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### 1NC Phelan Performance Link

#### Performance is not a mode of resistance – it gives too much power to the audience because the performer is structurally blocked from controlling the (re)presentation of their representations. Appealing to the ballot is a way of turning over one’s identity to the same reproductive economy that underwrites liberalism

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Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance’s being, like the ontology of subjectivityproposed here, becomes itself through disappearance.

The pressures brought to bear on performance to succumb to thelaws of the reproductive economy are enormous. For only rarely in this culture is the “now” to which performance addresses its deepest questions valued. (This is why the now is supplemented and buttressedby the documenting camera, the video archive.) Performance occursover a time which will not be repeated. It can be performed again, butthis repetition itself marks it as “different.” The document of a performance then is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present.

The other arts, especially painting and photography, are drawnincreasingly toward performance. The French-born artist Sophie Calle,for example, has photographed the galleries of the Isabella StewartGardner Museum in Boston. Several valuable paintings were stolen fromthe museum in 1990. Calle interviewed various visitors and membersof the muse um staff, asking them to describe the stolen paintings. She then transcribed these texts and placed them next to the photographs of the galleries. Her work suggests that the descriptions and memories of the paintings constitute their continuing “presence,” despite the absence of the paintings themselves. Calle gestures toward a notion of the interactive exchange between the art object and the viewer. While such exchanges are often recorded as the stated goals of museums and galleries, the institutional effect of the gallery often seems to put the masterpiece under house arrest, controlling all conflicting and unprofessional commentary about it. The speech act of memory and description (Austin’s constative utterance) becomes a performative expression when Calle places these commentaries within the

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representation of the museum. The descriptions fill in, and thus supplement (add to, defer, and displace) the stolen paintings. The factthat these descriptions vary considerably—even at times wildly—onlylends credence to the fact that the interaction between the art objectand the spectator is, essentially, performative—and therefore resistantto the claims of validity and accuracy endemic to the discourse of reproduction. While the art historian of painting must ask if thereproduction is accurate and clear, Calle asks where seeing and memoryforget the object itself and enter the subject’s own set of personalmeanings and associations. Further her work suggests that the forgetting(or stealing) of the object is a fundamental energy of its descriptiverecovering. The description itself does not reproduce the object, it ratherhelps us to restage and restate the effort to remember what is lost. Thedescriptions remind us how loss acquires meaning and generatesrecovery—not only of and for the object, but for the one who remembers.The disappearance of the object is fundamental to performance; itrehearses and repeats the disappearance of the subject who longs alwaysto be remembered.

For her contribution to the Dislocations show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1991, Calle used the same idea but this time she asked curators, guards, and restorers to describe paintings that were on loan from the permanent collection. She also asked them to draw small pictures of their memories of the paintings. She then arranged the texts and pictures according to the exact dimensions of the circulating paintings and placed them on the wall where the actual paintings usually hang. Calle calls her piece Ghosts, and as the visitor discovers Calle’s work spread throughout the museum, it is as if Calle’s own eye is following and tracking the viewer as she makes her way through the museum.1 Moreover, Calle’s work seems to disappear because it is dispersed throughout the “permanent collection”—a collection which circulates despite its “permanence.” Calle’s artistic contribution is a kind of self-concealment in which she offers the words of others about other works of art under her own artistic signature. By making visible her attempt to offer what she does not have, what cannot be seen, Calle subverts the goal of museum display. She exposes what the museum does not have and cannot offer and uses that absence to generate her own work. By placing memories in the place of paintings, Calle asks that the ghosts of memory be seen as equivalent to “the permanent collection” of “great works.” One senses that if she asked the same people over and over about the same paintings, each time they would describe a slightly different painting. In this sense, Calle demonstrates the performative quality of all seeing.

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I Performance in a strict ontological sense is nonreproductive. It is this quality which makes performance the runt of the litter of contemporary art. Performance clogs the smooth machinery of reproductive representation necessary to the circulation of capital. Perhaps nowhere was the affinity between the ideology of capitalism and art made more manifest than in the debates about the funding policies for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).2 Targeting both photography and performance art, conservative politicians sought to prevent endorsing the “real” bodies implicated and made visible by these art forms. Performance implicates the real through the presence of living bodies. In performance art spectatorship there is an element of consumption: there are no left-overs, the gazing spectator must try to take everything in. Without a copy, live performance plunges into visibility—in a maniacally charged present—and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control. Performance resists the balanced circulations of finance. It saves nothing; it only spends. While photography is vulnerable to charges of counterfeiting and copying, performance art is vulnerable to charges of valuelessness and emptiness. Performance indicates the possibility of revaluing that emptiness; this potential revaluation gives performance art its distinctive oppositional edge.3 To attempt to write about the undocumentable event of performance is to invoke the rules of the written document and thereby alter the event itself. Just as quantum physics discovered that macro-instruments cannot measure microscopic particles without transforming those particles, so too must performance critics realize that the labor to write about performance (and thus to “preserve” it) is also a labor that fundamentally alters the event. It does no good, however, to simply refuse to write about performance because of this inescapable transformation. The challenge raised by the ontological claims of performance for writing is to re-mark again the performative possibilities of writing itself. The act of writing toward disappearance, rather than the act of writing toward preservation, must remember that the after-effect of disappearance is the experience of subjectivity itself. This is the project of Roland Barthes in both Camera Lucida and Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes. It is also his project in Empire of Signs, but in this book he takes the memory of a city in which he no longer is, a city from which he disappears, as the motivation for the search for a disappearing performative writing. The trace left by that script is the meeting-point of a mutual disappearance; shared subjectivity is possible for Barthes because two people can recognize the same Impossible. To live for a love whose goal is to share the Impossible is both a humbling project and an exceedingly ambitious one, for it seeks to find connection only in that which is no longer there. Memory. Sight. Love. It must involve a full seeing of the Other’s absence (the ambitious part), a seeing which also entails the acknowledgment of the Other’s presence (the humbling part). For to acknowledge the Other’s (always partial) presence is to acknowledge one’s own (always partial) absence. In the field of linguistics, the performative speech act shares with the ontology of performance the inability to be reproduced or repeated. “Being an individual and historical act, a performative utterance cannot be repeated. Each reproduction is a new act performed by someone who is qualified. Otherwise, the reproduction of the performative utterance by someone else necessarily transforms it into a constative utterance.”4

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Writing, an activity which relies on the reproduction of the Same(the three letters cat will repeatedly signify the four-legged furry animalwith whiskers) for the production of meaning, can broach the frame of performance but cannot mimic an art that is nonreproductive. Themimicry of speech and writing, the strange process by which we put words in each other’s mouths and others’ words in our own, relies on a substitutional economy in which equivalencies are assumed and re-established. Performance refuses this system of exchange and resists the circulatory economy fundamental to it. Performance honors the idea that a limited number of people in a specific time/space frame can have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace afterward. Writing about it necessarily cancels the “tracelessness” inaugurated within this performative promise. Performance’s independence from mass reproduction, technologically, economically, and linguistically, is its greatest strength. But buffeted by the encroaching ideologies of capitaland reproduction, it frequently devalues this strength. Writing aboutperformance often, unwittingly, encourages this weakness and falls inbehind the drive of the document/ary. Performance’s challenge to writingis to discover a way for repeated words to become performative utterances, rather than, as Benveniste warned, constative utterances.

