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#### Isolating the targeting of black populations sanitizes neoliberalism---it reduces politics to a project of cultural representation and effaces institutional reform

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Defenses of Django Unchained pivot on claims about the social significance of the narrative of a black hero. One node of this argument emphasizes the need to validate a history of autonomous black agency and “resistance” as a politico-existential desideratum. It accommodates a view that stresses the importance of recognition of rebellious or militant individuals and revolts in black American history. Another centers on a notion that exposure to fictional black heroes can inculcate the sense of personal efficacy necessary to overcome the psychological effects of inequality and to facilitate upward mobility and may undermine some whites’ negative stereotypes about black people. In either register assignment of social or political importance to depictions of black heroes rests on presumptions about the nexus of mass cultural representation, social commentary, and racial justice that are more significant politically than the controversy about the film itself.¶ In both versions, this argument casts political and economic problems in psychological terms. Injustice appears as a matter of disrespect and denial of due recognition, and the remedies proposed—which are all about images projected and the distribution of jobs associated with their projection—look a lot like self-esteem engineering. Moreover, nothing could indicate more strikingly the extent of neoliberal ideological hegemony than the idea that the mass culture industry and its representational practices constitute a meaningful terrain for struggle to advance egalitarian interests. It is possible to entertain that view seriously only by ignoring the fact that the production and consumption of mass culture is thoroughly embedded in capitalist material and ideological imperatives.¶ That, incidentally, is why I prefer the usage “mass culture” to describe this industry and its products and processes, although I recognize that it may seem archaic to some readers. The mass culture v. popular culture debate dates at least from the 1950s and has continued with occasional crescendos ever since.5 For two decades or more, instructively in line with the retreat of possibilities for concerted left political action outside the academy, the popular culture side of that debate has been dominant, along with its view that the products of this precinct of mass consumption capitalism are somehow capable of transcending or subverting their material identity as commodities, if not avoiding that identity altogether. Despite the dogged commitment of several generations of American Studies and cultural studies graduate students who want to valorize watching television and immersion in hip-hop or other specialty market niches centered on youth recreation and the most ephemeral fads as both intellectually avant-garde and politically “resistive,” it should be time to admit that that earnest disposition is intellectually shallow and an ersatz politics. The idea of “popular” culture posits a spurious autonomy and organicism that actually affirm mass industrial processes by effacing them, especially in the putatively rebel, fringe, or underground market niches that depend on the fiction of the authentic to announce the birth of new product cycles.¶ The power of the hero is a cathartic trope that connects mainly with the sensibility of adolescent boys—of whatever nominal age. Tarantino has allowed as much, responding to black critics’ complaints about the violence and copious use of “nigger” by proclaiming “Even for the film’s biggest detractors, I think their children will grow up and love this movie. I think it could become a rite of passage for young black males.”6 This response stems no doubt from Tarantino’s arrogance and opportunism, and some critics have denounced it as no better than racially presumptuous. But he is hardly alone in defending the film with an assertion that it gives black youth heroes, is generically inspirational or both. Similarly, in a January 9, 2012 interview on the Daily Show, George Lucas adduced this line to promote his even more execrable race-oriented live-action cartoon, Red Tails, which, incidentally, trivializes segregation in the military by reducing it to a matter of bad or outmoded attitudes. The ironic effect is significant understatement of both the obstacles the Tuskegee airmen faced and their actual accomplishments by rendering them as backdrop for a blackface, slapped-together remake of Top Gun. (Norman Jewison’s 1984 film, A Soldier’s Story, adapted from Charles Fuller’s A Soldier’s Play, is a much more sensitive and thought-provoking rumination on the complexities of race and racism in the Jim Crow U.S. Army—an army mobilized, as my father, a veteran of the Normandy invasion, never tired of remarking sardonically, to fight the racist Nazis.) Lucas characterized his film as “patriotic, even jingoistic” and was explicit that he wanted to create a film that would feature “real heroes” and would be “inspirational for teenage boys.” Much as Django Unchained’s defenders compare it on those terms favorably to Lincoln, Lucas hyped Red Tails as being a genuine hero story unlike “Glory, where you have a lot of white officers running those guys into cannon fodder.”¶ Of course, the film industry is sharply tilted toward the youth market, as Lucas and Tarantino are acutely aware. But Lucas, unlike Tarantino, was not being defensive in asserting his desire to inspire the young; he offered it more as a boast. As he has said often, he’d wanted for years to make a film about the Tuskegee airmen, and he reports that he always intended telling their story as a feel-good, crossover inspirational tale. Telling it that way also fits in principle (though in this instance not in practice, as Red Tails bombed at the box office) with the commercial imperatives of increasingly degraded mass entertainment.¶ Dargis observed that the ahistoricism of the recent period films is influenced by market imperatives in a global film industry. The more a film is tied to historically specific contexts, the more difficult it is to sell elsewhere. That logic selects for special effects-driven products as well as standardized, decontextualized and simplistic—“universal”—story lines, preferably set in fantasy worlds of the filmmakers’ design. As Dargis notes, these films find their meaning in shopworn clichés puffed up as timeless verities, including uplifting and inspirational messages for youth. But something else underlies the stress on inspiration in the black-interest films, which shows up in critical discussion of them as well.¶ All these films—The Help, Red Tails, Django Unchained, even Lincoln and Glory—make a claim to public attention based partly on their social significance beyond entertainment or art, and they do so because they engage with significant moments in the history of the nexus of race and politics in the United States. There would not be so much discussion and debate and no Golden Globe, NAACP Image, or Academy Award nominations for The Help, Red Tails, or Django Unchained if those films weren’t defined partly by thematizing that nexus of race and politics in some way.¶ The pretensions to social significance that fit these films into their particular market niche don’t conflict with the mass-market film industry’s imperative of infantilization because those pretensions are only part of the show; they are little more than empty bromides, product differentiation in the patter of “seemingly timeless ideals” which the mass entertainment industry constantly recycles. (Andrew O’Hehir observes as much about Django Unchained, which he describes as “a three-hour trailer for a movie that never happens.”7) That comes through in the defense of these films, in the face of evidence of their failings, that, after all, they are “just entertainment.” Their substantive content is ideological; it is their contribution to the naturalization of neoliberalism’s ontology as they propagandize its universalization across spatial, temporal, and social contexts.¶ Purportedly in the interest of popular education cum entertainment, Django Unchained and The Help, and Red Tails for that matter, read the sensibilities of the present into the past by divesting the latter of its specific historicity. They reinforce the sense of the past as generic old-timey times distinguishable from the present by superficial inadequacies—outmoded fashion, technology, commodities and ideas—since overcome. In The Help Hilly’s obsession with her pet project marks segregation’s petty apartheid as irrational in part because of the expense rigorously enforcing it would require; the breadwinning husbands express their frustration with it as financially impractical. Hilly is a mean-spirited, narrow-minded person whose rigid and tone-deaf commitment to segregationist consistency not only reflects her limitations of character but also is economically unsound, a fact that further defines her, and the cartoon version of Jim Crow she represents, as irrational.¶ The deeper message of these films, insofar as they deny the integrity of the past, is that there is no thinkable alternative to the ideological order under which we live. This message is reproduced throughout the mass entertainment industry; it shapes the normative reality even of the fantasy worlds that masquerade as escapism. Even among those who laud the supposedly cathartic effects of Django’s insurgent violence as reflecting a greater truth of abolition than passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, few commentators notice that he and Broomhilda attained their freedom through a market transaction.8 This reflects an ideological hegemony in which students all too commonly wonder why planters would deny slaves or sharecroppers education because education would have made them more productive as workers. And, tellingly, in a glowing rumination in the Daily Kos, Ryan Brooke inadvertently thrusts mass culture’s destruction of historicity into bold relief by declaiming on “the segregated society presented” in Django Unchained and babbling on—with the absurdly ill-informed and pontifical self-righteousness that the blogosphere enables—about our need to take “responsibility for preserving racial divides” if we are “to put segregation in the past and fully fulfill Dr. King’s dream.”9 It’s all an indistinguishable mush of bad stuff about racial injustice in the old-timey days. Decoupled from its moorings in a historically specific political economy, slavery becomes at bottom a problem of race relations, and, as historian Michael R. West argues forcefully, “race relations” emerged as and has remained a discourse that substitutes etiquette for equality.10¶ This is the context in which we should take account of what “inspiring the young” means as a justification for those films. In part, the claim to inspire is a simple platitude, more filler than substance. It is, as I’ve already noted, both an excuse for films that are cartoons made for an infantilized, generic market and an assertion of a claim to a particular niche within that market. More insidiously, though, the ease with which “inspiration of youth” rolls out in this context resonates with three related and disturbing themes: 1) underclass ideology’s narratives—now all Americans’ common sense—that link poverty and inequality most crucially to (racialized) cultural inadequacy and psychological damage; 2) the belief that racial inequality stems from prejudice, bad ideas and ignorance, and 3) the cognate of both: the neoliberal rendering of social justice as equality of opportunity, with an aspiration of creating “competitive individual minority agents who might stand a better fighting chance in the neoliberal rat race rather than a positive alternative vision of a society that eliminates the need to fight constantly against disruptive market whims in the first place.”11¶ This politics seeps through in the chatter about Django Unchained in particular. Erin Aubry Kaplan, in the Los Angeles Times article in which Tarantino asserts his appeal to youth, remarks that the “most disturbing detail [about slavery] is the emotional violence and degradation directed at blacks that effectively keeps them at the bottom of the social order, a place they still occupy today.” Writing on the Institute of the Black World blog, one Dr. Kwa David Whitaker, a 1960s-style cultural nationalist, declaims on Django’s testament to the sources of degradation and “unending servitude [that] has rendered [black Americans] almost incapable of making sound evaluations of our current situations or the kind of steps we must take to improve our condition.”12 In its blindness to political economy, this notion of black cultural or psychological damage as either a legacy of slavery or of more indirect recent origin—e.g., urban migration, crack epidemic, matriarchy, babies making babies—comports well with the reduction of slavery and Jim Crow to interpersonal dynamics and bad attitudes. It substitutes a “politics of recognition” and a patter of racial uplift for politics and underwrites a conflation of political action and therapy.¶ With respect to the nexus of race and inequality, this discourse supports victim-blaming programs of personal rehabilitation and self-esteem engineering—inspiration—as easily as it does multiculturalist respect for difference, which, by the way, also feeds back to self-esteem engineering and inspiration as nodes within a larger political economy of race relations. Either way, this is a discourse that displaces a politics challenging social structures that reproduce inequality with concern for the feelings and characteristics of individuals and of categories of population statistics reified as singular groups that are equivalent to individuals. This discourse has made it possible (again, but more sanctimoniously this time) to characterize destruction of low-income housing as an uplift strategy for poor people; curtailment of access to public education as “choice”; being cut adrift from essential social wage protections as “empowerment”; and individual material success as socially important role modeling.¶ Neoliberalism’s triumph is affirmed with unselfconscious clarity in the ostensibly leftist defenses of Django Unchained that center on the theme of slaves’ having liberated themselves. Trotskyists, would-be anarchists, and psychobabbling identitarians have their respective sectarian garnishes: Trotskyists see everywhere the bugbear of “bureaucratism” and mystify “self-activity;” anarchists similarly fetishize direct action and voluntarism and oppose large-scale public institutions on principle, and identitarians romanticize essentialist notions of organic, folkish authenticity under constant threat from institutions. However, all are indistinguishable from the nominally libertarian right in their disdain for government and institutionally based political action, which their common reflex is to disparage as inauthentic or corrupt.

#### Cap’s the root cause of racial oppression and makes extinction inevitable

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For example, E. San Juan (2003) argues that race relations and race conﬂict are necessarily structured by the larger totality of the political economy of a given society, as well as by modiﬁcations in the structure of the world economy. He further notes that the capitalist mode of production has articulated ‘race’ with class in a peculiar way. He too is worth a substantial quotation:¶ While the stagnation of rural life imposed a racial or castelike rigidity to the peasantry, the rapid accumulation of wealth through the ever more intensifying exploitation of labor by capital could not so easily ‘racialize’ the wage-workers of a particular nation, given the alienability of labor power—unless certain physical or cultural characteristics can be utilized to divide the workers or render one group an outcast or pariah removed from the domain of ‘free labor.’ In the capitalist development of U.S. society, African, Mexican, and Asian bodies—more precisely, their labor power and its reproductive efﬁcacy—were colonized and racialized; hence the idea of ‘internal colonialism’ retains explanatory validity. ‘Race’ is thus constructed out of raw materials furnished by class relations, the history of class conﬂicts, and the vicissitudes of colonial/capitalist expansion and the building of imperial hegemony. It is dialecticallyaccented and operationalized not just to differentiate the price of wagelabor within and outside the territory of the metropolitan power, but alsoto reproduce relations of domination–subordination invested with an auraof naturality and fatality. The refunctioning of physical or cultural traits as ideological and political signiﬁers of class identity reiﬁes social relations. Such ‘racial’ markers enter the ﬁeld of the alienated laborprocess, concealing the artiﬁcial nature of meanings and norms, and essentializing or naturalizing historical traditions and values which are contingent on mutable circumstances. ¶ For San Juan, racism and nationalism are modalities in which class struggles articulate themselves at strategic points in history. He argues thatracism arose with thecreation and expansion of the capitalist world economy. He maintains, rightly in our view, that racial or ethnic group solidarity is given ‘meaning and value in terms of theirplace within the social organization ofproduction and reproduction of the ideological-political order; ideologies of racism as collective social evaluation of solidarities arise to reinforce structural constraints which preserve the exploited and oppressed position of these “racial” solidarities’.¶ It is remarkable, in our opinion, that so much of contemporary social theory has largely abandoned the problems of labor, capitalist exploitation, and class analysis at a time when capitalism is becoming more universal, more ruthless and more deadly. The metaphor of a contemporary ‘tower of Babel’ seems appropriate here—academics striking radical poses in the seminar rooms while remaining oblivious to the possibility that their seemingly radical discursive maneuvers do nothing to further the struggles ‘against oppression and exploitation which continue to be real, material, and not merely “discursive” problems of the contemporary world’ (Dirlik, 1997, p. 176). Harvey (1998, pp. 29–31) indicts the new academic entrepreneurs, the ‘masters of theory-in-and-for-itself’ whose ‘discourse radicalism’ has deftly side-stepped ‘the enduring conundrums of class struggle’ and who have, against a ‘sobering background of cheapened discourse and opportunistic politics,’ been ‘stripped of their self-advertised radicalism.’ For years, they ‘contested socialism,’ ridiculed Marxists, and promoted ‘their own alternative theories of liberatory politics’ but now they have largely been ‘reduced to the role of supplicants in the most degraded form of pluralist politics imaginable.’ As they pursue the politics of difference, the ‘class war rages unabated’ and they seem ‘either unwilling or unable to focus on the unprecedented economic carnage occurring around the globe.’¶ Harvey’s searing criticism suggests that post-Marxists have been busy ﬁddling while Rome burns and his comments echo those made by Marx (1978, p. 149) in his critique of the Young Hegelians who were, ‘in spite of their allegedly “worldshattering” statements, the staunchest conservatives.’ Marx lamented that the Young Hegelians were simply ﬁghting ‘phrases’ and that they failed to acknowledge that in offering only counter-phrases, they were in no way ‘combating the real existing world’ but merely combating the phrases of the world. Taking a cue from Marx and substituting ‘phrases’ with ‘discourses’ or ‘resigniﬁcations’ we would contend that the practitioners of difference politics who operate within exaggerated culturalist frameworks that privilege the realm of representation as the primary arena of political struggle question some discourses of power while legitimating others. Moreover, because they lack a class perspective, their gestures of radicalism are belied by their own class positions.10 As Ahmad (1997a, p. 104) notes:¶ One may speak of any number of disorientations and even oppressions, but one cultivates all kinds of politeness and indirection about the structure of capitalist class relations in which those oppressions are embedded. To speak of any of that directly and simply is to be ‘vulgar.’ In this climate of Aesopian languages it is absolutely essential to reiterate that most things are a matter of class. That kind of statement is … surprising only in a culture like that of the North American university … But it is precisely in that kind of culture that people need to hear such obvious truths. ¶ Ahmad’s provocative observations imply that substantive analyses of the carnage wrought by ‘globalized’ class exploitation have, for the most part, been marginalized by the kind of radicalism that has been instituted among the academic Left in North America. He further suggests that while various post-Marxists have invited us to join their euphoric celebrations honoring the decentering of capitalism, the abandonment of class politics, and the decline of metanarratives (particularly those of Marxism and socialism), they have failed to see that the most ‘meta of all metanarratives of the past three centuries, the creeping annexation of the globe for the dominance of capital over laboring humanity has met, during those same decades, with stunning success’ (Ahmad, 1997b, p. 364). As such, Ahmad invites us to ask anew, the proverbial question: What, then, must be done? To this question we offer no simple theoretical, pedagogical or political prescriptions. Yet we would argue that if social change is the aim, progressive educators and theorists must cease displacing class analysis with the politics of difference. ¶ Conclusion … we will take our stand against the evils [of capitalism, imperialism, and racism] with a solidarity derived from a proletarian internationalism born of socialist idealism. —National Ofﬁce of the Black Panther Party, February 1970¶ For well over two decades we have witnessed the jubilant liberal and conservative pronouncements of the demise of socialism. Concomitantly, history’s presumed failure to defang existing capitalist relations has been read by many self-identiﬁed ‘radicals’ as an advertisement for capitalism’s inevitability. As a result, the chorus refrain ‘There Is No Alternative’, sung by liberals and conservatives, has been buttressed by the symphony of post-Marxist voices recommending that we give socialism a decent burial and move on. Within this context, to speak of the promise of Marx and socialism may appear anachronistic, even naïve, especially since the post-al intellectual vanguard has presumably demonstrated the folly of doing so. Yet we stubbornly believe that the chants of T.I.N.A. must be combated for they offer as a fait accompli, something which progressive Leftists should refuse to accept—namely the triumph of capitalism and its political bedfellow neo-liberalism, which have worked together to naturalize suffering, undermine collective struggle, and obliterate hope. We concur with Amin (1998), who claims that such chants must be deﬁed and revealed as absurd and criminal, and who puts the challenge we face in no uncertain terms: humanity may let itself be led by capitalism’s logic to a fate of collective suicide or it may pave the way for an alternative humanist project of global socialism.¶ The grosteque conditions that inspired Marx to pen his original critique of capitalism are present and ﬂourishing. The inequalities of wealth and the gross imbalances of power that exist today are leading to abuses that exceed those encountered in Marx’s day (Greider, 1998, p. 39). Global capitalism has paved the way for the obscene concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands and created a world increasingly divided between those who enjoy opulent afﬂuence and those who languish in dehumanizing conditions and economic misery. In every corner of the globe, we are witnessing social disintegration as revealed by a rise in abject poverty and inequality. At the current historical juncture, the combined assets of the 225 richest people is roughly equal to the annual income of the poorest 47 percent of the world’s population, while the combined assets of the three richest people exceed the combined GDP of the 48 poorest nations (CCPA, 2002, p. 3). Approximately 2.8 billion people—almost half of the world’s population—struggle in desperation to live on less than two dollars a day (McQuaig, 2001, p. 27). As many as 250 million children are wage slaves and there are over a billion workers who are either un- or under-employed. These are the concrete realities of our time—realities that require a vigorous class analysis, an unrelenting critique of capitalism and an oppositional politics capable of confronting what Ahmad (1998, p. 2) refers to as ‘capitalist universality.’ They are realities that require something more than that which is offered by the prophets of ‘difference’ and post-Marxists who would have us relegate socialism to the scrapheap of history and mummify Marxism along with Lenin’s corpse. Never before has a Marxian analysis of capitalism and class rule been so desperately needed. That is not to say that everything Marx said or anticipated has come true, for that is clearly not the case. Many critiques of Marx focus on his strategy for moving toward socialism, and with ample justiﬁcation; nonetheless Marx did provide us with fundamental insights into class society that have held true to this day. Marx’s enduring relevance lies in his indictment of capitalism which continues to wreak havoc in the lives of most. While capitalism’s cheerleaders have attempted to hide its sordid underbelly, Marx’s description of capitalism as the sorcerer’s dark power is even more apt in light of contemporary historical and economic conditions. Rather than jettisoning Marx, decentering the role of capitalism, and discrediting class analysis, radical educators must continue to engage Marx’s oeuvre and extrapolate from it that which is useful pedagogically, theoretically, and, most importantly, politically in light of the challenges that confront us.

