#### **B. Debates about threats in the academic world result in better policy-making—real threats can be confronted and risks can be weighed.**

Walt 91 – Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago – 1991 (Stephen, INTERNATIONAL STUDIES QUARTERLY, p. 229-30)

A recurring theme of this essay has been the twin dangers of separating the study of security affairs from the academic world or of shifting the focus of academic scholarship too far from real-world issues. The danger of war will be with us for some time to come, and states will continue to acquire military forces for a variety of purposes. Unless one believes that ignorance is preferable to expertise, the value of independent national security scholars should be apparent. Indeed, history suggests that countries that suppress debate on national security matters are more likely to blunder into disaster, because misguided policies cannot be evaluated and stopped in time. As in other areas of public policy, academic experts in security studies can help in several ways. In the short term, academics are well placed to evaluate current programs, because they face less pressure to support official policy. The long-term effects of academic involvement may be even more significant: academic research can help states learn from past mistakes and can provide the theoretical innovations the produce better policy choices in the future. Furthermore, their role in training the new generation of experts gives academics an additional avenue of influence.

#### Must risk some cooption to matter-- the alt either accomplishes nothing or is just as likely to be coopted as the aff

David **CAMPBELL**Human and Community Development @ UC Davis ‘**1** “Conviction seeking efficacy: Sustainable Agriculture and the politics of cooptation” *Agriculture and Human Values* 18 p.  360-362

**Conclusion**While co-optation cannot be avoided, it need not be framed as posing a stark choice between politically disengaged purity and politically engaged capitulation. As CAFF’s experience suggests, social and political movements retain a significant freedom to craft middle range strategies that adapt to political circumstances while retaining attachments to core values and constituencies. These strategies are by no means easy to conceive or execute, and pose tensions and tradeoffs for movement organizations. However, if framed as a built-in necessity of meeting movement goals given entrenched opposition, the strategies can be implemented in a spirit that sustains organizational vitality, and broadens political and social impact. They can also enlarge the democratic sensibilities of movement leaders, increasing their ability to listen, learn, and forge alliances based on shared goals. To be certain, the end results will owe much to the political power of opponents. Critique ofthese opponents, and the structural forces they represent, remains essential to movement organizing. But as CAFF organizers discovered, criticism gains its effective power when it is wedded to an ability to lead by example, and to offer positive and realistic options. In this process, tradeoffs cannot be avoided, but neither are they necessarily a zero-sum game in which participants always return to square one.

#### Their fear of cooption tanks 1NC -- even if the aff is coopted, taking the risk can lead to real change

**Zizek 4**Slavoj, Senior Researcher, U of Ljubljana“Liberation Hurts: An Interview with Slavoj Zizek”; THE ELECTRONIC BOOK REVIEW; July 1, 2004; [www.electronicbookreview.com/v3/servlet/ebr?comman=view\_essay&essay\_id=rasmussen](http://www.electronicbookreview.com/v3/servlet/ebr?comman=view_essay&essay_id=rasmussen" \t "_blank).

Zizek: I’m trying to avoid two extremes. One extreme is the traditional pseudo-radical position which says, “If you engage in politics - helping trade unions or combating sexual harassment, whatever - you’ve been co-opted and so on. Then you have the other extreme which says, “Ok, you have to do something.” I think both are wrong. **I hate** those**pseudo-radicals who dismiss every concrete action by saying that “This will all be co-opted.” Of course, everything can be co-opte**d [chuckles] **but this is just a nice excuse to do absolutely nothing**.**Of course, there is a danger**that - to use the old Maoist term, popular in European student movements thirty some years ago, “the long march through institutions” will last so long that you’ll end up part of the institution. **We need more than ever, a parallax view - a double perspective. You engage in acts, being aware of their limitations. This does not mean that you act with your fingers crossed. No,you fully engage, but with the awareness that - the ultimate wager** in the almost Pascalian sense -**is not simply that this act will succeed, but that the very failure of this act will trigger a much more radical process**

**We solve the root cause of American exceptionalism**

True ’5 – Lecturer in International Politics, University of Auckland, New Zealand (Jacqui, *Theories of International Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 221-222, http://gendocs.ru/docs/35/34939/conv\_1/file1.pdf)//SS