### 1NC – Embodiment

#### Corporeal politics are inevitably coopted by the dominant order---starting politics with the marker of blackness can never achieve emancipation

Terry Eagelton 90, Distinguished Professor of English Literature at Lancaster University, The Ideology of the Aesthetic, Pages 27-8

The aesthetic, then, is from the beginning a contradictory, double-edged concept, On the one hand, it figures as a genuinely emancipatory force — as a community of subjects now finked by sensuous impulse and fellow-feeling rather than by heteronomous law, each safeguarded in its unique particularity while bound at the same time into social harmony. The aesthetic offers the middle class a superbly versatile model of their political aspirations, exemplifying new forms of autonomy and self-determination, transforming the relations between law and desire, morality and knowledge, recasting the links between individual and totality, and revising social relations on the basis of custom, affection and sympathy. On the other hand, the aesthetic signifies what Max Horkheimer has called a kind of `internalised repression', inserting social power more deeply into the very bodies of those it subjugates, and so operating as a supremely effective mode of political hegemony. To lend fresh significance to bodily pleasures and drives, however, if only for the purpose of colonizing them more efficiently, is always to risk foregrounding and intensifying them beyond one's control. The aesthetic as custom, sentiment, spontaneous impulse may consort well enough with political domination; but these phenomena border embarrassingly on passion, imagination, sensuality, which are not always so easily incorporable. As Burke put it in his Appeal from the NM to the Old Wags: 'There is a boundary to men's passions when they act from feeling; none when they are under the influence of imagination.'" `Deep' subjectivity is just what the ruling social order desires, and exactly what it has most cause to fear. If the aesthetic is a dangerous, ambiguous affair, it is because, as we shall see in this study, there is something in the body which can revolt against the power which inscribes it; and that impulse could only be eradicated by extirpating along with it the capacity to authenticate power itself.

### 1NC – Resistance Link

#### Resistance via the ballot can only instill an adaptive politics of being and effaces the institutional constraints that reproduce structural violence

Brown 95—prof at UC Berkeley (Wendy, States of Injury, 21-3)

For some, fueled by opprobrium toward regulatory norms or other mo- dalities of domination, the language of "resistance" has taken up the ground vacated by a more expansive practice of freedom. For others, it is the discourse of “empowerment” that carries the ghost of freedom's valence ¶ 22¶. Yet as many have noted, insofar as resistance is an effect of the regime it opposes on the one hand, and insofar as its practitioners often seek to void it of normativity to differentiate it from the (regulatory) nature of what it opposes on the other, it is at best politically rebellious; at worst, politically amorphous. Resistance stands against, not for; it is re-action to domination, rarely willing to admit to a desire for it, and it is neutral with regard to possible political direction. Resistance is in no way constrained to a radical or emancipatory aim. a fact that emerges clearly as soon as one analogizes Foucault's notion of resistance to its companion terms in Freud or Nietzsche. Yet in some ways this point is less a critique of Foucault, who especially in his later years made clear that his political commitments were not identical with his theoretical ones (and un- apologetically revised the latter), than a sign of his misappropriation. For Foucault, resistance marks the presence of power and expands our under- standing of its mechanics, but it is in this regard an analytical strategy rather than an expressly political one. "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet. or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority to power. . . . (T]he strictly relational character of power relationships . . . depends upon a multiplicity of points of resis- tance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations.\*39 This appreciation of the extent to which resistance is by no means inherently subversive of power also reminds us that it is only by recourse to a very non-Foucaultian moral evaluation of power as bad or that which is to be overcome that it is possible to equate resistance with that which is good, progressive, or seeking an end to domination. ¶ If popular and academic notions of resistance attach, however weakly at times, to a tradition of protest, the other contemporary substitute for a discourse of freedom—“empowerment”—would seem to correspond more closely to a tradition of idealist reconciliation. The language of resistance implicitly acknowledges the extent to which protest always transpires inside the regime; “empowerment,” in contrast, registers the possibility of generating one’s capacities, one’s “self-esteem,” one’s life course, without capitulating to constraints by particular regimes of power. But in so doing, contemporary discourses of empowerment too often signal an oddly adaptive and harmonious relationship with domination insofar as they locate an individual’s sense of worth and capacity in the register of individual feelings, a register implicitly located on some- thing of an other worldly plane vis-a-vis social and political power. In this regard, despite its apparent locution of resistance to subjection, contem- porary discourses of empowerment partake strongly of liberal solipsism—the radical decontextualization of the subject characteristic of¶ 23¶ liberal discourse that is key to the fictional sovereign individualism of liberalism. Moreover, in its almost exclusive focus on subjects’ emotionalbearing and self-regard, empowerment is a formulation that converges with a regime’s own legitimacy needs in masking the power of the regime.¶ This is not to suggest that talk of empowerment is always only illusion or delusion. It is to argue, rather, that while the notion of empowerment articulates that feature of freedom concerned with action, with being more than the consumer subject figured in discourses of rights and eco- nomic democracy, contemporary deployments of that notion also draw so heavily on an undeconstructed subjectivity that they risk establishing a wide chasm between the (experience of) empowerment and an actual capacity to shape the terms of political, social, or economic life. Indeed, the possibility that one can “feel empowered” without being so forms an important element of legitimacy for the antidemocratic dimensions of liberalism.