#### The alternative is to reject the affirmative’s epistemological lens to clear space for analyzing the totality of capitalist social relations

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Mutatis mutandis, the same holds also for large, organised collective violence. The Chinese Cultural Revolution serves as a lesson here: destroying old monuments proved not to be a true negation of the past. Rather it was an impotent passage a I'acte, an acting out which bore witness to the failure to get rid of the past. There is a kind of poetic justice in the fact that the final result of Mao's Cultural Revolution is the current unmatched explosion of capitalist dynamics in China. A profound structural homology exists between Maoist permanent self-revolutionising, the permanent struggle against the ossification of state structures, and the inherent dynamics of capitalism. One is tempted to paraphrase Brecht again here: "What is the robbing of a bank compared to the founding of a new bank?" What were the violent and destructive outbursts of a Red Guardist caught in the Cultural Revolution compared to the true Cultural Revolution, the permanent dissolution of all life-forms which capitalist reproduction dictates? The same, of course, applies to Nazi Germany, where the spectacle of the brutal annihilation of millions should not deceive us. The characterisation of Hitler which would have him as a bad guy, responsible for the deaths of millions but none the less a man with balls who pursued his ends with an iron will, is not only ethically repulsive, it is also simply wrong: no, Hitler did not "have the balls" really to change things. All his actions were fundamentally reactions: he acted so that nothing would really change; he acted to prevent the communist threat of a real change. His targeting of the Jews was ultimately an act of displacement in which he avoided the real enemy-the core of capitalist social relations themselves. Hitler staged a **spectacle of revolution** **so that the capitalist order could survive**. The irony was that his grand gestures of despising bourgeois self-complacency ultimately enabled this complacency to continue: far from disturbing the much-despised "decadent" bourgeois order, far from awakening the Germans, Nazism was a dream which enabled them to postpone awakening. Germany only really woke up with the defeat of 1945. If one wants to name an act which was truly daring, for which one truly had to "have balls" to try the impossible, but which was simultaneously an act of horrendous violence, an act which caused suffering beyond comprehension, it was Stalin's forced collectivisation at the end of the 1920s. Yet even this display of ruthless violence culminated in the big purges of 1936-37, which were, again, an impotent passage a I'acte: This was not a targeting of enemies, but blind rage and panic. It reflected not control of events but a recognition that the regime lacked regularized control mechanisms. It was not policy but the failure of policy. It was a sign of failure to rule with anything but forced.1 The very violence inflicted by the communist power on its own members bears witness to the radical self-contradiction of the regime. If at the origins of the regime, there was an "authentic" revolutionary project, incessant purges were necessary not only to erase the traces of the regime's origins, but also as a kind of "return of the repressed," a reminder of the radical negativity at the heart of the regime. The Stalinist purges of high party echelons relied on this fundamental betrayal: the accused were effectively guilty insofar as they, as the members of the new nomenklatura, betrayed the Revolution. The Stalinist terror is thus not simply the betrayal of the Revolution, that is, an attempt to erase the traces of the authentic revolutionary past. It also bears witness to a kind of "imp of the perverse" which compels the post-revolutionary new order to (re)inscribe its betrayal of the Revolution within itself, to "reflect" it or "re-mark" it in the guise of arbitrary arrests and killings which threaten all members of the nomenklatura. As we know from psychoanalysis, the Stalinist confession of guilt conceals the true guilt. It is well known that Stalin wisely recruited people of lower social origins into the NKVD. They were thus able to act out their hatred of the nomenklatura by arresting and torturing high apparatchiks. The inherent tension between the stability of the rule of the new nomenklatura and the perverted "return of the repressed" in the guise of the repeated purges of the ranks of the nomenklatura is at the very heart of the Stalinist phenomenon: purges are the very form in which the betrayed revolutionary heritage survives and haunts the regime.2 In "Murder in the Mews," an early Agatha Christie story, Poirot investigates the death of Mrs. Allen, found shot in her apartment on Guy Fawkes night. Although her death looks like suicide, numerous details indicate that a murder is more likely and that a clumsy attempt has been made to make it look as if Mrs. Allen took her own life. She shared a flat with Miss Plenderleith, who was away at the time. Soon a cufflink is found at the murder scene and its owner, Major Eustace, is implicated in the crime. Poirot's solution is one of the best in Christie's work: it turns round the standard plot of a murder made to look like suicide. The victim, who years ago was caught in a scandal in India, where she also met Eustace, was engaged to marry a Conservative MP. Knowing that the public exposure of her scandal would ruin her chances of marriage, Eustace was blackmailing her. Out of despair, she shot herself. Coming home immediately after her suicide, Miss Plender-leith-who knew about Eustace's blackmail and hated him-quickly rearranged details at the scene to make it appear that the murderer had tried clumsily to present the death as suicide, so that Eustace would be fully punished for driving Mrs. Allen to kill herself. The story thus turns on the question in what direction should the inconsistencies noted at the scene of the crime be read. Is it a murder masked as suicide or a suicide masked as murder? The story works because, instead of the murder being covered up, as is more usual, its appearance is staged: instead of being concealed, a crime is created as a lure. This is precisely what instigators of such violent passages a I'acte do. They misconstrue suicide as crime. In other words, they falsify clues so that a catastrophe which is a "suicide" (the result of immanent antagonisms) appears as the work of a criminal agent-Jews, traitors, or reactionaries. This is why, to put it in the Nietzschean terms which are appropriate here, the ultimate difference between radical-emancipatory politics and such outbursts of impotent violence is that an authentic political gesture is active, it imposes, enforces a vision, while outbursts of impotent violence are fundamentally reactive, a reaction to some disturbing intruder. Last but not least, the lesson of the intricate relationship between subjective and systemic violence is that violence is not a direct property of some acts, but is distributed between acts and their contexts, between activity and inactivity. The same act can count as violent or non-violent, depending on its context; sometimes a polite smile can be more violent than a brutal outburst. A brief reference to quantum physics might be of some help here; one of the most unsettling notions in quantum physics is that of the Higgs field. Left to their own devices in anenvironment to which they can pass their energy, all physical systems will eventually assume a state of lowest energy. To put it in another way, the more mass we take from a system, the more we lower its energy, till we reach the vacuum state at which the energy is zero. There are, however, phenomena which compel us to posit the hypothesis that there has to be something (some substance) that we cannot take away from a given system without RAISING that system's energy-this "something" is called the Higgs field: once this field appears in a vessel that has been pumped empty and whose temperature has been lowered as much as possible, its energy will be further lowered. The "something" which thus appears is a something that contains less energy than nothing. In short, sometimes zero is not the "cheapest" state of a system, so that, paradoxically, "nothing" costs more than "something." In a crude analogy, the social "nothing" (the stasis of a system, its mere reproduction without any changes) "costs more than something" (a change), that is, it demands a lot of energy, so that the first gesture to provoke a change in the system is to withdraw activity, to do nothing. Jose Saramago's novel Seeing (the literal translation of the original title is An Essay on Lucidity)3 can effectively be perceived as a mental experiment in Bartlebian politics.4 It tells the story of the strange events in the unnamed capital city of an unidentified democratic country. When the election day morning is marred by torrential rain, voter turnout is disturbingly low, but the weather breaks by mid-afternoon and the population heads en masse to their voting stations. The government's relief is short lived, however, when vote counting reveals that over 70 per cent of the ballots cast in the capital have been left blank. Baffled by this apparent civic lapse,the government gives the citizenry a chance to make amends just one week later with another election day. The results are worse: now 83 per cent of the ballots are blank. The two major political parties-the ruling party of the right (p.o.t.r.) and their chief adversary, the party of the middle (p.o.t.m.)-are in a panic, while the haplessly marginalised party of the left (p.o.t.l.) produces an analysis claiming that the blank ballots are essentially a vote for their progressive agenda. Is this an organised conspiracy to overthrow not just the ruling government but the entire democratic system? If so, who is behind it, and how did they manage to organise hundreds of thousands of people into such subversion without being noticed? When asked how they voted, ordinary citizens simply respond that such information is private, and besides, is not leaving the ballot blank their right? Unsure how to respond to a benign protest but certain that an anti-democratic conspiracy exists, the government quickly labels the movement "terrorism, pure and unadulterated" and declares a state of emergency, allowing the government to suspend all constitutional guarantees. Five hundred citizens are seized at random and disappear into secret interrogation sites, and their status is coded red for secrecy. Their families are informed in Orwellian style not to worry about the lack of information concerning their loved ones, since "in that very silence lay the key that could guarantee their personal safety." When these moves bear no fruit, the right-wing government adopts a series of increasingly drastic steps, from declaring a state of siege and concocting plots to create disorder to withdrawing the police and seat of government from the capital, sealing all the city's entrances and exits, and finally manufacturing its own terrorist ringleader. The city continues to function near-normally throughout, the people parrying each of the government's thrusts in inexplicable unison and with a truly Gandhian level of non-violent resistance. In his perspicacions review of the novel, Michael Wood noted a Brechtian parallel:  In a famous poem, written in East Germany in 1953, Brecht quotes a contemporary as saying that the people have lost the trust of the government. Would it not therefore be easier, Brecht slyly asks, to dissolve the people and have the government elect another one? Saramago's novel is a parable of what happens when neither government nor people can be dissolved.5 While the parallel holds, the concluding characterisation seems to fall short: the unsettling message of Seeing is not so much the indissolubility of both people and government as the compulsive nature of democratic rituals of freedom. What happens is that by abstaining from voting, people effectively dissolve the government-not only in the limited sense of overthrowing the existing government, but more radically. Why is the government thrown into such a panic by the voters' abstention? It is compelled to confront the fact that it exists, that it exerts power, only insofar as it is accepted as such by its subjects-accepted even in the mode of rejection. The voters' abstention goes further than the intra-political negation, the vote of no confidence: it rejects the very frame of decision. In psychoanalytic terms, the voters' abstention is something like the psychotic Verwerfung (foreclosure, rejection/repudiation), which is a more radical move than repression (Verdrdngung). According to Freud, the repressed is intellectually accepted by the subject, since it is named, and at the same time is negated because the subject refuses to recognise it, refuses to recognise him or herself in it. In contrast to this, foreclosure rejects the term from the symbolic tout court. To circumscribe the contours of this radical rejection, one is tempted to evoke Badiou's provocative thesis: "It is better to do nothing than to contribute to the invention of formal ways of rendering visible that which Empire already recognizes as existent."6 **Better to do nothing than to engage** **in localised acts the ultimate function of which is to make the system run more smoothly** (acts such as providing space for the multitude of new subjectivities). The threat today is not passivity, but pseudo-activity, the urge to "be active," to "participate," to mask the nothingness of what goes on. People intervene all the time, "do something"; academics participate in meaningless debates, and so on. The truly difficult thing is to step back, to withdraw. Those in power often prefer even a "critical" participation, a dialogue, to silence-just to engage us in "dialogue," to make sure our ominous passivity is broken. The voters' abstention is thus a true political act: it forcefully confronts us with the vacuity of today's democracies. If one means by violence a radical upheaval of the basic social relations, then, crazy and tasteless as it may sound, the problem with historical monsters who slaughtered millions was that they were not violent enough. Sometimes doing nothing is the most violent thing to do.

### 1NC T

#### Interpretation and violation --- the affirmative should defend the desirability of topical government action

#### Most predictable—the agent and verb indicate a debate about hypothetical government action

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

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

#### A general subject isn’t enough—debate requires a specific point of difference in order to promote effective exchange

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Debate is a means of settling differences, so there must be a controversy, a difference of opinion or a conflict of interest before there can be a debate. If everyone is in agreement on a feet or value or policy, there is no need or opportunity 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 of issues, there is no debate. Controversy invites decisive choice between competing positions. 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 live 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? Does 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? How 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 card, 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 are best understood when seated clearly such that all parties to the debate share an understanding about the objec­tive of the debate. This enables focus on substantive and objectively identifiable issues facilitating comparison of competing argumentation leading to effective decisions. Vague understanding results in unfocused deliberation and poor deci­sions, general feelings of tension without opportunity for resolution, frustration, and emotional distress, as evidenced by the failure of the U.S. Congress to make substantial progress on the immigration debate. Of course, arguments may be presented without disagreement. For exam­ple, claims are presented and supported within speeches, editorials, and advertise­ments even without opposing or refutational response. Argumentation occurs in a range of settings from informal to formal, and may not call upon an audi­ence or judge to make a forced choice among competing claims. Informal dis­course occurs as conversation or panel discussion without demanding a decision about a dichotomous or yes/no question. However, by definition, debate requires "reasoned judgment on a proposition. The proposition is a statement about which competing advocates will offer alternative (pro or con) argumenta­tion calling upon their audience or adjudicator to decide. The proposition pro­vides focus for the discourse and guides the decision process. Even when a decision will be made through a process of compromise, it is important to iden­tify the beginning positions of competing advocates to begin negotiation and movement toward a center, or consensus position. It is frustrating and usually unproductive to attempt to make a decision when deciders are unclear as to what the decision is about. The proposition may be implicit in some applied debates (“Vote for me!”); however, when a vote or consequential decision is called for (as in the courtroom or in applied parliamentary debate) it is essential that the proposition be explicitly expressed (“the defendant is guilty!”). In aca­demic debate, the proposition provides essential guidance for the preparation of the debaters prior to the debate, the case building and discourse presented during the debate, and the decision to be made by the debate judge after the debate. Someone disturbed by the problem of a 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. This focus contributes to better and more informed decision making with the potential for better results. In aca­demic debate, it provides better depth of argumentation and enhanced opportu­nity for reaping the educational benefits of participation. In the next section, we will consider the challenge of framing the proposition for debate, and its role in the debate. 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 a topic, such as ‘"homeless­ness,” or “abortion,” Or “crime,” or “global warming,” we are likely to have an interesting discussion but not to establish a profitable basis for argument. For example, the statement “Resolved: That the pen is mightier than the sword” is debatable, yet by itself fails to provide much basis for dear argumen­tation. If we take this statement to mean Iliad 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, perhaps promoting positive social change. (Note that “loose” propositions, such as the example above, may be defined by their advocates in such a way as to facilitate a clear contrast of competing sides; through definitions and debate they “become” clearly understood statements even though they may not begin as such. There are formats for debate that often begin with this sort of proposition. However, in any debate, at some point, effective and meaningful discussion relies on identification of a clearly stated or understood proposition.) Back to the example of the written word versus physical force. 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, cyber-warfare, disinformation, or what? What does it mean to be “mightier" 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 Laurania 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 treaty 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.

