### 1NC Neolib

#### The affirmative’s performance trades off with political struggles against neoliberalism – their blanket criticism of a falsely universal liberalism weakens the anti-neoliberal movement

Joseph M. Schwartz, 8-9-13 (Professor of Political Science at Temple University. Schwartz's teaching and published work focuses on the complex interaction among morality, ideology, and political and institutional development., “A Peculiar Blind Spot: Why did Radical Political Theory Ignore the Rampant Rise in Inequality Over the Past Thirty Years?”, Volume 35, Issue 3, 2013, Special Issue: Studying Politics Today: Critical Approaches to Political Science)

This article explores why self-defined radical and “subversive” political theory has, by and large, failed to examine the rampant increase in inequality under thirty years of neoliberal capitalism as a major threat to democracy.1 During this period, the most highly cited work in radical political thought focused on predominantly ontological and epistemological issues of “difference” and “the fiction of the coherent self.”2 But just as post-structuralist and difference theorists attacked the rational chooser of Rawlsian liberalism as a falsely universal subject and interrogated equality as a homogenizing category, political elites of both the right and the moderate left achieved an ideological consensus in favor of a new, neoliberal universal subject—the entrepreneurial, self-sufficient, competitive marketplace individual. Thus, it is rather ironic that during the “Great Compression” of the 1960s, when income and wealth inequality moderately decreased—in part due to the power of the labor and social democratic movements in advanced democracies—the revival of political theory focused on the challenge to democracy posed by economic inequality and the absence of voice for employees in the workplace; think of the early work of Carole Pateman, C.B. Macpherson, Michael Walzer, and Sheldon Wolin.3 Yet in the past several decades of rapidly growing inequality most radical theorists have focused on the challenge difference poses to democratic societies or how liberal democratic institutions of “governance” engage in the repressive norming of the self. This is not to deny the role that difference plays within a democratic pluralist society, or the intellectual validity of interrogating how dominant institutional norms can constrict individual identity. But the problem that vexed Rousseau, Mill, Marx, and the founders of contemporary democratic theory remains more relevant than ever: how do inequalities in wealth, income, power, and life-opportunity contradict the formal commitment of liberal democracy to the equal moral worth of persons?¶ Given the accentuated role that corporate power and wealth plays in American politics today, why also do few political theorists examine the tension between corporate power and democracy? Not since Charles Lindblom's and Robert Dahl's work in the late 1970s and early 1980s have students of politics focused on the anomalous role of corporations in a democratic society. As Dahl and Lindblom argued, in a democratic society binding decisions should only be granted legitimacy if they are made democratically. Yet corporate management regularly issues edicts that have binding, coercive effects on their employees and society at large.4 Nor have theorists focused on how the weakening of democratic institutions of countervailing power, such as unions and grass-roots social movements, has engendered a formal democracy that is de facto an oligarchy. 5 Recently, mainstream—even behavioral—American politics scholars have investigated the corrosive effects that the fungible nature of wealth into political power has upon democracy, as well as the resulting dominance in decision-making of the political preferences of elites. But recent political theory has been relatively silent on these issues.6¶ By the late 1980s theorists of difference, such as Iris Marion Young and Carol Gilligan, shifted the focus of radical theory from economic democracy to a critique of how one-size-fits-all social policies failed to meet the differential needs of members of particular groups.7 The turn to difference offered important insights for both theorists and activists, as democratic public policies must account for the differential needs of particular individuals and groups. But what the focus on difference sometimes obscured is that the argument that each individual should receive the resources necessary to satisfy their particular human needs still relies upon a universal democratic commitment to the equal standing of all members of society.¶ In contrast to theories of difference, the post-structuralist turn in political theory in part arose as a reaction to fears that identity and difference politics essentialized and homogenized the status of the self within groups.8 Post-structuralism rejected both Rawlsian liberalism's belief in a coherent, rational chooser and identity politics' granting of primacy to the group as the shaper of individual identity. Instead, post-structuralist analysis emphasized the labile, incoherent, shifting nature of a self constituted by, in Judith Butler's terms, the “performative discursive iteration” of social norms.9 Post-structuralist theorists emphasized the agonal nature of politics and the ever-present possibility that the discursive self could “performatively resist” hegemonic norms.10 That is, by refusing to perform according to the social norms that allegedly inscribe the self, individuals could engage in “transgressive” resistance. Ironically, just as allegedly radical theorists discerned the “radical Nietzschean” possibilities of individual resistance, the social and political options of working class individuals and many people of color in the United States were being further constrained by increased social, economic, and political inequality. This focus on individual resistance may have come about—as the literary theorist Terry Eagleton argues—because the forward progress of the left had been reversed by the triumph of Thatcher and Reagan and, thus, theorists lost faith in the possibility of democratic majoritarian political change.11

#### Discursive critiques alone fail to combat neoliberalism – only a state-oriented approach allows debate pedagogy to transcend racist ideologies and practices

Giroux Global TV Network Chair in Communication @ McMaster University 6-4-10 (Henry, “Spectacles of Race and Pedagogies of Denial: Anti-Black Racist Pedagogy Under the Reign of Neoliberalism,” *Communication Education (52)*, Issue 3-4, pgs. 191-211 Mike)

