### Cap – 1NC

#### Language doesn’t determine how we experience the world – our material positioning does. Framing politics in terms of how we talk cedes politics by reducing activism to ‘transgressive’ speech acts like the 1AC

Tumino ‘8 Stephen Tumino, professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh, "Materiality in Contemporary Cultural Theory," The Red Critique, Fall/Winter 2008, accessed 1/21/10 http://www.redcritique.org/FallWinter2008/materialityincontemporaryculturaltheory.htm

One of the mainstays of contemporary cultural theory is the argument that the social is primarily shaped by culture. Culture, that is, not as a collection of artifacts or an archive of progress, but, rather, following the writings of Antonio Gramsci, as "an arena of consent and resistance" (Stuart Hall, "Deconstructing" 239) over the shape of the social. Contemporary cultural theory has extended the understanding of culture beyond universalist, and, therefore, supposedly elitist assumptions and normative hegemonic conclusions about culture and instead focused on culture as "the articulation and activation of meaning" (Storey xiii) on the grounds that it is primarily discourse that possesses "the power and the authority to define social reality" (xii). The meaning(s) in a culture that secure and contest the dominant social arrangements are thought to lie in what Michel de Certeau calls "secondary production" (xiii), the sphere of consumption, rather than the economic sphere of production. In these terms, it is the "consumer who in effect 'produces in use'" (xiii) the meaning(s) of the culture that determines social reality. So much has such a focus on the daily practices of consumption and identification been "central to the project of cultural studies" (xi) that some have simply argued that "cultural studies could be described ... perhaps more accurately as ideological studies" (James Carey qtd. in Storey xii). The focus in cultural theory on the constitutive power of discourse to define social reality has shifted the attention of cultural studies from the wider social relations of production which shape ideology and consumption and in fact determine the social real, toward a market theory of culture which valorizes the excessive "uses" and "resignifications" of cultural commodities and in doing so transforms the subject of labor into the subject of consumption who, far from intervening into global capital, supports it through "resistant" desires and "rebellious" acts of consumption. Cultural theory, in other words, rests on the assumption that consumption determines production rather than the other way around. People's "lifestyles" (which is another way of referring to the commodities they consume and how they consume them) are thus assumed to be more significant, in these terms, than the labor relations they must enter into as a necessary precondition of consumption. Such an assumption concludes that the markers and beliefs that position individuals in culture as men and women, black, latino, gay,… are more important than the fact that they are wage workers that must first sell themselves daily to capital before they can acquire the cultural markers of identity. Such an understanding of the priority of the economic is seen on the cultural left as "left conservatism" (Butler, Bové, et. al.) because it forecloses on differences. But as Teresa Ebert has explained, "differences in class societies are always exploitative" (169) because they serve to divide and segment the working class and foster competition between the workers. At the core of the labor theory of culture is the explanation of how culturalism itself has an economic basis in the division of labor – and more specifically, in the crisis of overproduction that is endemic to capitalism since the 1970s—and reflects the interests of those who having had their material needs already met from the labor of the other can afford to focus on their desires in the market.

#### A historical material account of ableism explains why it occurs and sets out an agenda for how we can solve it

SACZKOWSKI 11 (Thomas, Graduate Progam in Critical Disability Studies, York U, Aug, "NARRATIVES OF VIOLENCE: THE RELATIONSHIP OF MASCULINITY ANDABLEISM," [www.academia.edu/1062128/Narratives\_of\_Violence\_The\_Relationship\_of\_Masculinity\_and\_Ableism])

In analyzing the relationship between patriarchal masculinity and politicaleconomy, Mohanty (2003) argues that we need to rethink how these two influence eachother so as to secure and maximize patriarchy. If we focus on these relations then we willfurther understand the dynamics of systemic violence and state oppression as aninterlocking web of social oppressions, and we can better resist these forces. I focus onthe relationship between capitalism, class relations and ableism in order to further understand the intersection of these oppressive ideologies and structures. First, I will present some of the Marxist-feminist literature on the relationship between masculinityand capitalism. I will not be focusing on the relationship between masculinity and class,although this has a significant impact on the dominant hybrid bloc of masculinity indifferent spaces. I will argue that capitalism is organized to necessarily reject peoplewith disabilities based on productivity and capital accumulation, which reifies theideology of ableism and has consequences on how people with disabilities are viewed interms of class. I am defining class as being constituted by the relations of production andownership of property that has implications on how people are treated and perceivedwithin a specific society (Bannerji et al., 2001) To give a specific example, the workingclass is constituted as a class by the fact that, unlike the bourgeoisie, it does not control agreat deal of property or wealth (Engels, 2007). To explain how ableism and other formsof social oppressions are created and perpetuated by capitalism, it is necessary to think about the essence of capitalist relations. By initially describing these roots we can then see how social structures are organized and how the economic and social structures of capitalism perpetuate hegemonic ideologies that permeate interpersonal relations(Mohanty, 2003).