International Relations’ key concepts are neither natural nor gender-neutral: they are derived from a social and political context where¶ masculine hegemony has been institutionalized. Feminist scholars argue¶ that notions of power, sovereignty, autonomy, anarchy, security and¶ the levels of analysis typology in International Relations are inseparable¶ from the gender division of public and private spheres institutionalized¶ within and across states. These concepts are identified specifically with¶ masculinity and men’s experiences and knowledge derived from an¶ exclusive, male-dominated public sphere. Theorizing, as Burchill and¶Linklater state in the Introduction to this volume, (Chapter 1) is ‘the¶ process by which we give meaning to an allegedly objectified world “out¶ there” ’ . A feminist analysis reveals International Relations’ conceptual¶ framework as but one, partial attempt to make sense of world politics.¶The discursive separation of domestic and international politics,¶ together with the neo-realist aversion to domestic explanations for interstate relations, obscures the prior gendered public–private division¶ within states and masculine aversion to the latter’s association with¶ emotion, subjectivity, reproduction, the body, femininity and women.¶ Both mainstream and critical theories of world politics overlook this¶ private sphere because it is submerged within domestic politics and state¶ forms (Walker 1992; Sylvester 1994a). The ontology of mainstream¶ International Relations theory conceives the private sphere like the international sphere as natural realms of disorder. The lower being, represented¶ by women, the body and the anarchical system, must be subordinated to¶ the higher being, represented by men, the rational mind and state¶ authority. Jean Elshtain (1992) insists that the realist narrative of¶ International Relations, in particular, pivots on this public–private¶ division and its essentialist construction of femininity and masculinity as¶ the respective cause of disorder and bringer of order.¶ For feminist analysts, the independence of domestic politics from¶ international politics and the separation of public from private spheres¶ cannot be the basis for a disciplinary boundary, since anarchy outside¶ typically supports gender hierarchy at home and vice versa. Throughout¶ modern history, for example, women have been told that they will¶ receive equality with men, after the war, after liberation, after the¶ national economy has been rebuilt and so on: but after all of these¶ ‘outside’ forces have been conquered, the commonplace demand is for¶ things to go back to normal, and women to a subordinate place. As¶ Cynthia Enloe (1989: 131) has observed ‘states depend upon particular¶ constructions of the domestic and private spheres in order to foster¶smooth[er] relationships at the public/international level’.

**Our analysis disrupts the war on terror**

Wilcox 03 [Lauren, PhD in IR @ University of Minnesota, BA @ Macalester College, MA @ London School of Economics, “Security Masculinity: The Gender-Security Nexus”]

These statements give several clues as to the implications of ”barbaric‘ behavior. Terrorists are barbaric and uncivilized, and opposed to democracy. Those who commit evil acts commit attacks against civilization, therefore, being uncivilized is equivalent to being evil. Finally, terrorists fight without rules, they kill innocents and women, and they are cowards, therefore they are barbaric and uncivilized. Overall, the message is clearly that of a dichotomous world, in which there are only two choices; civilization or barbarism, us or them.¶ In order to understand the significance of the use of the discourse of civilization versus barbarism in the war on terror, a brief history of this discourse is helpful. Applying the label ”barbaric‘ to people from the Middle East, or any non-white peoples is hardly a new historical development. In his book Orientalism˙ Edward Said critiques the discipline of Oriental Studies in the European and American academies for reproducing stereotypes and using their privileged status to create knowledge about people in the Middle East that served to justify and increase their control and domination over these people. 63 Said describes the relationship between West and the Middle East, as seen from the West, —to be one between a strong and a weak partner,“ and adds that, —many terms were used to express the relations…The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ”different‘; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ”normal.‘ “64 This relationship is gendered in that ”Orientals‘ are assigned traits associated with femininity and inferiority. This dichotomous relationship is replicated in political discourses as well as in academic and literary circles.¶ The discourse of civilization/barbarism was used in order to justify colonialism of non-white peoples throughout the world, and has a long history in US foreign history. A people labeled ”uncivilized‘ is considered to be unable to rule themselves, and is need of guidance from more civilized people. The use of force against ”barbarians‘ is also justified.65 Furthermore, the rules of humane and civilized warfare do not apply to wars against ”barbaric‘ peoples. Against this background, the use of the discourse of barbarism can be seen as an attempt to foretell the coming war and to persuade people of the necessity of using force against al-Qaeda and their hosts in Afghanistan. The additional measures of control, surveillance, and detention of Middle Eastern and North African men in the process of securitizing immigration served to harass, demean and subordinate this ”inferior‘ masculinity, contributing to the constructing of the hegemonic masculinity of American men. The ”special‘ registration requirements for the National Security Entry-Exit System is evidence of the gendered inside/outside, us/them distinction in regards to national identity. This program, instituted as part of the securitization of immigration, serves to support the construction and maintenance of the current articulation of hegemonic masculinity, which differentiates American men as superior to men in the Middle East. The special registration requires that men and boys over the age of fifteen with non-immigrant visas from countries in the Middle East, Northern Africa, countries with large Muslim populations such as Indonesia and Pakistan, and an outlier, North Korea, be interviewed and have their whereabouts tracked by the INS.66 These persons will be finger printed and photographed, with their fingerprints matched against fingerprints of known or suspected terrorists and used by law enforcement. They are also required to submit personal contact information, and are required to notify the Attorney General when the change addresses. These measures are in addition to the detention and questioning of thousands of men of Arab or Muslim background after the September 11 that tacks, some allegedly detained without access to attorneys or proper food.67 The INS has also recently changed its policy on asylum, as people seeking asylum from thirty-three countries, mostly in the Middle East, are now being detained pending the processing of their applications, where previously they have been released.68 By concentrating on men as the ”outsiders‘ Middle Eastern men specifically service not only as the ”other‘ that American identity is contrasted again, but a feminized ”other‘ that American masculinity is defined against.

