### Off 1

#### CP Text: The United States Federal Government should abolish prisons, jails, and detention centers in the United States.

#### The CP solves the case, an exploration of the capitalist and racist prison system can help us rethink and change the future. The criminal justice system punishes people because of economic gains and only complete abolition of prisons can break down this system.

Angela **Davis**20**03**. Are prisons obsolete? seven stories press, p. 36-39

**There are aspects of our history that we need to interrogate and rethink, the recognition of which may** help us to adopt more complicated, critical postures toward the present and the future. I have focused on the work of a few scholars whose work urges us to raise questions about the past, present, and future. Curtin, for example, is not simply content with offering us the possibility of reexamining the place of mining and steelwork in the lives of black people in Alabama. She also uses her research to urge us to think about the uncanny parallels between the convict lease system in the nineteenth century and prison privatization in the twenty-first.**In the late nineteenth century, coal companies wished to keep their skilled prison laborers as long as they could, leading to denials of “short time.” Today, a slightly different economic incentive lcan lead to similar consequences. CCA** [Corrections Corporation of America] i**s paid per prisoner.** If the supply dries up, or too many are released too early, their profits are affected... Longer prison terms mean greater profits, but the larger point is that**the profit motive promotes the expansion of imprisonment. The persistence of the prison as the main form of punishment, with its racist and sexist dimensions, has created this historical continuity between the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century convict lease system and the privatized prison business today.**While the convict lease system was legally abolished,**its structures of exploitation have reemerged in the patterns of privatization, and, more generally, in the wide-ranging corporatization of punishment** that has produced a prison industrial complex. If the prison continues to dominate the landscape of punishment throughout this century and into the next, what might await coming generations of impoverished African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian-Americans? Given the parallels between the prison and slavery, a productive exercise might consist in speculating about what the present might look like if slavery or its successor, the convict lease system had not been abolished. To be sure, I am not suggesting that the abolition of slavery and the lease system has produced an era of equality and justice. On the contrary, racism surreptitiously defines social and economic structures in ways that are difficult to identify and thus are much more damaging. In some states, for example, more than one-third of black men have been labeled felons. In Alabama and Florida, once a felon, always a felon, which entails the loss of status as a rights-bearing citizen.**One of the grave consequences of the powerful reach of the prison was the 2000 (s)election of George W. Bush as president.** If only the black men and women denied the right to vote because of an actual or presumed felony record had been allowed to cast their ballots, Bush would not be in the White House today. And perhaps we would not be dealing with the awful costs of the War on Terrorism declared during the first year of his administration. If not for his election, the people of Iraq might not have suffered death, destruction, and environmental poisoning by U.S. military forces. As appalling as the current political situation may be, imagine what our lives might have become if we were still grappling with the institution of slavery--or the convict lease system or racial segregation. But we do not have to speculate about living with the consequences of the prison. There is more than enough evidence in the lives of men and women who have been claimed by ever more repressive institutions and who are denied access to their families, their communities, to educational opportunities, to productive and creative work, to physical and mental recreation. And there is even more compelling evidence about the damage wrought by the expansion of the prison system in the schools located in poor communities of color that replicate the structures and regimes of the prison. When children attend schools that place a greater value on discipline and security than on knowledge and intellectual development, they are attending prep schools for prison. If this is the predicament we face today, what might the future hold if the prison system acquires even greater prescence in our society? In the nineteenth century, antislavery activists insisted that as long as slavery continued, the future of democracy was bleak indeed.**In the twenty-first century, antiprison activists insist that a fundamental requirement for the revitalization of democracy is the long-overdue abolition of the prison system.**

#### We endorse an abolitionist pedagogy, only imaging a post-prison world can we epistemologically divorce ourselves from the norms of the prison-industrial complex which the aff maintains

Rodríguez 10(Dylan – Professor and Chair of Ethnic Studies at UC Davis and a founding member of Critical Resistance, The Disorientation of the Teaching Act: Abolition as Pedagogical Position, Radical Teacher, Number 88, Summer 2010, MUSE Pg 12-15)

A compulsory deferral of abolitionist pedagogical possibilities composes the largely unaddressed precedent of teaching in the current historical period. It is this deferral—generally unacknowledged and largely presumed—that both undermines the emergence of an abolitionist pedagogical praxis and illuminates abolitionism’s necessity as a dynamic practice of social transformation, over and against liberal and progressive appropriations of “critical/radical pedagogy.” Contrary to the thinly disguised ideological Alinskyism that contemporary liberal, progressive, critical, and “radical” teaching generally and tacitly assumes in relation to the prison regime, what is usually required, and what usually works as a strategy for teaching against the carceral common sense, is a pedagogical approachthat asks the unaskable, posits the necessity of the impossible, and embraces the creative danger inherent in liberationist futures. About a decade of teaching a variety of courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels at one of the most demographically diverse research universities in the United States (the University [End Page 12] of California, Riverside) has allowed me the opportunity to experiment with the curricular content, assignment form, pedagogical mode, and conceptual organization of coursework that directly or tangentially addresses the formation of the U.S. prison regime and prison industrial complex. Students are consistently (and often unanimously) eager to locate their studies within an abolitionist genealogy—often understanding their work as potentially connected to a living history of radical social movements and epistemological-political revolt—and tend to embrace the high academic demands and rigor of these courses with far less resistance and ambivalence than in many of my other Ethnic Studies courses. There are some immediate analytical and scholarly tools that form a basic pedagogical apparatus for productively exploding the generalized common sense that creates and surrounds the U.S. prison regime. In fact, it is crucial for teachers and students to collectively understand that it is precisely the circulation and concrete enactment of this common sense that makes it central to the prison regime, not simply an ideological “supplement” of it. Put differently, many students and teachers have a tendency to presume that the cultural symbols and popular discourses that signify and give common sense meaning to prisons and policing are external to the prison regime, as if these symbols and discourses (produced through mass media, state spokespersons and elected officials, right-wing think tanks, video games, television crime dramas, etc.) simply amount to “bad” or “deceptive” propaganda that conspiratorially hide some essential “truth” about prisons that can be uncovered. This is a seductive and self-explanatory, but far too simplistic, way of understanding how the prison regime thrives. What we require, instead, is a sustained analytical discussion that considers how multiple layers of knowledge—including common sense and its different cultural forms—are constantly producing a “lived truth” of policing and prisons that has nothing at all to do with an essential, objective truth. Rather, this fabricated, lived truth forms the template of everyday life through which we come to believe that we more or less understand and “know” the prison and policing apparatus, and which dynamically produces our consent and/or surrender to its epochal oppressive violence.As a pedagogical tool, this framework compels students and teachers to examine how deeply engaged they are in the violent common sense of the prison and the racist state. Who is left for dead in the common discourse of crime, “innocence,” and “guilt”? How has the mundane institutionalized violence of the racist state become so normalized as to be generally beyond comment? What has made the prison and policing apparatus in its current form appear to be so permanent, necessary, and immovable within the common sense of social change and historical transformation? In this sense, teachers and students can attempt to concretely understand how they are a dynamic part of the prison regime’s production and reproduction—and thus how they might also be part of its abolition through the work of building and teaching a radical and liberatory common sense (this is political work that anyone can do, ideally as part of a community of social movement). Additionally, the abolitionist teacher can prioritize a rigorous—and vigorous—critique of the endemic complicities of liberal/progressive reformism to the [End Page 13] transformation, expansion, and ultimate reproduction of racist state violence and (proto)genocide; this entails a radical critique of everything from the sociopolitical legacies of “civil rights” and the oppressive capacities of “human rights” to the racist state’s direct assimilation of 1970s-era “prison reform” agendas into the blueprints for massive prison expansion discussed above.17 The abolitionist teacher must be willing to occupy the difficult and often uncomfortable position of political leadership in the classroom. To some, this reads as a direct violation of Freirian conceptions of critical pedagogy, but I would argue that it is really an elaboration and amplification of the revolutionary spirit at the heart of Freire’s entire lifework. That is, how can a teacher expect her/his students to undertake the courageous and difficult work of inhabiting an abolitionist positionality—even if only as an “academic” exercise—unless the teacher herself/himself embodies, performs, and oozes that very same political desire? In fact, it often seems that doing the latter is enough to compel many students (at least momentarily) to become intimate and familiar with the allegedly impossible. Finally, the horizon of the possible is only constrained by one’s pedagogical willingness to locate a particular political struggle (here, prison abolition) within the long and living history of liberation movements. In this context, “prison abolition” can be understood as one important strain within a continuously unfurling fabric of liberationist political horizons, in which the imagination of the possible and the practical is shaped but not limited by the specific material and institutional conditions within which one lives. It is useful to continually ask: on whose shoulders does one sit, when undertaking the audacious identifications and political practices endemic to an abolitionist pedagogy? There is something profoundly indelible and emboldening in realizing that one’s “own” political struggle is deeply connected to a vibrant, robust, creative, and beautiful legacy of collective imagination and creative social labor (and of course, there are crucial ways of comprehending historical liberation struggles in all their forms, from guerilla warfare to dance). While I do not expect to arrive at a wholly satisfactory pedagogical endpoint anytime soon, and am therefore hesitant to offer prescriptive examples of “how to teach” within an abolitionist framework, I also believe that rigorous experimentation and creative pedagogical radicalism is the very soul of this praxis. There is, in the end, no teaching formula or pedagogical system that finally fulfills the abolitionist social vision, there is only a political desire that understands the immediacy of struggling for human liberation from precisely those forms of systemic violence and institutionalized dehumanization that are most culturally and politically sanctioned, valorized, and taken for granted within one’s own pedagogical moment. To refuse [End Page 14] or resist this desire is to be unaccountable to the historical truth of our moment, in which the structural logic and physiological technologies of social liquidation (removal from or effective neutralization within civil society) have merged with history’s greatest experiment in punitive human captivity, a linkage that increasingly lays bare racism’s logical outcome in genocide.18

