# Round 6—Neg vs Texas FM

## 1NC

### 1nc 1

#### The solution to the world’s problem lies in the recognition that there is no solution – suffering and conflict are nothing more internal blockages – we must accept the world as it comes to us or we are doomed to the path of Don Quixote, fighting imaginary windmills for all eternity

**Khema 94**  (Ayya, 1994, Buddhist monk, “All of us beset by Birth, Decay, and Death.” Buddhism Today, <http://www.buddhismtoday.com/english/philosophy/thera/003-allofus-5.htm>)

If you have ever read Don Quixote, you'll remember that he was fighting windmills. Everybody is doing just that, fighting windmills. Don Quixote was the figment of a writer's imagination, a man who believed himself to be a great warrior. He thought that every windmill he met was an enemy and started battling with it. That's exactly what we are doing within our own hearts and that's why this story has such an everlasting appeal. It tells us about ourselves. Writers and poets who have survived their own lifetimes have always told human beings about themselves. Mostly people don't listen, because it doesn't help when somebody else tells us what's wrong with us and few care to hear it. One has to find out for oneself and most people don't want to do that either. What does it really mean to fight windmills? It means fighting nothing important or real, just imaginary enemies and battles. All quite trifling matters, which we build into something solid and formidable in our minds. We say: "I can't stand that," so we start fighting, and "I don't like him," and a battle ensues, and "I feel so unhappy," and the inner war is raging. We hardly ever know what we're so unhappy about. The weather, the food, the people, the work, the leisure, the country, anything at all will usually do. Why does this happen to us? Because of the resistance to actually letting go and becoming what we really are, namely nothing. Nobody cares to be that. Everybody wants to be something or somebody even if it's only Don Quixote fighting windmills. Somebody who knows and acts and will become something else, someone who has certain attributes, views, opinions and ideas. Even patently wrong views are held onto tightly, because it makes the "me" more solid. It seems negative and depressing to be nobody and have nothing. We have to find out for ourselves that it is the most exhilarating and liberating feeling we can ever have. But because we fear that windmills might attack, we don't want to let go. Why can't we have peace in the world? Because nobody wants to disarm. Not a single country is ready to sign a disarmament pact, which all of us bemoan. But have we ever looked to see whether we, ourselves, have actually disarmed? When we haven't done so, why wonder that nobody else is ready for it either? Nobody wants to be the first one without weapons; others might win. Does it really matter? If there is nobody there, who can be conquered? How can there be a victory over nobody? Let those who fight win every war, all that matters is to have peace in one's own heart. As long as we are resisting and rejecting and continue to find all sorts of rational excuses to keep on doing that there has to be warfare. War manifests externally in violence, aggression and killing. But how does it reveal itself internally? We have an arsenal within us, not of guns and atomic bombs, but having the same effect. And the one who gets hurt is always the one who is shooting, namely oneself. Sometimes another person comes within firing range and if he or she isn't careful enough, he or she is wounded. That's a regrettable accident. The main blasts are the bombs which go off in one's own heart. Where they are detonated, that's the disaster area. The arsenal which we carry around within ourselves consists of our ill will and anger, our desires and cravings. The only criterion is that we don't feel peaceful inside. We need not believe in anything, we can just find out whether there is peace and joy in our heart. If they are lacking, most people try to find them outside of themselves. That's how all wars start. It is always the other country's fault and if one can't find anyone to blame then one needs more "Lebensraum," more room for expansion, more territorial sovereignty. In personal terms, one needs more entertainment, more pleasure, more comfort, more distractions for the mind. If one can't find anyone else to blame for one's lack of peace, then one believes it to be an unfulfilled need. Who is that person, who needs more? A figment of our own imagination, fighting windmills. That "more" is never ending. One can go from country to country, from person to person. There are billions of people on this globe; it's hardly likely that we will want to see every one of them, or even one-hundredth, a lifetime wouldn't be enough to do so. We may choose twenty or thirty people and then go from one to the next and back again, moving from one activity to another, from one idea to another. We are fighting against our own dukkha and don't want to admit that the windmills in our heart are self-generated. We believe somebody put them up against us, and by moving we can escape from them. Few people come to the final conclusion that these windmills are imaginary, that one can remove them by not endowing them with strength and importance. That we can open our hearts without fear and gently, gradually let go of our preconceived notions and opinions, views and ideas, suppressions and conditioned responses. When all that is removed, what does one have left? A large, open space, which one can fill with whatever one likes. If one has good sense, one will fill it with love, compassion and equanimity. Then there is nothing left to fight. Only joy and peacefulness remain, which cannot be found outside of oneself. It is quite impossible to take anything from outside and put it into oneself. There is no opening in us through which peace can enter. We have to start within and work outward. Unless that becomes clear to us, we will always find another crusade.

#### Desire creates the illusion of the self and the suffering that defines the human condition. Our only capacity is thus to affirm the extermination of this desire in the face of perpetual death and an impermanent reality

**DOLLIMORE 1998** (Jonathan Dollimore 1998 (Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture, p 54-56.)

Siddhartha Gautama (560-477 BC) was a prince who, because of his high privilege, encountered suffering and death relatively late in life. Legend tells us that when he did eventually encounter them the trauma was the greater, and changed his life: he became Buddha, the Enlightened One. In the religion he founded, life is experienced as a permanent intrinsic unsatisfactoriness manifested as suffering (dukkha) and pain: birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, sorrow, lamentation, dejection, and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful. In short the five groups of grasping [the elements, skandbasy which make up a person] are painful. ('Sermon at Benares', in Burtt, p. 30) Everything about life involves suffering and dissatisfaction, a sense of lack. If we strive to overcome that lack we fail, and suffering becomes marked by a renewed craving, now intensified by an acute sense of loss. Suffering derives directly from the fact that everything that exists is radically mutable. In particular, happiness, if it is achieved, cannot last. Suffering haunts happiness from the outside and the inside. Where Buddhism differs from Western religions is in the full acceptance of mutability; happiness lies in achieving that acceptance. Suffering is perpetuated by, and inseparable from, ignorance, and mitigated by wisdom. The deepest ignorance is to fail to see, or to disavow, the fact that everything that exists is mutable and transient. The force of this position may be seen, again, in contrast with Christianity; for the Buddhist the source of suffering is ignorance rather than sin. And the real source of suffering is desire (kama) or craving (tanha, literally 'thirst'), both of which are intrinsic to, constitutive of, humankind. There is a Buddhist doctrine of 'conditioned arising' or 'dependent origination' which asserts that everything that exists is dependent on certain prevailing conditions; nothing is intrinsically self-sufficient, independent or stable. This is especially true of selfhood. Buddhism completely denies the idea of a transcendent or autonomous self so powerful in Western religion and philosophy. To believe that there is some essential inner self or consciousness which is the real me, ultimately identifiable apart from everything that happens to me, is an illusion: What we call a personality is just an individual stream of becoming; a cross-section of it at any given moment in an aggregate of the five skandhas which (as long as it continues) are in unstable and unceasing interaction with each other, (p. 86) There is no I. Even to believe in an I which possesses emotions (albeit helplessly) is mistaken. One of the problems with desire, and why it cannot make us happy, is that it presupposes a self which does not exist; at the core of our being we are empty. Everything that constitutes the individual is marked by the unsatisfactoriness and suffering which is dukkha. Nor is there such a thing as the soul. The person is only a fleeting series of discontinuous states held together by desire, by craving. When desire is extinguished the person is dissolved. Since life and suffering are synonymous, the extinction of desire is the goal of human endeavor. Until that happens we continue to exist through a series of rebirths. It is not death as such which is deplored, but rebirth; it is not death but rebirth which we must escape. So much so that in some early texts rebirth is described as 'redeath'. Desire perpetuates life, which is synonymous with suffering, and which leads to death. Desire perpetuates death; it keeps one dying. The self is merged with ultimate reality not by identifying the core of the self (soul/essence) with ultimate reality (God/the universal) but by extinguishing self into non-being (nirvana). This is the aspect of Buddhism which has fascinated Western philosophers like Schopenhauer and artists like Wagner; with whatever degree of misinterpretation, they have been drawn by the ideas of empowerment through renunciation, nullification and quiescence; of the apparent ability to move freely with the mutability and change which arc the apparent cause of suffering; of choosing freely not to pursue the illusion of freedom, in a sense to eliminate the illusion of self; of becoming discontinuous, mindless. Not to escape mutability but to become it; not to just go with the flow of endless change, but to become it. To achieve the state of nirvana - that is, a state of being which is essentially empty of desire and striving. The wisdom of Buddhism does not desire to transcend change or to affirm an essential ultimate relationship of self to the absolute and unchanging (Platonic forms, the Christian God); nor does the Buddhist desire to die or to cease to be (the death drive): he or she does not desire annihilation but rather learns how to cease desiring. Nirvana is the utter cessation of desire or craving; it means extinction.