#### The 1NC makes empathy for other people impossible, depriving them of reflective consideration.

Norris 94 (Christopher, Professor of the History of Ideas, University of Wales, TRUTH AND THE ETHICS OF CRITICISM, , p.87-8)

This is what distinguishes Montaigne's scepticism from the wholesale varieties currently in vogue among postmodernists, New Historicists, and others. It works on a principle directly counter to the 'radical alterity' thesis: that is to say, on the assumption that however deep such cultural differences may run, they are still (in William Empson's fine phrase) 'a small thing by comparison with our common humanity'. The trouble with the current anti-humanist doxa is that it swings so far against those bad old forms of quasi-universalist subject-centred thought that it leaves no room for treating other subjects - including the victims of colonial oppression - as in any way capable of reasoned enquiry or reflective moral awareness. At this point scepticism passes over into cynicism, or the critique of prejudice into another (just as damaging) kind of prejudice that regards all truth-claims and ethical values as relative to this or that 'discourse', or again, as mere products of the will-to-power in its protean manifestations.

#### Refusal to engage state politics worsens the impacts of the critique

Boggs 2k (CAROL BOGGS, PF POLITICAL SCIENCE – SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 00, THE END OF POLITICS, 250-1)

But it is a very deceptive and misleading minimalism. While Oakeshott debunks political mechanisms and rational planning, as either useless or dangerous, the actually existing power structure-replete with its own centralized state apparatus, institutional hierarchies, conscious designs, and indeed, rational plans-remains fully intact, insulated from the minimalist critique. In other words, ideologies and plans are perfectly acceptable for elites who preside over established governing systems, but not for ordinary citizens or groups anxious to challenge the status quo. Such one-sided minimalism gives carte blanche to elites who naturally desire as much space to maneuver as possible. The flight from “abstract principles” rules out ethical attacks on injustices that may pervade the status quo (slavery or imperialist wars, for example) insofar as those injustices might be seen as too deeply embedded in the social and institutional matrix of the time to be the target of oppositional political action. If politics is reduced to nothing other than a process of everyday muddling-through, then people are condemned to accept the harsh realities of an exploitative and authoritarian system, with no choice but to yield to the dictates of “conventional wisdom”. Systematic attempts to ameliorate oppressive conditions would, in Oakeshott’s view, turn into a political nightmare. A belief that totalitarianism might results from extreme attempts to put society in order is one thing; to argue that all politicized efforts to change the world are necessary doomed either to impotence or totalitarianism requires a completely different (and indefensible) set of premises. Oakeshott’s minimalism poses yet another, but still related, range of problems: the shrinkage of politics hardly suggests that corporate colonization, social hierarchies, or centralized state and military institutions will magically disappear from people’s lives. Far from it: the public space vacated by ordinary citizens, well informed and ready to fight for their interests, simply gives elites more room to consolidate their own power and privilege. Beyond that, the fragmentation and chaos of a Hobbesian civil society, not too far removed from the excessive individualism, social Darwinism and urban violence of the American landscape could open the door to a modern Leviathan intent on restoring order and unity in the face of social disintegration. Viewed in this light, the contemporary drift towards antipolitics might set the stage for a reassertion of politics in more authoritarian and reactionary guise-or it could simply end up reinforcing the dominant state-corporate system. In either case, the state would probably become what Hobbes anticipated: the embodiment of those universal, collective interests that had vanished from civil society.16 And either outcome would run counter to the facile antirationalism of Oakeshott’s Burkean muddling-through theories.