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#### Performance is not a mode of resistance – 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

Phelan 96—chair of New York University's Department of Performance Studies (Peggy, Unmarked: the politics of performance, ed published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005, 146-9)

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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 betweentheart 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 147 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. 148 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.”4 149 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.

#### Their attachment to competition represents a relationship of *cruel optimism* to the ballot—the ballot, the source of subjectification and violence, is invested with optimism rather than productive distance

Berlant 2006 (Lauren, Professor of Literature at the University of Chicago, “Cruel Optimism” in *differences* 17.3)

When we talk about an object of desire, we are really talk- ing about a cluster of promises we want someone or something to make to us and make possible for us. This cluster of promises could be embed- ded in a person, a thing, an institution, a text, a norm, a bunch of cells, smells, a good idea—whatever. To phrase “the object of desire” as a cluster of promises is to allow us to encounter what is incoherent or enigmatic in our attachments, not as confirmation of our irrationality, but as an explanation for our sense of our endurance in the object, insofar as prox- imity to the object means proximity to the cluster of things that the object promises, some of which may be clear to us while others not so much. In other words, all attachments are optimistic. That does not mean that they all feel optimistic: one might dread, for example, returning to a scene of hunger or longing or the slapstick reiteration of a lover or parent’s typi- cal misrecognition. But the surrender to the return to the scene where the object hovers in its potentialities is the operation of optimism as an affective form (see Ghent). “Cruel optimism” names a relation of attachment to compro- mised conditions of possibility. What is cruel about these attachments, and not merely inconvenient or tragic, is that the subjects who have x in their lives might not well endure the loss of their object or scene of desire, even though its presence threatens their well-being, because whatever the content of the attachment, the continuity of the form of it provides something of the continuity of the subject’s sense of what it means to keep on living on and to look forward to being in the world. This phrase points to a condition different than that of melancholia, which is enacted in the subject’s desire to temporize an experience of the loss of an object/scene with which she has identified her ego continuity. Cruel optimism is the condition of maintaining an attachment to a problematic object in advance of its loss.¶ One might point out that all objects/scenes of desire are prob- lematic, in that investments in them and projections onto them are less about them than about the cluster of desires and affects we manage to keep magnetized to them. I have indeed wondered whether all optimism is cruel, because the experience of loss of the conditions of its reproduction can be so breathtakingly bad. But some scenes of optimism are crueler than others: where cruel optimism operates, the very vitalizing or ani- mating potency of an object/scene of desire contributes to the attrition of the very thriving that is supposed to be made possible in the work of attachment in the first place. This might point to something as banal as a scouring love, but it also opens out to obsessive appetites, patriotism, a career, all kinds of things. One makes affective bargains about the costliness of one’s attachments, usually unconscious ones, most of which keep one in proximity to the scene of desire/attrition.¶ To understand cruel optimism as an aesthetic of attachment requires embarking on an analysis of the modes of rhetorical indirection that manage the strange activity of projection into an enabling object that is also disabling. I learned how to do this from reading Barbara Johnson’s work on apostrophe and free indirect discourse. In her poetics of indi- rection, each of these rhetorical modes is shaped by the ways a writing subjectivity conjures other ones so that, in a performance of phantasmatic intersubjectivity, the writer gains superhuman observational authority, enabling a performance of being made possible by the proximity of the object. Because the dynamics of this scene are something like what I am describing in the optimism of attachment, I will describe the shape of my transference with her thought.

#### The impact is to turn the case, takeout solvency- and an independent trauma disadadvantage—your frame produces the revolutionary hope that debate and society might change but ultimately reinstitutes the same in a way that solidifies and naturalizes divisions within the debate community

Berlant 2006 (Lauren, Professor of Literature at the University of Chicago, “Cruel Optimism” in *differences* 17.3)