Any attempt to address the politics of the new racism in the United States must begin by reclaiming the language of the social and affirming the project of an inclusive and just democracy. This suggests addressing how the politics of the new racism are made invisible under the mantle of neoliberal ideology, that is, raising questions about how neoliberalism works to hide the effects of power, politics, and racial injustice. What is troubling and must increasingly be made problematic is that neoliberalism wraps itself in what appears to be an unassailable appeal to common sense. As Jean and John Comaroff (2000) observe: there is a strong argument to be made that neoliberal capitalism in its millennial moment portends the death of politics by hiding its own ideological underpinnings in the dictates of economic efficiency: in the fetishism of the free market, in the inexorable, expanding needs of business, in the imperatives of science and technology. Or, if it does not conduce to the death of politics, it tends to reduce them to the pursuit of pure interest, individual or collective. (p. 322) Defined as the paragon of all social relations, neoliberalism attempts to eliminate an engaged critique about its most basic principles and social consequences by embracing the market as the arbiter of social destiny (Rule, 1998, p. 31). More is lost here than neoliberalism’s willingness to make its own assumptions problematic. Also lost is the very viability of politics itself. Not only does neoliberalism in this instance empty the public treasury, hollow out public services, and limit the vocabulary and imagery available to recognize antidemocratic forms of power and narrow models of individual agency, but it also undermines the socially discursive translating functions of any viable democracy by undercutting the ability of individuals to engage in the continuous translation between public considerations and the private interests by collapsing the public into the realm of the private (Bauman, 2001). Divested of its political possibilities and social underpinnings, freedom finds few opportunities for rearticulating private worries into public concerns or individual discontent into collective struggle (Bauman, 2001). Hence, the “first task in engaging neoliberalism is revealing its claim to a bogus universalism and making clear how it functions as a historical and social construction. Neoliberalism hides the traces of its own ideology, politics, and history either by rhetorically asserting its triumphalism as part of the end of history or by proclaiming that capitalism and democracy are synonymous. What must be challenged is neoliberalism’s future tense narrative of inevitability, demonstrating that the drama of world history remains wide open (Medovoi, 2002, p. 66). But the history of the changing economic and ideological conditions that gave rise to neoliberalism must be understood in relation to the corresponding history of race relations in the United States and abroad. Most importantly, as the history of race is either left out or misrepresented by the official channels of power in the United States, it is crucial that the history of slavery, civil rights, racial politics, and ongoing modes of struggle at the level of everyday life be remembered and used pedagogically to challenge the historical amnesia that feeds neoliberalism’s ahistorical claim to power and the continuity of its claims to common sense. The struggle against racial injustice cannot be separated from larger questions about what kind of culture and society are emerging under the imperatives of neoliberalism, what kind of history it ignores, and what alternatives might point to a substantive democratic future. Second, under neoliberalism all levels of government have been hollowed out and largely reduced either to their policing functions or to maintaining the privileges of the rich and the interests of corporate power, both of which are largely White. In this discourse, not only is the state absolved of its traditional social contract of upholding the public good and providing crucial social provisions and minimal guarantees for those who are in need of such services, but it also embraces a notion of color-blind racelessness. State racelessness is built on the right-wing logic of rational racists such as Dinesh DSouza (1995), who argue that What we need is a separation of race and state (p. 545). As David Theo Goldberg (2002) points out, this means that the state is now held to a standard of justice protective of individual rights and not group results from. This in turn makes possible the devaluation of any individuals considered not white, or white-like, the trashing or trampling of their rights and possibilities, for the sake of preserving the right to private rational discrimination of whites. [Thus] racist discrimination becomes privatized, and in terms of liberal legality state protected in its privacy. (p. 229) Defined through the ideology of racelessness, the state removes itself from either addressing or correcting the effects of racial discrimination, reducing matters of racism to individual concerns to be largely solved through private negotiations between individuals, and adopting an entirely uncritical role in the way in which the racial state shapes racial policies and their effects throughout the economic, social, and cultural landscape. Lost here is any critical engagement with state power and how it imposes immigration policies, decides who gets resources and access to a quality education, defines what constitutes a crime, how people are punished, how and whether social problems are criminalized, who is worthy of citizenship, and who is responsible for addressing racial injustices. As the late Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Grass, 2002) argues, there is a political and pedagogical need not only to protect the social gains, embodied in state policies, that have been the outcome of important collective struggles, but also to invent another kind of state (p. 71). This means challenging the political irresponsibility and moral indifference which are the organizing principles at the heart of the neoliberal vision. As Bourdieu suggests, this points to the need to restore a sense of utopian possibility rooted in a struggle for a democratic state. The racial state and its neoliberal ideology need to be challenged as part of any viable antiracist pedagogy and politics. Antiracist pedagogy also needs to move beyond the conundrums of a limited identity politics and begin to include in its analysis what it would mean to imagine the state as a vehicle for democratic values and a strong proponent for social and racial justice. In part, reclaiming the democratic and public responsibility of the state would mean: arguing for a state in which tax cuts for the rich, rather than social spending, are seen as the problem; using the state to protect the public good rather than waging a war on all things public; engaging and resisting the use of state power to both protect and define the public sphere as utterly White; redefining the power and role of the state so as to minimize its policing functions and strengthen its accountability to the public interests of all citizens, rather than to the wealthy and corporations. Removing the state from its subordination to market values means reclaiming the importance of social needs over commercial interests, democratic politics over corporate power, and addressing a host of urgent social problems that include but are not limited to: the escalating costs of health care, housing, the schooling crisis, the growing gap between the rich and poor, the environmental crisis, the rebuilding of the nation’s cities and impoverished rural areas, the economic crisis facing most of the states, and the increasing assault on people of color. The struggle over the state must be linked to a struggle for a racially just, inclusive democracy. Crucial to any viable politics of antiracism is the role the state will play as a guardian of the public interest and as a force in creating a multiracial democracy. Third, it is crucial for any antiracist pedagogy and politics to recognize that power does not just inhabit the realm of economics or state power, but is also intellectual, residing in the educational force of the culture and its enormous powers of persuasion. This means that any viable antiracist pedagogy must make the political more pedagogical by recognizing how public pedagogy works to determine and secure how racial identity, issues, and relations are produced in a wide variety of sites including schools, cable and television networks, newspapers and magazines, the Internet, advertising, churches, trade unions, and a host of other public spheres in which ideas are produced and distributed. This means becoming mindful of how racial meanings and practices are created, mediated, reproduced, and challenged through a wide variety of discourses, institutions, audiences, markets, and constituencies which help determine the forms and meaning of publicness in American society (Brenkman, 1995, p. 8). The crucial role that pedagogy plays in shaping racial issues reaffirms the centrality of a cultural politics that recognizes the relationship between issues of representation and the operations of power, the important role that intellectuals might play as engaged, public intellectuals, and the importance of critical knowledge in challenging neoliberalism’s illusion of unanimity. But an antiracist cultural pedagogy also suggests the need to develop a language of critique and possibility, and to wage individual and collective struggles in a wide variety of dominant public spheres and alternative counterpublics. Public pedagogy as a tool of antiracist struggles understands racial politics not only as a signifying activity through which subject positions are produced, identities inhabited, and desires mobilized but also as the mobilization of material relations of power as a way of securing, enforcing, and challenging racial injustices. While cultural politics offers an opportunity to understand how race matters and racist practices take hold in everyday life, such a pedagogical and cultural politics must avoid collapsing into a romanticization of the symbolic, popular, or discursive. Culture matters as a rhetorical tool and mode of persuasion, especially in the realm of visual culture, which has to be taken seriously as a pedagogical force, but changing consciousness is only a precondition to changing society and should not be confused with what it means to actually transform institutional relations of power. In part, this means contesting the control of the media by a handful of transnational corporations (on this subject, see McChesney & Nichols, 2002). The social gravity of racism as it works through the modalities of everyday language, relations, and cultural expressions has to be taken seriously in any antiracist politics, but such a concern and mode of theorizing must also be accompanied by an equally serious interest in the rise of corporate power and the role of state institutions and agencies in shaping contemporary forms of racial subjugation and inequality (Goldberg & Solomos, 2002, p. 231). Racist ideologies, practices, state formations, and institutional relations can be exposed pedagogically and linguistically, but they cannot be resolved merely in the realm of the discursive. Hence, any viable antiracist pedagogy needs to draw attention between critique and social transformation, critical modes of analysis and the responsibility of acting individually and collectively on one’s beliefs. Another important issue that has to be included in any notion of antiracist pedagogy and politics is the issue of connecting matters of racial justice to broader and more comprehensive political, cultural, and social agendas. Neoliberalism exerts a powerful force in American life because its influence and power are spread across a diverse range of political, economic, social and cultural spheres. Its ubiquity is matched by its aggressive pedagogical attempts to reshape the totality of social life in the image of the market, reaching into and connecting a wide range of seemingly disparate issues that bear down on everyday life in the United States. Neoliberalism is persuasive because its language of commercialism, consumerism, privatization, freedom, and self-interest resonates with, and saturates, so many aspects of public life. Differences in this discourse are removed from matters of equity and power and reduced to market niches. Agency is privatized, and social values are reduced to market-based interests. And, of course, a democracy of citizens is replaced by a democracy of consumers. Progressives, citizens, and other groups who are concerned about matters of race and difference need to maintain their concerns with particular forms of oppression and subordination, but the limits of various approaches to identity politics must be recognized so as not to allow them to become either fixed or incapable of making alliances with other social movements as part of a broader struggle over particular freedoms and the more generalized freedoms associated with an inclusive and radical democracy. I have not attempted to be exhaustive in suggesting what it might mean to recognize and challenge the new racism that now reproduces more subtle forms of racial subordination, oppression, and exclusion, though I have tried to point to some pedagogical and political concerns that connect racism and neoliberal politics. The color line in America is neither fixed nor static. Racism as an expression of power and exclusion takes many meanings and forms under different historical conditions. The emphasis on its socially and historically constructed nature offers hope because it suggests that what can be produced by dominant relations of power can also be challenged and transformed by those who imagine a more utopian and just world. The challenge of the color line is still with us today and needs to be recognized not only as a shameful example of racial injustice but also as a reprehensible attack on the very nature of democracy itself.

#### Neoliberalism results in an indiscriminate death drive for production – this is the same logic that produced Stalinism and Nazism

Santos ‘3 (Boaventura de Sousa, director of the Center for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra, EUROZINE, COLLECTIVE SUICIDE OR GLOBALIZATION FROM BELOW, http://www.eurozine.com/article/2003-03-26-santos-en.html)

Sacrificial genocide arises from a totalitarian illusion that is **manifested in** the belief that there are no alternatives to the present-day **reality and that the problems** and difficulties confronting it arise from failing to take its logic of development to its ultimate consequences. If there is unemployment**, hunger and death in the Third World,** this is not the result of market failures; instead, it is the outcome of the market laws not having been fully applied**. If there is terrorism, this is not due to the violence of the conditions that generate it; it is due, rather, to the fact that total violence has not been employed to physically eradicate all terrorists and potential terrorists.** This **political** logic **is based on the supposition of total power and knowledge, and on the radical rejection of alternatives; it** is ultra-conservative **in that** it aims to infinitely reproduce the status quo**.** Inherent to it is the **notion of the** end of history**. During the last hundred years,** the West has experienced three versions of this logic, and**, therefore**, seen three versions of the end of history: Stalinism, with its logic of insuperable efficiency of the plan; Nazism, with its logic of racial superiority; and neoliberalism, with its logic of insuperable efficiency of the market. The first two periods involved the destruction of democracy. The last one trivializes democracy, disarming it in the face of social actors sufficiently powerful to be able to privatize the State and international institutions in their favour. I have described this situation as a combination of political democracy and social fascism. One current manifestation of this combination resides in the fact that intensely strong public opinion, worldwide, against the war is found to be incapable of halting the war machine set in motion by supposedly democratic rulers. **At all these moments,** a death drive, **a catastrophic heroism,** predominates, the idea of a looming collective suicide, only preventable by the massive destruction of the other**. Paradoxically,** the broader the definition of the other **and the efficacy of its destruction,** the more likely collective suicide **becomes. In its sacrificial genocide version,** neoliberalism **is a mixture of market radicalization, neoconservatism and Christian fundamentalism.** Its death drive takes **a number of** forms, from the idea of "discardable populations", referring to citizens of the Third World not capable of being exploited as workers and consumers, to the concept of "collateral damage", to refer to the deaths, as a result of war, of thousands of innocent civilians. The last, catastrophic heroism, is quite clear on two facts: according to reliable calculations by the Non-Governmental Organization MEDACT, in London, between 48 and 260 thousand civilians will die during the war against Iraq and in the three months after (this is without there being civil war or a nuclear attack); the war will cost 100 billion dollars, - and much more if the costs of reconstruction are added - enough to pay the health costs of the world's poorest countries for four years.

