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### 1AC

A diferentes países los

Certifican los gringos

No quieren que exista droga

Pues dicen que es un peligro

¿Díganme quien certifica

A los Estados Unidos?

Para agarrar a los narcos

México a sido derecho.

Los gringos compran la coca

La pagan a cualquier precio.

No quieren que exista droga

Pero se dan privilegios

Different countries are

Certified by the gringos

They do not want drugs there

For they say that is a danger

Tell me who certifies

The United States?

To catch the narcos

Mexico has been straight.

The Americans buy coke

They pay it at any price.

They do not want drugs to exist

But give themselves privileges.

(from “El General” by Los Tigres del Norte, translation in “Criminals and enemies? The Mexican drug trafficker in official discourse and in narcocorridos” by Alejandro Lajous)

#### US attitude toward drugs is captured here by Los Tigres del Norte. Foreign supply is a threat, but domestic demand is a lost cause; while little is done to curtail consumption, the centerpiece of US engagement toward Mexico is characterized by militarized surveillance and violent suppression to combat drug trafficking. Any deviance from the status quo is perceived as a threat – the only option is the perpetuation of Calderon’s “war”

Freidersdorf, 13

staff writer at The Atlantic, where he focuses on politics and national affairs (Conor, “Mexico Is Ready to End Failed Drug-War Policies—Why Isn't the U.S.?,” The Atlantic, 30 April 2013, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/04/mexico-is-ready-to-end-failed-drug-war-policies-why-isnt-the-us/275410/)//bghs-BI>

Did you know that the U.S. has been operating surveillance drones in Mexico, providing air support for the Mexican military, tracking the movements of Mexican citizens, sharing state-of-the-art spy technology with Mexican officials, and sending CIA agents to help Mexico train drug informants? Did you know the DEA has more employees stationed in Mexico than any of its other foreign posts? That Mexican nationals trained and bankrolled by the CIA raid Mexican drug cartels? Or that the CIA runs high-tech "fusion centers" in Mexico City, Monterrey and elsewhere? "For the past seven years, Mexico and the United States have put aside their tension-filled history on security matters to forge an unparalleled alliance against Mexico's drug cartels, one based on sharing sensitive intelligence, U.S. training and joint operational planning," Dana Priest reports in the Washington Post. "But now, much of that hard-earned cooperation may be in jeopardy." Enrique Pena Nieto, Mexico's new leader, reportedly dislikes the status quo, and was shocked, on taking office this December, at the degree of United States involvement in his country. The article is worth reading in full. What I can't help but remark upon is the way that it handles the spectacular failure of the War on Drugs. It notes "mounting criticism" that any success fighting cartel leaders has also helped to incite "more violence than anyone had predicted, more than 60,000 deaths and 25,000 disappearances in the past seven years alone." Put another way, the period of maximum American involvement has coincided with a horrific spike in drug-related violence. "Meanwhile," Priest continues, "the drug flow into the United States continued unabated. Mexico remains the U.S. market's largest supplier of heroin, marijuana and methamphetamine and the transshipment point for 95 percent of its cocaine." So the strategy was high cost, low reward. It increased violence and did nothing to reduce the drug supply. Yet the fact that it completely failed plays basically no role in the rest of the article, in large part because everyone in the United States government apparently wants to preserve the failed status quo. American officials are very upset that Mexico's new leader has decided to go his own way. Look at the very next sentences: No one had come up with a quick, realistic alternative to Calderon's novel use of the Mexican military with U.S. support. But stopping the cartel violence had become Peña Nieto's top priority during the campaign. The U.S. administration didn't know what that meant. Some feared a scaling back of the bilateral efforts and a willingness to trade the relentless drive against cartel leaders for calmer streets. Does anyone else think that "a willingness to trade the relentless drive against cartel leaders for calmer streets" just might be "a quick, realistic alternative to Calderon's novel use of the Mexican military with U.S. support"? At the very least, it surely it doesn't make sense to presume, as the article seems to, that the obviously failed status quo is the most "realistic" way forward. Sticking with it is arguably delusional. But that angle is seemingly never pursued. As ever, the utter failure of American drug policy is taken by the establishment as evidence that persisting is of even more importance. The policies the United States pursued in Mexico as part of our increased role there coincided with a huge uptick in violence and no reduction in the supply of Mexican drugs? By God, let's hope that the Mexicans don't decide to try something completely different! It's the most irrational status-quo bias you're likely to find. Given that Mexicans are the ones dealing with the dead bodies in the current arrangement, little wonder that they're able to appreciate the irrationality more than America's mystifyingly persistent drug warriors. Drugs can have awful affects all on their own. What's even worse are black markets in drugs. There's only one way to end them in a free country. And policymakers aren't open to it, despite the fact that ending prohibition would weaken the cartels more than anything. So the carnage continues.

#### Since the 70s, the “war on drugs” has proven a failed initiative, yet it endures; the US-Mexico border has developed into a space of exception where law is suspended by the sovereign

Parker, 11 – master’s degree in cultural and political studies from Royal Holloway, University of London, written extensively in the academic arena on geopolitics, ‘radical’ politics and protest, and mass media (Lindsay, “The Making of a Space of Exception: the War on Drugs, Agamben, and Ciudad

Juarez,” Cultural Geography, August 2011, http://lindsayparkerdotnet.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/the-making-of-a-space-of-exception.pdf)//bghs-BI

The “war on drugs” was introduced into the American lexicon by Richard Nixon in 1971 (Cockburn & St. Clair 1998) as a continuation of the prohibitionist drug laws originating from 1914’s Harrison Narcotics Tax Act. The “war on drugs” was simultaneously enforced with Nixon’s “war on crime” that both emphasized “radical turn[s] from welfarist criminal justice approaches emphasizing rehabilitation and redistribution, towards coercive penal governance” (Corva 2008:178). Whereas a welfarist order understood illicit behaviour as symptomatic of an unjust socio-economic society and tried to rehabilitate users, the penal state adopted strict rules that would place offenders in prison for even small amounts of possession (Beckett & Sassoon 2000). Currently this “zero tolerance” policy emphasizes prohibition, halting production, distribution, and the consumption of drugs at the cost of $15 billion annually to the federal government, with state and local governments spending another $25 billion in 2010 alone (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2010). Yet the response nationally and internationally from civilians, lawyers, medical professionals, academics, and police enforcement alike is that the “war on drugs” is an overwhelming failure that has not reduced drug use, drug trafficking, or violent crime, but that has rather resulted in the growth of a multi-billion annual black market that promotes violence and results in harmful repercussions to society (Baum 1996; Bertram 1996). A major source of this violence stems from rival drug cartels throughout Central and South America fighting for trade routes and access to portals along the US/Mexican border across which they can smuggle narcotics for US consumption. The passing of NAFTA in 1994 made trafficking easier and more efficient than ever before (Andreas 1995; Campbell 2009) resulting in the competition for domination of border towns and cities, such as Ciudad Juarez, positioned a mere two miles away from the American border. This strategic location is crucial because of the United States’ insatiable demand for narcotics, especially cocaine. It is estimated that 80-90% of Central and South American cocaine ends up in the United States making border cities and towns incredibly valuable and vulnerable spaces of violent competition (United Nations 2010). As Mexico and the United States keep battling drug cartels in what seems an impossible war to win, narcotics are illegally exported into the United States where demand is still high. The war on drugs and resulting turf war in Juarez are indicative of a re-configuration of geographies of sovereignty and exceptional space along and beyond the border. Sovereign power is a key theme to Agamben’s Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life (1998). Translated from “Sacred Man, “homo sacer” refers to a bare life that is stripped of all citizens” rights that can be killed by anyone without punishment. Human life becomes politicized as it becomes dominated by the sovereign’s suspension of juridical order allowing for otherwise illegal crimes to become normalized because where there is no law, nothing can be illegal. This state of exception is a “point of indistinction between violence and law, the threshold on which violence passes over into law and law passes over into violence” (1998: 32). This threshold is at the core of what Agamben calls the paradox of sovereignty. If sovereign powers are able to declare spaces of exception or suspend the law, they are effectively placing themselves outside of the law. In his own work Agamben uses the example of Nazi concentration camps to exercise the tangibility and physicality of a space of exception, or where juridical order has been indefinitely suspended by sovereign actors. More recently, Agamben and others have identified Guantanamo Bay as such a space (Butler 2002; Gregory 2006). In these examples the sovereign powers, though acting within or outside of the law, were state actors. Agamben’s reading of sovereignty loosely follows Westphalian tenets including the principle of the sovereignty of states and fundamental right to self-determination, the principle of international law equality between states, and the principle of non-intervention of one state in the internal affairs of another state (Lyons & Mastanduno 1995). Traditional theorizations of sovereignty stemmed from Westphalia have increasingly come under scrutiny with some even posing the end of a traditional sovereignty in the political realm (Camilleri & Falk 1992; Hardt & Negri 2000; Ward 2003). These are important in considering how ideas of sovereignty have shifted through history and political landscapes including times of civil disobedience, terrorism, war, and globalization, which is especially intertwined (geo)politically and economically with the drug war. The drug war in Juarez is another example that is challenging traditional ideas of how sovereignty is practiced on the ground and how strict binaries of legal and illegal are being nullified and subverted as sovereign state actors are losing power to drug cartels.