#### Vote negative:

#### 1. Preparation and clash --- changing the topic post facto manipulates balance of prep, which structurally favors the aff because they speak last and permute alternatives --- strategic fairness is key to engaging a well-prepared opponent which promotes clash, the fundamental value of debate

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

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

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

#### 2. Substantive regulations that demarcate limits are necessary for dialogue --- refusal to tailor their identity claims to normative, public stances shuts down the possibility for discussion and democratic respect

John Dryzek 6, Professor of Social and Political Theory, The Australian National University, Reconciling Pluralism and Consensus as Political Ideals, American Journal of Political Science,Vol. 50, No. 3, July 2006, Pp. 634–649

A more radical contemporary pluralism is suspicious of liberal and communitarian devices for reconciling difference. Such a critical pluralism is associated with agonists such as Connolly (1991), Honig (1993), and Mouffe (2000), and difference democrats such as Young (2000). As Honig puts it, “Difference is just another word for what used to be called pluralism” (1996, 60). Critical pluralists resemble liberals in that they begin from the variety of ways it is possible to experience the world, but stress that the experiences and perspectives of marginalized and oppressed groups are likely to be very different from dominant groups. They also have a strong suspicion of liberal theory that looks neutral but in practice supports and serves the powerful.

Difference democrats are hostile to consensus, partly because consensus decisionmaking (of the sort popular in 1970s radical groups) conceals informal oppression under the guise of concern for all by disallowing dissent (Zablocki 1980). But the real target is political theory that deploys consensus, especially deliberative and liberal theory. Young (1996, 125–26) argues that the appeals to unity and the common good that deliberative theorists under sway of the consensus ideal stress as the proper forms of political communication can often be oppressive. For deliberation so oriented all too easily equates the common good with the interests of the more powerful, thus sidelining legitimate concerns of the marginalized. Asking the underprivileged to set aside their particularistic concerns also means marginalizing their favored forms of expression, especially the telling of personal stories (Young 1996, 126).3 Speaking for an agonistic conception of democracy (to which Young also subscribes; 2000, 49–51), Mouffe states:

To negate the ineradicable character of antagonism and aim at a universal rational consensus— that is the real threat to democracy. Indeed, this can lead to violence being unrecognized and hidden behind appeals to “rationality,” as is often the case in liberal thinking. (1996, 248)

Mouffe is a radical pluralist: “By pluralism I mean the end of a substantive idea of the good life” (1996, 246). But neither Mouffe nor Young want to abolish communication in the name of pluralism and difference; much of their work advocates sustained attention to communication. Mouffe also cautions against uncritical celebration of difference, for some differences imply “subordination and should therefore be challenged by a radical democratic politics” (1996, 247). Mouffe raises the question of the terms in which engagement across difference might proceed. Participants should ideally accept that the positions of others are legitimate, though not as a result of being persuaded in argument. Instead, it is a matter of being open to conversion due to adoption of a particular kind of democratic attitude that converts antagonism into agonism, fighting into critical engagement, enemies into adversaries who are treated with respect. Respect here is notjust (liberal) toleration, but positive validation of the position of others. For Young, a communicative democracy would be composed of people showing “equal respect,” under “procedural rules of fair discussion and decisionmaking” (1996, 126). Schlosberg speaks of “agonistic respect” as “a critical pluralist ethos” (1999, 70).

Mouffe and Young both want pluralism to be regulated by a particular kind of attitude, be it respectful, agonistic, or even in Young’s (2000, 16–51) case reasonable.Thus neither proposes unregulated pluralism as an alternative to (deliberative) consensus. This regulation cannot be just procedural, for that would imply “anything goes” in terms of the substance of positions. Recall thatMouffe rejects differences that imply subordination. Agonistic ideals demand judgments about what is worthy of respect and what is not. Connolly (1991, 211) worriesabout dogmatic assertions and denials of identity that fuel existential resentments that would have to be changed to make agonism possible. Young seeks “transformation of private, self-regarding desires into public appeals to justice” (2000, 51). Thus for Mouffe, Connolly, and Young alike, regulative principles for democratic communication are not just attitudinal or procedural; they also refer to the substance of the kinds of claims that are worthy of respect. These authors would not want to legislate substance and are suspicious of the content of any alleged consensus. But in retreating from “anything goes” relativism, they need principles to regulate the substance of what rightfully belongs in democratic debate.

#### Tailoring identity claims to common topics for deliberation is possible and desirable---the 1ac’s failure to affirm topical action impedes the culture of democratic debate that’s key to effective decision-making in a pluralistic society

Amanda Anderson 6, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities and English at Brown University, Spring 2006, “Reply to My Critic(s),” Criticism, Vol. 48, No. 2, p. 281-290

MY RECENT BOOK, The Way We Argue Now, has in a sense two theses. In the first place, the book makes the case for the importance of debate and argument to any vital democratic or pluralistic intellectual culture. This is in many ways an unexceptional position, but the premise of the book is that the claims of reasoned argument are often trumped, within the current intellectual terrain, by appeals to cultural identity and what I gather more broadly under the rubric of ethos, which includes cultural identity but also forms of ethical piety and charismatic authority. In promoting argument as a universal practice keyed to a human capacity for communicative reason, my book is a critique of relativism and identity politics, or the notion that forms of cultural authenticity or group identity have a certain unquestioned legitimacy, one that cannot or should not be subjected to the challenges of reason or principle, precisely because reason and what is often called "false universalism" are, according to this pattern of thinking, always involved in forms of exclusion, power, or domination. My book insists, by contrast, that argument is a form of respect, that the ideals of democracy, whether conceived from a nationalist or an internationalist perspective, rely fundamentally upon procedures of argumentation and debate in order to legitimate themselves and to keep their central institutions vital. And the idea that one should be protected from debate, that argument is somehow injurious to persons if it does not honor their desire to have their basic beliefs and claims and solidarities accepted without challenge, is strenuously opposed. As is the notion that any attempt to ask people to agree upon processes of reason-giving argument is somehow necessarily to impose a coercive norm, one that will disable the free expression and performance of identities, feelings, or solidarities. Disagreement is, by the terms of my book, a form of respect, not a form of disrespect. And by disagreement, I don't mean simply to say that we should expect disagreement rather than agreement, which is a frequently voiced-if misconceived-criticism of Habermas. Of course we should expect disagreement. My point is that we should focus on the moment of dissatisfaction in the face of disagreement-the internal dynamic in argument that imagines argument might be the beginning of a process of persuasion and exchange that could end in agreement (or partial agreement). For those who advocate reconciling ourselves to disagreements rather than arguing them out, by contrast, there is a complacent-and in some versions, even celebratory-attitude toward fixed disagreement. Refusing these options, I make the case for dissatisfied disagreement in the final chapter of the book and argue that people should be willing to justify their positions in dialogue with one another, especially if they hope to live together in a post-traditional pluralist society. ¶ One example of the trumping of argument by ethos is the form that was taken by the late stage of the Foucault/Habermas debate, where an appeal to ethos-specifically, an appeal to Foucault's style of ironic or negative critique, often seen as most in evidence in the interviews, where he would playfully refuse labels or evade direct answers-was used to exemplify an alternative to the forms of argument employed by Habermas and like-minded critics. (I should pause to say that I provide this example, and the framing summary of the book that surrounds it, not to take up airtime through expansive self-reference, but because neither of my respondents provided any contextualizing summary of the book's central arguments, though one certainly gets an incremental sense of the book's claims from Bruce Robbins. Because I don't assume that readers of this forum have necessarily read the book, and because I believe that it is the obligation of forum participants to provide sufficient context for their remarks, I will perform this task as economically as I can, with the recognition that it might have carried more weight if provided by a respondent rather than the author.) ¶ The Foucauldian counter-critique importantly emphasizes a relation between style and position, but it obscures (1) the importance or value of the Habermasian critique and (2) the possibility that the other side of the debate might have its own ethos to advocate, one that has precisely to do with an ethos of argument, an ideal of reciprocal debate that involves taking distance on one's pre-given forms of identity or the norms of one's community, both so as to talk across differences and to articulate one's claims in relation to shared and even universal ideals. And this leads to the second thesis of the book, the insistence that an emphasis on ethos and character is interestingly present if not widely recognized in contemporary theory, and one of the ways its vitality and existential pertinence makes itself felt (even despite the occurrence of the kinds of unfair trumping moves I have mentioned). We often fail to notice this, because identity has so uniformly come to mean sociological, ascribed, or group identity-race, gender, class, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, and so forth. Instances of the move toward character and ethos include the later Foucault (for whom ethos is a central concept), cosmopolitanism (whose aspiration it is to turn universalism into an ethos), and, more controversially, proceduralist ethics and politics (with its emphasis on sincerity and civility). Another version of this attentiveness to ethos and character appears in contemporary pragmatism, with its insistence on casualness of attitude, or insouciance in the face of contingency-recommendations that get elevated into full-fledged exemplary personae in Richard Rorty's notion of the "ironist" or Barbara Herrnstein Smiths portrait of the "postmodern skeptic." These examples-and the larger claim they support-are meant to defend theory as still living, despite the many reports of its demise, and in fact still interestingly and incessantly re-elaborating its relation to practice. This second aspect of the project is at once descriptive, motivated by the notion that characterology within theory is intrinsically interesting, and critical, in its attempt to identify how characterology can itself be used to cover or evade the claims of rational argument, as in appeals to charismatic authority or in what I identify as narrow personifications of theory (pragmatism, in its insistence on insouciance in the face of contingency, is a prime example of this second form). And as a complement to the critical agenda, there is a reconstructive agenda as well, an attempt to recuperate liberalism and proceduralism, in part by advocating the possibility, as I have suggested, of an ethos of argument. ¶ Robbins, in his extraordinarily rich and challenging response, zeroes in immediately on a crucial issue: who is to say exactly when argument is occurring or not, and what do we do when there is disagreement over the fundamentals (the primary one being over what counts as proper reasoning)? Interestingly, Robbins approaches this issue after first observing a certain tension in the book: on the one hand, The Way We Argue Now calls for dialogue, debate, argument; on the other, its project is "potentially something a bit stricter, or pushier: getting us all to agree on what should and should not count as true argument." What this point of entry into the larger issue reveals is a kind of blur that the book, I am now aware, invites. On the one hand, the book anatomizes academic debates, and in doing so is quite "debaterly" This can give the impression that what I mean by argument is a very specific form unique to disciplinary methodologies in higher education. But the book is not generally advocating a narrow practice of formal and philosophical argumentation in the culture at large, however much its author may relish adherence to the principle of non-contradiction in scholarly argument. I take pains to elaborate an ethos of argument that is linked to democratic debate and the forms of dissent that constitutional patriotism allows and even promotes. In this sense, while argument here is necessarily contextualized sociohistorically, the concept is not merely academic. It is a practice seen as integral to specific political forms and institutions in modern democracies, and to the more general activity of critique within modern societies-to the tradition of the public sphere, to speak in broad terms. Additionally, insofar as argument impels one to take distance on embedded customs, norms, and senses of given identity, it is a practice that at once acknowledges identity, the need to understand the perspectives of others, and the shared commitment to commonality and generality, to finding a way to live together under conditions of difference.¶ More than this: the book also discusses at great length and from several different angles the issue that Robbins inexplicably claims I entirely ignore: the question of disagreement about what counts as argument. In the opening essay, "Debatable Performances," I fault the proponents of communicative ethics for not having a broader understanding of public expression, one that would include the disruptions of spectacle and performance. I return to and underscore this point in my final chapter, where I espouse a democratic politics that can embrace and accommodate a wide variety of expressions and modes. This is certainly a discussion of what counts as dialogue and hence argument in the broad sense in which I mean it, and in fact I fully acknowledge that taking distance from cultural norms and given identities can be advanced not only through critical reflection, but through ironic critique and defamiliarizing performance as well. But I do insist-and this is where I take a position on the fundamental disagreements that have arisen with respect to communicative ethics-that when they have an effect, these other dimensions of experience do not remain unreflective, and insofar as they do become reflective, they are contributing to the very form of reasoned analysis that their champions sometimes imagine they must refuse in order to liberate other modes of being (the affective, the narrative, the performative, the nonrational). If a narrative of human rights violation is persuasive in court, or in the broader cultural public sphere, it is because it draws attention to a violation of humanity that is condemned on principle; if a performance jolts people out of their normative understandings of sexuality and gender, it prompts forms of understanding that can be affirmed and communicated and also can be used to justify political positions and legislative agendas.

#### The impact outweighs—deliberative debate models impart skills vital to respond to existential threats

Christian O. Lundberg 10 Professor of Communications @ University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, “Tradition of Debate in North Carolina” in Navigating Opportunity: Policy Debate in the 21st Century By Allan D. Louden, p. 311

The second major problem with the critique that identifies a naivety in articulating debate and democracy is that it presumes that the primary pedagogical outcome of debate is speech capacities. But the democratic capacities built by debate are not limited to speech—as indicated earlier, debate builds capacity for critical thinking, analysis of public claims, informed decision making, and better public judgment. If the picture of modem political life that underwrites this critique of debate is a pessimistic view of increasingly labyrinthine and bureaucratic administrative politics, rapid scientific and technological change outpacing the capacities of the citizenry to comprehend them, and ever-expanding insular special-interest- and money-driven politics, it is a puzzling solution, at best, to argue that these conditions warrant giving up on debate. If democracy is open to rearticulation, it is open to rearticulation precisely because as the challenges of modern political life proliferate, the citizenry's capacities can change, which is one of the primary reasons that theorists of democracy such as Ocwey in The Public awl Its Problems place such a high premium on education (Dewey 1988,63, 154). Debate provides an indispensible form of education in the modem articulation of democracy because it builds precisely the skills that allow the citizenry to research and be informed about policy decisions that impact them, to sort through and evaluate the evidence for and relative merits of arguments for and against a policy in an increasingly information-rich environment, and to prioritize their time and political energies toward policies that matter the most to them.

The merits of debate as a tool for building democratic capacity-building take on a special significance in the context of information literacy. John Larkin (2005, HO) argues that one of the primary failings of modern colleges and universities is that they have not changed curriculum to match with the challenges of a new information environment. This is a problem for the course of academic study in our current context, but perhaps more important, argues Larkin, for the future of a citizenry that will need to make evaluative choices against an increasingly complex and multimediated information environment (ibid-). Larkin's study tested the benefits of debate participation on information-literacy skills and concluded that in-class debate participants reported significantly higher self-efficacy ratings of their ability to navigate academic search databases and to effectively search and use other Web resources:

To analyze the self-report ratings of the instructional and control group students, we first conducted a multivariate analysis of variance on all of the ratings, looking jointly at the effect of instmction/no instruction and debate topic . . . that it did not matter which topic students had been assigned . . . students in the Instnictional [debate) group were significantly more confident in their ability to access information and less likely to feel that they needed help to do so----These findings clearly indicate greater self-efficacy for online searching among students who participated in (debate).... These results constitute strong support for the effectiveness of the project on students' self-efficacy for online searching in the academic databases. There was an unintended effect, however: After doing ... the project, instructional group students also felt more confident than the other students in their ability to get good information from Yahoo and Google. It may be that the library research experience increased self-efficacy for any searching, not just in academic databases. (Larkin 2005, 144)

Larkin's study substantiates Thomas Worthcn and Gaylcn Pack's (1992, 3) claim that debate in the college classroom plays a critical role in fostering the kind of problem-solving skills demanded by the increasingly rich media and information environment of modernity. Though their essay was written in 1992 on the cusp of the eventual explosion of the Internet as a medium, Worthcn and Pack's framing of the issue was prescient: the primary question facing today's student has changed from how to best research a topic to the crucial question of learning how to best evaluate which arguments to cite and rely upon from an easily accessible and veritable cornucopia of materials.

There are, without a doubt, a number of important criticisms of employing debate as a model for democratic deliberation. But cumulatively, the evidence presented here warrants strong support for expanding debate practice in the classroom as a technology for enhancing democratic deliberative capacities. The unique combination of critical thinking skills, research and information processing skills, oral communication skills, and capacities for listening and thoughtful, open engagement with hotly contested issues argues for debate as a crucial component of a rich and vital democratic life. In-class debate practice both aids students in achieving the best goals of college and university education, and serves as an unmatched practice for creating thoughtful, engaged, open-minded and self-critical students who are open to the possibilities of meaningful political engagement and new articulations of democratic life.