#### Use the ballot to engage in meditative affirmation of the status quo.

**Astma 6 –** Professor of Philosophy at Columbia College

(Stephen, “Against Transcendentalism: Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life and Buddhism”, *Monty Python and Philosophy* ebook copy, dml)

Upon close inspection, Buddha shows, paradise crumbles. The atman, on the other hand, is a no show. The Buddha thinks that atman is nowhere to be found except in the literary inventions of Hinduism and the confusions of its followers. Buddhism, contrary to all dualistic theories, asserts that **we are not made up of two metaphysically different parts**, a permanent spirit and an impermanent body. Buddhism breaks with most religions, East and West, by recognizing that we are each a finite tangle of qualities, all of which eventually exhaust themselves, and none of which, conscious or other, carries on independently. All humans, according to Buddha, are composed of the five aggregates (khandas ); body (rupa), feeling (vedana), perception (sanna), dispositions or volitional tendencies (sankhara) and consciousness (vinnana). If the Buddha was standing around in the battlefield setting of the Bhagavad Gita, he would certainly chime-in and object to Krishna’s irresponsible claim that a permanent soul resides in Arjuna and his enemies. Show me this permanent entity, the Buddha would demand. Is the body permanent? Are feelings permanent? What about perceptions, or dispositions, or even consciousness? The Buddha says “If there really existed the atman, there would be also something that belonged to this atman. As however, in truth and reality, neither an atman nor anything belonging to an atman can be found, is it not really an utter fool’s doctrine to say: This is the world, this am I; after death I shall be permanent, persisting and eternal?” (Mijjhima Nikaya) Buddha examines all the elements of the human being, finds that they are all fleeting, and finds no additional permanent entity or soul amidst the tangle of human faculties. There is no ghost in the machine. What’s So Grotesque about That? In their rejection of transcendentalism, Buddhism and Monty Python converge in their celebrations of the grotesque. The Python crew seems to relish the disgusting facts of human biology and they take every opportunity to render them through special effects. Throughout Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life, blood spurts, vomit spews, babies explode from birth canals, decapitated heads abound, and limbs putrefy. Theravada Buddhism also celebrates the revolting, treating it as a meditation focus for contemplating the lack of permanence. The transcendentalist consoles herself with the idea that this physical body may decay and perish, but an eternal soul will outlast the material melt-down—not so for the Buddha. In an attempt to undercut human vanity and demonstrate the impermanence of all things, Buddhist scriptures are filled with nauseating details about rotting carcasses and putrid flesh. In the Anguttara Nikaya, for example, the scripture asks, “Did you never see in the world the corpse of a man or a woman, one or two or three days after death, swollen up, blue-black in color, and full of corruption? And did the thought never come to you that you also are subject to death, that you cannot escape it?” (III, 35) When I was at a monastery in Southern Thailand, I chanced upon some reproductions of “dhamma paintings” from the mid-nineteenth century. These pictures were from a Chaiya manuscript discovered nearby, and they depicted, in detail, the “Ten Reflections on Foulness” (asubha kammatthana). The paintings illustrate the various uses of corpses as objects for contemplating impermanence. Following the great Theravadan philosopher Buddhaghosa’s Visuddhimagga text (“Path of Purification”), the artist rendered decaying corpses in rather comprehensive stages of dismemberment and putrification. According to Buddhaghosa, staring at a bloated corpse will be particularly useful to me if I’m feeling overly attached and arrogant about the shape and morphology of my body. If instead I’m feeling snobby or bigoted about my skin’s color or complexion, I should focus on the livid corpse that ranges from green to blue-black in color. Or, if I mistakenly feel that my body is my own, I am to rectify this error by meditating on a worm-infested corpse (puluvaka). As Buddhaghosa explains, “The body is shared by many and creatures live in dependence on (all parts and organs) and feed (on them). And there they are born, grow old, and die, evacuate and pass water; and the body is their maternity home, their hospital, their charnel ground, their privy and their urinal.” Buddhist “mindfulness” (meditational awareness) about the body is being aware of its transience, its brevity, its fugacity. The physical body is slowly macerating, and to try to hold onto it or recompose it is a pipe-dream. The single issue that invited comment from film reviewers when Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life was released was its wallow in the grotesque. One exclaimed that the film’s “ramshackle bouts of surreal physical comedy—a clotted mass of frenzied bodies, debris, mud, and gore—induce feelings of revolt and despair.”53 In light of the film’s critique of transcendentalism, however, this reviewer got it just backward. Far from despairing, the Pythons aimed to smash the deceptive veneer of puritanical snobbery that devalues the flesh and overvalues the invisible spirit. Like Buddhism, Python asks us to “say yes” to our true nature, **filled as it is with impermanence and unpleasantness.** At first this may seem jarring and disturbing, but in the long run **it is preferable to self-deception through figmentary transcendent reality**. Buddha’s rejection of a permanent transcendental soul is known as the anatta, or “no-self ” doctrine (and the companion doctrine that rejects the idea of a permanent God is called paticca samuppada, or “dependent arising,” because it denies the need for any transcendent uncaused cause). The most important Buddhist critique of the transcendental soul finds place in Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life. It is the idea that belief in unseen, eternal, and divine realities ultimately **distracts us from our own humanity**. Transcendentalism **dehumanizes us by feeding selfish craving**. If we embrace a worldview that pivots on the idea that we will attain immortality, then we are going to be overly concerned with our soul’s protection and its future fate. We become **more concerned with saving our own souls** than valuing and attending to the needs of those around us. Simply put, belief in a soul and a heaven of blissful happiness actually **makes you less ethical in this life**. The rejection of souls, heaven, and God, does not lead, as so many critics contend, to bleak egoistic nihilism. Many transcendentalists foretell a gloomy picture without the security of otherworldly meaning, predicting rampant hedonism (pure pleasure seeking) or nihilistic apathy. The Buddha disagrees and thinks that these life patterns are to be avoided as much as otherworldly dogmatism. The extremes, excesses, and general sufferings of the hedonist strategy and the nihilist strategy are revealed in the film. Terry’s Jones’s Mr. Creosote, for instance, is the giant embodiment of the crass pursuit of sensual gratification. After gorging himself on multiple servings of food and wine at a fancy French restaurant, his unchecked desire for the pleasures of chocolate puts him over the edge. Though he claims he can eat no more, Cleese easily seduces him with a single, small, “vaffer-thin” chocolate mint. Mr. Creosote then begins to inflate and he soon explodes, showering the restaurant in his blood and entrails. Obviously, such hedonism and self-gratification is not an appropriate fall-back for those who reject transcendental metaphysics and ethics. Nor is it appropriate to give oneself over to despair or indifference. The folly of that is illustrated in the movie’s gruesome portrayal of a liver transplant. After Graham Chapman starts the bloody business of removing this poor chap’s liver in his dining room, his partner, Cleese, chats up the man’s wife (Terry Jones in drag) in the kitchen. Cleese asks if she too would give up her liver, but she replies, “No . . . I don’t want to die.” Cleese perseveres and introduces her to Eric Idle, who steps out of her refrigerator and commences a musical tour of the sublime immensity of the universe and the tiny insignificance of her life: Just remember that you’re standing on a planet that’s evolving And revolving at nine hundred miles an hour, That’s orbiting at nineteen miles a second, so it’s reckoned, A sun that is the source of all our power. The sun and you and me and all the stars that we can see, Are moving at a million miles a day In an outer spiral arm, at forty thousand miles an hour, Of the galaxy we call the Milky Way. The Universe itself keeps on expanding and expanding In all of the directions it can whizz As fast as it can go, at the speed of light you know, Twelve million miles a minute, and that’s the fastest speed there is. So remember when you’re feeling very small and insecure How amazingly unlikely is your birth And pray that there’s intelligent life somewhere up in space Because there’s bugger all down here on earth. “Makes you feel so sort of insignificant, doesn’t it?” Cleese and Chapman ask. “Can we have your liver then?” She gives in—“Yeah. All right, you talked me into it”—and the two doctors set upon her with their knives. Just as Mr. Creosote succumbs to sensual overindulgence, this housewife opts for a groundless underindulgence. Just because she realizes she lives in an almost infinitely large universe, that is no reason for her to think that her life is worthless in itself and not worth continuing. This is what the extreme nihilist does (indeed, this is what nihilism is all about), and the Python crew is showing us the absurdity of it. Life **does not become meaningless** once you give up the idea that you are playing a role in a transcendentally planned drama. The values of family, work, love, understanding, simple pleasures, and peace, **don’t go away** once you reject transcendent meaning. Nor does the woman’s natural desire for self-preservation and the avoidance of suffering evaporate once she realizes her own finitude. Transcendental dogmatism is dehumanizing, but so are the opposing extremes of hedonism and nihilistic skepticism. The Buddha made this point explicitly when he argued for a Middle Way between all opposing extremes. Just as **one should find a middle way** between the slaveries of excessive indulgence and excessive asceticism (self-denial), so too one must avoid embracing both absolutist worldviews (like Palin’s toadying transcendentalist chaplain) and relativist worldviews (where all values and meanings are leveled or negated). The Buddha’s Middle Way doctrine seeks to reclaim human values and meaning by avoiding overly rigid blind faith and also avoiding distracting speculations about matters that are remote from lived experience. Back Down to Earth So, what are these more down-to-earth human values that must be rescued from transcendental flights-of-fancy and nihilistic negativity? In light of the film’s critique of transcendentalism, the extremely modest list of values offered at the end as final “answers” to the meaning of life make good sense. They are introduced by Palin (in drag) as he interrupts the Vegas-style celebration of perpetual Christmas. “Well, that’s the end of the film,” she announces. “Now here’s the Meaning of Life.” She opens an envelope and reads, “Well, it’s nothing special. Try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in, and try and live together in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and nations.” This rather modest sounding list makes perfect sense if we no longer pine for some more grand transcendental meaning. Once we dispatch both the otherworldly values (toadying to God and conserving our sperm, for example) and the otherworldly “realities” which ground those values (soul, heaven, God), then **matters of meaning become markedly more pragmatic and demystified**. Like Buddha’s philosophy, the essential goals in life become attempts to realize moderation, actualize one’s potential, and reduce suffering. When we try to make issues of ultimate meaning more melodramatic than this, we end up with the distracting and dehumanizing edifices of transcendentalism. The Buddha offers us Four Noble Truths that can be used to fight these temptations and distractions. First, he says “All life is suffering, or all life is unsatisfactory (dukkha).” This seems pessimistic at first, but he’s simply pointing out that to have a biological body is to be subject to pain, illness, and eventually death. To have family and friends means that we are open to inevitable loss, disappointment, and also betrayal. But more importantly, even when we feel joy and happiness, these too are transient experiences that will fade because all things are impermanent. Second, the Buddha says “Suffering is caused by craving or attachment.” When we have a pleasurable experience we try to repeat it over and over or try to hang on to it and turn it into a permanent thing. Sensual experiences are not themselves the causes of suffering—they are inherently neutral phenomena. It is the psychological state of craving that rises up in the wake of sensations which causes us to have unrealistic expectations of those feelings—sending us chasing after fleeting experiences that cannot be possessed. The Third Noble Truth states that the cure for suffering is non-attachment or the cessation of craving. In the Samyutta Nikaya text, the Buddha says that the wise person “regards the delightful and pleasurable things of this world as impermanent, unsatisfactory and without atman (any permanent essence), as a disease and sorrow—it is he who overcomes the craving” (12:66). And the Fourth Noble Truth is an eight-fold path that helps the follower to steer a Middle Way of ethical moderation. Following the simple eight-fold path, which contains simple recommendations similar those listed at the end of Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life, allows the follower to overcome egoistic craving. Perhaps the most important craving that must be overcome, according to Buddha, is the craving for immortality. The Buddha claimed that giving up transcendental tendencies would help us to better see the people all around us who need our help. We would become more compassionate, he argued, because we would not be distracted by cravings for the “other world.” Mind the Mindfulness As the Pythons suggest, however, not all dehumanizing distraction comes from “above.” Often, we lose sight of compassion and humane living by drowning ourselves in a sea of trivial diversions. In existential terms, we lose our “authentic self ” in the unimportant hustle and bustle of everyday matters. Consider again the executives of the Very Big Corporation of America. Later in the film, we learn that just before they were attacked by the mutineers sailing the Crimson Permanent Assurance they were having a meeting about “Item Six on the Agenda, the Meaning of Life.” The board chairman, Graham Chapman, turns things over to Michael Palin: “Now Harry, you’ve had some thoughts on this.” “That’s right, yeah. I’ve had a team working on this over the past few weeks,” Palin explains in his best American accent: What we’ve come up with can be reduced to two fundamental concepts. One, people are not wearing enough hats. Two, matter is energy; in the Universe there are many energy fields which we cannot normally perceive. Some energies have a spiritual source which act upon a person’s soul. However, this soul does not exist ab initio, as orthodox Christianity teaches; it has to be brought into existence by a process of guided self-observation. However, this is rarely achieved owing to man’s unique ability to be distracted from spiritual matters by everyday trivia. The other Board members sit quietly through Palin’s impressive and important report. But, they need clarification about one of the more important points: “What was that about hats again?” one of them asks. Distraction reigns again in Part IV, Middle Age, when the hyper-pleasant, smiley, and vapid American couple (Palin and, in drag, Idle) are served up a “philosophy conversation” in the form of flashcard prompts. The waiter (Cleese) tries to get the insipid couple started on their philosophy conversation by asking, “Did you ever wonder why we’re here?” They fail utterly to stay on topic. “Oh! I never knew that Schopenhauer was a philosopher,” Idle exclaims. Palin responds, “Yeah. . . . He’s the one that begins with an S. WIFE: “Oh.” HUSBAND: “Um [pause] . . . like Nietzsche.” WIFE: “Does Nietzsche begin with an S?” HUSBAND: “There’s an S in Nietzsche.” WIFE: “Oh wow! Yes there is. Do all philosophers have an S in them?” HUSBAND: “Yeah I think most of them do.” WIFE: “Oh! Does that mean [the popular singer] Selina Jones is a philosopher?” HUSBAND: “Yeah, Right. She could be. She sings about the meaning of life.” WIFE: “Yeah, that’s right, but I don’t think she writes her own material.” HUSBAND: “No. Maybe Schopenhauer writes her material?” WIFE: “No. Burt Bacharach writes it.” HUSBAND: “There’s no S in Burt Bacharach.” If we combine this tedious conversation and the Boardroom’s fascination with hats, the results of Palin’s research begins to make sense. Human beings must “create” their “souls” day-by-day (rather than simply discover them, ready made) through “a process of guided self-observation.” The great enemy of this process, these sketches show, **is distraction**. This is a conception of the soul that the Buddha could agree with. It embraces impermanence, avoids transcendentalist metaphysics, and accepts the view that we must actively cultivate our “souls.” This is the point of Buddhist “mindfulness” (sati)—a powerful meditation that cuts through the dehumanizing distractions. There’s nothing mystical or particularly fancy about it. **You can do it in your daily activities as well as in isolated contemplation**. It just requires you to focus your mind and senses in the present moment, and to resist the mind’s natural tendency to wander off into the past or future, **to replay events or imagine scenarios that fill our minds** with worries, regrets, hopes or cravings. Mindfulness is a state of awareness that comes from training and discipline, a state that shuts out the drifting distractions of life and reveals the uniqueness of each present moment. In doing this careful attending, one can become more present in his or her own life. Mindfulness helps to rehumanize a person by taking their head out of the clouds. And according to Buddhism it reconnects us better with our compassionate hearts by revealing other human beings as just human beings. Once the distractions of trivia, or theoretical, transcendental, or ideological overlays are removed, **we may become better able to know ourselves** and compassionately recognize ourselves in others. We may even come to learn that, in fact, we should all wear more hats. But **we will only know for sure if we are less distracted and more mindful**.

