## 1NC

**1**

**A. Interpretation: the affirmative must defend the hypothetical enactment of a topical plan by the United States federal government.**

**The United States federal government is the actor defined by the resolution, not individual debaters**

**US Gov** Official Website 20**09**

http://www.usa.gov/Agencies/federal.shtml

U.S. Federal Government **The three branches of U.S. government—legislative, judicial, and executive—carry out governmental power and functions.** View a complete diagram (.PDF) of the U.S. government's branches.

**“Resolved” expresses intent to implement the plan**

**Merriam-Webster Dictionary** 19**96** [http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=resolved, downloaded 07/20/03]

“6. **To change or convert by resolution or formal vote**; -- **used only reflexively; as, the house resolved itself into a committee of the whole**.”

**“Should” denotes an expectation of enacting a plan**

**American Heritage Dictionary 2K**

[www.dictionary.com]

3 **Used to express** probability or **expectation**

**B. Violation—the affirmative does not defend the implementation of a topical plan.**

**C. Vote negative**

**1. Limits—their interpretation kills limits because it creates a strategic incentive to disregard the resolution. If teams can get away with being non-topical, there’s no reason to defend the resolution. Limits are good:**

**A. Deliberation—having a limited topic with equitable ground is necessary to foster decision-making and clash**

**Steinberg & Freeley 8** \*Austin J. Freeley is a Boston based attorney who focuses on criminal, personal injury and civil rights law, AND \*\*David L. Steinberg , Lecturer of Communication Studies @ U Miami, **Argumentation and** Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making pp 45-

**Debate is a means of settling differences, so there must be a difference of opinion or a conflict of interest before there can be a debate. If everyone is in agreement on a tact or value or policy, there is no need for debate:** the matter can be settled by unanimous consent. Thus, for example, **it would be pointless to attempt to debate "Resolved: That two plus two equals four,"** because there is simply no controversy about this statement. (**Controversy is an essential prerequisite** of debate. **Where there is no clash of ideas, proposals, interests, or expressed positions on issues, there is no debate. In addition, debate cannot produce effective decisions without clear identification of a question or questions to be answered.** For example**, general argument may occur about the broad topic of illegal immigration. How many** illegal immigrants **are in the United States?** What is the impact of illegal immigration and immigrants on our economy? What is their impact on our communities? Do they commit crimes? **Do they take jobs** from American workers? Do they pay taxes? Do they require social services? Is it a problem that some do not speak English? **Is it the responsibility of employers to discourage illegal immigration** by not hiring undocumented workers? Should they have the opportunity- to gain citizenship? Docs illegal immigration pose a security threat to our country? **Do illegal immigrants do work that American workers are unwilling to do?** Are their rights as workers and as human beings at risk due to their status? Are they abused by employers, law enforcement, housing, and businesses? I low are their families impacted by their status? What is the moral and philosophical obligation of a nation state to maintain its borders? **Should we build a wall on the Mexican border**, establish a national identification can!, or enforce existing laws against employers? Should we invite immigrants to become U.S. citizens? **Surely you can think of many more concerns to be addressed by a conversation about the topic area of illegal immigration. Participation in this "debate" is likely to be emotional and intense. However, it is not likely to be productive or useful without focus on a particular question and identification of a line demarcating sides in the controversy.** To be discussed and resolved effectively, **controversies must be stated clearly. Vague understanding results in unfocused deliberation and poor decisions,** frustration, and emotional distress, as **evidenced by the failure of the United States Congress to make progress on the immigration debate** during the summer of 2007. **Someone disturbed by the problem of the growing underclass of poorly educated, socially disenfranchised youths might observe, "Public schools are doing a terrible job!** They are overcrowded, and many teachers are poorly qualified in their subject areas. Even the best teachers can do little more than struggle to maintain order in their classrooms." That same concerned citizen, facing a complex range of issues, might arrive at an unhelpful decision, such as "We ought to do something about this" or. worse. "It's too complicated a problem to deal with." **Groups of concerned citizens worried about the state of public education could join together to express their frustrations**, anger, disillusionment, and emotions regarding the schools, **but without a focus for their discussions, they could easily agree about the sorry state of education without finding points of clarity or potential solutions. A gripe session would follow. But if a precise question is posed**—such as "What can be done to improve public education?"—**then a more profitable area of discussion is opened up simply by placing a focus on the search for a concrete solution step**. **One or more judgments can be phrased in the form of debate propositions, motions for parliamentary debate, or bills for legislative assemblies.** The statements "Resolved: That the federal government should implement a program of charter schools in at-risk communities" and "Resolved: That the state of Florida should adopt a school voucher program" more clearly identify specific ways of dealing with educational problems in a manageable form, suitable for debate. **They provide specific policies to be investigated and aid discussants in identifying points of difference. To have a productive debate, which facilitates effective decision making by** directing and **placing limits on the decision** to be made, **the basis for argument should be clearly defined. If we merely talk about "homelessness" or "abortion" or "crime'\* or "global warming" we are likely to have an interesting discussion but not to establish profitable basis for argument**. For example, **the statement "Resolved: That the pen is mightier than the sword" is debatable, yet fails to provide much basis for clear argumentation**. If we take this statement to mean that the written word is more effective than physical force for some purposes, we can identify a problem area: the comparative effectiveness of writing or physical force for a specific purpose. **Although we now have a general subject, we have not yet stated a problem. It is still too broad,** too loosely worded to promote well-organized argument. **What sort of writing are we concerned with**—poems, novels, government documents, website development, advertising, or what? **What does "effectiveness" mean** in this context? What kind of physical force is being compared—fists, dueling swords, bazookas, nuclear weapons, or what? A more specific question might be. "Would a mutual defense treaty or a visit by our fleet be more effective in assuring Liurania of our support in a certain crisis?" **The basis for argument could be phrased in a debate proposition** such as "Resolved: That the United States should enter into a mutual defense treatv with Laurania." Negative advocates might oppose this proposition by arguing that fleet maneuvers would be a better solution. **This is not to say that debates should completely avoid creative interpretation** of the controversy by advocates, **or that good debates cannot occur over competing interpretations of the controversy; in fact, these sorts of debates may be very engaging. The point is that debate is best facilitated by the guidance provided by focus on a particular point of difference, which will be outlined in the following discussion.**

**B. Creativity—thinking “inside the box” forces teams to be creative about their positions and come up with innovative solutions. Absent constraints, debate becomes boring and stale—we link turn all of their offense.**

**Intrator 10** (Intrator, David, President of The Creative Organization and musical composer, October 22, 2010, “Thinking Inside The Box: A Professional Creative Dispels A Popular Myth”, Training, http://www.trainingmag.com/article/thinking-inside-box) FS

**One of the most pernicious myths about creativity, one that seriously inhibits creative thinking and innovation, is the belief that one needs to “think outside the box.”** As someone who has worked for decades as a professional creative, **nothing could be further from the truth. This** a **is** view **shared by the vast majority of creatives, expressed** famously **by** the **modernist designer Charles Eames when he wrote, “Design depends largely upon constraints.” The myth of thinking outside the box stems from a fundamental misconception of what creativity is**, and what it’s not. In the popular imagination, creativity is **something weird and wacky.** The creative process is magical, or divinely inspired. But, in fact, **creativity is** not about divine inspiration or magic. It’s **about problem-solving, and by definition a problem is a constraint**, a limit, a box. One of the best illustrations of this is the work of **photographers**. They **create by excluding the great mass what’s before them**, choosing a small frame in which to work. **Within that tiny frame, literally a box, they uncover relationships and establish priorities. What makes creative problem-solving uniquely challenging is that you, as the creator, are the one defining the problem.** You’re the one choosing the frame. And **you alone determine what’s an effective solution**. **This can be quite demanding,** both intellectually and emotionally. **Intellectually, you are required to establish limits, set priorities**, and cull patterns and relationships from a great deal of material, much of it fragmentary. More often than not, this is the material you generated during brainstorming sessions. At the end of these sessions, you’re usually left with a big mess of ideas, half-ideas, vague notions, and the like. Now, chances are you’ve had a great time making your mess. You might have gone off-site, enjoyed a “brainstorming camp,” played a number of warm-up games. You feel artistic and empowered. **But to be truly creative, you have to clean up your mess, organizing those fragments into something real, something useful, something that actually works**. That’s the hard part. It takes a lot of energy, time, and willpower to make sense of the mess you’ve just generated. It also can be emotionally difficult. **You’ll need to throw out many ideas you originally thought were great, ideas you’ve become attached to, because they simply don’t fit into the rules you’re creating as you build your box.** You can always change the rules, but that also comes with an emotional price. Unlike many other kinds of problems, with creative problems there is no external authority to which you can appeal to determine whether you’re on the right track, whether one set of rules should have priority over another, or whether one box is better than another. There is no correct answer. Better said: There might be a number of correct answers. Or none at all. The responsibility of deciding the right path to take is entirely upon you. That’s a lot of responsibility, and it can be paralyzing. So it’s no wonder that the creative process often stalls after the brainstorming in many organizations. Whereas generating ideas is open-ended, and, in a sense, infinitely hopeful, having to pare those ideas down is restrictive, tedious, and, at times, scary. The good news, however, is that understanding the creative process as problem-solving is ultimately liberating. For one, all of **those left-brainers with well-honed rational skills will find themselves far more creative than they ever thought.** They’ll discover their talents for organization, abstraction, and clarity are very much what’s required to be a true creative thinker. **Viewing creativity as problem-solving also makes the whole process far less intimidating**, even though it might lose some of its glamour and mystery. Moreover, **since creative problems are open to rational analysis, they can be broken down into smaller components that are easier to address.** Best of all, **the very act of problem-solving, of organizing and trying making sense of things, helps generate new ideas.** Paradoxically, **thinking within a box may be one of the most effective brainstorming techniques there** is. That may be what Charles Eames meant when he added, “I welcome constraints.” **Without some sort of structure to your creative thinking, you’re just flailing about.** For a while you might feel like you’re making progress, generating a great mess of ideas that might hold some potential. **But to turn those ideas into something truly innovative, your best bet is to build your box and play by the rules of your own creation.**

**2. Switch-Side Debate—their interpretation allows teams to only debate one side of an issue. Switch-side debate is good:**

**A. Critical thinking—switching sides forces debaters to assess all possible outcomes of a policy and sharpens their analysis of complex situations**

**Harrigan 8** NDT champion, debate coach at UGA (Casey, thesis submitted to Wake Forest Graduate Faculty for Master of Arts in Communication, “A defense of switch side debate”, http://dspace.zsr.wfu.edu/jspui/bitstream/10339/207/1/harrigancd052008, p. 57-59)