Expanding this practice is crucial, if only because the more we produce citizens that can actively and effectively engage the political process, the more likely we are to produce revisions of democratic life that are necessary if democracy is not only to survive, but to thrive. Democracy faces a myriad of challenges, including: domestic and international issues of class, gender, and racial justice; wholesale environmental destruction and the potential for rapid climate change; emerging threats to international stability in the form of terrorism, intervention and new possibilities for great power conflict; and increasing challenges of rapid globalization including an increasingly volatile global economic structure. More than any specific policy or proposal, an informed and active citizenry that deliberates with greater skill and sensitivity provides one of the best hopes for responsive and effective democratic governance, and by extension, one of the last best hopes for dealing with the existential challenges to democracy [in an] increasingly complex world.

#### Specifically Academic debate over war power restrictions is critical to check excessive presidential authority and warfare

Julian E. Zelizer 11, Professor of History and Public Affairs at Princeton University, "War powers belong to Congress and the president", June 27, www.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/06/27/zelizer.war.powers/index.html

But the failure of Congress to fully participate in the initial decision to use military force has enormous costs for the nation beyond the obvious constitutional questions that have been raised.¶ The first problem is that the U.S. now tends to go to war without having a substantive debate about the human and financial costs that the operation could entail. Asking for a declaration of war, and thus making Congress take responsibility for the decision, had required presidents to enter into a heated debate about the rationale behind the mission, the potential for large-scale casualties and how much money would be spent.¶ When presidents send troops into conflict without asking Congress for approval, it has been much easier for presidents to elude these realities. President Lyndon Johnson famously increased the troop levels in Vietnam without the public fully realizing what was happening until after it was too late.¶ Although Johnson promised Democrats when they debated the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964 that they would only have a limited deployment and he would ask them again if the mission increased, he never did. He used the broad authority granted to him to vastly expand the operations during his presidency.¶ By the end of his time in office, hundreds of thousands of troops were fighting a hopeless war in the jungles of Vietnam. Johnson also continued to mask the budgetary cost, realizing the opposition that would emerge if legislators knew how much the nation would spend. When the costs became clear, Johnson was forced to request a tax increase from Congress in 1967, a request which greatly undermined his support.¶ The second cost of presidents going to war rather than Congress doing so is that major mistakes result when decisions are made so quickly. When there is not an immediate national security risk involved, the slowness of the legislative process does offer an opportunity to force policymakers to prove their case before going to war.¶ Speed is not always a virtue. In the case of Iraq, the president started the war based on the shoddiest of evidence about WMD. The result was an embarrassment for the nation, an operation that undermined U.S. credibility abroad.¶ Even in military actions that have stronger justifications, there are downsides to speed. With President Obama and the surge in Afghanistan, there is considerable evidence that the administration went in without a clear strategy and without a clear objective. With Libya, there are major concerns about what the administration hopes to accomplish and whether we are supporting rebel forces that might be connected with terrorist networks intent on harming the U.S.¶ The third cost has been the cheapening of the decision about using military force. In the end, the decision about whether to send human treasure and expend valuable dollars abroad should be one that is made by both branches of government and one that results from a national dialogue. Requiring Congress to declare war forces voters to think about the decision sooner rather than later.¶ While efficiency is essential, so too is the democratic process upon which our nation is built.¶ The result of the decision-making process that has been used in recent decades is that as a nation too many citizens lose their connection to the war. Indeed, most Americans don't even think twice when troops are sent abroad. The shift of power toward the president has compounded the effects of not having a draft, which Congress dismantled in 1973. Wars sometimes resemble just another administrative decision made by the White House rather than a democratic decision.¶ So Boehner has raised a fair point, though he and other Republicans don't have much ground to stand on given their own party's history. Republicans, like Democrats, have generally supported presidential-war power in addition to a weak Congress.¶ Most politicians have only worried about war power when it is politically convenient. Indeed, in 2007, then-Sen. Obama wrote, the "President does not have power under the Constitution to unilaterally authorize a military attack in a situation that does not involve stopping an actual or imminent threat to this nation."¶ Clearly, Obama has not governed by the principles on which he campaigned.¶ It is doubtful whether the parties will do anything about this. The War Powers Resolution has not worked well and there seems to be little appetite to pass something else. But the consequences of the path that the nation has chosen are enormously high.¶ We've moved too far away from the era when Congress matters. As a result, the decision to use troops is too easy and often made in haste. Obama, who spoke about this issue so cogently on the campaign trail, should be a president who understands that reality.

#### That turns their impacts --- war causes and deepens racial inequality

Mertus, ethics prof, 99 – Professor and co-director of the Ethics and Peace program, American University's School of International Service (Julie, The Role of Racism as a Cause or Factor in Wars and Civil Conflict, International Council on Human Rights Policy, http://www.ichrp.org/paper\_files/112\_w\_01.pdf)

The war impacted on national identity in three ways. First, it accomplished the complete demonization of other nations and national groups. Initially, state-controlled propaganda machines broadcast stories of the “other’s” inhumanity. Overtime many witnesses and victims of acts of great cruelty began to tell their story – and their neighbours listened. Second, war hastened physical national segregation. People who had been forced to leave their villages and cities because of their national background now crowded into new cities, creating new enclaves of “their own people.” Segregation exploited and reinforced otherness. Finally, war closed the ranks. People throughout the former Yugoslavia were forced to decide who they were among three narrow choices: Serb, Croat, or Muslim. This left four categories of people without an identity: those of mixed parentage or marriage; those who were of another national identity, such as Albanian or Hungarian; those who wanted to identify themselves as something else, either above the nation, such as European, or below the nation, such as a member of a particular neighbourhood or organisation; and those who wanted out of the labelling process altogether. Those who failed to make a choice usually left the country (if they could) or fell silent; a few stubbornly fought back, despite the extreme backlash against anything different and potentially challenging to the nation. II. Characteristics of Conflicts with Racial Dimension: Roles of Racism The above discussion demonstrates a primary characteristic of conflicts with a racial dimension. Political mobilisation linked to real and imagined group differences arises where the state’s administrative structures and legal institutions distribute scarce resources based on ethnic/national differences. The problem is particularly acute where, as in Rwanda and Yugoslavia, lead positions in military and police forces are distributed based on group identity.20 Yugoslavia and Rwanda are textbook examples of cases in which the controlling entity (the state, the party, the colonial entity) “for its own administrative convenience and in order to improve control over local élites, may select certain ethnic élites and organisations as collaborators or channels for the transmission of 7 government patronage.”21 This favouritism based on group identity serves to polarise societies and, additionally, to institutionalise and make acceptable intra-group suspicion and hatred. In Rwanda and Kosovo, polarisation and racism played a role, not as the root cause of conflict, but as a tool of élites. In both Rwanda and Kosovo, many of those who participated in the propaganda inciting racism, were intellectuals.22 It is characteristic of conflicts with a racist dimension that élites have the ability to manipulate racism because of other conditions in-country, such as: structural poverty, unmet human development needs, comparative deprivation of one group to another, media manipulation of misunderstandings among the general populace, and the absence of human rights, the rule of law and civil and political institutions encouraging citizen participation. Where a group perceives a threat to its interests and values, rising counter-élites find playing the racist/nationalist/ chauvinist card a particularly useful tool to assert a right to rule to protect the “true” national or ethnic interest. In Rwanda and Kosovo, extremist élites played upon the deep fears and frustrations of the populace.

## Case

### WA

**Reforms are the best approach---it avoids a mobilization of politics around maintaining identity rather than articulating a future of social justice for society**

**Bhambra 10**—U Warwick—AND—Victoria Margree—School of Humanities, U Brighton (Identity Politics and the Need for a ‘Tomorrow’, http://www.academia.edu/471824/Identity\_Politics\_and\_the\_Need\_for\_a\_Tomorrow\_)

**Political mobilisation** around suffering **engenders solidarities** between those who are suffering and those who afford recognition of (and then action around) that suffering. Those who suffergenerally claim their common humanity with others in asking forpeople to look beyond the speciﬁc circumstances of their suffer-ing, and in doing so, the request is to address those speciﬁc circumstances on the basis of a humanity not bound to the circumstances. **The mistake of some forms of identity politics, then, is to associate identity with suffering**. While a recognition of historical (and contemporary) suffering is an important aspect of the political process of seeking redress for the conditions of suffering, it does not constitute identity singularly. ¶ “Wounded attachments”, we would argue, do not representthe general condition of politicised identities, but rather, are prob-lematic constructions of identities which fail to recognise (oraccept) the processes of change associated with movements. The accumulation of different sorts of challenges around similar issues generally leads to the gradual amelioration of the condi-tions which generated the identity (and the associated move-ment) in the ﬁrst instance. If the emphasis in the movement is on identity then successful reform (**even partial reform**) **reduces the injury and thus diminishes the power of the identity claim based upon that injury**. This is because reform is necessarily uneven in terms of the impact it has. This then poses a problem for those within the movement who would **wish the reforms to go further** and who see in the reforms a weakening of the identity that they believe is a necessary prerequisite for political action. **As they can no longer mobilise the injured identity – and the associated suffering – as common to all** (and thus requiring address becauseof its generalised effect), **there is often, then, a perceived need to privilege that suffering as particular and to institute a politics of guilt with regard to addressing it – truly the politics of ressentiment**. ¶ The problems arise by insisting on the necessity of political action being constituted through pre-existing identities and soli-darities (for example, those of being a woman). If, instead, it was recognised that equality for women is not separable from (or achievable separated from) wider issues of justice and equality within society then **reforms could be seen as steps towards equality**. A movement concerned with issues of social justice (of whichgender justice is an integral aspect) would allow for provisional reforms to prevailing conditions of injustice without calling into question the basis for the movement – for there would always be more to be achieved . 8 Each achievement would itself necessitate further revision of what equality would look like. And it would also necessitate revision of the particular aims that constitute the “identity” afforded by participating in that movement. In this way, identity becomes more appropriately understood as being, in part at least, about participating in a series of dialogues about what is desired for the future in terms of understandings of social justice. ¶ Focusing on the future, on how we would like things to be tomorrow, based on an understanding of where we are today, would allow for partial reforms to be seen as gains and not threats. It is only if one believes that political action can only occur in the context of identiﬁcation of past injustices as opposed to future justice that one has a problem with (partial) reforms in the present. Political identity which exists only through an enunciation of its injury and does not seek to dissolve itself as an identity can lead to the ossiﬁcation of injured relations. The “wounded attachment” occurs when the politicised identity can see no future without the injury also constituting an aspect of that future. Developing on the work of Brown, we would argue that not only does a “reformed” identity politics need to be based upon desire for the future, but that that desire should actually be a desire for the dissolution (in the future) of the identity claim. The complete success of the femi-nist movement, for instance, would mean that feminists no longerexisted, as the conditions that caused people to become feministhad been addressed. Similarly, with the dalit movement, its success would be measured by the dissolution of the identity of “dalit” as asalient political category. There would be no loss here, only a gain.¶ As we have argued, following Mohanty ([1993] 2000) andNelson (1993), it is participation in the processing of one’s ownand other’s experiences into knowledge about the world, in thecontext of communities that negotiate epistemological premises, which confers a notion of politicised identity. Since it is an under-standing of “tomorrow” (what that would be, and how it is to beachieved) that establishes one as, for example, a feminist, such an identity claim does not exclude others from participation, and it does not solicit the reiﬁcation of identity around the fact of historical or contemporary suffering. By removing these obstacles to progress, the “tomorrow” that is the goal, is more readily achievable. Identity politics, then, “needs a tomorrow” in this sense: that the raison d’être of any politicised identity is the bringing about of a tomorrow in which the social injustices of the present have been overcome. But identity politics also needs that tomorrow – today – in the sense that politicised identities need to inscribe that tomorrow into their self-deﬁnition in the present, in order to avoid consolidating activity around the maintenance of the identity rather than the overcoming of the conditions that generated it. That the tomorrow to be inscribed – today – in the self-deﬁnition of one’s political identity, is one in which that identity will no longer be required, is not a situation to be regretted, since it is rather the promise of success for any movement for justice.

#### The affirmative abdicates politics for moralism---venerating oppression as the starting point for argument naturalizes states of injury that initially created the exploitation

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In chapter 1 I explore an ideology prominent in the “emancipatory” discourses of the North American academy. Scholarly interest in “the other” on the part of critical theorists, feminists, and antiracist scholars concerned with the legacy of colonialism, imperialism, and patriarchy has had an enormous impact on how we view the condition and status of the victim. The “post” discourses— postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism— are in large part responsible for rightly drawing attention to “the wretched of the earth” as well as problematically venerating “the other,” a veneration that ultimately robs the subaltern (the native, woman, “those who have no part”) 18 of moral agency and responsibility. While there are a number of important intellectual and political sources of this veneration, I trace it to a tradition in what has come to be known broadly as continental philosophy, which has greatly influenced and been influenced by contemporary feminist scholarship. This veneration of the other has resulted from readings— or misreadings— of the work of Emmanuel Levinas and Frantz Fanon, among others, rendering the other a pure victim, beyond moral and epistemic reproach— a good other. Its undesirable effects include the abdication of politics for an impotent ethics; a reticence to make moral judgments in the name of sensitivity to cultures other than one's own, both cultures rendered essentialist and immutable in their incommensurability; and an impoverished sense of justice— motivated by guilt or ressentiment, synonymous with retribution.¶ We are left with a bleak picture of political practice as policing and a moral judgment premised only on accepted ideological principles. 19 A community of victims stand in judgment over those deemed responsible for their subordination. Justice becomes a matter of balancing the scales of suffering by making the perpetrator suffer as the victim has. Responsibility belongs solely to the perpetrator group. Yet no one has been able to establish why the view “from the margins” equips the victimized with a superior moral sensibility and power of judgment that others ostensibly lack on the grounds of their privilege. ¶ In chapter 1, then, we witness the antagonistic dynamic between essentialized categories of privileged and oppressed— characterized by an incommensurable, nonreciprocal, morally unequal relationship— that theorists of difference promote. Ironically, it is a mirror image of the antagonism, essentialism, and moral reproach inherent in the circumstances that reduced an individual or group to inferior status to begin with. This irony is the point of departure in chapter 2, which elaborates a theme prevalent in Mahmood Mamdani's analysis of the Rwandan genocide. Rather than privilege the view from the margins, Mamdani warns of the dangers of assuming the “worldview” of the victim, constructed as it is on the very hierarchical system politicized by the perpetrator. While a similar binary logic of victim versus perpetrator is evident in the identity politics of the West, the stakes are much higher in the context of violent conflict purported to be “ethnopolitical.” In the case of an intractable conflict like the ongoing crisis in Israel and Palestine— characterized by a severely asymmetrical power imbalance but also by the utmost conviction on both sides of a superior claim to victimhood and thus to truth, history, land, and a future state— the stakes are higher yet.¶ The focus of this second chapter is the troubling extent to which we often justify the violence of the victimized as a legitimate course of action, whether in the name of empowerment, self-determination, or— most often today— security. This is evident in analyses of Palestinian suicide bombing that justify killing on the basis of despair and misery, as well as in the American and Israeli governments' reliance on a paradigm of security to legitimize a brutal military occupation. Here we witness the moral capital of the victim writ large, each side of the struggle firm in its conviction that it fights a just war. The Palestinians fight to end an occupation of more than sixty years, with its systematized, normalized inequality and disenfranchisement, impassioned by the collective memory of expulsion. The Israelis fight a war against terror and anti-Semitism, impassioned by the collective memory of genocide and persecution. The asymmetry of political power and economic well-being is often ignored by supporters of the Israeli government and used to add moral currency to the Palestinians' position by those who act in solidarity with them. ¶ Relying on the work of Frantz Fanon and Hannah Arendt to understand the nature of political violence, particularly in its emancipatory form, I conclude in this chapter that the violence of the victim is not a justifiable response to victimhood, nor is it as inevitable as we are led to believe. ¶ The unrelenting nature of violence and counterviolence, and the willful blindness to the binary logic of victim versus perpetrator, means that dissenting voices and the actions of those who do not comply are usually ignored. As in chapter 1, the view of politics here is bleak; “never again” is the mantra of a politics of death and destruction propelled by fear— or rather of a failure of politics, and a corresponding failure to take responsibility and exercise moral agency. The solutions can be found, I argue, in the work of countless individuals and groups who are not permitted the political tools necessary to make the leaps required for a viable future for all Palestinians and Israelis. Since it is the ideological framing of the conflict that blinds us to these solutions, it is our responsibility, as bystanders, to engage in conceptual reframing, not to impose peace plans or political solutions ourselves but to stop preventing Israelis and Palestinians from creating them.¶ The third chapter elaborates the subjective or psychic effects of victimization. I seek to provide a phenomenology of victimhood based on the narratives and analyses of Jean Améry, Susan Brison, Frantz Fanon, and others who have explored the condition of victimhood and the process of recuperating a sense of self after a traumatic experience. I discuss these writers in the context of a contemporary discourse on trauma in the fields of psychology, psychoanalysis, feminism, anticolonialism, and military psychiatry. An overview of the “birth of trauma” demonstrates that we have moved from recognizing injury to naturalizing it, and to a universalization of pain and suffering that trivializes the meaning of trauma,

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 rendering indistinguishable the experiences of those who survive genocide, rape, or sexual harassment. Historicizing the experience of victimhood makes it impossible to essentialize the condition of the victim— that victims respond in diverse ways to acts of violence and violation should not be neglected— but I point to a number of features that broadly constitute what it means to be victimized.¶ Despite the focus in chapter 3 on the psychic pain and suffering victims experience— the alienated consciousness, dehumanization, self-enslavement, “amputation,” or shattered self— I argue that our empathic regard must not preclude judgment or the acknowledgment of responsibility for wrongdoing when we consider the violence that victims themselves perpetuate. While Fanon stresses the agency of the colonized subject in the work of reversing the alienation he suffers, Améry dwells in a kind of melancholia, valorizing what Nietzsche calls ressentiment— resentment against those who tortured him in a Nazi camp and against the German people who enabled the Nazi regime to carry out genocide. ¶ How do we arrest the evolution of grief into grievance before further violence occurs in the name of victimhood? Brison provides an answer, demonstrating that victims can eventually forget their victimization, to some extent, through the long and painful process of narration. ¶ 14¶ Raped and nearly beaten to death, Brison describes the pain of displacement and exile from her own body as well as from the human community, but she recognizes that although the self can be destroyed by others, it is also created and sustained by them. The devastating loss of security her attacker caused is mitigated over time by her acceptance that absolute control over one's life is never possible— we cannot escape our vulnerability— and by narrating the event into her past. The contrast between the reflections of Améry and Brison, however, points to the power of unconscious desires and motivations that render survival an individual matter. We are not all equal in our capacity to struggle and overcome.