#### The politics of identity is reactionary which ultimately creates an attachment to the status of oppression---the affirmative’s emphasis on anti-blackness and exclusion from Whiteness perversely recreate those as valorized ideals

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\_)

2 The Reification of Identity We wish to turn now to a related problem within identity politicsthat can be best described as the problem of the reiﬁcation of politicised identities. Brown (1995) positions herself within thedebate about identity politics by seeking to elaborate on “the wounded character of politicised identity’s desire” (ibid: 55); thatis, the problem of “wounded attachments” whereby a claim to identity becomes over-invested in its own historical suffering and perpetuates its injury through its refusal to give up its identity claim. Brown’s argument is that where politicised identity is founded upon an experience of exclusion, for example, exclusion itself becomes perversely valorised in the continuance of that identity. In such cases, group activity operates to maintain and reproduce the identity created by injury (exclusion) rather than– and indeed, often in opposition to – resolving the injurious social relations that generated claims around that identity in the ﬁrst place. If things have to have a history in order to have af uture, then the problem becomes that of how history is con-structed in order to make the future. To the extent that, for Brown, identity is associated primarily with (historical) injury, the future for that identity is then already determined by the injury “as both bound to the history that produced it and as a reproach to the present which embodies that history” (ibid 1995: 73). Brown’s sug-gestion that as it is not possible to undo the past, the focus back- wards entraps the identity in reactionary practices, is, we believe,too stark and we will pursue this later in the article. Politicised identity, Brown maintains, “emerges and obtains its unifying coherence through the politicisation of exclusion from an ostensible universal, as a protest against exclusion” (ibid: 65). Its continuing existence requires both a belief in the legitimacy of the universal ideal (for example, ideals of opportunity, and re- ward in proportion to effort) and enduring exclusion from those ideals. Brown draws upon Nietzsche in arguing that such identi-ties, produced in reaction to conditions of disempowerment andinequality, then become invested in their own impotence through practices of, for example, reproach, complaint, and revenge. These are “reactions” in the Nietzschean sense since they are substitutes for actions or can be seen as negative forms of action. Rather than acting to remove the cause(s) of suffering, that suf-fering is instead ameliorated (to some extent) through “the estab-lishment of suffering as the measure of social virtue” (ibid 1995:70), and is compensated for by the vengeful pleasures of recrimnation. Such practices, she argues, stand in sharp distinction to –in fact, provide obstacles to – practices that would seek to dispel the conditions of exclusion. Brown casts the dilemma discussed above in terms of a choicebetween past and future, and adapting Nietzsche, exhorts theadoption of a (collective) will that would become the “redeemer of history” (ibid: 72) through its focus on the possibilities of creat-ing different futures. As Brown reads Nietzsche, the one thingthat the will cannot exert its power over is the past, the “it was”.Confronted with its impotence with respect to the events of thepast, the will is threatened with becoming simply an “angry spec-tator” mired in bitter recognition of its own helplessness. The onehope for the will is that it may, instead, achieve a kind of mastery over that past such that, although “what has happened” cannotbe altered, the past can be denied the power of continuing to de-termine the present and future. It is only this focus on the future, Brown continues, and the capacity to make a future in the face of human frailties and injustices that spares us from a rancorous decline into despair. Identity politics structured by ressentiment – that is, by suffering caused by past events – can only break outof the cycle of “slave morality” by remaking the present againstthe terms of the past, a remaking that requires a “forgetting” of that past. An act of liberation, of self-afﬁrmation, this “forgettingof the past” requires an “overcoming” of the past that offers iden-tity in relationship to suffering, in favour of a future in whichidentity is to be deﬁned differently. In arguing thus, Brown’s work becomes aligned with a posi-tion that sees the way forward for emancipatory politics as re-siding in a movement away from a “politics of memory” (Kilby 2002: 203) that is committed to articulating past injustices andsuffering. While we agree that investment in identities prem-ised upon suffering can function as an obstacle to alleviating the causes of that suffering, we believe that Brown’s argument as outlined is problematic. First, following Kilby (2002), we share a concern about any turn to the future that is ﬁgured as a complete abandonment of the past. This is because for those who have suffered oppression and exclusion, the injunction to give up articulating a pain that is still felt may seem cruel and impossible to meet. We would argue instead that the “turn to the future” that theorists such as Brown and Grosz callfor, to revitalise feminism and other emancipatory politics, need not be conceived of as a brute rejection of the past. Indeed, Brown herself recognises the problems involved here, stating that [since] erased histories and historical invisibility are themselves suchintegral elements of the pain inscribed in most subjugated identities[then] the counsel of forgetting, at least in its unreconstructedNietzschean form, seems inappropriate if not cruel (1995: 74). She implies, in fact, that the demand exerted by those in painmay be no more than the demand to exorcise that pain throughrecognition: “all that such pain may long for – more than revenge– is the chance to be heard into a certain release, recognised intoself-overcoming, incited into possibilities for triumphing over, and hence, losing itself” (1995: 74-75). Brown wishes to establish the political importance of remembering “painful” historical events but with a crucial caveat: that the purpose of remembering pain is to enable its release . The challenge then, according to her,is to create a political culture in which this project does not mutate into one of remembering pain for its own sake. Indeed, if Brown feels that this may be “a pass where we ought to part with Nietzsche” (1995: 74), then Freud may be a more suit-able companion. Since his early work with Breuer, Freud’s writ-ings have suggested the (only apparent) paradox that remember-ing is often a condition of forgetting. The hysterical patient, who is doomed to repeat in symptoms and compulsive actions a past she cannot adequately recall, is helped to remember that trau-matic past in order then to move beyond it: she must remember inorder to forget and to forget in order to be able to live in the present. 7 This model seems to us to be particularly helpful for thedilemma articulated by both Brown (1995) and Kilby (2002),insisting as it does that “forgetting” (at least, loosening the holdof the past, in order to enable the future) cannot be achieved without ﬁrst remembering the traumatic past. Indeed, this wouldseem to be similar to the message of Beloved , whose central motif of haunting (is the adult woman, “Beloved”, Sethe’s murderedchild returned in spectral form?) dramatises the tendency of theunanalysed traumatic past to keep on returning, constraining, asit does so, the present to be like the past, and thereby, disallow-ing the possibility of a future different from that past. As Sarah Ahmed argues in her response to Brown, “in order to break the seal of the past, in order to move away from attach-ments that are hurtful, we must ﬁrst bring them into the realm of political action” (2004: 33). We would add that the task of analys-ing the traumatic past, and thus opening up the possibility of political action, is unlikely to be achievable by individuals on their own, but that this, instead, requires a “community” of participants dedicated to the serious epistemic work of rememberingand interpreting the objective social conditions that made up thatpast and continue in the present. The “pain” of historical injury is not simply an individual psychological issue, but stems from objective social conditions which perpetuate, for the most part, forms of injustice and inequality into the present. In sum, Brown presents too stark a choice between past andfuture. In the example of Beloved with which we began thisarticle, Paul D’s acceptance of Sethe’s experiences of slavery asdistinct from his own, enable them both to arrive at new under-standings of their experience. Such understanding is a way of partially “undoing” the (effects of) the past and coming to terms with the locatedness of one’s being in the world (Mohanty 1995). As this example shows, opening up a future, and attending to theongoing effects of a traumatic past, are only incorrectly under-stood as alternatives. A second set of problems with Brown’s critique of identity poli-tics emerge from what we regard as her tendency to individualise social problems as problems that are the possession and theresponsibility of the “wounded” group. Brown suggests that the problems associated with identity politics can be overcome through a “shift in the character of political expression and politi-cal claims common to much politicised identity” (1995: 75). She deﬁnes this shift as one in which identity would be expressed in terms of desire rather than of ontology by supplanting the lan-guage of “I am” with the language of “I want this for us” (1995:75). Such a reconﬁguration, she argues, would create an opportu-nity to “rehabilitate the memory of desire within identiﬁcatory processes…prior to [their] wounding” (1995: 75). It would fur-ther refocus attention on the future possibilities present in theidentity as opposed to the identity being foreclosed through its attention to past-based grievances.

