoples; as a practical matter, politically liberal societies are [\*754] vastly preferable to the alternatives. n64 A faith in reason has sustained efforts to educate people into critical thinking and to engage in debate rather than violence. n65 The passionate and constructive energy of modernist narratives of emancipation is also grounded in a moral faith: that human beings are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights; that oppression is wrong and resistance to oppression right; that opposing subjugation in the name of liberty, equality, and true community is the obligation of every rational person. In its modernist moments, CRT aims not to topple the Enlightenment, but to make its promises real. n66

### 2

#### The aff’s presentation of suffering creates a marketplace of trauma transforming wounds into a commodity for western consumption. Their reductionism of native suffering exists by turning the other into a faceless object through which we can construct a sentimental economy of pleasure and pacification. The aff is a form of empathetic identification which is a process of deathmaking which ensures the smooth functioning of imperialism.

Berlant 1999 [Lauren, George M. Pullman Professor, Department of English, University of Chicago, “The Subject of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy and Politics” in *Cultural Pluralism, Identity Politics and the Law* ed. Sarat and Kearns, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Pg. 49-54]

Ravaged wages and ravaged bodies saturate the global marketplace in which the United States seeks desperately to compete "competitively," as the euphemism goes, signifying a race that will be won by the nations whose labor conditions are most optimal for profit.2 In the United States the media of the political public sphere regularly register new scandals of the proliferating sweatshop networks "at home" and "abroad," which has to be a good thing, because it produces feeling and with it something at least akin to consciousness that can lead to action) Yet, even as the image of the traumatized worker proliferates, even as evidence of exploitation is found under every rock or commodity, it competes with a normative/utopian image of the US. citizen who remains unmarked, framed, and protected by the private trajectory of his life project, which is sanctified at the juncture where the unconscious meets history: the American Dream.4 In that story one's identity is borne of suffering, mental, physical, or economic. If the US worker is lucky enough to live at an economic moment that sustains the Dream, he gets to appear at his least national when he is working and at his most national at leisure, with his family or in semipublic worlds of other men producing surplus manliness (e.g., via sports). In the American dreamscape his identity is private property, a zone in which structural obstacles and cultural differences fade into an ether of prolonged, deferred, and individuating enjoyment that he has earned and that the nation has helped him to earn. Meanwhile, exploitation only appears as a scandalous nugget in the sieve of memory when it can be condensed into an exotic thing of momentary fascination, a squalor of the bottom too horrible to be read in its own actual banality. The exposed traumas of workers in ongoing extreme conditions do not generally induce more than mourning on the part of the state and the public culture to whose feeling-based opinions the state is said to respond. Mourning is what happens when a grounding object is lost, is dead, no longer living (to you). Mourning is an experience of irre¬ducible boundedness: I am here, I am living, he is dead, I am mourning. It is a beautiful, not sublime, experience of emancipation; mourning supplies the subject the definitional perfection of a being no longer in flux. It takes place over a distance: even if the object who induces the feeling of loss and helplessness is neither dead nor at any great distance from where you are.5 In other words, mourning can also be an act of aggression, of social deathmaking: it can perform the evacuation of sig-nificance from actually-existing subjects. Even when liberals do it, one might say, "others" are ghosted for a good cause.6 The sorrow songs of scandal that sing of the exploitation that is always "elsewhere" (even a few blocks away) are in this sense aggressively songs of mourning. Play them backward, and the military march of capitalist triumphalism (The Trans-Nationale) can be heard. Its lyric, currently crooned by every organ of record in the United States, is about necessity. It exhorts citi-zens to understand that the "bottom line" of national life is neither utopia nor freedom but survival, which can only be achieved by a citi-zenry that eats its anger, makes no unreasonable claims on resources or control over value, and uses its most creative energy to cultivate inti¬mate spheres while scrapping a life together flexibly in response to the market world's caprices. In this particular moment of expanding class unconsciousness that looks like consciousness emerges a peculiar, though not unprecedented, hero: the exploited child. If a worker can be infanfilized, pic-tured as young, as small, as feminine or feminized, as starving, as bleeding and diseased, and as a (virtual) slave, the righteous indigna-tion around procuring his survival resounds everywhere. The child must not be sacrificed to states or to profiteering. His wounded image speaks a truth that subordinates narrative: he has not "freely" chosen his exploitation; the optimism and play that are putatively the right of childhood have been stolen from him. Yet only "voluntary" steps are ever taken to try to control this visible sign of what is ordinary and sys¬temic amid the chaos of capitalism, in order to make its localized night¬mares seem uninevitable. Privatize the atrocity, delete the visible sign, make it seem foreign. Return the child to the family, replace the children with adults who can look dignified while being paid virtually the same revolting wage. The problem that organizes so much feeling then regains livable proportions, and the uncomfortable pressure of feeling dissipates, like so much gas. Meanwhile, the pressure of feeling the shock of being uncomfort-ably political produces a cry for a double therapy-4o the victim and the viewer. But before "we" appear too complacently different from the privileged citizens who desire to caption the mute image of exotic suf¬fering with an aversively fascinated mourning (a desire for the image to be dead, a ghost), we must note that this feeling culture crosses over into other domains, the domains of what we call identity politics, where the wronged take up voice and agency to produce transformative testimony, which depends on an analogous conviction about the self-evidence and therefore the objectivity of painful feeling The central concern of this essay is to address the place of painful feeling in the making of political worlds. In particular, I mean to challenge a powerful popular belief in the positive workings of something I call national sentimentality, a rhetoric of promise that a nation can be built across fields of social difference through channels of affective identification and empathy. Sentimental politics generally promotes and maintains the hegemony of the national identity form, no mean feat in the face of continued widespread intercultural antagonism and economic cleavage. But national sentimentality is more than a current of feeling that circulates in a political field: the phrase describes a long¬standing contest between two models of U.S. citizenship. In one, the classic model, each citizen's value is secured by an equation between abstractness and emancipation: a cell of national identity provides juridically protected personhood for citizens regardless of anything specific about them. In the second model, which was initially organized around labor, feminist, and antiracist struggles of the nineteenth-cen¬tury United States, another version of the nation is imagined as the index of collective life. This nation is peopled by suffering citizens and noncitizens whose structural exclusion from the utopian-American dreamscape exposes the state's claim of legitimacy and virtue to an acid wash of truth telling that makes hegemonic disavowal virtually impos¬sible, at certain moments of political intensity. Sentimentality has long been the means by which mass subaltern pain is advanced, in the dominant public sphere, as the true core of national collectivity. It operates when the pain of intimate others burns into the conscience of classically privileged national subjects, such that they feel the pain of flawed or denied citizenship as their pain. Theo¬retically, to eradicate the pain those with power will do whatever is necessary to return the nation once more to its legitimately utopian odor. Identification with pain, a universal true feeling, then leads to structural social change. In return, subalterns scarred by the pain of failed democracy will reauthorize universalist notions of citizenship in the national utopia, which involves believing in a redemptive notion of law as the guardian of public good. The object of the nation and the law in this light is to eradicate systemic social pain, the absence of which becomes the definition of freedom. Yet, since these very sources of protection—the state, the law, patriotic ideology—have traditionally buttressed traditional matrices of cultural hierarchy, and since their historic job has been to protect universal subject/citizens from feeling their cultural and corporeal specificity as a political vulnerability, the imagined capacity of these institutions to assimilate to the affective tactics of subaltern counterpolitics suggests some weaknesses, or misrecognitions, in these tactics. For one thing, it may be that the sharp specificity of the traumatic model of pain implicitly mischaracterizes what a person is as what a person becomes in the experience of social negation; this model also falsely promises a sharp picture of structural violence's source and scope, in turn promoting a dubious optimism that law and other visible sources of inequality, for example, can provide the best remedies for their own taxonomizing harms. It is also possible that counterhegemonic deploy-ments of pain as the measure of structural injustice actually sustain the utopian image of a homogeneous national metaculture, which can look like a healed or healthy body in contrast to the scarred and exhausted ones. Finally, it might be that the tactical use of trauma to describe the effects of social inequality so overidentifies the eradication of pain with the achievement of justice that it enables various confusions: for instance, the equation of pleasure with freedom or the sense that changes in feeling, even on a mass scale, amount to substantial social change. Sentimental politics makes these confusions credible and these violences bearable, as its cultural power confirms the centrality of inter-personal identification and empathy to the vitality and viability of col-lective life. This gives citizens something to do in response to over-whelming structural violence. Meanwhile, by equating mass society with that thing called "national culture," these important transpersonal linkages and intimacies all too frequently serve as proleptic shields, as ethically uncontestable legitimating devices for sustaining the hege¬manic field.9

#### The logic of capitalism results in extinction through the creation of ecological catastrophe and violent imperialist wars that will turn nuclear

Foster 5 [John Bellamy, Monthly Review, September, Vol. 57, Issue 4, “Naked Imperialism”, <http://www.monthlyreview.org/0905jbf.htm>]