**Along these lines, the greatest benefit of switching sides**, which goes to the heart of contemporary debate, **is its inducement of critical thinking.** Defined as “reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do” (Ennis, 1987, p. 10), **critical thinking learned through debate teaches students not just how advocate and argue, but how to decide as well**. **Each and every student,** whether in debate or (more likely) at some later point in life, **will be placed in the position of the decision-maker**. Faced with competing options whose costs and benefits are initially unclear, **critical thinking is necessary to assess all the possible outcomes of each choice,** c**ompare their relative merits, and arrive at some final decision about which is preferable**. In some instances, such as choosing whether to eat Chinese or Indian food for dinner, the importance of making the correct decision is minor. For many other decisions, however, **the implications of choosing an imprudent course of action are potentially grave.** As Robert Crawford notes, **there are “issues of unsurpassed importance in the daily lives of millions upon millions of people…being decided to a considerable extent by the power of public speaking**” (2003). Although the days of the Cold War are over, and the risk that “the next Pearl Harbor could be ‘compounded by hydrogen’” (Ehninger and Brockriede, 1978, p. 3) is greatly reduced, **the manipulation of public support before the invasion of Iraq in 2003 points to the continuing necessity of training a well-informed and critically-aware public** (Zarefsky, 2007).**In the absence of debate-trained critical thinking, ignorant but ambitious politicians and persuasive but nefarious leaders would be much more likely to draw the country, and possibly the world, into conflicts with incalculable losses in terms of human well-being. Given the myriad threats of global proportions that will require incisive solutions, including global warming, the spread of pandemic diseases, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cultivating a robust and effective society of critical decision-makers is essential. A**s Louis Rene Beres writes, “with such learning, we Americans could prepare…not as immobilized objects of false contentment, but as authentic citizens of an endangered planet” (2003). Thus, **it is not surprising that critical thinking has been called “the highest educational goal of the a**ctivity” (Parcher, 1998). W**hile arguing from conviction can foster limited critical thinking skills, the element of switching sides is necessary to sharpen debate’s critical edge and ensure that decisions are made in a reasoned manner instead of being driven by ideology**. Debaters trained in SSD are more likely to evaluate both sides of an argument before arriving at a conclusion and are less likely to dismiss potential arguments based on his or her prior beliefs (Muir 1993). **In addition, debating both sides teaches “conceptual flexibility,” where decision-makers are more likely to reflect upon the beliefs that are held before coming to a final opinion** (Muir, 1993, p. 290). **Exposed to many arguments on each side of an issue, debaters learn that public policy is characterized by extraordinary complexity that requires careful consideration before action.** Finally**, these arguments are confirmed by the preponderance of empirical research demonstrating a link between competitive SSD and critical thinking** (Allen, Berkowitz)

**B. Tolerance—switching sides makes debaters more tolerant of arguments and ideas that are the opposite of their own—their one-sided approach promotes dogmatism**

**Muir 93** (Star, Professor of Communication – George Mason U., “A Defense of the Ethics of Contemporary Debate”, **Philosophy & Rhetoric**, Vol. 26, No. 4, p. 288-289)

The role of **switch-side debate is especially important in the** oral **defense of arguments that foster tolerance** without accruing the moral complications of acting on such beliefs. **The forum is** therefore **unique in providing debaters with** attitudes of **tolerance** without committing them to active moral irresponsibility. As Freeley notes, **debaters are** indeed **exposed to a multivalued world**, both within and between the sides of a given topic. Yet this exposure hardly commits them to such "mistaken" values. In this view, **the divorce of the game from the "real world" can be** seen as **a means of gaining perspective** without obligating students to validate their hypothetical value structure through immoral actions.'s Values clarification, Stewart is correct in pointing out, does not mean that no values are developed. Two very important values— **tolerance and fairness—inhere to a significant degree in the ethics of switch-side debate**. A second point about the charge of relativism is that tolerance is related to the development of reasoned moral viewpoints. **The willingness to recognize** the existence of **other views, and to grant alternative positions** a degree of **credibility, is** a value **fostered by switch-side debate**: Alternately **debating both sides** of the same question . . . **inculcates a deep-seated** attitude of **tolerance** toward differing points of view. **To** be forced to **debate only one side leads to an ego-identification with that side**. , . . The other side in contrast is seen only as something to be discredited. Arguing as persuasively as one can for completely opposing views is one way of giving recognition to the idea that a strong case can generally be made for the views of earnest and intelligent men, however such views may clash with one's own. . . .**Promoting** this kind of **tolerance is** perhaps **one of the greatest benefits debating both sides has to offer**. 5' The activity should encourage debating both sides of a topic, reasons Thompson, because **debaters are "more likely to realize that propositions are bilateral. It is those who fail to recognize this** fact who **become intolerant, dogmatic, and bigoted**.""\* While Theodore Roosevelt can hardly be said to be advocating bigotry, his efforts to turn out advocates convinced of their rightness is not a position imbued with tolerance.

**3. Topic Education—their interpretation diverts focus away from the topic. Topic education is good:**

**Academic, institutions-based debate regarding war powers is critical to check excessive presidential authority---college students key**

Kelly Michael **Young 13**, Associate Professor of Communication and Director of Forensics at Wayne State University, "Why Should We Debate About Restriction of Presidential War Powers", 9/4, public.cedadebate.org/node/13

**Beyond its obviously timeliness, we believed debating about presidential war powers was important because of the stakes involved in the controversy. Since the Korean War, scholars and pundits have grown increasingly alarmed by the growing scope** and techniques **of presidential war making**. In 1973, in the wake of Vietnam, Congress passed the joint War Powers Resolution (WPR) to increase Congress’s role in foreign policy and war making by requiring executive consultation with Congress prior to the use of military force, reporting within 48 hours after the start of hostiles, and requiring the close of military operations after 60 days unless Congress has authorized the use of force. **Although the WPR was a significant legislative feat, 30 years since its passage, presidents** have frequently **ignore**s **the WPR requirements and the changing nature of conflict does not fit neatly into these regulations.** After the terrorist attacks on 9-11, **many experts worry that executive war powers have expanded far beyond healthy limits. Consequently, there is a fear that continued expansion of these powers will undermine the constitutional system of checks and balances that maintain the democratic foundation of this country and risk constant and unlimited military actions**, particularly in what Stephen Griffin refers to as a “long war” period like the War on Terror (http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674058286). In comparison, pro-presidential powers advocates contend that new restrictions undermine flexibility and timely decision-making necessary to effectively counter contemporary national security risks. Thus, **a debate about presidential wars powers is important to investigate a number of issues that have serious consequences on** the status of **democratic checks and national security** of the United States.¶ Lastly, **debating presidential war powers is important because we the people have an important role in affecting the use of presidential war powers**. As many legal scholars contend, regardless of the status of legal structures to check the presidency, **an important political restrain on presidential war powers is the presence of a well-informed and educated public**. **As Justice Potter Stewart explains, “the only effective restraint upon executive policy and power…may lie in an enlightened citizenry – in an informed and critical public opinion which alone can protect the values of a democratic government”** (http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/historics/USSC\_CR\_0403\_0713\_ZC3.html). As a result, **this is not simply an academic debate about institutions and powers that that do not affect us. As the numerous recent foreign policy scandals make clear, anyone who uses a cell-phone or the internet is** potential **affected by unchecked presidential war powers. Even if we agree that these powers are justified, it is important that today’s college students understand and appreciate the scope and consequences of presidential war powers, as these students’ opinions will stand as an important potential check on the presidency.**

### 2

#### Deconstruction only masks and fuels the material structures of capital that render oppression possible—only the alt solves

Rob **Wilkie**, Assistant Professor, Cultural and Digital Studies, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, "Capitalism's Posthuman Empire," THE RED CRITIQUE n. 14, Winter/Spring 20**12**,http://redcritique.org/WinterSpring2012/capitalismsposthumanempire.htm

This is the limit of the posthumanist theory of "difference." Insofar as it defines otherness, oppression, and exploitation as the effect of an instrumental logic of classification which is endemic to all social relations, it denies that there is any history to the ways in which people live. Instead, transformative theory becomes an "ethical" praxis that, in the words of Agamben, "must face a problem and a particular situation each and every time" (What is An Apparatus? 9). In this way, it becomes impossible to suggest that exploitation and oppression are inherent to capitalism or would be any different under any alternative mode of production. In fact, Hardt and Negri argue precisely this when they declare that "Socialism and capitalism…are both regimes of property that exclude the common" (ix). The consequence is that posthumanism effectively naturalizes capitalism by denying what Marx calls "species-being"—the basis of human freedom in the collectivity of labor—and replacing it instead withwhat Agamben calls "special being" or that which "without resembling any other…represents all others" (Profanations 59). When Agamben proclaims that, "‘To be special [far specie] can mean ‘to surprise and astonish’ (in a negative sense) by not fitting into established rules, but the notion that individuals constitute a species and belong together in a homogeneous class tends to be reassuring" (59) he replicates the bourgeois theory of difference which, as Marx writes, is based upon "an individual separated from the community, withdrawn into himself, wholly preoccupied with his private interest and acting in accordance with his private caprice" such that "far from being considered, in the rights of man, as a species-being; on the contrary, species-life itself—society—appears as a system which is external to the individual and as a limitation of his original independence" (On the Jewish Question 43). In other words, the very nature of the division of labor under capitalism causes workers to blame ahistorical notions of "society" and "government" for the contradictions which reside in the economic and, in turn, seek refuge in the "freedom"of individuality which bourgeois society promises. In this way, when Agamben writes that "The transformation of the species into a principle of identity and classification is the original sin of our culture, its most implacable apparatus [dispositivo]" (60), he reproduces the sense with which people respond to capitalist exploitation by blaming the very idea of "society," rather than the society of exploitation. By taking the question of identity and differenceout of the social, Agambenturns exploitation into an existential crisis which can only be resolved by the ethical recognition of difference on its own terms, leaving the contradictions of society intact.

This is how the posthumanist theories of identity return to the same structures of representation they claim to oppose because their opposition does not move beyond the economic structures of capitalism. Both the Hegelian theory of "recognition" and the posthuman theory of "singularity" are ultimately theories of the isolated individual, which is an ideological fiction arising alongside capitalism (a la "Robinson Crusoe") as a result of the economic shift toward wage-labor. They consequently substitute for more radical theories of freedom from the market the freedom of the individual in the market, as if rigid structures of social interpretations and not the system of wage-labor were holding the individual back. If we are to truly see the world differently, not just as isolated individuals, but as a united community which uses new technologies for freeing people fromthe drudgery of wage labor and its corresponding ideologies of racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression, what is necessary is a social transformation that ends the exploitation of labor upon which capitalism is based. Pluralizing identities doesn’t challenge the logic of exploitation, butactually expands it since private property establishes individual responsibility as the very basis of one's "natural" existence by stripping people of any means of survival outside of wage-labor. Thus, retreating into individualism is merely the ideological mask which is placed over the subsumption of all life under the profit motive. However, as Marx writes, regardless of appearances, "the individual is the social being. His life, even if it may not appear in the direct form of a communal life carried out together with others is… an expression and confirmation of social life" (86). Although posthumanism turns the alienation of the worker under capitalism into the very pre-condition of all culture, I argue that it is only by freeing labor from the restrictions of capitalist exploitation that, we can, as Marx writes, end racial oppression and find a "genuine resolution of the conflict between [hu]man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species" (84).

#### The affs ethics only occur after they have given up on a truly revolutionary change—collapses a marxist approach to politics

**Defazio 12** Machine-Thinking and the Romance of Posthumanism Kimberly DeFazio, Red Critique, http://redcritique.org/WinterSpring2012/machinethinkingandtheromanceofposthumanism.htm

While the argument here seems to be a "progressive" call to be aware of the power dynamics that exist in all relations so as to treat others "ethically," its more emphatic claim is the deeply conservative argument against establishing "equal" conditions of equality for all, which casts principles for universal equality as "dangerous." Wolfe's pragmatism tellingly echoes the right-wing argument that efforts to provide "universal" health care, to establish federal laws requiring corporations to set caps on emissions or provide workers compensation are violent "impositions" on the local and the specific. It is in this context that Edmund Burke advocated as "natural" the "hereditary succession [of power] by law" and denounced the struggles for democracy around the French Revolution as a "perversion" of individuality: "We procure reverence to our civil institutions on the principle upon which nature teaches us to revere individual men," whereas "those who attempt to level, never equalise. In all societies, consisting of various descriptions of citizens, some description must be uppermost. The levelers therefore only change and pervert the natural order of things" (Reflections on the Revolution in France 30, 43)—a sentiment that has grown increasingly popular in the American political context. This is, by the way, why pragmatism is so effectively aligned with ethics: both highlight the specificity of context and the absence of any foundation of judgment and reject any notion of objective basis that might be used to explain the underlying relations of specificities. Ethics, to put it bluntly, is the ruse through which the "natural" existence of class relations is justified today. Ethics (individual acts of kindness, or what Foucault calls the "care of the self") is what follows once one has already decided that no serious social change is possible.