### 1NC – Wendy B Alternative

#### Our alternative is to recognize debate as a site of contingent commonality in which we can forge bonds of argumentation beyond identity---the affirmative’s focus on subjectivity abdicates the flux of politics and debate for the incontestable truth of identity

Brown 95—prof at UC Berkeley (Wendy, States of Injury, 47-51)

The postmodern exposure of the imposed and created rather than dis- covered character of all knowledges—of the power-surtuscd, struggle-¶48¶produced quality of all truths, including reigning political and scientific ones—simultaneously exposes the groundlessness of discovered norms or visions. It also reveals the exclusionary and regulatory function of these norms: white women who cannot locate themselves in Nancy Hartsock’s account of women’s experience or women s desires, African American women who do not identify with Patricia Hill Collinss account of black women’s ways of knowing, are once again excluded from the Party of Humanism—this time in its feminist variant. ¶Our alternative to reliance upon such normative claims would seem to be engagement in political struggles in which there are no trump cards such as “morality” or “truth."Our alternative, in other words, is to struggle within an amoral political habitat for temporally bound and fully contestable visions of who we are and how we ought to live. Put still another way, postmodernity unnerves feminist theory not merely because it deprives us of uncomplicated subject standing, as Christine Di Stefano suggests, or of settled ground for knowledge and norms, as Nancy Hartsock argues, or of "centered selves and “emancipatory knowledge," as Seyla Bcnhabib avers. Postmodernity unsettles feminism because it erodes the moral ground that the subject, truth, and nor- mativity coproduce in modernity. When contemporary feminist political theorists or analysts complain about the antipolitical or unpolitical nature of postmodern thought—thought that apprehends and responds to this erosion—they arc protesting, inter' aha, a Nictzschcan analysis of truth and morality as fully implicated in and by power, and thereby dplegiti- mated qua Truth and Morality Politics, including politics with passion- ate purpose and vision, can thrive without a strong theory of the subject, without Truth, and without scientifically derived norms—one only need reread Machiavelli, Gramsci, or Emma Goldman to see such a politics flourish without these things. The question is whether fnninist politics can prosper without a moral apparatus, whether feminist theorists and activists will give up substituting Truth and Morality for politics. Are we willing to engage in struggle rather than recrimination, to develop our faculties rather than avenge our subordination with moral and epistemological gestures, to fight for a world rather than conduct process on the existing one? Nictzschc insisted that extraordinary strengths of character and mind would be necessary to operate in thce domain of epistemological and religious nakedness he heralded. But in this heexcessively individualized a challenge that more importantly requires the deliberate development of postmoral and antirelativist political spaces, practices of deliberation, and modes of adjudication.¶49¶The only way through a crisis of space is to invent a new space —Fredric Jameson. “Postmodernism"¶Precisely because of its incessant revelation of settled practices and identi- ties as contingent, its acceleration of the tendency to melt all that is solid into air. what is called postmodernity poses the opportunity to radically sever the problem of the good from the problem of the true, to decide “what we want” rather than derive it from assumptions or arguments about “who we are.” Our capacity to exploit this opportunity positively will be hinged to our success in developing new modes and criteria for political judgment. It will also depend upon our willingness to break certain modernist radical attachments, particularly to Marxism’s promise (however failed) of meticulously articulated connections betwreen a com- prehensive critique of the present and norms for a transformed future—a science of revolution rather than a politics of oneResistance, the practice most widely associated with postmodern polit- ical discourse, responds to without fully meeting the normativity chal- lenge of postmodernity. A vital tactic in much political w’ork as wrcll as for mere survival, resistance by itself does not contain a critique, a vision, or grounds for organized collective efforts to enact either. Contemporary affection for the politics of resistance issues from postmodern criticism’s perennial authority problem: our heightened consciousncss of the will to power in all political “positions” and our wrariness about totalizing an- alyses and visions. Insofar as it eschew’s rather than revisesthese problematic practices, resistance-as-politics does not raise the dilemmas of responsibility and justification entailed in “affirming” political projects and norms. In this respect, like identity politics, and indeed sharing with identity politics an excessively local viewpoint and tendency toward positioning without mapping, the contemporary vogue of resistance is more a symptom of postmodernity’s crisis of political space than a coherent response to it. Resistance goes nowhere in particular, has no inherent attachments, and hails no particular vision; as Foucault makes clear, resistance is an effect of and reaction to power, not an arrogation of it.¶What postmodernity disperses and postmodern feminist politics requires are cultivated political spaces for posing and questioning feminist political norms, for discussing the nature of “the good” for women. Democratic political space is quite undcrtheonzed in contemporary femi- nist thinking, as it is everywhere in latc-twentieth-ccntury political the- ory, primarily bccausc it is so little in evidence. Dissipated by the increasing tcchnologizing of would-be political conversations and pro- cesses, by the erosion of boundaries around specifically political domains¶50¶and activities, and by the decline of movement politics, political spaces are scarcer and thinner today than even in most immediately prior epochs of Western history. In this regard, their condition mirrors the splayed and centrifuged characteristics of postmodern political power. Yet precisely because of postmodernity’s disarming tendencies toward political disori- entation, fragmentation, and technologizing, the creation of spaces where political analyses and norms can be proffered and contested is su- premely important.¶Political space is an old theme in Western political theory, incarnated by the polis practices of Socrates, harshly opposed by Plato in the Repub- lic, redeemed and elaborated as metaphysics by Aristotle, resuscitated as salvation for modernity by Hannah Arendt. jnd given contemporary spin in Jurgen Habermas's theories of ideal speech situations and com- municative rationality. The project of developing feminist postmodern political spaces, while enriched by pieces of this tradition, necessarily also departs from it. In contrast with Aristotle’s formulation, feminist politi- cal spaces cannot define themselves against the private sphere, bodies, reproduction and production, mortality, and all the populations and is- sues implicated in these categories. Unlike Arendt’s, these spaces cannot be pristine, ratified, and policed at their boundaries but are necessarily cluttered, attuned to earthly concerns and visions, incessantly disrupted, invaded, and reconfigured. Unlike Habermas, wc can harbor no dreams of nondistorted communication unsullied by power, or even of a ‘com- mon language,’\* but wc recognize as a permanent political condition par- tiality of understanding and expression, cultural chasms whose nature may be vigilantly identified but rarely “resolved,” and the powers of words and images that evoke, suggest, and connote rather than transmit meanings.42 Our spaces, while requiring some definition and protection, cannot be clean, sharply bounded, disembodied, or permanent: to engage postmodern modes of power and honor specifically feminist knowledges, they must be heterogenous, roving, relatively noninstitutionalized, and democratic to the point of exhaustion.¶Such spaces are crucial for developing the skills and practices of post- modern judgment, addressing the problem of “how to produce a discourse on justicc . . . when one no longer relies on ontology or epistemology.”43 Postmodemity’s dismantling of metaphysical foundations for justice renders us quite vulnerable to domination by technical reason ¶51¶unless we seize the opportunity this erosion also creates to develop democratic processes for formulating postepistemelogical and postontological judgments. Such judgements require learning how to have public conversations with each other, arguing from a vision about the common (“what I want for us") rather than from identity (“who I am”), and from explicitly postulated norms and potential common values rather than false essentialism or unreconstructed private interest.44 Paradoxically, such public and comparatively impersonal arguments carry potential for greater accountability than arguments from identity or interest. While the former may be interrogated to the ground by others, the latter are insulated from such inquiry with the mantle of truth worn by identity-based speech. Moreover, post identity political positions and conversations potentially replace a politics of difference with a politics of diversity—differences grasped from a perspective larger than simply one point in an ensemble. Postidentity public positioning requires an outlook that discerns structures of dominance within diffused and disorienting orders of power, thereby stretching toward a more politically potent analysis than that which our individuated and fragmented existences can generate. In contrast to Di Stefano's claim that 'shared identity” may constitute a more psychologically and politically reliable basis for “attachment and motivation on the part of potential activists,” I am suggesting that political conversation oriented toward diversity and the common, toward world rather than self, and involving a conversion of ones knowledge of the world from a situated (subject) position into a public idiom, offers us the greatest possibility of countering postmodern social fragmentations and political disintegrations.¶Feminists have learned well to identify and articulate our "subject positions —we have become experts at politicizing the “I”that is produced through multiple sites ofpower and subordination. But the very practice so crucial to making these elements of power visible and subjectivity political may be partly at odds with the requisites for developing political conversation among a complex and diverse “we.” We may need to learn public speaking and the pleasures of public argument not to overcome our situatedness, but in order to assume responsibility for our situations and to mobilize a collective discourse that will expand them. For the political making of a feminist future that does not reproach the history on which it is borne, we may need to loosen our attachments to subjectivity, identity, and morality and to redress our underdeveloped taste for political argument.