### AT: Social Death

#### The invocation of social death as ontologically inevitable inscribes a pessimism towards politics which makes agency impossible and oversimplifies the history of resistance

Brown 9 Vincent, Prof. of History and African and African-American Studies @ Harvard Univ., December, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," American Historical Review, p. 1231-1249

Specters of the Atlantic is a compellingly sophisticated study of the relation be- tween the epistemologies underwriting both modern slavery and modern capitalism, but the book’s discussion of the politics of anti-slavery is fundamentally incomplete. While Baucom brilliantly traces the development of “melancholy realism” as an op- positional discourse that ran counter to the logic of slavery and finance capital, he has very little to say about the enslaved themselves. Social death, so well suited to the tragic perspective, stands in for the experience of enslavement. While this heightens the reader’s sense of the way Atlantic slavery haunts the present, Baucom largely fails to acknowledge that the enslaved performed melancholy acts of accounting not unlike those that he shows to be a fundamental component of abolitionist and human rights discourses, or that those acts could be a basic element of slaves’ oppositional activities. In many ways, the effectiveness of his text depends upon the silence of slaves—it is easier to describe the continuity of structures of power when one down- plays countervailing forces such as the political activity of the weak. So Baucom’s deep insights into the structural features of Atlantic slave trading and its afterlife come with a cost. Without engagement with the politics of the enslaved, slavery’s history serves as an effective charge leveled against modernity and capitalism, but not as an uneven and evolving process of human interaction, and certainly not as a locus of conflict in which the enslaved sometimes won small but important victories.11¶ Specters of the Atlantic is self-consciously a work of theory (despite Baucom’s prodigious archival research), and social death may be largely unproblematic as a matter of theory, or even law. In these arenas, as David Brion Davis has argued, “the slave has no legitimate, independent being, no place in the cosmos except as an instrument of her or his master’s will.”12 But the concept often becomes a general description of actual social life in slavery. Vincent Carretta, for example, in his au- thoritative biography of the abolitionist writer and former slave Olaudah Equiano, agrees with Patterson that because enslaved Africans and their descendants were “stripped of their personal identities and history, [they] were forced to suffer what has been aptly called ‘social death.’ ” The self-fashioning enabled by writing and print “allowed Equiano to resurrect himself publicly” from the condition that had been imposed by his enslavement.13 The living conditions of slavery in eighteenth-century Jamaica, one slave society with which Equiano had experience, are described in rich detail in Trevor Burnard’s unflinching examination of the career of Thomas Thistle- wood, an English migrant who became an overseer and landholder in Jamaica, and who kept a diary there from 1750 to 1786. Through Thistlewood’s descriptions of his life among slaves, Burnard glimpses a “world of uncertainty,” where the enslaved were always vulnerable to repeated depredations that actually led to “significant slave dehumanization as masters sought, with considerable success, to obliterate slaves’ personal histories.” Burnard consequently concurs with Patterson: “slavery completely stripped slaves of their cultural heritage, brutalized them, and rendered ordinary life and normal relationships extremely difficult.”14 This was slavery, after all, and much more than a transfer of migrants from Africa to America.15 Yet one wonders, after reading Burnard’s indispensable account, how slaves in Jamaica or- ganized some of British America’s greatest political events during Thistlewood’s time and after, including the Coromantee Wars of the 1760s, the 1776 Hanover conspiracy, and the Baptist War of 1831–1832. Surely they must have found some way to turn the “disorganization, instability, and chaos” of slavery into collective forms of belonging and striving, making connections when confronted with alien- ation and finding dignity in the face of dishonor. Rather than pathologizing slaves by allowing the condition of social death to stand for the experience of life in slavery, then, it might be more helpful to focus on what the enslaved actually made of their¶ situation.¶ Among the most insightful texts to explore the experiential meaning of Afro- Atlantic slavery (for both the slaves and their descendants) are two recent books by Saidiya Hartman and Stephanie Smallwood. Rather than eschewing the concept of social death, as might be expected from writing that begins by considering the per- spective of the enslaved, these two authors use the idea in penetrating ways. Hart- man’s Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route and Smallwood’s Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora extend social death beyond a general description of slavery as a condition and imagine it as an experience of self. Here both the promise and the problem with the concept are most fully apparent.16¶ Both authors seek a deeper understanding of the experience of enslavement and its consequences for the past, present, and future of black life than we generally find in histories of slavery. In Hartman’s account especially, slavery is not only an object of study, but also the focus of a personal memoir. She travels along a slave route in Ghana, from its coastal forts to the backcountry hinterlands, symbolically reversing the first stage of the trek now commonly called the Middle Passage. In searching prose, she meditates on the history of slavery in Africa to explore the precarious nature of belonging to the social category “African American.” Rendering her re- markable facility with social theory in elegant and affective terms, Hartman asks the question that nags all identities, but especially those forged by the descendants of slaves: What identifications, imagined affinities, mythical narratives, and acts of re- membering and forgetting hold the category together? Confronting her own alienation from any story that would yield a knowable genealogy or a comfortable identity, Hartman wrestles with what it means to be a stranger in one’s putative motherland, to be denied country, kin, and identity, and to forget one’s past—to be an orphan.17 Ultimately, as the title suggests, Lose Your Mother is an injunction to accept dis- possession as the basis of black self-definition.¶ Such a judgment is warranted, in Hartman’s account, by the implications of social death both for the experience of enslavement and for slavery’s afterlife in the present. As Patterson delineated in sociological terms the death of social personhood and the reincorporation of individuals into slavery, Hartman sets out on a personal quest to “retrace the process by which lives were destroyed and slaves born.”18 When she contends with what it meant to be a slave, she frequently invokes Patterson’s idiom: “Seized from home, sold in the market, and severed from kin, the slave was for all intents and purposes dead, no less so than had he been killed in combat. No less so than had she never belonged to the world.” By making men, women, and children into commodities, enslavement destroyed lineages, tethering people to own- ers rather than families, and in this way it “annulled lives, transforming men and women into dead matter, and then resuscitated them for servitude.” Admittedly, the enslaved “lived and breathed, but they were dead in the social world of men.”19 As it turns out, this kind of alienation is also part of what it presently means to be African American. “The transience of the slave’s existence,” for example, still leaves its traces in how black people imagine and speak of home:¶ We never tire of dreaming of a place that we can call home, a place better than here, wherever here might be . . . We stay there, but we don’t live there . . . Staying is living in a country without exercising any claims on its resources. It is the perilous condition of existing in a world in which you have no investments. It is having never resided in a place that you can say is yours. It is being “of the house” but not having a stake in it. Staying implies transient quarters, a makeshift domicile, a temporary shelter, but no attachment or affiliation. This sense of not belonging and of being an extraneous element is at the heart of slavery.20¶ “We may have forgotten our country,” Hartman writes, “but we haven’t forgotten our dispossession.”21¶ Like Baucom, Hartman sees the history of slavery as a constituent part of a tragic present. Atlantic slavery continues to be manifested in black people’s skewed life chances, poor education and health, and high rates of incarceration, poverty, and premature death. Disregarding the commonplace temporalities of professional historians, whose literary conventions are generally predicated on a formal distinction between past, present, and future, Hartman addresses slavery as a problem that spans all three. The afterlife of slavery inhabits the nature of belonging, which in turn guides the “freedom dreams” that shape prospects for change. “If slavery persists as an issue in the political life of black America,” she writes, “it is not because of an antiquated obsession with bygone days or the burden of a too-long memory, but because black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago.”22¶ A professor of English and comparative literature, Hartman is in many respects in a better position than most historians to understand events such as the funeral aboard the Hudibras. This is because for all of her evident erudition, her scholarship is harnessed not so much to a performance of mastery over the facts of what hap- pened, which might substitute precision for understanding, as to an act of mourning, even yearning. She writes with a depth of introspection and personal anguish that is transgressive of professional boundaries but absolutely appropriate to the task. Reading Hartman, one wonders how a historian could ever write dispassionately about slavery without feeling complicit and ashamed. For dispassionate accounting—exemplified by the ledgers of slave traders—has been a great weapon of the powerful, an episteme that made the grossest violations of personhood acceptable, even necessary. This is the kind of bookkeeping that bore fruit upon the Zong. “It made it easier for a trader to countenance yet another dead black body or for a captain to dump a shipload of captives into the sea in order to collect the insurance, since it wasn’t possible to kill cargo or to murder a thing already denied life. Death was simply part of the workings of the trade.” The archive of slavery, then, is “a mortuary.” Not content to total up the body count, Hartman offers elegy, echoing in her own way the lamentations of the women aboard the Hudibras. Like them, she is concerned with the dead and what they mean to the living. “I was desperate to reclaim the dead,” she writes, “to reckon with the lives undone and obliterated in the making of human commodities.”23¶ It is this mournful quality of Lose Your Mother that elevates it above so many histories of slavery, but the same sense of lament seems to require that Hartman overlook small but significant political victories like the one described by Butter- worth. Even as Hartman seems to agree with Paul Gilroy on the “value of seeing the consciousness of the slave as involving an extended act of mourning,” she remains so focused on her own commemorations that her text makes little space for a consideration of how the enslaved struggled with alienation and the fragility of belonging, or of the mourning rites they used to confront their condition.24 All of the ques- tions she raises about the meaning of slavery in the present—both highly personal and insistently political—might as well be asked about the meaning of slavery to slaves themselves, that is, if one begins by closely examining their social and political lives rather than assuming their lack of social being. Here Hartman is undone by her reliance on Orlando Patterson’s totalizing definition of slavery. She asserts that “no solace can be found in the death of the slave, no higher ground can be located, no perspective can be found from which death serves a greater good or becomes any- thing other than what it is.”25 If she is correct, the events on the Hudibras were of negligible importance. And indeed, Hartman’s understandable emphasis on the personal damage wrought by slavery encourages her to disavow two generations of social history that have demonstrated slaves’ remarkable capacity to forge fragile com- munities, preserve cultural inheritance, and resist the predations of slaveholders. This in turn precludes her from describing the ways that violence, dislocation, and death actually generate culture, politics, and consequential action by the enslaved.26¶ This limitation is particularly evident in a stunning chapter that Hartman calls “The Dead Book.” Here she creatively reimagines the events that occurred on the voyage of the slave ship Recovery, bound, like the Hudibras, from the Bight of Biafra to Grenada, when Captain John Kimber hung an enslaved girl naked from the mizzen stay and beat her, ultimately to her death, for being “sulky”: she was sick and could not dance when so ordered. As Hartman notes, the event would have been unre- markable had not Captain Kimber been tried for murder on the testimony of the ship’s surgeon, a brief transcript of the trial been published, and the woman’s death been offered up as allegory by the abolitionist William Wilberforce and the graphic satirist Isaac Cruikshank. Hartman re-creates the murder and the surge of words it inspired, representing the perspectives of the captain, the surgeon, and the aboli tionist, for each of whom the girl was a cipher “outfitted in a different guise,” and then she puts herself in the position of the victim, substituting her own voice for the unknowable thoughts of the girl. Imagining the experience as her own and wistfully representing her demise as a suicide—a final act of agency—Hartman hopes, by this bold device, to save the girl from oblivion. Or perhaps her hope is to prove the impossibility of ever doing so, because by failing, she concedes that the girl cannot be put to rest. It is a compelling move, but there is something missing. Hartman discerns a convincing subject position for all of the participants in the events sur- rounding the death of the girl, except for the other slaves who watched the woman die and carried the memory with them to the Americas, presumably to tell others, plausibly even survivors of the Hudibras, who must have drawn from such stories a basic perspective on the history of the Atlantic world. For the enslaved spectators, Hartman imagines only a fatalistic detachment: “The women were assembled a few feet away, but it might well have been a thousand. They held back from the girl, steering clear of her bad luck, pestilence, and recklessness. Some said she had lost her mind. What could they do, anyway? The women danced and sang as she lay dying.”¶ Hartman ends her odyssey among the Gwolu, descendants of peoples who fled the slave raids and who, as communities of refugees, shared her sense of dispos- session. “Newcomers were welcome. It didn’t matter that they weren’t kin because genealogy didn’t matter”; rather, “building community did.” Lose Your Mother con- cludes with a moving description of a particular one of their songs, a lament for those who were lost, which resonated deeply with her sense of slavery’s meaning in the present. And yet Hartman has more difficulty hearing similar cries intoned in the past by slaves who managed to find themselves.27¶ Saltwater Slavery has much in common with Lose Your Mother. Smallwood’s study of the slave trade from the Gold Coast to the British Americas in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries likewise redeems the experience of the people traded like so many bolts of cloth, “who were represented merely as ciphers in the political arithmetic,” and therefore “feature in the documentary record not as subjects of a social history but as objects or quantities.”28 Each text offers a penetrating analysis of the market logic that turned people into goods. Both books work with the concept of social death. However, Smallwood examines the problem of social death for the enslaved even more closely than Hartman does.29¶ Like Hartman, Smallwood sees social death as a by-product of commodification. “If in the regime of the market Africans’ most socially relevant feature was their exchangeability,” she argues, “for Africans as immigrants the most socially relevant feature was their isolation, their desperate need to restore some measure of social life to counterbalance the alienation engendered by their social death.” But Small- wood’s approach is different in a subtle way. Whereas for Hartman, as for others, social death is an accomplished state of being, Smallwood veers between a notion of social death as an actual condition produced by violent dislocation and social death as a compelling threat. On the one hand, she argues, captivity on the Atlantic littoral was a social death. Exchangeable persons “inhabited a new category of mar- ginalization, one not of extreme alienation within the community, but rather of ab- solute exclusion from any community.” She seems to accept the idea of enslaved commodities as finished products for whom there could be no socially relevant relationships: “the slave cargo constituted the antithesis of community.” Yet elsewhere she contends that captives were only “menaced” with social death. “At every point along the passage from African to New World markets,” she writes, “we find a stark contest between slave traders and slaves, between the traders’ will to commodify people and the captives’ will to remain fully recognizable as human subjects.”30 Here, I think, Smallwood captures the truth of the idea: social death was a receding ho- rizon—the farther slaveholders moved toward the goal of complete mastery, the more they found that struggles with their human property would continue, even into the most elemental realms: birth, hunger, health, fellowship, sex, death, and time.¶ If social death did not define the slaves’ condition, it did frame their vision of apocalypse. In a harrowing chapter on the meaning of death (that is, physical death) during the Atlantic passage, Smallwood is clear that the captives could have no frame of reference for the experience aboard the slave ships, but she also shows how des- perate they were to make one. If they could not reassemble some meaningful way to map their social worlds, “slaves could foresee only further descent into an endless purgatory.” The women aboard the Hudibras were not in fact the living dead; they were the mothers of gasping new societies. Their view of the danger that confronted them made their mourning rites vitally important, putting these at the center of the women’s emerging lives as slaves—and as a result at the heart of the struggles that would define them. As Smallwood argues, this was first and foremost a battle over their presence in time, to define their place among ancestors, kin, friends, and future progeny. “The connection Africans needed was a narrative continuity between past and present—an epistemological means of connecting the dots between there and here, then and now, to craft a coherent story out of incoherent experience.” That is precisely what the women on the Hudibras fought to accomplish.31

# 2NC

## T

### XT Violation

#### Multiple violations:

#### A --- They don’t defend USFG action --- that’s the core question posed by resolution based on the “USFG should” statement --- that’s Ericson

#### B --- the 1AC doesn’t defend a statutory or judicial restriction being imposed to limit the utilization of war powers

#### Statute requires legislative action

The Law Dictionary 13 “What is Statutory Restriction?, The Law Dictionary: **Featuring Black’s Law Dictionary Free Online Legal Dictionary 2nd Edition**, http://thelawdictionary.org/statutory-restriction/

What is STATUTORY RESTRICTION?

Limits or controls that have been place[d] on activities by its ruling legislation.