#### The material determinism of capital is responsible for the instrumentalization of all life—makes all oppression inevitable and causes extinction

**Dyer-Witherford** (professor of Library and Info. Sciences @ the Univ. of Western Ontarion) **‘99** [Nick. Cyber Marx: Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High Technology Capitalism.]

**For capitalism, the use of machines as organs of “will over nature” is an imperative**. The great insight of the Frankfurt School—an insight subsequently improved and amplified by feminists and ecologists—was that capital’s dual project of dominating both humanity and nature was intimately tied to the cultivation of “instrumental reason” that systematically objectifies, reduces, quantifies and fragments the world for the purposes of technological control. Business’s systemic need to cheapen labor, cut the costs of raw materials, and expand consumer markets gives it an inherent bias toward the piling-up of technological power. This priority—enshrined in phrases such as “progress,” “efficiency,” “productivity,” “modernization,” and “growth”—assumes an automatism that is used to override any objection or alternative, regardless of the environmental and social consequences. Today, we witness global vistas of toxification, deforestation, desertification, dying oceans, disappearing ozone layers, and disintegrating immune systems, all interacting in ways that perhaps threaten the very existence of humanity and are undeniably inflicting social collapse, disease, and immiseration across the planet. The degree to which this project of mastery has backfired is all too obvious.

#### The alternative has two parts

#### The first is about debate- our idea of the debate space is one which recognizes that the ballot isn’t imbued with power and doesn’t have a significant effect on the debate community writ large – the first step towards rejecting the commodity fetishism of the ballot is to refuse to give it power over us . We think debate should be a question of competing methods for changing politics. The alt is “base communism”- which works towards dedicating our labor to caring for community over abstract economies of value.

#### the second is disrupting “common sense”- Even in absence of a blueprint for an alternative – endorsing a politics of labor based on communal relations rather than surplus value is essential to avoid ecological devastation, extinction and solve their ethic better. Decision calculus should not be to expect things to change overnight but be open to the possibility of revolution.

Graeber 13 (contributing editor of the Baffler, “A Practical Utopian’s Guide to the Coming Collapse”¶ DAVID GRAEBER¶ [from The Baffler No. 22, 2013] http://www.thebaffler.com/past/practical\_utopians\_guide

What is a revolution? We used to think we knew. Revolutions were seizures of power by popular forces aiming to transform the very nature of the political, social, and economic system in the country in which the revolution took place, usually according to some visionary dream of a just society. Nowadays, we live in an age when, if rebel armies do come sweeping into a city, or mass uprisings overthrow a dictator, it’s unlikely to have any such implications; when profound social transformation does occur—as with, say, the rise of feminism—it’s likely to take an entirely different form. It’s not that revolutionary dreams aren’t out there. But contemporary revolutionaries rarely think they can bring them into being by some modern-day equivalent of storming the Bastille.¶ ¶ At moments like this, it generally pays to go back to the history one already knows and ask: Were revolutions ever really what we thought them to be? For me, the person who has asked this most effectively is the great world historian Immanuel Wallerstein. He argues that for the last quarter millennium or so, revolutions have consisted above all of planetwide transformations of political common sense.¶ Already by the time of the French Revolution, Wallerstein notes, there was a single world market, and increasingly a single world political system as well, dominated by the huge colonial empires. As a result, the storming of the Bastille in Paris could well end up having effects on Denmark, or even Egypt, just as profound as on France itself—in some cases, even more so. Hence he speaks of the “world revolution of 1789,” followed by the “world revolution of 1848,” which saw revolutions break out almost simultaneously in fifty countries, from Wallachia to Brazil. In no case did the revolutionaries succeed in taking power, but afterward, institutions inspired by the French Revolution—notably, universal systems of primary education—were put in place pretty much everywhere. Similarly, the Russian Revolution of 1917 was a world revolution ultimately responsible for the New Deal and European welfare states as much as for Soviet communism. The last in the series was the world revolution of 1968—which, much like 1848, broke out almost everywhere, from China to Mexico, seized power nowhere, but nonetheless changed everything. This was a revolution against state bureaucracies, and for the inseparability of personal and political liberation, whose most lasting legacy will likely be the birth of modern feminism.¶ A quarter of the American population is now engaged in “guard labor”—defending property, supervising work, or otherwise keeping their fellow Americans in line.¶ Revolutions are thus planetary phenomena. But there is more. What they really do is transform basic assumptions about what politics is ultimately about. In the wake of a revolution, ideas that had been considered veritably lunatic fringe quickly become the accepted currency of debate. Before the French Revolution, the ideas that change is good, that government policy is the proper way to manage it, and that governments derive their authority from an entity called “the people” were considered the sorts of things one might hear from crackpots and demagogues, or at best a handful of freethinking intellectuals who spend their time debating in cafés. A generation later, even the stuffiest magistrates, priests, and headmasters had to at least pay lip service to these ideas. Before long, we had reached the situation we are in today: that it’s necessary to lay out the terms for anyone to even notice they are there. They’ve become common sense, the very grounds of political discussion.¶ Until 1968, most world revolutions really just introduced practical refinements: an expanded franchise, universal primary education, the welfare state. The world revolution of 1968, in contrast—whether it took the form it did in China, of a revolt by students and young cadres supporting Mao’s call for a Cultural Revolution; or in Berkeley and New York, where it marked an alliance of students, dropouts, and cultural rebels; or even in Paris, where it was an alliance of students and workers—was a rebellion against bureaucracy, conformity, or anything that fettered the human imagination, a project for the revolutionizing of not just political or economic life, but every aspect of human existence. As a result, in most cases, the rebels didn’t even try to take over the apparatus of state; they saw that apparatus as itself the problem.¶ It’s fashionable nowadays to view the social movements of the late sixties as an embarrassing failure. A case can be made for that view. It’s certainly true that in the political sphere, the immediate beneficiary of any widespread change in political common sense—a prioritizing of ideals of individual liberty, imagination, and desire; a hatred of bureaucracy; and suspicions about the role of government—was the political Right. Above all, the movements of the sixties allowed for the mass revival of free market doctrines that had largely been abandoned since the nineteenth century. It’s no coincidence that the same generation who, as teenagers, made the Cultural Revolution in China was the one who, as forty-year-olds, presided over the introduction of capitalism. Since the eighties, “freedom” has come to mean “the market,” and “the market” has come to be seen as identical with capitalism—even, ironically, in places like China, which had known sophisticated markets for thousands of years, but rarely anything that could be described as capitalism.¶ The ironies are endless. While the new free market ideology has framed itself above all as a rejection of bureaucracy, it has, in fact, been responsible for the first administrative system that has operated on a planetary scale, with its endless layering of public and private bureaucracies: the IMF, World Bank, WTO, trade organizations, financial institutions, transnational corporations, NGOs. This is precisely the system that has imposed free market orthodoxy, and opened the world to financial pillage, under the watchful aegis of American arms. It only made sense that the first attempt to recreate a global revolutionary movement, the Global Justice Movement that peaked between 1998 and 2003, was effectively a rebellion against the rule of that very planetary bureaucracy.¶ Future Stop¶ In retrospect, though, I think that later historians will conclude that the legacy of the sixties revolution was deeper than we now imagine, and that the triumph of capitalist markets and their various planetary administrators and enforcers—which seemed so epochal and permanent in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991—was, in fact, far shallower.¶ I’ll take an obvious example. One often hears that antiwar protests in the late sixties and early seventies were ultimately failures, since they did not appreciably speed up the U.S. withdrawal from Indochina. But afterward, those controlling U.S. foreign policy were so anxious about being met with similar popular unrest—and even more, with unrest within the military itself, which was genuinely falling apart by the early seventies—that they refused to commit U.S. forces to any major ground conflict for almost thirty years. It took 9/11, an attack that led to thousands of civilian deaths on U.S. soil, to fully overcome the notorious “Vietnam syndrome”—and even then, the war planners made an almost obsessive effort to ensure the wars were effectively protest-proof. Propaganda was incessant, the media was brought on board, experts provided exact calculations on body bag counts (how many U.S. casualties it would take to stir mass opposition), and the rules of engagement were carefully written to keep the count below that.¶ The problem was that since those rules of engagement ensured that thousands of women, children, and old people would end up “collateral damage” in order to minimize deaths and injuries to U.S. soldiers, this meant that in Iraq and Afghanistan, intense hatred for the occupying forces would pretty much guarantee that the United States couldn’t obtain its military objectives. And remarkably, the war planners seemed to be aware of this. It didn’t matter. They considered it far more important to prevent effective opposition at home than to actually win the war. It’s as if American forces in Iraq were ultimately defeated by the ghost of Abbie Hoffman.¶ Clearly, an antiwar movement in the sixties that is still tying the hands of U.S. military planners in 2012 can hardly be considered a failure. But it raises an intriguing question: What happens when the creation of that sense of failure, of the complete ineffectiveness of political action against the system, becomes the chief objective of those in power?¶ ¶ The thought first occurred to me when participating in the IMF actions in Washington, D.C., in 2002. Coming on the heels of 9/11, we were relatively few and ineffective, the number of police overwhelming. There was no sense that we could succeed in shutting down the meetings. Most of us left feeling vaguely depressed. It was only a few days later, when I talked to someone who had friends attending the meetings, that I learned we had in fact shut them down: the police had introduced such stringent security measures, canceling half the events, that most of the actual meetings had been carried out online. In other words, the government had decided it was more important for protesters to walk away feeling like failures than for the IMF meetings to take place. If you think about it, they afforded protesters extraordinary importance.¶ Is it possible that this preemptive attitude toward social movements, the designing of wars and trade summits in such a way that preventing effective opposition is considered more of a priority than the success of the war or summit itself, really reflects a more general principle? What if those currently running the system, most of whom witnessed the unrest of the sixties firsthand as impressionable youngsters, are—consciously or unconsciously (and I suspect it’s more conscious than not)—obsessed by the prospect of revolutionary social movements once again challenging prevailing common sense?¶ It would explain a lot. In most of the world, the last thirty years has come to be known as the age of neoliberalism—one dominated by a revival of the long-since-abandoned nineteenth-century creed that held that free markets and human freedom in general were ultimately the same thing. Neoliberalism has always been wracked by a central paradox. It declares that economic imperatives are to take priority over all others. Politics itself is just a matter of creating the conditions for growing the economy by allowing the magic of the marketplace to do its work. All other hopes and dreams—of equality, of security—are to be sacrificed for the primary goal of economic productivity. But global economic performance over the last thirty years has been decidedly mediocre. With one or two spectacular exceptions (notably China, which significantly ignored most neoliberal prescriptions), growth rates have been far below what they were in the days of the old-fashioned, state-directed, welfare-state-oriented capitalism of the fifties, sixties, and even seventies. By its own standards, then, the project was already a colossal failure even before the 2008 collapse.¶ If, on the other hand, we stop taking world leaders at their word and instead think of neoliberalism as a political project, it suddenly looks spectacularly effective. The politicians, CEOs, trade bureaucrats, and so forth who regularly meet at summits like Davos or the G20 may have done a miserable job in creating a world capitalist economy that meets the needs of a majority of the world’s inhabitants (let alone produces hope, happiness, security, or meaning), but they have succeeded magnificently in convincing the world that capitalism—and not just capitalism, but exactly the financialized, semifeudal capitalism we happen to have right now—is the only viable economic system. If you think about it, this is a remarkable accomplishment.¶ Debt cancellation would make the perfect revolutionary demand.¶ How did they pull it off? The preemptive attitude toward social movements is clearly a part of it; under no conditions can alternatives, or anyone proposing alternatives, be seen to experience success. This helps explain the almost unimaginable investment in “security systems” of one sort or another: the fact that the United States, which lacks any major rival, spends more on its military and intelligence than it did during the Cold War, along with the almost dazzling accumulation of private security agencies, intelligence agencies, militarized police, guards, and mercenaries. Then there are the propaganda organs, including a massive media industry that did not even exist before the sixties, celebrating police. Mostly these systems do not so much attack dissidents directly as contribute to a pervasive climate of fear, jingoistic conformity, life insecurity, and simple despair that makes any thought of changing the world seem an idle fantasy. Yet these security systems are also extremely expensive. Some economists estimate that a quarter of the American population is now engaged in “guard labor” of one sort or another—defending property, supervising work, or otherwise keeping their fellow Americans in line. Economically, most of this disciplinary apparatus is pure deadweight.¶ In fact, most of the economic innovations of the last thirty years make more sense politically than economically. Eliminating guaranteed life employment for precarious contracts doesn’t really create a more effective workforce, but it is extraordinarily effective in destroying unions and otherwise depoliticizing labor. The same can be said of endlessly increasing working hours. No one has much time for political activity if they’re working sixty-hour weeks.¶ It does often seem that, whenever there is a choice between one option that makes capitalism seem the only possible economic system, and another that would actually make capitalism a more viable economic system, neoliberalism means always choosing the former. The combined result is a relentless campaign against the human imagination. Or, to be more precise: imagination, desire, individual creativity, all those things that were to be liberated in the last great world revolution, were to be contained strictly in the domain of consumerism, or perhaps in the virtual realities of the Internet. In all other realms they were to be strictly banished. We are talking about the murdering of dreams, the imposition of an apparatus of hopelessness, designed to squelch any sense of an alternative future. Yet as a result of putting virtually all their efforts in one political basket, we are left in the bizarre situation of watching the capitalist system crumbling before our very eyes, at just the moment everyone had finally concluded no other system would be possible.¶ Work It Out, Slow It Down¶ Normally, when you challenge the conventional wisdom—that the current economic and political system is the only possible one—the first reaction you are likely to get is a demand for a detailed architectural blueprint of how an alternative system would work, down to the nature of its financial instruments, energy supplies, and policies of sewer maintenance. Next, you are likely to be asked for a detailed program of how this system will be brought into existence. Historically, this is ridiculous. When has social change ever happened according to someone’s blueprint? It’s not as if a small circle of visionaries in Renaissance Florence conceived of something they called “capitalism,” figured out the details of how the stock exchange and factories would someday work, and then put in place a program to bring their visions into reality. In fact, the idea is so absurd we might well ask ourselves how it ever occurred to us to imagine this is how change happens to begin.¶ This is not to say there’s anything wrong with utopian visions. Or even blueprints. They just need to be kept in their place. The theorist Michael Albert has worked out a detailed plan for how a modern economy could run without money on a democratic, participatory basis. I think this is an important achievement—not because I think that exact model could ever be instituted, in exactly the form in which he describes it, but because it makes it impossible to say that such a thing is inconceivable. Still, such models can be only thought experiments. We cannot really conceive of the problems that will arise when we start trying to build a free society. What now seem likely to be the thorniest problems might not be problems at all; others that never even occurred to us might prove devilishly difficult. There are innumerable X-factors.¶ The most obvious is technology. This is the reason it’s so absurd to imagine activists in Renaissance Italy coming up with a model for a stock exchange and factories—what happened was based on all sorts of technologies that they couldn’t have anticipated, but which in part only emerged because society began to move in the direction that it did. This might explain, for instance, why so many of the more compelling visions of an anarchist society have been produced by science fiction writers (Ursula K. Le Guin, Starhawk, Kim Stanley Robinson). In fiction, you are at least admitting the technological aspect is guesswork.¶ Myself, I am less interested in deciding what sort of economic system we should have in a free society than in creating the means by which people can make such decisions for themselves. What might a revolution in common sense actually look like? I don’t know, but I can think of any number of pieces of conventional wisdom that surely need challenging if we are to create any sort of viable free society. I’ve already explored one—the nature of money and debt—in some detail in a recent book. I even suggested a debt jubilee, a general cancellation, in part just to bring home that money is really just a human product, a set of promises, that by its nature can always be renegotiated.¶ ¶ Labor, similarly, should be renegotiated. Submitting oneself to labor discipline—supervision, control, even the self-control of the ambitious self-employed—does not make one a better person. In most really important ways, it probably makes one worse. To undergo it is a misfortune that at best is sometimes necessary. Yet it’s only when we reject the idea that such labor is virtuous in itself that we can start to ask what is virtuous about labor. To which the answer is obvious. Labor is virtuous if it helps others. A renegotiated definition of productivity should make it easier to reimagine the very nature of what work is, since, among other things, it will mean that technological development will be redirected less toward creating ever more consumer products and ever more disciplined labor, and more toward eliminating those forms of labor entirely.¶ What would remain is the kind of work only human beings will ever be able to do: those forms of caring and helping labor that are at the very center of the crisis that brought about Occupy Wall Street to begin with. What would happen if we stopped acting as if the primordial form of work is laboring at a production line, or wheat field, or iron foundry, or even in an office cubicle, and instead started from a mother, a teacher, or a caregiver? We might be forced to conclude that the real business of human life is not contributing toward something called “the economy” (a concept that didn’t even exist three hundred years ago), but the fact that we are all, and have always been, projects of mutual creation.¶ It’s as if American forces in Iraq were ultimately defeated by the ghost of Abbie Hoffman.¶ At the moment, probably the most pressing need is simply to slow down the engines of productivity. This might seem a strange thing to say—our knee-jerk reaction to every crisis is to assume the solution is for everyone to work even more, though of course, this kind of reaction is really precisely the problem—but if you consider the overall state of the world, the conclusion becomes obvious. We seem to be facing two insoluble problems. On the one hand, we have witnessed an endless series of global debt crises, which have grown only more and more severe since the seventies, to the point where the overall burden of debt—sovereign, municipal, corporate, personal—is obviously unsustainable. On the other, we have an ecological crisis, a galloping process of climate change that is threatening to throw the entire planet into drought, floods, chaos, starvation, and war. The two might seem unrelated. But ultimately they are the same. What is debt, after all, but the promise of future productivity? Saying that global debt levels keep rising is simply another way of saying that, as a collectivity, human beings are promising each other to produce an even greater volume of goods and services in the future than they are creating now. But even current levels are clearly unsustainable. They are precisely what’s destroying the planet, at an ever-increasing pace.¶ Even those running the system are reluctantly beginning to conclude that some kind of mass debt cancellation—some kind of jubilee—is inevitable. The real political struggle is going to be over the form that it takes. Well, isn’t the obvious thing to address both problems simultaneously? Why not a planetary debt cancellation, as broad as practically possible, followed by a mass reduction in working hours: a four-hour day, perhaps, or a guaranteed five-month vacation? This might not only save the planet but also (since it’s not like everyone would just be sitting around in their newfound hours of freedom) begin to change our basic conceptions of what value-creating labor might actually be.¶ Occupy was surely right not to make demands, but if I were to have to formulate one, that would be it. After all, this would be an attack on the dominant ideology at its very strongest points. The morality of debt and the morality of work are the most powerful ideological weapons in the hands of those running the current system. That’s why they cling to them even as they are effectively destroying everything else. It’s also why debt cancellation would make the perfect revolutionary demand.¶ All this might still seem very distant. At the moment, the planet might seem poised more for a series of unprecedented catastrophes than for the kind of broad moral and political transformation that would open the way to such a world. But if we are going to have any chance of heading off those catastrophes, we’re going to have to change our accustomed ways of thinking. And as the events of 2011 reveal, the age of revolutions is by no means over. The human imagination stubbornly refuses to die. And the moment any significant number of people simultaneously shake off the shackles that have been placed on that collective imagination, even our most deeply inculcated assumptions about what is and is not politically possible have been known to crumble overnight.