### 1NC Identity = Relational / AT Experience

#### Identity arguments are only ever implicit explanations of the constitutive effects of the social order, never a manifestation of some metaphysical status. Experience does not create us; we constitute experience and identity in concert with others. Knowledge of experience is therefore not the province of the individual; instead, we can only know identity through the shared practices that make communities the locus of knowledge production

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\_)

We suggest that alternative models of identity and community are required from those put forward by essentialist theories, and that these are offered by the work of two theorists, Satya Mohanty and Lynn Hankinson Nelson. Mohanty’s ([1993] 2000) post-positivist, realist theorisation of identity suggests a way through the impasses of essentialism, while avoiding the excesses of the postmodernism that Bramen, among others, derides as a proposed alternative to identity politics. For Mohanty ([1993] 2000), identities must be understood as theoretical that enable subjects to read the world in particular ways; as such, substantial claims about identity are, in fact, implicit explanations of the social world and its constitutive relations of power. Experience – that from which identity is usually thought to derive– is not something that simply occurs, or announces its meaning and signiﬁcance in a self-evident fashion: rather, experience is always a work of interpretation that is collectively produced (Scott 1991). Mohanty’s work resonates with that of Nelson (1993), who similarly insists upon the communal nature of meaning of knowledge-making. Rejecting both foundationalist views of knowledge and the postmodern alternative which announces the “death of the subject” and the impossibility of epistemology, Nelson argues instead that, it is not individuals who are the agents of epistemology, but communities. Since it is not possible for an individual to know something that another individual could not also (possibly) know, it must be that the ability to make sense of the world proceeds from shared conceptual frameworks and practices. Thus, it is the community that is the generator and repository of knowledge. Bringing Mohanty’s work on identity as theoretical construction together with Nelson’s work on epistemological communities therefore suggests that, “identity” is one of the knowledges that is produced and enabled for and by individuals in the context of the communities within which they exist. The post-positivist reformulation of “experience” is necessary here as it privileges understandings that emerge through the processing of experience in the context of negotiated premises about the world, over experience itself producing self-evident knowledge (self-evident, however, only to the one who has “had” the experience). This distinction is crucial for, if it is not the experience of, for example, sexual discrimination that “makes” one a feminist, but rather, the paradigm through which one attempts to understand acts of sexual discrimination, then it is not necessary to have actually had the experience oneself in order to make the identiﬁcation “feminist”. If being a “feminist” is not a given fact of a particular social (and/or biological) location – that is, being designated “female” – but is, in Mohanty’s terms, an “achievement” – that is, something worked towards through a process of analysis and interpretation – then two implications follow. First, that not all women are feminists. Second, that feminism is something that is “achievable” by men. 3 While it is accepted that experiences are not merely theoretical or conceptual constructs which can be transferred from one person to another with transparency, we think that there is something politically self-defeating about insisting that one can only understand an experience (or then comment upon it) if one has actually had the experience oneself. As Rege (1998) argues, to privilege knowledge claims on the basis of direct experience, or then on claims of authenticity, can lead to a narrow identity politics that limits the emancipatory potential of the movements or organisations making such claims. Further, if it is not possible to understand an experience one has not had, then what point is there in listening to each other? Following Said, such a view seems to authorise privileged groups to ignore the discourses of disadvantaged ones, or, we would add, to place exclusive responsibility for addressing injustice with the oppressed themselves. Indeed, as Rege suggests, reluctance to speak about the experience of others has led to an assumption on the part of some white feminists that “confronting racism is the sole responsibility of black feminists”, just as today “issues of caste become the sole responsibility of the dalit women’s organisations” (Rege 1998). Her argument for a dalit feminist standpoint, then, is not made in terms solely of the experiences of dalit women, but rather a call for others to “educate themselves about the histories, the preferred social relations and utopias and the struggles of the marginalised” (Rege 1998). This, she argues, allows “their cause” to become “our cause”, not as a form of appropriation of “their” struggle, but through the transformation of subjectivities that enables a recognition that “their” struggle is also “our” struggle. Following Rege, we suggest that social processes can facilitate the understanding of experiences, thus making those experiences the possible object of analysis and action for all, while recognising that they are not equally available or powerful for all subjects. 