#### Capitalism implicates the well-being of everyone in numerous scenarios for disaster

Parr ’13 Adrian Parr, The Wrath of Capital, 2013, p. 145-147 jss

A quick snapshot of the twenty-first century so far: an economic meltdown; a frantic sell-off of public land to the energy business as President George W Bush exited the White House; a prolonged, costly, and unjustified war in Iraq; the Greek economy in ruins; an escalation of global food prices; bee colonies in global extinction; 925 million hungry reported in 2010; as of 2005, the world's five hundred richest individuals with a combined income greater than that of the poorest 416 million people, the richest 10 percent accounting for 54 percent of global income; a planet on the verge of boiling point; melting ice caps; increases in extreme weather conditions; and the list goes on and on and on.2 Sounds like a ticking time bomb, doesn't it? Well it is. It is shameful to think that massive die-outs of future generations will put to pale comparison the 6 million murdered during the Holocaust; the millions killed in two world wars; the genocides in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Darfur; the 1 million left homeless and the 316,000 killed by the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The time has come to wake up to the warning signs.3 The real issue climate change poses is that we do not enjoy the luxury of incremental change anymore. We are in the last decade where we can do something about the situation. Paul Gilding, the former head of Greenpeace International and a core faculty member of Cambridge University's Programme for Sustainability, explains that "two degrees of warming is an inadequate goal and a plan for failure;' adding that "returning to below one degree of warming . . . is the solution to the problem:'4 Once we move higher than 2°C of warming, which is what is projected to occur by 2050, positive feedback mechanisms will begin to kick in, and then we will be at the point of no return. We therefore need to start thinking very differently right now. We do not see the crisis for what it is; we only see it as an isolated symptom that we need to make a few minor changes to deal with. This was the message that Venezuela's president Hugo Chavez delivered at the COP15 United Nations Climate Summit in Copenhagen on Decembe . r i6, 2009, when he declared: "Let's talk about the cause. We should not avoid responsibilities, we should not avoid the depth of this problem. And I'll bring it up again, the cause of this disastrous panorama is the metabolic, destructive system of the capital and its model: capitalism:'s The structural conditions in which we operate are advanced capitalism. Given this fact, a few adjustments here and there to that system are not enough to solve the problems that climate change and environmental degradation pose.6 Adaptability, modifications, and displacement, as I have consistently shown throughout this book, constitute the very essence of capitalism. Capitalism adapts without doing away with the threat. Under capitalism, one deals with threat not by challenging it, but by buying favors from it, as in voluntary carbon-offset schemes. In the process, one gives up on one's autonomy and reverts to being a child. Voluntarily offsetting a bit of carbon here and there, eating vegan, or recycling our waste, although well intended, are not solutions to the problem, but a symptom of the free market's ineffectiveness. By casting a scathing look at the neoliberal options on display, I have tried to show how all these options are ineffective. We are not buying indulgences because we have a choice; choices abound, and yet they all lead us down one path and through the golden gates of capitalist heaven. For these reasons, I have underscored everyone's implication in this structure-myself included. If anything, the book has been an act of outrage- outrage at the deceit and the double bind that the "choices" under capitalism present, for there is no choice when everything is expendable. There is nothing substantial about the future when all you can do is survive by facing the absence of your own future and by sharing strength, stamina, and courage with the people around you. All the rest is false hope. In many respects, writing this book has been an anxious exercise because I am fully aware that reducing the issues of environmental degradation and climate change to the domain of analysis can stave off the institution of useful solutions. But in my defense I would also like to propose that each and every one of us has certain skills that can contribute to making the solutions that we introduce in response to climate change and environmental degradation more effective and more realistic. In light of that view, I close with the following proposition, which I mean in the most optimistic sense possible: our politics must start from the point that after 2050 it may all be over.

#### Vote negative to endorse Marxist labor theory of value.

#### Increasing contradictions of capital necessitate a new approach. Focus on material production is key to social praxis.

Tumino ’12 Stephen Tumino, more marxist than Marx himself, “Is Occupy Wall Street Communist,” Red Critique 14, Winter/Spring 2012, http://www.redcritique.org/WinterSpring2012/isoccupywallstreetcommunist.htm jss

Leaving aside that the purpose of Wolff's speech was to popularize a messianic vision of a more just society based on workplace democracy, he is right about one thing: Marx's original contribution to the idea of communism is that it is an historical and material movement produced by the failure of capitalism not a moral crusade to reform it. Today we are confronted with the fact that capitalism has failed in exactly the way that Marx explained was inevitable.[4] It has "simplified the class antagonism" (The Communist Manifesto); by concentrating wealth and centralizing power in the hands of a few it has succeeded in dispossessing the masses of people of everything except their labor power. As a result it has revealed that the ruling class "is unfit to rule," as The Communist Manifesto concludes, "because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him." And the slaves are thus compelled to fight back. Capitalism makes communism necessary because it has brought into being an international working class whose common conditions of life give them not only the need but also the economic power to establish a society in which the rule is "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need" (Marx, Critique of the Gotha Programme). Until and unless we confront the fact that capitalism has once again brought the world to the point of taking sides for or against the system as a whole, communism will continue to be just a bogey-man or a nursery-tale to frighten and soothe the conscience of the owners rather than what it is—the materialist theory that is an absolute requirement for our emancipation from exploitation and a new society freed from necessity! As Lenin said, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" (What Is To Be Done?). We are confronted with an historic crisis of global proportions that demands of us that we take Marxism seriously as something that needs to be studied to find solutions to the problems of today. Perhaps then we can even begin to understand communism in the way that The Communist Manifesto presents it as "the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority" to end inequality forever.