#### Historical materialism is key: you must understand the world before you can change it- grounding sites of political contestation outside of labor humanizes capital and forcloses upon the possibility of revolution.

**Tumino** (Prof. English @ Pitt) **01**

[Stephen, “What is Orthodox Marxism and Why it Matters Now More than Ever”, Red Critiqu]

Any effective political theory will have to do at least two things: it will have to offer an integrated understanding of social practices and, based on such an interrelated knowledge, offer a guideline for praxis. My main argument here is that among all contesting social theories now, only Orthodox Marxism has been able to produce an integrated knowledge of the existing social totality and provide lines of praxis that will lead to building a society free from necessity. But first I must clarify what I mean by Orthodox Marxism. Like all other modes and forms of political theory, the very theoretical identity of Orthodox Marxism is itself contested—not just from non-and anti-Marxists who question the very "real" (by which they mean the "practical" as under free-market criteria) existence of any kind of Marxism now but, perhaps more tellingly, from within the Marxist tradition itself. I will, therefore, first say what I regard to be the distinguishing marks of Orthodox Marxism and then outline a short polemical map of contestation over Orthodox Marxism within the Marxist theories now. I will end by arguing for its effectivity in bringing about a new society based not on human rights but on freedom from necessity. I will argue that to know contemporary society—and to be able to act on such knowledge—one has to first of all know what makes the existing social totality. I will argue that the dominant social totality is based on inequality—not just inequality of power but inequality of economic access (which then determines access to health care, education, housing, diet, transportation, . . . ). This systematic inequality cannot be explained by gender, race, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, or nationality. These are all secondary contradictions and are all determined by the fundamental contradiction of capitalism which is inscribed in the relation of capital and labor. All modes of Marxism now explain social inequalities primarily on the basis of these secondary contradictions and in doing so—and this is my main argument—legitimate capitalism. Why? Because such arguments authorize capitalism without gender, race, discrimination and thus accept economic inequality as an integral part of human societies. They accept a sunny capitalism—a capitalism beyond capitalism. Such a society, based on cultural equality but economic inequality, has always been the not-so-hidden agenda of the bourgeois left—whether it has been called "new left," "postmarxism," or "radical democracy." This is, by the way, the main reason for its popularity in the culture industry—from the academy (Jameson, Harvey, Haraway, Butler,. . . ) to daily politics (Michael Harrington, Ralph Nader, Jesse Jackson,. . . ) to. . . . For all, capitalism is here to stay and the best that can be done is to make its cruelties more tolerable, more humane. This humanization (not eradication) of capitalism is the sole goal of ALL contemporary lefts (marxism, feminism, anti-racism, queeries, . . . ). Such an understanding of social inequality is based on the fundamental understanding that the source of wealth is human knowledge and not human labor. That is, wealth is produced by the human mind and is thus free from the actual objective conditions that shape the historical relations of labor and capital. Only Orthodox Marxism recognizes the historicity of labor and its primacy as the source of all human wealth. In this paper I argue that any emancipatory theory has to be founded on recognition of the priority of Marx's labor theory of value and not repeat the technological determinism of corporate theory ("knowledge work") that masquerades as social theory.