Their kritik creates a false dichotomy between total rejection and oppression—their “all or nothing” alternative dooms coalitions and closes off space for political activism

Krishna ’93 [Sankaran, Dept. of Polit. Sci., Alternatives, 1993]

The dichotomous choice presented in this excerpt is straightforward: one either indulges in total critique, delegitimizing all sovereign truths, or one is committed to “nostalgic”, essential unities that have become obsolete and have been the grounds for all our oppressions. In offering this dichotomous choice, Der Derian replicates a move made by Chaloupka in his equally dismissive critique of the more mainstream nuclear oppression, the Nuclear freeze movement of the early 1980s, that according to him, was operating along obsolete lines emphasizing “facts” and “realities” while a “postmodern” President Reagan easily outflanked them through an illusory Star Wars program. (See KN: chapter 4)Chaloupka centers this difference between his own supposedly total critique of all sovereign truths (which he describes as nuclear criticism in an echo of literary criticism) and the more partial (and issue-based) criticism of what he calls “nuclear opposition” or “antinuclearists” at the very outset of his book. (KN: xvi) Once again, the unhappy choice forced upon the reader is to join Chaloupka in his total critique of sovereign truths or be trapped in obsolete essentialisms.This leads to a disastrous politics, pitting groups that have the most in common (and need to unite on some basis to be effective) against each other. Both Chaloupka and Der Derian thus reserve their most trenchant critique for political groups that should, in any analysis, be regarded as the closest to them in terms of an oppositional politics and their desired futures. Instead of finding ways to live with these differences and to (if fleetingly) coalesce against the New Right, this fratricidal critique is politically suicidal. It obliterates the space for a political activism based on provisional and contingent coalitions, for uniting behind a common cause even as one recognizes that the coalition is comprised of groups that have very differing (and possibly unresolvable) views of reality.¶ Moreover, it fails to consider the possibility that there may have been other, more compelling reasons for the “failure” of the Nuclear Freedom movement or anti-Gulf War movement. Like many a worthwhile cause in our times, they failed to garner sufficient support to influence state policy. The response to that need not be a totalizing critique that delegitimizes all narratives.The blackmail inherent in the choice offered by Der Derian and Chaloupka, between total critique and “ineffective” partial critique, ought to be transparent. Among other things, it effectively militates against the construction of provisional or strategic essentialisms in our attempts to create space for an activist politics. In the next section, I focus more widely on the genre of critical international theory and its impact on such an activist politics

#### The aff’s recognition of sexual difference embraces all forms of non-normativity for discussion

Braidotti 3 (Rosi, Professor of Women’s Studies in the Arts Faculty of Utrecht University and scientific director of the Netherlands Research School of Women’s Studies, “Becoming Woman: or Sexual Difference,” pg. 46-47 Theory, Culture & Society 2003 (SAGE, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi), Vol. 20(3) //nimo)