From the longer view offered by a historical-materialist critique of capitalism, the direction that would be taken by U.S. imperialism following the fall of the Soviet Union was never in doubt. Capitalism by its very logic is a globally expansive system. The contradiction between its transnational economic aspirations and the fact that politically it remains rooted in particular nation states is insurmountable for the system. Yet, ill-fated attempts by individual states to overcome this contradiction are just as much a part of its fundamental logic. In present world circumstances, when one capitalist state has a virtual monopoly of the means of destruction, the temptation for that state to attempt to seize full-spectrum dominance and to transform itself into the de facto global state governing the world economy is irresistible. As the noted Marxian philosopher István Mészáros observed in Socialism or Barbarism? (2001)—written, significantly, before George W. Bush became president: “[W]hat is at stake today is not the control of a particular part of the planet—no matter how large—putting at a disadvantage but still tolerating the independent actions of some rivals, but the control of its totality by one hegemonic economic and military superpower, with all means—even the most extreme authoritarian and, if needed, violent military ones—at its disposal.” The unprecedented dangers of this new global disorder are revealed in the twin cataclysms to which the world is heading at present: nuclear proliferation and hence increased chances of the outbreak of nuclear war, and planetary ecological destruction. These are symbolized by the Bush administration’s refusal to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to limit nuclear weapons development and by its failure to sign the Kyoto Protocol as a first step in controlling global warming. As former U.S. Secretary of Defense (in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations) Robert McNamara stated in an article entitled “Apocalypse Soon” in the May–June 2005 issue of Foreign Policy: “The United States has never endorsed the policy of ‘no first use,’ not during my seven years as secretary or since. We have been and remain prepared to initiate the use of nuclear weapons—by the decision of one person, the president—against either a nuclear or nonnuclear enemy whenever we believe it is in our interest to do so.” The nation with the greatest conventional military force and the willingness to use it unilaterally to enlarge its global power is also the nation with the greatest nuclear force and the readiness to use it whenever it sees fit—setting the whole world on edge. The nation that contributes more to carbon dioxide emissions leading to global warming than any other (representing approximately a quarter of the world’s total) has become the greatest obstacle to addressing global warming and the world’s growing environmental problems—raising the possibility of the collapse of civilization itself if present trends continue. The United States is seeking to exercise sovereign authority over the planet during a time of widening global crisis: economic stagnation, increasing polarization between the global rich and the global poor, weakening U.S. economic hegemony, growing nuclear threats, and deepening ecological decline. The result is a heightening of international instability. Other potential forces are emerging in the world, such as the European Community and China,that could eventually challenge U.S. power, regionally and even globally. Third world revolutions, far from ceasing, are beginning to gain momentum again, symbolized by Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution under Hugo Chávez. U.S. attempts to tighten its imperial grip on the Middle East and its oil have had to cope with a fierce, seemingly unstoppable, Iraqi resistance, generating conditions of imperial overstretch. With the United States brandishing its nuclear arsenal and refusing to support international agreements on the control of such weapons, nuclear proliferation is continuing. New nations, such as North Korea, are entering or can be expected soon to enter the “nuclear club.” Terrorist blowback from imperialist wars in the third world is now a well-recognized reality, generating rising fear of further terrorist attacks in New York, London, and elsewhere. Such vast and overlapping historical contradictions, rooted in the combined and uneven development of the global capitalist economy along with the U.S. drive for planetary domination, foreshadow what is potentially the most dangerous period in the history of imperialism. The course on which U.S and world capitalism is now headed points to global barbarism—or worse. Yet it is important to remember that nothing in the development of human history is inevitable. There still remains an alternative path—the global struggle for a humane, egalitarian, democratic, and sustainable society. The classic name for such a society is “socialism.” Such a renewed struggle for a world of substantive human equality must begin by addressing the system’s weakest link and at the same time the world’s most pressing needs—by organizing a global resistance movement against the new naked imperialism.

#### Debate exacerbates these problems: the ballot writes suffering into identity and institutionalizes identity politics’ dependence on suffering. Because debate already occurs against the backdrop of oppression, privilege, and suffering, the ballot can only ever be a vehicle for revenge.

Brown 1995 [Wendy, Professor of Political Science at Berkeley, States of Injury, pp. 66-74]

Liberalism contains from its inception a generalized incitement to what Nietzsche terms ressentiment, the moralizing revenge of the powerless, "the triumph of the weak as weak. "22 This incitement to ressentiment inheres in two related constitutive paradoxes of liberalism: that between individual liberty and social egalitarianism, a paradox which produces failure turned to recrimination by the subordinated, and guilt turned to resentment by the "successful"; and that between the individualism that legitimates liberalism and the cultural homogeneity required by its commitment to political universality, a paradox which stimulates the articulation of politically significant differences on the one hand, and the suppression of them on the other, and which offers a form of articulation that presses against the limits of universalist discourse even while that which is being articulated seeks to be harbored within-included in-the terms of that universalism. Premising itself on the natural equality of human beings, liberalism makes a political promise of universal individual freedom in order to arrive at social equality, or achieve a civilized retrieval of the equality postulated in the state of nature. It is the tension between the promises of individualistic liberty and the requisites of equality that yields ressentiment in one of two directions, depending on the way in which the paradox is brokered. A strong commitment to freedom vitiates the fulfillment of the equality promise and breeds ressentiment as welfare state liberalism--attenuations of the unmitigated license of the rich and powerful on behalf of the "disadvantaged." Conversely, a strong commitment to equality, requiring heavy state interventionism and economic redistribution, attenuates the commitment to freedom and breeds ressentiment expressed as neoconservative anti-statism, racism, charges of reverse racism, and so forth. However, it is not only the tension between freedom and equality but the prior presumption of the self-reliant and self-made capacities of liberal subjects, conjoined with their unavowed dependence on and construction by a variety of social relations and forces, that makes all liberal subjects, and not only markedly disenfranchised ones, vulnerable to ressentiment: it is their situatedness within power, their production by power, and liberal discourse's denial of this situatedness and production that cast the liberal subject into failure, the failure to make itself in the context of a discourse in which its self-making is assumed, indeed, is its assumed nature. This failure, which Nietzsche calls suffering, must either find a reason within itself (which redoubles the failure) or a site of external blame upon which to avenge its hurt and redistribute its pain. Here is Nietzsche's account of this moment in the production of ressentiment: For every sufferer instinctively seeks a cause for his suffering, more exactly, an agent; still more specifically, a guilty agent who is susceptible to suffering--in short, some living thing upon which he can, on some pretext or other, vent his affects, actually or in effigy .... This ... constitutes the actual physiological cause of ressentiment, vengefulness, and the like: a desire to deaden pain by means of affects... to deaden, by means of a more violent emotion of any kind, a tormenting, secret pain that is becoming unendurable, and to drive it out of consciousness at least for the moment: for that one requires an affect, as savage an affect as possible, and, in order to excite that, any pretext at all.23 Ressentiment in this context is a triple achievement: it produces an affect (rage, righteousness) that overwhelms the hurt; it produces a culprit responsible for the hurt; and it produces a site of revenge to displace the hurt (a place to inflict hurt as the sufferer has been hurt). Together these operations both ameliorate (in Nietzsche's term, "anaesthetize") and externalize what is otherwise "unendurable." In a culture already streaked with the pathos of ressentiment for the reasons just discussed, there are several distinctive characteristics of late modern postindustrial societies that accelerate and expand the conditions of its production. My listing will necessarily be highly schematic: First, the phenomenon William Connolly names "increased global contingency" combines with the expanding pervasiveness and complexity of domination by capital and bureaucratic state and social networks to create an unparalleled individual powerlessness over the fate and direction of one's own life, intensifying the experiences of impotence, dependence, and gratitude inherent in liberal capitalist orders and constitutive of ressellfiment.24 Second, the steady desacralization of all regions of life--what Weber called disenchantment, what Nietzsche called the death of god-would seem to add yet another reversal to Nietzsche's genealogy of ressentiment as perpetually available to "alternation of direction." In Nietzsche's account, the ascetic priest deployed notions of "guilt, sin, sinfulness, depravity, damnation" to "direct the ressentiment of the less severely afflicted sternly back upon themselves ... and in this way exploited the bad instincts of all sufferers for the purpose of self-discipline, self-surveillance, and self-overcoming. "25 However, the desacralizing tendencies of late modernity undermine the efficacy of this deployment and turn suffering's need for exculpation back toward a site of external agency26 Third, the increased fragmentation, if not disintegration, of all forms of association not organized until recently by the commodities market-communities, churches, families-and the ubiquitousness of the classificatory, individuating schemes of disciplinary society, combine to produce an utterly unrelieved individual, one without insulation from the inevitable failure entailed in liberalism's individualistic construction. 