#### The Alternative is to use this academic space to oppose neoliberalism.

#### The Role of the Ballot is to affirm the team who best confronts hegemonic structures of oppression.

#### Our position against neoliberalism is necessary to reinvigorate movements *against the state* – the alternative recovers the possibility of performative resistance against dominant structures through its political praxis of solidarity

#### Joseph M. Schwartz, 8-9-13 (Professor of Political Science at Temple University. Schwartz's teaching and published work focuses on the complex interaction among morality, ideology, and political and institutional development., “A Peculiar Blind Spot: Why did Radical Political Theory Ignore the Rampant Rise in Inequality Over the Past Thirty Years?”, Volume 35, Issue 3, 2013, Special Issue: Studying Politics Today: Critical Approaches to Political Science)

Given how divided the United States is, not only politically, but also geographically and socially on lines of race, class, and citizenship status, democratic theorists perhaps should refocus their energies on defining the role solidarity and equality of standing must play in the construction of a just society. For example, the political conflict likely to define America's political future is how expeditiously undocumented workers and their dependents become full citizens. Unlike some who long for a return to a class-based politics of social solidarity, I am well aware that forms of racial, national, and gender exclusion helped construct past forms of political solidarity.12 Moreover, the working class has never been a truly homogeneous and “universal class”; its identity and consciousness are constructed in complex ways that reflect the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and sexuality and the role that ideology and culture play in social life.¶ Yet, absent a revival of a pluralist, majoritarian left it is hard to imagine how difference can be institutionalized in an egalitarian manner. Theorists of difference are, in some ways, blind to the reality that difference (or “diversity”) can be—and is being—institutionalized on a radically inegalitarian social terrain, in which some social groups have much more power and opportunity than others. This blind spot mimics the weaknesses of the liberal pluralist theory that dominated political science in the 1950s and 1960s. Then, radical theorists pointed out that liberal pluralist society failed to be fully democratic because some groups had inordinate economic and political power as compared to their small numbers within the demos.13 Today, the same critique of difference can be made.¶ Post-structuralist theorists' focus on the performative resistance of decentered, mutable selves also fails to recognize that the performative options of working-class individuals, persons of color, women, and gays and lesbians are constrained by the structural distribution of racial, economic, and gendered forms of power. Thus, if the performative options of the vast majority are to be enhanced, left theorists have to recover a politics and practice of solidarity and democratic equality; concepts which neither a pure politics of difference nor an agonal politics of post-structuralist radical democracy can adequately ground.

### 1NC Forum

#### ****Our counter advocacy is to create a forum in which we create a dialogue including but not limited to whether Latinos or blacks should engage in the system****

#### This is the only way to solve

Zompetti ’04 [Joe, Assistant Professor, School of Communication, Illinois State

University, “Contemporary Argumentation and Debate”]

Interjecting the personalized into debate rounds has become highly problematic. As discussions on eDebate demonstrate and my own discussions with folks who have judged teams like Louisville suggest, these arguments have increased anxiety, frustration, anger and resentment. To be fair, these arguments have also facilitated much soul-searching and self-reflexivity in the community. However, except for the Urban Debate League (UDL) movement little, if anything, is being done to correct for inadequacies and inequities in the community, contrary to the appeal of the personalized arguments. In fact, any benefits from the personalization of debate can be accrued from enhancing other strategies: larger community discussions (as evidenced by some messages on eDebate), discussion fora at national tournaments,4 special high school debate institutes, clear directives and discussion during the CEDA and NDT business and roundtable meetings, more sensitive topic selection, etc. The drawbacks to personalizing debate, however, are, in my opinion, enormous.

#### First is Alliance splitting – approaching debate from a personal perspective ensures backlash against your cause

**Zompetti ’04** [Joe, Assistant Professor, School of Communication, Illinois State

University, “Contemporary Argumentation and Debate”]

The purpose of this essay is to outline what I strongly believe is a fundamental problem with recent debate techniques – the personalizing of debating. The intent is not to isolate or overly criticize the arguments advanced by the University of Louisville specifically, but rather to locate their arguments as a case study for how debate rounds have become highly personalized. Even before Louisville's project (and certainly Louisville is not the only team that currently engages in this type of debating), individuals and groups alike were personalizing debate arguments, making it difficult for opponents and judges to decipher, understand, analyze and come to grips with such arguments in a forum meant for hypothetical policy-making. In essence, the personalizing of debating has emerged wrought with frustrations, anxiety, resistance and backlash.

#### Second is location – debate rounds are the wrong location for this form of discussion – time constraints, competitive aspects, and shifting advocacies means the community can never just sit and talk about what to do

**Zompetti ’04** [Joe, Assistant Professor, School of Communication, Illinois State

University, “Contemporary Argumentation and Debate”]

The second major problem with this turn in contemporary policy debate is its deflection, if not downright rejection, of more fundamental or core problems which are the cause of marginalization. Dana Cloud (1998) poignantly argues that when focusing on the personalizing of "debating," society stifles dissent, which is probably more important and powerful at ushering-in social change than particularized attention to therapeutic, albeit victimized, perspectives. The will to engage in discourse about transgression is one of individualized therapy, as if the individual's psychological condition is at stake (e.g., arguments about "discursive violence" are often deployed to this end). Her argument is primarily one about key progressive change – should we focus on individual notions of psychological distress or the larger group's problem of resource-based scarcity and exploitation? If one is compelled by the argument that we should look self-reflexively2 and comprehensively at the nature of excluding debaters of color and other marginalized groups, then we might be tempted to agree with the outcome of piecemeal solutions and incoherent policies. On the other hand, we may want to analyze how such relationships occurred and grew when other relationships and situations were not as obvious. In fact, we may want to even broaden our interpretation of such relationships – exactly how are students of color marginalized? Why do folks believe they have nothing to contribute? Why do students of color feel excluded? It is very difficult, if not impossible, to get at these questions during a collegiate debate round. Not only is the limited time in a round an impediment at answering these complex questions, but both debaters of a single team may advance different personalized arguments, creating a moving target of advocacy that the opposing team and judges have difficulty in specifically pinning down for thorough and productive examination. Or, as Cloud suggests, such therapeutic arguments "deflect [sic] the energy and radicalism of activists," essentially creating a shell-game during private discussions of much larger societal problems (1998, p. 34). In addition, these questions are often skirted in debate rounds because there is a drive for competition. While some critical self-reflection has undoubtedly occurred as a result of personalizing debate, the overwhelming majority of debaters and coaches spend less time thinking about the core problems of marginalization (and their solutions) than they do locating debate strategies to beat personalization arguments at the next tournament. During squad meetings and coaching sessions, one does not hear an opposing team sincerely talk about their privilege or the exclusion of women or people of color in the debate community. Instead, one hears about what topicality argument, framework argument, or counter-narrative will be deployed to win the judge's ballot. The problem of therapeutic rhetoric underscores how personalized debating prevents examination of

more important factors such as resource disparity.

#### Translating misery into capital is a perverse system of neoimperial academia---vote negative to reject their call for the ballot

Tomsky 11 (Terri, Ph.D in English from U-British Columbia, postdoctoral fellow in cultural memory at the University of Alberta From Sarajevo to 9/11: Travelling Memory and the Trauma Economy, Parallax Volume 17, Issue 4, 2011)