#### Evaluate the debate as a dialectical materialist—you are a historian inquiring into the determinant factors behind the 1AC—prefer Marxian labor theory of value over disruption of whiteness and linguistic dominance

Tumino ‘1 Stephen Tumino, professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh, “What is Orthodox Marxism and Why it Matters Now More Than Ever Before,” Red Critique, Spring 2001, http://redcritique.org/spring2001/whatisorthodoxmarxism.htm jss

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

#### Methodological inquiry comes before praxis – facts take on meaning only within presuppositions about the historical totality

Lukács ’67 György Lukács, History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics, trans. Rodney Livingstone, MIT Press: Cambridge, 1967, p. 7-10 jss

Thus we perceive that there is something highly problematic in the fact that capitalist society is predisposed to harmonise with scientific method, to constitute indeed the social premises of its exactness. If the internal structure of the 'facts' of their interconnections is essentially historical, if, that is to say, they are caught up in a process of continuous transformation, then we may indeed question when the greater scientific inaccuracy occurs. It is when I conceive of the 'facts' as existing in a form and as subject to laws concerning which I have a methodological certainty (or at least probability) that they no longer apply to these facts? Or is it when I consciously take this situation into account, cast a critical eye at the 'exactitude' attainable by such a method and concentrate instead on those points where this historical aspect, this decisive fact of change really manifests itself? The historical character of the 'facts' which science seems to have grasped with such 'purity' makes itself felt in an even more devastating manner. As the products of historical evolution they are involved in continuous change. But in addition they are also precisely in their objective structure the products of a definite historical epoch, namely capitalism. Thus when 'science' maintains that the manner in which data immediately present themselves is an adequate foundation of scientific conceptualisation and that the actual form of these data is the appropriate starting point for the formation of scientific concepts, it thereby takes its stand simply and dogmatically on the basis of capitalist society. It uncritically accepts the nature of the object as it is given and the laws of that society as the unalterable foundation of 'science'. In order to progress from these 'facts' to facts in the true meaning of the word it is necessary to perceive their historical conditioning as such and to abandon the point of view that would see them as immediately given: they must themselves be subjected to a historical and dialectical examination. For as Marx says:8 "The finished pattern of economic relations as seen on the surface in their real existence and consequently in the ideas with which the agents and bearers of these relations seek to understand them, is very different from, and indeed quite the reverse of and antagonistic to their inner, essential but concealed core and the concepts corresponding to it." If the facts are to be understood, this distinction between their real existence and their inner core must be grasped clearly and precisely. This distinction is the first premise of a truly scientific study which in Marx's words, "would be superfluous if the outward appearance of things coincided with their essence" .10 Thus we must detach the phenomena from the form in which they are immediately given and discover the intervening links which connect them to their core, their essence. In so doing, we shall arrive at an understanding of their apparent form and see it as the form in which the inner core necessarily appears. It is necessary because of the historical character of the facts, because they have grown in the soil of capitalist society. This twofold character, the simultaneous recognition and transcendence of immediate appearances is precisely the dialectical nexus. In this respect, superficial readers imprisoned in the modes of thought created by capitalism, experienced the gravest difficulties in comprehending the structure of thought in Capital. For on the one hand, Marx's account pushes the capitalist nature of all economic forms to their furthest limits, he creates an intellectual milieu where they can exist in their purest form by positing a society 'corresponding to the theory', i.e. capitalist through and through, consisting of none but capitalists and proletarians. But conversely, no sooner does this strategy produce results, no sooner does this world of phenomena seem to be on the point of crystallising out into theory than it dissolves into a mere illusion, a distorted situation appears as in a distorting mirror which is, however, "only the conscious expression of an imaginary movement". Only in this context which sees the isolated facts of social life as aspects of the historical process and integrates them in a totality, can knowledge of the facts hope to become knowledge of reality. This knowledge starts from the simple (and to the capitalist world), pure, immediate, natural determinants described above. It progresses from them to the knowledge of the concrete totality, i.e. to the conceptual reproduction of reality. This concrete totality is by no means an unmediated datum for thought. "The concrete is concrete," Marx says,11 "because it is a synthesis of many particular determinants, i.e. a unity of diverse elements." Idealism succumbs here to the delusion of confusing the intellectual reproduction of reality with the actual structure of reality itself. For "in thought, reality appears as the process of synthesis, not as starting-point, but as outcome, although it is the real starting-point and hence the starting-point for perception and ideas." Conversely, the vulgar materialists, even in the modem guise donned by Bernstein and others, do not go beyond the reproduction of the immediate, simple determinants of social life. They imagine that they are being quite extraordinarily 'exact' when they simply take over these determinants without either analysing them further or welding them into a concrete totality. They take the facts in abstract isolation, explaining them only in terms of abstract laws unrelated to the concrete totality. As Marx observes: "Crudeness and conceptual nullity consist in the tendency to forge arbitrary unmediated connections between things that belong together in an organic union." 12 The crudeness and conceptual nullity of such thought lies primarily in the fact that it obscures the historical, transitory nature of capitalist society. Its determinants take on the appearance of timeless, eternal categories valid for all social formations. This could be seen at its crassest in the vulgar bourgeois economists, but the vulgar Marxists soon followed in their footsteps. The dialectical method was overthrown and with it the methodological supremacy of the totality over the individual aspects; the parts were prevented from finding their definition within the whole and, instead, the whole was dismissed as unscientific or else it degenerated into the mere 'idea' or 'sum' of the parts. With the totality out of the way, the fetishistic relations of the isolated parts appeared as a timeless law valid for every human society. Marx's dictum: "The relations of production of every society form a whole" 13 is the methodological point of departure and the key to the historical understanding of social relations. All the isolated partial categories can be thought of and treated-in isolation-as something that is always present in every society. (If it cannot be found in a given society this is put down to 'chance as the exception that proves the rule.) But the changes to which these individual aspects are subject give no clear and unambiguous picture of the real differences in the various stages of the evolution of society. These can really only be discerned in the context of the total historical process of their relation to society as a whole.