It is striking that these moments of optimism, which mark a possibility that the habits of a history might not be reproduced, release an overwhelmingly negative force: one predicts such effects in traumatic scenes, but it is not usual to think about an optimistic event as having the same potential consequences. The conventional fantasy that a revolu- tionary lifting of being might happen in proximity to a new object/scene would predict otherwise than that a person or a group might prefer, after all, to surf from episode to episode while leaning toward a cluster of vaguely phrased prospects. And yet: at a certain degree of abstraction both from trauma and optimism, the experience of self-dissolution, radi- cally reshaped consciousness, new sensoria, and narrative rupture can look similar; the emotional flooding in proximity to a new object can also produce a similar grasping toward stabilizing form, a reanchoring in the symptom’s predictability.¶ I have suggested that the particular ways in which identity and desire are articulated and lived sensually within capitalist culture produce such counterintuitive overlaps. But it would be reductive to read the preceding as a claim that anyone’s subjective transaction with the optimistic structure of value in capital produces the knotty entailments of cruel optimism as such. This essay focuses on artworks that explicitly remediate singularities into cases of nonuniversal but general abstraction, providing narrative scenarios of how people learn to identify, manage, and maintain the hazy luminosity of their attachment to being x and having x, given that their attachments were promises and not possessions after all. Geoff Ryman’s historical novel Was provides a different kind of limit case of cruel optimism. Linking agrarian labor, the culture industries, and therapy culture through four encounters with The Wizard of Oz, its pursuit of the affective continuity of trauma and optimism in self-unfold- ing excitement is neither comic, tragic, nor melodramatic, but metaformal: it absorbs all of these into a literary mode that validates fantasy (from absorption in pretty things to crazy delusion) as a life-affirming defense against the attritions of ordinary history.¶ Was constructs a post-traumatic drama that is held together by the governing consciousness of Bill Davison, a mental health worker, a white heterosexual Midwesterner whose only intimate personal brush with trauma has been ambivalence toward his fiancée but whose profes- sional capacity to enter into the impasse with his patients, and to let their impasses into him, makes him the novel’s optimistic remainder, a rich witness. The first traumatic story told is about the real Dorothy Gale, spelled Gael, partly, I imagine, to link up the girl who’s transported to Oz on a strong breeze to someone in prison, and also to link her to the Gaelic part of Scotland, home of the historical novel, the genre whose affective and political conventions shape explicitly Ryman’s quasi-documentary inclusion of experiences and memories whose traces are in archives, land- scapes, and bodies scattered throughout Kansas, Canada, and the United States. Like Cooter, this Dorothy Gael uses whatever fantasy she can scrap together to survive her scene of hopeless historical embeddedness. But her process is not to drift vaguely, but intensely, by way of multigeneric inven- tion: dreams, fantasies, private plays, psychotic projection, aggressive quiet, lying, being a loud bully and a frank truth teller. Dorothy’s creativity makes a wall of post-traumatic noise, as she has been abandoned by her parents, raped and shamed by her Uncle Henry Gulch, and shunned by other children for being big, fat, and ineloquent.¶ Part 2 of Was tells the story of Judy Garland as the child Frances Gumm. On the Wizard of Oz set she plays Dorothy Gale as desexualized sweetheart, her breasts tightly bound so that she can remain a child and therefore have her childhood stolen from her. It is not stolen through rape, but by parents bound up in their own fantasies of living through children in terms of money and fame (Gumm’s mother) or sex (Gumm’s father, whose object choice was young boys). The third story in Was is about a fictional gay man, a minor Hollywood actor named Jonathan, whose fame comes from being the monster in serial killer movies titled The Child Minder and who, as the book begins, is offered a part in a touring Wizard of Oz company while he is entering aids dementia. All of these stories are about the cruelty of optimism for people without control over the material condi- tions of their lives and whose relation to fantasy is all that protects them from being destroyed by other people and the nation. I cannot do justice here to the singularities of what optimism makes possible and impossible in this entire book but want to focus on a scene that makes the whole book possible. In this scene, Dorothy Gael encounters a substitute teacher, Frank Baum, in her rural Kansas elementary school.¶ “The children,” writes Ryman, “knew the Substitute was not a real teacher because he was so soft” (168). “Substitute” derives from the word “succeed,” and the sense of possibility around the changeover is deeply embedded in the word. A substitute brings optimism if he hasn’t yet been defeated—by life or by the students. He enters their lives as a new site for attachment, a dedramatized possibility. He is by definition a placeholder, a space of abeyance, an aleatory event. His coming is not personal—he is not there for anyone in particular. The amount of affect released around him says something about the intensity of the children’s available drive to be less dead, numb, neutralized, or crazy with habit; but it says nothing about what it would feel like to be in transit between the stale life and all its others, or whether that feeling would lead to something good.¶ Of course, often students are cruel to substitutes, out of excite- ment at the unpredictable and out of not having fear or transference to make them docile or even desiring of a recognition that has no time to be built. But this substitute is special to Dorothy: he is an actor, like her parents; he teaches them Turkish, and tells them about alternative histo- ries lived right now and in the past (171). Dorothy fantasizes about Frank Baum not in a narrative way, but with a mixture of sheer pleasure and defense: “Frank, Frank, as her uncle put his hands on her” (169); then she berates herself for her “own unworthiness” (169) because she knows “how beautiful you are and I know how ugly I am and how you could never have anything to do with me” (174). She says his name, Frank, over and over: it “seemed to sum up everything that was missing from her life” (169). Yet, face to face she cannot bear the feeling of relief from her life that the substitute’s being near provides for her. She alternately bristles and melts at his deference, his undemanding kindness. She mocks him and disrupts class to drown out her tenderness, but obeys him when he asks her to leave the room to just write something, anything.¶ What she comes back with is a lie, a wish. Her dog, Toto, had been murdered by her aunt and uncle, who hated him and who had no food to spare for him. But the story she hands in to the substitute is a substitute: it is about how happy she and Toto are. It includes sentences about how they play together and how exuberant he is, running around yelping “like he is saying hello to everything” (174). Imaginary Toto sits on her lap, licks her hand, has a cold nose, sleeps on her lap, and eats food that Auntie Em gives her to give him. The essay suggests a successful life, a life where love circulates and extends its sympathies, rather than the life she actually lives, where “[i]t was as if they had all stood back-to-back, shouting ‘love’ at the tops of their lungs, but in the wrong direction, away from each other” (221). It carries traces of all of the good experience Dorothy has ever had. The essay closes this way: “I did not call him Toto. That is the name my mother gave him when she was alive. It is the same as mine” (175).¶ Toto, Dodo, Dorothy: the teacher sees that the child has opened up something in herself, let down a defense, and he is moved by the brav- ery of her admission of identification and attachment. But he makes the mistake of being mimetic in response, acting soft toward her in a way he might imagine that she seeks to be: “I’m very glad,” he murmured, “that you have something to love as much as that little animal.” Dorothy goes ballistic at this response and insults Baum, but goes on to blurt out all of the truths of her life, in public, in front of the other students. She talks nonstop about being raped and hungry all the time, about the murder of her dog, and about her ineloquence: “I can’t say anything,” she closes (176). That phrase means she can’t do anything to change anything. From here she regresses to yelping and tries to dig a hole in the ground, to become the size she feels, and also to become, in a sense, an embodiment of the last thing she loved. After that, Dorothy goes crazy, lives in a fantasy world of her own, wandering homeless and free, especially, of the capacity to reflect on loss in the modalities of realism, tragedy, or melodrama. To protect her last iota of optimism, she goes crazy.¶ In Was, Baum goes on to write The Wizard of Oz as a gift of alternativity to the person who can’t say or do anything to change her life materially and who has taken in so much that one moment of relief from herself produces a permanent crack in the available genres of her survival. In “What Is a Minor Literature?” Deleuze and Guattari exhort people to become minor in exactly that way, to deterritorialize from the normal by digging a hole in sense, like a dog or a mole. Creating an impasse, a space of internal displacement, in this view, shatters the normal hierar- chies, clarities, tyrannies, and confusions of compliance with autonomous individuality. This strategy looks promising in the Ashbery poem. But in “Exchange Value,” a moment of relief produces a psychotic defense against the risk of loss in optimism. For Dorothy Gael, in Was, the optimism of attachment to another living being is itself the cruelest slap of all.¶ From this cluster we can understand a bit more of the magnetic attraction to cruel optimism, with its suppression of the risks of attach- ment. A change of heart, a sensorial shift, intersubjectivity, or transference with a promising object cannot generate on its own the better good life: nor can the collaboration of a couple, brothers, or pedagogy. The vague futurities of normative optimism produce small self-interruptions as the utopias of structural inequality. The texts we have looked at here stage moments when it could become otherwise, but shifts in affective atmo- sphere are not equal to changing the world. They are, here, only pieces of an argument about the centrality of optimistic fantasy to reproducing and surviving in zones of compromised ordinariness. And that is one way to take the measure of the impasse of living in the overwhelmingly present moment.

#### And our alternative is to understand the content of the debate itself as an expression of the logic of symbolic exchange rather than exchange value—instead of viewing the debate as a referendum on difference and racism, we should understand the debate as a space that refuses to be a part of the broader economy of debate that the 1AC has critiqued—the fact that we did not read framework or other reactionary positions suggests the alternative of our performance in the debate space itself constitutes opposition to broadly problematic trends in debate

Grace 2000 (Victoria, Professor of Sociology at Canterbury University, *Baudrillard’s Challenge* p. 18-19)

¶ Symbolic exchange is the radical other from the economic. According to Baudrillard, the economic, in its classical and neo-classical form, 11 is born when what the object ‘is’ is assumed to reside within it, it has an essence; when the object attains its value in accordance with an abstract code that enables its relation to other objects to be ascertained through a logic of equivalence which in turn obtains its rationale from the ideology of utility and use value; and when the individual emerges as a ‘subject’ whose relation to the world of objects is articulated primarily through the ideology of need (and, with psychoanalysis, desire). From this critical viewpoint, the notion of the ‘individual’ as it emerged from the Enlightenment period with needs, ‘liberated’ from the ties and constraints of a previous era, is an abstraction. And the discourse of liberation can be understood as a process of interiorising subjectivity resulting from the dichotomous separation of subject and object. This ‘subject’ of industrialising modernity has an essence, ‘an abstract essence over which the identity of the subject comes to fix itself’ (MOP: 95). By contrast, symbolic exchange is a form of exchange, a form of construction of objects and their meaning, that is antithetical to the economic. The poles of the exchange are not automatised; there is neither essence nor absolute separation of subject from object. Both are continually transformed through the exchange. There is no identity. 12 The ontology of objects is inexorably ambivalent. Goods are not produced, nor do they exist as commodities or products. Most importantly, goods are destined to circulate in a social process of exchange that augments the social in terms of the creation and destruction, the giving and returning or passing on, of the ‘gift’. This process negates the possibility of power through accumulation. The individual is not an ‘individual’ with an interior psychology, a subjectivity, an identity, with needs and desires. Within this construct of the symbolic exchange, language is symbolic, similarly ambivalent, and must be exchanged. Words evoke, point, seduce, act rather than connote and denote. And they circulate. Stockpiles of words that do not circulate and are not exchanged are, as Baudrillard writes, more deadly than the accumulation of waste from industrialisation (SE&D: 203). The logic of the symbolic and symbolic exchange is one of ambivalence and transformation through circulation; the positive and the negative, presence and absence (if one can talk in these terms), are always activated.