The sexual politics of this project are clear: for Irigaray it is about how to identify and enact points of exit from the universal mode defined by man, towards a radical version of heterosexuality, that is to say, the full recog- nition of the specificities of each sexed subject position. More specifically, she wonders how to elaborate a site, that is to say, a space and a time, for the irreducibility of sexual difference to express itself, so that the masculine and feminine libidinal economies may coexist in the positive expression of their respective differences. This positivity is both horizontal/terrestrial and vertical/celestial, and it entails the (re)thinking through of gender-specific relations to space, time and the interval between the sexes, so as to avoid polarizing oppositions. Issues of ‘other differences’, notably religion, nation- ality, language and ethnicity are crucial to this project, and integral to the task of evolving towards the recognition of the positivity of difference. This aspect of Irigaray’s philosophy becomes more prominent in the second phase of her work, as I indicated earlier. This radically heterosexual project, however, is not heterosexist, nor does it imply the dismissal of homosexual love, although on this point there is a growing disparity between Irigaray’s earlier and later work. Elizabeth Grosz, for instance, refers to Irigaray’s advocacy of a ‘tactical homosexuality modelled on the corporeal relations of the pre-oedipal daughter to the mother’ (Grosz, 1994: 338). This mother–daughter bond aims at exploring and reclaiming bodily pleasures and contacts that have been eradicated from their memory. It thus becomes a tool for undoing the Oedipal hold over women and allows them to explore a radically different morphology and narcissism. Concludes Grosz: ‘It provides a model of homosexuality not as a substitute for heterosexuality but as its disavowed prerequisite. It makes explicit the intolerable threat of women’s desire within a culture founded on its denial’ (Grosz, 1994: 338). In her earlier work, Irigaray is especially keen to prevent the assimi- lation of female homosexuality into a Phallic mode of dialectical opposition to the other and thus of masculine identification. Nor is she dupe to the illusion that a mere choice of another woman as object of desire is enough to allow a woman to escape from the Phallic clutches. In either case (homo or hetero), Irigaray is not prescriptive – she just emphasizes the need for a space of experimentation by women for their desires and specific sexual morphology. Men are called upon to do the same: to reclaim a non-Phallic sexuality and re-signify their desires. Sexual difference cuts both ways. The real difference – which produces the ethical passion of ‘wonder’ (Irigaray, 1993a) – is the escape from sexual sameness, that is, identification with male phallicity. It is precisely this kind of in-depth criticism of the socio- symbolic system based on the Phallic masculine economy of Sameness that connects Irigaray’s work to the major thinkers of her generation. Deleuze is the philosopher that I find the closest to the aims and scope of Irigaray’s early formulation of a subject that is not One, which I also call ‘the virtual feminine’. The differences between these two thinkers, however, are as note- worthy as their similarities.

#### The 1NC engages in dangerous politics of prioritizing methodology and assigning intellectual prerequisites political strategy. Their use of the experience of oppression as the status that defines those who should guide politics harms progressive political strategies. Their particular strategy is part of a larger discourse of recapturing agency through privileging experience as the basis for politics.

Craig IRELAND American Culture @ Bilkent ‘02 "The Appeal to Experience and its Consequences" Cultural Critique 52 Fall 2002p.87-88

" Once an arcane philosophical term, experience over the last three decades has become a general buzzword. By the 1970s, experience spilled over into the streets, so to speak, and it has since then become the stuff of programmatic manifestos and has been enlisted as the found from which microstrategies of resistance and subaltern counterhistories can be erected. But for all the blows and counterblows that have carried on tor over"\*three decades between those who appeal to the counterhegemonic potential of experience and those who see such appeals as naive voluntarism, such debates show no signs of abating. On the contrary, they have become yet more strident, as can be seen by Michael Pickering's recent attempt to rehabilitate the viability of the term "experience" for subaltern historiography by turning to E. P. Thompson and Dilthey and, more recently still, by Sonia Kruks's polemical defense of experience for subaltern inquiry by way of a reminder that poststructuralist critics of experience owe much to those very thinkers, from Sartre to Merleau-Ponty, whom they have debunked as if in oedipal rebellion against their begetters. Such debates over experience have so far gravitated around issues of epistemology and agency, pitting those who debunk experience as the stuff of an antiquated philosophy of consciousness against those who argue that subaltern experience provides an enclave against strong structural determination. Lost in such debates, however, have been the potential consequences of appeals to immediate experience as a ground for subaltern agency and specificity.

And it is just such potential consequences that will be examined here, These indeed demand our attention, for more is at stake in the appeal to experience than some epistemological faux pas. By so wagering on the perceived immediacy of experience as the evidence for subaltern specificity and counterhegemonic action, appeals to immediate experience, however laudable their goal, end up unwittingly naturalizing what is in fact historical, and, in so doing, they leave the door as wide-open to a progressive politics of identity as to a retreat to neoethnic tribalism. Most alarming about such appeals to experience is not some failure of epistemological nerve – it is instead their ambiguous political and social ramifications. And these have reverberate beyond academia and found an echo in para-academia – so much so that experience has increasingly become the core concept or key word of subaltern groups and the rallying call for what Craig Calhoun calls the “new social movements” in which “experience is made the pure ground of knowledge, the basis of an essentialized standpoint of critical awareness” (468 n.64).