### Welsh – 1NC

#### Scholarship cannot be purely political – their strategy attempts to subvert the fundamental antagonism separating academics from the political sphere, spurring expertism and narcissistic research because it emerges in a competitive context. The opposing poles of social change and personal benefit are irreconcilable – their goal of repairing the community is academic fantasy structured by the impossibility of breaking free from subjective norms.

Welsh ’12 Scott Welsh, Department of Communication @ Appalachian State University, “Coming to Terms with the Antagonism between Rhetorical Reflection and Political Agency,” Philosophy and Rhetoric, vol. 45, no. 1, 2012 jss

Between Scholarly Reflection and Political Agency It is important to keep in mind that, for Žižek, antagonism does not mean simple binary opposition. Instead, to propose the existence of an antagonism is to operate on the assumption of the impossibility of inventing a terminology able to contain, without remainder, the competing elements that make up the whole of a particular realm of human experience (in this case, academia) (2005, 249–54). For example, this article assumes that to be a scholar is to be both embedded within the chains of material consequences that constitute the political and detached from the fully engaged political pursuit of any particular consequences (regardless of whether or not one is fully engaged in the rest of one’s life). A scholarly subject position can be seen as unavoidably a part of and necessarily apart from the political. To suggest that this constitutes an irresolvable antagonism means that the two elements can neither remain separate nor be united. Rather, it is the conflicted relationship itself that constitutes the position of the scholar. Symptoms, according to Žižek, are the function of the ideological inadequacy of either an imagined total separation or an imagined complete unity. Both are means of effacing an antagonism and inviting ideology-frustrating symptoms (2005, 251). Effacing the antagonism between scholarly reflection and political agency, in both ways, is relatively simple. Consider, first, effacement through projected incommensurability or total separation. Perhaps the most common way this is done is through imagining an objective, politically disinterested position from which a scholar-as-scientist conducts research and reports results. Scholars as scientists “rise above it all” and are not affected by, concerned with, or implicated in the political. They are concerned only with the pursuit of truth or the life of the mind. Rhetoric scholars have been right to draw attention to the impossibility of achieving such political detachment ([Wander 1983](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b33); [Campbell 1983](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b6), 1972; [Ivie 1994](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b19)). For example, recasting and elucidating earlier arguments, James F. Klump and Thomas A. Hollihan elaborate a critique of the idea that scholarly reflection and political action ever remain separate. Their argument is against those who advance a “self-image for [rhetorical] critics” that values “‘objectivity’ as moral non-involvement,” for the very act of choosing to “objectively” investigate the causes of one phenomenon instead of another is to devote [End Page 6] time and resources to one set of priorities instead of another (1989, 92). Every scholarly agenda subsidizes a political agenda, whether intentionally or not ([Young, Battaglia, and Cloud 2010](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b35), 432). Or, as Burke argues, the ideal of scientific detachment is impossible for scholars “except in so far as they can contrive to conceal from themselves the true implications of their role” (1969, 35). Klump and Hollihan also show how complete separation between scholarly reflection and political agency is attempted through aesthetic conceits as well. They explain that “so strong was the social scientific image [during the 1950s and 1960s] that the response to it became an artistic self-image—the critic’s task was to increase appreciation for the artistic use of language in the rhetorical act.” They show how a subjective hermeneutic of appreciation does not escape the idea of complete scholarly detachment associated with supposedly objective knowledge-producing science. Klump and Hollihan astutely note how “both of these self-images alienate” (92). They alienate scholars from the consequences of their scholarly work. Both the scientist and the aesthete refuse the antagonism between scholarly reflection and political agency by insisting that the political is alien to each of them. Construed as wholly distinct symbolic spheres, the reflective and the political never have reason to come into contact with each other. While Klump and Hollihan convincingly expose the effacement of the antagonism between scholarly reflection and political agency in both scientific and artistic scholarly identities, they do not recognize, however, that they also efface the antagonism. They simply take the alternate route—refusal by way of declaring an essential oneness between the two. Beyond recognizing the fact that all choices have material consequences, whether intended or not, and arguing that scholars must take them into account, they go a step further and reduce scholarly reflection to a mode of political agency. The reduction proceeds as follows: first, scholars make choices. Second, whether or not they make them intentionally or unintentionally, they will make them nonetheless. Third, those choices will have material consequences (1989, 90–91). Therefore, because our choices, or the words we produce, will have material, political, consequences whether or not we intend them to, we should embrace the consequences we prefer and pursue them directly (the hidden premise being that intentionally pursued consequences are better than unintended ones). Hence, Klump and Hollihan conclude by saying that “the critic that emerges—the interpreter, the teacher, the social actor—is a moral participant, cognizant of the power and responsibility that accompanies full critical participation in his/her society” (1989, 94). [End Page 7] Michael