27 ln short, the characteristics of late modern secular society, in which individuals are buffeted and controlled by global configurations of disciplinary and capitalist power of extraordinary proportions, and are at the same time nakedly individuated, stripped of reprieve from relentless exposure and accountability for themselves, together add up to an incitement to ressentiment that might have stunned even the finest philosopher of its occasions and logics. Starkly accountable yet dramatically impotent, the late modern liberal subject quite literally seethes with ressentiment11. Enter politicized identity, now conceivable in part as both product of and reaction to this condition, where "reaction" acquires the meaning Nietzsche ascribed to it: namely, an effect of domination that reiterates impotence, a substitute for action, for power, for self-affirmation that reinscribes incapacity, powerlessness, and rejection. For Nietzsche, ressentiment itself is rooted in reaction-the substitution of reasons, norms, and ethics for deeds-and he suggests that not only moral systems but identities themselves take their bearings in this reaction. As Tracy Strong reads this element of Nietzsche's thought: Identity ... does not consist of an active component, but is reaction to something outside; action in itself, with its inevitable self-assertive qualities, must then become something evil, since it is identified with that against which one is reacting. The will to power of slave morality must constantly reassert that which gives definition to the slave: the pain he suffers by being in the world. Hence any attempt to escape that pain will merely result in the reaffirmation of painful structures. 28 If the "cause" of ressentiment is suffering, its "creative deed" is the reworking of this pain into a negative form of action, the "imaginary revenge" of what Nietzsche terms "natures denied the true reaction, that of deeds. "29 This revenge is achieved through the imposition of suffering "on whatever does not feel wrath and displeasure as he does"30 (accomplished especially through the production of guilt), through the establishment of suffering as the measure of social virtue, and through casting strength and good fortune ("privilege,·· as we say today) as self-recriminating, as its own indictment in a culture of suffering: "it is disgraceful to be fortunate, there is too much misery. "'1 But in its attempt to displace its suffering, identity structured by ressentiment at the same time becomes invested in its own subjection. This investment lies not only in its discovery of a site of blame for its hurt will, not only in its acquisition of recognition through its history of subjection (a recognition predicated on injury, now righteously revalued), but also in the satisfactions of revenge, which ceaselessly reenact even as they redistribute the injuries of marginalization and subordination in a liberal discursive order that alternately denies the very possibility of these things and blames those who experience them for their own condition. Identity politics structured by ressentiment reverse without subverting this blaming structure: they do not subject to critique the sovereign subject of accountability that liberal individualism presupposes, nor the economy of inclusion and exclusion that liberal universalism establishes. Thus, politicized identity that presents itself as a self-affirmation now appears as the opposite, as predicated on and requiring its sustained rejection by a "hostile external world." Insofar as what Nietzsche calls slave morality produces identity in reaction to power, insofar as identity rooted in this reaction achieves its moral superiority by reproaching power and action themselves as evil, identity structured by this ethos becomes deeply invested in its own impotence, even while it seeks to assuage the pain of its powerlessness through its vengeful moralizing, through its wide distribution of suffer-through its reproach of power as such. Politicized identity, premised on exclusion and fueled by the humiliation and suffering imposed by its historically structured impotence in the context of a discourse of sover- eign individuals, is as likely to seek generalized political paralysis, to feast on generalized political impotence, as it is to seek its own or collective liberation through empowerment. Indeed, it is more likely to punish and reproach-"punishment is what revenge calls itself; with a hypocritical lie it creates a good conscience for itself"33\_than to find venues of self- affirming action.¶ But contemporary politicized identity's desire is not only shaped by the extent to which the sovereign will of the liberal subject, articulated ever more nakedly by disciplinary individuation and capitalist disinternments, is dominated by late-twentieth-century configurations of political and economic powers. It is shaped as well by the contemporary problematic of history itself, by the late modern rupture of history as a narrative, as ended because it has lost its end-a rupture that paradoxically gives history an immeasurable weight. As the grim experience of reading Discipline and Punish makes clear, there is a sense in which the gravitational force of history is multiplied at precisely the moment that history's narrative coherence and objectivist foundation is refuted. As the problematic of power in history is resituated from subject positioning to subject construction; as power is seen to operate spatially, infiltrationally, "microphysically" rather than only temporally, permeating every heretofore designated "interior" space in social lives and individuals; as eroding historical metanarratives take with them both laws of history and the futurity such laws purported to assure; as the presumed continuity of history is replaced with a sense of its violent, contingent, and ubiquitous force -history becomes that which has weight but no trajectory, mass but no coherence, force but no direction: it is war without ends or end. Thus, the extent to which "the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living" is today unparalleled, even as history itself disintegrates as a coherent category or practice. We know ourselves to be saturated by history, we feel the extraordinary force of its and determinations; we are also steeped in a discourse of its insignificance, above all, we know that history will no longer (always already did not) act as our redeemer.¶ I raise the question of history because in thinking about late modern politicized identity's structuring by ressentiment, I have thus far focused on its foundation in the sufferings of a subordinated sovereign subject. Bur Nietzsche's account of the logic of ressentiment is also linked to that feature of the will that is stricken by history, that rails against time itself, that cannot "will backwards," that cannot exert its power over the past- either as a specific set of events or as time itself.¶ Willing liberates; but what is it that puts even the liberator himself in fetters? "It was"-that is the name of the will's gnashing of teeth and most secret melancholy. Powerless against what has been done, he is an angry spectator of all that is past. . . . He cannot break time and time's covetousness, that is the will's loneliest melancholy.¶ Although Nietzsche appears here to be speaking of the will as such, Zarathustra's own relationship to the will as a "redeemer of history" makes clear that this "angry spectatorship" can with great difficulty be reworked as a perverse kind of mastery, a mastery that triumphs over the past by reducing its power, by remaking the present against the terms of the past-in short, by a project of self-transformation that arrays itself against its own genealogical consciousness. In contrast with the human ruin he sees everywhere around him-"fragments and limbs and dreadful accidents"-it is Zarathustra's own capacity to discern and to make a future that spares him from a rancorous sensibility, from crushing disappointment in the liberatory promise of his will:¶ The now and the past on earth-alas, my friends, that is what I find most unendurable; and l should not know how to live if I were not also a seer of that which must come. A seer, a willer, a creator, a future himself and a bridge to the future-and alas, also, as it were, a cripple at this bridge: all this is Zarathustra. ¶ Nietzsche here discerns both the necessity and the near impossibility- the extraordinary and fragile achievement-of formulating oneself as a creator of the future and a bridge to the future in order to appease the otherwise inevitable rancor of the will against time, in order to redeem the past by lifting the weight of it, by reducing the scope of its determinations. "And how could I bear to be a man if man were not also a creator and guesser of riddles and redeemer of accidents'" Of course, Zarathustra's exceptionality in what he is willing to confront and bear, in his capacities to overcome in order to create, is Nietzsche's device for revealing us to ourselves. The ordinary will, steeped in the economy of slave morality, devises means "to get rid of his melancholy and to mock his dungeon," means that reiterate the cause of the melancholy, that continually reinfect the narcissistic wound to its capaciousness inflicted by the past. "Alas," says Nietzsche, "every prisoner becomes a fool; and the imprisoned will redeems himself foolishly. "3" From this foolish redemption-foolish because it does not resolve the will's rancor but only makes a world in its image-is born the wrath of revenge: "that which was" is the name of the stone [the will] cannot move. And so he moves stones out of wrath and displeasure, and he wreaks revenge on whatever does not feel wrath and displeasure as he does. Thus the will, the liberator, took to hurting; and on all who can suffer he wreaks revenge for his inability to go backwards. This . . is what revenge is: the will's ill will against time and its ‘it was’. "?•9 Revenge as a "reaction," a substitute for the capacity to act, produces identity as both bound to the history that produced it and as a reproach to the present which embodies that history. The will that "took to hurting'' in its own impotence against its past becomes (in the form of an identity whose very existence is due to heightened consciousness of the immovability of its "it was," its history of subordination) a will that makes not only a psychological but a political practice of revenge, a practice that reiterates the existence of an identity whose present past is one of insistently irredeemable injury. This past cannot be redeemed unless the identity ceases to be invested in it, and it cannot cease to be invested in it without giving up its identity as such, thus giving up its economy of avenging and at the same time perpetuating its hurt-"when he then stills the pain of the wound he at the same time infects that wound. "40 In its emergence as a protest against marginalization or subordination, politicized identity thus becomes attached to its own exclusion both because it is premised on this exclusion for its very existence as identity and because the formation of identity at the site of exclusion, as exclusion, augments or "alters the direction of the suffering" entailed in subordination or marginalization by finding a site of blame for it. But in so doing, it installs its pain over its unredeemed history in the very foundation of its political claim, in its demand for recognition as identity. In locating a site of blame for its powerlessness over its past-a past of injury, a past as a hurt will-and locating a "reason" for the "unendurable pain" of social powerlessness in the present, it converts this reasoning into an ethicizing politics, a politics of recrimination that seeks to avenge the hurt even while it reaffirms it, discursively codifies it. Politicized identity thus enunciates itself, makes claims for itself, only by entrenching, restating, dramatizing, and inscribing its pain in politics; it can hold out no future-for itself or others-that triumphs over this pain. The loss of historical direction, and with it the loss of futurity characteristic of the late modern age, is thus homologically refigured in the structure of desire of the dominant political expression of the age: identity politics. In the same way, the generalized political impotence produced by the ubiquitous yet discontinuous networks of late modern political and economic power is reiterated in the investments of late modern democracy’s primary oppositional political formations.