#### Judicial action requires a court --- we’ll read evidence if they question this factual statement

#### C --- “War powers” refers to US DOD operations --- not domestic law enforcement

Oxford International Encyclopedia of Legal History 2012

(Oxford University Press via Oxford Reference, Georgetown University library)

**The War Power in the Twenty-First Century**.

The presumption of a dual war-making role appears to have been eclipsed since 2001, during which time it has been argued by some that the president stands supreme in his war-making capacity as **commander in chief** and that he has no obligation to share such power with Congress. This view assumes that the president has all the requisite and necessary **authority to order whatever he deems necessary in terms of military operations** and that Congress can claim only the power to declare war; the resulting operational conduct is strictly a presidential prerogative. Opponents of this interpretation point to all the additional powers dealing with the military that are vested in Congress.

### 2NC Anderson Must Read AT Psychic Violence/FW Turns Case

#### Only we access offense---arguments like framework don’t injure people, but policies do---avoiding democratic engagement means the aff can never actually transform the institutions that produce exclusion in the first place---rejecting institutional engagement turns debate into a palliative where they escaped lived realities instead of producing political habits necessary to actualize democratic politics

Amanda Anderson 6, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities and English at Brown University, Spring 2006, “Reply to My Critic(s),” Criticism, Vol. 48, No. 2, p. 281-290

Probyns piece is a mixture of affective fallacy, argument by authority, and bald ad hominem. There's a pattern here: precisely the tendency to personalize argument and to foreground what Wendy Brown has called "states of injury." Probyn says, for example, that she "felt ostracized by the books content and style." Ostracized? Argument here is seen as directly harming persons, and this is precisely the state of affairs to which I object. Argument is not injurious to persons. Policies are injurious to persons and institutionalized practices can alienate and exclude. But argument itself is not directly harmful; once one says it is, one is very close to a logic of censorship. The most productive thing to do in an open academic culture (and in societies that aspire to freedom and democracy) when you encounter a book or an argument that you disagree with is to produce a response or a book that states your disagreement. But to assert that the book itself directly harms you is tantamount to saying that you do not believe in argument or in the free exchange of ideas, that your claim to injury somehow damns your opponent's ideas.

When Probyn isn't symptomatic, she's just downright sloppy. One could work to build up the substance of points that she throws out the car window as she screeches on to her next destination, but life is short, and those with considered objections to liberalism and proceduralism would not be particularly well served by the exercise. As far as I can tell, Probyn thinks my discussion of universalism is of limited relevance (though far more appealing when put, by others, in more comfortingly equivocating terms), but she's certain my critique of appeals to identity is simply not able to accommodate the importance of identity in social and political life. As I make clear throughout the book, and particularly in my discussion of the headscarf debate in France, identity is likely to be at the center of key arguments about life in plural democracies; my point is not that identity is not relevant, but simply that it should not be used to trump or stifle argument.

In closing, I'd like to speak briefly to the question of proceduralism's relevance to democratic vitality. One important way of extending the proceduralist arguments put forth by Habeimas is to work on how institutions and practices might better promote participation in democratic life. The apathy and nonparticipation plaguing democratic institutions in the United States is a serious problem, and can be separated from the more romantic theoretical investments in a refusal to accept the terms of what counts as argument, or in assertions of inassimilable difference. With respect to the latter, which is often glorified precisely as the moment when politics or democracy is truly occurring, I would say, on the contrary democracy is not happening then-rather, the limits or deficiencies of an actually existing democracy are making themselves felt. Acknowledging struggle, conflict, and exclusion is vital to democracy, but insisting that exclusion is not so much a persistent challenge for modern liberal democracies but rather inherent to the modern liberal-democratic political form as such seems to me precisely to remain stalled in a romantic critique of Enlightenment. It all comes down to a question of whether one wants to work with the ideals of democracy or see them as essentially normative in a negative sense: this has been the legacy of a certain critique of Enlightenment, and it is astonishingly persistent in the left quarters in the academy. One hears it clearly when Robbins makes confident reference to liberalisms tendency to ignore "the founding acts of violence on which a social order is based." One encounters it in the current vogue for the work of Giorgio Agamben and Carl Schmitt. Saying that a state of exception defines modernity or is internal to the law itself may help to sharpen your diagnoses of certain historical conditions, but if absolutized as it is in these accounts, it gives you nothing but a negative diagnostic and a compensatory flight to a realm entirely other-the kind of mystical, Utopian impulse that flees from these conditions rather than confronts and fights them on terms that derive from the settled-if constantly evolving-normative basis of democratic modernity. If one is outraged by the flagrant disregard of democratic procedures in the current U.S. political regime, then one needs to be able to coherently say why democratic procedures matter, what principles underwrite them, and what historical movements and institutions have helped us to secure and support them. Argument as a critical practice and as a key component of democratic institutions and public debate has a vital role to play in such a task.

#### Framework is a prescriptive norm, not violent oppression---there’s no link to psychic violence because we’re not saying that in all your future debates you’re mandated to read a plan; just that you shouldn’t win this debate because you weren’t topical which impeded negative engagement---our argument is just another axis along which to evaluate who did the better debating, which is the same thing that happens in every debate

Amanda Anderson 6, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities and English at Brown University, Spring 2006, “Reply to My Critic(s),” Criticism, Vol. 48, No. 2, p. 281-290

Lets first examine the claim that my book is "unwittingly" inviting a resurrection of the "Enlightenment-equals-totalitarianism position." How, one wonders, could a book promoting argument and debate, and promoting reason-giving practices as a kind of common ground that should prevail over assertions of cultural authenticity, somehow come to be seen as a dangerous resurgence of bad Enlightenment? Robbins tells us why: I want "argument on my own terms"-that is, I want to impose reason on people, which is a form of power and oppression. But what can this possibly mean? Arguments stand or fall based on whether they are successful and persuasive, even an argument in favor of argument. It simply is not the case that an argument in favor of the importance of reasoned debate to liberal democracy is tantamount to oppressive power. To assume so is to assume, in the manner of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, that reason is itself violent, inherently, and that it will always mask power and enforce exclusions. But to assume this is to assume the very view of Enlightenment reason that Robbins claims we are "thankfully" well rid of. (I leave to the side the idea that any individual can proclaim that a debate is over, thankfully or not.) But perhaps Robbins will say, "I am not imagining that your argument is directly oppressive, but that what you argue for would be, if it were enforced." Yet my book doesn't imagine or suggest it is enforceable; I simply argue in favor of, I promote, an ethos of argument within a liberal democratic and proceduralist framework. As much as Robbins would like to think so, neither I nor the books I write can be cast as an arm of the police.

Robbins wants to imagine a far more direct line of influence from criticism to political reality, however, and this is why it can be such a bad thing to suggest norms of argument. Watch as the gloves come off:

Faced with the prospect of submitting to her version of argument roughly, Habermass version-and of being thus authorized to disagree only about other, smaller things, some may feel that there will have been an end to argument, or an end to the arguments they find most interesting. With current events in mind, I would be surprised if there were no recourse to the metaphor of a regular army facing a guerilla insurrection, hinting that Anderson wants to force her opponents to dress in uniform, reside in well-demarcated camps and capitals that can be bombed, fight by the rules of states (whether the states themselves abide by these rules or not), and so on-in short, that she wants to get the battle onto a terrain where her side will be assured of having the upper hand.

Lets leave to the side the fact that this is a disowned hypothetical criticism. (As in, "Well, okay, yes, those are my gloves, but those are somebody elses hands they will have come off of.") Because far more interesting, actually, is the sudden elevation of stakes. It is a symptom of the sorry state of affairs in our profession that it plays out repeatedly this tragicomic tendency to give a grandiose political meaning to every object it analyzes or confronts. We have evidence of how desperate the situation is when we see it in a critic as thoughtful as Bruce Robbins, where it emerges as the need to allegorize a point about an argument in such a way that it gets cast as the equivalent of war atrocities. It is especially ironic in light of the fact that to the extent that I do give examples of the importance of liberal democratic proceduralism, I invoke the disregard of the protocols of international adjudication in the days leading up to the invasion of Iraq; I also speak about concerns with voting transparency. It is hard for me to see how my argument about proceduralism can be associated with the policies of the Bush administration when that administration has exhibited a flagrant disregard of democratic procedure and the rule of law. I happen to think that a renewed focus on proceduralism is a timely venture, which is why I spend so much time discussing it in my final chapter. But I hasten to add that I am not interested in imagining that proceduralism is the sole political response to the needs of cultural criticism in our time: my goal in the book is to argue for a liberal democratic culture of argument, and to suggest ways in which argument is not served by trumping appeals to identity and charismatic authority. I fully admit that my examples are less political events than academic debates; for those uninterested in the shape of intellectual arguments, and eager for more direct and sustained discussion of contemporary politics, the approach will disappoint. Moreover, there will always be a tendency for a proceduralist to under-specify substance, and that is partly a principled decision, since the point is that agreements, compromises, and policies get worked out through the communicative and political process. My book is mainly concentrated on evaluating forms of arguments and appeals to ethos, both those that count as a form of trump card or distortion, and those that flesh out an understanding of argument as a universalist practice. There is an intermittent appeal to larger concerns in the political democratic culture, and that is because I see connections between the ideal of argument and the ideal of deliberative democracy. But there is clearly, and indeed necessarily, significant room for further elaboration here.

There is a way to make Robbins’s point more narrowly which would run something like this: Anderson has a very restricted notion of how argument should play out, or appear, within academic culture, given the heavy emphasis on logical consistency and normative coherence and explicitness. This conception of argument is too narrow (and hence authoritarian). To this I would reply simply that logical consistency and normative coherence and explicitness do not exhaust the possible forms, modes, and strategies of argumentation. There is a distinction to be made between the identification of moves that stultify or disarm argument, and an insistence on some sort of single manner of reasoned argument. The former I am entirely committed to; the latter not at all, despite the fact that I obviously favor a certain style of argument, and even despite the fact that I am philosophically committed to the claims of the theory of communicative reason. I do address the issue of diverse forms and modes of argument in the first and last chapters of the book (as I discuss above), but it seems that a more direct reflection on the books own mode of argumentation might have provided the occasion for a fuller treatment of the issues that trouble Robbins.

Different genres within academe have different conventions, of course, and we can and do make decisions all the time about what rises to the level of cogency within specific academic venues, and what doesn't. Some of those judgments have to do with protocols of argument. The book review, for example, is judged according to whether the reviewer responsibly represents the scholarship under discussion, seems to have a good grasp of the body of scholarship it belongs to, and convincingly and fairly points out strengths and weaknesses. The book forum is a bit looser-one expects responsible representation of the scholarship under discussion, but it can be more selectively focused on a key set of issues. And one expects a bit of provocation, in order to make the exchange readable and dramatic. But of course in a forum exchange there is an implicit norm of argument, a tendency to judge whether a particular participant is making a strong or a weak case in light of the competing claims at play. Much of our time in the profession is taken with judging the quality of all manner of academic performance, and much of it has to do with norms of argument, however much Robbins may worry about their potentially coercive nature.

From time to time I myself have wondered whether my book is too influenced by the modes of academe. But when I read a piece of writing like the one that Elspeth Probyn produced, I find myself feeling a renewed commitment to the evaluative norms of responsible scholarship, and to the idea that clearly agreed-upon genres and protocols of fair scholarship benefit from explicit affirmation at times. Probyn's piece does not conform at all to the conventions of the forum response. She may herself be quite delighted that it does not. Robbins may find himself delighted that she represents a viewpoint that does not agree on my (totalitarian) fundamentals of forum responses. But I would simply say that here we do not have fair or reasoned argument, which is one of the enabling procedures of forum exchanges. Indeed, I hear a different genre altogether: the venting phone call to a friend or intimate. In this genre, which I think we are all familiar with, one is not expected or required to give reasons or evidence, as one is in academic argument. Here's how the phone call might go: "Ugh. I have to write a response to this awful book. I agreed to this because I thought the book had an interesting title; it's called The Way We Argue Now. But I can't get through it; it isn't at all what I expected. I find myself alternately bored and irritated. It's so from the center—totally American parochial, and I just hate the style: polemical in a slam-bam-thank-you-ma'am way—really quite mean-spirited. She's so arrogant. And you wouldn't believe the so-called critique of Foucault. I don't know, I think I'm just sick of abstract theory—I mean, aren't we past this? It's so stultifying. I wish there were some way to get out of the commitment. I don't know how I'm ever going to get to it anyway, with all my journalism deadlines." The friend: "That sounds awful. But just use the occasion to write about something else, something you think is important. Write about yourself. Direct attention to a book that you do like. Whatever you do, don't spend too much time on it. And definitely call her out on the American centrism."

Do we really want to overhear this kind of conversation when we turn to the review section of a journal like Criticism? Of what intellectual value is it to know [End Page 288] Probyn's casual reactions to a book she won't bother responsibly to describe or engage, unless of course we accord to Probyn some sort of authority in advance that makes argument unnecessary. That she herself believes in such argument-by-authority is evident when she tells us, "As Stuart Hall would say, along with any undergraduate in my classes, 'A discourse is a group of statements that provide a language for talking about a particular kind of knowledge about a topic.'" This is the extent of Probyn's searing critique of the problem with advocating debate generally. But note that it relies, first, upon the invocation of an authority, Stuart Hall, and then upon the implication that her students have all entirely absorbed her own channeling of that authority. Probyn is entirely unbothered, moreover, that the undergraduates in her classes unblinkingly accept this empty statement without protest or challenge or further inquiry into its aimless specificity.

### AT Psychic Violence

#### Focus on intrapsychic violence fails to create normative or political prescriptions for the world---Democratic proceduralism is essential to create intersubjective relations

Amanda Anderson 6, prof of English at Johns Hopkins The Way We Argue Now, 37-9

There remains yet another reason why the theory of communicative ethics cannot answer Butler’s theoretical investments. Despite Butler’s obvious political commitment, and her intermittent attention to race, internationalism, and institutions, her theories dwell overwhelmingly at the level of individual, intrapsychic drama. Nancy Fraser, who herself criticizes Butler’s intrasubjective focus, suggests that perhaps Butler’s recent appeals to radical democracy, though at this point only gestural, are the beginnings of a more sustained working out of normative commitments and collective practices. Perhaps. But I read these more as compensatory moments in a theory whose real focus often lies elsewhere. In Gender Trouble, because the field of politics remains fully focused on questions of identity, performative subversions necessarily emphasize the self ’s relation to the law, or the self ’s relation to the self (or to the normative identity the self inhabits). Given the exclusionary effects of any assumption of identity, one might assume that denaturalizing that process of assumption will have positive intersubjective consequences, but we are not told how this works.¶ The problem reemerges in Bodies That Matter, most pronouncedly in the essay “Phantasmatic Identification and the Assumption of Sex.” Here Butler makes an impassioned plea for the ethicopolitical efficacy of incoherent identity: since the assumption of coherent identity always comes at a cost, and harbors exclusions, we need to cultivate incoherent identity, or forms of identity that remain open to multiple, and what now appear as contradictory, identifications. Only then can we begin the ongoing process of overcoming a situation in which “the specificity of identity is purchased through the loss and degradation of connection” (BTM, 114). Not only does this account fail to elaborate any basis for its normative commitments, but there is an unexamined assumption that intrapsychic maneuvers translate directly into political realities, which seems to me to be a highly questionable claim. This comes out more sharply in the following gesture toward more positive psychic practices: “If [the] subject produces its coherence at the cost of its own complexity, the crossings of identifications of which it is itself composed, then that subject forecloses the kinds of contestatory connections that might democratize the field of its own operation” (BTM, 115; my emphasis). As was the case with performative subversion, the primary drama here is one of self-constitution. Democracy can be achieved internally, via the self ’s own internal operations. Intersubjective effects simply follow naturally from the form of identification undergone. At best, this constitutes an argument by analogy.¶ 39¶ This is one of those rare passages where Butler admits the possibility, indirectly and negatively to be sure, that we might actually foster antiexclusionary practices that would not require belatedness as a constitutive feature. Characteristically, Butler draws back somewhat from this utopian moment, stressing in subsequent paragraphs that processes of exclusion can never be eradicated. In the light of that sobering truth, she then offers a variant version of future possibility: by avowing our exclusionary identifications, we will glimpse an expanded community. In her words, we should “[trace] the ways in which identification is implicated in what it excludes, and [follow] the lines of that implication for the map of future community it might yield” (BTM, 119). In other words, to recognize that one is what one repudiates will help to effect a possible avowal of connection with those now constituted as irredeemably other. This passage more readily acknowledges the gap between intrapsychic and collective transformation, yet it still installs the former as the template for the latter.¶ Butler’s work is not devoid of all references to public and collective political practices. Indeed, she clearly aligns herself with specific activist communities—the feminist and gay and lesbian, most prominently—and seeks to articulate collective moments, most notably in “Gender Is Burning” and “Critically Queer,” two of the essays in Bodies That Matter.

**MARKED**

But there is a distinctly unmapped connection between her intrapsychic model and her collective model, an attempt to imagine that intrapsychic transformation will automatically yield social transformation, just as the assumption of identity has automatically produced all the exclusions that structure our social and political world. I think there is a real problem with this emphasis on intrapsychic identity, which will continue to disable Butler’s attempts to project positive political norms or to explain why she regards certain activist communities or moments as more “democratic” than others. Butler’s theory needs an account of how intersubjective and collective associations might be forged and nurtured beyond the moment of “contestatory connections.” This would necessarily require the risk of a greater normative clarity about democratic procedure (might not she at least risk a contingent proceduralism?).