In contrast to the cosmopolitization of a Holocaust cultural memory,1 there exist experiences of trauma that fail to evoke recognition and subsequently, compassion and aid. What is it exactly that confers legitimacy onto some traumatic claims and anonymity onto others? This is not merely a question of competing victimizations, what geographer Derek Gregory has criticized as the process of ‘cherry-picking among [ . . . ] extremes of horror’, but one that engages issues of the international travel, perception and valuation of traumatic memory.2 This seemingly arbitrary determination engrosses the e´migre´ protagonist of Dubravka Ugresic’s 2004 novel, The Ministry of Pain, who from her new home in Amsterdam contemplates an uneven response to the influx of claims by refugees fleeing the Yugoslav wars: The Dutch authorities were particularly generous about granting asylum to those who claimed they had been discriminated against in their home countries for ‘sexual differences’, more generous than to the war’s rape victims. As soon as word got round, people climbed on the bandwagon in droves. The war [ . . . ] was something like the national lottery: while many tried their luck out of genuine misfortune, others did it simply because the opportunity presented itself.3¶ Traumatic experiences are described here in terms analogous to social and economic capital. What the protagonist finds troubling is that some genuine refugee claimants must invent an alternative trauma to qualify for help: the problem was that ‘nobody’s story was personal enough or shattering enough. Because death itself had lost its power to shatter. There had been too many deaths’.4 In other words, the mass arrival of Yugoslav refugees into the European Union means that war trauma risks becoming a surfeit commodity and so decreases in value. I bring up Ugresic’s wry observations about trauma’s marketability because they enable us to conceive of a trauma economy, a circuit of movement and exchange where traumatic memories ‘travel’ and are valued and revalued along the way.¶ Rather than focusing on the end-result, the winners and losers of a trauma ‘lottery’, this article argues that there is, in a trauma economy, no end at all, no fixed value to any given traumatic experience. In what follows I will attempt to outline the system of a trauma economy, including its intersection with other capitalist power structures, in a way that shows how representations of trauma continually circulate and, in that circulation enable or disable awareness of particular traumatic experience across space and time. To do this, I draw extensively on the comic nonfiction of Maltese-American writer Joe Sacco and, especially, his retrospective account of newsgathering during the 1992–1995 Bosnian war in his 2003 comic book, The Fixer: A Story From Sarajevo.5 Sacco is the author of a series of comics that represent social life in a number of the world’s conflict zones, including the Palestinian territories and the former Yugoslavia. A comic artist, Sacco is also a journalist by profession who has first-hand experience of the way that war and trauma are reported in the international media. As a result, his comics blend actual reportage with his ruminations on the media industry. The Fixer explores the siege of Sarajevo (1992–1995) as part of a larger transnational network of disaster journalism, which also critically, if briefly, references the September eleventh, 2001 attacks in New York City. Sacco’s emphasis on the transcultural coverage of these traumas, with his comic avatar as the international journalist relaying information on the Bosnian war, emphasizes how trauma must be understood in relation to international circuits of mediation and commodification. My purpose therefore is not only to critique the aesthetic of a travelling traumatic memory, but also to call attention to the material conditions and networks that propel its travels.¶ Travelling Trauma Theorists and scholars have already noted the emergence, circulation and effects of traumatic memories, but little attention has been paid to the travelling itself. This is a concern since the movement of any memory must always occur within a material framework. The movement of memories is enabled by infrastructures of power, and consequently mediated and consecrated through institutions. So, while some existing theories of traumatic memory have made those determining politics and policies visible, we still don’t fully comprehend the travel of memory in a global age of media, information networks and communicative capitalism.6 As postcolonial geographers frequently note, to travel today is to travel in a world striated by late capitalism. The same must hold for memory; its circulation in this global media intensive age will always be reconfigured, transvalued and even commodified by the logic of late capital.¶ While we have yet to understand the relation between the travels of memory (traumatic or otherwise) and capitalism, there are nevertheless models for the circulation of other putatively immaterial things that may prove instructive. One of the best, I think, is the critical insight of Edward W. Said on what he called ‘travelling theory’.7 In 1984 and again in 1994, Said wrote essays that described the reception and reformulation of ideas as they are uprooted from an original historical and geographical context and propelled across place and time. While Said’s contribution focuses on theory rather than memory, his reflections on the travel and transformation of ideas provide a comparison which helpfully illuminates the similar movements of what we might call ‘travelling trauma’. Ever attendant to the historical specificities that prompt transcultural transformations, the ‘Travelling Theory’ essays offers a Vichian humanist reading of cultural production; in them, Said argues that theory is not given but made. In the first instance, it emanates out of and registers the sometimes urgent historical circumstances of its theorist.¶ Subsequently, he maintains, when other scholars take up the theory, they necessarily interpret it, additionally integrating their own social and historical experiences into it, so changing the theory and, often, authorizing it in the process. I want to suggest that Said’s bird’s eye view of the intellectual circuit through which theory travels, is received and modified can help us appreciate the movement of cultural memory. As with theory, cultural memories of trauma are lifted and separated from their individual source as they travel; they are mediated, transmitted and institutionalized in particular ways, depending on the structure of communication and communities in which they travel.¶ Said invites his readers to contemplate how the movement of theory transforms its meanings to such an extent that its significance to sociohistorical critique can be drastically curtailed. Using Luka´ cs’s writings on reification as an example, Said shows how a theory can lose the power of its original formulation as later scholars take it up and adapt it to their own historical circumstances. In Said’s estimation, Luka´ cs’s insurrectionary vision became subdued, even domesticated, the wider it circulated. Said is especially concerned to describe what happens when such theories come into contact with academic institutions, which impose through their own mode of producing cultural capital, a new value upon then. Said suggests that this authoritative status, which imbues the theory with ‘prestige and the authority of age’, further dulls the theory’s originally insurgent message.8 When Said returned to and revised his essay some ten years later, he changed the emphasis by highlighting the possibilities, rather than the limits, of travelling theory.¶ ‘Travelling Theory Reconsidered’, while brief and speculative, offers a look at the way Luka´ cs’s theory, transplanted into yet a different context, can ‘flame [ . . . ] out’ in a radical way.9 In particular, Said is interested in exploring what happens when intellectuals like Theodor Adorno and Franz Fanon take up Luka´ cs: they reignite the ‘fiery core’ of his theory in their critiques of capitalist alienation and French colonialism. Said is interested here in the idea that theory matters and that as it travels, it creates an ‘intellectual [ . . . ] community of a remarkable [ . . . ] affiliative’ kind.10 In contrast to his first essay and its emphasis on the degradation of theoretical ideas, Said emphasizes the way a travelling theory produces new understandings as well as new political tools to deal with violent conditions and disenfranchized subjects. Travelling theory becomes ‘an intransigent practice’ that goes beyond borrowing and adaption.11 As Said sees it, both Adorno and Fanon ‘refuse the emoluments offered by the Hegelian dialectic as stabilized into resolution by Luka´ cs’.12 Instead they transform Luka´ cs into their respective locales as ‘the theorist of permanent dissonance as understood by Adorno, [and] the critic of reactive nationalism as partially adopted by Fanon in colonial Algeria’.13¶ Said’s set of reflections on travelling theory, especially his later recuperative work, are important to any account of travelling trauma, since it is not only the problems of institutional subjugation that matter; additionally, we need to affirm the occurrence of transgressive possibilities, whether in the form of fleeting transcultural affinities or in the effort to locate the inherent tensions within a system where such travel occurs. What Said implicitly critiques in his 1984 essay is the negative effects of exchange, institutionalization and the increasing use-value of critical theory as it travels within the academic knowledge economy; in its travels, the theory becomes practically autonomous, uncoupled from the theorist who created it and the historical context from which it was produced. This seems to perfectly illustrate the international circuit of exchange and valuation that occurs in the trauma economy.¶ In Sacco’s The Fixer, for example, it is not theory, but memory, which travels from Bosnia to the West, as local traumas are turned into mainstream news and then circulated for consumption. By highlighting this mediation, The Fixer explicitly challenges the politics that make invisible the maneuvers of capitalist and neoimperial practices. Like Said, Sacco displays a concern with the dissemination and reproduction of information and its consequent effects in relation to what Said described as ‘the broader political world’.14 Said’s anxiety relates to the academic normativization of theory (a ‘tame academic substitution for the real thing’15), a transformation which, he claimed, would hamper its uses for society.¶ A direct line can be drawn from Said’s discussion of the circulation of discourse and its (non)political effects, and the international representation of the 1992–1995 Bosnian war. The Bosnian war existed as a guerre du jour, the successor to the first Gulf War, receiving saturation coverage and represented daily in the Western media. The sustained presence of the media had much to do with the proximity of the war to European cities and also with the spectacular visibility of the conflict, particularly as it intensified. The bloodiest conflict to have taken place in Europe since the Second World War, it displaced two million people and was responsible for over 150,000 civilian casualties.16 Yet despite global media coverage, no decisive international military or political action took place to suspend fighting or prevent ethnic cleansing in East Bosnia, until after the massacre of Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica in 1995. According to Gregory Kent, western perceptions about the war until then directed the lack of political will within the international community, since the event was interpreted, codified and dismissed as an ‘ethnic’, ‘civil’ war and ‘humanitarian crisis’, rather than an act of (Serbian) aggression against (Bosnian) civilians.17¶ The rather bizarre presence of a large international press corps, hungry for drama and yet comfortably ensconced in Sarajevo’s Holiday Inn amid the catastrophic siege of that city, prompted Jean Baudrillard to formulate his theory of the hyperreal. In an article for the Paris newspaper Libe´ration in 1993, Baudrillard writes of his anger at the international apathy towards the Bosnian crisis, denouncing it as a ‘spectral war’.18 He describes it as a ‘hyperreal hell’ not because the violence was in a not-so-distant space, but because of the way the Bosnians were ‘harassed by the [international] media and humanitarian agencies’.19 Given this extensive media coverage, it is important to evaluate the role of representative discourses in relation to violence and its after effects. To begin with, we are still unsure of the consequences of this saturation coverage, though scholars have since elaborated on the racism framing much of the media discourses on the Yugoslav wars.20 More especially, it is¶ the celebrity of the Bosnian war that makes a critical evaluation of its current status in today’s media cycle all the more imperative. Bosnia’s current invisibility is fundamentally related to a point Baudrillard makes towards the end of his essay: ‘distress, misery and suffering have become the raw goods’ circulating in a global age of ‘commiseration’.21 The ‘demand’ created by a market of a sympathetic, yet selfindulgent spectators propels the global travel of trauma (or rather, the memory of that trauma) precisely because Bosnian suffering has a ‘resale value on the futures markets’.22 To treat traumatic memory as currency not only acknowledges the fact that travelling memory is overdetermined by capitalism; more pertinently, it recognizes the global system through which traumatic memory travels and becomes subject to exchange and flux. To draw upon Marx: we can comprehend trauma in terms of its fungible properties, part of a social ‘relation [that is] constantly changing with time and place’.23 This is what I call the trauma economy. By trauma economy, I am thinking of economic, cultural, discursive and political structures that guide, enable and ultimately institutionalize the representation, travel and attention to certain traumas.