#### The war metaphor remains dominant in official discourse surrounding drugs, collapsing the distinction between criminal and enemy – peace is impossible until the enemy is annihilated

Lajous, 12 – doctor of Law at Yale, professor and researcher at Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica, a Mexican center of research and higher education specialized in social sciences (Alejandro Madrazo, “Criminals and enemies? The Mexican drug trafficker in official discourse and in narcocorridos,” translated by Fernanda Alonso)//bghs-BI

III. The criminal and the enemy in the official discourse On December 4th, 2006, just three days after assuming the presidency of the Mexican government, Felipe Calderon announced the first deployment of federal forces, Army included, so as to perform police functions in a state: his native state, Michoacan. "Be assured that my government is working hard to win the war against crime" (Calderón, 2011q). With this, the President defined his crime fighting strategy as a war; he justified the move on the fact that the number of drug-related killings in the region during the previous year exceeded 500.10 A few weeks later, on January 22, 2007, at the XXI Session of the National Security Council, the President went further: "To win the war against crime it is essential that we work together beyond our differences [...] beyond any political party’s flag and any private interest." (Calderon, 2007n) He presented the war as a reason to demand national unity in a country deeply divided by party likes and dislikes, after a competed and questioned election. Infancy is destiny; the use of war metaphors marked the official narrative surrounding crime and security throughout the his administration. Since then, the government does not pursue common criminals in the fulfillment of police functions or law enforcement, but instead confronts them in a war, for which there will be no truce until the enemy is defeated. The war jargon in the war on drugs has dominated the narrative, the political imaginary and the current government policy. The war metaphor in the government’s discourse has obvious practical and strategic functions. On the one hand, "(...) it is applied to keep justifying the use of the Armed Forces..." (Miguel Lopez Norzagaray David 2010; 172), one of the building blocks of the security policy for the administration. On the other hand, it functions as a rhetorical framework to call for national unity. However, it also has consequences that go beyond those that it seemingly seeks. On the one hand, it builds up crime and on the other it blurs the boundaries between different categories within the law. The government does not prosecute people who commit different types of crimes –kidnapping, drug trafficking, and murder– but crime itself. In this sense, "(...) drug trafficking was framed within a larger enemy, an enemy that is even more sparse than the very same drug trafficking, one ranging from common crime to the organized social structure needed to commit a crime." (Norzagaray Lopez 2010; 229) This section looks to explore how, in the official discourse dominated by the war metaphor, the distinction between criminal and enemy collapses. By labeling delinquents as enemies, President Calderon is not only establishing an identity between the terms, but also establishing in the political imaginary, on which he reflects and builds his discourse, that the criminal fulfills the function of the enemy (and not only shares his label).11

#### Politicizing the criminal as the enemy subjects them not to law but unlimited sovereignty, enabling the state to justify sacrifice of the political community and making civil war inevitable

Lajous, 12 – doctor of Law at Yale, professor and researcher at Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica, a Mexican center of research and higher education specialized in social sciences (Alejandro Madrazo, “Criminals and enemies? The Mexican drug trafficker in official discourse and in narcocorridos,” translated by Fernanda Alonso)//bghs-BI

II. The criminal and the enemy in the political imaginary8 The temptation to label a criminal as an enemy and point him out as "public enemy number 1”, is enormous, especially when the threat he represents is perceived as overwhelming. But the distinction between a criminal and an enemy in the political imaginary is crucial: it reflects and supports the distinction between sovereignty and law, between political action –in its strictest sense— and legal action. Criminals and enemies may do the same violent acts, destroying property and persons. Nevertheless, the modern political imaginary carefully maintained the distinction as a matter of both formal law and informal representation. (Kahn, 2010; 1) In the modern political imaginary, the criminal and the enemy occupy different spaces: the criminal faces the law; the enemy faces sovereignty. Law is restricted, predetermined, it cannot overturn the rules that it is made up of; sovereignty is unlimited, unrestricted, subject only to its ability to affirm itself. The criminal is not the enemy; the enemy is not the criminal. The enemy can be killed but not punished. (…) On the other hand, the criminal can be punished but, in most of the West, he cannot be killed. (Kahn, 2010; 1)9 The distinction lies precisely on the difference between the criminal’s relationship to law and the enemy’s relationship to sovereignty. The criminal is a citizen, a part of the political community, and therefore enjoys the protection of the very laws which he infringes; the enemy is the opposite of a citizen, located outside the political community and posing a threat to it; consequently the enemy does not enjoy the protection of the law, nor is he under obligation to abide by it. Moreover, the enemy has the right to resist the violence of a political community to which he does not belong to; the criminal does not. Informally, warfare is imagined as a sort of duel: a reciprocal relationship of threat, of killing and being killed. (…) This is why every war is imagined as “self-defense” by both sides of the conflict. The confrontation with the criminal, on the other hand, is certainly not imagined as a duel. Criminals have no right of self-defense against the police. The force of law is asymmetrical. For this reason, we think of the violence of law – policing – as “depoliticized.” There is a corresponding depoliticalization of the violence of crime: it is not political threat, but personal pathology. Law enforcement aims to prevent the violence of the criminal from becoming a source of collective self-expression. Were it to become so, we would confront an enemy. (Kahn, 2010; 2) The law in a political community says nothing to its enemies, nor does it say anything about its enemies. The enemy does not operate in the restricted field of law, operating instead in the unrestricted space of sovereignty. Contrastingly, the criminal is determined by the law he infringes: Everything about the criminal is defined by law, from the elements of the crime, to the procedure of adjudication, to the character of punishment. His depoliticalization is accomplished through his complete juridification. The law, however, will not tell us who are our enemies. It will not define the conditions of victory or defeat. It will not tell us how seriously to take a threat or how devastating to make the response. The enemy, despite the efforts of international law, is not a juridical figure at all. (Kahn, 2010; 2) The enemy is located outside the political community and threatens it. Because of this, the enemy endows members of the community with an identity: they are ultimately identified in contrast to the person who is not a member of the political community: the enemy (who is in turn, identified in contrast to the first). The criminal does not fulfill that role in the political imaginary. His existence does not identify us, and he does not identify himself as opposed to the political community, but rather he participates in it. True, he participates from a marginal and stigmatized position, but he is part of the community that punishes him. Against the enemy, the state may legitimately require sacrifices from us –including our lives— so as to protect the continuity of the political community. Against the criminal, we require the State’s protection, not vice versa. We are presented then, with two very different categories, which must not be confused. The criminal is a member of the political community; the enemy is not. The criminal is subject to the law of the community and is simultaneously protected and bound by it; the enemy is not. The criminal should be punished; the enemy destroyed or subdued. The criminal is completely juridified (he is regulated and precisely constraint by the law) and, therefore, depoliticized; the enemy is necessarily a politicized subject (he defines the polis by opposing it) and cannot be understood through the law. But the distinction between criminal and enemy is not only important to them; the distinction is fundamental –foundational even– to the political community, i.e. to "us", all individuals belonging to it: At stake in the criminal/enemy distinction, I will argue, is the relationship of sovereignty to law. These are not just categories of theory, but the organizing principles of political and personal narrative. When we lose control of the categories, we can lose the sense of who we are. (Kahn, 2010; If we collapse the two categories, we lose our political identity. We no longer know who belongs to the "us" (the political community, which in principle, includes criminals) and who belongs to the "they" (the enemies). When the criminal becomes an enemy, the community’s action is no longer the application of law, but that of a civil war: Indeed, under some circumstances criminals do become enemies: the order of law becomes the disorder of civil war. (Kahn, 2010; 5) When the criminal is politicized, he is mistaken for the enemy; he becomes the enemy. He is no longer identified by the law (which signals him as an offender), but instead he is identified as that which opposes sovereignty, that is the political community; against which he is now "entitled" to confront. The community can no longer demand obedience from him. He goes from being in an asymmetrical relationship governed by the law to a symmetric relation (symbolically) analogous to a duel, in which the law disappears and all that remains is the contrast of two competing wills in the field of sovereignty. That is, in a space in which only a civil war can be deployed, no longer a normative system.

#### The biopolitical determination of the threshold beyond which life ceases to have juridical value creates the category of a “life devoid of value” which spills over to the biological body of every living being and nullifies value to death

Agamben, 98 – professor of philosophy at university of Verona (Giorgio, Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life, pg. 139-140)

It is not our intention here to take a position on the difficult ethical problem of euthanasia, which still today, in certain coun­tries, occupies a substantial position in medical debates and pro­vokes disagreement. Nor are we concerned with the radicaliry with which Binding declares himself in favor of the general admissibility of euthanasia. More interesting for our inquiry is the fact that the sovereignty of the living man over his own life has its immediate counterpart in the determination of a threshold beyond which life ceases to have any juridical value and can, therefore, be killed without the commission of a homicide. The new juridical category of “life devoid of value” (or “life unworthy of being lived”) corre­sponds exactly—even if in an apparently different direction—to the bare life of homo sacer and can easily be extended beyond the limits imagined by Binding. It is as if every valorization and every “politicization” of life (which, after all, is implicit in the sovereignty of the individual over his own existence) necessarily implies a new decision concerning the threshold beyond which life ceases to be politically relevant, becomes only “sacred life,” and can as such be eliminated without punishment. Every society sets this limit; every society—even the most modern—decides who its “sacred men” will be. It is even pos­sible that this limit, on which the politicization and the exceprio of natural life in the juridical order of the state depends, has done nothing but extend itself in the history of the West and has now— in the new biopolitical horizon of states with national sovereignty—moved inside every human life and every citizen. Bare life is no longer confined to a particular place or a definite category. It now dwells in the biological body of every living being.