### 1nc 2

#### Their model of resistance defeats itself when it mirrors sovereign violence by maintaining bare life as an object of resistance just as it is an object of sovereign power—the only solution is for bare life to become absolutely and immediately political on its own terms

Amoore and Hall 13. Louise Amoore, professor of geography at the University of Durham, and Alexandra Hall, professor of politics at the University of York, “The clown at the gates of the camp: Sovereignty, resistance and the figure of the fool,” Security Dialoge 44(2) pg. 95

It is our contention, and following Jenny Edkins’ (2007) subtle reading of Agamben, that the phi- losopher himself suggests a way out of the political impasse conjured by his vision of sovereign power. Rendering bare life as ‘form-of-life’, Agamben imagines a being without definitive identity or claim in the world. This, he describes, is a being ‘which is only its own bare existence’ and which ‘being its own form remains inseparable from it’ and ‘over which power no longer seems to have any hold’ (Agamben, 1998: 188). Like the ‘whatever being’ that Agamben refers to in the Coming Community, this is a being that does not make any settled claim for identity or recognition. It is this very lack of identity and lack of definitive demand that constitutes a ‘threat the State cannot come to terms with’ (Agamben 1993: 85). Sovereign power, Agamben (1993: 85–86) reminds us, can recognize and deal with any claim for identity, and yet it cannot tolerate ‘that singularities form a community without affirming an identity’. As Jenny Edkins and Veronique Pin-Fat (2004: 13) suggest, the grammar of sovereign power is not effectively contested by counter identity claims, for such actions merely fight over ‘where the lines are drawn’. Instead, it is by neither refusing nor accepting the biopolitical distinctions that sovereign power seeks to draw that its logic may be interrupted.4 Agamben’s discussions of whatever being and form-of-life point to a space for political action, contestation and resistance that is produced within, and forms an intrinsic part of, sovereign power, one that that is frequently occluded in discussions of homo sacer. Bare life has the potential to become ‘explicitly and immediately political’ (Agamben, 1998: 153) – as Edkins (2007: 86) has it, bare life is the constitutive outside of sovereignty that may also form ‘the element that threatens its disruption from within’.