Calvin McGee reduces scholarly reflection to political agency in the same way. At key points, McGee, as well as Klump and Hollihan, refer to Burke’s observation that “all living things are critics,” constantly interpreting the signs around them ([Burke 1984b](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html#b4), 5; [McGee 1990](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b23), 281; [Klumpp and Hollihan 1989](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html#b21), 93). And because the signs around us do, in fact, produce much of the social world in which we live, all speech, including academic writing, is inherently political and should be embraced as such. Hence, McGee challenges scholars to engage in “social surgery,” wherein they substitute “new cultural imperatives” for “old taken-for-granted conventions” in order to “make the world conform to their will.” Moreover, as naturalborn critics, like all living things, scholars cannot help but engage in “social surgery” (1990, 281–82). As with Klump and Hollihan, the only remaining question is whether or not they will acknowledge and embrace their true nature. This argument is repeated throughout the “critical rhetoric” literature of the late 1980s and early 1990s. For example, Raymie McKerrow challenges so-called critical rhetoricians to acknowledge their complicity in the production of political culture and take a side. McKerrow advances a liberation theology ethos oriented toward the “the critique of domination” and the emancipation of the oppressed (1989, 93, 103, 106). Although ostensibly responding to McKerrow, Kent Ono and John Sloop largely expand on the ethos implicit or already present in McKerrow’s presentation of critical rhetoric. What they add is the claim that a generalized resistance to ruling-class interests is insufficient to maintain a meaningful, long-term political agenda. What is required is deep investment in a particular cause “able to re-form the individual” (1992, 51). And, just like the other authors, they argue that because even the skeptical critic “often unconsciously commits to a telos despite her attempts to resist the ever-present threat of dogmatism,” critics fully embracing the moral imperative should deliberately, “at the moment of placing pen to paper . . .[,] relinquish skepticism and advance their argument for that moment as if the direction chosen by the critic (i.e. telos) were Truth with a capital ‘T’”(53). This Truth with a capital “T” is not an epistemic conclusion but an unreserved commitment to “the ideal picture we have created for ourselves” of a “utopian future” (1992, 56, 59). Recent contributions across a variety of published forums concerning rhetorical criticism, public intellectualism, and academic engagement demonstrate that this reduction of scholarly reflection to political agency (through the acknowledgment of the fact of complicity) remains influential among rhetoric scholars. In some quarters, it has been radicalized. In the [End Page 8] recent Western Journal of Communication special issue on rhetorical criticism, Stephen Hartnett argues, for example, that rhetoric scholars need to get to the point where they “are no longer studying objects from which they hope to glean some truths to be offered as tools to others.” Instead, scholars are to “build projects where they are directly implicated in and work alongside disadvantaged communities.” The ideal is “scholars who are activists writing about their activism” (2010, 78). Hartnett folds scholarly reflection into politics. The former only reemerges as a distinct kind of activity after the fact in reflective accounts of one’s political efforts. Hence, the truly committed “social justice scholar” needs to learn how to “speak clearly and look authoritative” while repeating “mass-media-shaped tidbits” within the “corporate-driven cesspool of mass media” (2010, 81–83). Explicitly affirming the thrust of Hartnett’s essay, Peter Simonson calls on scholars to “transport their bodies outside the cloisters” and into the political field. Similarly, he responds to Celeste Condit’s concern that McGee made “the rhetorical scholar indistinguishable from the street rhetorician” with “I would answer that passing for a street rhetorician might in fact be the ideal” (2010, 121, 95). Likewise, in the recent Quarterly Journal of Speech forum on engaged scholarship, Anna Young, Adria Battaglia, and Dana Cloud plainly state that because Aristotle was right that “man is by nature a political animal” we must “reframe politics as our job description” (2010, 433). In the Philosophy and Rhetoric forum, Steve Fuller characterizes the “public intellectual” as an “agent of justice.” He deems John Dewey a failed public intellectual because he “refused to use all the available means of persuasion” (2006, 150). His criticism of Dewey, however, is not that Dewey tried and failed to be a public intellectual. Rather, it is Dewey’s alleged refusal itself to be a public intellectual that draws Fuller’s criticism. This is because Fuller’s vision of public intellectualism—a willingness and ability to use all available means of persuasion as an agent of justice—is held up not as an option for some academics in their life outside of the academy but as the essential academic identity. At its best, the academy is “the custodian of the nation’s spirit, the loyal opposition” of whoever holds “the reins of state power at the moment” or the place from which a protected scholarly class is enabled to “speak truth to power.” Using the same logic employed by early critical rhetoricians, anything less is rejected as a cowardly attempt to find an academic identity that “basically absolves intellectuals of any responsibility for their ideas” (2006, 151, 49). Similarly, Henry Giroux concludes his argument about the “responsibility of intellectuals” with the declaration that “if we do not want to repeat the present as the future, or [End Page 9] even worse, become complicit in the dominant exercise of power, it is time for educators to mobilize collectively their energies by breaking down the illusion of unanimity that dominant power propagates while working diligently, tirelessly, and collectively to reclaim the promises of a truly global, democratic future” (2004, 77).