### Case

**There is no Other to whom we owe responsibility, but a Big Other to whom we feel a debt. Levinasian ethics are nothing more than a capitulation to the desire to fill gaps in the Big Other. This enters us into a cycle of desire, which incites us to mar and disfigure the very Other we claim to help and save.**

Slavoj **Zizek**, Professor of Sociology at the Institute for Sociology, Ljubljana University, **2004**, Umbr(a): War, p. 80-82

**The topic of the “other” is to be submitted to** a kind of spectral **analysis that renders visible its imaginary, symbolic, and real aspects** — it provides perhaps the ultimate case of the Lacanian notion of the “Borromean knot” that unites these three dimensions. First, **there is the imaginary other** — **other people “like me,”** my fellow human beings with whom I am engaged in the mirror-like relationships of competition or mutual recognition. **Then, there is the symbolic “big Other**” — **the “substance” of our social existence,** the impersonal set of rules that coordinate our coexistence. Finally, **there is the Other qua real, the impossible Thing, the “inhuman partner,” the Other with whom no** symmetrical **dialogue**, mediated by the symbolic order, **is possible**. And it is crucial to perceive how these three dimensions are interconnected. The neighbor (Nebenmensch) as the Thing means that, **beneath the neighbor as** my semblant, **my mirror-image**, **there always lurks the unfathom­able abyss of radical Otherness**, of a monstrous Thing that cannot be “gentrified.”” Lacan’s notion, from the early fifties, of the “founding word,” the statement that confers on you a symbolic title and thus makes you what you are (wife, master, and so on), is usually perceived as an echo of the theory of the performative. It is clear, however, that Lacan aims at something more: we need recourse to performativity, to the symbolic engagement, precisely and only insofar as the other whom we encounter is not only the imaginary semblant, but also **the elusive absolute Other of the real Thing** with whom no reciprocal exchange is possible. **In order to render our coexistence with the Thing mini­mally bearable, the symbolic order qua pacifying mediator has to intervene**. The “gentrification” of the Other-Thing into a “normal human fellow” cannot occur through our direct interaction, but presupposes the third agency to which we both submit ourselves. There is no intersubjectivity (no symmetrical, shared relation between humans) without the impersonal symbolic order. So no axis between the two terms can subsist without the third one: **if the functioning of the big Other is suspended, the friendly neigh­bor coincides with the monstrous Thing** (a la Antigone); **if there is no neighbor to whom I can relate as a human partner, the symbolic order itself turns into the monstrous Thing**, which directly parasitizes me (like Schreber’s God who directly controls him, penetrating him with rays of jouissance); **if there is no Thing to underpin our everyday symbolically regulated exchange with others, we find ourselves in a** Habermasian “fiat,” aseptic **uni­verse in which subjects are deprived of their hubris of excessive passion, reduced to lifeless pawns** in the regulated game of communication. **It is from here that one should approach the** key **Levinasian notion of encountering the Other’s face as the epiphany**, as the event that precedes truth itself: “But deceit and verac­ity already presuppose the absolute authenticity of the face...To seek truth, I have already established a relationship with a face which can guarantee itself, whose epiphany itself is somehow a word of honor. Every language as an exchange of verbal signs refers already to this primordial word of honor.”’2 One should read these lines against the background of the circular, self-referential character of the Lacanian big Other, the symbolic “substance” of our being, which is perhaps best rendered by Donald Davidson’s “holistic” claim that “our only evidence for a belief is other beliefs...And since no belief is self-certifying, none can supply a certain basis for the rest.”’3 Far from functioning as the “fatal flaw” of the symbolic order, this circularity is the very condition of its effective functioning. So when Levinas claims that a face ‘can guarantee itself,” this means that it serves as the non-linguistic point of reference that also enables us to break the vicious circularity of the symbolic order, providing it with the ultimate foundation and “absolute authenticity.” **The face is** thus **the ultimate fetish**, **the object that fills in** (obfuscates) **the big Other’s** ‘castration” (**inconsistency**, lack), **the abyss of its circularity**. At a different level, this fetishization — or rather, fetishistic disavowal — is discernible in our daily relation to another person’s face. This disavowal does not primarily concern the raw reality of flesh, but rather, at a more radical level, the abyss/void of the Other: the human face “gentrifles” the terrifying Thing that is the ultimate reality of our neighbor. And insofar as the void called “the subject of the signifier” is strictly correlative to this inconsistency of the Other, subject and face are to be opposed. **The event of encountering the other’s face is not the experience of the abyss of the other’s subjectivity; the only way to arrive at this experi­ence is through defacement in all its dimensions, through a simple tic or grimace that disfigures the face** (in this sense, Lacan claims that the real is ‘the grimace of reality”).

**Putting ethics first precludes politics and relies on sovereign violence turning the case.**

Robert **Meister**, professor of politics university of santa clara, “’Never Again’: The Logic of the Neighbor and the Politics of Genocide,” 20**05**, muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern\_culture/v015/15.2**meister**.html

My topic is not whether the "world community" should have (at least) bombed Auschwitz or Rwanda when the genocides there became known, but rather the conception of ethics and politics that underlies such dilemmas. According to this conception, **bombing (like foreign occupation) can be a justifiable form of political intervention by third parties when preceded by gross ethical barbarities occurring among neighbors. The ethical condemnation of atrocity, if not the atrocity itself, must here precede political intervention. Contemporary humanitarian practice requires such a sequence because it is based on the premise that, in theory too, ethics comes before politics. The opposing position--putting politics before ethics--is now commonly derided as the error shared by right and left throughout the twentieth century**, an era of revolution and counterrevolution in which individuals were exquisitely sensitive to the suffering of their comrades and insensitive to pain inflicted on their foes (see Glover and Rummel). This is what politics is, Carl Schmitt argues--a selective antidote to 3

**The claim that ethics inevitably comes first relies on a standard of radical Evil. The threatened Other can only be permanently threatened if there is a permanent threat. This logic devolves into a search for the enemies of humanity and justifies genocide.**

Robert **Meister**, professor of politics university of santa clara, “’Never Again’: The Logic of the Neighbor and the Politics of Genocide,” 20**05**, muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern\_culture/v015/15.2**meister**.html

To prevent the repetition of Auschwitz, according to Lévinas, we must face up to the mechanisms that Klein would call projective identification: "I am [unconsciously, Klein would say] responsible for the persecutions I undergo . . . since **I am responsible for the responsibility of the other**" (Lévinas, "Responsibility" 99). Although this ethical claim can be found throughout his work, Lévinas eventually grounds it on the observation that a desire to commit murder or genocide is intelligible only because we see ourselves either as its subject or as its object. **The imaginable reversibility of subject and object (active or passive) has an ethical significance that Lévinas comes to call "substitution."** "The ego," he says, "is a substitution" ("Substitution" 127). By this he means that "subjectivity no longer belongs to the order where the alternative of passivity and activity retains its meaning"; it follows that "the self, a hostage, is already substituted for the others" (118). On this view, **every evil that we are capable of fearing--and now we must include even radical evil--is also something for which we are capable of wishing. We must ground ethics not in affinity or reciprocity, but in our prior responsibility toward those to whom we will relate only as neighbors**--and whom we must treat as though our feelings toward them were merely projective. In a Lévinasian ethics of the neighbor, my responsibility not to kill is based on proximity alone.      It can thus be argued that the ethics of human rights "after Auschwitz" presupposes the simultaneous existence and repression of genocidal thoughts. This kind of argument is nothing new. Freud himself grounds mass (or group) psychology both on the wish to kill the father and on the repression of the memory of having already done so in one's mind (that is, in unconscious fantasy). He argues that the foundation of the group is a memory that lies outside the realm of permissible thoughts in the form of a taboo.[17](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot17) Subsequent Freudian interpretations of the social contract have evoked real and fantasmatic scenarios of regicide and fratricide (Brown 3-31). The question is whether the imagery of Auschwitz--which is also and indubitably something real--now also functions on a fantasmatic level within the global rhetoric of human rights in the way that the imagery of regicide functioned in discourses on the Rights of Man that followed the French Revolution (see Walzer and Hunt).      My general claim about t**he function of genocide in the global ethic of the neighbor is that it functions like Freud's argument about the role of parricide in the ethics of the family. In the new global ethics of "never again," however, the collectivity is not seen as a type of family, but as a type of neighborhood in**

**which spatial rather than generational relations predominate.** Like all foundational acts, genocide is constitutively outside the sovereign power that (from time to time) calls a group, even a "world community," into being. **The génocidaire is the quintessential criminal against humanity as such, the inhuman monster to whom "terrorists," for example, must now be compared; genocide has become the morally incomparable act that is constantly subject to repetition. In fin-de-siècle human rights discourse, genocide becomes the wish that an imaginary sovereign power makes taboo--unthinkable because it is repressed, and for that very reason at the root of all our conscious fears**.      **The presumed unthinkability of genocide--the repression, not the absence, of the wish--is thus both the founding premise of the fin-de-siècle Human Rights Discourse and the stated goal of most human rights advocacy**.[18](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot18) The recollection of genocidal experiences from the victims' standpoint, however, is the overt subject matter of many histories and of much science fiction.[19](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot19) On its surface, this literature claims to warn us of the dangers of genocide so that we will fear and avoid them at all costs.[20](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot20) At a deeper level, however, the fear of genocidal victimhood and our enhanced imagination of it are also troubling. What does it really mean, after all, to imagine genocide, to fear it, and to avoid it at all costs? **Is it not ultimately this political mindset that has made "thinkable" in the twentieth century the genocides of which some otherwise civilized nations have become capable?** For them, the thinkability of ethnic cleansings and extermination has been a defense (by projection) against their heightened ability to imagine themselves as the objects of genocidal intent.[21](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot21) As the world embarks on the twenty-first century, genocide has never been more thinkable--especially the genocide of which we may be victims. It has now become almost conventional to argue for the existence of genocide, for example in Darfur, by publishing photographs of dead bodies and daring the viewer to refuse empathy.[22](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot22)      The thinkability of genocide as a defense against the fear of genocide is a disturbing point to acknowledge. **To say that genocide is morally intelligible is not to say that it is now, or ever could have been, morally right; instead, it is to note that most genocides are not mere acts of inadvertence or insensitivity, but rather moments of intense moral concentration invoking high concepts like human rights and democracy. If we cannot imagine the logic of genocide (and how that logic employs our moral concepts), we will never understand how a human rights discourse (which may, for a period of time, seem well-established in places like Sarajevo) can dissolve into what commentators glibly describe as "primordial group hatreds," and how that same discourse can later re-emerge as a self-conscious return to civilized values**.[23](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot23)

**The aff is dependent on a redemptive politics. Their claims to responsibility are nothing, but shame, which leads to inaction and genocide.**

Jacob **Schiff**, Department of Political Science at the University of Chicago, **2003**, online: http://ptw.uchicago.edu/schiff03.pdf, accessed September 11, 2010 **gender modified**

What has gone wrong here? I believe **that this dismal response to genocide reflects an insistence upon redemptive politics; upon politics that seek to purify us and deliver us from that which we hate, fear and resent, of that which shames us and makes us feel dirty, evil, wrong, or bad. Such politics** seek perfect peace, justice, order, virtue, and the like, but they **are ultimately self-defeating**. In this case, **the aspiration that gives voice to our “Never again!”, that spurs us to rid the world of genocide forever, imposes upon us an absolute, infinite responsibility that paralyzes us into inaction**--and so genocide continues. **The lessons of history amply demonstrate the ongoing frustration to which redemptive politics seem condemned**. Given these lessons, **the persistence of redemptive language and logic** in some of our political claims--like those concerning genocide--deserves attention.3 We are unlikely ever to escape the trap of redemptive politics altogether--to suggest that we could, would reinforce its logic. But we can work harder to articulate political claims in ways that resist redemptive temptations, ways that **reflect the urgency of combating cruelty and injustice whenever we confront them, but that resist the intolerable burden**