¶ The Trauma Economy in Joe Sacco’s The Fixer Having introduced the idea of a trauma economy and how it might operate, I want to turn to Sacco because he is acutely conscious of the way representations of trauma circulate in an international system. His work exposes the infrastructure and logic of a trauma economy in war-torn Bosnia and so echoes some of the points made by Said about the movement of theory. As I examine Sacco’s critical assessment of the Bosnian war, I want to bear in mind Said’s discussion about the effects of travel on theory and, in particular, his two contrasting observations: first, that theory can become commodified and second, that theory enables unexpected if transient solidarities across cultures. The Fixer takes up the notion of trauma as transcultural capital and commodity, something Sacco has confronted in his earlier work on Bosnia.24 The Fixer focuses on the story of Neven, a Sarajevan local and the ‘fixer’ of the comic’s title, who sells his services to international journalists, including Sacco’s avatar. The comic is¶ set in 2001, in postwar Sarajevo and an ethnically partitioned and economically devastated Bosnia, but its narrative frequently flashes back to the conflict in the mid- 1990s, and to what has been described as ‘the siege within the siege’.25 This refers not just to Sarajevo’s three and a half year siege by Serb forces but also to its backstage: the concurrent criminalization of Sarajevo through the rise of a wartime black market economy from which Bosniak paramilitary groups profited and through which they consolidated their power over Sarajevan civilians. In these flashbacks, The Fixer addresses Neven’s experience of the war, first, as a sniper for one of the Bosniak paramilitary units and, subsequently, as a professional fixer for foreign visitors, setting them up with anything they need, from war stories and tours of local battle sites to tape recorders and prostitutes. The contemporary, postwar scenes detail the ambivalent friendship between Neven and Sacco’s comic avatar. In doing so, The Fixer spares little detail about the economic value of trauma: Neven’s career as a fixer after all is reliant on what Sacco terms the ‘flashy brutality of Sarajevo’s war’.26 Even Neven admits as much to his interlocutor, without irony, let alone compassion: ‘“When massacres happened,” Neven once told me, “those were the best times. Journalists from all over the world were coming here”’.27¶ The Fixer never allows readers to forget that Neven provides his services in exchange for hard cash. So while Neven provides vital – indeed for Sacco’s avatar often the only – access to the stories and traumas of the war, we can never be sure whether he is a reliable witness or merely an opportunistic salesman. His anecdotes have the whiff of bravura about them. He expresses pride in his military exploits, especially his role in a sortie that destroyed several Serb tanks (the actual number varies increasingly each time the tale is told). He tells Sacco that with more acquaintances like himself, he ‘could have broken the siege of Sarajevo’.28 Neven’s heroic selfpresentation is consistently undercut by other characters, including Sacco’s avatar, who ironically renames him ‘a Master in the School of Front-line Truth’ and even calls upon the reader to assess the situation. One Sarajevan local remembers Neven as having a ‘big imagination’29; others castigate him as ‘unstable’30; and those who have also fought in the war reject his claims outright, telling Sacco, ‘it didn’t happen’.31¶ For Sacco’s avatar though, Neven is ‘a godsend’.32 Unable to procure information from the other denizens of Sarajevo, he is delighted to accept Neven’s version of events: ‘Finally someone is telling me how it was – or how it almost was, or how it could have been – but finally someone in this town is telling me something’.33 This discloses the true value of the Bosnian war to the Western media: getting the story ‘right’ factually is less important than getting it ‘right’ affectively. The purpose is to extract a narrative that evokes an emotional (whether voyeuristic or empathetic) response from its audience. Here we see a good example of the way a traumatic memory circulates in the trauma economy, as it travels from its site of origin and into a fantasy of a reality. Neven’s mythmaking – whether motivated by economic opportunism, or as a symptom of his own traumatized psyche – reflects back to the international community a counter-version of mediated events and spectacular traumas that appear daily in the Western media. It is worth adding that his mythmaking only has value so long as it occurs within preauthorized media circuits.¶ When Neven attempts to bypass the international journalists and sell his story instead directly to a British magazine, the account of his wartime ‘action against the 43 tanks’ is rejected on the basis that they ‘don’t print fiction’.34 The privilege of revaluing and re-narrating the trauma is reserved for people like Sacco’s avatar, who has no trouble adopting a mythic and hyperbolic tone in his storytelling: ‘it is he, Neven, who has walked through the valley of the shadow of death and blown things up along the way’.35¶ Yet Neven’s urge to narrate, while indeed part of his job, is a striking contrast to the silence of other locals. When Sacco arrives in Sarajevo in 2001 for his follow-up story, he finds widespread, deliberate resistance to his efforts to gather first-hand testimonies. Wishing to uncover the city’s ‘terrible secrets’, Sacco finds his ‘research has stalled’, as locals either refuse to meet with him or cancel their appointments.36 The suspiciousness and hostility Sacco encounters in Sarajevo is a response precisely to the international demand for trauma of the 1990s. The mass media presence during the war did little to help the city’s besieged residents; furthermore, international journalists left once the drama of war subsided to ‘the last offensives grinding up the last of the last soldiers and civilians who will die in this war’.37 The media fascination¶ with Sarajevo’s humanitarian crisis was as intense as it was fleeting and has since been described as central to the ensuing ‘compassion fatigue’ of Western viewers.38 In contrast to this coverage, which focused on the casualties and victims of the war, The Fixer reveals a very different story: the rise of Bosniak paramilitary groups, their contribution (both heroic and criminal) to the war and their ethnic cleansing of non- Muslim civilians from the city. Herein lies the appeal of Neven, a Bosnian-Serb, who has fought under Bosnian- Muslim warlords defending Sarajevo and who considers himself a Bosnian citizen first before any other ethnic loyalty. For not only is Sacco ignorant about the muddled ethnic realities of the war, its moral ambiguities and its key players but he also wants to hear Neven’s shamelessly daring and dirty account of the war, however unreliable. As Sacco explains, he’s ‘a little enthralled, a little infatuated, maybe a little in love and what is love but a transaction’.39 Neven – a hardened war veteran – provides the goods, the first-hand experience of war and, for Sacco’s avatar, that is worth every Deutschemark, coffee and cigarette. He explains in a parenthetical remark to his implied reader: ‘I would be remiss if I let you think that my relationship with Neven is simply a matter of his shaking me down. Because Neven was the first friend I made in Sarajevo . . . [he’s] travelled one of the war’s dark roads and I’m not going to drop him till he tells me all about it’.40 Sacco’s assertion here suggests something more than a mutual exploitation. The word ‘friend’ describing Sacco’s relationship to Neven is quickly replaced by the word ‘drop’. Having sold his ‘raw goods’, Neven finds that the trauma economy in the postwar period has already devalued his experience by disengaging with Bosnia’s local traumas. As Sacco suggests, ‘the war moved on and left him behind [ . . . ] The truth is, the war quit Neven’.41 The Neven of 2001 is not the brash Neven of old, but a pasty-looking unemployed forty-year old and recovering alcoholic, who takes pills to prevent his ‘anxiety attacks’.42 His wartime actions lay heavily on his conscience, despite his efforts to ‘stash [ . . . ] deep’ his bad memories.43 The Fixer leaves us with an ironic fact: Neven, who has capitalized on trauma during the war, is now left traumatized and without capital in the postwar situation.¶ Juxtaposing Traumas in a Global Age¶ Sacco’s depiction of the trauma economy certainly highlights the question of power and exploitation, since so many of the interactions between locals and international visitors are shaped by the commodity market of traumatic memories. And while The Fixer provides a new perspective of the Bosnian war, excoriating the profit-seeking objectives of both the media and the Bosnian middle-men amid life-altering events, its general point about the capitalistic vicissitudes of the trauma economy is not significantly different from that sustained in the narratives of Aleksandar Hemon, Rajiv Chandrasekaran or Art Spiegelman.44What distinguishes Sacco’s work is the way it also picks up the possibility described in Edward Said’s optimistic re-reading of travel: the potential for affiliation. As I see it, Sacco’s criticism isn’t leveled merely at the moral grey zone created during the Bosnian war: he is more interested in the framework of representations themselves that mediate, authorize, commemorate and circulate trauma in different ways. been described as central to the ensuing ‘compassion fatigue’ of Western viewers.38 In contrast to this coverage, which focused on the casualties and victims of the war, The Fixer reveals a very different story: the rise of Bosniak paramilitary groups, their contribution (both heroic and criminal) to the war and their ethnic cleansing of non- Muslim civilians from the city. Herein lies the appeal of Neven, a Bosnian-Serb, who has fought under Bosnian- Muslim warlords defending Sarajevo and who considers himself a Bosnian citizen first before any other ethnic loyalty. 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As I see it, Sacco’s criticism isn’t leveled merely at the moral grey zone created during the Bosnian war: he is more interested in the framework of representations themselves that mediate, authorize, commemorate and circulate trauma in different ways. suffering’.48 Instead, the panel places Sacco’s (Anglophone) audience within the familiar, emotional context of the September 11, 2001 attacks, with their attendant anxieties, shock and grief and so contributes to a blurring of the hierarchical lines set up between different horrors across different spaces. Consequently, I do not see Sacco’s juxtaposition of traumas as an instance of what Michael Rothberg calls, ‘competitive memory’, the victim wars that pit winners against losers.49 Sacco gestures towards a far more complex idea that takes into account the highly mediated presentations of both traumas, which nonetheless evokes Rothberg’s notion of multidirectional memory by affirming the solidarities of trauma alongside their differences. In drawing together these two disparate events, Sacco’s drawings echo the critical consciousness in Said’s ‘Travelling Theory’ essay. Rather than suggesting one trauma is, or should be, more morally legitimate than the other, Sacco is sharply attentive to the way trauma is disseminated and recognized in the political world. The attacks on theWorld Trade Centre, like the siege of Sarajevo, transformed into discursive form epitomize what might be called victim narratives. In this way, the United States utilized international sympathy (much of which was galvanized by the stunning footage of the airliners crashing into the towers) to launch a retaliatory campaign against Afghanistan and, later, Iraq. In contrast, Bosnia in 1992 faced a precarious future, having just proclaimed its independence. As we discover in The Fixer, prior to Yugoslavia’s break-up, Bosnia had been ordered to return its armaments to the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), which were then placed ‘into the hands of the rebel Serbs’, leaving the Bosnian government to ‘build an army almost from scratch’.50 The analogy between 9/11 and 1992 Sarajevo is stark: Sarajevo’s empty landscape in the panel emphasizes its defencelessness and isolation. The Fixer constantly reminds the reader about the difficulties of living under a prolonged siege in ‘a city that is cut off and being starved into submission’.51 In contrast, September 11, 2001 has attained immense cultural capital because of its status as a significant U.S. trauma. This fact is confirmed by its profound visuality, which crystallized the spectacle and site of trauma. Complicit in this process, the international press consolidated and legitimated the event’s symbolic power, by representing, mediating and dramatizing the trauma so that, as SlavojZ ˇ izˇek writes, the U.S. was elevated into ‘the sublime victim of Absolute Evil’.52 September 11 was constructed as an exceptional event, in terms of its irregular circumstances and the symbolic enormity both in the destruction of iconic buildings and in the attack on U.S. soil. Such a construction seeks to overshadow perhaps all recent international traumas and certainly all other U.S. traumas and sites of shock. Sacco’s portrayal, which locates September eleven in Sarajevo 1992, calls into question precisely this claim towards the singularity of any trauma. The implicit doubling and prefiguring of the 9/11 undercuts the exceptionalist rhetoric associated with the event. Sacco’s strategy encourages us to think outside of hegemonic epistemologies, where one trauma dominates and becomes more meaningful than others. Crucially, Sacco reminds his audience of the cultural imperialism that frames the spectacle of news and the designation of traumatic narratives in particular.¶ Postwar Bosnia and Beyond 2001 remains, then, both an accidental and a significant date in The Fixer. While the (Anglophone) world is preoccupied with a new narrative of trauma and a sense of historical rupture in a post 9/11 world, Bosnia continues to linger in a postwar limbo. Six years have passed since the war ended, but much of Bosnia’s day-to-day economy remains coded by international perceptions of the war. No longer a haven for aspiring journalists, Bosnia is now a thriving economy for international scholars of trauma and political theory, purveyors of thanotourism,53 UN peacekeepers and post-conflict nation builders (the ensemble of NGOs, charity and aid workers, entrepreneurs, contractors, development experts, and EU government advisors to the Office of the High Representative, the foreign overseer of the protectorate state that is Bosnia). On the other hand, many of Bosnia’s locals face a grim future, with a massive and everincreasing unemployment rate (ranging between 35 and 40%), brain-drain outmigration, and ethnic cantonments. I contrast these realities of 2001 because these circumstances – a flourishing economy at the expense of the traumatized population – ought to be seen as part of a trauma economy. The trauma economy, in other words, extends far beyond the purview of the Western media networks. In discussing the way traumatic memories travel along the circuits of the global media, I have described only a few of the many processes that transform traumatic events into fungible traumatic memories; each stage of that process represents an exchange that progressively reinterprets the memory, giving it a new value. Media outlets seek to frame the trauma of the Bosnian wars in ways that are consistent with the aims of pre-existing political or economic agendas; we see this in Sacco just as easily as in Ugresic’s assessment of how even a putatively liberal state like the Netherlands will necessarily inflect the value of one trauma over another. The point is that in this circulation, trauma is placed in a marketplace; the siege of Sarajevo, where an unscrupulous fixer can supply western reporters with the story they want to hear is only a concentrated example of a more general phenomenon. Traumatic memories are always in circulation, being revalued in each transaction according to the logic of supply and demand. Victim and witness; witness and reporter; reporter and audience; producer and consumer: all these parties bargain to suit their different interests. The sooner we acknowledge the influence of these interests, the closer we will come to an understanding of how trauma travels.