#### When the legitimacy and existence of a population is in question, politics become murderous – the entirety of the world is reduced to bare life in an attempt to rid the public sphere of all risk. The only option becomes the extermination of all life

Duarte, 5 – professor of Philosophy at Universidade Federal do Paraná (André, “Biopolitics and the dissemination of violence: the Arendtian critique of the present,” April 2005, http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=andre\_duarte)//bghs-BI

These historic transformations have not only brought more violence to the core of the political but have also redefined its character by giving rise to biopolitical violence. As stated, what characterizes biopolitics is a dynamic of both protecting and abandoning life through its inclusion and exclusion from the political and economic community. In Arendtian terms, the biopolitical danger is best described as the risk of converting animal laborans into Agamben’s homo sacer, the human being who can be put to death by anyone and whose killing does not imply any crime whatsoever 13).  When politics is conceived of as biopolitics, as the task of increasing the life and happiness of the national *animal laborans*, the nation-state becomes ever more violent and murderous. If we link Arendt’s thesis from *The Human Condition* to those of The Origins of Totalitarianism, we can see the Nazi and Stalinist extermination camps as the most refined experiments in annihilating the “bare life” of *animal laborans* (although these are by no means the only instances in which the modern state has devoted itself to human slaughter). Arendt is not concerned only with the process of the extermination itself, but also the historical situation in which large-scale exterminations were made possible – above all, the emergence of ‘uprooted’ and ‘superfluous’ modern masses, what we might describe as *animal laborans* balanced on the knife-edge of ‘bare life.’ Compare her words in ‘Ideology and Terror’ (1953), which became the conclusion of later editions of The Origins of Totalitarianism: Isolation is that impasse into which men [humans] are driven when the political sphere of their lives… is destroyed… Isolated man who lost his place in the political realm of action is deserted by the world of things as well, if he is no longer recognized as homo faber but treated as an *animal laborans* whose necessary ‘metabolism with nature’ is of concern to no one. Isolation then become loneliness… Loneliness, the common ground for terror, the essence of totalitarian government, and for ideology or logicality, the preparation of its executioners and victims, is closely connected with uprootedness and superfluousness which have been the curse of modern masses since the beginning of the industrial revolution and have become acute with the rise of imperialism at the end of the last century and the break-down of political institutions and social traditions in our own time. To be uprooted means to have no place in the world, recognized and guaranteed by others; to be superfluous means not to belong to the world at all 14). The conversion of homo faber, the human being as creator of durable objects and institutions, into *animal laborans* and, later on, into homo sacer, can be traced in Arendt’s account of nineteenth century imperialism. As argued in the second volume of The Origins of Totalitarianism, European colonialism combined racism and bureaucracy to perpetrate the “most terrible massacres in recent history, the Boers’ extermination of Hottentot tribes, the wild murdering by Carl Peters in German Southeast Africa, the decimation of the peaceful Congo population – from 20 to 40 million reduced to 8 million people; and finally, perhaps worst of all, it resulted in the triumphant introduction of such means of pacification into ordinary, respectable foreign policies.” 15)  This simultaneous protection and destruction of life was also at the core of the two World Wars, as well as in many other more local conflicts, during which whole populations have become stateless or deprived of a public realm. In spite of all their political differences, the United States of Roosevelt, the Soviet Russia of Stalin, the Nazi Germany of Hitler and the Fascist Italy of Mussolini were all conceived of as states devoted to the needs of the national *animal laborans*. According to Agamben, since our contemporary politics recognizes no other value than life, Nazism and fascism, that is, regimes which have taken bare life as their supreme political criterion are bound to remain standing temptations 16).  Finally, it is obvious that this same logic of promoting and annihilating life persists both in post-industrial and in underdeveloped countries, inasmuch as economic growth depends on the increase of unemployment and on many forms of political exclusion. When politics is reduced to the tasks of administering, preserving and promoting the life and happiness of animal laborans it ceases to matter that those objectives require increasingly violent acts, both in national and international arenas. Therefore, we should not be surprised that the legality of state violence has become a secondary aspect in political discussions, since what really matters is to protect and stimulate the life of the national (or, as the case may be, Western) *animal laborans*. In order to maintain sacrosanct ideals of increased mass production and mass consumerism, developed countries ignore the finite character of natural reserves and refuse to sign International Protocols regarding natural resource conservation or pollution reduction, thereby jeopardising future humanity. They also launch preventive attacks and wars, disregard basic human rights, for instance in extra-legal detention camps such as Guantánamo,27)  and multiply refugee camps. Some countries have even imprisoned whole populations, physically isolating them from other communities, in a new form of social, political and economic apartheid. In short, states permit themselves to impose physical and structural violence against individuals and regimes (‘rogue states’ 18) ) that supposedly interfere with the security and growth of their national ‘life process.’ If, according to Arendt, the common world consists of an institutional in-between meant to outlast both human natality and mortality, in modern mass societies we find the progressive abolition of the institutional artifice that separates and protects our world from the forces of nature 19).  This explains the contemporary feeling of disorientation and unhappiness, likewise the political impossibility we find in combining stability and novelty 20).  In the context of a “waste economy, in which things must be almost as quickly devoured and discarded as they have appeared in the world, if the process itself is not to come to a sudden catastrophic end,” 21)  it is not only possible, but also necessary, that people themselves become raw material to be consumed, discarded, annihilated. In other words, when Arendt announces the “grave danger that eventually no object of the world will be safe from consumption and annihilation through consumption,” 22)  we should also remember that human annihilation, once elevated to the status of an ‘end-in-itself’ in totalitarian regimes, still continues to occur – albeit in different degrees and by different methods, in contemporary ‘holes of oblivion’ such as miserably poor Third World neighbourhoods 23)  and penitentiaries, underpaid and slave labour camps, in the name of protecting the vital interests of *animal laborans*. To talk about a process of human consumption is not to speak metaphorically but literally. Heidegger had realized this in his notes written during the late thirties, later published under the title of Overcoming Metaphysics. He claimed that the difference between war and peace had already been blurred in a society in which “metaphysical man [human], the animal rationale, gets fixed as the labouring animal,” so that “labour is now reaching the metaphysical rank of the unconditional objectification of everything present.” 24)  Heidegger argued that once the world becomes fully determined by the “circularity of consumption for the sake of consumption” it is at the brink of becoming an ‘unworld’ (Unwelt), since ‘man [human], who no longer conceals his character of being the most important raw material, is also drawn into the process. Man is “the most important raw material” because he remains the subject of all consumption.’ 25)  After the Second World War and the release of detailed information concerning the death factories Heidegger took his critique even further, acknowledging that to understand man as both subject and object of the consumption process would still not comprehend the process of deliberate mass extermination. He saw this, instead, in terms of the conversion of man into no more than an “item of the reserve fund for the fabrication of corpses” (Bestandestücke eines Bestandes der Fabrikation von Leichen). According to Heidegger, what happened in the extermination camps was that death became meaningless, and the existential importance of our anxiety in the face of death was lost; instead, people were robbed of the essential possibility of dying, so that they merely “passed away” in the process of being “inconspicuously liquidated” (unauffällig liquidiert). 26)  The human being as *animal laborans* (Arendt), as homo sacer (Agamben), as an ‘item of the reserve fund’ (Heidegger) – all describe the same process of dehumanisation whereby humankind is reduced to the bare fact of being alive, with no further qualifications. As argued by Agamben, when it becomes impossible to differentiate between biós and zóe, that is, when bare life is transformed into a qualified or specific ‘form of life,’ we face the emergence of a biopolitical epoch 27).  When states promote the animalisation of man by policies that aim at both protecting and destroying human life, we can interpret this in terms of the widespread presence of the homo sacer in our world: “If it is true that the figure proposed by our age is that of an unsacrificeable life that has nevertheless become capable of being killed to an unprecedented degree, then the bare life of homo sacer concerns us in a special way… If today there is no longer any one clear figure of the sacred man, it is perhaps because we are all virtually homines sacri.” 28) Investigating changes in the way power was conceived of and exercised at the turn of the nineteenth century, Foucault realized that when life turned out to be a constitutive political element, managed, calculated, and normalized by means of biopolitics, political strategies soon became murderous. Paradoxically, when the Sovereign’s prerogative ceased to be simply that of imposing violent death, and became a matter of promoting the growth of life, wars became more and more bloody, mass killing more frequent. Political conflicts now aimed at preserving and intensifying the life of the winners, so that enmity ceased to be political and came to be seen biologically: it is not enough to defeat the enemy; it must be exterminated as a danger to the health of the race, people or community. Thus Foucault on the formation of the modern biopolitical paradigm at the end of the nineteenth century:…death that was based on the right of the sovereign is now manifested as simply the reverse of the right of the social body to ensure, maintain or develop its life. Yet wars were never as bloody as they have been since the nineteenth century, and all things being equal, never before did regimes visit such holocausts on their own populations. But this formidable power of death… now presents itself as the counterpart of a power that exerts a positive influence on life that endeavours to administer, optimise, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations. Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged on behalf of the existence of everyone; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity: massacres have become vital. It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men [humans] to be killed. And through a turn that closes the circle, as the technology of wars have caused them to tend increasingly toward all-out destruction, the decision that initiates them and the one that terminates them are in fact increasingly informed by the naked question of survival. The atomic situation is now at the end of point of this process: the power to expose a whole population to death is the underside of the power to guarantee an individual’s continued existence. The principle underlying the tactics of battle – that one has to be capable of killing in order to go on living – has become the principle that defines the strategy of states. But the existence in question is no longer the juridical existence of sovereignty; at stake is the biological existence of a population. If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers, this is not because of a recent return of the ancient right to kill; it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population. 29)  Arendt proposed no political utopias, but she remained convinced that our political dilemmas have no necessary outcome, that history has not and will not come to a tragic end. Neither a pessimist nor an optimist, she wanted only to understand the world in which she lived in and to stimulate our thinking and acting in the present. It is always possible that radically new political constellations will come into our world, and responsibility for them will always be ours. If we wish to remain faithful to the spirit of Arendt’s political thinking, then we must think and act politically without constraining our thinking and acting in terms of some pre-defined understanding of what politics ‘is’ or ‘should’ be. In other words, I believe that the political challenge of the present is to multiply the forms, possibilities and spaces in which we can act politically. These may be strategic actions destined to further the agendas of political parties concerned with social justice. They can also be discrete, subversive actions favoured by small groups at the margins of the bureaucratised party machines, promoting political interventions free of particular strategic intentions, since their goal is to invite radical politicisation of existence. Finally, there are also actions in which ethical openness towards otherness becomes political: small and rather inconspicuous actions of acknowledging and welcoming, of extending hospitality and solidarity towards others.