#### Their identity politics assumes the universal communicability of trauma which reinforces legal imperialism. The alternative is to rethink within a frame of “I want” rather than “I am”.

Berlant 1999 [Lauren, George M. Pullman Professor, Department of English, University of Chicago, “The Subject of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy and Politics” in *Cultural Pluralism, Identity Politics and the Law* ed. Sarat & Kearns, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Pg. 70-76]

In Griswold,I have argued, we see codified the assurance of some jurists that the intimate feelings of married sexual partners represent that zone of privacy and personhood beyond the scrutiny of the law whose value is so absolute that the law must protect its sovereignty. Between Gris¬wold and Roe these intimate feelings and their relation to liberty were still assumed as the sovereign materials of the law of sexual privacy. Now, however, many of the political and juridical contexts have dis¬solved that once sustained the fantasy of a core national culture, threat¬ening the capacity of sentimental politics to create feeling cultures of consensus that distract from the lived violences and fractures of every¬day life in the polls. The class, racial, economic, and sexual fragmentation of U.S. society has emerged into the vision of the law and the pub¬lic not as an exception to a utopian norm but as a new governing rule of the present. The legal struggles over affirmative action, welfare, abor¬tion, and immigration the courts currently worry are also about whether the utopian or the traumatic story of national life will govern jurisprudence and the world it seeks to confirm. Trauma is winning. Central to the legal emergence of the politics of trauma against the scene of liberal-patriotic disavowal has been a group of activists from within (mainly academic) legal studies who speak from feminist, gay and lesbian, antiracist, and anticapitalist movements. They take their different but generally painful experiences of social hierarchy in the United States to require a radical rhetorical and conceptual transforma-tion of legal scholarship that embraces "subjectivity of perspective," asserts the collective nature of subject formation (around stereotypical social identities), and refuses traditional liberal notions that organize the social optimism of law around relatively unimpeded individuality, privacy, property, and conventional values.42 At stake in this transfor-mation of law is the importance of antinormativity to counterhege¬rnonic critical theory and practice: since liberal law has long recognized a particular and traditionally sanctioned form of universal personhood as that around which society, theory, forms of discipline, and aspira¬tional pedagogies should be organized, antiliberal activism has had strategically to ground law in experience (in all senses of the pun) and particular identities. In this sense critical legal praxis is the opposite of national senti mentality, which pursues collective cohesion by circulating a univer-salist currency of distress. At the same time, the structure of reparation central to radical legal politics suggests an unevenness in this general tactic of making legal notions of subjectivity historically and corpore¬ally specific. Subaltern pain is not considered universal (the privileged do not experience it, they do not live expecting that at any moment their ordinarily loose selves might be codified into a single humiliated atom of subpersonhood). But subaltern pain is deemed, in this context, universally intelligible, constituting objective evidence of trauma reparable by the law and the law's more privileged subjects. In other words, the universal value is here no longer a property of political per¬sonhood but, instead, a property of a rhetoric that claims to represent not the universal but the true self. But, if historical contexts are incom¬parable across fields of simple and complex distinction, how can some¬one's pain or traumatized identity produce such perfect knowledge? And, if the pedagogies of politics were necessary to reframe a set of experiences, knowledges, and feelings as the kind of pain that exposes injustice, what is "true" about it, exactly? In this political model of identity trauma stands as truth. We can't use happiness as a guide to the aspirations for social change, because the feeling of it might well be false consciousness; nor boredom, which might be depression, illness, or merely a spreading malaise. Pain, in contrast, is something quick and sharp that simultaneously specifies you and makes you generic; it is something that happens to you before you "know" it, and it is intensely individuating, for surviving its shock lets you know it is your general survival at stake. Yet, if the pain is at the juncture of you and the stereotype that represents you, you know that you are hurt not because of your relation to history but because of A)rneone else's relation to it, a type of someone whose privilege or corn-tort depends on the pain that diminishes you, locks you into identity, awas you with shame, and sentences you to a hell of constant poten¬tial exposure to the banality of derision. Pain thus organizes your specific experience of the world, separat¬ing you from others and connecting you with others similarly shocked but not surprised) by the strategies of violence that constantly regen¬erate the bottom of the hierarchies of social value you inhabit. In this sense subaltern pain is a public form because its outcome is to make You readable, for others. This is, perhaps, why activists from identity politics generally assume pain as the only sign readable across hierar¬chies of social life: the subaltern is the surrogate form, of cultural intelli¬gibility generally, and negated identities are pain effects. Know me, know my pain—you caused it: in this context paranoia would seem adaptive and would make understandable a desire for law to be both the origin and end of my experience of injustice. It might even make a wish that I have to see even subaltern suffering as something more mediated seem, perhaps, cold or an effect of the leisure of privilege. Who has time, after all, to query violence between shock and the moment it becomes true meaning? These dicta ground much current countertraditionai legal argu-ment. Take, for example, an original and impassioned work such as Robin West's Narrative, Authority, and Law,41 which sees as its task the production of moral criticism and transformation of the law from the point of view of its and a society's victims. West wields narratives pow¬erfully throughout the book that reveal the law's fundamental immorality (and therefore its fundamentally imrnoralizing effect on the subjects who are educated to its standards) where women's lives are concerned, and her powerful feminist arguments for the need to depri¬vatize women's structurally induced pain testify to the radical changes in the law and other institutions of intimacy that would have to happen if women are to attain legitimacy as social subjects. But West assumes that women's pain is already available as knowledge. To her it is mean¬ing and the material for radical pedagogy. To think otherwise is to be either misogynist or guilty of shallow and overacademic postmod.- ernism. Empathy is an ethical rule. Not surprisingly, as it happens, one example of pain's pure force that she uses to summarize her argument comes from a child: "We must be able to say, to quote my two-year-old, 'don't do that—you're hurting me,' and we must be able to hear that utterance as an ethical mandate to change course."44 Not all radical legal theorists so simplify pain as to make the emblem of true wisdom about injustice and its eradication something as sentimental and fictive (to adults) as a child's consciousness:45 yet the desire expressed in its seeming extreme clarity signals a lost oppor¬tunity for rethinking the relation of critique and culture building at this juncture of identity politics and legal theory. Would the child build a just world from the knowledge he gleans from being hurt? What would the child need to know for that to happen? How could this child learn to think beyond trauma, to make a context for it? It seems hard for this group of legal theorists to imagine the value of such questions, for a few reasons. One may be due to the centrality of "pain and suffering" to tort law, which endorses a construction of the true subject as a feeling sub¬ject whose suffering disables a person's ability to live at his fun capaci¬ties, as he has been doing, and thus requires reparations from the agents who wielded the force. A great deal has been and will be written on this general area, for feminist antipornography and anfiracist hate speech litigation borrows much of its legitimation from this hoary jurisprudential domain:46 their tactic here is to challenge local purvey¬ors of structural violence in order to make racism and misogyny less profitable, even symbolically, and meanwhile to use the law to debanalize violence by making illegal that which has been ordinary practice, on the model, say, of sexual harassment law or even more extremely, using the constitutional model of "cruel and unusual punishment" to revoke legitimation from social relations of violence traditionally authorized by the state and the law. Kendall Thomas has made this latter point, in an essay on privacy state power and claims that the Cruel and Unusual Punishment clause of the Eighth Amendment should be applied to state discrimination against gays and lesbians. The strength and clarity of his vision and the sense that his suggestion seems to make brings us to the second reason it seems hard for theorists who equate subjectivity in general with legal subjectivity to work beyond the rule of traumatic pain in imagining the conditions for progressive social change Thomas's model only works if the agent of violence is the state or the law; it works only if the domain of law is deemed inter¬changeable with the entire field of injury and reparation, and if the sub¬ject of law is fully described by the taxonomies that law recognizes. This position would look awkward if it were rephrased: subjects are always citizens. But the fact is that the notion of reparation for identity-based subordination assumes that the law describes what a person is, and that social violence can be located the way physical injury can be tracked. The law's typical practice is to recognize kinds of subjects, acts, and identities: it is to taxonornize. What is the relation between the (seemingly inevitable) authoritarianism of juridical categorization, and the other, looser spaces of social life and personhood that do not con¬geal in categories of power, cause, and effect the way the law does? Is the "cruel and unusual punishment" tactic merely a reversal in extremis that points to the sublime banality of state cruelty, or is it a policy aspiration seeking a specific reparation for the specific viola¬tion/creation of gay and lesbian identities? Would the homeopathy of law against its own toxins in this domain of state cruelty work for women or the poor African Americans, Hispanics, and immigrants who are currently being economically disenfranchised from the resources that state capitalism manages? Without making a ridiculous argument that the state is merely a mirage or a fetish that represents networks of inchoate forces that con-trol, without constituting, the realm of society, it should be possible to say that radical counterpolitics needs to contend with notions of per-sonhood and power that do not attain the clarity of state and juridical taxonomy, even across fields of practice and stigma. The desire to find an origin for trauma, and to rework culture at the violating origin, effectively imagines subjects only within that zone, reducing the social to that zone (in this case the state and the laws that legislate nonnorma¬five sex) and covertly reauthorizing the hegemony of the national.. The desire to use trauma as the model for the pain of subordination that gets congealed into identities forgets the difference between trauma and adversity: trauma takes you out of your life shockingly and places you into another one, whereas structural subordination is not a sur¬prise to the subjects who experience it, and the pain of subordination is ordinary life I have not meant to argue that identity politics has become a mode of "victim politics" too reductive to see the world clearly or to have posi¬tive effects. In its most tawdry version this accusation reads that a pol¬itics organized around publicizing pain constitutes a further degrada¬tion of subaltern selves into a species of subcivilized nonagency. The people who make this argument usually recognize structural social inequality and the devastating impacts it has on persons but continue to believe that the United States operates meritocratically, for worthy individuals. In contrast, Wendy Brown's deconstruction of contempo¬rary U.S. identity rhetorics places skepticism about traumatic identity in the context of imagining a more radical politics. Brown sees people who claim their pain and build collective struggles around it as poten¬tially overiclentifying with their pain then identifying with it, becoming passive to it, becoming addicted to seeing themselves as virtuous in the face of bad, unethical power. She follows Nietzsche's dicta against a passive-aggressive politics of ressentiment: Politicized identity thus enunciates itself, makes claims for itself, only by retrenching, restating, dramatizing, and inscribing its pain in politics, and can hold out no future—for itself or others—which triumphs over this pain. The loss of historical direction, and with it the loss of futurity characteristic of the late-modern age, is thus homologically refigured in the structure of desire of the dominant political expression of the age--identity politics. . .What if we sought to supplant the language of "I am"—with its defensive clo¬sure on identity, its insistence on the fixity of position, its equation of social with moral positioning—with the language of "I want"?48 The critical clarity of a subordinate population's politicized pain has provided crucially destabilizing material that disaffirms the organiza¬tion of liberal national culture around a utopian form of personhood that lives in zones of privacy and abstraction beyond pain, and, as a counterhegemonic tactic, this logic of radical juridicality affirms more powerfully than anything the fragile and violent disavowals that bol¬ster hegemonic worlds of reason and the law. But to say that the traumatized self is the true self is to say that a particular facet of subjective experience is where the truth of history lies: it is to suggest that the clarity of pain marks a political map for achieving the good life, if only we would read it. It is also to imply that in the good life there will be no pain. Brown suggests that a replace¬ment of traumatic identity with a subjectivity articulated utopianly, via the agency of imagined demand, will take from pain the energy for social transformation beyond the field of its sensual experience. For this to happen psychic pain experienced by subordinated populations must be treated as ideology, not as prelapsarian knowledge or a condensed com¬prehensive social theory. It is more like a capital letter at the beginning of an old bad sentence that needs rewriting. To think otherwise is to assert that pain is merely banal, a story always already told. It is to think that the moment of its gestation is, indeed, life itself.

### Case

**The affirmative’s focus on personal narratives and experiences creates a therapeutic model of debate that merely counsels the individual victims of oppression. This locates the cause of problems and solutions within the self, which invites political inaction and leaves structural causes of oppression untouched as long as we have adopted their method** [found survival strategies for blackness, opened debate up for inclusion of alternative perspectives, etc.]. **This effectively absolves intellectuals of responsibility for racism while allowing it to thrive.**

**Tonn 5 – assoc. prof of comm. @ u of Maryland**

(Mari, “Taking Conversation, Dialogue, and Therapy Public ,” Rhetoric & Public Affairs 8.3 (2005) 405-430)

**Approaching public controversies through a conversational model informed by therapy** also **enables political inaction** in two respects. First, **an open-ended process lacking mechanisms for closure thwarts progress toward resolution.** As Freeman writes of consciousness raising, **an unstructured, informal discussion** [End Page 418] **"leaves people with no place to go and** the lack of structure leaves them with **no way of getting there."**70 Second, **the** therapeutic **impulse to emphasize the self as both problem and solution ignores structural impediments constraining individual agency.** "**Therapy**," Cloud argues, "**offers consolation rather than compensation, individual adaptation rather than social change, and an experience of politics that is impoverished in its isolation from structural critique and collective action.**" Public **discourse emphasizing healing and coping**, she claims, "**locates** blame and **responsibility for solutions in the private sphere.**"71¶ **Clinton's Conversation on Race** not only **exemplified the** frequent **wedding of public dialogue and therapeutic themes but also illustrated the failure of a conversation-as-counseling model to achieve meaningful social reform.** In his speech inaugurating the initiative, Clinton said, "Basing our self-esteem on the ability to look down on others is not the American way . . . Honest dialogue will not be easy at first . . . Emotions may be rubbed raw, but we must begin." Tempering his stated goal of "concrete solutions" was the caveat that "power cannot compel" racial "community," which "can come only from the human spirit."72¶ **Following the president's cue to self-disclose emotions, citizens** chiefly **aired personal experiences and perspectives during** the **various community dialogues.** In keeping with their talk-show formats, **the forums showcased** what Orlando Patterson described as **"performative 'race' talk,"** "public speech acts" of denial, proclamation, defense, exhortation, and even apology, in short, **performances of "self" that left little room for productive public argument.**73 **Such personal evidence overshadowed the "facts" and "realities"** Clinton also had promised to explore, **including, for example, statistics on discrimination patterns in employment, lending, and criminal justice or expert testimony on cycles of dependency, poverty, illegitimacy, and violence.**¶ **Whereas Clinton had encouraged "honest dialogue"** in the name of "responsibility" and "community," **Burke argues that "The Cathartic Principle" often produces the reverse. "[C]onfessional,"** he writes, **"contains in itself a kind of 'personal irresponsibility,' as we may even relieve ourselves of private burdens by befouling the public medium."** More to the point, "**a thoroughly 'confessional' art may enact a kind of 'individual salvation at the expense of the group,'" performing a "sinister function, from the standpoint of overall-social necessities."**74 **Frustrated observers of the racial dialogue—many of them African Americans—echoed Burke's concerns.** Patterson, for example, noted, "when a young Euro-American woman spent nearly five minutes of our 'conversation' in Martha's Vineyard . . . publicly confessing her racial insensitivities, she was directly unburdening herself of all sorts of racial guilt feeling. **There was nothing to argue about.**"75 Boston Globe columnist Derrick Z. **Jackson invoked** the game metaphor communication theorists often link to [End Page 419] skills in conversation,76 voicing **suspicion of a talking cure for racial ailments that included neither** exhaustive **racial data nor concrete goals.** **"The game,"** wrote Jackson, **"is to get 'rid' of responsibility for racism while doing nothing to solve it."**77