4 Understandings of identity as given and essential, then, we suggest, need to give way to understandings which accept them as socially constructed and contingent on the work of particular, overlapping, epistemological communities that agree that this or that is a viable and recognised identity. Such an understanding avoids what Bramen identiﬁes as the postmodern excesses of “post-racial” theory, where in this “world without borders (“racism is real, but race is not”) one can be anything one wants to be: a black kid in Harlem can be Croatian-American, if that is what he chooses, and a white kid from Iowa can be Korean-American”(2002: 6). Unconstrained choice is not possible to the extent that, as Nelson (1993) argues, the concept of the epistemological community requires any individual knowledge claim to sustain itself in relation to standards of evaluation that already exist and that are social. Any claim to identity, then, would have to be recognised by particular communities as valid in order to be successful. This further shifts the discussion beyond the limitations of essentialist accounts of identity by recognising that the communities that confer identity are constituted through their shared epistemological frameworks and not necessarily by shared characteristics of their members conceived of as irreducible. 5 Hence, the epistemological community that enables us to identify our-selves as feminists is one that is built up out of a broadly agreed upon paradigm for interpreting the world and the relations between the sexes: it is not one that is premised upon possessing the physical attribute of being a woman or upon sharing the same experiences. Since at least the 1970s, a key aspect of black and/or postcolonial feminism has been to identify the problems associated with such assumptions (see, for discussion, Rege 1998, 2000). We believe that it is the identiﬁcation of injustice which calls forth action and thus allows for the construction of healthy solidarities. 6 While it is accepted that there may be important differences between those who recognise the injustice of disadvantage while being, in some respects, its beneﬁciary (for example, men, white people, brahmins), and those who recognise the injustice from the position of being at its effect (women, ethnic minorities, dalits), we would privilege the importance of a shared political commitment to equality as the basis for negotiating such differences. Our argument here is that thinking through identity claims from the basis of understanding them as epistemological communities militates against exclusionary politics (and its associated problems) since the emphasis comes to be on participation in a shared epistemological and political project as opposed to notions of ﬁxed characteristics – the focus is on the activities individuals participate in rather than the characteristics they are deemed to possess. Identity is thus deﬁned further as a function of activity located in particular social locations (understood as the complex of objective forces that inﬂuence the conditions in which one lives) rather than of nature or origin (Mohanty 1995:109-10). As such, the communities that enable identity should not be conceived of as “imagined” since they are produced by very real actions, practices and projects.

### 1NC Coughlin (Just in case ya’ll care)

#### Trading autobiographical narrative for the ballot commodifies one’s identity and has limited impact on the culture that one attempt’s to reform – when autobiographical narrative “wins,” it subverts its own most radical intentions by becoming an exemplar of the very culture under indictment

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Although Williams is quick to detect insensitivity and bigotry in remarks made by strangers, colleagues, and friends, her taste for irony fails her when it comes to reflection on her relationship with her readers and the material benefits that her autobiographical performances have earned for her. n196 Perhaps Williams should be more inclined to thank, rather than reprimand, her editors for behaving as readers of autobiography invariably do. When we examine this literary faux pas - the incongruity between Williams's condemnation of her editors and the professional benefits their publication secured her - we detect yet another contradiction between the outsiders' use of autobiography and their desire to transform culture radically. Lejeune's characterization of autobiography as a "contract" reminds us that autobiography is a lucrative commodity. In our culture, members of the reading public avidly consume personal stories, n197 which surely explains why first-rate law journals and academic presses have been eager to market outsider narratives. No matter how unruly the self that it records, an autobiographical performance transforms that self into a form of "property in a moneyed economy" n198 and into a valuable intellectual [\*1283] asset in an academy that requires its members to publish. n199 Accordingly, we must be skeptical of the assertion that the outsiders' splendid publication record is itself sufficient evidence of the success of their endeavor. n200

Certainly, publication of a best seller may transform its author's life, with the resulting commercial success and academic renown. n201 As one critic of autobiography puts it, "failures do not get published." n202 While writing a successful autobiography may be momentous for the individual author, this success has a limited impact on culture. Indeed, the transformation of outsider authors into "success stories" subverts outsiders' radical intentions by constituting them as exemplary participants within contemporary culture, willing to market even themselves to literary and academic consumers. n203 What good does this transformation do for outsiders who are less fortunate and less articulate than middle-class law professors? n204 Although they style themselves cultural critics, the [\*1284] storytellers generally do not reflect on the meaning of their own commercial success, nor ponder its entanglement with the cultural values they claim to resist. Rather, for the most part, they seem content simply to take advantage of the peculiarly American license, identified by Professor Sacvan Bercovitch, "to have your dissent and make it too." n205

#### Even if their best intention is to resist the liberal subject, autobiography is understood by its consuming audience as the assertion of the classic autonomous subject – this subverts the political potential of performance by rendering one’s experience legible to the terms of liberalism. This recreates the violence of liberalism that is the root of Western conquest