**of an elusive future in which we will be forever rid of them.** We should, I will suggest, urge not “Never again!” but, rather, “Not this time!” Emmanuel Levinas provides an argument for and an example of such articulations. Levinas is often regarded as the theorist of responsibility. Accordingly, a number of scholars frustrated by the state of normative IR theory have turned to him in search of ethical resources for world politics (see, e.g., Campbell, 1999; Dillon, 1995, 1999; Franke, 2000; Molloy, 1999, 2000; Neumann, 1996, 1999; Shapiro, 1999; Warner, 1996).4 Some of Levinas’ interlocutors (notably Campbell, Shapiro, and Neumann) ascribe to Levinas a redemptive vision of politics. This vision may--or may not--be theirs, but it is not his. This misunderstanding prevents them from appreciating Levinas’ sober--and more promising--account of a politics that calls redemptive aspirations into question. The trouble began with a radio interview in which Levinas participated in 1982, following the massacre of hundreds of Arabs inside Palestinian camps at Sabra and Chatila at the apparent behest of the Israeli Defence Forces during Israel’s war with Lebanon (in Hand, 1989: 289-97; see, e.g., Fisk, 2001). According to Campbell, Shapiro, and Neumann, Levinas’ strong support for Israel and his faith in the state as such led him to betray his own claims about responsibility and justice, and to pay insufficient attention to competing historical narratives. These charges are misplaced insofar as they rest on a misunderstanding of Levinas’ account of politics as a redemptive one, and upon a conflation of Levinas’ ethics with his politics. In **Levinas’** defense, I will argue that he offers a very different account of politics, one that **counsels us against seeking redemption without either justifying inaction or urging resignation in the face of cruelty and injustice**. At times, Levinas’ position highlights the difference between framing political claims in redemptive and non-redemptive terms, and suggests the merits of the latter. Aside from my own misgivings about redemptive politics, part of my motivation here concerns disciplinary politics. Within (and without) the field of International Relations, critical theorists—among whom I include Levinasians--are frequently suspected of being politically naïve. John Mearsheimer, for instance, has claimed that the goal of “critical theorists” is “to relegate security competition and war to the scrap heap of history” (1995: 37). Alexander Wendt was right to respond that framing “the debate between realists and critical theorists as one between a theory of war and a theory of peace” is “a fundamental mistake” (1995: 75). But, Wendt never asks, where does Mearsheimer get this distorted picture of critical theorists? I fear that he gets it directly from us, especially when we employ redemptive language in writing and talking about politics. **Being thought naïve—or, even worse, actually being naïve-- is a serious problem, and one that critical theorists need to face head-on. Rethinking Levinas’ account of politics provides us with an instrument for doing so.**

## 2NC

### link 2NC

#### they mask the role of class- replaces the universal with difference

Rob Wilkie, Assistant Professor, Cultural and Digital Studies, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, "Capitalism's Posthuman Empire," THE RED CRITIQUE n. 14, Winter/Spring 2012,http://redcritique.org/WinterSpring2012/capitalismsposthumanempire.htm

The economic tumultuousness of capitalism requires a constant turnover of ideological concepts which, on the one hand, displace the fundamental inequality of private property while, on the other hand, replacing the possibilities of true economic equality with the illusion of the empty equality of the market. While the advancing productivity of human labor means that we are able to foresee a time when the needs of all are met, capitalism restricts these developments to the profit motive. An economic system which divides the working class against itself by forcing workers around the world to compete with one another for the wage, capitalism can’t but foster new social divisions and contestations within the working class while at the same time reducing working class unity to the reified homogeneity of exploitation. It is on these terms that we must understand bourgeois theory’s "posthumanist turn" and the way in which it disconnects the relation between race and class. I argue that what is represented as posthumanism's "ethical" recognition of difference without closure—the claim to recognize the "solidarity" between humans and animals by resisting the instrumental reduction of both to homogeneous masses—is in actuality a displacement of the more revolutionary critique of capitalism as a global system that must expand the conditions for private accumulation by subsuming all boundaries and differences under the one difference which only a social transformation can bring an end to, namely the difference of class.

In order to consider the social realities of capital's posthuman empire, however, I believe it is necessary to start outside of it, in what Marx and Engels call the "real ground of history…the material production of life itself" (The German Ideology 164). What I mean by this is that in contrast to Giorgio Agamben's posthumanist declaration in What is an Apparatus? that "what is to be at stake, to be precise, is not an erasure or an overcoming, but rather a dissemination that pushes to the extreme the masquerade that has always accompanied every personal identity" (13), the apparent fluidity of the concept of "identity" and "otherness" in social, philosophic, and scientific discourses over time is governed by what Marx and Engels describe as the "mass of productive forces, capital funds and conditions, which, on the one hand, is indeed modified by the new generation, but also on the other prescribes for it its conditions of life and gives it a definite development" (The German Ideology 165). In starting outside of epistemology, in the historical and material ontology of social relations, it becomes possible to not only document the fact that theories of "self" and "other" change, but why changes in the meaning of identity reflect the deeper social contestations between classes over the material conditions that shape one's life; namely, the life-activity of human labor.

It is on these terms, for instance, that Hegel's foundational theory of otherness in The Phenomenology of the Mind that underlies virtually all cultural theories of difference today can be understood not as the spontaneous coming to "self-consciousness" of the contingent nature of all identity, but rather as a reflection of the changing economic relations of an emerging industrial capitalism which, in turn, turns these economic relations into the illusion of the natural condition of all "life." According to Hegel, "self-consciousness" occurs when society reaches the point at which it can reflect on itself by understanding that individuals exist relationally, but nonetheless independently. "Self-consciousness," he writes, "exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it is only by being acknowledged or 'recognized'" (561). It is on these terms that Hegel proposes that the dependent nature of human consciousness up to that point—manifest in the relation between lord and bondsman—is only transformed when each recognizes the other as an equal and independent being.

However, by drawing upon what Marx theorizes as the "material conditions of life," it becomes clear that what Hegel represents as "self-consciousness" cannot be understood outside of the historical and material conditions in which his inquiry takes place. That is, in seeking to define the relational basis of the self as other than the dependent relation between the bondsman to the lord (563), Hegel is challenging the "self" as understood under feudal economic relations and, in its place, establishing the ideological framework for the "liberty" of private property relations under capitalism. It is on this basis, for instance, that Marx writes that the form of "liberty as a right of man" which Hegel privileges is "not founded upon the relations between man and man, but rather upon the separation of man from man" (On The Jewish Question 42). In other words, the need to recast humanity as a social relation based upon the "recognition" of equals is driven by the emergence of a society framed around both the contractual meeting of "free" individuals in the marketplace—that is, individuals "freed" from the means of production and thus forced to sell their labor power for a wage—as well as the rethinking of the bourgeois "individual" as having a natural "right" to freely own private property.

To return, then, to the contemporary moment of posthumanism, the reading of identity which has come to dominate cultural theory responds to the globalization of wage-labor by arguing that the primary struggle is no longer between classes, but between the cultural homogenization of the social, on the one hand, and the post-race, post-class, and post-gender multitudes which "resist" through appeals to cultural singularity and local difference, on the other. Perhaps the most prominent proponents of this thesis are Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who, in Commonwealth, argue that although "War, suffering, misery, and exploitation increasingly characterize our globalizing world… [o]ne primary effect of globalization… is the creation of a common world, a world that, for better or worse, we all share, a world that has no 'outside'" (vii). At the core of their thesis is that capitalism is no longer a system divided by class, but rather a system of political domination that, however unevenly, nonetheless impacts and pulls everyone into a struggle over control over definitions of "self." In the new, "common" world, they write, "each identity is divided internally by others: racial hierarchies divide genders and classes, gender hierarchies divide races and classes, and so forth" (340) and "no one domain or social antagonism is prior to the others" (342). In this sense, the struggle for social change is not about ending the conditions of class exploitation that lead to racial and other forms of oppression, but rather expanding the recognition of independent identities such that they can no longer be subsumed under the homogeneity of capitalism's instrumental and reductive logic. In this post-race, post-class, and post-gender world, they declare, recognizing the "Singularity" of the multitudes "destroys the logic of property" (339) and "fills the traditional role of… the abolition of the state" (333). As such, their proposal is to abandon any hope of fundamental social transformation or alternative to capitalism in favor of "an ethics of democratic political action within and against Empire" (vii).

The problem is that although "globalization" has become synonymous in theory with the end of any economic challenge to capitalism's dominance and the absence of an outside from which to critique exploitation, this does not change the reality that the expansion of capitalism globally has meant in actuality a rising level of inequality and a sharpening of the class divide, a point then reflected back in culture by increasing racial and religious tensions. This is because capitalism is a system that depends upon the exploitation of labor. Regardless of whether the primary location of production is the North or the South, or whether the workers work in factories that are highly mechanized or newly digitalized, it is the production of surplus value extracted from the surplus labor of workers by owners that drives capitalism forward. It is in the context of increasing economic uncertainty and inequality that one must read, for example, the increasing use of institutionalized and "culturally acceptable" racism against Muslims and immigrants in the United States and Europe to divide the working class as an instance of what Marx calls the "secret which enables the capitalist class to maintain its power" ("Marx to S. Meyer and A. Vogt" 337). In other words, far from the divisions of the past being displaced, as Hardt and Negri propose, class divisions have only become heightened in capital's new global ecology, leading as usual to the divisive cultural promulgation of "internal" cultural divisions within the global proletariat.

It is for this reason, I argue, that the recognition of the singularity of cultural difference as the means by which to address the social oppressions of race, gender, sexuality, animality, and (dis)ability argued for by posthumanists has in actuality become the ideology that in obscuring exploitation enables global capitalism to deepen social inequalities. This is because it strips away the historical and material conditions of difference and, instead, represents the conditions of identity under capitalism, as Cary Wolfe suggests in What is Posthumanism?, as the "ongoing, differentiated construction and creation of a shared environment, sometimes converging in a consensual domain, sometimes not, by autopoetic entities that have their own temporalities, chronicities, perceptual modalities, and so on—in short, their own forms of embodiment" (xxiv). The problem, according to posthumanists such as Wolfe, is the failure of capitalism to recognize that all beings should be allowed to operate "on their own time," instead of being forced to operate under a homogenized "temporality." Capitalism, then, is challenged not as an economic system, but a managerial one. That is, it is said that capital does not do enough to recognize the "differences" which exist at the very core of all being and thus is challenged to further incorporate people (and animals) in their local, embedded realities. This local recognition, the argument goes, will bring the rigid, instrumental logic of capitalism into crisis. However, this image of society as consisting of autonomous, self-identified individuals who sometimes operate together and sometimes not, doesn't challenge the core logic of capitalism in exploitation. In fact, it replicates the very ideology on which capitalism depends, namely the illusion of freedom in the marketplace, where "individuals" encounter each other in a series of chance meetings to exchange—more or less "fairly"—wages for labor. By giving up the possibility of any theory of identity and difference beyond the isolated encounter, posthumanist ethics offers only a politics of individual, autonomous solutions to what is a structural economic contradiction. In turn, it thus serves at the level of culture as the means by which to extend the economic realities of capitalism which in fact give rise to the conditions of oppression posthumanists nominally oppose. Capitalism, especially in its current "global" phase, has no problems recognizing local differences and adapting commodities to local markets. What matters to capital is not the locality of markets, but the globality of labor.