#### Calling for a safe space destroys growth—embracing the lack of safety enables clash and critical reflection.

Boostrom 98 (Robert Boostrom, Ph.D Curriculum and Instruction, Professor, University of Southern Indiana, College of Science, Engineering, and Education “‘Safe spaces’: reflections on an educational metaphor” Journal of Curriculum Studies, 1998, vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 397-408)

Understood as the avoidance of stress, the ‘safe space’ metaphor drains from classroom life every impulse toward critical reflection. It’s one thing to say that students should not be laughed at for posing a question or for offering a wrong answer. It’s another to say that students must never be conscious of their ignorance. It’s one thing to say that students should not be belittled for a personal preference or harassed because of an unpopular opinion. It’s another to say that students must never be asked why their preferences and opinions are different from those of others. It’s one thing to say that students should be capable of self-revelation. It’s another to say that they must always like what they see revealed.¶ The power of the ‘safe space’ metaphor to censor critical thinking was revealed to me in a teacher education course I observed (Benson and Boostrom 1995). The course was called “Cultural Diversity’, and it aimed, like many other courses in ‘global education’ or ‘multicultural education’, to teach students about people and customs different from the ones they have typically encountered. The professor of this class created a ‘safe space’ by insisting that each student’s contributions must be respected, and this attitude quickly became a standard of classroom life. On one of the many occasions when groups of students worked together to summarize and portray their thoughts visually on poster paper, Steven insulted the poster prepared by Jennifer’s group, calling it a ‘comic strip’. Later, during the class discussion about posters, Jennifer complained that it wasn’t right for people to make fun of her drawing what she called ‘the big-headed man’. Judging by the students’ support of her complaint, both the professor and I later agreed that the class as a whole supported Jennifer’s claim that Steven had spoken unfairly. In other words, the injunction to respect one another’s contributions had come to be understood as a general prohibition against critically assessing someone else’s work or even expressing the belief that some people’s achievements might be better (more meaningful, more beautiful, more lasting, more pervasive, wiser, etc.) than other people’s achievements. All discrimination (all choosing, all ranking, all evaluating) had come to be seen as equally evil whether done as an individual assessment (‘Group 1’s’ poster isn’t as well thought out as group 2’s’) or as general assessment (‘Soccer players never create insightful posters’).¶ It is noteworthy that this example comes from a course in multicultural education. The more attention given to diversity (and isolation), the more talk there is about the necessity for safe spaces. Thus, the three most recent items retrieved from ERIC under ‘safe space’ all concern ‘diversity’ (National Conference of Christians and Jews 1994, Montero 1995, Fayne et al. 1996). The exhortation in these instances, as in those that I have discussed, is that ‘space’ is needed for diverse groups or individuals to express their identity. That is, people should be able to present themselves openly and to speak freely, without fear of censure, ridicule, or exploitation. The ‘space’ is ‘safe’ when individuals and groups know they will not face criticisms that would challenge their expressions of identity. In a ‘safe space’, people are encouraged to speak their minds freely and to share their experiences openly, and they are guaranteed that their expressions of self will be as well regarded as anyone else’s. Self-expression is protected by a figurative refrigerator box that guards the individual from the coercion of the group, and guards the minority group from the oppression of the majority. Expressions of self (individual or collective) cannot be challenged.¶ Many, perhaps most, of the educators who talk about creating ‘safe spaces’ would vehemently deny that they would ever countenance bland acceptance of all opinions and behavior. But the problem is that the precise outcome is built into the metaphor of ‘safe space’. The stories that underlie the metaphor are not stories about intellectual challenge and personal growth. Recall Caleb, the boy who was afraid of everything. Yes, it’s true that we see him transformed from pathological shyness to participation in the life of the class. But the point of the story is not that Caleb began to say to others what he had preciously said only to his pencil. The point is that all the other students (who were not pathologically shy) began to feel free to express their diverse individuality. We are not told that they were challenged to grow, only that they were free to speak up, to decorate their space, to show themselves. This is what ‘safe spaces’ are for. ‘The challenge’, says Maxine Greene (1995: 198)¶ is to make the ground palpable and visible to our students, to make possible the interplay of multiple voices, of ‘not quite commensurable visions’. It is to attend to the plurality of consciousnesses…¶ Is it possible to ‘attend to the plurality of consciousnesses’ without censoring critical thinking? I hope so, but it can’t be done by turning the classroom into a ‘safe space’, a place where teachers rule out conflict. When everyone’s voice is accepted and no one’s voice can be criticized, then no one can grow. The tendency of ‘safe space’ talk to censor critical reflection turns sympathy into sentimentality, open-mindedness into empty-headedness. That we need to hear other voices in order to grow is certainly true, but we also need to be able to respond to those voices, to criticize them, to challenge them, to sharpen our own perspectives through the friction of dialogue. A person can learn, says Socrates, ‘if he is brave and does not tire of the search’ (Plato: 81d). We have to be brave because along the way we are going to be ‘vulnerable and exposed’; we are going to encounter images that are ‘alienating and shocking’. We are going to be very unsafe. ¶ If critical thinking, imagination and individuality are to flourish in classrooms, teachers need to manage conflict, not prohibit it (Osborne 1997). Perhaps we need a different sort of metaphor—the classroom as agora or the classroom as congress. Perhaps we simply need to pay attention to the metaphors we use.

## 2NC

### Berlant K

#### The translation of misery into capital is the worst form of capitalist exploitation

Tomsky 2011 [Terri, postdoctoral fellow at the University of Alberta, “From Sarajevo to 9/11: travelling memory and the trauma economy,” *Parallax* 17.4]