#### In the face of the hegemonic “war” discourse, an alternative has arisen in the public imaginary: the *narcocorrido*. Ambivalent but credible, epic but ordinary, it constitutes rebellion against a political system sustained on exceptionalism

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IV. The criminal and the enemy in the saga of the narcocorrido There is popular tradition, deeply rooted in our country, that through various means such as literature, popular press, oral tradition and music, highlights and records the events of criminal’s lives, opposing the official discourse (see eg Speckman, 2002). One of the best-known means that materialize this tradition is the popular music genre known as the corrido, popular music relating noteworthy events and the daily life of communities. Specifically, the narcocorrido, presents itself as a contemporary successor or subgenre of the corrido. The narcocorrido is of interest here because it offers an alternative view to the official stance on drug trafficking in our country. Faced with a hegemonic official discourse on drug trafficking, popular culture, and on occasions the drug traffickers themselves,13 offer their vision of the phenomenon, through narcocorridos. Luis Astorga points out that some narcocorridos are spontaneous products of popular culture, while others are deliberately sponsored by drug traffickers themselves to build their own image. The two variants break the state monopoly ub geberatubg of the discourse referring to drug trafficking (Astorga, 1997). With the dawn of the narcocorridos, "the identity of the group was no longer subject to the will, imaginary and interest of those who had hitherto managed to impose their classifications, and turn them into official discourse" (Astorga, 1997, 2). Astorga argues that the stories told in the narcocorridos focus on presenting facts, rather than justifying them: "There is no justification for their activities, only an affirmation of situations where the primacy of the ethical codes and rules of the game at play are often disputed through gun shots" (Astorga, 1997, 10-1). The stories reflected in the narcocorridos are in fact ambivalent: torn between telling the facts and even criticizing them, or praising and vindicating the protagonists. For some, the narcocorridos tend more towards the second pole of this spectrum (Benavides et al., 2009, 152). Regardless of whether the stories told in the narcocorridos are understood as "documentation" of the popular interpretation of the facts or as a ladatio of the patrons of the musicians who compose them, the truth is that in recounting the events from the perspective of those living surrounded by drug trafficking and its profits, narcocorridos express cultural counter-values to the official discourse and culture. The narcocorrido is presented as the popular voice that contrasts with the discourse of political power; at least that is what it intends (Lara, 2003) (Wald, 2008). This is not to say that the narcocorrido (fully) articulates a political or ethical discourse, but rather it outlines one, providing an epic, but not enough to articulate an ethic14. It is the epic that is offered by the narcocorrido what perhaps allows us a glimpse into the roles of the criminal, authority, the law and the enemy in the popular imaginary of communities living near or in contact with drug-related business and its prohibition. Both the corrido and the narcocorrido deal with the heroic deeds of cultural heroes or individuals who are considered to be exceptional or considered to have done exceptional deeds, usually with great bravery and courage in the face of danger: soldiers and revolutionary leaders in the early twentieth century; drug traffickers and smugglers at the end of the same century. One of the main functions that wields the corrido and which made it so popular during the twentieth century, was the broadcasting of events that occurred during the period of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, which were very difficult to transmit from mass media such as newspapers ... for the majority of the population that was submerged in appalling illiteracy ... there was no point in disseminating the news in print ... the corrido (...) has definitely served as an important form in broadcasting, that brings us closer to life in the communities ... [In the corridos,] the Mexican masses have seen their desires, passions, frustrations and sympathies reflected. (Lara, 2003; 213) "The history of the narcocorrido goes all the way back to the corridos of border smugglers in the nineteenth century. In those years it was not marijuana, cocaine or heroin that was being smuggled, but fabrics, spices and clothing, among other goods. The flow of contraband also wasn’t like it is today, from south to north, but rather the opposite; goods were transported from the U.S. to Mexico." (Ramírez-Pimienta, 2011; 22) Alcohol prohibition, established in 1920 in the United States, led to the creation of a smuggling business from Canada and Mexico. For Mexican bootleggers, alcohol smuggling was a task that: "Was extremely dangerous and difficult, as the smugglers sometimes had to travel hundreds of miles trying to bring the cargo to its destination, whilst confusing the hated rinches, the Texas Rangers, who were in charge, along with federal agencies, of combating them. (...) It is in this context that the most important precursor of drug trafficking corridos is produced in the nineteen twenties and early thirties… the corridos about tequila smugglers. " (Ramírez-Pimienta, 2011, 35-36) From the origins of the smuggler’s corrido15, an important feature for understanding the relationships between traffickers and officials can be identified: "(...) we have found several notions that are still paradigmatic in the current narcocorrido. Namely, we found a strong collusion and transposition between drug dealer, police officer and politician. In other words, we have politicians and police who are traffickers or are protecting traffickers." (Ramírez-Pimienta, 2011; 68) Specifically, in its origins, the smuggler’s corrido identifies the foreign U.S. authority, or the national authority subdued to it, as threats to the protagonist: "(...) virtually no one in the corridística community would object to representing the American Rangers (be they soldiers, customs police or border patrol agents) in a negative fashion. The Anglo-Saxon with power over the Mexican community (or the Mexican under the services of Anglo- Saxon law) is a target accepted by this community, which perceives itself as victimized." (Ramírez-Pimienta, 2011; 35) In addition to identifying the U.S. authority as the threat to the smuggler (or the Mexican authority under the US authority), the smuggler’s corrido outlines another feature imputed to authority figures: their corruption and, consequently, their participation (usually subordinate) in crime. One of the most famous examples of this type of ballad is the 'Corrido de Mier', also known as 'The Mier customs' and 'The Ward' (...) [what is] narrated makes it clear from the first verses how incredible it is that they managed to mock the entire guard, i.e. all the employees of the customs office, opening the possibility that customs play the part of accomplices rather than smugglers’ incompetent enemies.16 With the narcocorrido, as a subgenre distinguished from the general corrido and as its closest ancestor, the corrido that specifically addresses contraband, grows the propensity to move from a mere chronicle of events or deeds to the elation of heroic deeds (not necessarily an epistle) of the protagonists of the events: This new type of corrido approves and praises those outside the law. It celebrates the heroism of those who are able to pass to the world of crime. In general, the narcocorridos are chronicles of adventure, betrayal, misfortune, love and other acts of individuals involved in the "business", another of the many synonyms of drug trafficking. Be it either through the common language or through key words and phrases, a partial, but credible vision of what drug trafficking is, is being embodied. Some corridos deal with the origins of the drug dealer, and others express the economic causes that push the ordinary Mexican to become a drug dealer. (Massard, 2005) The vision they provide is a criticism to the general context in which the adventure of the drug dealer comes to be, and therefore, it diverges from the official discourse. In speaking of criminals, of the poverty from which they escape, of the crimes and acts corruption, a vision is reflected which cannot but constitute itself as a critique of the world reflected in the official discourse. The narcocorrido reflects the economic crisis and the gradual decline of the system inherited from the Revolution. If it is true that the land reform returned the land to the peasants, today the small farmer has no way out and prefers to replace corn with marijuana, evidently increasing the value of land cultivated and the crop itself. Sociologists agree that narcocorridos represent a sample of the rebellion against a political system that not only fails to provides outputs, but has made corruption and impunity the pillars of its survival, since the tentacles of the drug trafficking have reached the echelons of power... (Massard, 2005) What do the narcocorridos say? What do they tell us about the place that drug traffickers, as criminals, play in the popular political imaginary? Do we see a politicization of the drug trafficker, which corresponds to his politicization in official discourse of the war on drugs?

#### Representations and exposition are the organizing principles behind the debate which we can challenge to alter power

Agamben, 2000 – professor of philosophy at the College International de Philosophie in Paris (Giorgio, Means Without End: Notes on Politics, p. 93-95)

Exposition is the location of politics. If there is no ani­mal politics, that is perhaps because animals are always already in the open and do not try to take possession of their own exposition; they simply live in it without car­ing about it. That is why they are not interested in mir­rors, in the image as image. Human beings, on the other hand, separate images from things and give them a name precisely because they want to recognize themselves, that is, they want to take possession of their own very ap­pearance. Human beings thus transform the open into a world, that is, into the battlefield of a political struggle without quarter. This struggle, whose object is truth, goes by the name of History. It is happening more and more often that in porno­graphic photographs the portrayed subjects, by a calcu­lated stratagem, look into the camera, thereby exhibiting the awareness of being exposed to the gaze. This unex­pected gesture violently belies the fiction that is implicit in the consumption of such images, according to which the one who looks surprises the actors while remaining unseen by them: the latter, rather, knowingly challenge the voyeur’s gaze and force him to look them in the eyes. In that precise moment, the insubstantial nature of the human face suddenly comes to light. The fact that the actors look into the camera means that they show that they are simulating; nevertheless, they paradoxically ap­pear more real precisely to the extent to which they ex­hibit this falsification. The same procedure is used to­day in advertising: the image appears more convincing if it shows openly its own artifice. In both cases, the one who looks is confronted with something that concerns unequivocally the essence of the face, the very structure of truth. We may call tragicomedy of appearance the fact that the face uncovers only and precisely inasmuch as it hides, and hides to the extent to which it uncovers. In this way, the appearance that ought to have manifested human be­ings becomes for them instead a resemblance that be­trays them and in which they can no longer recognize themselves. Precisely because the face is solely the loca­tion of truth, it is also and immediately the location of simulation and of an irreducible impropriety. This does not mean, however, that appearance dissimulares what it uncovers by making it look like what in reality it is not: rather, what human beings truly are is nothing other than this dissimulation and this disquietude within the appearance. Because human beings neither are nor have to be any essence, any nature, or any specific destiny, their condition is the most empty and the most insubstantial of all: it is the truth. What remains hidden from them is not something behind appearance, but rather appearing itself, that is, their being nothing other than a face. The task of politics is to return appearance itself to appearance, to cause appearance itself to appear. The face, truth, and exposition are today the objects of a global civil war, whose battlefield is social life in its en­tirety, whose storm troopers are the media, whose victims are all the peoples of the Earth. Politicians, the media establishment, and the advertising industry have under­stood the insubstantial character of the face and of the community it opens up, and thus they transform it into a miserable secret that they must make sure to control at all costs. State power today is no longer founded on the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence — a mo­nopoly that states share increasingly willingly with other nonsovereign organizations such as the United Nations and terrorist organizations; rather, it is founded above all on the control of appearance (of doxa). The fact that politics constitutes itself as an autonomous sphere goes hand in hand with the separation of the face in the world of spectacle — a world in which human communication is being separated from itself. Exposition thus transforms itself into a value that is accumulated in images and in the media, while a new class of bureaucrats jealously watches over its management.