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The outsider narratives do not reflect on another feature of autobiographical discourse that is perhaps the most significant obstacle to their goal to bring to law an understanding of the human self that will supersede the liberal individual. Contrary to the outsiders' claim that their personalized discourse infuses law with their distinctive experiences and political perspectives, numerous historians and critics of autobiography have insisted that those who participate in autobiographical discourse speak not in a different voice, but in a common voice that reflects their membership in a culture devoted to liberal values. n206 As Sacvan Bercovitch puts it, American cultural ideals, including specifically the mythic connection between the "heroic individual ... [and] the values of free enterprise," are "epitomized in autobiography." n207 In his seminal essay on the subject, Professor Georges Gusdorf makes an observation that seems like a prescient warning to outsiders who would appropriate autobiography as their voice. He remarks that the practice of writing about one's own self reflects a belief in the autonomous individual, which is "peculiar to Western man, a concern that has been of good use in his systematic conquest of the [\*1285] universe and that he has communicated to men of other cultures; but those men will thereby have been annexed by a sort of intellectual colonizing to a mentality that was not their own." n208 Similarly, Albert Stone, a critic of American autobiography, argues that autobiographical performances celebrate the Western ideal of individualism, "which places the self at the center of its world." n209 Stone begins to elucidate the prescriptive character of autobiographical discourse as he notes with wonder "the tenacious social ideal whose persistence is all the more significant when found repeated in personal histories of Afro-Americans, immigrants, penitentiary prisoners, and others whose claims to full individuality have often been denied by our society." n210¶ Precisely because it appeals to readers' fascination with the self-sufficiency, resiliency and uniqueness of the totemic individual privileged by liberal political theory, there is a risk that autobiographical discourse is a fallible, even co-opted, instrument for the social reforms envisioned by the outsiders. By affirming the myths of individual success in our culture, autobiography reproduces the [\*1286] political, economic, social and psychological structures that attend such success. n211 In this light, the outsider autobiographies unwittingly deflect attention from collective social responsibility and thwart the development of collective solutions for the eradication of racist and sexist harms. Although we may suspect in some cases that the author's own sense of self was shaped by a community whose values oppose those of liberal individualism, her decision to register her experience in autobiographical discourse will have a significant effect on the self she reproduces. n212 Her story will solicit the public's attention to the life of one individual, and it will privilege her individual desires and rights above the needs and obligations of a collectivity.¶ Moreover, literary theorists have remarked the tendency of autobiographical discourse to override radical authorial intention. Even where the autobiographer self-consciously determines to resist liberal ideology and represents her life story as the occasion to announce an alternative political theory, "the relentless individualism of the genre subordinates" her political critique. n213 Inevitably, at least within American culture, the personal narrative engrosses the readers' imagination. Fascinated by the travails and triumphs of the developing autobiographical self, readers tend to construe the text's political and social observations only as another aspect of the author's personality.¶ Paradoxically, although autobiography is the product of a culture that cultivates human individuality, the genre seems to make available only a limited number of autobiographical protagonists. n214 Many theorists have noticed that when an author assumes the task of defining her own, unique subjectivity, she invariably reproduces herself as a character with whom culture already is well-acquainted. n215 While a variety of forces coerce the autobiographer [\*1287] to conform to culturally sanctioned human models, n216 the pressures exerted by the literary market surely play a significant role. The autobiographer who desires a material benefit from her performance must adopt a persona that is intelligible, if not enticing, to her audience. n217 As I will illustrate in the sections that follow, the outsider narratives capitalize on, rather than subvert, autobiographical protagonists that serve the values of liberalism.

# Block

### 1nr forgetting alt

#### The alternative is to embrace Nietzschean forgetting---this turn to the future does not require a rejection of identity, but rather using debate as a site for agonistic engagement

Brown 93—prof at UC Berkeley (Wendy, Wounded Attachments, Political Theory, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Aug., 1993), pp. 390-410)

What might be entailed in transforming these investments in an effort to fashion a more radically democratic and emancipatory political culture? One avenue of exploration may lie in Nietzsche's counsel on the virtues of "forgetting," for if identity structured in part by ressentiment resubjugates itself through its investment in its own pain, through its refusal to make itself in the present, memory is the house of this activity and this refusal. Yet erased histories and historical invisibility are themselves such integral elements of the pain inscribed in most subjugated identities that the counsel of forgetting, at least in its unreconstructed Nietzschean form, seems inappropriate, if not cruel.33 Indeed, it is also possible that we have reached a pass where we ought to part with Nietzsche, whose skills as diagnostician usually reach the limits of their political efficacy in his privileging of individual character and capacity over the transformative possibilities of collective political inven- tion, in his remove from the refigurative possibilities of political conversation or transformative cultural practices. For if I am right about the problematic of pain installed at the heart of many contemporary contradictory demands for political recognition, all that such pain may long for more than revenge is the chance to be heard into a certain reprieve, recognized into self-overcoming, incited into possibilities for triumphing over, and hence losing, itself. Our challenge, then, would be to configure a radically democratic political culture that can sustain such a project in its midst without being overtaken by it, a challenge that includes guarding against abetting the steady slide of political into therapeutic discourse, even as we acknowledge the elements of suffering and healing we might be negotiating.

What if it were possible to incite a slight shift in the character of political expression and political claims common to much politicized identity? What if we sought to supplant the language of "I am"-with its defensive closure on identity, its insistence on the fixity of position, and its equation of social with moral positioning-with the language of reflexive "wanting"? What if it were possible to rehabilitate the memory of desire within identificatory processes, the moment in desire-either "to have" or "to be"-prior to its wounding and thus prior to the formation of identity at the site of the wound? What if "wanting to be" or "wanting to have" were taken up as modes of political speech that could destabilize the formulation of identity as fixed position, as entrenchment by history, and as having necessary moral entail- ments, even as they affirm "position" and "history" as that which makes the speaking subject intelligible and locatable, as that which contributes to a hermeneutics for adjudicating desires? If every "I am" is something of a resolution of desire into fixed and sovereign identity, then this project might involve not only learning to speak but to read "I am" this way, as in motion, as temporal, as not-I,as deconstructable according to a genealogy of want rather than as fixed interests or experiences. The subject understood as an effect of a (ongoing) genealogy of desire, including the social processes constitutive of, fulfilling, or frustrating desire, is in this way revealed as neither sovereign nor conclusive even as it is affirmed as an "I." In short, this partial dissolution of sovereignty into desire could be that which reopens a desire for futurity where Nietzsche saw it sealed shut by festering wounds expressed as rancor and ressentiment. 'This instinct for freedom pushed back and repressed . . . incarcerated within."'

Such a slight shift in the character of the political discourse of identity eschews the kinds of ahistorical or utopian turns against identity politics made bya nostalgic and broken humanist Left as well as the reactionary and disingenuous assaults on politicized identity tendered by the Right. Rather than opposing or seeking to transcend identity investments, the replacement- even the complex admixture-of the language of "being" with "wanting"would seek to exploit politically a recovery of the more expansive moments in the genealogy of identity formation. It would seek to reopen the moment prior to its own foreclosure against its want, prior to the point at which its sovereign subjectivity is established through such foreclosure and through eternal repetition of its pain. How might democratic discourse itself be invigorated by such a shift from ontological claims to these kinds of more expressly political ones, claims which, rather than dispensing blame for an unlivable present, inhabited the necessarily agonistic theater of discursively forging an alternative future.