### Marx: Perm-- 2NC

#### 4th, praxis DA: This is why you can’t perm a method…They strip all of the conceptual theory that allows us to understand the world—worse than the aff or the alt alone. deconstruction doesn’t do anything- they deconstruct, but when does it end? concrete plans are k2 the alt Perm will become like occupy wall street—it’s also a rejection of capitalism but doesn’t have a praxis because the movement is fractured, no one knows what they are fighting for—this is why it will never catch on.

Tumino (Prof. English @ Pitt) 01

[Stephen, “What is Orthodox Marxism and Why it Matters Now More than Ever”, Red Critiqu]

Orthodox Marxism has become a test-case of the "radical" today. Yet, what passes for orthodoxy on the left—whether like Smith and Zizek they claim to support it, or, like Butler and Rorty they want to "achieve our country" by excluding it from "U.S. Intellectual life" ("On Left Conservatism"), is a parody of orthodoxy which hybridizes its central concepts and renders them into flexodox simulations. Yet, even in its very textuality, however, the orthodox is a resistance to the flexodox. Contrary to the common-sensical view of "orthodox" as "traditional" or "conformist" "opinions," is its other meaning: ortho-doxy not as flexodox "hybridity," but as "original" "ideas." "Original," not in the sense of epistemic "event," "authorial" originality and so forth, but, as in chemistry, in its opposition to "para," "meta," "post" and other ludic hybridities: thus "ortho" as resistance to the annotations that mystify the original ideas of Marxism and hybridize it for the "special interests" of various groups. The "original" ideas of Marxism are inseparable from their effect as "demystification" of ideology—for example the deployment of "class" that allows a demystification of daily life from the haze of consumption. Class is thus an "original idea" of Marxism in the sense that it cuts through the hype of cultural agency under capitalism and reveals how culture and consumption are tied to labor, the everyday determined by the workday: how the amount of time workers spend engaging in surplus-labor determines the amount of time they get for reproducing and cultivating their needs. Without changing this division of labor social change is impossible. Orthodoxy is a rejection of the ideological annotations: hence, on the one hand, the resistance to orthodoxy as "rigid" and "dogmatic" "determinism," and, on the other, its hybridization by the flexodox as the result of which it has become almost impossible today to read the original ideas of Marxism, such as "exploitation"; "surplus-value"; "class"; "class antagonism"; "class struggle"; "revolution"; "science**"** (i.e., objective knowledge); "ideology**"** (as "false consciousness"). Yet, it is these ideas alone that clarify the elemental truths through which theory ceases to be a gray activism of tropes, desire and affect, and becomes, instead, a red, revolutionary guide to praxis for a new society freed from exploitation and injustice. Marx's original scientific discovery was his labor theory of value. Marx's labor theory of value is an elemental truth of Orthodox Marxism that is rejected by the flexodox left as the central dogmatism of a "totalitarian" Marxism. It is only Marx's labor theory of value, however, that exposes the mystification of the wages system that disguises exploitation as a "fair exchange" between capital and labor and reveals the truth about this relation as one of exploitation. Only Orthodox Marxism explains how what the workers sell to the capitalist is not labor, a commodity like any other whose price is determined by fluctuations in supply and demand, but their labor-power—their ability to labor in a system which has systematically "freed" them from the means of production so they are forced to work or starve—whose value is determined by the amount of time socially necessary to reproduce it daily. The value of labor-power is equivalent to the value of wages workers consume daily in the form of commodities that keep them alive to be exploited tomorrow. Given the technical composition of production today this amount of time is a slight fraction of the workday the majority of which workers spend producing surplus-value over and above their needs. The surplus-value is what is pocketed by the capitalists in the form of profit when the commodities are sold. Class is the antagonistic division thus established between the exploited and their exploiters. Without Marx's labor theory of value one could only contest the after effects of this outright theft of social labor-power rather than its cause lying in the private ownership of production. The flexodox rejection of the labor theory of value as the "dogmatic" core of a totalitarian Marxism therefore is a not so subtle rejection of the principled defense of the (scientific) knowledge workers need for their emancipation from exploitation because only the labor theory of value exposes the opportunism of knowledges (ideology) that occult this exploitation. Without the labor theory of value socialism would only be a moral dogma that appeals to the sentiments of "fairness" and "equality" for a "just" distribution o**f** the social wealth that does the work of capital by naturalizing the exploitation of labor under capitalism giving it an acceptable "human face."

### A2 Materialism not true

#### Materialism explains reality…focus on the discursive/symbolic obfuscates that relation and makes oppression inevitable

Cloud (Prof of Comm at Texas) 01

[Dana, “The Affirmative Masquerade”, p. online: http://www.acjournal.org/holdings/vol4/iss3/special/cloud.htm]

At the very least, however, it is clear that poststructuralist discourse theories have left behind some of historical materialism’s most valuable conceptual tools for any theoretical and critical practice that aims at informing practical, oppositional political activity on behalf of historically exploited and oppressed groups. As Nancy Hartsock (1983, 1999) and many others have argued (see Ebert 1996; Stabile, 1997; Triece, 2000; Wood, 1999), we need to retain concepts such as standpoint epistemology (wherein truth standards are not absolute or universal but arise from the scholar’s alignment with the perspectives of particular classes and groups) and fundamental, class-based interests (as opposed to understanding class as just another discursively-produced identity). We need extra-discursive reality checks on ideological mystification and economic contextualization of discursive phenomena. Most importantly, critical scholars bear the obligation to explain the origins and causes of exploitation and oppression in order better to inform the fight against them. In poststructuralist discourse theory, the "retreat from class" (Wood, 1999) expresses an unwarranted pessimism about what can be accomplished in late capitalism with regard to understanding and transforming system and structure at the level of the economy and the state. It substitutes meager cultural freedoms for macro-level social transformation even as millions of people around the world feel the global reach of capitalism more deeply than ever before. At the core of the issue is a debate across the humanities and social sciences with regard to whether we live in a "new economy," an allegedly postmodern, information-driven historical moment in which, it is argued, organized mass movements are no longer effective in making material demands of system and structure (Melucci, 1996). In suggesting that global capitalism has so innovated its strategies that there is no alternative to its discipline, arguments proclaiming "a new economy" risk inaccuracy, pessimism, and conservatism (see Cloud, in press). While a thoroughgoing summary is beyond the scope of this essay, there is a great deal of evidence against claims that capitalism has entered a new phase of extraordinary innovation, reach, and scope (see Hirst and Thompson, 1999). Furthermore, both class polarization (see Mishel, Bernstein, and Schmitt, 2001) and the ideological and management strategies that contain class antagonism (see Cloud, 1998; Parker and Slaughter, 1994) still resemble their pre-postmodern counterparts. A recent report of the Economic Policy Institute concludes that in the 1990s, inequality between rich and poor in the U.S. (as well as around the world) continued to grow, in a context of rising worker productivity, a longer work week for most ordinary Americans, and continued high poverty rates. Even as the real wage of the median CEO rose nearly 63 percent from 1989, to 1999, more than one in four U.S. workers lives at or below the poverty level. Among these workers, women are disproportionately represented, as are Black and Latino workers. (Notably, unionized workers earn nearly thirty percent more, on average, than non-unionized workers.) Meanwhile, Disney workers sewing t-shirts and other merchandise in Haiti earn 28 cents an hour. Disney CEO Michael Eisner made nearly six hundred million dollars in 1999--451,000 times the wage of the workers under his employ (Roesch, 1999). According to United Nations and World Bank sources, several trans-national corporations have assets larger than several countries combined. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Russian Federation have seen sharp economic decline, while assets of the world’s top three billionaires exceed the GNP of all of the least-developed countries and their combined population of 600 million people (Shawki and D’Amato, 2000, pp. 7-8). In this context of a real (and clearly bipolar) class divide in late capitalist society, the postmodern party is a masquerade ball, in which theories claiming to offer ways toward emancipation and progressive critical practice in fact encourage scholars and/as activists to abandon any commitment to crafting oppositional political blocs with instrumental and perhaps revolutionary potential. Instead, on their arguments, we must recognize agency as an illusion of humanism and settle for playing with our identities in a mood of irony, excess, and profound skepticism. Marx and Engels’ critique of the Young Hegelians applies equally well to the postmodern discursive turn: "They are only fighting against ‘phrases.’ They forget, however, that to these phrases they themselves are only opposing other phrases, and that they are in no way combating the real existing world when they are merely combating the phrases of this world" (1976/1932, p. 41). Of course, the study of "phrases" is important to the project of materialist critique in the field of rhetoric. The point, though, is to explain the connections between phrases on the one hand and economic interests and systems of oppression and exploitation on the other. Marxist ideology critique, understands that classes, motivated by class interest, produce rhetorics wittingly and unwittingly, successfully and unsuccessfully. Those rhetorics are strategically adapted to context and audience. [cont’d] [cont;d] Yet Marxist theory is not naïve in its understanding of intention or individual agency. Challenging individualist humanism, Marxist ideology critics regard people as "products of circumstances" (and changed people as products of changed circumstances; Marx, 1972b/1888, p. 144). Within this understanding, Marxist ideology critics can describe and evaluate cultural discourses such as that of racism or sexism as strategic and complex expressions of both their moment in history and of their class basis. Further, this mode of critique seeks to explain both why and how social reality is fundamentally, systematically oppressive and exploitative, exploring not only the surface of discourses but also their often-complex and multi-vocal motivations and consequences. As Burke (1969/1950) notes, Marxism is both a method of rhetorical criticism and a rhetorical formation itself (pp. 109-110). There is no pretense of neutrality or assumption of transcendent position for the critic. Teresa Ebert (1996) summarizes the purpose of materialist ideology critique: Materialist critique is a mode of knowing that inquires into what is not said, into the silences and the suppressed or missing, in order to uncover the concealed operations of power and the socio-economic relations connecting the myriad details and representations of our lives. It shows that apparently disconnected zones of culture are in fact materially linked through the highly differentiated, mediated, and dispersed operation of a systematic logic of exploitation. In sum, materialist critique disrupts ‘what is’ to explain how social differences--specifically gender, race, sexuality, and class--have been systematically produced and continue to operate within regimes of exploitation, so that we can change them. It is the means for producing transformative knowledges. (p. 7)

### totalitarianism

#### Capitalism is what totalizes everything—we’re just pointing it out

Istavan **Meszaros**, Professor Emeritus, University of Sussex, BEYOND CAPITAL: TOWARDS A THEORY OF TRANSITION, 19**95**.

p. 41

What must be stressed first of all is that capital is not a ‘material entity’ — let alone a rationally controllable ‘mechanism’, as the apologists of the allegedly neutral market mechanism’ (to be happily embraced by ‘market socialism’) tried to make US believe, as we shall see in Part Three — but an ultimately uncontrollable mode of social metabolic control. The main reason why this system must escape a meaningful degree of human control is precisely because it itself emerged in the COUrSe of history as a most powerful — indeed up to the present time by far the niost powerful — totalizing’ framework of control into which everything else, including human beings, must be fitted, and prove thereby their ‘productive viability’, or perish if they fail to do so. One cannot think of a more inexorably all engulfing — and in that important sense ‘totalitarian’ — system of control than the globally dominant capital system. For t

he latter blindly subjects to the same imperatives health care no less than commerce, education no less than agriculture, art no less than manufacturing industry, ruthlessly superimposing its own criteria of viability on everything, from the smallest units of its ‘microcosm’ to the most gigantic transnational enterprises, and from the most intimate personal relations to the most complex decision making processes of industry- wide monopolies, favouring always the strong against the weak. Ironically (and rather absurdly), however, in the opinion of its propagandists this system is supposed to be inherently democratic, indeed the paradigm foundation of all conceivable democracy. This is why the Editors and Leader writers of the London Economist can commit to paper in all seriousness the proposition according to which: There is no alternative to the free market as the way to organize economic life. The spread of free market economics should gradually lead to multi-party democracy, because people who have free economic choice tend to insist on having free political choice coo.46 I Unemployment for countless millions, among many other blessings of ‘free market economics’, thus belongs to the category of ‘free economic choice’, out of which in due course the fruits of ‘free political choice’ — ‘multi-party democracy’, no less, (and certainly no more) — will arise. And then, of course, we shall all live happily ever after. In actuality, though, the capital system is the first one in history which constitutes itself as an unexceptionable and irresistible totalizer, no matter how repressive the imposition of its totalizing function must be whenever and wherever it encounters resistance.