#### Attempting to bridge the gap between scholar and citizen requires an impossible submersion of academia into politics – this failure is sutured by a narcissistic fantasy that projects every error onto a scapegoated other and redirects emancipatory energy into self-defeating ends.

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Giroux’s concluding words, in which scholars reclaim the promises of a truly global democratic future, echo Ono and Sloop’s construction of scholarship as the politically embedded pursuit of utopia, McKerrow’s academic emancipation of the oppressed, McGee’s social surgery, Hartnett’s social justice scholar, and Fuller’s agent of justice. Each aims to unify the competing elements within the scholarly subject position—scholarly reflection and political agency—by reducing the former to the latter. Žižek’s advice is to consider how such attempts are always doomed to frustration, not because ideals are hard to live up to but because of the impossibility of resolving the antagonism central to the scholarly subject position. The titles “public intellectual” and “critical rhetorician” attest to the fundamental tension. “Public” and “rhetorician” both represent the aspiration to political engagement, while “critical” and “intellectual” set the scholar apart from noncritical, nonintellectual public rhetoric. However, rather than allowing the contingently articulated terms to exist in a state of paradoxical tension, these authors imagine an organic, unavoidable, necessary unity. The scholar is, in one moment, wholly public and wholly intellectual, wholly critical and wholly rhetorical, wholly scholar and wholly citizen—an impossible unity, characteristic of the sublime, in which the antagonism vanishes (2005, 147). Yet, as Žižek predicts, the sublime is the impossible. The frustration-producing gap between the unity of the ideological sublime and conflicted experience quickly begins to put pressure on the ideology. This is born out in the shift from the exhilarated tone accompanying the birth of critical rhetoric (and its liberation of rhetoric scholarship from the incoherent and untenable demands of scientific objectivity) to a dispirited accounting for the difficulty of actually embodying the imagined unity of scholarly reflection and political agency. Simonson, for example, draws attention to the gap, noting how, twenty years later, it is hard to resist the feeling that “the bulk of our academic publishing is utterly inconsequential.” His hope is that a true connection between scholarly reflection and political agency may be possible outside of academia (2010, 95). Fuller approaches this conclusion when he says that the preferred path to filling universities with agents of justice is through “scaling back the qualifications needed for tenure-stream posts from the doctorate to the master’s degree,” a way of [End Page 10]addressing the antagonism that amounts to setting half of it afloat (2006, 154). Hartnett is especially interesting because while he also insists on the existence of the gap, dismissing “many” of his “colleagues” as merely dispensing “politically vacuous truisms” or, worse, as serving as “tools of the state” and “humanities-based journals” as “impenetrably dense” and filled with “jargon-riddled nonsense,” he evinces a considerable impatience with the audiences he must engage as a social justice scholar (2010, 69, 74–75). In addition to reducing those populating the mass media to a cabal of “rotten corporate hucksters,” Hartnett rejects vernacular criticisms of his activism as “ranting and raving by fools,” and chafes at becoming “a target for yahoos of all stripes” (87, 84). In other words, the gap is not only recognized on the academic side of the ledger but appears on the public side as well; the public (in the vernacular sense of the word) does not yield to the desire of the social justice scholar. Or, as Žižek puts it, referencing Lacan, “You never look at me from the place in which I see you” (1991, 126). More telling still, Hartnett’s main examples of social justice scholars are either retired or located outside of academia (2010, 86). As Simonson suggests, and Hartnett implicitly concedes, it may well be that it really is only outside the academy that there can be immediate, material, political consequences. In light of Žižek’s account of antagonism, one should not be surprised, however, by the conclusion that broadly effective activism is only possible outside of academia. The failure to unify scholarship and politics was predestined in the symbolic imagination that rendered them unified. Instead, effectively coming to terms with an antagonism means finding ways to keep the competing elements of the antagonism in view—and not simply as “bad” academic pretensions in conflict with “good” political motives. Rather, the two elements that constitute the scholarly subject position, reflective investigation and the production of unavoidable consequences, must be constantly present, each vying for our attention. And, insofar as the two elements are not kept in tension with each other, the scholarly subject position becomes increasingly unbearable, leading to the production of what Žižek calls supplemental ideological fantasies or ready explanations for the gap. For Fuller, the gap between lived experience and the wished-for embodiment of the scholar as agent of justice is explained not by the basic impossibility of resolving the antagonism within the realm of the symbolic itself but by the treacherous acts of colleagues of low moral character. Deploying a Puritan rhetoric ([Roberts-Miller 1999](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b31)), Fuller blames the selfishness of individual scholars pursuing personal gain and “convenience” [End Page 11] for the failure of activist scholarship to emerge (2006, 150). Other scholars who fail to be agents of justice are “feckless” (2006, 149). Those resistant to such a scholarly identity “simply follow the path of least intellectual resistance,” preferring “easily funded research” because it offers “greater professional recognition” (2006, 110, 111). Hartnett follows Fuller in explaining how “theory wolves” have “learned to play the tenure game for their own benefit.” Current “graduate students and assistant professors” are cynical, self-obsessed, and content to explore “the intricacies of representation, often with psychoanalytic overtones that explicitly focus on the self or psyche rather than the community or the political” (2006, 72–73). Yet, fantasy, according to Žižek, is not simple delusion. In fact, how much scholarly research is unrelated to the exorcism of personal demons? Who among us has not shaded an argument one way or another in order to please a particular audience? Who has not fecklessly decided against even sending a letter to the local newspaper? Rather, a key characteristic of fantasy, in Žižek’s use of Lacan, is that it accounts for a persistent failure in a prevailing ideology without making reference to basic, structuring antagonisms inherent to every use of symbols. In this case, the gap—the existence of academic work that appears not to serve (or in reality does not serve) a sublime vision of an organic unity between scholarship and citizenship—is accounted for by the existence of cynical, crafty scholars of low academic rank who just want to get ahead. This fantastic pathway to the palliation of the identity-jeopardizing symptom suggests that without these cowardly, selfish, yet strangely powerful neophytes, scholarly reflection and political agency would finally consummate their symbolic union. In this new context of frustration, what is now most “real” is the spiritual principle of the oneness of scholarly reflection and political agency, while the experienced fact of failed transcendence is reduced to a mere empirical obstacle (feckless or selfish individuals) to be displaced.