### 1nr Chandler Evasiveness Link

#### Shifting to their politics is a way to dodge fundamental collective debates with the hegemonic forces that underwrite oppression – training an incapacity to engage with institutional power sets activism up to fail against the organized forces of political control – the aff is a modern day Nero who fiddles the night away as Rome burns down around him

Chandler 7 – Researcher @ Centre for the Study of Democracy, Chandler. 2007. Centre for the Study of Democracy, Westminster, Area, Vol. 39, No. 1, p. 118-119

This disjunction between the human/ethical/global causes of post-territorial political activism and the capacity to 'make a difference' is what makes these individuated claims immediately abstract and metaphysical – there is no specific demand or programme or attempt to build a collective project. This is the politics of symbolism. The rise of symbolic activism is highlighted in the increasingly popular framework of 'raising awareness'– here there is no longer even a formal connection between ethical activity and intended outcomes (Pupavac 2006). Raising awareness about issues has replaced even the pretense of taking responsibility for engaging with the world – the act is ethical in-itself. Probably the most high profile example of awareness raising is the shift from Live Aid, which at least attempted to measure its consequences in fund-raising terms, to Live 8 whose goal was solely that of raising an 'awareness of poverty'. The struggle for 'awareness' makes it clear that the focus of symbolic politics is the individual and their desire to elaborate upon their identity – to make us aware of their 'awareness', rather than to engage us in an instrumental project of changing or engaging with the outside world. It would appear that in freeing politics from the constraints of territorial political community there is a danger that political activity is freed from any constraints of social mediation(see further, Chandler 2004a). Without being forced to test and hone our arguments, or even to clearly articulate them, we can rest on the radical 'incommunicability' of our personal identities and claims – you are 'either with us or against us'; engaging with those who disagree is no longer possible or even desirable. It is this lack of desire to engage which most distinguishes the unmediated activism of post-territorial political actors from the old politics of territorial communities, founded on struggles of collective interests (Chandler 2004b). The clearest example is old representational politics – this forced engagement in order to win the votes of people necessary for political parties to assume political power. Individuals with a belief in a collective programme knocked on strangers' doors and were willing to engage with them, not on the basis of personal feelings but on what they understood were their potential shared interests. Few people would engage in this type of campaigning today; engaging with people who do not share our views, in an attempt to change their minds, is increasingly anathema and most people would rather share their individual vulnerabilities or express their identities in protest than attempt to argue with a peer. This paper is not intended to be a nostalgic paean to the old world of collective subjects and national interests or a call for a revival of territorial state-based politics or even to reject global aspirations: quite the reverse. Today, politics has been 'freed' from the constraints of territorial political community – governments without coherent policy programmes do not face the constraints of failure or the constraints of the electorate in any meaningful way; activists, without any collective opposition to relate to, are free to choose their causes and ethical identities; protest, from Al Qaeda, to anti-war demonstrations, to the riots in France, is inchoate and atomized. When attempts are made to formally organize opposition, the ephemeral and incoherent character of protest is immediately apparent.

### 1nr Zizek Nothing Changes Link

#### Inclusion in the debate space is a empty act of tolerance that ensures that nothing really changes

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ellipses in orig

Let us take two predominant topics of to day's American radical academia: postcolonial and queer (gay) studies. The problem of postcolonialism is undoubtedly crucial; however, "postcolonial studies" tend to translate it into the multiculturalist problematic of the colonized minorities' "right to narrate" their victimizing experience, of the power mechanisms which repress "otherness," so that, at the end of the day, we learn that the root of postcolonial exploitation is our intolerance toward the Other, and, furthermore, that this intolerance itself is rooted in our intolerance toward the "Stranger in Ourselves," in our inability to confront what we repressed in and of ourselves. The politico-economic struggle is thus imperceptibly transformed into a pseudo-psychoanalytic drama of the subject unable to confront its inner traumas ... The true corruption of American academia is not primarily financial, it is not only that they are able to buy many European critical intellectuals (myself included – up to a point), but conceptual: notions of "European" critical theory are imperceptibly translated into the benign universe of Cultural Studies chic. ¶ My personal experience is that practically all of the "radical" academics silently count on the long-term stability of the American capitalist model, with the secure tenured position as their ultimate professional goal (a surprising number of them even play on the stock market). If there is a thing they are gen­uinely horrified of, it is a radical shattering of the (relatively) safe life environ­ment of the "symbolic classes" in the developed Western societies. Their excessive Politically Correct zeal when dealing with sexism, racism, Third World sweatshops, etc., is thus ultimately a defense against their own innermost identi­fication, a kind of compulsive ritual whose hidden logic is: "Let's talk as much as possible about the necessity of a radical change to make sure that nothing will really change!" Symptomatic here is the journal October: when you ask one of the editors to what the title refers, they will half-confidentially signal that it is, of course, that October – in this way, one can indulge in the jargonistic analyses of modern art, with the hidden assurance that one is somehow retaining the link with the radical revolutionary past ... With regard to this radical chic, the first gesture toward Third Way ideologists and practitioners should be that of praise: they at least play their game straight and are honest in their acceptance of global capitalist coordinates, in contrast to the pseudo-radical academic Leftists who adopt toward the Third Way the attitude of utter disdain, while their own radi­cality ultimately amounts to an empty gesture which obligates no one to any­thing determinate.¶ II. From Human to Animal Rights ¶ We live in the "postmodern" era in which truth­ claims as such are dismissed as an expression of hidden power mechanisms – as the reborn pseudo-Nietzscheans like to emphasize, truth is a lie which is most efficient in asserting our will to power. The very question "Is it true?" apropos of some statement is supplanted by another question: "Under what power con­ditions can this statement be uttered?" What we get instead of the universal truth is a multitude of perspectives, or, as it is fashionable to put it today, of "narratives" – not only of literature, but also of politics, religion, science, they are all different narratives, stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, and the ultimate goal of ethics is to guarantee the neutral space in which this multitude of narratives can peacefully coexist, in which everyone, from ethnic to sexual minorities, will have the right and possibility to tell his/her story. The two philosophers of today's global capitalism are the two great Left-liberal "progres­sives," Richard Rorty and Peter Singer – honest in their respective stances. Rorty defines the basic coordinates: the fundamental dimension of a human being is the ability to suffer, to experience pain and humiliation – consequently, since humans are symbolic animals, the fundamental right is the right to nar­rate one's experience of suffering and humiliation.2 Singer then provides the Darwinian background.3