In contrast to the cosmopolitization of a Holocaust cultural memory,1 there exist experiences of trauma that fail to evoke recognition and subsequently, compassion and aid. What is it exactly that confers legitimacy onto some traumatic claims and anonymity onto others? This is not merely a question of competing victimizations, what geographer Derek Gregory has criticized as the process of ‘cherry-picking among [ . . . ] extremes of horror’, but one that engages issues of the international travel, perception and valuation of traumatic memory.2 This seemingly arbitrary determination engrosses the e´migre´ protagonist of Dubravka Ugresic’s 2004 novel, The Ministry of Pain, who from her new home in Amsterdam contemplates an uneven response to the influx of claims by refugees fleeing the Yugoslav wars: The Dutch authorities were particularly generous about granting asylum to those who claimed they had been discriminated against in their home countries for ‘sexual differences’, more generous than to the war’s rape victims. As soon as word got round, people climbed on the bandwagon in droves. The war [ . . . ] was something like the national lottery: while many tried their luck out of genuine misfortune, others did it simply because the opportunity presented itself.3 Traumatic experiences are described here in terms analogous to social and economic capital. What the protagonist finds troubling is that some genuine refugee claimants must invent an alternative trauma to qualify for help: the problem was that ‘nobody’s story was personal enough or shattering enough. Because death itself had lost its power to shatter. There had been too many deaths’.4 In other words, the mass arrival of Yugoslav refugees into the European Union means that war trauma risks becoming a surfeit commodity and so decreases in value. I bring up Ugresic’s wry observations about trauma’s marketability because they enable us to conceive of a trauma economy, a circuit of movement and exchange where traumatic memories ‘travel’ and are valued and revalued along the way. Rather than focusing on the end-result, the winners and losers of a trauma ‘lottery’, this article argues that there is, in a trauma economy, no end at all, no fixed value to any given traumatic experience. In what follows I will attempt to outline the system of a trauma economy, including its intersection with other capitalist power structures, in a way that shows how representations of trauma continually circulate and, in that circulation enable or disable awareness of particular traumatic parallax ISSN 1353-4645 print/ISSN 1460-700X online q 2011 Taylor & Francis http://www.tandfonline.com http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13534645.2011.605578 parallax, 2011, vol. 17, no. 4, 49–60 parallax 49 Downloaded by [University of Alberta] at 09:59 01 November 2011 experience across space and time. To do this, I draw extensively on the comic nonfiction of Maltese-American writer Joe Sacco and, especially, his retrospective account of newsgathering during the 1992–1995 Bosnian war in his 2003 comic book, The Fixer: A Story From Sarajevo.5 Sacco is the author of a series of comics that represent social life in a number of the world’s conflict zones, including the Palestinian territories and the former Yugoslavia. A comic artist, Sacco is also a journalist by profession who has first-hand experience of the way that war and trauma are reported in the international media. As a result, his comics blend actual reportage with his ruminations on the media industry. The Fixer explores the siege of Sarajevo (1992–1995) as part of a larger transnational network of disaster journalism, which also critically, if briefly, references the September eleventh, 2001 attacks in New York City. Sacco’s emphasis on the transcultural coverage of these traumas, with his comic avatar as the international journalist relaying information on the Bosnian war, emphasizes how trauma must be understood in relation to international circuits of mediation and commodification. My purpose therefore is not only to critique the aesthetic of a travelling traumatic memory, but also to call attention to the material conditions and networks that propel its travels. Travelling Trauma Theorists and scholars have already noted the emergence, circulation and effects of traumatic memories, but little attention has been paid to the travelling itself. This is a concern since the movement of any memory must always occur within a material framework. The movement of memories is enabled by infrastructures of power, and consequently mediated and consecrated through institutions. So, while some existing theories of traumatic memory have made those determining politics and policies visible, we still don’t fully comprehend the travel of memory in a global age of media, information networks and communicative capitalism.6 As postcolonial geographers frequently note, to travel today is to travel in a world striated by late capitalism. The same must hold for memory; its circulation in this global media intensive age will always be reconfigured, transvalued and even commodified by the logic of late capital. While we have yet to understand the relation between the travels of memory (traumatic or otherwise) and capitalism, there are nevertheless models for the circulation of other putatively immaterial things that may prove instructive. One of the best, I think, is the critical insight of Edward W. Said on what he called ‘travelling theory’.7 In 1984 and again in 1994, Said wrote essays that described the reception and reformulation of ideas as they are uprooted from an original historical and geographical context and propelled across place and time. While Said’s contribution focuses on theory rather than memory, his reflections on the travel and transformation of ideas provide a comparison which helpfully illuminates the similar movements of what we might call ‘travelling trauma’. Ever attendant to the historical specificities that prompt transcultural transformations, the ‘Travelling Theory’ essays offers a Vichian humanist reading of cultural production; in them, Said argues that theory is not given but made. In the first instance, it emanates out of and registers the sometimes urgent historical circumstances of its theorist. Tomsky 50 Downloaded by [University of Alberta] at 09:59 01 November 2011 Subsequently, he maintains, when other scholars take up the theory, they necessarily interpret it, additionally integrating their own social and historical experiences into it, so changing the theory and, often, authorizing it in the process. I want to suggest that Said’s bird’s eye view of the intellectual circuit through which theory travels, is received and modified can help us appreciate the movement of cultural memory. As with theory, cultural memories of trauma are lifted and separated from their individual source as they travel; they are mediated, transmitted and institutionalized in particular ways, depending on the structure of communication and communities in which they travel. Said invites his readers to contemplate how the movement of theory transforms its meanings to such an extent that its significance to sociohistorical critique can be drastically curtailed. Using Luka´ cs’s writings on reification as an example, Said shows how a theory can lose the power of its original formulation as later scholars take it up and adapt it to their own historical circumstances. In Said’s estimation, Luka´ cs’s insurrectionary vision became subdued, even domesticated, the wider it circulated. Said is especially concerned to describe what happens when such theories come into contact with academic institutions, which impose through their own mode of producing cultural capital, a new value upon then. Said suggests that this authoritative status, which imbues the theory with ‘prestige and the authority of age’, further dulls the theory’s originally insurgent message.8 When Said returned to and revised his essay some ten years later, he changed the emphasis by highlighting the possibilities, rather than the limits, of travelling theory. ‘Travelling Theory Reconsidered’, while brief and speculative, offers a look at the way Luka´ cs’s theory, transplanted into yet a different context, can ‘flame [ . . . ] out’ in a radical way.9 In particular, Said is interested in exploring what happens when intellectuals like Theodor Adorno and Franz Fanon take up Luka´ cs: they reignite the ‘fiery core’ of his theory in their critiques of capitalist alienation and French colonialism. Said is interested here in the idea that theory matters and that as it travels, it creates an ‘intellectual [ . . . ] community of a remarkable [ . . . ] affiliative’ kind.10 In contrast to his first essay and its emphasis on the degradation of theoretical ideas, Said emphasizes the way a travelling theory produces new understandings as well as new political tools to deal with violent conditions and disenfranchized subjects. Travelling theory becomes ‘an intransigent practice’ that goes beyond borrowing and adaption.11 As Said sees it, both Adorno and Fanon ‘refuse the emoluments offered by the Hegelian dialectic as stabilized into resolution by Luka´ cs’.12 Instead they transform Luka´ cs into their respective locales as ‘the theorist of permanent dissonance as understood by Adorno, [and] the critic of reactive nationalism as partially adopted by Fanon in colonial Algeria’.13 Said’s set of reflections on travelling theory, especially his later recuperative work, are important to any account of travelling trauma, since it is not only the problems of institutional subjugation that matter; additionally, we need to affirm the occurrence of transgressive possibilities, whether in the form of fleeting transcultural affinities or in the effort to locate the inherent tensions within a system where such travel occurs. What Said implicitly critiques in his 1984 essay is the negative effects of exchange, institutionalization and the increasing use-value of critical theory as it parallax 51 Downloaded by [University of Alberta] at 09:59 01 November 2011 travels within the academic knowledge economy; in its travels, the theory becomes practically autonomous, uncoupled from the theorist who created it and the historical context from which it was produced. This seems to perfectly illustrate the international circuit of exchange and valuation that occurs in the trauma economy. In Sacco’s The Fixer, for example, it is not theory, but memory, which travels from Bosnia to the West, as local traumas are turned into mainstream news and then circulated for consumption. By highlighting this mediation, The Fixer explicitly challenges the politics that make invisible the maneuvers of capitalist and neoimperial practices. Like Said, Sacco displays a concern with the dissemination and reproduction of information and its consequent effects in relation to what Said described as ‘the broader political world’.14 Said’s anxiety relates to the academic normativization of theory (a ‘tame academic substitution for the real thing’15), a transformation which, he claimed, would hamper its uses for society. A direct line can be drawn from Said’s discussion of the circulation of discourse and its (non)political effects, and the international representation of the 1992–1995 Bosnian war. The Bosnian war existed as a guerre du jour, the successor to the first Gulf War, receiving saturation coverage and represented daily in the Western media. The sustained presence of the media had much to do with the proximity of the war to European cities and also with the spectacular visibility of the conflict, particularly as it intensified. The bloodiest conflict to have taken place in Europe since the Second World War, it displaced two million people and was responsible for over 150,000 civilian casualties.16 Yet despite global media coverage, no decisive international military or political action took place to suspend fighting or prevent ethnic cleansing in East Bosnia, until after the massacre of Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica in 1995. According to Gregory Kent, western perceptions about the war until then directed the lack of political will within the international community, since the event was interpreted, codified and dismissed as an ‘ethnic’, ‘civil’ war and ‘humanitarian crisis’, rather than an act of (Serbian) aggression against (Bosnian) civilians.17 The rather bizarre presence of a large international press corps, hungry for drama and yet comfortably ensconced in Sarajevo’s Holiday Inn amid the catastrophic siege of that city, prompted Jean Baudrillard to formulate his theory of the hyperreal. In an article for the Paris newspaper Libe´ration in 1993, Baudrillard writes of his anger at the international apathy towards the Bosnian crisis, denouncing it as a ‘spectral war’.18 He describes it as a ‘hyperreal hell’ not because the violence was in a not-so-distant space, but because of the way the Bosnians were ‘harassed by the [international] media and humanitarian agencies’.19 Given this extensive media coverage, it is important to evaluate the role of representative discourses in relation to violence and its after effects. To begin with, we are still unsure of the consequences of this saturation coverage, though scholars have since elaborated on the racism framing much of the media discourses on the Yugoslav wars.20 More especially, it is the celebrity of the Bosnian war that makes a critical evaluation of its current status in today’s media cycle all the more imperative. Bosnia’s current invisibility is fundamentally related to a point Baudrillard makes towards the end of his essay: ‘distress, misery and suffering have become the raw goods’ circulating in a global age Tomsky 52 Downloaded by [University of Alberta] at 09:59 01 November 2011 of ‘commiseration’.21 The ‘demand’ created by a market of a sympathetic, yet selfindulgent spectators propels the global travel of trauma (or rather, the memory of that trauma) precisely because Bosnian suffering has a ‘resale value on the futures markets’.22 To treat traumatic memory as currency not only acknowledges the fact that travelling memory is overdetermined by capitalism; more pertinently, it recognizes the global system through which traumatic memory travels and becomes subject to exchange and flux. To draw upon Marx: we can comprehend trauma in terms of its fungible properties, part of a social ‘relation [that is] constantly changing with time and place’.23 This is what I call the trauma economy. By trauma economy, I am thinking of economic, cultural, discursive and political structures that guide, enable and ultimately institutionalize the representation, travel and attention to certain traumas. The Trauma Economy in Joe Sacco’s The Fixer Having introduced the idea of a trauma economy and how it might operate, I want to turn to Sacco because he is acutely conscious of the way representations of trauma circulate in an international system. His work exposes the infrastructure and logic of a trauma economy in war-torn Bosnia and so echoes some of the points made by Said about the movement of theory. As I examine Sacco’s critical assessment of the Bosnian war, I want to bear in mind Said’s discussion about the effects of travel on theory and, in particular, his two contrasting observations: first, that theory can become commodified and second, that theory enables unexpected if transient solidarities across cultures. The Fixer takes up the notion of trauma as transcultural capital and commodity, something Sacco has confronted in his earlier work on Bosnia.24 The Fixer focuses on the story of Neven, a Sarajevan local and the ‘fixer’ of the comic’s title, who sells his services to international journalists, including Sacco’s avatar. The comic is set in 2001, in postwar Sarajevo and an ethnically partitioned and economically devastated Bosnia, but its narrative frequently flashes back to the conflict in the mid- 1990s, and to what has been described as ‘the siege within the siege’.25 This refers not just to Sarajevo’s three and a half year siege by Serb forces but also to its backstage: the concurrent criminalization of Sarajevo through the rise of a wartime black market economy from which Bosniak paramilitary groups profited and through which they consolidated their power over Sarajevan civilians. In these flashbacks, The Fixer addresses Neven’s experience of the war, first, as a sniper for one of the Bosniak paramilitary units and, subsequently, as a professional fixer for foreign visitors, setting them up with anything they need, from war stories and tours of local battle sites to tape recorders and prostitutes. The contemporary, postwar scenes detail the ambivalent friendship between Neven and Sacco’s comic avatar. In doing so, The Fixer spares little detail about the economic value of trauma: Neven’s career as a fixer after all is reliant on what Sacco terms the ‘flashy brutality of Sarajevo’s war’.26 Even Neven admits as much to his interlocutor, without irony, let alone compassion: ‘“When massacres happened,” Neven once told me, “those were the best times. Journalists from all over the world were coming here”’.27 parallax 53 Downloaded by [University