### Off 2

#### CP Text: My partner and I advocate the entirety of the 1AC except its reading of the resolution.

#### The power of the president is purely symbolic – their use of the resolution is an appeal to this symbolic order and gives it mastery over this simulated space

Rubenstein 08 (Diane – Professor of Political Rhetoric and Science at Cornell University “This Is Not a President: Sense, Nonsense, and the American Political Imaginary” pp. 74-75)

-We might as well insert the "id" -a president without depth. The scandal that the trompe l'oeil poses for political and esthetic representation since the Renaissance is situated in its "unreal reversion" (S, 6o). The aim of the reconstructed Oval Office in both Disneyland and Washington is to supply a sign that will fool (trompe) the eye and abolish the distinction of reference. (Or, as in Bush's own words: "This isn't any signal. It's a direct statement. If it's a signal, fine.")5 In the history of the late-twentieth-century presidency, Bush marks a peculiar instance of the relation of reference to signification. While American presidents since Gerald Ford have been empty signifiers, rarely has there been such a Lacanian relation to language as the one that Bush daily enacts. Bushspeak may be the closest approximation outremer of the Lacanian unconscious: c;a parle: "It says what it knows while the subject does not know it. "6 With Bush, we have a presidential subject that cannot be understood as a signified (i.e., as objectively knowable). This is preparation for the· final turn of the screw: Quayle as Baudrillard's fatal strategy, where "the metamorphosis, tactics and strategies of the object exceed d>e subject's understanding."7 (Carter posed problems of a different psychoanalytical order. For he demonstrated the fissure between idea and affect. Carter always seemed to smile at the wrong time.) The end-of-the-millenni= presidency is a twin appeal to the "image repertoire" and the symbolic order. As image repertoire, it can be read as a litany of bad presidential performances: "LBJ abusing his dogs and exposing his belly; Nixon hunched and glistening like a concerned toad, Gerald Ford tripping over .... " Reagan, as a hyperreal president, could always satisfy our iconic interests: "Reagan was nice as Iago was honest because his image repertoire required it of him."8 Moreover, Reagan was always tangible as symbol if not as image. In the difference between image repertoire and the symbolic order we can first glimpse the subde passage from hyperreality to seduction. What sets Bush apart from Reagan is his intractable opacity. For Bush is a simulacra without perspective. He appears as a pure artifact (our "environmental" president, our "education" president) against a vertical backdrop. Bush replaces Reagan's tangibility with the "tactile vertigo of the afterimage." Richard Goldstein concurs: "now we're in the grip of something that no longer requires a spokesman. "9 This tactile vertigo recounts "the subject's insane desire to obliterate his own image and thereby vanish" (S. 62). Life becomes a "Jeff Koons tableau." Koons the artist and Bush the seducer know how to let the signs hang. Bush/Koons, suspended in ether. This Is Not a President I 7 5 Bush not only follows the hyperrealism of neo-geo/Reagan but recalls the surrealism of Ger.ald Ford. Both share the same knack for the tautology: "Things are more like they are now than they ever have been" (Ford) 10 ; "It's no exaggeration to say the undecideds could go one way or another" (Bush)." They juxtapose physical against linguistic slapstick: Ford trips; Bush slips linguistically. If Gerald Ford recalls the Jerry Lewis of the Lewis-Martin movies in which a subjective irony might still be possible, Bush is most reminiscent of the movies Lewis produced after his split with Martin.12 An internally dissociated subject emerges in the linguistic parapraxis as Bush stages his own disappearance. Pronouns flee, then verbs, in the vanishing act of his State of the Union address: "Ambitious aims? Of course! Easy to do? Far from it." 13 We are left with nothing but the irony of the object, which underscores the tie between Lacan's linguisterie ("linguistricks") and Bushspeak: "what might be called a man, the male speaking being strictly disappears as an effect of discourse by being inscribed within it solely as castration." 14 Ghosts that haunt the emptiness of the stage -Baudrillard (S, 6o) I'm going to be so much better a president for having been at the CIA that you are not going to believe it. -George H. W. Bush 15 What seduces us with Bush, as in the trompe l'oeil, is its missing dimension. And if Ronald Reagan was a hologram, Bush is, in Baudrillard's words, "a superficial abyss." Opposed to Reagan's televisual sarcasm ("How do I spell relief? V-E-T-0"), Bush is a visual non sequitur. Bush affords the same perspectual pleasure as that of the trompe l'oeil (as well as its secret undermining of language), even as he takes us back to our earliest lessons of political representation. Since Machiavelli, power has always-already been a simulation model, only an effect of perspective. Baudrillard recounts that at the heart of the ducal palaces of Urbina and Gubbio were tiny trompe l'oeil sanctuaries, inverted microcosms whose space was actualized by simulation. These sanctuaries (studio los) were blind spots in the palace and were placed at the heart of the prince's politico-architectural space. Through a subversive metonymy, they invite an allegorical reading: that the prince's power is only mastery of a simulated space. This is the prince's secret.16

#### **This makes us passive in the face of the military industrial complex—the impact is endless militarized violence**

Bacevich 10 (Andrew – PhD in American Diplomatic History from Princeton University. Chair of International Relations; Professor of International Relations and History at Boston University “Washington Rules: America’s Path to Permanent War” pg. 31-33) f

Pretending to the role of Decider, a president all too often becomes little more than the medium through which power is exercised. Especially on matters related to national security, others manufacture or manipulate situations to which presidents then react. Only in the most nominal sense did Harry Truman decide to bomb Hiroshima. By the summer of 1945 the momentum dictating that the atomic bomb should be used had become all but irresistible. Much the same can be said about John F. Kennedy's 1961 decision to launch the Bay of Pigs operation, Lyndon Johnson's 1965 decision to commit U.S. combat troops to Vietnam, or even George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003. In each case, the erstwhile commander in chief did little more than ratify a verdict that others had already rendered. Yet with rare exceptions, all presidents-even those held responsible for astonishing blunders-maintain the fiction of having remained fully in charge from start to finish. Thus do they sustain the cult of the modern presidency. Dwight D. Eisenhower's justly famous "Farewell Address" stands out as one of those rare exceptions.18 On the eve of leaving office-although not before-Eisenhower offered the American people a glimpse of powerful forces that lay behind and beyond presidential control. He honestly, accurately, and courageously (if belatedly) let his fellow citizens in on the secret that, in Washington, appearances were profoundly deceptive. In describing and decrying what he called the "military-industrial complex," Ike provided a sobering tutorial in political reality, disabusing Americans of civics book notions of a political apparatus purposefully committed to advancing some collective vision of the common good. What Americans mistook for politics-the putative rivalry that pitted Democrats against Republicans, the wrangling between Congress and the White House-actually amounted to little more than theater, he implied. Behind the curtain, a consensus forged of ambition, access, money, fevered imaginations, and narrow institutional interests determined the nation's actual pri0rities. Although Eisenhower was about to surrender his office to a handsome young successor who promised dramatic change-neither the first nor last president to make such a commitment-he knew that John Kennedy's personal qualities, however attractive, counted for little given the forces arrayed against him. "The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist," the outgoing president warned. "We should take nothing for granted." Eisenhower's unvarnished warning reflected his own appreciation of a troubling new reality. The nation's "immense military establishment" married to a "permanent armaments industry of vast proportions" wielded influenceeconomic, political, even spiritual"-that reached into "every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government." In effect, by 1961, semiwarriors-those who derived their power and influence by perpetuating an atmosphere of national security crisis-had gained de facto control of The U.S. government. Eisenhower chose not to acknowledge that he himself had served as their ally and enabler. Nor did he explain why he had waited until the eve of his return to private\_ Iife to expose the existence of this misplaced power. Still, given the source, Ike's admission was nothing less than revelatory: Initiatives undertaken to ensure national security had given rise to new institutions and habits deeply antithetical to traditional American values. These new forces had yielded unwelcome consequences that Eisenhower himself, whether as general or as president, had neither intended nor anticipated, threatening American democracy. To expect that Washington would remedy a problem that Washington itself had created was, as Eisenhower understood, a delusion. "Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry," he insisted, could keep semiwarriors on a sufficiently short leash "so that security and liberty may prosper together." The outgoing president urged ordinary Americans to wake up, pay attention, and reclaim their democracy