#### Alt: Reject the aff’s attempt to unify academic debate and social justice politics.

#### Trying to eliminate the opposition between these terms constricts the emancipatory potential of debate – instead of denying the competitive nature of the game, we should keep it in view as a reminder of the impossibility of full political subjectivity

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What is Žižek’s psychoanalytic advice? Identify with the symptom (1989, 128). Identification with the symptom means noting how the symptom is quite likely a byproduct of the ideology itself, or a consequence of one’s own symbolic identity, and not a simple empirical fact to be negated. In this case, the antagonism between the symbolic practices of scholarly reflection and political action yields academic products that cannot be reduced to disinterested science or political engagement. To be an academic is to be (unsettlingly) in the political world but not of the political world. It is to resist the belief that one could finally fulfill the drive to transcendence structuring the academic subject position. Žižek’s “coming to terms” with [End Page 12] antagonism means, in Burke’s language, learning to leave the two impulses constituting this dialectical pair in “jangling relation” to each other ([Žižek 1989](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b36), 3, 5, 133; 2005, 242–43; [Burke 1969](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b2), 187) or to fold the existence of the jangling relation into a less anxiety-producing vocabulary going forward. To identify with the symptom is to begin the process of inventing an identity that allows one to accept and even enjoy the tension as the constitutive feature of the identity ([Michael 2000](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b25), 12). Nevertheless, the desire to “make a difference” needs to remain in full force. However, when an individual scholar wants to make a difference as the thing in and of itself versus making a distinctly scholarly difference, the antagonism is again repressed. In seeking to make a difference as the thing in itself, scholars, in Žižek’s language, “overtake” their “desire” and become an object of disgust (1991, 110). In fact, Hartnett, McKerrow, Condit, and Giroux are each sensitive to this. Hartnett puts it most explicitly when he warns that the “haggard activist, angry and inflamed, accusing others of their transgressions while embodying anxiety, achieves little, alienates many, and often succumbs to despair” ([Hartnett 2010](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html#b18), 70–71; [Condit 1990](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b8), 345; [Giroux 2004](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b14), 73). In his eighth and final principle of critical rhetoric (“criticism is performance”), McKerrow qualifies his call to political engagement by distancing himself from Phillip Wander, whom he characterizes as wanting scholars to “take to the streets as practicing revolutionaries.” In other words, after seventeen pages of calling for scholars to perform critical rhetoric in order to liberate the oppressed from institutional and cultural domination, McKerrow devotes three blushing sentences to hedging his bet, explaining that he really just means that scholars should be “specific intellectuals” working within the confines of the university (1989, 108). All of these scholars are correct to fear that the image of activist academics engaging in practices indistinguishable from politics, especially in state-supported institutions, is a potentially grotesque image, even if the popular image is rarely accurate ([Ivie 2005](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b20), 62–68). Hartnett in particular is not unaware of the significance of public perception. He claims, however, that the public sees decreasing value in universities because they are populated by “inane” and “depraved” scholars (theory wolves) producing publicly disconnected, jargon-riddled nonsense. While this assessment may account for elements within academia that refuse the antagonism by maintaining a relatively thorough detachment from the communities they claim to serve, reducing scholarship to “activists writing about their activism” is no more responsive to the antagonism and would understandably provoke public suspicion ([Hartnett 2010](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.ups.edu/journals/philosophy_and_rhetoric/v045/45.1.welsh.html%22%20%5Cl%20%22b18), 75, 78). [End Page 13] Moreover, coming to terms with the antagonism is central to academic freedom. In his bracing polemic on politics in the academy, Stanley Fish recognizes the antagonism between academic freedom and the freedom one enjoys as a function of citizenship. Academic freedom, he argues, is the freedom to “academicize” anything freely and without fear of reprisal. For Fish, this means the freedom to treat any subject whatsoever as an open question in need of further study, no matter how politically controversial investigating some particular subject may be (2008, 87). And insofar as every citizen enjoys “freedom of speech,” as Fuller also points out in his reference to Dewey’s founding of the AAUP, academic freedom also includes the right to actually be a citizen advancing a political agenda without fear of losing one’s university employment (2006, 151). However, when the citizenly role of advancing a political agenda overtakes reflective investigation in the practice of the scholarly role, “academic” freedom is not at stake but is, rather, put into jeopardy by the refusal to inhabit the inherently conflicted scholarly subject position that justifies one’s academic immunity from political reprisal in the first place. While “the academic is political” no less than “the personal is political,” that does not mean that it is not useful or necessary to establish a social sphere defined by the intention to resist political embeddedness, even if such a distinction is unavoidably tenuous.