Notwithstanding the important absence of any representable identity in whatever being, ques- tions do remain as to the specific nature of such forms of being. Precisely what kinds of subjectiv- ity are problematic for sovereign power? What kinds of life fail to be comfortably identifiable within the conditions set out by sovereign power? What might the practices and actions of these forms-of-life of a coming politics look like? The refugee has frequently been invoked as a figure who embodies the threatening ‘outside’ of sovereign political life (Agamben, 1995; Edkins and Pin Fat, 2004; Nyers, 2006; Tyler, 2006). Yet, the way in which the ‘bare’ refugee becomes implicated in attempts to oppose sovereign power via rights and humanitarianism frequently replicates sover- eign power’s own grasp of bare life. In other words, bare life becomes the object or subject of sovereign power and also the object and subject of efforts to oppose it (Agamben, 1998: 133; Edkins, 2007: 75). As Edkins (2007: 75) puts the problem, ‘a coming politics, if it is to be other than a sovereign politics, cannot be a form of identity or social movement politics’. Sovereign power cannot be countered by a politics that seeks to draw lines differently, but that still persists in the act of declaring unities and drawing distinctions.

#### The very basis of American jurisprudence that all of their solvency arguments are premised upon has a racialized history that must be interrogated prior to attempts to utilize it positively.

Cho and Gott 10. Sumi Cho, professor of law at DePaul University, and Gil Gott, professor of international studies at DePaul University, “The Racial Sovereign,” Sovereignty, Emergency, Legality, ed. Austin Sarat, Cambridge University Press 2010: pg. 190

Sovereignty and other foundational legal principles in the United States developed homologously with the structures of societal racial formation.24 So, for example, how federalism would be defined, who could be a “citi- zen,” or what is meant by “military necessity” or “national security” all “grew up” next to the question of what it meant to be white, what it meant for “America” to be white, and what it meant to lack whiteness in the United States. Courts developed the lofty but racially contingent foundational legal principles in a way that effectively solidified the stratifications of racial caste. These foundational legal principles transcended legal rationales or distinc- tions, and asked the big questions of what it meant to be a nation, what the relationship was between state and federal governments, and how private property became constructed in the United States. National sovereignty,25 federalism,26 separation of powers,27 and plenary power 28 are all central legal principles on which the United States was founded. Each term embeds a racialized history in which race and law were mutually constructed. That these foundational legal principles originate in racial contingency and become defined and refined in the context of racial conflict reveals the his- torical processes by which race and law have been mutually constitutive in the United States.29

#### The nihilistic system of sovereignty thrives on its continued pre-supposed inevitability, which necessarily limits the forms a “human” can take, eviscerating the possibility of a happy life

Prozorov 10. Sergei Prozorov, professor of political and economic studies at the University of Helsinki, “Why Giorgio Agamben is an optimist,” Philosophy Social Criticism 2010 36: pg. 1065

In a later work, Agamben generalizes this logic and transforms it into a basic ethical imperative of his work: ‘[There] is often nothing reprehensible about the individual behavior in itself, and it can, indeed, express a liberatory intent. What is disgraceful – both politically and morally – are the apparatuses which have diverted it from their possible use. We must always wrest from the apparatuses – from all apparatuses – the possibility of use that they have captured.’32 As we shall discuss in the following section, this is to be achieved by a subtraction of ourselves from these apparatuses, which leaves them in a jammed, inoperative state. What is crucial at this point is that the apparatuses of nihilism themselves prepare their demise by emptying out all positive content of the forms-of-life they govern and increasingly running on ‘empty’, capable only of (inflict- ing) Death or (doing) Nothing.

On the other hand, this degradation of the apparatuses illuminates the ‘inoperosity’ (worklessness) of the human condition, whose originary status Agamben has affirmed from his earliest works onwards.33 By rendering void all historical forms-of-life, nihi- lism brings to light the absence of work that characterizes human existence, which, as irreducibly potential, logically presupposes the lack of any destiny, vocation, or task that it must be subjected to: ‘Politics is that which corresponds to the essential inoperability of humankind, to the radical being-without-work of human communities. There is pol- itics because human beings are argos-beings that cannot be defined by any proper oper- ation, that is, beings of pure potentiality that no identity or vocation can possibly exhaust.’34

Having been concealed for centuries by religion or ideology, this originary inoperos- ity is fully unveiled in the contemporary crisis, in which it is manifest in the inoperative character of the biopolitical apparatuses themselves, which succeed only in capturing the sheer existence of their subjects without being capable of transforming it into a positive form-of-life:

[T]oday, it is clear for anyone who is not in absolutely bad faith that there are no longer historical tasks that can be taken on by, or even simply assigned to, men. It was evident start- ing with the end of the First World War that the European nation-states were no longer capa- ble of taking on historical tasks and that peoples themselves were bound to disappear.35

Agamben’s metaphor for this condition is bankruptcy: ‘One of the few things that can be

declared with certainty is that all the peoples of Europe (and, perhaps, all the peoples of the Earth) have gone bankrupt’.36 Thus, the destructive nihilistic drive of the biopolitical machine and the capitalist spectacle has itself done all the work of emptying out positive forms-of-life, identities and vocations, leaving humanity in the state of destitution that Agamben famously terms ‘bare life’. Yet, this bare life, whose essence is entirely con- tained in its existence, is precisely what conditions the emergence of the subject of the coming politics: ‘this biopolitical body that is bare life must itself be transformed into the site for the constitution and installation of a form-of-life that is wholly exhausted in bare life and a bios that is only its own zoe.’37

The ‘happy’ form-of-life, a ‘life that cannot be segregated from its form’, is nothing but bare life that has reappropriated itself as its own form and for this reason is no longer separated between the (degraded) bios of the apparatuses and the (endangered) zoe that functions as their foundation.38 Thus, what the nihilistic self-destruction of the appara- tuses of biopolitics leaves as its residue turns out to be the entire content of a new form-of-life. Bare life, which is, as we recall, ‘nothing reprehensible’ aside from its con- finement within the apparatuses, is reappropriated as a ‘whatever singularity’, a being that is only its manner of being, its own ‘thus’.39 It is the dwelling of humanity in this irreducibly potential ‘whatever being’ that makes possible the emergence of a generic non-exclusive community without presuppositions, in which Agamben finds the possi- bility of a happy life.

[If] instead of continuing to search for a proper identity in the already improper and sense- less form of individuality, humans were to succeed in belonging to this impropriety as such, in making of the proper being-thus not an identity and individual property but a singularity without identity, a common and absolutely exposed singularity, then they would for the first time enter into a community without presuppositions and without subjects.40

Thus, rather than seek to reform the apparatuses, we should simply leave them to their self-destruction and only try to reclaim the bare life that they feed on. This is to be achieved by the practice of subtraction that we address in the following section.

#### Be ready to destroy everything.

Burroughs 88. William S. Burroughs, *Western Lands* 1988

Scientists always said there is no such thing as a soul. Now they are in a position to prove it. Total Death. Soul Death. It’s what the Egyptians called the Second and Final Death. This awesome power to destroy souls forever is now vested in farsighted and responsible men in the State Department, the CIA, and the Pentagon.

Governments fall from sheer indifference. Authority figures, deprived of the vampiric energy they suck off their constituents, are seen for what they are: dead empty masks manipulated by computers. And what is behind the computers? Remote control. Of course. Don't intend to be here when this shithouse goes up. Nothing here now but the recordings. Shut them off, they are as radioactive as an old joke.  
Look at the prison you are in, we are all in. This is a penal colony that is now a Death Camp. Place of the Second and Final Death.  
Desperation is the raw material of drastic change. Only those who can leave behind everything they have ever believed in can hope to escape.

#### Accepting the plan as a legitimate subject of debate implicitly accepts that the lines of sovereign inside and outside must be drawn somewhere.