The consequences of such appeals to experience can best be addressed not by individually considering disparate currents, but by seeking their common denominator. And in this regard, E.P. Thompson will occupy the foreground.

 It is safe to say that what started as an altercation between Thompson and Althusser has since spawned academic and para-academic "histories from below" and subaltern cultural inquiries that, for all their differences, share the idea that the identities and counterhistories of the disenfranchised can be buttressed by the specificity of a group's concrete experiences. Much theorizing on experience by certain cultural and historiographical trends, as many have already pointed out, has been but a variation on a persistent Thompsonian theme in which Thompson's "kind of use of experience has the same foundational status if we substitute 'women's' or 'black' or 'lesbian' or 'homosexual' for 'working class'" (Scott, 786)

#### Experience as manifest destiny. The 1ac's description of unalienated experience turns into a new form of authoritarian pedagogy. Presenting the self as evidence prevents a critical inquiry into what authorities experience itself. The discourse of experience becomes a trump card-a fascist prohibition on what can be criticized and what stands as absolute.

Rey CHOW Modern Culture and Media @ Brown ’98 Ethics After Idealism

In the foregoing pages, I have tried to argue that fascism needs to be understood not only in its negative but more importantly in its positive aspects, and that fascism's production of idealism is a projectional production of luminosity-as-self-evidence, "In an essay entitled "The Evidence of Experience," which does not at first seem to have anything to do with the topic of fascism, Joan Scott has made comparable observations about the use of “experience” in the North American academy today. In the general atmosphere of a felt need to deconstruct universalist: claims about human history, Scott writes, scholars of various disciplines have increasingly turned to personal experience as a means of such deconstruction. However, she argues, by privileging experience as the critical weapon against univeralisms, we are leaving open the question as to what authorizes experience itself. Scott charges that the appeal to experience “as uncontestable evidence and as an originary point of explanation” for historical difference has increasingly replaced the necessary task of exploring “how difference is established, how it operates, now, and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world.” For me, what is especially interesting is the manner in which Scott emphasizes the role of vision and visibility throughout her essay. Beginning her discussion with Samuel R. Delany's autobiographical meditation, The Motion of Light in Water, Scott notes that "a metaphor of visibility as literal transparency is crucial to his project." She concludes that, for Delany, "knowledge is gained through vision; vision is a direct apprehension of a world of transparent objects."41 What Scott articulates here is the other side of Virilio's argument about the coterminous nature of visual perception and destruction – that is, the coterminous nature of visual perception and knowledge: "Seeing is the origin of knowing.” While the technology of seeing, or seeing-as-technology, has become an inalienable part of the operation of militarism and fascist propaganda, Scott shows how it has also come to dominate our thinking about identity so much so that visibility and luminosity are the conditions toward which accounts of difference and alternative histories derived from personal experience” now aspire.

This kind of aspiration, Scott implies, is an aspiration toward the self-evidence of the self’s (personal) experience. The self as evidence this means that the self, like the Stalin myth in Soviet cinema, is so transparent, so shone through with light, that it simply is without need for further argument about its history or what Scott calls its “discursive character.”

#### The 1NC begins with the appeal to bodily experience and materiality as the basis for political action. This becomes the basis for an authentic and unldeological experience that questions dominant narrative. Treating this body as the corrective to ideology reduces everyone to a purely biological identity. Instead of exchange and transgression we end up with a static politics and pedagogy.