#### **Our affirmation is a form of play that liberates debate from rigid rules and detaches humanity from the sacred**

Dragona, 8 – PhD Candidate in the Faculty of Communication and Mass Media at University Of Athens, Freelance media arts curator (Daphne, “WhoDaresToDe-sacraliseTodaySPlay,” Personal Cinema, Page Last Modified 24 April 2008, http://www.personalcinema.org/warport/index.php?n=Main.WhoDaresToDe-sacraliseTodaySPlay?)

Giorgio Agamben considers play a most important element in culture, explaining that it is the only one that can profane what is considered sacred. It can liberate humanity from the “sacred”, without negating it. It can profane the “sacred” without destroying the myth behind; it does not simply politicise. And if play is to cause changes and form our lives in better ways, this would be through its capacity to be an act of profanation by itself. But, unfortunately, this tendency according to Agamben is in decline and the need to regain it is a political necessity (Agamben 2006 : 127). What are the conditions of play today? Can it seriously play a role in our everyday lives? Who could re-attribute its capability to profane? Defining play There have been many definitions of play from different disciplines and orientations. Sutton – Smith in his book The Ambiguity of Play refers frequently to Mihail Spariosu who had called play “amphibolous” describing a basic disagreement between the Western philosophers over whether play is an orderly and rule- governed affair according to the common western society norms, or a chaotic, violent and indeterminate interaction of forces, according to some more modern approaches (Sutton Smith 1997/2001: 80). Roger Caillois had also seen two poles in play, but as a continuum where diversified forms could be set. On one extreme we find “paidia”, an “indivisible principle”, common to diversion, turbulence, free improvisation and carefree gaiety which is manifested by uncontrolled fantasy. At the other end, we find “ludus”, bound with “arbitrary, imperative and purposely tedious conventions”. The more the “frolic and impulsive exuberance” of paidia is “disciplined by an inversed tendency to its anarchic and capricious nature”, the more play approaches ludus (Caillois 1958/2001: 13). The Western European thought mostly followed the rationalistic common pattern and embraced the politicized, ruled form of play surpassing its anarchic and vivid features. This can be easily seen by the well known definitions of Huizinga and Caillois who, although they described play as free and unproductive activity, still insist on its dependency on the rules and its separation from everyday life. (Caillois 1958/2001: 43, Huizinga 1955: 13) Is it play or game? The old scholars, Huizinga and Caillois, did not especially differentiate the two terms. It seems that the rules that institutionalised play gave form to games. Play appears to be the idea, the notion, the anarchic and spontaneous basis, the activity based on fantasy, what Caillois called paidia, as Plato and Aristotle first put it. Accordingly, games seem to be the expressions and the forms of play that are governed by rules, demand discipline and form hierarchies, need a constraint space and time, reflecting more the ludus element. Generally, one could assume that play as a notion precedes games – it is their presupposition; it is the play ‘instinct’ that inspires the formation of forms. (Huizinga in Wark 2007: 181) In our times, with the explosion of the video game industry, the two words seem to have enclosed different features and ideas. Edward Castronova highlights the difference as follows: “Play is an intense, survival- relevant action that is not serious… Play is make believe… Play is an easy- to- copy behaviour that brings joy… Games are not the same thing as play. Games are designed goal environments with uncertain outcomes. They are social institutions. Games are a perfect environment for creating play, but also they appear under other circumstances. Elections… stock markets… wars are games.” (Castronova 2007: 100,101) In the digital era, games in the form of video games distant themselves more from play. Games compared to play can be described, can be analysed; they become a product, a commodity; they can be copied, copyrighted and become a subject of control. As Alexander R. Galloway notes, the video game is a cultural object bound by history and materiality, consisting of an electronic computational device and a game simulated in software (Galloway, 2006: 1) Risks of play Mckenzie Wark writes in his recent book Gamer Theory that games are no longer a past time, outside or alongside of life. They are now the very form of life, and death, and time, itself (Wark 2007: 06) To a certain degree, every civilization can be described and characterised by its games but what happens today is that life itself has taken the form of a game; of game and not play. While gaming platforms today are being used widely for different disciplines we might need to wonder: What are the risks play runs in this context? How could they be faced? The risk of contamination According to the classic thinkers of play, there was one main threat for play, its “contamination” by the ordinary life. Play could only be considered as a “stepping out of real life, into a temporary sphere with a disposition of its own” (Huizinga 1955: 8). The world of play and that of everyday life were considered as two different universes, antagonistic to each other (Caillois, 1958/2001: 44, 53). This austere distinction was what the situationists tried to break and to transcend. “Play, radically broken from a confined ludic time and space, must invade the whole of life”, they stated in 1958. The situationists with their notions of the psychogeographies, the derive, the situation and the détournement had proposed a fusion of play into the cities, a total swift where the player is in reality the “liver”. In our days, a different fusion of play occurred. Our everyday life is a fusion in itself of the virtual and the real. As Edward Castronova mentions “the real world can be a terribly empty place.” Synthetic worlds may offer experiences and opportunities that one might not have in their real life. Of course, “reality remains reality, strongly sensated but unfiltered, raw. It will always command attention, but it has long since abandoned the claim to all of our attention. We already live partly in media. Games are just the latest improvement.” (Castronova 2007: 30, 69) The risk of productivity Play is longer by definition an occasion of pure waste; waste of time, energy, ingenuity and skill. Play’s second major risk is the one formed by productivity, by players who belong to the generation of the prosumers, as they are producers and consumers at the same time. Play nowadays becomes part of the immaterial labour, within which as Lazzarato notes ‘leisure time’ and ‘working time’ are increasingly fused, making play – in our case- inseparable from work (Lazzarato 1997). This affective labor of play produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity that at the end is defined as game. Within this content stand today’s synthetic worlds where the players contribute voluntarily with their work and behaviour to the formation of the gaming worlds and the augmentation of the virtual economy. Communication is continually improved as the power of this form is found in the collective process, in the users/prosumers social relations. People of course might as well make profit for themselves. This kind of play can be to their advantage. But one can not overlook the fact that this era of ludocapitalism, as Dibbel frames it, is “a curious new post-industrial revolution, driven by play as the first one was driven by steam”. (Dibbell in Shaviro 2007) The risk of being the alibi The risk of play being exploited and being used as an alibi for economical or political profit is not a new one. The ambiguous –in ethic terms - economy of the casinos, the lotteries and the hippodromes or even the economy of the sports industry are such phenomena that have given birth to discussions, problems and even scandals for most of the countries of the Western world. However, the highest risk for play today is found in the exploitation of play being made by the military entertainment complex. War as a game is an old metaphor. Chess and Go and especially the 19th century Kriegsspiel which was used to aid Prussian officers, could be considered as predecessors of the games that would be used for military entertaining purposes later on (Halter 2002). But what the media and especially the video games changed was the possibilities given for nationalistic propaganda. Games like America’s Army, are at the same time a recruiting tool, an edugame, a test bed and tool and a propaganda game. Such games can influence attitudes and behaviours and win a communication battle that would otherwise be lost. Creating falsifying images of super-clean pure war, as seen on the screens, the games succeed in “using sweet power to win a war on ideas” (Neiborg 2007: 79) Summarizing the risks above, the impression given is that we have “nowhere to hide outside the gamespace” (Wark 2007: 183). But, are we trapped within a total game or is play itself trapped as well at the end? The sovereignity of the game over play today is a fact. Having been institutionalized, play has been accredited with the seriousness of an academic, social, political and economic value and has become an issue of controversial discussion accordingly. But in reality, again, it is mostly games we are talking about, not play. Contemporary play is purposely sacralised and distant, used as an excuse for games’ abuses. Being considered sacred, play’s case reminds us of religion. Religion does not unify all; on the contrary it keeps the roles distinct and separated. It keeps people apart from the divine (Agamben 2006: 124). So it happens with play, keeping the players apart from play itself. Could this separation be broken? And could play become an important contributory factor to our lives’ amelioration? Setting play free “It was in fact from art that play broke free” Raoul Vaneigem wrote in reference to Dada (Vaneigem 1967). To transcend rigid and crystallized forms, rules need to be broken. One can play by rules, or play with the rules. Freedom can be regained by those who can play with today’s forms of play, who can appropriate them, see through and reverse them, by those who can profane what is considered sacred. Following the famous predecessors of the dada, Surrealism, Fluxus and Situationism, artists today turn again towards play and use it as a means to challenge stereotypes, to offer new ways of reading and understanding, to break the constraints and offer new perspectives. Art merged with new media, activism, philosophy, politics and social sciences takes the role of the animator, the hacker, the player – “liver” today. Artists working on these fields through projects that do not necessarily need to be game – based, reveal play’ s multifaceted original character and propose means for its use, liberation and expansion within different sides of life. Play as play… Play can not be doubted and its fundamental role, original features and continuous presence is what some artists highlight. Axel Stockburger’s Tokyo Arcade Warriors – Shibuya and William Wegman’ s Dog Duet (Two Dogs and a ball) showcase how play absorbs one in the most serious and utter way. Documenting only the figures of players and not the action itself, one can still not deny or doubt play even if it is hidden. Other artists working on the field, show how playfulness is kept intact, while common playgrounds are being transformed into new ones based on technology. Such are the cases of Himalaya’ s Head by Devart where a snow war takes place between physical and virtual players or Jumping Rope by Orna Portugaly, Daphna Talithman and Sharon Younger, where participants are invited to jump a rope which is being turned by two virtual projected characters. Play back in action… Artists like the Ludic Society and Gordan Savicic follow a neo – situationist approach of play; they bring action back to the real dimension and spread it in the cities. In their projects they create ludic ambiances and city walks where the notions of the “dérivé”, the “détournement” and the “psychogeographies” are being appropriated to raise questions about today’s everyday life and potentialities for playfulness. Objects of Desire by the Ludic Society is a playful metaphor where objects take the place of subjects, with obsessions and desires that they follow to find their home. Gordan Savicic’ s Constraint City / the pain of everyday life is based on a corset with high torque servo motors and a WIFI-enabled game-console, that when worn, can write and read the city codes while also being a fetish object causing pain according to the strength of signal it gets. Following a different direction, David Valentine and MediaShed, also re-invite play back to the ordinary life, as seen on their video The duellists that documents a CCTV parkour performance. Two free-runners run an acrobatic competition in a shopping mall of Manchester Arndale. The fluid, uninterrupted movement of them acting as players re - energizes the environment in the most vivid and spontaneous way. Play caught in between… Other artists look into limits between the virtual and the real in today’ s play. The work of Silver and True named Sell your Rolex comments on the virtual dimension lived by millions of people today. Taking the roles of the user and its avatar, players note that behaviours of the virtual world are odd, funny and embarrassing when brought back to real life. How accurate is simulation after all in realistic terms? The MIT Lab with Stiff People’ s League mingles the two dimensions through a mixed reality game of soccer, happening simultaneously in the real space and in the world of Second Life. The common relationship between physical and virtual world is inverted as physical players need to rely on the virtual ones to play the game. Play reclaimed… Different questions are being raised by artists regarding play’s exploitation for purposes of political, nationalistic and ideological propaganda. Is morality a question? Are people conscious enough about what they are playing? John Klima in his project The Great Game.Epilogue brings reality into a game context as he incorporates in a child’s arcade ride true information from the conflict in Afghanistan, which has been collected by the Department of Defense of the US. John Paul Bichard with the Art of War addresses the issue of the representation of violence and its ways of interpretation through the contemporary media. Through two video works with footages from the army, one cannot tell what is real and what is imaginary anymore. In a similar direction, Vladan Joler has created the Schengen Information System, Version 1.0.3, a game where the player takes on the role of the activist who should intrude the building of the Schengen Information System and destroy the archives. Making use of publicly accessible technology and information, the artist has managed to make a realistic reconstruction and reverse the common use of games for military training purposes. Derivart wishing to tackle a socio-economical issue -that of real estate in Spain - use play to situate a problem and raise people’s awareness. The Burbujometro, showing the prices of apartments in different Spanish cities in the form of bubbles, that the user can shoot, criticizes the building boom of the 2000s. Play 2.0… The Folded-in project, created by Personal Cinema and the Erasers is a different critique on today’s play. The project examines the notion of borders in the era of the web 2.0 social networks. In the form of an online game application which reverses and criticizes the platform of YouTube, the projects seeks to find if players in the digital spaces could be liberated from their common prejudices and beliefs and to what extent they are supporters of immaterial labour, being the ideal prosumers. Taking this problem more to its extremes, one meets the phenomenon of the gold farming. Ge Jin with his documentary The Gold Farmers examines how the growth of virtual economy has given birth to the phenomenon of the gaming sweatshops and aims to answer how it leads play to become real work and what facts are hidden behind it. Play re-discussed… But how far can games and their creators go when observing, reproducing and criticizing today’s real world? Danny Ledonne, a young artist from Colorado, polarised the audience when he made a videogame of the Columbine assassination in the 90’s. Wishing to express this controversy, he made a documentary about the game investigating the issues of games, violence, and ethics. A lot of answers regarding the strategies followed by artists today and the phenomenon of the play culture, are also given in the 8 bit documentary by Marcin Ramocki & Justin Strawhand where they examine the overall influence play has in our everyday culture. CONCLUSION Play in our times presents a paradox. Despite its wide use and continuous presence in different forms of cultures, it is distant and trapped in its own formations, the games. Games are being accused; play is being sacrilised and is placed on a pedestal. Running certain risks, within this structure, play’s influential role on our culture is questioned. If, following Giorgio Agamben, play’s significance lies on the fact that it can detach humanity from the “sacred”, play would need to liberate itself first from the constraints of the sacred. To achieve this, one should not deny play; because this would lead to its cancellation. What one should do is to profane, to neglect, to surpass the constraints and break the rules. And this again can happen only through play itself, through its anarchic and vivid features that are today being wept out. This is how the actions taken by the artists can be described: as actions of profanity where they appropriate the myth and reverse the ceremony of the sacred. This violation is also an act of play itself that is then set free from all constraints. But there is one last point to remember: According to Agamben, profanation gains its complete meaning only when what has been profaned, is then rendered back to the people, at their disposal to start all over again. So this act is not an act of cancellation or politicisation; it is an act about raising awareness and about re-assigning to play its capacity to become a passage for true life, as Vaneigem would describe it. Can art fulfill this? Let’s hope so and wait and see…