### Case

#### Focus on narratives of experience trades-off with broad structural critique and social reforms

Coughlin 95 (Anne M. Coughlin, “Resisting the Self: Autobiographical Performances in Outsider Scholarship Author(s)”, Virginia Law Review 81.5, August 1995 pp. 1229-1340, Jstor, DA: 18 November 2013, mjb)

Precisely because it appeals to readers 'fascination with the self- sufficiency r,esiliency and uniqueness of the totemic individual privileged by liberal political theory t,here is a risk that autobio- graphical discourse is a fallible, even co-opted,instrument for the social reformesn visioned by the outsiders. By affirming the myths of individual success in our culture, autobiography reproduces the¶ political, economic, social and psychological structures that attend suchsuccess.21'In this light, the outsider autobiographies unwit- tingly 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 h,er decision to register her experience in autobiographical dliscourse will have a significant effect on theselfshereproduces.21H2er story will solicit the public's attention to the life of one individual a,nd it will privi- lege her individual desires and rights above the needs and obliga- tions of a collectivity

#### Use of experience provides the only ability to identify the effects of dominant ideologies and patterns without analyzing how they have been socially constructed or their mechanisms – makes interrupting the system impossible

Scott 91 (Joan W. Scott is the professor of social science at the Institute for

Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey.—Critical Inuiry, 17.4.773-797, University of Chicago Press, “Evidence of Experience”, DA” 7 January 2014, mjb)

Not only does homosexuality define heterosexuality by specifying its negative limits, and not only is the boundary between the two a shifting one, but both operate within the structures of the same "phallic¶ economy"-an economy whose workings are not taken into account by studies that seek simply to make homosexual experience visible. One way¶ to describe this economy is to say that desire is defined through the pur-¶ suit of the phallus-that veiled and evasive signifier which is at once fully¶ present but unattainable, and which gains its power through the promise¶ it holds out but never entirely fulfills.'i Theorized this way,homosexuality¶ and heterosexuality work according to the same economy, their social institutions mirroring one another. The social institutions through which¶ gay sex is practiced may invert those associated with dominant heterosex-¶ ual behavior (promiscuous versus restrained, public versus private, anony- mous versus known, and so on), but they both operate within a system structured according to presence and lack."ITo the extent that this system¶ constructs desiring subjects (those who are legitimate as well as those who are not), it simultaneously establishes them and itself as given and outside¶ of time, as the way things work, the way they inevitably are.¶ The project of making experience visible precludes analysis of the¶ workings of this system and of its historicity; instead, it reproduces its¶ terms. We come to appreciate the consequences of the closeting of homo- sexuals and we understand repression as an interested act of power or¶ domination; alternative behaviors and institutions also become available to us. What we don't have is a way of placing those alternatives within the¶ framework of (historically contingent) dominant patterns of sexuality and the ideology that supports them. We know they exist, but not how they have been constructed; we know their existence offers a critique of norma- tive practices, but not the extent of the critique. Making visible the experi-¶ ence of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms, but not their inner workings or logics; we know that difference exists, but we don't understand it as relationally constituted. For that we need to attend to the historical processes that, through discourse, position subjects and produce their experiences. It is not individuals who have experience,¶ but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this¶ definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the author- itative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is pro- duced. To think about experience in this way is to historicize it as well as to historicize the identities it produces. This kind of historicizing represents a reply to the many contemporary historians who have argued that an un-¶ problematized "experience" is the foundation of their practice; it is a historicizing that implies critical scrutiny of all explanatory categories usu- ally taken for granted, including the category of "experience."

**The problem is the USFG and its policies; the solution lies in redirecting the institution to solve the problems. Our methodology embodies the necessary steps to solve problems; ballot represents an endorsement of steps.**

**Stiglitz ’13** (http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/02/16/equal-opportunity-our-national-myth/ Equal Opportunity, Our National Myth By JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ) Joseph E. Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in economics, a professor at Columbia and a former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers and chief economist for the World Bank, is the author of “The Price of Inequality.”

Discrimination, however, is only a small part of the picture. Probably the most important reason for lack of equality of opportunity is education: both its quantity and quality. After World War II, Europe made a major effort to democratize its education systems. We did, too, with the G.I. Bill, which extended higher education to Americans across the economic spectrum. But then we changed, in several ways. While racial segregation decreased, economic segregation increased. After 1980, the poor grew poorer, the middle stagnated, and the top did better and better. Disparities widened between those living in poor localities and those living in rich suburbs — or rich enough to send their kids to private schools. A result was a widening gap in educational performance — the achievement gap between rich and poor kids born in 2001 was 30 to 40 percent larger than it was for those born 25 years earlier, the Stanford sociologist Sean F. Reardon found. Of course, there are other forces at play, some of which start even before birth. Children in affluent families get more exposure to reading and less exposure to environmental hazards. Their families can afford enriching experiences like music lessons and summer camp. They get better nutrition and health care, which enhance their learning, directly and indirectly. Americans are coming to realize that their cherished narrative of social and economic mobility is a myth. Unless current trends in education are reversed, the situation is likely to get even worse. In some cases it seems as if policy has actually been designed to reduce opportunity: government support for many state schools has been steadily gutted over the last few decades — and especially in the last few years. Meanwhile, students are crushed by giant student loan debts that are almost impossible to discharge, even in bankruptcy. This is happening at the same time that a college education is more important than ever for getting a good job. Young people from families of modest means face a Catch-22: without a college education, they are condemned to a life of poor prospects; with a college education, they may be condemned to a lifetime of living at the brink. And increasingly even a college degree isn’t enough; one needs either a graduate degree or a series of (often unpaid) internships. Those at the top have the connections and social capital to get those opportunities. Those in the middle and bottom don’t. The point is that no one makes it on his or her own. And those at the top get more help from their families than do those lower down on the ladder. Government should help to level the playing field. Americans are coming to realize that their cherished narrative of social and economic mobility is a myth. Grand deceptions of this magnitude are hard to maintain for long — and the country has already been through a couple of decades of self-deception. Without substantial policy changes, our self-image, and the image we project to the world, will diminish — and so will our economic standing and stability. Inequality of outcomes and inequality of opportunity reinforce each other — and contribute to economic weakness, as Alan B. Krueger, a Princeton economist and the chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, has emphasized. We have an economic, and not only moral, interest in saving the American dream. Policies that promote equality of opportunity must target the youngest Americans. First, we have to make sure that mothers are not exposed to environmental hazards and get adequate prenatal health care. Then, we have to reverse the damaging cutbacks to preschool education, a theme Mr. Obama emphasized on Tuesday. We have to make sure that all children have adequate nutrition and health care — not only do we have to provide the resources, but if necessary, we have to incentivize parents, by coaching or training them or even rewarding them for being good caregivers. The right says that money isn’t the solution. They’ve chased reforms like charter schools and private-school vouchers, but most of these efforts have shown ambiguous results at best. Giving more money to poor schools would help. So would summer and extracurricular programs that enrich low-income students’ skills. Finally, it is unconscionable that a rich country like the United States has made access to higher education so difficult for those at the bottom and middle. There are many alternative ways of providing universal access to higher education, from Australia’s income-contingent loan program to the near-free system of universities in Europe. A more educated population yields greater innovation, a robust economy and higher incomes — which mean a higher tax base. Those benefits are, of course, why we’ve long been committed to free public education through 12th grade. But while a 12th-grade education might have sufficed a century ago, it doesn’t today. Yet we haven’t adjusted our system to contemporary realities. The steps I’ve outlined are not just affordable but imperative. Even more important, though, is that we cannot afford to let our country drift farther from ideals that the vast majority of Americans share. We will never fully succeed in achieving Mr. Obama’s vision of a poor girl’s having exactly the same opportunities as a wealthy girl. But we could do much, much better, and must not rest until we do. Joseph E. Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in economics, a professor at Columbia and a former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers and chief economist for the World Bank, is the author of “The Price of Inequality.”