Craig IRELAND American Culture @ Bilkent ’02 "The Appeal to Experience and its Consequences" Cultural Critique 52 Fall 2002, 91-96

It was precisely in response to this turn or events that the culturalist strain in British Marxism, as well as subsequent strands in subaltern studies, came to see experience as that which, by virtue of its prediscursive immediacy, radically demarcates itself from and therefore evades discursive or ideological mediation and determination. Because the imposition of state ideology, as Thompson saw it, "cannot succeed unless there is congruence between the imposed rules and view of life and the necessary business of living in a given mode of production" {Poverty of Theory, 367), something was needed that might sabotage such a congruence and, in so doing, bypass strong structural determination. Of the possible candidates, the perceived nonmediatedness, or immediacy, or experience proved to be particularly seductive. Indeed, because of its seemingly immediate, that is, its nondiscursive or nonideological contact with environing social being, experience represented just that sort of untainted raw materials (to use Thompson’s expression) that, in order to congeal into class or group self-consciousness and agency needed but to be articulated by a regionalized culture sufficiently specific to those sharing particular experiences. Experience, in short, represented the stuff (in the sense of its Germanic cognate, Stoff, that is, resistant material) that, impervious as it appeared to be to ideological tampering, might furnish the material building blocks from which counterhistories could be constructed and subaltern cultures reinforced.

Such perceptions of the counterhegemonic potential of experience were encouraged by the connotations the word had acquired in the Anglo-American world. From a term that from the seventeenth to the early eighteenth century implied knowledge gained through both a reliance on the past as well as through observation untainted, as Francis Bacon would say, by church dogma, superstition, and other obscurantist idols, the concept of experience semantically shifted by the midto late eighteenth century not only to that which opposed reason, but also to that which is "full and active awareness" of both feeling and thought and, as such, assumed an aura of authenticity with which reasoning and ideas could not dispense (Williams, 126). The German equivalents of experience, whether as Erfahrung or as the early nineteenth-century neologism Erlebnis, are likewise informed by a conceptual and etymological history that encouraged the association of experience with notions of counterhegemonic resistance, as can be seen in the recourse to Erfahrung, by certain members of the Frankfurt School and by certain phenomenologists as a means of countering given or dominant horizons of understanding and, as can also be seen in the recourse by Lebensphilosophie to Erlebnis, as a means of opposing the mediacy of abstract reason with the immediacy of the concretely lived.

Thompson's notion of experience, however, does not seek to rehabilitate the "other" of reason in the manner that Erlebnis had in certain popularizations of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Lebensphilosophie; instead, it wagers on the "other" of the perceived immateriality of signification – the immediacy of experience is opposed to the mediacy of ideology as the material is to the immaterial. If experience plays a central role in certain theories hoping to vindicate subaltern agency, it is because of its assumed unmediated proximity with materiality. Because of its corporeal resistance to external tampering, materiality appears as less malleable and thus less amenable to ideological mediation much as for Locke the qualities or material spatial extension, lending themselves as they do to palpable verification and thus less prone to perceptual distortion, are seen as qualities more primary than the pliable and fickle secondary

qualities of sight or sound. It is true that, in order to avoid both naive empirical positivism and strong structural determinism, Thompson proposed that experience be understood less as binarily opposed to structure than as a mediating third term between "conditioning" and "agency" and at the "intersection between determination and self activity" (Poverty of Theory, 225, 228); it nevertheless remains that his notion of experience is imbued with material properties: 'Thus change takes place in social being which then gives rise to change in experience," Thompson explains,"... and this experience exerts pressure on existent social consciousness, raises questions, and furnishes the material for intellectual elaboration” (200; my emphasis). As raw material and in the manner of a Gegenstand, Thompson's notion of experience stands against and exerts pressure on consciousness, and although dependent on its retrospective mediation within a local culture, this experience nevertheless has all the makings of the spatially extended solidity of matter – matter that, by presumably circumventing ideological determination, can serve as the ground from which resistance can be mustered and alternative sociability constructed. This Thompsonian notion of experience, as many have already pointed out, has found its way in numerous strains of Anglo-American feminist epistemologies and subaltern studies. And rooted as it is in prediscursive materiality, it is hardly surprising that it should have lately migrated to what is considered by many to be the last enclave of resistance against ideological contamination – the perceived nondiscursive material immediacy of the body itself. Certain North American feminist strands propose "experience, qua women's experience of alienation from their own bodies, as the evidence of difference" (Bellamy and Leontis, 167); while others, by contending that the materiality of social practice somehow institutes a disruptive fissure within dominant discursive regimes, have retreated, as Joan W. Scott notes, to "the biological or physical 'experience' of the body" itself (787-88). Others have gone so far as to see the body as the last enclave of resistance where the nonmediated specificity of experience is “registered" or "inscribed” in the manner of Kafka's penal colony, as so many body piercings testifying to the irreducibly singular, telling us, as does Chantal Maille, that "our body is becoming a new locus of struggle, which lays claim to its difference through actions such as body piercing" (quoted in Houde, 6). Such a stance is, of course, beset by numerous problems that have already been repeatedly pointed out by others and that need not be rehearsed here. Suffice it to say, as does Fredric Jameson, that “we must be very suspicious of the reference to the body as an appeal to immediacy (the warning goes back to the very first chapter Hegel's Phenomenology); even Foucault s medical and penal work can be read as an account of the construction of the body which rebukes premature immediacy" ("On 'Cultural Studies,’" 44). The recent obsession with the material body is, of course, hardly in a position to vindicate the historical materialism with which, as if to appease Bourdieu, it often fancies itself allied – Materialism is scarcely achieved by a litany of the body," Jameson rightly notes, and the materialism of the body "should not be confused with a historical materialism that turns on praxis and on the mode of production" (ibid.). But at stake in the recent obsession with the materiality of bodily experience is not just an attempt to redeem historical, let alone dialectical, materialism – something that an exclusive reliance on immediate material experience, bodily or otherwise, is hardly in a position to accomplish anyway; at stake is instead the condition of possibility of an active subject and of a ground from which can be erected strategies of resistance (to use the jargon of the 1980s) and a politics of identity (to use the slogan of the 1990s) that might evade the hegemony, as current parlance phrases it, of dominant discursive formations. It is in the name of agency and cultural specificity that, to this day, appeals are made to immediate and materially grounded experience by those currents in subaltern studies that presuppose a nonmediated homology or correlation between one's structural position, one's socioeconomic interests, one's propensity for certain types of experiences, and certain forms of consciousness or awareness.