### Case

#### The need to "break the silence" reproduces violence and oppression by normalizing and codifying it - these essentialisms totalize subjects of subordination and short-circuit resistance

Brown '96 Wendy Brown, Professor of Women's Studies and Legal Studies at University of California - Santa Cruz, The University of Chicago Law School Roundtable, 1996

These questions suggest that in legally codifying a fragment of an insurrec- tionary discourse as a timeless truth, interpellating women as unified in their victimization, and casting the "free speech" of men as that which "silences" and thus subordinates women, MacKinnon not only opposes bourgeois liberty to substantive equality, but potentially intensifies the regulation of gender and sexuality in the law, abetting rather than contesting the production of gender identity as sexual. In short, as a regulatory fiction of a particular identity is deployed to displace the hegemonic fiction of universal personhood, the discourse of rights converges insidiously with the discourse of disciplinarity to produce a spectacularly potent mode of juridical-regulatory domination. Again, let me emphasize that the problem I am seeking to delineate is not specific to MacKinnon or even feminist legal reform. Rather, MacKinnon's and kindred efforts at bringing subjugated discourses into the law merely constitute examples of what Foucault identified as the risk of re-codification and re- colonisation of "disinterred knowledges" by those "unitary discourses, which first disqualified and then ignored them when they made their appearance." n23 They exemplify how the work of breaking silence can metamorphose into new techniques of domination, how our truths can become our rulers rather than our emancipators, how our confessions become the norms by which we are regulated.

#### Narratives essentialize identity groups as powerless and victimizes - this relegates subjectivity to victimhood and excludes anyone who doesn’t meet this model of subordination

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If, taken together, the two passages from Foucault we have been consider- ing call feminists to account in our compulsion to put everything about women into discourse, they do not yet exhaust the phenomenon of being ensnared 'in the folds of our own discourses.' For if the problem I have been discussing is easy enough to see--indeed, largely familiar to those who track techniques of co-optation--at the level of legal and bureaucratic discourse, it is altogether more disquieting when it takes the form of regulatory discourse in our own sub- and counter-cultures of resistance . . . when confessing injury becomes that which attaches us to the injury, paralyzes us within it, and prevents us from seeking or even desiring a status other than injured. In an age of social identification through attributes marked as culturally significant--gender, race, sexuality, and so forth--confessional discourse, with its truth-bearing status in a post-epistemological universe, not only regulates the confessor in the name of freeing her as Foucault described that logic, but extends beyond the confess- ing individual to constitute a regulatory truth about the identity group. Confessed truths are assembled and deployed as "knowledge" about the group. This phenomenon would seem to undergird a range of recurring troubles in feminism, from the "real woman" rejoinder to post-structuralist deconstructions of her, to totalizing descriptions of women's experience that are the inadvertent effects of various kinds of survivor stories. Thus, for example, the porn star who feels miserably exploited, violated and humiliated in her work invariably monopolizes the truth about sex work; as the girl with math anxieties constitutes the truth about women and math; as eating disor- ders have become the truth about women and food; as sexual abuse and viola- tion occupy the knowledge terrain of women and sexuality. In other words, even as feminism aims to affirm diversity among women and women's ex- periences, confession as the site of production of truth and its convergence with feminist suspicion and deauthorization of truth from other sources tends to reinstate a unified discourse in which the story of greatest suffering becomes the true story of woman. (I think this constitutes part of the rhetorical power of MacKinnon's work; analytically, the epistemological superiority of confes- sion substitutes for the older, largely discredited charge of false consciousness). Thus, the adult who does not suffer from her or his childhood sexual experi- ence, the lesbian who does not feel shame, the woman of color who does not primarily or "correctly" identify with her marking as such--these figures are excluded as bonafide members of the categories which also claim them. Their status within these discourses is that of being "in denial," "passing" or being a "race traitor." This is the norm-making process in feminist traditions of "breaking silence" which, ironically, silence and exclude the very women these traditions mean to empower. (Is it surprising, when we think in this vein, that there is so little feminist writing on heterosexual pleasure?) But if these practices tacitly silence those whose experiences do not parallel those whose suffering is most marked (or whom the discourse produces as suffering markedly), they also condemn those whose sufferings they record to a permanent identification with that suffering. Here, we experience a temporal ensnaring in 'the folds of our own discourses' insofar as we identify ourselves in speech in a manner that condemns us to live in a present dominated by the past. But what if speech and silence aren't really opposites? Indeed, what if to speak incessantly of one's suffering is to silence the possibilities of overcoming it, of living beyond it, of identifying as something other than it? What if this incessant speech not only overwhelms the experiences of others, but alternative (unutterable? traumatized? fragmentary? inassimilable?) zones of one's own experience? Conversely, what if a certain modality of silence about one's suffering--and I am suggesting that we must consider modalities of silence as varied as modalities of speech and discourse--is to articulate a variety of possibilities not otherwise available to the sufferer?