**Foregrounding of whiteness reinforces US exceptionalism, undermining solvency – their localization to intra-debate community issues is an exclamation mark**

**Carey 2009** (Jane Carey, Postcolonialism Researcher, Monach U, Leigh Boucher, School of Modern History & PLS, Marquarie U, and Katherine Ellinghaus (School of Hist Studies, Monach U), Re-Orienting Whiteness (B) 2009)

(p3-4) Arneson was not alone, as the flurry of similarly dissatisfied reviews indicated." Although not as scathing, Peter Kolchin, for example, also expressed uneasiness at the "elusive, undefined nature of whiteness," the lack of "historical grounding" of many contemporary studies, and the "over-reliance on whiteness in explaining the American past." 2° In assigning such overarching explanatory power to whiteness, he suggested, the field is prone to overstatement and overgeneralization, coming close to "portraying race as a ubiquitous and unchanging transhistorical force rather than a shifting and contingent 'construction.'" 21 Kolchin also briefly observed that one of the "most striking features" of whiteness studies is the "assumption—sometimes asserted and sometimes unspoken—that the racism they describe is uniquely American and that American whiteness can be understood in isolation." 22 The most influential U.S. scholarship, particularly that by labor historians, locates the creation of white identity entirely within historical circumstances quite specific to the United States, namely black chattel slavery and, later, mass immigration. 23 While this narrow national focus has not emerged as a prominent concern within existing critiques of the field, we argue that it is in fact of central importance. Much historical work on whiteness is even more narrowly positioned. As John Munro has outlined, it largely represents another in the series of U.S. labor history projects that have sought to answer the question Werner Sombart posed in 1906, "Why is there no socialism in the United States?," and is primarily concerned with finding "a usable past upon which an anti-capitalist and antiracist future can be envisioned." 24 This in part explains why it has largely ignored wider scholarship that does not share these, very particular, interests, and why many objections to whiteness studies have simply joined the long history of attempts to assert the primacy of class over race. 25 Despite pretensions to an almost universal applicability, distinct U.S. academic debates, as well as specific political projects and disavowals (particularly of the settler-colonial underpinnings of the United States), silently orient the field. In many ways, debates about whiteness have primarily reflected a turf war over leadership in the field of labor history in the United States. The issues at stake are far too important to allow them to be subsumed within such parochial concerns.

**Pessimism towards progressivism inverts the error and makes racism worse**

**Jones 1999** (Richard Wyn Jones is at Cardiff University, where he is currently a Professor of Politics. Professor Wyn Jones is the former Director of the Institute of Welsh Politics and professor in critical security studies at Aberystwyth University. Security, Strategy, and Critical Theory – 1999. Columbia International Affairs Online, September 1999)

An even more troubling feature of Adorno and Horkheimer’s analysis is the downplaying of individual responsibility that is implicit in their argument. If Auschwitz is the inevitable outcome of enlightenment, and if instrumental rationality is too powerful to resist, then can we expect an individual Nazi to act in a different fashion? In the hermetic society the individual is a mere cipher, and if this is the case, can any individual really be blamed for his or her behavior? These questions highlight an ethical lacuna at the heart of Dialectic of Enlightenment. Despite the obvious intentions of the authors, their analysis generates a logic that renders them unable to differentiate meaningfully between different actions in the political realm. If “nothing complicitous with this world can have any truth,” then surely everything that exists in the real world must be judged equally untrue or false. But if this is so, how are we to evaluate efforts at securing change in contemporary society? Let us consider the ending of apartheid in South Africa. Although the citizens of that country cannot be adjudged to be free after the overthrow of the apartheid system, surely they are freer. Although the establishment of liberal democracy there offers no panacea, it is a better system than the totalitarian one that it has replaced. But although Adorno and Horkheimer as individuals would almost certainly have rejoiced in the downfall of the apartheid system, as theoreticians they seem to be unable to provide us with any grounds for favoring one particular set of social institutions over another. Here we have a bizarre inversion of the relativism to which contemporary poststructuralist approaches are prone. By arguing that there are no grounds to choose between different accounts of reality, poststructuralists are inevitably forced to accept that all accounts of a given reality are true. They can make no judgment on these claims that is not arbitrary (Norris 1992; Hunter and Wyn Jones 1995). Similarly, by arguing that everything in the world is equally false, Adorno and Horkheimer can make no judgment as to why we might prefer some forms of behavior and some set of practices over others. Here the impasse into which the analysis of Dialectic of Enlightenment leads its authors stands in bold relief. The determinism and reductionism of their argument is ultimately paralyzing. It was, of course, Antonio Gramsci who popularized the injunction that all those intent on changing society should attempt to face the world with a **combination of “pessimism of the intellect” and “optimism of the will**.” This position has much to commend it given the propensity of radicals to view society with rose–tinted glasses. However, the limitations of this position are nowhere better illustrated than in Dialectic of Enlightenment, in which the pessimism is so thoroughgoing that it becomes absolutely debilitating. Any attempt to challenge the status quo already stands condemned as futile. The logical outcome of this attitude is resignation and passivity. Adorno attempted to make a virtue of the detached attitude that he and Horkheimer adopted toward the political struggles of their own age by claiming: “If one is concerned to achieve what might be possible with human beings, it is extremely difficult to remain friendly towards real people.” However, considering that it is only “real people” who can bring about a better society, Adorno’s “complex form of misanthropy” ultimately leads only to quiescence (Wiggershaus 1994: 268). Thus, despite the clear similarities in the influences and interests of the founding fathers of critical theory and Gramsci, the resignatory passivity of the authors of Dialectic of Enlightenment led them to a position on political practice far more akin to that of Oswald Spengler or Arthur Schopenhauer than to that adopted by the Sardinian Marxist Gramsci, even as he languished in a fascist prison. In view of the traditional Marxist emphasis on the unity of theory and practice, it is hardly surprising that Adorno and Horkheimer’s rejection of any attempt to orient their work toward political activity led to bitter criticism from other radical intellectuals. Perhaps the most famous such condemnation was that of Lukács, who acidly commented that the members of the Frankfurt School had taken up residence in the “Grand Hotel Abyss.” The inhabitants of this institution enjoyed all the comforts of the bourgeois lifestyle while fatalistically surveying the wreckage of life beyond its doors. Whereas Lukács’s own apologias for Stalinism point to the dangers of subordinating theoretical activity to the exigencies of day–to–day practical politics, Adorno and Horkheimer sunder theory and political practice completely, impoverishing the theoretical activity itself. Their stance leads to an aridity and scholasticism ill suited to any social theory that aspires to real–world relevance. Furthermore, the critical theorist’s position on political practice is based on an underestimation of the potential for progressive change that exists even in the most administered societies. It is instructive to contrast the attitude of Adorno and Horkheimer with that of Raymond Williams, who delivers the following broadside against “high culture Marxists” such as the members of the Frankfurt School: When the Marxists say that we live in a dying culture, and that the masses are ignorant, I have to ask them... where on earth they have lived. A dying culture, and ignorant masses, are not what I have known and see. (R. Williams 1989: 8) As I will discuss in Chapter 6, the evidence suggests that Williams is closer to the truth. People acting both individually and collectively, through social movements and state institutions, can actually influence the world around them in a progressive direction. Adorno and Horkheimer’s pessimism is unwarranted.