#### Independently - their demand for the ballot is bad—it cedes revolutionary potential to the sovereign authority of the judge which paradoxically reaffirms the status quo.

David Campbell, Professor of International Politics at the University of Newcastle in England, 1998, Performing Politics and the Limits of Language, Theory & Event, 2:1

Those who argue that hate speech demands juridical responses assert that not only does the speech communicate, but that it constitutes an injurious act. This presumes that not only does speech act, but that "it acts upon the addressee in an injurious way" (16). This argumentation is, in Butler's eyes, based upon a "sovereign conceit" whereby speech wields a sovereign power, acts as an imperative, and embodies a causative understanding of representation. In this manner, hate speech constitutes its subjects as injured victims unable to respond themselves and in need of the law's intervention to restrict if not censor the offending words, and punish the speaker: This idealization of the speech act as a sovereign action (whether positive or negative) appears linked with the idealization of sovereign state power or, rather, with the imagined and forceful voice of that power. It is as if the proper power of the state has been expropriated, delegated to its citizens, and the state then rememerges as a neutral instrument to which we seek recourse to protects as from other citizens, who have become revived emblems of a (lost) sovereign power (82). Two elements of this are paradoxical. First, the sovereign conceit embedded in conventional renderings of hate speech comes at a time when understanding power in sovereign terms is becoming (if at all ever possible) even more difficult. Thus the juridical response to hate speech helps deal with an onto-political problem: "The constraints of legal language emerge to put an end to this particular historical anxiety [the problematisation of sovereignty], for the law requires that we resituate power in the language of injury, that we accord injury the status of an act and trace that act to the specific conduct of a subject" (78). The second, which stems from this, is that (to use Butler's own admittedly hyperbolic formulation) "the state produces hate speech." By this she means not that the state is the sovereign subject from which the various slurs emanate, but that within the frame of the juridical account of hate speech "the category cannot exist without the state's ratification, and this power of the state's judicial language to establish and maintain the domain of what will be publicly speakable suggests that the state plays much more than a limiting function in such decisions; in fact, the state actively produces the domain of publicly acceptable speech, demarcating the line between the domains of the speakable and the unspeakable, and retaining the power to make and sustain the line of consequential demarcation" (77). The sovereign conceit of the juridical argument thus linguistically resurrects the sovereign subject at the very moment it seems most vulnerable, and reaffirms the sovereign state and its power in relation to that subject at the very moment its phantasmatic condition is most apparent. The danger is that the resultant extension of state power will be turned against the social movements that sought legal redress in the first place (24)

### 1NC Safe Distance

#### The aff’s protest against racism takes place from a safe distance—this maintains ideology

A – paranoia is adopted as a hedge against the “bureaucracy” which is what the aff criticizes

B – if the desires of the movement are accomplished that equals the end of the movement

C – empirics prove, conservatives were against communism but in reality they needed communism to continue existing – paranoia needs an enemy to enjoy

Carlson, 99 – Professor of Law (David Gray and Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law Columbia Law Review November, 1999)