It is, of course, unlikely that Thompson would endorse some of the uses to which his notion of experience has been put. But that is beside the point. Regardless of Thompson's motivations, this turn to the material immediacy of bodily experiences is but the logical unfolding of his argument that, for all its cautious disclaimers, attempts to ground group specificity and agency in the nondiscursive and the immediate. Since for the Thompsonian notion of experience all forms of mediation are considered fair game for ideological penetration, the turn to the immediate is to be expected, and the migration toward material immediacy is but an extrapolation of such a turn. But what are the potential consequences of such a turn?

THE SPECTER OF NEOETHNIC TRIBALISM

More is involved here than some epistemological blunder. In their bid to circumvent ideological mediation by turning to the presumed immediacy of experience, Thompsonian experience-oriented theories advance an argument that is not so much theoretically specious as it is potentially dangerous: there is nothing within the logic of such an argument that precludes the hypostatization of other nondiscursive bases for group membership and specificity – bases that can be as readily be those of a group’s immediate experiences as they can be those of a group’s presumed materially immediate biological characteristics or physical markers of ethnicity and sexuality. If the criterion for the disruptive antihegemonic potential of experience is its immediacy, and if, as we have just seen, such a criterion can readily lead to a fetishization of the material body itself, then what starts out as an attempt to account for a nonmediated locus of resistance and agency can end up as a surenchere of immediacy that by but a nudge of a cluster of circumstances can propel toward what Michael Piore's Beyond Individualism calls ''biologism'’ – an increasingly common trend whereby "a person's entire identity resides in a single physical characteristic, whether it be of blackness, of deafness or of homosexuality: (quoted in Gitlin, 6). Blut und Boden seem but a step away.

The step from a wager on immediate experience, whether from theories hoping to account for agency or from groups struggling for cultural recognition, to rabid neoethnic fundamentalisms is only a possible step and not a necessary one

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', and the link between these two" trends as certainly not one of enmity, and still less one of causality. What the parallelism between the two does suggest, however, is that in spite of their divergent motivations and means, they both attempt to ground group specificity by appealing to immediacy – by appointing, in other words, to something that is less a historical product or a mediated construct than it is an immediately given natural entity, whether it be the essence of a Volk, as in current tribalisms, or the essence of material experiences specific to groups, as in strains of Alltagsgeschichte and certain subaltern endeavors. If a potential for biologism and the specter of neoethnic tribalism are close at hand in certain cultural theories and social movements, it is because the recourse to immediate experience opens the back door to what was booted out the front door – it inadvertently naturalizes what it initially set out to historicize.