#### Truth and predictability are nihilistic illusions built upon a myth of sameness and unity grounded in a fear of the flux and movement which lie at the heart of life – embrace the ecstasy of risk and the glory of active interpretation which uses force to wrest meaning from the abyss of nihilism.

**Lotringer, 1** – Professor of Foreign Philosophy at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at Columbia University, (Sylvere, “The Dance of Signs” in Hatred of Capitalism: A Semiotext(e) Reader ed. Kraus&Lotringer, Los Angeles:Semiotext(e), pg 174-176)

Freud is not blind to this: "The producer which the author makes his Zoe adopt for curing her childhood friend's delusion shows a far reaching similarity - no, a complete agreement in its essence - with the analytical method which consists, as applied to patients suffering from disorders analogous to Hanold's delusion, in bringing to their consciousness, to some extent forcibly, the unconscious whose repression led to their falling ill" (Standard Edition, IX, 88). Such is the powerful thrust of similitude. Freud has no more qualms to reduce "poetic creations" to real persons or the "Pompeian fancy" to a simple "psychiatric study." Beneath the trappings of truth, on the razor's edge of demonstration, forces are confronting each other in order to turn the process - the text -into a product. If Gradiva adheres so perfectly to the analytical mold, the analysis of the novel must serve as an absolute proof, in Freud's words, of the theory of the unconscious. Absolute proof - or absolute counter-proof... Even thought "absolute" is clearly too strong a word for such a circum-scribed operation, to counter Freud's interpretation and thus unsettle he theory of the unconscious is indeed the substance of the present attempt. Not to replace Freud's elaborate construct with another, more powerful, mode of evaluation would certainly prove the wisdom in the face of the illusion of truth. Although "nihilistic" at heart, such a perspective is not bound to be simply negative. It can attest to a growing force. I realize that I can overcome the temptation of total interpretations, whose values are universal (they are actually symptoms of fear and apathy). To destroy the belief in the law, to dissipate the fiction of predictability, to reject the sage recurrence of the "same," this is not just a "critical" stand. It is an act of force. But destruction must not open onto an absence of values, worthless or meaninglessness. It must lead to a new evaluation. Nietzsche sees in the wisdom of the East a principle of decadence, a weakening of the power of appropriation. Force of intention matters more than will to truth. To reject truth without intensifying the force of invention still participates in the ascetic ideal, thus in ressentiment. "To read off a text without interposing an interpretation" therefore is "hardly possible" (The Will to Power, 479). I must use my creative forces to create values without falling into the inertia of truth or an anemia of will. I must render the text, and the world, to their "disturbing and enigmatic character"; will them incomprehensible, elusive, "in flux," only indebted to perspective valuations: "The greater the impulse toward unity, the more firmly may one conclude that weakness is present; the greater the impulse toward variety, differentiation, inner decay, the more force is present" (WP, 655). Inner decay: to dance away over oneself. Motion, not emotions. Freud's interpretation resists the false neutrality of science. It only shows a sign of decline when it aims for the truth, when it succumbs to the temptation of unity, the sick security of monism, the illusion of a reconciliation. A reactive interpretation, it assumes powerful, but fabricated, weapons: the difference between objects and subjects, cause and effect, means and ends, etc. That Gradiva presents a certain order of succession in no way proves that individual moments are related to one another as cause and effect, that they obey a "law" and a calculus but rather that different factions abruptly confront each other in their attempt to draw their ultimate consequence at every moment. "As long as there is a structure, as long as there is a method, or better yet as long as structure and method exist through the mental, through intelligence, time is trapped - or else we imagine we have trapped it" (John Cage, Pour les Oiseaux. Belfond, 1976, 34). Structural analysis properly discerned that a narrative establishes | a confusion between time (succession) and logic (cause and effect). However, instead of "delogifying" time, it forced narrative time to sub-mit to narrative logic. Far from being dispelled, the confusion became the very springboard of analysis! It is high time to take advantage of this latency of the narrative, of the divorce between consequence and construction, in order to "rechronocize" succession. I will, here and now, stop wanting the story to go somewhere. I will forget what I know feebly, in advance, in order to gather the whole complexity of forces at play in a text. I will learn to resist the melody of casual relations and the torpor of narrative accumulations in order to reinvent the intensity of risks, ceaselessly menacing and forever being reborn.

## 2AC

### Discourse Shapes Reality

#### Theoretical thinking concerning security problematizes militarized practices like the “war on drugs” – it constitutes reality

**Bilgin, 5** – Professor of IR, Bikent University, *Regional Security In The Middle East A Critical Perspective*, Page 7

From a critical perspective, thinking differently about security involves: first, challenging the ways in which security has traditionally been conceptualised by broadening and deepening the concept and by rejecting the primacy given to the sovereign state as the primary referent for, and agent of, security. Critical approaches also problematise the **militarised** and zero-sum practices informed by prevailing discourses and call for reconceptualising practice. Second, thinking differently entails rejecting the conception of theory as a neutral tool, which merely explains social phenomena, and emphasises the mutually constitutive relationship between theory and practice. That is, the way we (the community of students of security) think and write about security informs practice; it privileges certain practices whilst marginalising others, thereby helping **constitute** what human beings choose to call **'reality'**. Theory is itself a form of practice; theorising is recognised as a political activity. Finally, adopting a critical approach to security implies adopting an explicitly normative (for some, emancipation-oriented) approach to security in theory and practice.