**Attending to the specificity of whitenesses in the context of different racial projects is necessary for political engagement—a focus on the interplay between institutions and discourse, between policy and ontology is key**

**Winant 1997** (Howard, Director, UC Center for New Racial Studies. Institute for Social, Behavioral, and Economic. Research. University of California Santa Barbara, CA, Behind Blue Eyes: Contemporary White Racial Politics, <http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/faculty/winant/whitness.html>)

Yet it would be inaccurate to describe the racial reaction of the post-civil rights era as merely a new form of "coded" white supremacy. A crucial aspect of its success was its ability to reinterpret some of the 1960s movements' most cherished demands in a conservative and individualistic discourse focused on formal equality. This was in fact a legitimate rendition of certain movement positions, which were selected, to be sure, from a generally more radical movement discourse, but not invented out of whole cloth. The frequent reference made on the right to Dr. King's phrase about "the content of their character, not the color of their skin" (Steele 1990), for example, demonstrates the possibility of rearticulating movement claims in a more pacific direction, and not coincidentally, in a direction far more palatable to whites. The neoconservative rearticulation of 1960s movement demands in the form of the "color-blind" ideal of what a racially egalitarian society would look like thus served several purposes: it did in fact embody a certain current in movement thinking; it described the limited but real accomplishments of integration, accommodation, and tolerance that were achieved in the post-1960s period; it offered a concrete vision of how US society might get "beyond race"; it allowed society's inevitable failure to do this on a large scale to be blamed on "race radicals" and "separatists," who insisted on cultivating a "victim mentality"; and, as I have mentioned, it provided a fig leaf with which to cover over the unpleasant fact that widespread discrimination, and indeed unreconstructed white supremacist attitudes, remained. \*\*\* Thus from the late 1960s on, white identity has been reinterpreted, rearticulated in a dualistic fashion: on the one hand egalitarian, on the other hand privileged; on the one hand individualistic and "color-blind," on the other hand "normalized" and white. Nowhere is this new framework of the white "politics of difference" more clearly on display than in the reaction to affirmative action policies of all sorts (in hiring, university admissions, federal contracting, etc.). Assaults on these policies, which have been developing since their introduction as tentative and quite limited efforts at racial redistribution (Johnson 1967, but see also Steinberg 1994), are currently at hysterical levels. These attacks are clearly designed to effect ideological shifts, rather than to shift resources in any meaningful way. They represent whiteness as disadvantage, something which has few precedents in US racial history (Gallagher 1995). This imaginary white disadvantage -- for which there is almost no evidence at the empirical level -- has achieved widespread popular credence, and provides the cultural and political "glue" that holds together a wide variety of reactionary racial politics. White Racial Projects Both the onset of white racial dualism and the new politicization of whiteness in the post-civil rights era reflect the fragmentation of earlier concepts of white racial identity and of white supremacy more generally. In their place, a variety of concepts of the meaning of whiteness have emerged. How can we analyze and evaluate in systematic fashion this range of white racial projects? As I have argued elsewhere (Winant 1994, Omi and Winant 1994), the concept of racial projects is crucial to understanding the dynamics of racial formation in contemporary society. In this approach, the key element in racial formation is the link between signification and structure, between what race means in a particular discursive practice and how, based upon such interpretations, social structures are racially organized. The link between meaning and structure, discourse and institution, signification and organization, is concretized in the notion of the racial project. To interpret the meaning of race in a particular way at a given time is at least implicitly, but more often explicitly, to propose or defend a certain social policy, a particular racialized social structure, a racial order. The reverse is also true: in a highly racialized society, to put in place a particular social policy, or to mobilize for social or political action, is at least implicitly, but more often explicitly, to articulate a particular set of racial meanings, to signify race in certain ways. Existing racial projects can be classified along a political spectrum, according to explicit criteria drawn from the meaning each project attaches to "whiteness." Such a classification will necessarily be somewhat schematic, since in the real world of politics and culture ideas and meanings, as well as social practices, tend to overlap in unpredictable ways. Nevertheless, I think it would be beneficial to attempt to sort out alternative conceptions of whiteness, along with the politics that both flow from and inform these conceptions. This is what I attempt here, focusing on five key racial projects, which I term far right, new right, neoconservative, neoliberal, and new abolitionist.

#### **Imagining alternative fictions is key to activating agency within the public sphere and intercollegiate policy debate. The alternative utopian counter factual serves a pre-requisite to actual change.**

McGee and Romanelli 2 POLICY DEBATE AS FICTION: IN DEFENSE OF UTOPIAN FIAT Brian McGee, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Texas Tech University and David Romanelli, PERSPECTIVES IN CONTROVERSY: Selected Essays from Contemporary Argumentation and Debate, KENNETH BRODA-BAHM, EDITOR