## 1NR

### Zizek v. Levinas: 2NC

#### The primacy of the Other is a lie. Subjectivity is structured by our relationship to unknown Thirds. Their ethics inherently privileges what is in front of us forever obscuring the mass of invisible thirds we ignore to self-satisfactionally gaze upon the Other’s face. The only ethics is breaking the Other’s face for the thirds.

Slavoj Zizek, Professor of Sociology at the Institute for Sociology, Ljubljana University, 2004, Umbr(a): War, p. 87-89

The more standard answer to Levinas’ ethics of radical responsibility would have been that one can truly love others only if one loves oneself. However, at a more radical level, is there not something inherently false in such a link between the responsibility to/for the other and the questioning of one’s own right to exist? Although Levinas asserts this asym­metry as universal (every one of us is in the position of primordial responsibility toward others), does this asymmetry not effectively end up privileging one particular group that assumes responsibility for all others, which embodies in a privileged way this responsibility, directly stands for it — in this case, of course, Jews, so that again one is ironically tempted to speak of the “Jewish man’s (ethical) burden”? A Spinozan answer to Levinas would have been that our existence is not at the expense of others, but part of the network of reality. There is, for Spinoza, no Hobbesian “Self as extracted from and opposed to reality. Spinoza’s is an ontology of full immanence — that is, I “am” just the network of my relations with the world; I am totally “externalized” in it. Levinas therefore secretly imputes to Spinoza an egotistic, “subjectivist” notion of (my) existence. His anti-Spinozan questioning of my right to exist is inverted arrogance, as if I am the center whose existence threatens all others. So the answer should not be an asser­tion of my right to exist in harmony with others, but a more radical claim: Do I exist in the first place? Am I not, rather, a hole in the order of being? This brings us to the ultimate paradox on account of which Levinas’ answer is not sufficient: I am a threat to the entire order of being not insofar as I positively exist as part of this order, but precisely insofar as I am a hole in the order of being. As such, as nothing, I “am” a striving to reach out and appropriate All (only a Nothing can desire to become Everything) — it was already Schelling who defined the subject as the endless striving of the Nothing to become Everything. On the contrary, a positive living being that occupies a determinate space in reality, rooted in it, is by definition a moment of its circulation and reproduction. One should therefore risk countering Levinas’ position with a more radical one: others are primordially an (ethically) indifferent multitude, and love is a violent gesture of cutting into this multitude and privileging a One as the neighbor, thus introducing a radical imbal­ance into the whole. In contrast to love, justice begins when I remember the faceless many left in the shadows in this privileging of the One. Justice and love are thus structurally incompatible: justice, not love, has to be blind; it has to disregard the privileged One whom I “really understand.” This means that the Third is not secondary: it is always al­ready here, and the primordial ethical obligation is toward this Third who is not here in face-to-face relationships, the one in the shadow, like the absent child of the couple. This is not simply the Derridean-Kierkegaardian point that tout autre est tout autre, that I always betray the Other because I have to make a choice to select who my neighbor is from the mass of Thirds, which is the original sin of love. This brings us to the radical anti-Levinasian conclusion: the true ethical step is the one beyond the face of the other, the one of suspending the hold of the face — the choice against the face, for the Third. This coldness is justice at its most elementary. Every preempting of the Other in the guise of his face relegates the Third to the faceless background. And the elementary gesture of justice is not to show respect for the face in front of me, to be open to its depth, but to abstract from it and refocus onto the faceless Thirds in the background. It is only such a shift of focus onto the Third that effectively up roots justice, liberating it from the contingent umbilical link that embeds it in a particular situation. In other words, it is only such a shift onto the Third that grounds justice in the dimension of universality proper. Levinas is right to point out the ultimate paradox of how “the Jewish consciousness, formed precisely through contact with this harsh morality, with its obligations and sanc­tions, has learned to have an absolute horror of blood, while the doctrine of non-violence has not stemmed the natural course towards violence displayed by a whole world over the last two thousand years...Only a God Who maintains the principle of Law can in practice tone down its severity and use oral law to go beyond the inescapable harshness of Scripture.”25 But what about the opposite paradox? What if only a God who is ready to subordinate his own Law to love can in practice push us to realize blind justice in all of its harshness? Recall how Che Guevara conceived revolutionary violence as a “work of love”: “Let me say, with the risk of appearing ridiculous, that the true revolutionary is guided by strong feelings of love. It is impossible to think of an authentic revolutionary without this quality.”26 Therein lies the core of revolutionary justice, this much misused term: harsh­ness of the measures taken, sustained by love. Christ’s scandalous words from Luke (“if anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and his mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes even his own life — he cannot be my disciple” [Luke 14: 26]) point in exactly the same direction as another of Che’s famous pronouncements: “You may have to be tough, but do not lose your tenderness. You may have to cut the flowers, but it will not stop the Spring.”27 This Christian stance is the very opposite of the “Oriental” attitude of non-violence, which — as we know from the long history of Buddhist rulers and warriors — can legitimize the worst violence. It is not that revolutionary violence “really” aims at establishing a non-violent harmony; on the contrary, the authentic revolutionary liberation is much more directly identified with violence. It is violence as such (the violent gesture of discarding, of establishing a difference, of drawing a line of separation) that liberates. Freedom is not a blissfully neutral state of harmony and balance, but the very violent act that disturbs this balance.

### Ethics First Bad: 2NC

**\*The claim that ethics inevitably comes first relies on a standard of radical Evil. The threatened Other can only be permanently threatened if there is a permanent threat. This logic devolves into a search for the enemies of humanity and justifies genocide.**

Robert **Meister**, professor of politics university of santa clara, “’Never Again’: The Logic of the Neighbor and the Politics of Genocide,” 20**05**, muse.jhu.edu/journals/postmodern\_culture/v015/15.2**meister**.html

To prevent the repetition of Auschwitz, according to Lévinas, we must face up to the mechanisms that Klein would call projective identification: "I am [unconsciously, Klein would say] responsible for the persecutions I undergo . . . since **I am responsible for the responsibility of the other**" (Lévinas, "Responsibility" 99). Although this ethical claim can be found throughout his work, Lévinas eventually grounds it on the observation that a desire to commit murder or genocide is intelligible only because we see ourselves either as its subject or as its object. **The imaginable reversibility of subject and object (active or passive) has an ethical significance that Lévinas comes to call "substitution."** "The ego," he says, "is a substitution" ("Substitution" 127). By this he means that "subjectivity no longer belongs to the order where the alternative of passivity and activity retains its meaning"; it follows that "the self, a hostage, is already substituted for the others" (118). On this view, **every evil that we are capable of fearing--and now we must include even radical evil--is also something for which we are capable of wishing. We must ground ethics not in affinity or reciprocity, but in our prior responsibility toward those to whom we will relate only as neighbors**--and whom we must treat as though our feelings toward them were merely projective. In a Lévinasian ethics of the neighbor, my responsibility not to kill is based on proximity alone.      It can thus be argued that the ethics of human rights "after Auschwitz" presupposes the simultaneous existence and repression of genocidal thoughts. This kind of argument is nothing new. Freud himself grounds mass (or group) psychology both on the wish to kill the father and on the repression of the memory of having already done so in one's mind (that is, in unconscious fantasy). He argues that the foundation of the group is a memory that lies outside the realm of permissible thoughts in the form of a taboo.[17](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot17) Subsequent Freudian interpretations of the social contract have evoked real and fantasmatic scenarios of regicide and fratricide (Brown 3-31). The question is whether the imagery of Auschwitz--which is also and indubitably something real--now also functions on a fantasmatic level within the global rhetoric of human rights in the way that the imagery of regicide functioned in discourses on the Rights of Man that followed the French Revolution (see Walzer and Hunt).      My general claim about t**he function of genocide in the global ethic of the neighbor is that it functions like Freud's argument about the role of parricide in the ethics of the family. In the new global ethics of "never again," however, the collectivity is not seen as a type of family, but as a type of neighborhood in which § Marked 08:29 § spatial rather than generational relations predominate.** Like all foundational acts, genocide is constitutively outside the sovereign power that (from time to time) calls a group, even a "world community," into being. **The génocidaire is the quintessential criminal against humanity as such, the inhuman monster to whom "terrorists," for example, must now be compared; genocide has become the morally incomparable act that is constantly subject to repetition. In fin-de-siècle human rights discourse, genocide becomes the wish that an imaginary sovereign power makes taboo--unthinkable because it is repressed, and for that very reason at the root of all our conscious fears**.      **The presumed unthinkability of genocide--the repression, not the absence, of the wish--is thus both the founding premise of the fin-de-siècle Human Rights Discourse and the stated goal of most human rights advocacy**.[18](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot18) The recollection of genocidal experiences from the victims' standpoint, however, is the overt subject matter of many histories and of much science fiction.[19](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot19) On its surface, this literature claims to warn us of the dangers of genocide so that we will fear and avoid them at all costs.[20](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot20) At a deeper level, however, the fear of genocidal victimhood and our enhanced imagination of it are also troubling. What does it really mean, after all, to imagine genocide, to fear it, and to avoid it at all costs? **Is it not ultimately this political mindset that has made "thinkable" in the twentieth century the genocides of which some otherwise civilized nations have become capable?** For them, the thinkability of ethnic cleansings and extermination has been a defense (by projection) against their heightened ability to imagine themselves as the objects of genocidal intent.[21](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot21) As the world embarks on the twenty-first century, genocide has never been more thinkable--especially the genocide of which we may be victims. It has now become almost conventional to argue for the existence of genocide, for example in Darfur, by publishing photographs of dead bodies and daring the viewer to refuse empathy.[22](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot22)      The thinkability of genocide as a defense against the fear of genocide is a disturbing point to acknowledge. **To say that genocide is morally intelligible is not to say that it is now, or ever could have been, morally right; instead, it is to note that most genocides are not mere acts of inadvertence or insensitivity, but rather moments of intense moral concentration invoking high concepts like human rights and democracy. If we cannot imagine the logic of genocide (and how that logic employs our moral concepts), we will never understand how a human rights discourse (which may, for a period of time, seem well-established in places like Sarajevo) can dissolve into what commentators glibly describe as "primordial group hatreds," and how that same discourse can later re-emerge as a self-conscious return to civilized values**.[23](http://muse.jhu.edu.floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/postmodern_culture/v015/15.2meister.html#foot23)