### 2AC – Invisibility

#### Welcome to the undercommons – it solves your K

Moten and Harney 12 (Fred Moten, professor of modern poetry at Duke, Stefano Harney, lecturer in management at the University of Leicester, 11-12-13, “Studying through the Undercommons: Stefano Harney & Fred Moten – Interviewed by Stevphen Shukaitas,” http://classwaru.org/2012/11/12/studying-through-the-undercommons-stefano-harney-fred-moten-interviewed-by-stevphen-shukaitis/) gz

Stefano: Yes. So, I just don’t think of study and the university with that kind of connection – even though originally we were writing about what we knew, and that’s why the undercommons first came out in relationship to the university. I don’t see the undercommons as having any necessary relationship to the university. And, given the fact that, to me, the undercommons is a kind of comportment or ongoing experiment with and as the general antagonism, a kind of way of being with others, it’s almost impossible that it could be matched up with particular institutional life. It would obviously be cut through in different kinds of ways and in different spaces and times. Fred: Studying is not limited to the university. It’s not held or contained within the university. Study has a relation to the university, but only insofar as the university is not necessarily excluded from the undercommons that it tries so hard to exclude.

#### You read the Invisible Committee wrong – they impact turn your framework argument and love the aff

Them in 9 http://tarnac9.noblogs.org/gallery/5188/insurrection\_english.pdf

There’s no reason to engage in one citizens’ collective or another, in one extreme left impasse or another, in the latest communitarian imposture. All the organizations that claim to contest the present order themselves have all the puppetry of the form, morals and language of miniature States about them. None of the old lies about “doing politics differently” have ever contributed to anything but the indefinite extension of Statist pseudopodia48 . There’s no reason to react to the news of the day, but to understand each information given as an operation carried out on a hostile battlefield full of strategies to decode, an operation aiming precisely to stir up some certain reaction or another among some group of people or another, and to see that operation itself as the real news contained within the apparent news. There’s no more reason to expect or wait for anything – to expect that it will all blow over, that the revolution will come, a nuclear apocalypse or a social movement. To wait anymore is madness. The catastrophe isn’t coming; it’s here. We’re already situated within a civilization’s movement of collapse. And we have to take part in it. To stop waiting means to enter into insurrectionary logic in one way or another. It means to begin to hear, once again, in the voices of our rulers, that trembling of terror that’s never really left them. Because to govern has never meant anything but to hold back, by a thousand subterfuges, the moment when the crowd will string you up – and every act of government is nothing but another way to keep from losing control over the population.

#### The K misreads history – change is the key internal link to progress – also their argument necessitates complicity in evil because any action *could* be coopted

Trott, 10

Ben Trott, journal newspaper in which to think through, debate and articulate the political, social, economic and cultural theories of our movements, as well as the networks of diverse practices and alternatives that surround them; “Skipping steps,” May 2010, http://www.redpepper.org.uk/Skipping-steps/ //bghs-ms

Second, The Coming Insurrection offers a very one-dimensional reading of history, which derives directly from that of the Situationists. For The Invisible Committee, history is the history of defeat. Or rather, what Debord would call 'recuperation', turning systemic opposition or criticism into something not only controllable, but profitable. Think of the trajectory taken by punk: from a riotous youth movement to the shelves of H&M, via Vivienne Westwood diamond-studded safety pins. This narrative is not incorrect as such, but it is incomplete. The book fails to recognise, for instance, that the precarious, flexible and mobile reality of work today, which it so vividly describes, is in part a result of the earlier rejection of the monotony of the assembly line. This does not mean we should just be happy with our lot. But failing to recognise the role that previous generations' struggles played in shaping the world runs the risk of underestimating the range of possibilities to bring about further changes. It is on the basis of these shortcomings that The Coming Insurrection proposes its strategy for change: an attempt to deploy forms of struggle that cannot be recuperated (as if they existed!), de-linked from the rest of the left, and relatively disinterested in some of the most pressing questions. Such as: where and by whom is social wealth produced today? Or: how can we go about democratically deciding how we want to produce and live in the future? In the current political and economic climate, proposals for a radical remaking of society are an urgent necessity. But in skipping vital questions the book ends up providing a strategy unlikely to bear fruit.

#### Alt prevents coalitions

Krishna, 93 (Sankaran, professor of political science, university of Hawaii, Alternatives 1993 v. 18 p.400)

The dichotomous choice presented in this excerpt is straightforward: one either indulges in total critique, delegitimizing all sovereign truths, or one is committed to “nostalgic,” essentialist unities that have become obsolete and have been the grounds for all our oppressions. In offering the dichotomous choice, Der Derian replicates a move made by Chaloupka in his equally dismissive critique of the move mainstream nuclear opposition, the Nuclear Freeze movement of the early 1980s, that, according to him, was operating along obsolete lines, emphasizing “facts” and “realities,” while a “postmodern” President Reagan easily outflanked them through an illusory Star Wars program (See KN: chapter 4) Chaloupka centers this difference between his own supposedly total critique of all sovereign truths (which he describes as nuclear criticism in an echo of literary criticism) and the more partial (and issue based) criticism of what he calls “nuclear opposition” or “antinuclearists” at the very outset of his book. (Kn: xvi) Once again, the unhappy choice forced upon the reader is to join Chaloupka in his total critique of all sovereign truths or be trapped in obsolete essentialisms. This leads to a disastrous politics pitting groups that have the most common (and need to unite on some basis to be effective) against each other. Both Chaloupka and Der Derian thus reserve their most trenchant critique for political groups that should, in any analysis, be regarded as the closest to them in terms of an oppositional politics ad their desired futures. Instead of finding ways to live with these differences and to (if fleetingly) coalesce against the New Right, this fratricidal critique is politically suicidal. It obliterates the space for a political activism based on provisional and contingent coalitions, for uniting behind a common cause even as one recognizes that the coalition is comprised of groups that have very differing (and possibly unresolvable) views of reality. Moreover, it fails to consider the possivlity that there may have been other more compelling reasons for the “failure” of the Nuclear Freeze movement or anti-Gulf War movement. Like many a worthwhile cause in our times, they failed to garner sufficient support to influence state policy. The response to that need not be a totalizing critique that delegitimizes all narratives. The blackmail inherent in the choice offered by Der Derian and Chaloupka, between total critique and “ineffective” partial critique, ought to be transparent. Among other things, it effectively militates against the construction of provisional on strategic essentialisms our attempts to create space for activist politics. IN the next section, I focus more widely on genre of critical internation theory and its impact on such an activist politics.

### 2AC – FW

#### “Resolved” means to reduce through mental analysis

Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 6

(http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/resolved)

Resolve: 1.To come to a definite or earnest decision about; determine (to do something): I have resolved that I shall live to the full. 2.to separate into constituent or elementary parts; break up; cause or disintegrate (usually fol. by into). 3.to reduce or convert by, or as by, breaking up or disintegration (usually fol. by to or into). 4.to convert or transform by any process (often used reflexively). 5.to reduce by mental analysis (often fol. by into).

#### The entirety of Western politics rests on the state of exception – any action that begins with the State maintains the ability to determine life

Agamben 98 – professor of philosophy at the University of Verona (Giorgio, Homo Sacer, pg. 8-9)

The protagonist of this book is bare life, that is, the life of *homo sacer* (sacred man), who *may be killed and yet not sacrificed,* and whose essential function in modern politics we intend to assert. An obscure figure of archaic Roman law, in which human life is included in the juridical order || *ordinamento* || solely in the form of its exclusion (that is, of its capacity to be killed), has thus offered the key by which not only the sacred texts of sovereignty but also the very codes of political power will unveil their mysteries. At the same time, however, this ancient meaning of the term sacer presents us with the enigma of a figure of the sacred that, before or beyond the religious, constitutes the first paradigm of the political realm of the West. The Foucauldian thesis will then have to be corrected or, at least, completed, in the sense that what characterizes modern politics is not so much the inclusion of zo~in rhepo/is—which is, in itself, absolutely ancient—nor simply the fact that life as such be­comes a principal object of the projections and calculations of State power. Instead the decisive fact is that, together with the process by which the exception everywhere becomes the rule, the realm of bare life—which is originally situated at the margins of the political order—gradually begins to coincide with the political realm, and exclusion and inclusion, outside and inside, bios and zoe right and fact, enter into a zone of irreducible indistinction. At once exclud­ing bare life from and capturing it within the political order, the state of exception actually constituted, in its very separateness, the hidden foundation on which the entire political system rested. ‘When its borders begin to be blurred, the bare life that dwelt there frees itself in the city and becomes both subject and object of the conflicts of the political order, the one place for both the organiza­tion of State power and emancipation from it. Everything happens as if, along with the disciplinary process by which State power makes man as a living being into its own specific object, another process is set in motion that in large measure corresponds to the birth of modern democracy, in which man as a living being pres­ents himself no longer as an *object* but as the *subject* of political power. These processes—which in many ways oppose and (at least apparently) bitterly conflict with each other—nevertheless con­verge insofar as both concern the bare life of the citizen, the new biopolitical body of humanity.