Edkins and Pin-Fat 05. Jenny Edkins, professor of international politics at Prifysgol Aberystwyth University (in Wales) and Veronique Pin-Fat, senior lecturer in politics at Manchester Universit, “Through the Wire: Relations of Power and Relations of Violence,” Millennium - Journal of International Studies 2005 34: pg. 14

One potential form of challenge to sovereign power consists of a refusal to draw any lines between zoe- and bios, inside and outside**.**59 As we have shown, sovereign power does not involve a power relation in Foucauldian terms. It is more appropriately considered to have become a form of governance or technique of administration through relationships of violence that reduce political subjects to mere bare or naked life. In asking for a refusal to draw lines as a possibility of challenge, then, we are not asking for the elimination of power relations and consequently, we are not asking for the erasure of the possibility of a mode of political being that is empowered and empowering, is free and that speaks: quite the opposite. Following Agamben, we are suggesting that it is only through a refusal to draw any lines at all between forms of life (and indeed, nothing less will do) that sovereign power as a form of violence can be contested and a properly political power relation (a life of power as potenza) reinstated. We could call this challenging the logic of sovereign power through refusal. Our argument is that we can evade sovereign power and reinstate a form of power relation by contesting sovereign power’s assumption of the right to draw lines, that is, by contesting the sovereign ban. Any other challenge always inevitably remains within this relationship of violence. To move outside it (and return to a power relation) we need not only to contest its right to draw lines in particular places, but also to resist the call to draw any lines of the sort sovereign power demands.

The grammar of sovereign power cannot be resisted by challenging or fighting over where the lines are drawn. Whilst, of course, this is a strategy that can be deployed, it is not a challenge to sovereign power per se as it still tacitly or even explicitly accepts that lines must be drawn somewhere (and preferably more inclusively). Although such strategies contest the violence of sovereign power’s drawing of a particular line, they risk replicating such violence in demanding the line be drawn differently**.** This is because such forms of challenge fail to refuse sovereign power’s line-drawing ‘ethos’, an ethos which, as Agamben points out, renders us all now homines sacri or bare life.

Taking Agamben’s conclusion on board, we now turn to look at how the assumption of bare life can produce forms of challenge. Agamben puts it in terms of a transformation:

This biopolitical body that is bare life must itself instead be transformed into the site for the constitution and installation of a form of life that is wholly exhausted in bare life and a bios that is only its own zoe-.... If we give the name form-of-life to this being that is only its own bare existence and to this life that, being its own form, remains inseparable from it we will witness the emergence of a field of research beyond the terrain defined by the intersection of politics and philosophy, medico-biological sciences and jurisprudence.60

#### The affirmative is weak messianism that surrenders the possibility of an entirely new language to respond to the problem of sovereign control. Appeals to legality fail absent study and de-activation of the fictional lines of inside and outside created by the sovereign guardians

McLoughlin 13. Daniel McLoughlin, professor of law at the University of South Wales, “The Fiction of Sovereignty and the Real State of Exception: Giorgio Agamben’s Critique of Carl Schmitt,” Law, Culture and the Humanities 0(0) pg. 17

State of Exception suggests that the studious deactivation of the law is exemplified by Kafka’s characters.86 While his reading of Kafka is only one strand of the politics of inoperativity within his work, it is nonetheless an important one for our purposes, given Agamben’s tendency to illuminate the relationship between messianism, nihil- ism and law through Kafka.87 To conclude, then, I briefly examine the way in which Kafka’s characters seek to “deactivate” the law; how this might relate to the production of a “real state of exception”; and how Agamben conceives the stakes of this politics of “use.”

According to Homo Sacer, Kafka’s parable “Before the Law” represents the “struc- ture of the sovereign ban in an exemplary abbreviation.”88 The story begins with the “man from the country” approaching the door of the law, only to be informed by its gatekeeper that, although the door is open, he cannot enter at the moment. The man asks if permission will be forthcoming: the gatekeeper responds that it is possible, “but not now,”89 and that, although he is welcome to enter the door without permission, he will only encounter door after door, and guardian after guardian, each more fearsome than the last. Taking a seat before the door of the law, the man from the country then waits for days and years, all the while trying to convince the gatekeeper to grant him entry. Still before the law in old age, with little time left to live, he sees a radiance streaming from the gateway to the law. As his life begins to fade, the man from the country asks why in all this time no-one else has attempted to gain entry, to which the doorkeeper responds: “No one else could ever be admitted here, since this gate was made only for you. I am now going to shut it.”90

According to Agamben, “Before the Law” is usually read as a tale of “irremediable defeat,”91 a story of the impossibility of surpassing the structure of sovereignty. Agamben, by contrast, argues that the man from the country is engaged in a patient and ultimately successful attempt to deactivate the law’s “being in force without sig- nificance.” At the end of the story, despite the risk to his life entailed by his struggle with the law, the man remains alive and the door to the Law is shut. In his essay “K,” Agamben elaborates on this reading with a subtle yet important shift of emphasis: the lesson of the man from the country is, he argues, that the deactivation of the law does not require the study of law itself, but rather, the “long study of its doorkeepers.”92 While the law is absent in Kafka’s world, what keeps it at work is the fact that the guardians of the law claim to act on its behalf. If one wants to deactivate the law, then the decisive politi- cal struggle is not with law itself, which is already inoperative, but with those who cover over this fact with the claim that they represent the law. In the same essay, Agamben makes a similar point about The Castle: the land surveyor who tries to gain access to the castle does not engage in a struggle “against God or supreme sovereignty ... but against the angels, the messengers and functionaries who appear to represent it ... (it is) a conflict with the fabrications of men (or of angels) regarding the divine.”93

This helps to illuminate the sense in which the real state of exception can simultane- ously be a situation to which we are subject; a situation that has been exposed as such by Benjamin; and also a crucial political task to undertake that will “help in the struggle against Fascism.” In Agamben’s account of Paul, the coming of the messiah has deacti- vated the law and yet the law remains at work; in his analyses of the state of exception the law is suspended yet remains in force; in his reading of Kafka, the Law is absent yet still present. In each instance, then, there is a messianic tension between an “already” existing lawlessness that is “not yet” fully experienced as such, because it is being cov- ered over by authority: the katechon in Paul, the guardians of the law in Kafka, and those trying to control the state in his account of the exception. To produce a real state of exception is to deactivate the law, which requires undermining the claims of the repre- sentatives of the law and the political divisions that they maintain on this basis. While the lawlessness of the real state of exception is at work, it can only come to light in and through a “conflict with the fabrications of men” about the continued existence of law.94

Agamben sees the politics of deactivating the law as the only appropriate (and indeed conceptually viable) response to the state of emergency as rule. As we have observed, Schmitt’s analysis of sovereignty closed down the idea of pure violence and the possi- bility of a radically revolutionary act through the idea of the force-of-law, which placed the power to suspend the law into the hands of the state and those who seek to control it. However, Benjamin’s eighth thesis turns the tables on Schmitt, as the idea of sover- eignty becomes utterly implausible when the state of emergency is the rule. Within the contemporary political horizon, then, it is conceptually impossible to claim legal author- ity and legitimacy: as Agamben asserts in The Church and the Kingdom “nowhere on earth today is a legitimate power to be found.”95 What is conceptually possible, how- ever, is a politics that seeks to deactivate the law by neutralizing the claims to legality made by those who present themselves as its guardians. It is only through such a politics that the lawlessness of the ‘‘real state of exception’’ is experienced as such, as any poli- tics that makes claims to legal authority rests upon the fiction of sovereignty and hence continues to conceal the deactivation of the law.

What is at stake in this account of the real state of exception is an attempt to break with the sense of political stagnation that characterizes contemporary politics. In a frag- ment from The Coming Community entitled “Halos,” Agamben recounts a version of a parable about the Kingdom of the Messiah told to Ernst Bloch by Walter Benjamin: “The Hassidim tell a story about the world to come that says everything there will be just as it is here. Just as our room is now, so will it be in the world to come; where our baby sleeps now, there too it will sleep in the other world. And the clothes we wear in this world, so too we will wear there. Everything will be as it is now, just a little bit different.”96 After recounting Benjamin’s version of the parable, Agamben goes on to say that “the tiny displacement does not refer to things, but to their sense and their limits ... the parable introduces a possibility there where everything is perfect, an ‘otherwise’ where every- thing is finished forever.”97 For Agamben, then, the sense of “inversion” that is charac- teristic of Benjamin’s messianism brings to light a possibility to be otherwise. Similarly, Agamben’s messianic inversion of sovereignty responds to a sense of political closure by trying to introduce a sense that it is possible for things to be otherwise.

Throughout his political work, he asserts that the political tradition has reached its end due to the increasing indistinction of the fundamental oppositions (law/anomie, politics/ life) that have historically delimited the political and thereby made it possible. The con- ceptual and institutional structures that framed and helped to make sense of our political experience have collapsed and it is not possible to return to their shelter.98 Despite this crisis, we do not seem capable of conceiving of political experience beyond the terms offered by the political tradition, and the theory of sovereignty plays a key role in this sense of political closure, anchoring all political experience to the law, and foreclosing the idea of a political action that breaks with the order of legal violence.