### Evidence Good

#### Evidence-based policymaking is key to effective policies and government

**Sanderson 2002,** Ian, Policy Research Institute at Leeds Metropolitan University, Public Administration, Vol. 80 No. 1, “Evaluation, Policy Learning and Evidence-Based Policy Making”, http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118910496/abstract?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0

The increasing emphasis on the need for evidence-based policy indicates the continuing influence of the ‘modernist’ faith in progress informed by reason. Although the rationalist assumptions of evidence-based policy making have been subject to severe challenge from constructivist and post-modernist perspectives, it is argued that **the attempt to ground policy making in more reliable knowledge of ‘what works’ retains its relevance and importance.** Indeed, its importance is enhanced by the need for effective governance of complex social systems and it is argued that **‘reflexive social learning’** informed by policy and programme evaluation **constitutes an increasingly important basis for ‘interactive governance’.** The expanded use of piloting of new policies and programmes by the current UK Government is considered to provide limited scope for evaluation to derive reliable evidence of whether policies work. There is a need for greater clarity about the role of evaluation in situations where piloting essentially constitutes ‘prototyping’. **More emphasis should be placed on developing a sound evidence base for policy through longterm impact evaluations of policies** and programmes. It is argued from a realist position that such evaluation should be theory-based and focused on explaining and understanding how policies achieve their effects using ‘multi-method’ approaches.

# 1NR

## Cap

### XT

#### The real test of our politics should be the ability to advocate for change on behalf of people who aren’t like us and whose experience we don’t share---our framework creates policy deliberation on broader issues of concern to people who might be unlike ourselves

Fred Clark 3-21, ethicist, journalist, former managing editor of Prism Magazine, 3/21/13, “For Sen. Portman, Sen. Kirk and the rest of us: The next big step is the important one,” <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/slacktivist/2013/03/21/for-sen-portman-sen-kirk-and-the-rest-of-us-the-next-big-step-is-the-important-one/>

Earlier this year, Sen. Mark Kirk, R-Ill., returned to Washington after a long, arduous recovery from the stroke he suffered in early 2012. In an interview with Natasha Korecki of the Chicago Sun-Times, Kirk said he:¶ [Plans] to take a closer look at funding of the Illinois Medicaid program for those with have no income who suffer a stroke, he said. In general, a person on Medicaid in Illinois would be allowed 11 rehab visits, he said.¶ “Had I been limited to that, I would have had no chance to recover like I did,” Kirk said. “So unlike before suffering the stroke, I’m much more focused on Medicaid and what my fellow citizens face.”¶ Kirk has the same federal health-care coverage available to other federal employees. He has incurred major out-of-pocket expenses, which have affected his savings and retirement, sources familiar with Kirk’s situation said.¶ Harold Pollack commended Kirk for those “wise words, sadly earned,” writing: “Such a profound physical ordeal – and one’s accompanying sense of profound privilege in securing more help than so many other people routinely receive — this changes a person.”¶ Steve Benen was also impressed with Kirk’s hard-won change of heart, but noted:¶ I do wish, however, that we might see similarly changed perspectives without the need for direct personal relevance. Many policymakers are skeptical about federal disaster relief until it’s their community that sees devastation. They have no interest in gay rights until they learn someone close to them is gay. And they’re unsure of the value of Medicaid until they see its worth up close.¶ Which brings us to this week, and the news that conservative Republican Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio now supports marriage equality for same-sex couples. The Cleveland Plain-Dealer’s headline for Sabrina Eaton’s report tells the story, “Sen. Rob Portman comes out in favor of gay marriage after son comes out as gay“:¶ Republican U.S. Sen. Rob Portman on Thursday announced he has reversed his longtime opposition to same-sex marriage after reconsidering the issue because his 21-year-old son, Will, is gay.¶ Portman said his son, a junior at Yale University, told him and his wife, Jane, that he’s gay and “it was not a choice, it was who he is and that he had been that way since he could remember.”¶ “It allowed me to think of this issue from a new perspective, and that’s of a Dad who loves his son a lot and wants him to have the same opportunities that his brother and sister would have — to have a relationship like Jane and I have had for over 26 years,” Portman told reporters in an interview at his office.¶ The conversation the Portmans had with their son two years ago led to him to evolve on the issue after he consulted clergy members, friends — including former Vice President Dick Cheney, whose daughter is gay — and the Bible.¶ This is a big deal. Portman is the first Republican senator to endorse marriage equality. And he wasn’t previously someone who seemed on the fence — he was adamantly, religiously opposed before.¶ So the first thing I want to say is congratulations, kudos, and thank you to Portman. I heartily second the commendations and praise he’s receiving from groups like the Human Rights Campaign, Freedom to Marry Ohio, and PFLAG.¶ For Portman, as for Kirk, an unbidden circumstance expanded his perspective of the world. That new, larger appreciation in turn expanded his understanding of what justice requires — of what justice requires for people who aren’t necessarily just like him.¶ This is one way we all learn — one way we all become bigger, better people. It is, for almost all of us, a necessary first step toward a more expansive empathy and a more inclusive understanding of justice. Even if it is only a first step, it is an unavoidable one, and we should celebrate the epiphany that challenging circumstance has allowed these senators.¶ What Steve Benen said about Kirk is still true for Portman. It is good to see his perspective change due to “direct personal relevance,” but it would be better if he could learn to expand his perspective even without it. That’s the next necessary step, the next epiphany awaiting these senators.¶ Kirk’s long recovery provided his “Aha!” moment when it comes to other people who are also recovering from a stroke. And Portman’s coming to grips with his son’s identity provided him with an “Aha!” moment when it comes to other LGBT people and their families. But it’s not yet clear that either senator has yet taken the next logical step — the next “Aha!” moment. The next step is the big one. It’s the realization that because I didn’t understand others’ situation or others’ perspective until I myself faced the same thing, I should then strive to listen and to learn and to see the world through others’ eyes so that I can better understand the world without having to experience every situation, every injustice, every ordeal personally.¶ This next step is necessary for justice, which can only come “When those who are not injured feel as indignant as those who are.”¶ That next step may seem obvious, but epiphanies always seem obvious in retrospect.¶ Until that next step occurs, though, the slightly expanded empathy of people like Kirk and Portman seems self-serving, like the “cowardice and hypocrisy” of the privileged, as Morf Morford describes it. They still seem to cling to a cramped, self-centered understanding of justice — one that can only grow when their own, personal interests require it to do so. It still lacks the ability to be “indignant” except when one is personally among the “injured.”¶ “Moral and political positions aren’t supposed to be something you only take when they’ll benefit you,” Mark Evanier wrote. Empathy becomes suspect when it coincides so closely with personal benefit. It begins to look like what Mark Schmitt calls “Miss America compassion“:¶ Their compassion seems so narrowly and literally focused on the specific misfortune that their family encountered. Having a child who suffers from mental illness would indeed make one particularly passionate about funding for mental health, sure. But shouldn’t it also lead to a deeper understanding that there are a lot of families, in all kinds of situations beyond their control, who need help from government? Shouldn’t having a son whose illness leads to suicide open your eyes to something more than a belief that we need more money for suicide help-lines? Shouldn’t it call into question the entire winners-win/losers-lose ideology of the current Republican Party?¶ If we take the first step without ever taking the next step — changing our perspective only when “direct personal relevance” demands it and not otherwise — we can fall into what Matthew Yglesias describes as “The Politics of Narcissism“:¶ Remember when Sarah Palin was running for vice president on a platform of tax cuts and reduced spending? But there was one form of domestic social spending she liked to champion? Spending on disabled children? Because she had a disabled child personally? Yet somehow her personal experience with disability didn’t lead her to any conclusions about the millions of mothers simply struggling to raise children in conditions of general poorness. Rob Portman doesn’t have a son with a pre-existing medical condition who’s locked out of the health insurance market. Rob Portman doesn’t have a son engaged in peasant agriculture whose livelihood is likely to be wiped out by climate change. Rob Portman doesn’t have a son who’ll be malnourished if SNAP benefits are cut. So Rob Portman doesn’t care.¶ … But if Portman can turn around on one issue once he realizes how it touches his family personally, shouldn’t he take some time to think about how he might feel about other issues that don’t happen to touch him personally? Obviously the answers to complicated public policy questions don’t just directly fall out of the emotion of compassion. But what Portman is telling us here is that on this one issue, his previous position was driven by a lack of compassion and empathy. Once he looked at the issue through his son’s eyes, he realized he was wrong. Shouldn’t that lead to some broader soul-searching? Is it just a coincidence that his son is gay, and also gay rights is the one issue on which a lack of empathy was leading him astray? That, it seems to me, would be a pretty remarkable coincidence. The great challenge for a senator isn’t to go to Washington and represent the problems of his own family. It’s to try to obtain the intellectual and moral perspective necessary to represent the problems of the people who don’t have direct access to the corridors of power.¶ Senators basically never have poor kids. That’s something members of Congress should think about.¶ Will Femia notes that this widely shared observation prompted an insightful — and darkly funny — meme about “hypothetical Republican empathy.”¶ “If empathy only extends to your flesh and blood, we gotta start shoving people into those families,” Rachel Maddow said.¶ “Now all we need is 59 more gay Republican kids,” Dave Lartigue wrote.¶ “Perhaps if we could get the Republican caucus to adopt gay, black Hispanic illegal-immigrant children, who will grow up to be denied insurance due to pre-existing conditions, we’d make some more social progress,” mistermix wrote.¶ “Eventually one of these Republican congressmen is going to find out his daughter is a woman, and then we’re all set,” Anil Dash tweeted.¶ And Andy Borowitz chimed in with “Portman Inspires Other Republicans to Stop Speaking to Their Children.”¶ Endless variations of that joke circulated this week because that joke offers limitless possibilities — as limitless as the stunted “hypothetical empathy” of “Miss America compassion” is limited.¶ That joke and Yglesias’ argument are correct. An empathy that never moves beyond that first step and that first epiphany is morally indistinct from selfishness. To take that first step without the next one is only to move from “me first” to “me and mine first.” (David Badash and Jonathan Chait also have insightful posts making this argument.)¶ But no one can take that next big step until they take the first one. So I’m less interested in criticizing Portman or Kirk or anyone else in their position than I am in figuring out how we can urge and encourage them to take that next big step. How can we facilitate the next epiphany?¶ That’s the bigger issue, the more important challenge. Ari Kohen tackles this challenge in a bookish post building on Richard Rorty’s thoughts. Kohen is interested most of all in how “to accomplish this progress of sentiments, this expanding of our sense of solidarity”:¶ The best way to convince the powerful that their way of thinking about others needs to evolve is to show them the ways in which individuals they consider to be “Other” are, in fact, much more closely akin to them than they ever realized. It is, in short, to create a greater solidarity between the powerful and the weak based on personal identification.¶ Rob Portman’s change of heart is a good example of the way in which we ultimately achieve a progress of sentiments that leads to the equal treatment of more and more people. Viewed in this way, it’s really not something people on the Left ought to be criticizing; it’s something we should be working to encourage for those without the sort of immediate personal connection that Portman fortunately had.¶ (Note that we are, yet again, confronted with the idea of ethics as a trajectory.)¶ The vital question, then, is how? How can we encourage “a progress of sentiments” along a trajectory “that leads to the equal treatment of more and more people”?¶ Part of the answer, I think, is to remember how we ourselves were encouraged along — how we ourselves each came to take that next step, how we ourselves came to have that second epiphany.¶ That’s the approach that Grace at Are Women Human? takes in a firm-but-generous post titled “Changes of heart and our better selves.” Grace highlights Portman’s case as an example of “the tensions between celebrating progress and recognizing that there’s still work to be done.” She draws on her own story and history for humility and perspective, and as a guide to helping others see and take the next steps in their journey:¶ How easy it is to say Portman … should have done better and forget that I wasn’t so different, not so long ago.¶ The honest truth: it was getting to know and love queer people that, more than anything else, led me away from the bigotry I’d been taught as faith. … It’s important for me not to forget this, or that it took the thought that my not-yet-born child might be transgender for me to realize that I needed to educate myself about gender identity. It would be dangerous to indulge the fiction that I’ve always held the moral “high ground.” …¶ That history — her own and that of others who have come to a more inclusive, expansive understanding of justice — informs the advice, and the warning, that follows:¶ Portman isn’t an exception in having, and indulging, the luxury of ignoring the consequences of politics that don’t affect him personally.¶ This is a feature, not a bug, of our culture and political system. Power is concentrated in the hands of people who routinely make policy on matters they have little experience or real stakes in. You don’t need any conscious malice in this setup to produce policy that has devastating effects on the communities these issues touch most directly (though there’s plenty of malice, too). All you need is a system run by people who can afford not to care that much about policies that mostly impact other people’s lives.¶ Which, I suppose, is why civil rights activism often depends on cultivating these very moments of identification with the “other,” on spontaneous and planned appeals to emotion and basic decency. Systemic lack of incentive to care has to be confronted with stories that get politicians or the public to care.¶ Emmitt Till’s open casket. Rosa Parks’ carefully planned protest of bus segregation – as a more “respectable” face of black resistance than Claudette Colvin. Hydeia Broadbent and Ryan White as the faces of children with HIV. DREAMers taking over public spaces, stories about families torn apart by racist, classist, unjust immigration policies.¶ … Rob Portman is not an exception. He’s the rule. I don’t say this to suggest that we cut him slack for finally arriving at a basic (and still incomplete) recognition of the humanity of queer people. Nor am I arguing that we shouldn’t critique the circumstances around his change of heart.¶ What I hope is that we don’t forget ourselves in these calls to do better. That we don’t fall into the deceptive confidence that because we know or do better, we’ve arrived…or forget how many of us had to change and grow to get to where we are now. We’re all capable of fooling ourselves into thinking our standpoints are clearly “rational” or “moral” when it comes to issues that don’t affect us.

#### Focus on the every-day of resistance and particularized voices sanitizes neoliberalisms ontological basis of individualism

Adolph Reed 13, professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania and a member of the interim national council of the Labor Party. Django Unchained, or, The Help: How “Cultural Politics” Is Worse Than No Politics at All, and Why, http://nonsite.org/feature/django-unchained-or-the-help-how-cultural-politics-is-worse-than-no-politics-at-all-and-why

So why is a tale about a manumitted slave/homicidal black gunslinger more palatable to a contemporary leftoid sensibility than either a similarly cartoonish one about black maids and their white employers or one that thematizes Lincoln’s effort to push the Thirteenth Amendment through the House of Representatives? The answer is, to quote the saccharine 1970s ballad, “Feelings, nothing more than feelings.” Wiener’s juxtapositions reflect the political common sense that gives pride of place to demonstrations of respect for the **“voices” of the oppressed and recognition of their suffering, agency, and accomplishments**. That common sense informs the proposition that providing inspiration has social or political significance. But it equally shapes the generic human-interest “message” of films like The Help that represent injustice as an issue of human relations—the alchemy that promises to reconcile social justice and capitalist class power as a win/win for everyone by means of attitude adjustments and deepened mutual understanding. That common sense underwrites the tendency to reduce the past to a storehouse of encouraging post-it messages for the present. It must, because the presumption that the crucial stakes of political action concern recognition and respect for the oppressed’s voices is a presentist view, and mining the past to reinforce it requires anachronism. The large struggles against slavery and Jim Crow were directed toward altering structured patterns of social relations **anchored in law and state power**, but stories of that sort are **incompatible with both global marketing imperatives and the ideological predilections of neoliberalism and its identitarian loyal opposition**. One can only shudder at the prospect of how Gillo Pontecorvo’s 1966 film, The Battle of Algiers, or Costa-Gavras’s State of Siege (1972) would be remade today. (Guy Ritchie’s and Madonna’s execrable 2002 remake of Lina Wertmüller’s 1974 film Swept Away may provide a clue; their abomination completely erases the original film’s complex class and political content and replaces it with a banal—aka “universal”—story of an encounter between an older woman and a younger man, while at the same time meticulously, almost eerily, reproducing, scene by scene, the visual structure of Wertmüller’s film.) Particularly as those messages strive for “universality” as well as inspiration, their least common denominator tends toward the generic story of individual triumph over adversity. But the imagery of the individual overcoming odds to achieve fame, success, or recognition also maps onto the fantasy of limitless upward mobility for enterprising and persistent individuals who persevere and remain true to their dreams. As such**, it is neoliberalism’s version of an ideal of social justice, legitimizing both success and failure as products of individual character**. When combined with a multiculturalist rhetoric of “difference” that reifies as autonomous cultures—in effect racializes—what are actually contingent modes of life reproduced by structural inequalities, **this fantasy crowds inequality as a metric of injustice out of the picture entirely**. This accounts for the popularity of reactionary dreck like Beasts of the Southern Wild among people who should know better. The denizens of the Bathtub actively, even militantly, choose their poverty and cherish it and should be respected and appreciated for doing so. But no one ever supposed that Leni Riefenstahl was on the left. The tale type of individual overcoming has become a script into which the great social struggles of the last century and a half have commonly been reformulated to fit the requirements of a wan, gestural multiculturalism. Those movements have been condensed into the personae of Great Men and Great Women—Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, George Washington Carver, Martin Luther King, Jr., Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Ella Baker, Fannie Lou Hamer and others—who seem to have changed the society apparently by virtue of manifesting their own greatness. The different jacket photos adorning the 1982 and 1999 editions of Doug McAdam’s well known sociological study of the civil rights movement, Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970, exemplify the shift. The first edition’s cover was a photo of an anonymous group of marching protesters; the second edition featured the (staged) photo—made iconic by its use in an Apple advertising campaign—of a dignified Rosa Parks sitting alone on the front seat of a bus looking pensively out the window.20 Ironically, **the scholarly turn away from organizations and institutional processes to valorize instead the local and everyday dimensions of those movements may have exacerbated this tendency by encouraging a focus on previously unrecognized individual figures and celebrating their lives and “contributions.**” Rather than challenging the presumption that consequential social change is made by the will of extraordinary individuals, however, this scholarship in effect validates it by inflating the currency of Greatness so much that it can be found any and everywhere. Giving props to the unrecognized or underappreciated has become a feature particularly of that scholarship that defines scholarly production as a terrain of political action in itself and aspires to the function of the “public intellectual.” A perusal of the rosters of African American History Month and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day speakers at any random sample of colleges and universities attests to how closely this scholar/activist turn harmonizes with the reductionist individualism of prosperity religion and the varieties of latter-day mind cure through which much of the professional-managerial stratum of all races, genders, and sexual orientations, narrates its understandings of the world.