Schlag presents a dark vision of what he calls "the bureaucracy," which crushes us and controls us. It operates on "a field of pain and death." n259 It deprives us of choice, speech, n260 and custom. n261 As bureaucracy cannot abide great minds, legal education must suppress greatness through mind numbing repetition. n262 In fact, legal thought is the bureaucracy and cannot be distinguished from it. n263 If legal thought tried to buck the bureaucracy, the bureaucracy would instantly crush it. n264 Schlag observes that judges have taken "oaths that require subordination of truth, understanding, and insight, to the preservation of certain bureaucratic governmental institutions and certain sacred texts." n265 Legal scholarship and lawyers generally n266 are the craven tools of bureaucracy, and those who practice law or scholarship simply serve to justify and strengthen the bureaucracy. "If there were no discipline of American law, the liberal state would have to invent it." n267 "Legal thinkers in effect serve as a kind of P.R. firm for the bureaucratic state." n268 Legal scholarship has sold out to the bureaucracy: Insofar as the expressions of the state in the form of [statutes, etc.] can be expected to endure, so can the discipline that so helpfully organizes, rationalizes, and represents these expressions as intelligent knowledge. As long as the discipline shows obeisance to the authoritative legal forms, it enjoys the backing of the state... Disciplinary knowledge of law can be true not because it is true, but because the state makes it true. n269 Scholarship produces a false "conflation between what [academics] celebrate as 'law' and the ugly bureaucratic noise that grinds daily in the [\*1946] [ ] courts...." n270 Scholarship "becomes the mode of discourse by which bureaucratic institutions and practices re-present themselves as subject to the rational ethical-moral control of autonomous individuals." n271 "The United States Supreme Court and its academic groupies in the law schools have succeeded in doing what many, only a few decades ago, would have thought impossible. They have succeeded in making Kafka look naive." n272 Lacanian theory allows us to interpret the meaning of this anti-Masonic vision precisely. Schlag's bureaucracy must be seen as a "paranoid construction according to which our universe is the work of art of unknown creators." n273 In Schlag's view, the bureaucracy is in control of law and language and uses it exclusively for its own purposes. The bureaucracy is therefore the Other of the Other, "a hidden subject who pulls the strings of the great Other (the symbolic order)." n274 The bureaucracy, in short, is the superego (i.e., absolute knowledge of the ego), n275 but rendered visible and projected outward. The superego, the ego's stern master, condemns the ego and condemns what it does. Schlag has transferred this function to the bureaucracy. As is customary, n276 by describing Schlag's vision as a paranoid construction, I do not mean to suggest that Professor Schlag is mentally ill or unable to function. Paranoid construction is not in fact the illness. It is an attempt at healing what the illness is - the conflation of the domains of the symbolic, imaginary, and real. n277 This conflation is what Lacan calls "psychosis." Whereas the "normal" subject is split between the three domains, the psychotic is not. He is unable to keep the domains separate. n278 The symbolic domain of language begins to lose place to the real domain. The psychotic raves incoherently, and things begin to talk to [\*1947] him directly. n279 The psychotic, "immersed in jouissance," n280 loses desire itself. Paranoia is a strategy the subject adopts to ward off breakdown. The paranoid vision holds together the symbolic order itself and thereby prevents the subject from slipping into the psychotic state in which "the concrete 'I' loses its absolute power over the entire system of its determinations." n281 This of course means - and here is the deep irony of paraonia - that bureaucracy is the very savior of romantic metaphysics. If the romantic program were ever fulfilled - if the bureaucracy were to fold up shop and let the natural side of the subject have its way - subjectivity would soon be enveloped, smothered, and killed in the night of psychosis. n282 Paranoid ambivalence toward bureaucracy (or whatever other fantasy may be substituted for it) is very commonly observed. Most recently, conservatives "organized their enjoyment" by opposing communism. n283 By confronting and resisting an all-encompassing, sinister power, the subject confirms his existence as that which sees and resists the power. n284 As long as communism existed, conservatism could be perceived. When communism disappeared, conservatives felt "anxiety" n285 - a lack of purpose. Although they publicly opposed communism, they secretly regretted its disappearance. Within a short time, a new enemy was found to organize conservative jouissance - the cultural left. (On the left, a similar story could be told about the organizing function of racism and sexism, which, of course, have not yet disappeared.) These humble examples show that the romantic yearning for wholeness is always the opposite of [\*1948] what it appears to be. n286 We paranoids need our enemies to organize our enjoyment. Paranoid construction is, in the end, a philosophical interpretation, even in the clinical cases. n287 As Schlag has perceived, the symbolic order of law is artificial. It only exists because we insist it does. We all fear that the house of cards may come crashing down. Paradoxically**, it is this very "anxiety" that shores up the symbolic**. The normal person knows he must keep insisting that the symbolic order exists precisely because the person knows it is a fiction. n288 The paranoid, however, assigns this role to the bureaucracy (and thereby absolves himself from the responsibility). Thus, paranoid delusion allows for the maintenance of a "cynical" distance between the paranoid subject and the realm of mad psychosis. n289 In truth**, cynicism toward bureaucracy shows nothing but the unconfronted depth to which the cynic is actually committed to what ought to be abolished.**

#### Starting politics from the standpoint of an excluded identity-group is a vengeful politics of resentment – it can only position itself reactively against an ostensible universal like <whiteness>, inevitably re-instantiating the terms of oppression

A – Focusing on suffering means your identity becomes dependent on that notion i.e. exclusion

B – they gain pleasure from reliving the suffering because it is their form of revenge

C – we must use a community as a place to discuss best forms of political action

D – the affirmative is “MY suffering” when it should be “OUR suffering”

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

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

#### Ideology is sustained because we gain enjoyment from protesting it—attempts to change the system in a debate tournament is the ultimate act of conformity since nothing is at stake

A – Kundera is a writer who opposed the socialist ideology, for his works to be of any meaning the socialist structures had to be present

B – participating in a revolt that is done from a safe distance (speeches) strengthens the system because they will tear down your revolt

C – privately indulging in cynical irony while publically obeying the rules of the system is a conformist attitude which is apolitical

D – we get enjoyment from the existence of that which we hate, because we laugh at the system

E – two examples were given – the movie Brasil has a government official marching as if he was doing something important the hero sees him but he gets enjoyment from seeing this official repeating this meaningless action and then the Opera Life with an Idiot

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Emphasis should be laid on the inherent political dimension of the notion of enjoyment or on the way this kernel of enjoyment functions as a political factor. Let us probe this dimension through one of the enigmas of cultural life in postsocialist Eastern Europe: the fate of Milan Kundera. Throughout the sixties and the seventies, Kundera's novels, from The Joke to The Unbearable Lightness of Being, were hailed in the West at the quintessential cultural expression of the Central European movement, preparing the ground for the "velvet revolution" that overthrew the Communist regime in 1990. Yet in his own country, the Czech Republic, the attitude towards him in the "orthodox" dissident circles was always one of uneasiness. Even now, after the victory of democracy, he suffers a kind of excommunication in Bohemia. His works are rarely published, the media pass them over in silence, and everybody is somehow embarrassed to speak about him. In order to justify such a treatment, one rakes up old stories about his hidden collaboration with the Communist regime, about his taking refuge in private pleasures and avoiding the morally upright conflict a la Vaclav Havel, etc. However, the roots of this resistance lie deeper: Kundera conveys a message unamenable to the "normalized" democratic consciousness. At first glance, the fundamental axis that structures the universe of his works seems to be the opposition between the pretentious pathos of the official socialist ideology and the islands of everyday private life, with its small joys and pleasures, laughters and tears, beyond the reach of ideology. These islands enable us to assume a distance which renders visible the ideological ritual in its vain, ridiculous pretentiousness and grotesque meaninglessness: **it is not worth the trouble to revolt against an official ideology with pathetic speeches** on freedom and democracy - sooner or later, such a revolt leads to a new version of the "Big March" (Kundera's ironic name for the tightly controlled mass movement in which individual destinies are sacrificed to some sacred "progressive" ideological goal). If Kundera is reduced to such an attitude, it is easy to dismiss him via Havel's fundamental "Althusserian" insight into how the **ultimate conformist attitude** is precisely such an "apolitical" stance which, **while publicly obeying the imposed ritual, privately indulges in cynical irony**. It is not sufficient to ascertain that the ideological ritual is a mere appearance which nobody takes se- [\*930] riously - this appearance is essential, which is why one has to take a risk and refuse to participate in the public ritual. n8 One must therefore take a step further and consider that there is no way to simply step aside from ideology. The private indulgence in cynicism and the obsession with private pleasures are all precisely how totalitarian ideology operates in nonideological everyday life. It is how this life is determined by ideology, how ideology is "present in it in the mode of absence," if we may resort to this syntagma from the heroic epoch of structuralism. The depoliticization of the private sphere in late Socialist societies is "compulsive," marked by the fundamental prohibition of free political discussion; for that reason, such depoliticization always functions as the evasion of what is truly at stake. This accounts for the most immediately striking feature of Kundera's novels: the depoliticized private sphere in no way functions as the free domain of innocent pleasures; there is always something damp, claustrophobic, inauthentic, even desperate, in the characters' striving for sexual and other pleasures. In this respect, the lesson of Kundera's novels is the exact opposite of a naive reliance on the innocent private sphere; the totalitarian socialist ideology vitiates from within the very sphere of privacy to which we take refuge. This insight, however, is far from conclusive. Another step is needed to deal with Kundera's even more ambiguous lesson. Notwithstanding the dampness of the private sphere, the fact remains that the totalitarian situation gave rise to a series of phenomena attested by numerous chronicles of everyday life in the socialist East. In reaction to totalitarian ideological domination, not only a cynical escape into the "good life" of private pleasures took place, but also an extraordinary flourishing of authentic friendship, of paying visits at home, of shared dinners, and of passionate intellectual conversations in closed societies - features which usually fascinated visitors from the West. The problem, of course, is that there is no way to draw a clear line of separation between the two sides; they are the front and the back of the same coin, which is why, with the advent of democracy, they both get lost. It is to Kundera's credit that he does not conceal this ambiguity: the spirit of "Middle Europe" - of authentic friendship and intellectual sociability - sur- [\*931] vived only in Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland as a form of resistance to totalitarian ideological domination. Perhaps yet another step is to be ventured here; the very **subordination to the** socialist **order brought about** a specific **enjoyment**: not only the enjoyment provided by an awareness that people were living in a universe absolved of uncertainty (since the system possessed, or pretended to possess, an answer to everything), but above all the enjoyment of the very stupidity of the System - a relish in the emptiness of the official ritual, in the worn-out stylistic figures of the predominating ideological discourse. n9 An exemplary case of this enjoyment that pertains to the "totalitarian" bureaucratic machinery is provided by a scene from Terry Gallein's film, Brasil. n10 In the labyrinthine corridors of a large government building, a high-ranking functionary marches promptly, followed by several clerks desperately trying to keep pace with him. The functionary moves at a frenetic pace, inspecting documents and shouting orders to the people around him while quickly walking, in a great hurry, as if on his way to some important meeting. When this functionary stumbles upon the film's hero, Jonathan Pryce, he exchanges a couple of words with him and rushes forward, busy as ever. However, half an hour later, the hero sees him again in a distant corridor, carrying on his senseless ritualistic march. Enjoyment is provided by the very senselessness of the functionary's act: although his frantic officiating imitates efficiency, it is in the strict sense purposeless - a pure ritual repeated ad infinitum. The contemporary Russian composer Alfred Schnittke succeeded in exposing this quality in his opera, Life with an Idiot: n11 the so-called "Stalinism" confronts us with what Lacan designated as the imbecility inherent to the signifier as such. n12 The opera tells the story of an ordinary married man ("I") who, under a punishment imposed by the Communist Party, is compelled to take a person from a lunatic asylum to live with his family. This idiot, Vava, appears to be a "normal" bearded, bespectacled intellectual, constantly spouting meaningless political phrases; he soon, however, shows his true colors as an obscene intruder, first by having sex with I's wife and then with I himself. Vava stands here not only for [\*932] the **empty pseudointellectual prattle**, but for the imbecile obscenity of the symbolic order itself, of language which "runs amok" and gets entangled in the vicious cycle of enjoying its own game. Insofar as we are living in the universe of language, we are condemned to this imbecility of the superego: we can assume a minimal distance from it, thus rendering it more bearable, but we can never be rid of it.