Few scholars would object to the mundane contention that one should compare the merits of competing policy options in policy debate. This weak sense of "making policy" does not require any pretense of government authority or official imprimatur. In this weak interpretation of "policy" as an adjective modifying "debate," the judge's decision to vote for the affirmative or negative debate team is an act of "intellectual endorsement" (Solt 130) without necessary policy-making consequences. However, the strong version of the policy-making metaphor, which insists that debaters work within the confines of extant policy-making institutions in the United States, is not satisfying.¶ The prevailing policy-making metaphor, in which debaters play the part of government agents, has three disadvantages. First, this approach would have debaters pretend to argue before a U.S. president, the members of Congress, or some other qualified maker of public policy. This judge role-playing is problematic because very few debate judges thoroughly understand the decision-making processes that elected or appointed federal officials would employ. The inability of judges to meet the requirements of the policy-making metaphor inevitably divorces debate from the "real world" of making public policy that so many defenders of the metaphor prize. Moreover, judges lack the constraints usually placed on those who craft public policy. A member of Congress is often influenced by her or his hopes for re-election,¶ while the President may support or oppose a certain bill based on its political ramifications. In short, debate judges typically are not capable of meeting the demands of the policy-making metaphor. As Dallas Perkins comments, since "the judge is not in fact a policy maker, ii appropriate that resolutions are not typically a tool of policy making" ("Counterplans" Hi¶ Second, while debate facilitates the discussion of public policy, debate does not mirror the making of public policy. In "real world" policy discussion the number of alternatives would be far greater than those considered in a typical two-hour intercollegiate debate. It would impossible to discuss all of these options intelligently in a single debate round. As Sni< argues, it "seems clear that the best possible policy decision cannot be arrived at after two-hour discussion" ("Fantasy" 13). Policy options in the "real world" are brought before committees, differences are worked out between House and Senate versions of legislation addressing the same issue, and the U.S. President may put pressure on Congressional lead to modify legislation or risk a veto.¶ Third, the policy-making metaphor asks undergraduate debaters to pretend to something that they probably will never do in the "real world."Most debaters will never hold public office or have a great deal of immediate input in the making of public policy. The involvement in U.S. politics will be much less direct, though not necessarily unimportantInsisting that debaters meet the demands of making public policy suggests that the education goal of debate is to train future generations of bureaucrats and policy wonks. Without accepti the entirety of their analysis, one can sympathize with the contention of Thomas A. Hollihi Kevin T. Baaske, and Patricia Riley that there "are 'technocrats to spare' in the boardrooms corporate America, in the defense establishment, and in the rest of the bureaucracy. We need more social critics who are capable of inspiring citizen activism" (186). While the policy-making metaphor undoubtedly encourages a debate praxis that teaches students 1 intricacies of policy analysis, a better metaphor would preserve most of these pedagogical advantages without asking students to take on roles they are not likely to play in the real world. Also, preparing students for life outside formal policy-making circles, where the vast major of them will find themselves after graduation, is presumptively desirable.¶ To summarize, the policy-making metaphor, particularly in its strong sense, unsatisfactory for guiding intercollegiate debate practice. The prevailing metaphor asks too much of debate judges and the debate format, while asking students to reject the "real world in which most of them will live. The next section provides the context required I understanding an alternative metaphor for the intercollegiate debate experience. To this point, "utopian literature" has been mentioned as an alternative frame of reference for understanding debate. Comprehending this metaphor requires a very brief discussion of the importance of Utopian and dystopian literatures in U.S. history. In this discussion, the potential of literature to influence the political process is assumed. (For example, Abraham Lincoln once credited Harriet Beecher Stowe's famous novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin, with starting the U.S. Civil War.)¶Utopian literature presents an alternative social order as being morally or practically better than the status quo in politics, law, economics, and/or interpersonal relations. The transition to this new social order might be sudden and dramatic, but nothing logically prevents a series of small, incremental steps over time from leading to the establishment of Utopia. While Utopia, the perfectly "good place that is no place" in John Rodden's words (Rodden 1), may not yet exist, American Utopians have always struggled to make some counterfactual Utopian world a possibility. In the nineteenth century, Utopian experiments in agrarian living were numerous in the United States, and familiar names like "Shaker" and "Amana" are the detritus of those experiments. In the twentieth century, Utopian novels still appear as commentaries on the problems of American society (see Haschak). Consistently, American Utopians have emphasized their desire to demonstrate the practicality of their proposed alternative world and the ease of the transition from the way things are in the current milieu to the way things ought to be (in a sense other than Rush Limbaugh's). Even when criticizing the limits of Utopian desire, James Darsey concludes that "utopian desire thwarts complacency by keeping alive dreams that practical politics would consign to the morgue" (Darsey 34).¶ In contrast with Utopian novels, dystopian literatures emphasize the limitations of alternative world views by demonstrating their impracticality or their considerable disadvantages. George Orwell's 1984 and his Animal Farm are considered classic examples of dystopian novels, given their harsh criticism of totalitarian government and socialism. If Utopian novels demonstrate the advantages of abandoning the current order, their dystopian counterparts warn against the dangers of too quickly abandoning a system that is not wholly dysfunctional. For example, one could argue that Francis Fukuyama's announcement of the "end of history" is simultaneously a proclamation that the capitalist, North Atlantic democracies are Utopias and that non-capitalist alternatives have dystopian consequences.¶ Finally, Utopian literature has had a historically important social function. In the nineteenth century, Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward inspired the foundation of Bellamy societies and a short-lived political party. In the twentieth century, B. F. Skinner's Walden Two has remained in print for several decades and was consulted by some of those who experimented¶ with communal living in the 1950s and 1960s. Today, first-.and second-wave feminist Utopias, including Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Her land (1915), Marge Piercy's Woman on the Edge of Time (1976), and Sally Miller Gearhart's Wanderground (1979) are embraced by many academic feminists.4 In short, utopian literature is an important part of the history of American social movement, and there is some reason to conclude that Utopian science fictions and other Utopian literatures will continue to play a role in future efforts to inspire social change or, in the case of dystopian literatures, to discourage such change.¶ The next section suggests that envisioning debate as Utopian fiction has several practical advantages.¶ Snider argued several years ago that a suitable paradigm should address "something we can ACTUALLY DO as opposed to something we can MAKE BELIEVE ABOUT" ("Fantasy as Reality" 14). A Utopian literature metaphor is beneficial precisely because it is within the power of debaters to perform the desired action suggested by the metaphor, if not always to demonstrate that the desired action is politically feasible.¶ Instead of debaters playing to an audience of those who make public policy, debaters should understand themselves as budding social critics in search of an optimal practical and cultural politics. While few of us will ever hold a formal policy-making position, nearly all of us grow up with the social and political criticism of the newspaper editorial page, the high school civics class, and, at least in homes that do not ban the juxtaposition of food and politics, the lively dinner table conversation. We complain about high income taxes, declining state subsidies for public education, and crumbling interstate highways. We worry about the rising cost of health care and wonder if we will have access to high-quality medical assistance when we need it. Finally, we bemoan the decline of moral consensus, rising rates of divorce, drug use among high school students, and disturbing numbers of pregnant teen-agers. From childhood on, we are told that good citizenship demands that we educate ourselves on political matters and vote to protect the polls; the success of democracy allegedly demands no less. For those who accept this challenge instead of embracing the political alienation of Generation X and becoming devotees of Beavis andButthead, social criticism is what good citizens do.¶ Debate differs from other species of social criticism because debate is a game played by students who want to win. However, conceiving of debate as a kind of social criticism has considerable merit. Social criticism is not restricted to a technocratic elite or group of elected officials. Moreover, social criticism is not necessarily idle or wholly deconstructive. Instead, such criticism necessarily is a prerequisite to any effort to create policy change, whether that criticism is articulated by an elected official or by a mother of six whose primary workplace is the home. When one challenges the status quo, one normally implies that a better alternative course of action exists. Given that intercollegiate debate frequently involves exchanges over a proposition of policy by student advocates who are relatively unlikely ever to debate before Congress, envisioning intercollegiate debate as a specialized extension of ordinary citizen inquiry and advocacy in the public sphere seems attractive. Thinking of debate as a variety of social criticism gives debate an added dimension of public relevance.¶ One way to understand the distinction between debate as policy-making and debate as social criticism is to examine Roger W. Cobb and Charles D. Elder's agenda-building theory.5 Cobb and Elder are well known for their analytic split of the formal agenda for policy change, which includes legislation or other action proposed by policy makers with formal power (e.g., government bureaucrats, U.S. Senators), from thepublic agenda for policy change, which is composed of all those who work outside formal policy-making circles to exert influence on the formal agenda. Social movements, lobbyists, political action committees, mass media outlets, and public opinion polls all constitute the public agenda, which, in turn, has an effect on what issues come to the forefront on the formal agenda. From the agenda-building perspective, one cannot understand the making of public policy in the United States without comprehending the confluence of the formal and public agenda.¶ In intercollegiate debate, the policy-making metaphor has given primacy to formal agenda functions at the expense of the public agenda. Debaters are encouraged to bypass thinking about the public agenda in outlining policy alternatives; appeals for policy change frequently are made by debaters under the strange pretense that they and/or their judges are members of the formal agenda elite. Even arguments about the role of the public in framing public policy are typically issued by debaters as if those debaters were working within the confines of the formal agenda for their own, instrumental advantage. (For example, one thinks of various social movement "backlash" disadvantage arguments, which advocate a temporary policy paralysis in order to stir up public outrage and mobilize social movements, whose leaders will demand the formal adoption of a presumably superior policy alternative.) The policy-making metaphor concentrates on the formal agenda to the near exclusion of the public agenda, as the focus of a Katsulas or a Dempsey on the "real-world" limitations for making policy indicates.¶Debate as social criticism does not entail exclusion of formal agenda concerns from intercollegiate debate. The specified agent of action in typical policy resolutions makes ignoring the formal agenda of the United States government an impossibility. However, one need not be able to influence the formal agenda directly in order to discuss what it is that the United States government should do. Undergraduate debaters and their judges usually are far removed—both physically and functionally-from the arena of formal-agenda deliberation. What the disputation of student debaters most closely resembles, to the extent that it resembles any real-world analog, is public-agenda social criticism. What students are doing is something they really CAN do as students and ordinary citizens; they are working in their own modest way to shape the public agenda.¶ While "social criticism" is the best explanation for what debaters do, this essay goes a step further. The mode of criticism in which debaters operate is the production of Utopian literature. Strictly speaking, debaters engage in the creation of fictions and the comparison of fictions to one another. How else does one explain the affirmative advocacy of a plan, a cciunterfactual world, that, by definition, does not exist? Indeed, traditional inherency burdens demand that such plans be Utopian, in the sense that current attitudes or structures make the immediate enactment of such plans unlikely in the "real world" of the formal agenda. Intercollegiate debate is utopian because plan and/or counterplan enactment is improbable. While one can distinguish between incremental and radical policy change proposals, the distinction makes no difference in the Utopian practice of intercollegiate debate.¶ More importantly, intercollegiate debate is Utopian in another sense. Policy change is considered because such change, it is hoped, will facilitate the pursuit of the good life. For decades, intercollegiate debaters have used fiat or the authority of the word "should" to propose radical changes in the social order, in addition to advocacy of the incremental policy changes typical of the U.S. formal agenda. This wide range of policy alternatives discussed in contemporary intercollegiate debate is the sign of a healthy public sphere, where thorough consideration of all policy alternatives is a possibility. Utopian fiction, in which the good place that is no place is envisioned,makes possible the instantiation of a rhetorical vision prerequisite to building that good place in our tiny corner of the universe. Even Lewis Mumford, a critic of utopian thought, concedes that we "can never reach the points of the compass; and so no doubt we shall never live in Utopia; but without the magnetic needle we should not be able to travel intelligently at all" (Mumford 24-25).