## Case

### McWhorter

#### Avoiding engaging the topic because the state is irredeemably racist over-essentializes modern black-life---switching sides on Afro-Pessimism crucial

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The answer common in such departments is that the principal mission is to teach students about the eternal power of racism past and present. Certainly it should be part of a liberal arts education to learn that racism is more than face-to-face abuse, and that social inequality is endemic to American society. However, too often the curriculum of African-American Studies departments gives the impression that racism and disadvantage are the most important things to note and study about being black.

The question is whether this, for all of its moral urgency in the local sense, qualifies as education under any serious definition.

Typical is the curriculum of one African-American Studies department in a solid, selective state school west of the Mississippi. In this department, racism is, essentially, everything.

One course teaches that "Housing discrimination systematically skews opportunities and life chances," another that "racism, sexism, and heterosexism shape black life chances in a 21st century context," while yet another zeroes in on "the effects of institutional racism on social policy, desegregation, integration, and affirmative action programs."

Then there is "Blacks in the Media" - or, rather, one slice of that subject: "Studying literature, comic books, comic strips, cartoons, music, theater, cinema, broadcasting, and television, students will analyze the mythical imageries which have created stereotypes." This is a common trope in writings on black performance, in which any performer can be jammed into a category such as "Mammy" or "Tragic Mulatto," sidestepping the nevertheless brilliant performances of people like Ethel Waters and Fredi Washington in the old days, or Queen Latifah and Halle Berry today.

Following from this glum desperation is a fetishization of radical politics as blacks' only constructive allegiance. One would never know the marginal import of radicalism to most black lives from its centrality to so many African-American Studies department syllabi. One course analyzes "the tradition of radical thought and the relevance of this thought to the needs and interests of the black community" - but what does the "relevance" consist of except intellectually? Yet the same department also offers a course on, more specifically, black Marxism.

According to this curriculum, being black has been so horrific that we are even challenged by the mere physicality of existence. One courses teaches that black women's bodies have to be "important spaces of resistance," while another is based on the idea that black people have been done in by various permutations of "urban spatial relations."

Because racism and inequality will always exist in some forms, this all qualifies as a bone-deep, almost willful pessimism about black potential. One would expect the thinking class of a troubled race to at least pay more lip service to looking forward. The set-jawed obsession with tabulating obstacles becomes almost peculiar, as if based on an assumption that in some way, black Americans are uniquely exempt from treating challenges as surmountable. There is even a course on black psychology whose description would get a white-run department picketed out of existence in a week, examining "manifestations of various psychological characteristics of people of African decent [sic], their cultual [sic] and behavioral norms, including the way that issues of race, class, gender and sexuality affect their cognitive, social, and emotional development."

One senses that the people teaching in African-American Studies departments feel that blackness is indeed something very different, likely because African slaves were unwilling immigrants. However, Ralph Ellison once asked "Can a people live and develop for over three hundred years simply by reacting?"

To those who would consider themselves representing black people by answering in the affirmative, there are legions of black people of all walks who would heartily disagree. There is no self-standing metric of unassailable truth that justifies intellectuals treating that disagreement - that is, the life-spirit of a people millions strong making the best of the worst for four hundred years -- as unworthy of serious address.

As to the possible objection that course descriptions do not engage these departments closely enough, a look at a few actual course syllabi is useful.

At the University of Pennsylvania, the syllabus for "Racial and Sexual Conflict" openly states that "The term paper for this course should be concerned with the structure, causes, and policies that attempt to alleviate or perpetuate racial and/or sexual discrimination in the United States." Technically, this stipulation could allow an exploration of what people have done to get past obstacles rather than merely describe them. However, the material covered in this course gives precious little support to such an endeavor.

One week, the discussion concerns the questions as to "What role does educational opportunity play in economic opportunity? How has government policy affected educational opportunity by race?" However, the readings include none of the academic literature by scholars such as Joleen Kirschenman, Kathryn Neckerman, Jomills Braddock, James McPartland and Alford Young on how attitudinal factors affect the hireability of many uneducated black men, none of the literature on solid job opportunities for people without college degrees, and nothing on organizations nationwide assisting people in taking advantage of such opportunities. In a course purporting to teach America's brightest and most ambitious students about urgent realities, how are sources such as these irrelevant?

At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, one course exemplifies the focus on radicalism. "Race, Radicalism and African American Culture" seeks to "track the genealogy of the movement that came to be called 'Black Power,' and to situate black radical artists and intellectuals in the broader history of twentieth-century American thought, culture, and politics."

And the course covers a noble procession of figures: Marcus Garvey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Richard Wright, Paul Robeson, the Black Panthers, Amiri Baraka, Cornel West, Bell Hooks. Not to mention James Baldwin. And Malcolm X. And Stokely Carmichael. Upon which the simple question is: despite their resonance, what effect did any of these people have upon the fact that there are today more middle-class black people than poor ones? Which was more central to making whites comfortable enough with blackness to elect a black President, the legacy of Malcolm X or the legacy of Dr. King?

As to King, the course does address Bayard Rustin, who was central to organizing the March on Washington. But he was at loggerheads with black radicals as the sixties wore on. The main legacy of black radicalism has been mood and fashion. Is its centrality to so many African-American Studies departments' curricula a matter of comprehensive engagement with black political development? Or is it what happens to be a common political orientation among modern academics in the humanities, including black ones?

To the extent that the answer is the latter, students are being underserved. At Columbia, in one African-American Studies course Manning Marable assigns an article by Robin Kelley called "Beyond the 'Real' World, or Why Black Radicals Need to Wake Up and Start Dreaming." But which black radical dreams have borne fruit in a way that would elicit a salute from ordinary black people in 2009? Dr. King had a dream indeed -- but he didn't mean us to stop there.

The issue is not the quality of these courses in themselves. I will gladly assume that these professors are all excellent lecturers, assiduous researchers and dedicated mentors. Yet attention must be paid to their ideological bias nevertheless. An African-American Studies curriculum whose main message is that black Americans' most interesting experience has always been racism, still is, and that this requires radicalism as a politics of choice is not education. It is indoctrination. It proposes a single minority view as sense incarnate. This is not what education is supposed to be.

To the extent that these courses and syllabi are typical, then, there is a problem. And anyone familiar with African-American Studies departments knows that these courses and syllabi are, indeed, typical.

African-American Studies departments have a place in a liberal arts education. However, to deserve that inclusion in anything beyond a symbolic sense, they should revise their curricula in exactly two ways, simple but crucial.

First, there should be full acknowledgment in all courses that the role of racism in black people's lives and fates is receding, and to such a degree that the race's challenges today are vastly different than they were forty years ago.

The aim should not be to downplay the reality of racism, but to present precisely what education consists of: the ambiguities and challenges of real life and how one thinks about it.

Defeatism should be discouraged. Any sense that defeatism is the empirically proper position on black American history in the same way as it would have been for Pompeiians in the face of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius fails -- for the simple reason that progress for black Americans continues on so many fronts.

Most of the people in question would resist being characterized as defeatist, or as not acknowledging change. However, there is acknowledgment and there is genuflection. Plus, a claim that black radicalism is our only real future is, in itself, defeatism. Four centuries of black history give no indication that these politics will significantly affect how most black people thrive.

For example, a course like Yale's on "African-American Politics" should include not only mention of the Bradley Effect (under which whites voters have claimed in polls that they would vote for black candidates but do not at the voting booth) but also that it has been proven to be on the wane repeatedly for twenty years, including in the election of Barack Obama. Otherwise, Yale's teachings will lag behind what even Wikipedia tells us about the reality on the Bradley Effect, as opposed to its recruitment as a strategy of indoctrination.

The course I mentioned on blacks' problems with urban space flags environmental racism - but would ideally mention the important work of Christopher Foreman of the Brookings Institution (black, for the record) showing that claims along these lines have been overblown.

It must also fall out of this that there will be no such thing as a course shoehorning the careers of hundreds of hard-working and excellent black artists and performers as lessons in stereotyping, or as most interesting for how they were hemmed in by racism than for what they accomplished regardless. Just as it is impossible to imagine Jewish Americans submitting themselves to so dispiriting and reductive a historiography of performance as this one, black scholars should step away from this kind of thinking as giving in to, rather than coping with, the ills of our history.

In the same vein, black popular music (including hip hop) should not be treated as most interesting in how it happened to intersect with (leftist and radical) political ideology - anymore than klezmer music, Chinese opera, or Tchaikovsky is. What about how our music is just good?

Second, an African-American Studies department should be considered larval without a course on black conservative thought - upon which courses on black radicalism would then be acceptable as alternative arguments.

Crucially, token assignment of writings of ancient three-named figures like Booker T. Washington, who wrote amidst post-Civil War conditions now ancient history, are a mere beginning. Most departments already slip in Washington, for example - although they should now regularly engage Robert Norrell's new biography that rescues the man from a century of calumny.

However, equally central to honest engagement with "black thought" are modern figures often considered controversial by the campus set, such as Shelby Steele, Thomas Sowell, Walter Williams, Debra Dickerson, and Stanley Crouch. (I will refrain from putting myself on this list, but will mention that my work is not uncommonly assigned to college students and seems not to leave them deaf to America's sociological imperfections.) Also useful, given that African-American Studies syllabi typically include some white writers, would be Stephen and Abigail Thernstrom, Lawrence Mead, Dan Subotnik and Peter Wood.

There is an argument hardly unfamiliar in the halls of ivy that black writers of this ilk are irrelevant to serious discussion because they are traitors to the race. Those charges must be permitted as free speech - but have no place in any brand of academic inquiry. All of the writers I have listed are careful thinkers deeply concerned with the fate of black America. It will not do to tar them as "not scholarly" because they do not all write in academic format or publish in obscure scholarly journals. Writings typically assigned by James Baldwin, Cornel West or even most of the others in this school are not written in this format either.

Thomas Sowell is read by millions in a nationally syndicated column, and this is in part because he is an economics and history scholar of long standing, whose books are often festooned with footnotes and references to academic work. Shelby Steele won the National Book Award, because of rhetorical skill surely the equal of writers like Patricia Williams and Michael Eric Dyson. Stanley Crouch is a polymath whose salty, "down" essence challenges anyone's claim that not being with the black radical program means not being "culturally black."

To be sure, many professors in African-American Studies departments think of themselves as doing their jobs in what they term "contesting" assorted topics. An example is Marable's "Critical Approaches to African-American Studies" at Columbia in which the contesting is the likes of "Remapping the black experience," "Redefining whiteness," and "Race-ing justice." However, this is a rearranging of furniture, very en famille. The confrontational, leftwardly politicized assumptions remain steadfast - while millions of blacks have overcome having never heard of politics of this kind.

These views, nevertheless, have value and should be heard. Yet they are not, on their own, truth. They verge into excess and anti-empiricism as readily as views from the right. There exist as many intelligent "contestings" of these leftist views as there exist "contestings" of the writings of Shelby Steele or myself. In a university department worth the status, contesting from all sides must be heard.

### Specific Demands Key

#### Specific demands key

Adolph Reed 9, Professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania and a member of the interim national council of the Labor Party, “The limits of anti-racism”, http://www.leftbusinessobserver.com/Antiracism.html

Antiracism is a favorite concept on the American left these days. Of course, all good sorts want to be against racism, but what does the word mean exactly?¶ The contemporary discourse of “antiracism” is focused much more on taxonomy than politics. It emphasizes the name by which we should call some strains of inequality—whether they should be broadly recognized as evidence of “racism”— over specifying the mechanisms that produce them or even the steps that can be taken to combat them. And, no, neither “overcoming racism” nor “rejecting whiteness” qualifies as such a step any more than does waiting for the “revolution” or urging God’s heavenly intervention. If organizing a rally against racism seems at present to be a more substantive political act than attending a prayer vigil for world peace, that’s only because contemporary antiracist activists understand themselves to be employing the same tactics and pursuing the same ends as their predecessors in the period of high insurgency in the struggle against racial segregation.¶ This view, however, is mistaken. The postwar activism that reached its crescendo in the South as the “civil rights movement” wasn’t a movement against a generic “racism;” it was specifically and explicitly directed toward full citizenship rights for black Americans and against the system of racial segregation that defined a specific regime of explicitly racial subordination in the South. The 1940s March on Washington Movement was also directed against specific targets,like employment discrimination in defense production. Black Power era and post-Black Power era struggles similarly focused on combating specific inequalities and pursuing specific goals like the effective exercise of voting rights and specific programs of redistribution.¶ ¶ Clarity lost¶ Whether or not one considers those goals correct or appropriate, they were clear and strategic in a way that “antiracism” simply is not. Sure, those earlier struggles relied on a discourse of racial justice, but their targets were concrete and strategic. It is only in a period of political demobilization that the historical specificities of those struggles have become smoothed out of sight in a romantic idealism that homogenizes them into timeless abstractions like “the black liberation movement”—an entity that, like Brigadoon, sporadically appears and returns impelled by its own logic.¶ Ironically, as the basis for a politics, antiracism seems to reflect, several generations downstream, the victory of the postwar psychologists in depoliticizing the critique of racial injustice by shifting its focus from the social structures that generate and reproduce racial inequality to an ultimately individual, and ahistorical, domain of “prejudice” or “intolerance.” (No doubt this shift was partly aided by political imperatives associated with the Cold War and domestic anticommunism.) Beryl Satter’s recent book on the racialized political economy of “contract buying” in Chicago in the 1950s and 1960s, Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America, is a good illustration of how these processes worked; Robert Self’s book on Oakland since the 1930s, American Babylon, is another. Both make abundantly clear the role of the real estate industry in creating and recreating housing segregation and ghettoization.¶ Tasty bunny¶ All too often, “racism” is the subject of sentences that imply intentional activity or is characterized as an autonomous “force.” In this kind of formulation, “racism,” a conceptual abstraction, is imagined as a material entity. Abstractions can be useful, but they shouldn’t be given independent life.¶ I can appreciate such formulations as transient political rhetoric; hyperbolic claims made in order to draw attention and galvanize opinion against some particular injustice. But as the basis for social interpretation, and particularly interpretation directed toward strategic political action, they are useless. Their principal function is to feel good and tastily righteous in the mouths of those who propound them. People do things that reproduce patterns of racialized inequality, sometimes with self-consciously bigoted motives, sometimes not. Properly speaking, however, “racism” itself doesn’t do anything more than the Easter Bunny does.¶ Yes, racism exists, as a conceptual condensation of practices and ideas that reproduce, or seek to reproduce, hierarchy along lines defined by race. Apostles of antiracism frequently can’t hear this sort of statement, because in their exceedingly simplistic version of the nexus of race and injustice there can be only the Manichean dichotomy of those who admit racism’s existence and those who deny it. There can be only Todd Gitlin (the sociologist and former SDS leader who has become, both fairly and as caricature, the symbol of a “class-first” line) and their own heroic, truth-telling selves, and whoever is not the latter must be the former. Thus the logic of straining to assign guilt by association substitutes for argument.¶ My position is—and I can’t count the number of times I’ve said this bluntly, yet to no avail, in response to those in blissful thrall of the comforting Manicheanism—that of course racism persists, in all the disparate, often unrelated kinds of social relations and “attitudes” that are characteristically lumped together under that rubric, but from the standpoint of trying to figure out how to combat even what most of us would agree is racial inequality and injustice, that acknowledgement and $2.25 will get me a ride on the subway. It doesn’t lend itself to any particular action except more taxonomic argument about what counts as racism.¶ Do what now?¶ And here’s a practical catch-22. In the logic of antiracism, exposure of the racial element of an instance of wrongdoing will lead to recognition of injustice, which in turn will lead to remedial action—though not much attention seems ever given to how this part is supposed to work. I suspect this is because the exposure part, which feels so righteously yet undemandingly good, is the real focus. But this exposure convinces only those who are already disposed to recognize.