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

A – the alternative is to engage in politics, and find solutions within the system rather than question it

B – Resistance accomplishes nothing, therefore working within the political is better but for the political to be effective deliberation about what “we” should do is better than what the system can do for “me”

C – there should be safe spaces to learn how to communicate and argue common points rather than individual points, because those individual points are insulated from inquiry

D – the alternative is to use debate as a safe deliberative space that removes identity or subjectivity as reasoning for collective action

Brown, 95 - prof at UC Berkeley (Wendy, “States of Injury” p. 47-51)

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

### Case

Ontological Arguments Presuppose a Singularity of Meaning That Precludes the Meaning Reconstituted Through the Subject Position of the Singular Plural – Only Through Understanding Meaning as a Multiplicative Plurality Can We Discover the Truth Behind Thought

Jean-Luc Nancy Professor of Philosophy at the University of Strasbourg 2000 *Being Singular Plural* Stanford University Press translated by Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne, 1

The first and principal essay of this book, which gives it its title, was not composed in an altogether sequential manner, but rather in a discontinuous way, repeatedly taking up several themes. To a certain extent, then, the sections can be read in any order, since there are repetitions here and there. But this is the result of a fundamental difficulty. **This text does not disguise its ambition of redoing the whole of "first philosophy" by giving the "singular plural" of Being as its foundation. This**, however, **is not my ambition, but rather the necessity of the thing itself and of our history.** At the very least, I hope to make this necessity felt. At the same time, apart from the fact that I do not have the strength to deliver the treatise "of the singular plural essence of Being," **the form of the ontological treatise ceases to be appropriate as soon as the singular of Being itself, and therefore also of ontology, is in question.** This is nothing new. At least since Nietzsche, and for all sorts of reasons that no doubt come together in the reason I invoke, **philosophy is at odds with its "form," that is, with its "style," which is to say, finally, with its address.** H o w does thinking address itself to itself, to thinking (which also means: how does thinking address itself to everyone, without its being a matter of a "comprehension" or "understanding" that might be called "common")? H o w is thinking addressed? (The philosophical treatise, and "philosophy" as such, is the neutralization of address, the subjectless discourse of Being-Subject [l'Etre-Sujet] itself.) Put another way, what is the " d i alogue of the soul with itself" that Plato talks about, which demonstrates that this question, or this worry, has always been part of our history? **If thinking is addressed, then it is because there is meaning in this address, and not in discourse** (but it is in the address of discourse). **This obeys the primordial, ontological condition of being with or being-together**, which is what I would like to talk about. **A treatise**, therefore, **is not sufficiently discursive. Nor is it enough to dress discourse in the form of an address** (for me to address you with the familiar "you" [tu] the whole way through). **The address means that thinking itself addresses itself to "me" and to "us" at the same time**; that is, **thinking addresses itself to the world, to history, to people, to things: to "us."** Another ambition springs from this or, better yet, another, more restricted, attempt: **to allow thinking's address to be perceived, an address that comes to us from everywhere simultaneously, multiplied, repeated, insistent, and variable, gesturing only toward "us" and toward our curious "being-withone-another,"** [être-les-uns-avec-les-autres], **toward our addressing-one-another** (By the way, the logic of "with" often requires heavy-handed syntax in order to say "being-with-one-another." You may suffer from it as you read these pages. **But perhaps it is not an accident that language does not easily lend itself to showing the "with" as such, for it is itself the address and not what must be addressed.**) In this, **there is an illusion that lies in wait, the illusion of willing the adequation of "form" and "content," of willing truth itself into presence**: as if I could write to every addressee a seismographical account of our upsets, our agitations, our troubles, and our addresses without addressees. My only response is no: no will , "on my life I did not know what it was to will " (Nietzsche). Or I might say the following: **willing (or desire) is not a thinking; it is a disturbance, an echo, a reverberating shock.**

**Embracing political action from multiple ontological viewpoints is a prior question- the alternative is to embrace a pluralistic ethic of being; Embracing the Multiplicity of Meaning Enables a Confrontation of Identity that Ruptures the Singularity of Being – Only Through an Inclusion of Multiple Meanings Can We Break Down the “All Powerful” Monotheism of the Aff**

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On this side and that of the gaping hole of the world, hollowed out in the name of ‘globalisation’, it is indeed the community which is separated from and confronted with itself. In times past, communities were able to think of themselves as distinct and autonomous without seeking their assumption in a generic humanity. **But once the world completes the task of becoming global and once man [sic] completes the task of becoming human** (it is in this sense, too, that he becomes ‘the last man’), **once ‘the’ community sets itself to stammering a strange uniqueness** (as if there should only be the one, and as if it should possess a unique essence of the common), **then ‘the’ community takes in the fact that it is the community itself that gapes—yawningly open to its unity and to its absent essences—and that it confronts within itself this break. It is community against community, foreign community against foreign community and familiar community against familiar community, each rending itself in rending the others that are themselves lacking the possibility of communication**, of communion too. **Monotheism in itself confronted with itself**—like theism and like atheism—**is**, for this reason, **the schema of our present condition. That this confrontation with self may be a law of being-in-common and its very meaning, this is what is on the task sheet for the work of thought**— immediately accompanied by this other project of thought: that **the confrontation, in grasping the fact of itself, grasps the fact that mutual destruction destroys all the way along to the very possibility of confrontation, and with that destruction the possibility of being-in-common or being-with.** For, **if the ‘common’ is the ‘with’, the ‘with’ designates the space lacking all-powerfulness and all-presence. In the ‘with’ there can be none but the forces that confront one another because of their mutual play, and the presences that part from one another because they must always become something else apart from pure presences** (given objects, subjects comforted in their certainties, a world of inertia and entropy). **How to enable ourselves to look squarely at our gaping lack**, our confrontation, **not in order to sink into it, but in order to draw from it**, despite everything, the strength to confront ourselves: first, with utter awareness; then, in such a way as to really scrutinise ourselves—without which scrutiny the confrontation is nothing but an indistinct and blind shoving match? **The challenge of this duly acknowledged, to look squarely at a gaping chasm and to confront oneself with an intense gaze are not without grounds for comparison, if the other’s gaze never opens upon anything but the unfathomable: upon absolute strangeness, upon a truth which cannot be verified but which must nevertheless be clung to.**

Threefold strangeness: that of the distant other, that of the withdrawn same, that of history turned toward the un-encountered, perhaps the unbearable. It is necessary, against an ‘altruistic’ morality too blandly recited, to hold onto the rigour of the relationship to the stranger, wherein strangeness is a strict condition of existence and of presence. And it is necessary to hold onto that which, out in front of us, exposes us to the sombre, radiating dispersal of our own future and of our own fissure. **It is neither a question of making the Occident guilty nor of reasserting a mythic Orient: it is a question of conceiving a world that is in itself and of itself broken, by a break that comes forth from the furthest reaches of its history and that really must, by one means or another, for the worst and perhaps**—who knows?—**for the least worst, establish its obscure meaning; not an obscured meaning but one where the obscure is elemental.** It is difficult, it is necessary. It is our need in the two senses of the word: it is our poverty and our obligation.