By undermining the idea of sovereignty, Benjamin’s eighth thesis re-opens the con- ceptual possibility of a politics of pure violence. Pure violence is, Agamben writes, mani- fest in the purification of violence: that is, in the “exposure and deposition”99 of the nexus between violence and law. This is precisely what Benjamin achieves in his philo- sophical combat with Schmitt, meaning that the eighth thesis is a manifestation of the politics of pure violence at the level of theory.100 But while Benjamin may have disabled the apparatus of sovereignty at a philosophical level, the force-of-law is consistently invoked by the messengers and guardians of the law to justify the anomic violence that is leading us towards catastrophe.101 Benjamin’s eighth thesis then grounds Agamben’s call for, and attempt to theorize the conditions of, a messianic politics dedicated to bringing to light the inoperativity of the law that is already at work in the politics of our time. For Agamben, to live messianically means to take the illegitimacy of state power as the premise of one’s politics: to act on the basis that the law is already inoperative, that the claims to authority of its representatives are a fiction, and that their power needs to be deactivated.

### case

#### We are living “after the orgy”—their struggle for liberation does nothing more than feed status quo tactics of domination—they create a culture of representative freedom without any real agency.

Baudrillard 90. Jean Baudrillard, French philosopher, writer, and professor of sociology at the Universite de Paris-X, *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*, Verso Books 1990.

If I were asked to characterize the present state of affairs, I would describe it as ‘**after the orgy’**. The orgy in question was the moment when modernity exploded upon us, the moment of liberation in every sphere. Political liberation, sexual liberation, liberation of the forces of production, liberation of the forces ofdestruction, women’s liberation, children’s liberation, liberation of the unconscious drives, liberation of art. The assumption of all models of representation, as models of anti-representation. This was a total orgy—an orgy of the real, the rational, the sexual, of criticism as of anti-criticism, of development as the crisis of development. We have pursued every avenue in the production and effective overproduction of objects, signs, messages, ideologies, and satisfactions. Now everything has been liberated, the chips are down, and we find ourselves faced collectively with the big question: **WHAT DO WE DO NOW THAT THE ORGY IS OVER?** Now all we can do is simulate the orgy, simulate liberation. We pretend to carry on in the same direction, accelerating, but in reality we are accelerating in a void, because all the goals of liberation are already behind us, and because what haunts and obsesses us is being thus ahead of all the results—the very availability of all the signs, all the forms, all the desires that we had been pursuing. But what can we do? This is the state of simulation, a state in which we are obliged to replay all scenarios precisely because they have all taken place already, whether actually or potentially. The state of utopia realized, of all utopias realized, wherein paradoxically we must continue to live as though they had not been. But since they have, and since we can no longer, therefore, nourish the hope of realizing them, **we can only ‘hyper-realize’ them through interminable simulation**. We live amid the interminable reproduction of ideals, phantasies, images, and dreams, which are now behind us, yet which we must continue to reproduce in a sort of inescapable indifference. The fact is that the revolution has well and truly happened, but not in the way we expected. Everywhere what has been liberated has been liberated so that it can enter a state of pure circulation, so that it can go into orbit. With the benefit of hindsight, we may say that the unavoidable goal of all liberation is to foster and provision circulatory networks. The fate of the things liberated is an incessant commutation, and these things are thus subject to increasing indeterminacy, to the principal of uncertainty. Nothing (not even God) now disappears by coming to an end, by dying. Instead, things disappear through proliferation or contamination, by becoming saturated or transparent, because of extenuation or extermination, or as a result of the epidemic of simulation, as a result of their transfer into the secondary existence of simulation. Rather than a mortal mode of disappearance, then, a fractal mode of dispersal. Nothing is truly reflected any more—whether in a mirror or in the abyssal realm (which is merely the endless reduplication of consciousness). The logic of viral dispersal in networks is no longer a logic of value; neither, therefore, is it a logic of equivalence. There is no longer any such thing as a revolution in values—merely a circumvention or involution of values. A centripetal compulsion coexists with a decentredness of all systems, an internal metastasis or fevered endogenic virulence, which creates a tendency for systems to explode beyond their own limits, to override their own logic—not in the sense of creating sheer redundancy, but in the sense of an increase in power, a fantastic potentialization whereby their own very existence is put at risk.

**To make micropolitics visible is to coopt it by giving resistance an object – this understanding allows resistance to be framed, to be declared a failure and prevents the immanence of imperceptible politics from coalescing around mundane practices and habitudes of existence**

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In this sense **imperceptible politics does not necessarily differ from or oppose other prevalent forms of politics, such as state-oriented politics, micropolitics, identity politics, cultural and gender politics, civil rights movements, etc**. And indeed **imperceptible politics connects with all these various forms of political engagement and intervention in an opportunistic way: it deploys them to the extent that they allow the establishment of spaces outside representation**; that is, spaces which do not primarily focus on the transformation of the conditions of the double-R axiom (rights and representation) but on the insertion of new social forces into a given political terrain. In the previous chapter we called this form of politics outside politics: the politics which opposes the representational regime of policing. Imperceptibility is the everyday strategy which allows us to move and to act below the overcoding regime of representation. **This everyday strategy is inherently anti-theoretical; that is, it resists any ultimate theorisation, it cannot be reduced to one successful and necessary form of politics** (such as state-oriented politics or micropolitics, for example). **Rather, imperceptible politics is genuinely empiricist, that is it is always enacted as ad hoc practices which allow the decomposition of the representational strategies in a particular field and the composition of events which cannot be left unanswered by the existing regime of control. If imperceptible politics resists theorisation and is ultimately empiricist, what then are the criteria for doing imperceptible politics? There are** three **dimensions which characterise imperceptible politics: objectlessness,** totality, **trust**. **Firstly, imperceptible politics is objectless, that is it performs political transformation without primarily targeting a specific political aim (such as transformation of a law or institution, or a particular claim for inclusion**, etc). **Instead imperceptible politics proceeds by materialising its own political actions through contagious and affective transformations.** **The object of its political practice is its own practices. In this sense, imperceptible politics is non-intentional - and therein lies its difference from state-oriented politics or the politics of civil rights movements**, for example - **it instigates change through a series of everyday transformations which can only be codified as having a central political aim or function in retrospect**. Secondly, imperceptible politics addresses the totality of an existing field of power. This seems to be the difference between imperceptible politics and micropolitics or other alternative social movements: imperceptible politics is not concerned with containing itself to a molecular level of action; it addresses the totality of power through the social changes which it puts to work in a particular field of action. The distinction between molar and molecular (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 275) has only analytical significance from the perspective of imperceptible politics. In fact imperceptible politics is both molar and molecular, because by being local situated action it addresses the whole order of control in a certain field. Imperceptible politics is located at the heart of a field of power and at the same time it opens a way to move outside this field by forcing the transformation of all these elements which are constitutive of this field. In this sense, imperceptible politics is a driving force which is simul­taneously both present and absent. We described this in the previous chapter by exploring the importance of speculative figurations for the practice of escape. On the everyday level of escape (a level we called in this chapter imperceptible politics) speculative figuration can be translated into trust. This is the third characteristic of **imperceptible politics**; it **is driven by a firm belief in the importance and truthfulness of its actions, without seeking any evidence for, or conducting any investigation into its practices. This is trust. Imperceptible politics is driven by trust in something which seems to be absent from a particular situation. Imperceptible politics operates around a void, and it is exactly the conversion of this void into everyday politics that becomes the vital force for imperceptible politics.**

#### Feminizing politics doesn’t solve—it still occurs within a masculinized political sphere

**Kathlene 90—**Purdue University

(Lyn, “Power and Influence in State Legislative Policymaking: The Interaction of Gender and Position in Committee Hearing Debates”, The American Political Science Review, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Sep., 1994), pp. 560-576, dml)