of Alberta] at 09:59 01 November 2011 The Fixer never allows readers to forget that Neven provides his services in exchange for hard cash. So while Neven provides vital – indeed for Sacco’s avatar often the only – access to the stories and traumas of the war, we can never be sure whether he is a reliable witness or merely an opportunistic salesman. His anecdotes have the whiff of bravura about them. He expresses pride in his military exploits, especially his role in a sortie that destroyed several Serb tanks (the actual number varies increasingly each time the tale is told). He tells Sacco that with more acquaintances like himself, he ‘could have broken the siege of Sarajevo’.28 Neven’s heroic selfpresentation is consistently undercut by other characters, including Sacco’s avatar, who ironically renames him ‘a Master in the School of Front-line Truth’ and even calls upon the reader to assess the situation. One Sarajevan local remembers Neven as having a ‘big imagination’29; others castigate him as ‘unstable’30; and those who have also fought in the war reject his claims outright, telling Sacco, ‘it didn’t happen’.31 For Sacco’s avatar though, Neven is ‘a godsend’.32 Unable to procure information from the other denizens of Sarajevo, he is delighted to accept Neven’s version of events: ‘Finally someone is telling me how it was – or how it almost was, or how it could have been – but finally someone in this town is telling me something’.33 This discloses the true value of the Bosnian war to the Western media: getting the story ‘right’ factually is less important than getting it ‘right’ affectively. The purpose is to extract a narrative that evokes an emotional (whether voyeuristic or empathetic) response from its audience. Here we see a good example of the way a traumatic memory circulates in the trauma economy, as it travels from its site of origin and into a fantasy of a reality. Neven’s mythmaking – whether motivated by economic opportunism, or as a symptom of his own traumatized psyche – reflects back to the international community a counter-version of mediated events and spectacular traumas that appear daily in the Western media. It is worth adding that his mythmaking only has value so long as it occurs within preauthorized media circuits. When Neven attempts to bypass the international journalists and sell his story instead directly to a British magazine, the account of his wartime ‘action against the 43 tanks’ is rejected on the basis that they ‘don’t print fiction’.34 The privilege of revaluing and re-narrating the trauma is reserved for people like Sacco’s avatar, who has no trouble adopting a mythic and hyperbolic tone in his storytelling: ‘it is he, Neven, who has walked through the valley of the shadow of death and blown things up along the way’.35 Yet Neven’s urge to narrate, while indeed part of his job, is a striking contrast to the silence of other locals. When Sacco arrives in Sarajevo in 2001 for his follow-up story, he finds widespread, deliberate resistance to his efforts to gather first-hand testimonies. Wishing to uncover the city’s ‘terrible secrets’, Sacco finds his ‘research has stalled’, as locals either refuse to meet with him or cancel their appointments.36 The suspiciousness and hostility Sacco encounters in Sarajevo is a response precisely to the international demand for trauma of the 1990s. The mass media presence during the war did little to help the city’s besieged residents; furthermore, international journalists left once the drama of war subsided to ‘the last offensives grinding up the last of the last soldiers and civilians who will die in this war’.37 The media fascination with Sarajevo’s humanitarian crisis was as intense as it was fleeting and has since Tomsky 54 Downloaded by [University of Alberta] at 09:59 01 November 2011 been described as central to the ensuing ‘compassion fatigue’ of Western viewers.38 In contrast to this coverage, which focused on the casualties and victims of the war, The Fixer reveals a very different story: the rise of Bosniak paramilitary groups, their contribution (both heroic and criminal) to the war and their ethnic cleansing of non- Muslim civilians from the city. Herein lies the appeal of Neven, a Bosnian-Serb, who has fought under Bosnian- Muslim warlords defending Sarajevo and who considers himself a Bosnian citizen first before any other ethnic loyalty. For not only is Sacco ignorant about the muddled ethnic realities of the war, its moral ambiguities and its key players but he also wants to hear Neven’s shamelessly daring and dirty account of the war, however unreliable. As Sacco explains, he’s ‘a little enthralled, a little infatuated, maybe a little in love and what is love but a transaction’.39 Neven – a hardened war veteran – provides the goods, the first-hand experience of war and, for Sacco’s avatar, that is worth every Deutschemark, coffee and cigarette. He explains in a parenthetical remark to his implied reader: ‘I would be remiss if I let you think that my relationship with Neven is simply a matter of his shaking me down. Because Neven was the first friend I made in Sarajevo . . . [he’s] travelled one of the war’s dark roads and I’m not going to drop him till he tells me all about it’.40 Sacco’s assertion here suggests something more than a mutual exploitation. The word ‘friend’ describing Sacco’s relationship to Neven is quickly replaced by the word ‘drop’. Having sold his ‘raw goods’, Neven finds that the trauma economy in the postwar period has already devalued his experience by disengaging with Bosnia’s local traumas. As Sacco suggests, ‘the war moved on and left him behind [ . . . ] The truth is, the war quit Neven’.41 The Neven of 2001 is not the brash Neven of old, but a pasty-looking unemployed forty-year old and recovering alcoholic, who takes pills to prevent his ‘anxiety attacks’.42 His wartime actions lay heavily on his conscience, despite his efforts to ‘stash [ . . . ] deep’ his bad memories.43 The Fixer leaves us with an ironic fact: Neven, who has capitalized on trauma during the war, is now left traumatized and without capital in the postwar situation. Juxtaposing Traumas in a Global Age Sacco’s depiction of the trauma economy certainly highlights the question of power and exploitation, since so many of the interactions between locals and international visitors are shaped by the commodity market of traumatic memories. And while The Fixer provides a new perspective of the Bosnian war, excoriating the profit-seeking objectives of both the media and the Bosnian middle-men amid life-altering events, its general point about the capitalistic vicissitudes of the trauma economy is not significantly different from that sustained in the narratives of Aleksandar Hemon, Rajiv Chandrasekaran or Art Spiegelman.44What distinguishes Sacco’s work is the way it also picks up the possibility described in Edward Said’s optimistic re-reading of travel: the potential for affiliation. As I see it, Sacco’s criticism isn’t leveled merely at the moral grey zone created during the Bosnian war: he is more interested in the framework of representations themselves that mediate, authorize, commemorate and circulate trauma in different ways. parallax 55 Downloaded by [University of Alberta] at 09:59 01 November 2011 The comic genre of The Fixer is integral to Sacco’s critical assessment of the trauma economy. As a visual narrative that positions itself against a realist mode of aesthetics, a comic book insistently reminds us that its reality is also subject to a politics of representation. Writing on the graphic novel, Hillary Chute and Marianne DeKoven have emphasized the self-reflexivity of the genre. They note that the graphic narrative is ‘a form that also always refuses a problematic transparency, through an explicit awareness of its own surfaces’.45 The Fixer, with its comic avatar, a member of the international media who is gathering his story and representing it to an Anglophone audience, thus becomes one more mediated representation of the war that travels to a particular set of consumers. Sacco’s self-reflexivity around the social mediation and reproduction of traumas plays an important role in demystifying the trauma economy; it facilitates a readerly response that recognizes the capitalist frame of travelling trauma and yet refuses to accept the objectification of trauma and the ideological system of dominance (i.e. the classification of one trauma as more important than another) conferred by this system. One remarkable panel in The Fixer does this precisely, condensing many of the issues around the trauma economy and its international dissemination of traumatic memories as infotainment.46 The panel stands out not only because it takes up an entire page,47 but also because it short-circuits the normal path of exchange in the trauma economy, by invoking the 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York. But Sacco modifies the context, the iconic image of the burning Twin Towers is drawn into the Sarajevan siege. This convergence of traumatic events offers readers a dialogic point in the comic that reveals the disparities of traumatic memories as they travel, while also highlighting the interconnections generated by these different historic events, exactly as they are placed into conversation through Sacco’s comic novel. The panel shows two tower-block buildings on fire. The caption dates the scene: it is 1992, the beginning of the siege of Sarajevo. The scene evokes numerous, now mostly forgotten, media photos of Sarajevo burning, such as the picture of the Bosnian parliament – also a tower-block building – on fire after Serb paramilitary attacks. Yet, Sacco’s panel shows two identical tower blocks, with thick black smoke pouring out of the upper portions of the buildings. In a post 9/11 environment, it would be difficult to deny that the panel does not recall those iconic video stills of the attacks on the Twin Towers, captured moments after the second plane flew into the World Trade Centre. Sacco stresses the vulnerability of this moment and its greater significance, by a small caption that states: ‘Who will defend Sarajevo?’. Here the representation of the shelling of Sarajevo’s civilian buildings both resonates with and rejects the 9/11 narrative trajectory of events. The picture affiliates the two traumas by visually communicating the horror and moral outrage of both attacks on civilians; but this moral equivalence is simultaneously belied by the manifest differences of the two events. Bosnia is, of course, the focus of Sacco’s work. Yet looking at the panel, there is the suggestion that, for Sacco, the spectre of 9/11 enabled a new kind of memorialization of the Bosnian war and of the siege of Sarajevo, more specifically. To reassess the Bosnian war after 9/11 to some extent dispenses with the sense of neutrality and detachment of many western observers as they contemplate ‘the spectacle of distant Tomsky 56 Downloaded by [University of Alberta] at 09:59 01 November 2011 suffering’.48 Instead, the panel places Sacco’s (Anglophone) audience within the familiar, emotional context of the September 11, 2001 attacks, with their attendant anxieties, shock and grief and so contributes to a blurring of the hierarchical lines set up between different horrors across different spaces. Consequently, I do not see Sacco’s juxtaposition of traumas as an instance of what Michael Rothberg calls, ‘competitive memory’, the victim wars that pit winners against losers.49 Sacco gestures towards a far more complex idea that takes into account the highly mediated presentations of both traumas, which nonetheless evokes Rothberg’s notion of multidirectional memory by affirming the solidarities of trauma alongside their differences. In drawing together these two disparate events, Sacco’s drawings echo the critical consciousness in Said’s ‘Travelling Theory’ essay. Rather than suggesting one trauma is, or should be, more morally legitimate than the other, Sacco is sharply attentive to the way trauma is disseminated and recognized in the political world. The attacks on theWorld Trade Centre, like the siege of Sarajevo, transformed into discursive form epitomize what might be called victim narratives. In this way, the United States utilized international sympathy (much of which was galvanized by the stunning footage of the airliners crashing into the towers) to launch a retaliatory campaign against Afghanistan and, later, Iraq. In contrast, Bosnia in 1992 faced a precarious future, having just proclaimed its independence. As we discover in The Fixer, prior to Yugoslavia’s break-up, Bosnia had been ordered to return its armaments to the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), which were then placed ‘into the hands of the rebel Serbs’, leaving the Bosnian government to ‘build an army almost from scratch’.50 The analogy between 9/11 and 1992 Sarajevo is stark: Sarajevo’s empty landscape in the panel emphasizes its defencelessness and isolation. The Fixer constantly reminds the reader about the difficulties of living under a prolonged siege in ‘a city that is cut off and being starved into submission’.51 In contrast, September 11, 2001 has attained immense cultural capital because of its status as a significant U.S. trauma. This fact is confirmed by its profound visuality, which crystallized the spectacle and site of trauma. Complicit in this process, the international press consolidated and legitimated the event’s symbolic power, by representing, mediating and dramatizing the trauma so that, as SlavojZˇ izˇek writes, the U.S. was elevated into ‘the sublime victim of Absolute Evil’.52 September 11 was constructed as an exceptional event, in terms of its irregular circumstances and the symbolic enormity both in the destruction of iconic buildings and in the attack on U.S. soil. Such a construction seeks to overshadow perhaps all recent international traumas and certainly all other U.S. traumas and sites of shock. Sacco’s portrayal, which locates September eleven in Sarajevo 1992, calls into question precisely this claim towards the singularity of any trauma. The implicit doubling and prefiguring of the 9/11 undercuts the exceptionalist rhetoric associated with the event. Sacco’s strategy encourages us to think outside of hegemonic epistemologies, where one trauma dominates and becomes more meaningful than others. Crucially, Sacco reminds his audience of the cultural imperialism that frames the spectacle of news and the designation of traumatic narratives in particular. parallax 57 Downloaded by [University of Alberta] at 09:59 01 November 2011 Postwar Bosnia and Beyond 2001 remains, then, both an accidental and a significant date in The Fixer. While the (Anglophone) world is preoccupied with a new narrative of trauma and a sense of historical rupture in a post 9/11 world, Bosnia continues to linger in a postwar limbo. Six years have passed since the war ended, but much of Bosnia’s day-to-day economy remains coded by international perceptions of the war. No longer a haven for aspiring journalists, Bosnia is now a thriving economy for international scholars of trauma and political theory, purveyors of thanotourism,53 UN peacekeepers and post-conflict nation builders (the ensemble of NGOs, charity and aid workers, entrepreneurs, contractors, development experts, and EU government advisors to the Office of the High Representative, the foreign overseer of the protectorate state that is Bosnia). On the other hand, many of Bosnia’s locals face a grim future, with a massive and everincreasing unemployment rate (ranging between 35 and 40%), brain-drain outmigration, and ethnic cantonments. I contrast these realities of 2001 because these circumstances – a flourishing economy at the expense of the traumatized population – ought to be seen as part of a trauma economy. The trauma economy, in other words, extends far beyond the purview of the Western media networks. In discussing the way traumatic memories travel along the circuits of the global media, I have described only a few of the many processes that transform traumatic events into fungible traumatic memories; each stage of that process represents an exchange that progressively reinterprets the memory, giving it a new value. Media outlets seek to frame the trauma of the Bosnian wars in ways that are consistent with the aims of pre-existing political or economic agendas; we see this in Sacco just as easily as in Ugresic’s assessment of how even a putatively liberal state like the Netherlands will necessarily inflect the value of one trauma over another. The point is that in this circulation, trauma is placed in a marketplace; the siege of Sarajevo, where an unscrupulous fixer can supply western reporters with the story they want to hear is only a concentrated example of a more general phenomenon. Traumatic memories are always in circulation, being revalued in each transaction according to the logic of supply and demand. Victim and witness; witness and reporter; reporter and audience; producer and consumer: all these parties bargain to suit their different interests. The sooner we acknowledge the influence of these interests, the closer we will come to an understanding of how trauma travels.