Yoder's assessment in itself has serious implica- tions for women in politics generally and legislative committee studies specifically. Few social and occu- pational domains are more masculinized than poli- tics. One does not need a thorough review of Amer- ican history to recognize that elected offices have belonged almost solely to men (especially at the state and national levels) until just very recently-the last 20 or so years. While on one hand we may bemoan that women are making slow (but steady) increases in state legislatures (less than a 1% gain per year), women's pace, historically understood, could be clas- sified as rapid and "intrusive" in a highly masculin- ized institution (women's presence in state legisla- tures has increased fivefold since 1969; see CAWP 1993b). If individual power and influence over poli- cymaking occurs mainly in committees (Francis and Riddlesperger 1982; Hall 1987), women may face additional social barriers not considered within exist- ing models of legislative committee behavior. In the legislative setting, individuals (and therefore groups) obtain influence primarily through two methods: (1) appointments to powerful positions and (2) assignments to and participation in committees. Theoretically, in a gender-neutral institution, all com- mittee chairs have the power to set the agenda and guide committee discussions. If women have more of an interest in certain types of issues, as research on their legislative priorities and sponsorship of bills indicates (Saint-Germain 1989; Thomas and Welch 1991), then, in an equitable setting, female committee chairs would have opportunities to imprint their concerns while directing hearings. Similarly, if com- mittees are composed of some critical mass of women, then the effects of tokenism and marginal- ization should be eliminated, allowing women to join freely in the debate on bills. Yet Yoder's work sug- gests that women chairs will not receive the same respect or have the same influence over committee hearings as men; and the more feminized a commit- tee becomes, the more overt hostility will be directed at women by men. But it is even more complicated than Yoder's work implies. Other research has found that women do not use or perceive their positions of power like their male counterparts (Blair and Stanley 1991; Dodson and Carroll 1991; Duerst-Lahti and Johnson 1990). Eagly and Johnson's (1990) metaanalysis of experi- mental and organization research on gender and leadership style found that women tended to lead more democratically, while men tended to be more autocratic. Similar results were found in a legislative setting, where women chairs were more likely to use their position as a facilitator or moderator of commit- tee discussion, rather than as a way to control wit- ness testimony, direct committee discussion, and join in the substantive debates (Kathlene 1990, 1991).1 Yet it is the latter approaches that are associated with the notion of positional power. That women do not use the position in the same way brings up two important questions: (1) Will gaining access to "powerful" po- sitions result in truly equal influence? and (2) If women use their positions differently, is this due to men's negative reaction to women in power or wo- men's freely chosen redefinition of power? Finally, with regard to rank-and-file committee members, theoretical and empirical research previ- ously discussed strongly indicates that women and men will not be "equal" participants in group discus- sions. Therefore, electing more women to legislatures will not automatically change the power balance or the influence in policymaking. Gender, as described and applied in this literature, is a complex and interacting construct representing struggles over the use and definition of power, methods of managing conflict and building consensus, paths toward imple- menting change, and resistance by supporters of the status quo. Gender, like class, is a fundamental category of political analysis, not simply another independent variable representing biological sex (Sil- verberg 1990).

## 2NC

### agamben

No cardssssss

## 1NR

### buddhism

#### The alternative would have the president engage in self-immolation, that solves the aff

**Kelly 2011** (Brenden, Senior Lecturer in Psychiatry, University College Dublin “Self-immolation, suicide and self-harm in Buddhist and Western traditions” Transcultural Psychiatry 48(3)

There is a lengthy tradition of self-cremation in Chinese Buddhism. Benn (2007) recounts the story of Daodu, a Buddhist monk who lived in a monastery on Mount Ruona, in Eastern Yangzhou, China in the sixth century. Benn’s account is based on a funerary inscription entitled ‘‘Liang Xiaozhuangyan si Daodu Chanshi bei,’’ composed by Xiao Gang (503–551). According to this account, in December 526, a series of strange events occurred at the monastery: the monastery bell rang of its own accord, rays of light emanated from Daodu’s water vessel, and a vast flock of birds suddenly landed in the monastery, before flying towards the west. At around midnight on 17 January 527, there was the sound of a chime being struck and a voice was heard chanting verses on impermanence. At that moment, a fire broke out and when monks rushed to the scene, they found Daodu meditating calmly, his body engulfed in flames. Daodu was a notably accomplished monk who had a life-long devotion to the Lotus S\_ utra, a major Mah\_ay\_ana scripture (compiled in the first century BCE in India) which presents the story of a Bodhisattva who made various offerings to the Buddha, before deciding to offer his own body, which he doused with fragrant oils and then set alight through sheer spiritual concentration (Reeves, 2009). The Bodhisattva’s body burned for twelve hundred years after which time he was born again. The Lotus S\_ utra does not, however, provide an unqualified endorsement of self-cremation (Kieschnick, 1997; Stevenson, 1995) and indicates that while there is some pun\_ ya (i.e., karmic fruitfulness or spiritual merit) in burning a finger or toe as an offering to the Buddha, there is much more pun\_ ya to be attained in other ways, such as reciting a verse of the Lotus S\_ utra itself. Indian Buddhism does not present ready evidence of individuals emulating the actions described in the Lotus S\_ utra, but there is significant evidence of emulation in Japanese and, especially, Chinese Buddhist traditions (Williams, 2009; Jan, 1965). In China, self-cremations were public events, occurring with the permission of local rulers, and often accompanied by chanting of verses from the Lotus Sutra. Chinese Buddhist biographers had a range of views on these acts, noting, on the one hand, that monks were motivated by compassion (i.e., intended to help relieve the suffering of living beings by, for example, drawing attention to injustice), but, on the other hand, were breaking a monastic precept by killing themselves. Williams (1989) notes that burning some or all of the body as an act of devotion was a serious matter in East Asian Buddhism and that, up until recently, the burning of fingers was not an uncommon practice in Chinese Buddhist monasteries. Conze, Horner, Snellgrove, and Waley (1995) provide the example of the nun Feng, who lived a life of strict asceticism in a Chinese Buddhist monastery and, over time, burned off six fingers as far as her palm, as offerings to the Buddha. In the broader context, Benn (2007) notes that such acts of self-immolation had a variety of meanings in China, and, in addition to spiritual consequences, were often believed to have specific material results such as ending wars and bringing rain. The spiritual significances of self-immolation and self-cremation Self-immolation and self-cremation also had a variety of spiritual significances, and were sometimes viewed as the equivalent of attaining enlightenment, while in other contexts they were thought to result in rebirth in the heavens or in a Pure Land (Benn, 2007). More specifically, the Pure Land school of Buddhism (within the Mah\_ay\_ana tradition) believes that Amit\_abha Buddha’s Pure Land is better than a human rebirth and emphasizes the importance of faith (as reflected in meditation, for example) for spiritual progress. Examples of suicide in this tradition include that of Ajisaka Nyudo, a Japanese aspirant to the Pure Land, who, apparently following the advice of Saint Ippen, attempted to enter the Pure Land by drowning himself in the Fuji River (Becker, 1990). Scroll paintings depicting the scene show Ajisaka bobbing on the waves in a peaceful, prayerful position, and indicate music coming from the clouds, consistent with rebirth in the Pure Land. Later, after Ippen died, six of his disciples committed suicide in sympathy, in the hope of accompanying him to the Pure Land. These acts were, however, viewed as selfwilled by Shinkyo (Ippen’s disciple and second patriarch of the Ji School) and thus contrary to the Pure Land faith’s reliance on the power and will of Amit\_abha Buddha. Thus, while the suicide of Ajisaka was not condemned, the suicides of his disciples appeared motivated by clinging or desire, and were not to be praised (Becker, 1990).

#### We are our synapses

**Patoine 10** – writer for the Dana Foundation [cites Jerome Kagan, professor emeritus in psychology at Harvard and Joseph LeDoux, neurobiologist at NYU]

(Brenda, “The Unhealthy Ego”, <http://www.dana.org/media/detail.aspx?id=29256>, dml)

If ego is loosely defined in psychiatric circles, a neural definition is **virtually nonexistent. “Ego** doesn’t exist **in the brain**,” says Kagan. What does exist, he explains, is a brain circuit that controls the intrusiveness of feelings of self-doubt and anxiety, which can modulate self-confidence. But, Kagan says, “**We are nowhere near** naming the brain circuit that might mediate the feeling of ‘God, I feel great; I can conquer the world.’ I believe it’s possible to do, but **no one knows that chemistry or that anatomy.**”

Dana Alliance member Joseph LeDoux, Ph.D., a neurobiologist at New York University, has argued that psychological constructs such as ego are not incompatible with modern neuroscience; scientists just need to come up with **better ways of thinking about the self** and its relation to the brain. “For many people, the brain and the self are quite different,” he writes in The Synaptic Self, where he made the opposite case. For LeDoux, it’s a truism that our personality—**who we are in totality**—is represented in the brain as **a complex pattern of synaptic connectivity**, because synapses underlie everything the brain does. "We are our synapses," he says.

Researchers are increasingly applying the tools of modern neuroscience to try to understand how the brain **represents self and other aspects of ego** as popularly defined—they just don’t call it ego. Brain-imaging studies have used self-reference experiments to investigate the neurobiology of self. For example, asking a subject to make a judgment about a statement, such as “I am a good friend” versus a statement that is self-neutral, such as “water is necessary for life.” Others have looked at brain pathology in people with disorders of self. These studies have **fairly consistently linked self-referential mental activity to the medial prefrontal cortex**, a subregion of the frontal lobe where higher-order cognitive functions are processed.

#### Short-term gratification and long-term connections are mutually exclusive and they cause extinction

**Hagos 9 –** writer for Wafrika

(Michael, *The Cult Of Having Versus The City Of Being* pg 48-49, dml)

The planet is burning. As we have seen, this is very much a consequence of the cult of having, since the process of capital accumulation, however it may be framed and disguised if it is ever even fully acknowledged by the rich and powerful, is the basic cause of human suffering (Gabriel Kolko). This cult’s intrinsically dark, empowering sense of dominance over victims leads to escalating acts of cruelty and lasting emotional disorders, primarily for the dominators themselves, since they suffer a dangerous expansion of ego that cannot be appeased except by escalating acts of cruelty. Either we are putting out the fire or adding fuel to it. There is no middle ground. Those who are immobilized due to one or another form of disgraceful rationalization naturally belong to the latter group, hence bear the much more onerous burden of that mortal sin called alienation. Which will only deepen and widen as long as the Cult of Having morbidly triumphs over the latent City of Being, ultimately leading to extinction of the species, which appears to be an imminent threat. Like much else, that is a matter of will and choice, not just by the powerful, but, at least by default, by the powerless as well, since those who are silent are understood not just to consent but to be complicit in terrible crimes against peace and humanity, war crimes, economic crimes, social crimes 71 and environmental crimes (the cumulative effects of which already have been devastatingly enormous)—contrary to our calling as human beings.

#### Perspectives of the oppressed are as epistemologically suspect as a view from nowhere—insistence on proximity of oppression as a yardstick for oppression is an insufficient basis for knowledge and dooms solvency

**Disch 93** (Lisa J.; Professor of Political Theory – University of Minnesota, “More Truth Than Fact: Storytelling as Critical Understanding in the Writings of Hannah Arendt,” Political Theory 21:4, November)

What Hannah Arendt called “my old fashioned storytelling”7 is at once the most elusive and the most provocative aspect of her political philosophy. The apologies she sometimes made for it are well known, but few scholars have attempted to discern from these “scattered remarks” as statement of epistemology or method.8 Though Arendt alluded to its importance throughout her writings in comments like the one that prefaces this essay, this offhandedness left an important question about storytelling unanswered: how can thought that is “bound” to experience as its only “guidepost” possibly be critical? I discern an answer to this question in Arendt’s conception of storytelling, which implicitly redefines conventional understandings of objectivity and impartiality. Arendt failed to explain what she herself termed a “rather unusual approach”9 to political theory because she considered methodological discussions to be self-indulgent and irrelevant to real political problems.10 This reticence did her a disservice because by failing to explain how storytelling creates a vantage point that is both critical and experiential she left herself open to charges of subjectivism.11 As Richard Bernstein has argued, however, what makes Hannah Arendt distinctive is that she is neither a subjectivist nor a foundationalist but, rather, attempts to move “beyond objectivism and relativism.”12 I argue that Arendt’s apologies for her storytelling were disingenuous; she regarded it not as an anachronistic or nostalgic way of thinking but as an innovative approach to critical understanding. Arendt’s storytelling proposes an alternative to the model of impartiality defined as detached reasoning. In Arendt’s terms, impartiality involves telling oneself the story of an event or situation form the plurality of perspectives that constitute it as a public phenomenon. This critical vantage point, not from outside but from within a plurality of contesting standpoints, is what I term “situated impartiality.” Situated impartial knowledge is neither objective disinterested nor explicitly identified with a single particularistic interest. Consequently, its validity does not turn on what Donna Haraway calls the “god trick,” the claim to an omnipotent, disembodied vision that is capable of “seeing everything from nowhere.”13 But neither does it turn on a claim to insight premised on the experience of subjugation, which purportedly gives oppressed peoples a privileged understanding of structures of domination and exonerates them of using power to oppress. The two versions of standpoint claims – the privileged claim to disembodied vision and the embodied claim to “antiprivilege” from oppression – are equally suspect because they are simply antithetical. Both define knowledge positionally, in terms of proximity to power; they differ only in that they assign the privilege of “objective” understanding to opposite poles of the knowledge/power axis. Haraway argues that standpoint claims are insufficient as critical theory because they ignore the complex of social relations that mediate the connection between knowledge and power. She counters that any claim to knowledge, whether advanced by the oppressed or their oppressors, is partial. No one can justifiably lay claim to abstract truth, Haraway argues, but only to “embodied objectivity,” which she argues “means quite simply situated knowledges.”14 There is a connection between Arendt’s defense of storytelling and Haraway’s project, in that both define theory as a critical enterprise whose purpose is not to defend abstract principles or objective facts but to tell provocative stories that invite contestation form rival perspectives.15

#### we are a prerequisite to action that celebrates life

**Jones 81** –founder of the Network of Engaged Buddhists

(Ken, “Buddhism and Social Action: An Exploration”, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/jones/wheel285.html#one>, dml) [gender-modified words denoted by brackets]

Through our practice, both in the world and in withdrawn meditation, the delusion of a struggling self becomes more and more transparent, and the conflicting opposites of good and bad, pain and pleasure, wealth and poverty, oppression and freedom are seen and understood in a Wisdom at once serene and vigilant. This Wisdom partakes of the sensitivity of the heart as well as the clarity of thought. In this Wisdom, in the words of R.H. Blyth, things are beautiful — but not desirable; ugly — but not repulsive; false — but not rejected. What is inevitable, like death, is accepted without rage; what may not be, like war, is the subject of action skillful and the more effective because, again, it is not powered and blinded by rage and hate. We may recognize an oppressor and resolutely act to remove the oppression, but we do not hate ~~him~~ [them]. Absence of hatred, disgust, intolerance or righteous indignation within us is itself a part of our growth towards enlightenment (bodhi). Such freedom from negative emotions should not be mistaken for indifference, passivity, compromise, loving our enemy instead of hating ~~him~~ [them], or any other of these relativities. This Wisdom transcends the Relativities which toss us this way and that. Instead, there is an awareness, alert and dispassionate, of an infinitely complex reality, but always an awareness free of despair, of self-absorbing aggression, or of blind dogma, an awareness free to act or not to act. Buddhists have their preferences, and in the face of such social cataclysms as genocide and nuclear war, they are strong preferences, but they are not repelled into quietism by them. What has been said above has to be cultivated to perfection by one following the Bodhisattva ideal. We are inspired by it, but very few of us can claim to live it. Yet we shall never attain the ideal by turning our backs upon the world and denying the compassionate Buddha nature in us that reaches out to suffering humanity, however stained by self love those feelings may be. Only through slowly "Wearing out the shoe of samsara" in whatever way is appropriate to us can we hope to achieve this ideal, and not through some process of incubation.

#### research proves this

**Wallace and Shapiro 6** – Santa Barbara Institute for Consciousness Studies AND Santa Clara University

(B. Alan and Shauna, “Mental Balance and Well-Being: Building Bridges Between Buddhism and Western Psychology”, American Psychologist Vol. 61, No. 7, 690 –701, dml)

Well-being that transcends such transient, stimulus-driven pleasures depends on the cultivation of **speciﬁc types of enduring beliefs and attitudes** and on developing one’s signature strengths (Haidt, 2006; Seligman, 2004). The cultivation of meaningful priorities, attitudes, perspectives, and behaviors has been highlighted by positive psychology (Seligman, 1998) and is also strongly emphasized in Buddhist practice (Shantideva, 1997; Wallace, 2001a). Both Western psychology and Buddhism claim that the happiness resulting from such **internal mental training is** more durable **than stimulus-driven pleasures** (Brickman & Cambell, 1971; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Current psychological research on “maximizers” and “satisﬁcers” supports this theory of well-being drawn from Buddhism and Western psychology (Schwartz et al., 2002). Maximizers are deﬁned as persons who are always looking for the best, whereas satisﬁcers are satisﬁed once the threshold of acceptability based on their intrinsic values is crossed. **Research demonstrates** that maximizers’ attempts at ﬁnding the best **paradoxically leads to** increased suffering, not increased satisfaction. Of note, although maximizers may achieve better objective outcomes than satisﬁcers, they are likely to experience these outcomes as worse (Iyengar, Wells, & Schwartz, 2006). As the maximizer attempts to create an internal state through external perfection, **dissatisfaction** (not pleasure) **increases**. This reinforces a core hypothesis of Buddhism that expectations and striving after such things as wealth, fame, approval, and power lead to discontentment, anxiety, and frustration. Buddhism states that these misguided attempts to ﬁnd happiness are due to people’s **confusion about the sources that lead to true well-being** (Nanamoli & Bodhi, 1995; Goldstein & Kornﬁeld, 1987). **This view is supported by** current psychological research **in affective forecasting**. Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz (1999) proposed that **people are** poor predictors **of their future happiness**, ﬁnding that people often inaccurately forecast the emotional impact of speciﬁc events and therefore make choices based on erroneous calculations of what will bring the greatest happiness (Kahneman et al., 1999). **There is** substantial evidence **for an impact bias in predictions** about emotional reactions to future events (for a review, see Wilson & Gilbert, 2003). These ﬁndings lend partial support to the Buddhist view that often what people think will make them happy does not lead to lasting well-being.