#### Second, turns the aff - capitalism is the root cause of exploitation and racism.

McLaren and Torres 99 (Peter Mclaren, professor of education at U of California, and Rudolfo Torres, Professor of Planning, Policy, and Design, Chicano/Latino Studies, and Political Science, “Racism and Multicultural Education: Rethinking ‘Race’ and ‘Whiteness’ in Late Capitalism”, Chapter 2 of “Critical Multiculturalism: Rethinking Multicultural and Antiracist Education”, edited by Stephen May, p.49-50, Questia)

According to Alex Callinicos (1993), racial differences are invented. Racism occurs when the characteristics which justify discrimination are held to be inherent in the oppressed group. This form of oppression is peculiar to capitalist societies; it arises in the circumstances surrounding industrial capitalism and the attempt to acquire a large labour force. Callinicos points out three main conditions for the existence of racism as outlined by Marx: economic competition between workers; the appeal of racist ideology to white workers; and efforts of the capitalist class to establish and maintain racial divisions among workers. Capital's constantly changing demands for different kinds of labour can only be met through immigration. Callinicos remarks that 'racism offers for workers of the oppressing “race” the imaginary compensation for the exploitation they suffer of belonging to the “ruling nation”' (1993, p. 39). Callinicos notes the way in which Marx grasped how 'racial' divisions between 'native' and 'immigrant' workers could weaken the working-class. United States' politicians like Pat Buchanan, Jesse Helms and Pete Wilson, to name but a few, take advantage of this division which the capitalist class understands and manipulates only too well-using racism effectively to divide the working-class. At this point you might be asking yourselves: Doesn't racism pre-date capitalism? Here we agree with Callinicos that the heterophobia associated with precapitalist societies was not the same as modern racism. Pre-capitalist slave and feudal societies of classical Greece and Rome did not rely on racism to justify the use of slaves. The Greeks and Romans did not have theories of white superiority. If they did, that must have been unsettling news to Septimus Severus, Roman Emperor from Ad 193 to 211, who was, many historians claim, a black man. Racism emerged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from a key development of capitalism-colonial plantations in the New World where slave labour stolen from Africa was used to produce tobacco, sugar, and cotton for the global consumer market (Callinicos, 1993). Callinicos cites Eric Williams who remarks: 'Slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery' (cited in Callinicos, 1993, p. 24). In effect, racism emerged as the ideology of the plantocracy. It began with the class of sugar-planters and slave merchants that dominated England's Caribbean colonies. Racism developed out of the 'systemic slavery' of the New World. The 'natural inferiority' of Africans was a way that Whites justified enslaving them. According to Callinicos: Racism offers white workers the comfort of believing themselves part of the dominant group; it also provides, in times of crisis, a ready-made scapegoat, in the shape of the oppressed group. Racism thus gives white workers a particular identity, and one which unites them with white capitalists. We have here, then, a case of the kind of 'imagined community' discussed by Benedict Anderson in his influential analysis of nationalism. (1993, p. 38) In short, to abolish racism in any substantive sense, we need to abolish global capitalism.

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### Berlant K

#### The claim that oppression should be the basis for winning a debate round is a pretty good example of our link argument---the ballot is not a tool of emancipation, but rather a tool of revenge---it serves as a palliative that denies their investment in oppression as a means by which to claim the power of victory

Enns 12—Professor of Philosophy at McMaster University (Dianne, The Violence of Victimhood, 28-30)

Guilt and Ressentiment We need to think carefully about what is at stake here. Why is this perspective appealing, and what are its effects? At first glance, the argument appears simple: white, privileged women, in their theoretical and practical interventions, must take into account the experiences and conceptual work of women who are less fortunate and less powerful, have fewer resources, and are therefore more subject to systemic oppression. The lesson of feminism's mistakes in the civil rights era is that this “mainstream” group must not speak for other women. But such a view must be interrogated. Its effects, as I have argued, include a veneration of the other, moral currency for the victim, and an insidious competition for victimhood. We will see in later chapters that these effects are also common in situations of conflict where the stakes are much higher. ¶ We witness here a twofold appeal: otherness discourse in feminism appeals both to the guilt of the privileged and to the resentment, or ressentiment, of the other. Suleri's allusion to “embarrassed privilege” exposes the operation of guilt in the misunderstanding that often divides Western feminists from women in the developing world, or white women from women of color. The guilt of those who feel themselves deeply implicated in and responsible for imperialism merely reinforces an imperialist benevolence, polarizes us unambiguously by locking us into the categories of victim and perpetrator, and blinds us to the power and agency of the other. Many fail to see that it is embarrassing and insulting for those identified as victimized others not to be subjected to the same critical intervention and held to the same demands of moral and political responsibility. Though we are by no means equal in power and ability, wealth and advantage, we are all collectively responsible for the world we inhabit in common. The condition of victimhood does not absolve one of moral responsibility. I will return to this point repeatedly throughout this book.¶ Mohanty's perspective ignores the possibility that one can become attached to one's subordinated status, which introduces the concept of ressentiment, the focus of much recent interest in the injury caused by racism and colonization. Nietzsche describes ressentiment as the overwhelming sentiment of “slave morality,” the revolt that begins when ressentiment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values. 19 The sufferer in this schema seeks out a cause for his suffering—“ a guilty agent who is susceptible to suffering”— someone on whom he can vent his affects and so procure the anesthesia necessary to ease the pain of injury. The motivation behind ressentiment, according to Nietzsche, is the desire “to deaden, by means of a more violent emotion of any kind, a tormenting, secret pain that is becoming unendurable, and to drive it out of consciousness at least for the moment: for that one requires an affect, as savage an affect as possible, and, in order to excite that, any pretext at all.” 20 In its contemporary manifestation, Wendy Brown argues that ressentiment acts as the “righteous critique of power from the perspective of the injured,” which “delimits a specific site of blame for suffering by constituting sovereign subjects and events as responsible for the ‘injury’ of social subordination.” Identities are fixed in an economy of perpetrator and victim, in which revenge, rather than power or emancipation, is sought for the injured, making the perpetrator hurt as the sufferer does. 21¶ 30¶ Such a concept is useful for understanding why an ethics of absolute responsibility to the other appeals to the victimized. Brown remarks that, for Nietzsche, the source of the triumph of a morality rooted in ressentiment is the denial that it has any access to power or contains a will to power. Politicized identities arise as both product of and reaction to this condition; the reaction is a substitute for action— an “imaginary revenge,” Nietzsche calls it. Suffering then becomes a social virtue at the same time that the sufferer attempts to displace his suffering onto another. The identity created by ressentiment, Brown explains, becomes invested in its own subjection not only through its discovery of someone to blame, and a new recognition and revaluation of that subjection, but also through the satisfaction of revenge. 22¶ The outcome of feminism's attraction to theories of difference and otherness is thus deeply contentious. First, we witness the further reification reification of the very oppositions in question and a simple reversal of the focus from the same to the other. This observation is not new and has been made by many critics of feminism, but it seems to have made no serious impact on mainstream feminist scholarship or teaching practices in women's studies programs. Second, in the eagerness to rectify the mistakes of “white, middle-class, liberal, western” feminism, the other has been uncritically exalted, which has led in turn to simplistic designations of marginal, “othered” status and, ultimately, a competition for victimhood. Ultimately, this approach has led to a new moral code in which ethics is equated with the responsibility of the privileged Western woman, while moral immunity is granted to the victimized other. Ranjana Khanna describes this operation aptly when she writes that in the field of transnational feminism, the reification of the other has produced “separate ethical universes” in which the privileged experience paralyzing guilt and the neocolonized, crippling resentment. The only “overarching imperative” is that one does not comment on another's ethical context. An ethical response turns out to be a nonresponse. 23 Let us turn now to an exploration of this third outcome.