#### Their politics leads to passivity

Antonio, 95 – Professor of Sociology at the University of Kansas (Robert J., “Nietzsche's Antisociology: Subjectified Culture and the End of History,” The American Journal of Sociology, 101.1, p. 14-15, 1995)

The "problem of the actor," Nietzsche said, "troubled me for the longest time."' He considered "roles" as "external," "surface," or "foreground" phenomena and viewed close personal identification with them as symptomatic of estrangement. While modern theorists saw differentiated roles and professions as a matrix of autonomy and reflexivity, Nietzsche held that persons (especially male professionals) in specialized occupations overidentify with their positions and engage in gross fabrications to obtain advancement. They look hesitantly to the opinion of others, asking themselves, "How ought I feel about this?" They are so thoroughly absorbed in simulating effective role players that they have trouble being anything but actors—"The role has actually become the character." This highly subjectified social self or simulator suffers devastating inauthenticity. The powerful authority given the social greatly amplifies Socratic culture's already self-indulgent "inwardness." Integrity, decisiveness, spontaneity, and pleasure are undone by paralyzing overconcern about possible causes, meanings, and consequences of acts and unending internal dialogue about what others might think, expect, say, or do (Nietzsche 1983, pp. 83-86; 1986, pp. 39-40; 1974, pp. 302-4, 316-17). Nervous rotation of socially appropriate "masks" reduces persons to hypostatized "shadows," "abstracts," or simulacra. One adopts "many roles," playing them "badly and superficially" in the fashion of a stiff "puppet play." Nietzsche asked, "Are you genuine? Or only an actor? A representative or that which is represented? . . . [Or] no more than an imitation of an actor?" Simulation is so pervasive that it is hard to tell the copy from the genuine article; social selves "prefer the copies to the originals" (Nietzsche 1983, pp. 84-86; 1986, p. 136; 1974, pp. 232-33, 259; 1969b, pp. 268, 300, 302; 1968a, pp. 26-27). Their inwardness and aleatory scripts foreclose genuine attachment to others. This type of actor cannot plan for the long term or participate in enduring net-works of interdependence; such a person is neither willing nor able to be a "stone" in the societal "edifice" (Nietzsche 1974, pp. 302-4; 1986a, pp. 93-94). Superficiality rules in the arid subjectivized landscape. Neitzsche (1974, p. 259) stated, "One thinks with a watch in one's hand, even as one eats one's midday meal while reading the latest news of the stock market; one lives as if one always 'might miss out on something.' `Rather do anything than nothing': this principle, too, is merely a string to throttle all culture. . . . Living in a constant chase after gain compels people to expend their spirit to the point of exhaustio0n in continual pretense and overreaching and anticipating others." Pervasive leveling, improvising, and faking foster an inflated sense of ability and an oblivious attitude about the fortuitous circumstances that contribute to role attainment (e.g., class or ethnicity). The most mediocre people believe they can fill any position, even cultural leadership. Nietzsche respected the self-mastery of genuine ascetic priests, like Socrates, and praised their ability to redirect ressentiment creatively and to render the "sick" harmless. But he deeply feared the new simulated versions. Lacking the "born physician's" capacities, these impostors amplify the worst inclinations of the herd; they are "violent, envious, exploitative, scheming, fawning, cringing, arrogant, all according to circumstances." Social selves are fodder for the "great man of the masses." Nietzsche held that "the less one knows how to command, the more urgently one covets someone who commands, who commands severely—a god, prince, class, physician, father confessor, dogma, or party conscience." The deadly combination of desperate conforming and overreaching and untrammeled ressentiment paves the way for a new type of tyrant (Nietzsche 1986, pp. 137, 168; 1974, pp. 117-18, 213, 288-89, 303-4).

### AT: Dialogue

#### Link turn – we cannot rely upon common terms for discussion – they freeze alternative thought and prevent real debate from occurring

Bleiker, 98 – asst. prof. of International Studies at Pusan National University (Roland, “Retracing and redrawing the boundaries of events: Postmodern interferences with international theory”, *Alternatives*, Oct-Dec 1998, Vol. 23, Issue 4)

In the absence of authentic knowledge, the formulation of theoretical positions and practical action requires modesty. Accepting difference and facilitating dialogue becomes more important than searching for the elusive Truth. But dialogue is a process, an ideal, not an end point. Often there is no common discursive ground, no language that can establish a link between the inside and the outside. The link has to be searched first. But the celebration of difference is a process, an ideal, not an end point. A call for tolerance and inclusion cannot be void of power. Every social order, even the ones that are based on the acceptance of difference, excludes what does not fit into their view of the world. Every form of thinking, some international theorists recognize, expresses a will to power, a will that cannot but "privilege, oppress, and create in some manner."[54] There is no all-encompassing gaze. Every process of revealing is at the same time a process of concealing. By opening up a particular perspective, no matter how insightful it is, one conceals everything that is invisible from this vantage point. The enframing that occurs by such processes of revealing, Martin Heidegger argues, runs the risk of making us forget that enframing is a claim, a disciplinary act that "banishes man into that kind of revealing that is an ordering." And where this ordering holds sway, Heidegger continues, "it drives out every other possibility for revealing."[55] This is why one must move back and forth between different, sometimes incommensurable forms of insights. Such an approach recognizes that the key to circumventing the ordering mechanisms of revealing is to think in circles--not to rest too long at one point, but to pay at least as much attention to linkages between than to contents of mental resting places. Inclusiveness does not lie in the search for a utopian, all-encompassing worldview, but in the acceptance of the will to power--in the recognition that we need to evaluate and judge, but that no form of knowledge can serve as the ultimate arbiter for thought and action. As a critical practice, postmodernism must deal with its own will to power and to subvert that of others. This is not to avoid accountability, but to take on responsibility in the form of bringing modesty to a majority.

### AT: Limits

#### Their move is not benign – the rhetoric of limits creates a necessarily exclusionary and authoritarian politics

Kulynych 97 (Kulynych, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Winthrop University, 1997 [Jessica, “Performing Politics," Polity, Winter, v.XXX, n.2, p. 315-330)

II. Disciplining Habermas Political scientists have traditionally understood political participation as an activity that assures individual influence over the political system, protection of private interests, system legitimacy, and perhaps even selfdevelopment. Habermas and Foucault describe the impact of the conditions of postmodernity on the possibility for efficacious political action in remarkably similar ways. Habermas describes a world where the possibilities for efficacious political action are quite limited. The escalating interdependence of state and economy, the expansive increase in bureaucratization, the increasingly technical nature of political decisionmaking, and the subsequent colonization of a formerly sacred private sphere by a ubiquitous administrative state render traditional modes of political participation unable to provide influence, privacy, legitimacy, and self-development.' As the state is forced to take an ever larger role in directing a complex global, capitalist, welfare state economy, the scope of administration inevitably grows. In order to fulfill its function as the manager of the economy, the administrative state must also manage the details of our lives formerly considered private. Yet, as the state's role in our "private" lives continues to grow, the public has become less and less interested in government, focusing instead on personal and social mores, leisure, and consumption. Ironically, we have become less interested in politics at precisely the same moment when our lives are becoming increasingly "politicized" and administered. This siege of private life and the complicity of this ideology of "civil privatism" in the functioning of the modern administrative state makes a mockery of the idea that there exist private interests that can be protected from state intervention.4 Correlatively, the technical and instrumental rationality of modem policymaking significantly lessens the possibility for public influence on state policy.5 The difficulty of participation in Habermas's world is exacerbated by the added complexity of a political system structured by hierarchical gender and racial norms. Nancy Fraser uses Habermas's analysis of the contemporary situation to demonstrate how the infusion of these hierarchical gender and racial norms into the functioning of the state and economy ensures that political channels of communication between citizens and the state are unequally structured and therefore cannot function as mechanisms for the equal protection of interests.' Accordingly, theorists are much less optimistic about the possibilities for citizens to acquire or develop feelings of autonomy and efficacy from the attempt to communicate interests to a system that is **essentially impervious to citizen interests, eschews discussion of long-term goals, and requires exclusively technical and instrumental debate.** Similarly, Foucault's complex genealogical descriptions of disciplinary power networks challenge the traditional assumption that political power is located primarily in the formal apparatus of the state. The traditional understanding of political participation tells us nothing about what types of political action are appropriate in a world where power is typically and predominantly disciplinary, productive, and normalizing. As long as we define the purpose of participation only in terms of influence, privacy, legitimacy, and self-development, we will be unable to see how political action can be effective in the contemporary world. While separately both Habermas and Foucault challenge the traditional understanding of participation, their combined insights further and irrevocably extend that challenge. Theoretical focus on the distinctions between Habermas and Foucault has all too often obscured important parallels between these two theorists. Specifically, the HabermasFoucault debate has underemphasized the extent to which Habermas also describes a disciplinary society. In his descriptions of bureaucracy, technocracy, and system colonization, Habermas is also describing a world where power is productive and dispersed and where political action is constrained and normalized. Habermas, like Foucault, describes a type of power that cannot be adequately characterized in terms of the intentions of those who possess it. Colonization is not the result of conscious intention, but is rather the unintended consequence of a multitude of small adjustments. The gender and racial subtexts infusing the system are not the results of conscious intention, but rather of implicit gender and racial norms and expectations infecting the economy and the state. Bureaucratic power is not a power that is possessed by any individual or agency, but exists in the exercise of decisionmaking. As Iris Young points out, we must "analyze the exercise of power [in contemporary societies] as the effect of often liberal and humane practices of education, bureaucratic administration, production and distribution of consumer goods, medicine and so on."' The very practices that Habermas chronicles are exemplary of a power that has no definitive subject. As Young explains, "the conscious actions of many individuals daily contribute to maintaining and reproducing oppression, but those people are simply doing their jobs or living their lives, and do not understand themselves as agents of oppression."" Colonization and bureaucratization also fit the pattern of a power that is not primarily repressive but productive. Disciplinary technologies are, as Sawicki describes, not ... repressive mechanisms ... [that] operate primarily through violence ... or seizure ... but rather [they operate] by producing new objects and subjects of knowledge, by inciting and channeling desires, generating and focusing individual and group energies, and establishing bodily norms and techniques for observing, monitoring and controlling bodily movements, processes, and capacities. The very practices of administration, distribution, and decisionmaking on which Habermas focuses his attention can and must be analyzed as productive disciplinary practices. Although these practices can clearly be repressive, their most insidious effects are productive. Rather than simply holding people back, bureaucratization breaks up, categorizes, and systemizes projects and people. It creates new categories of knowledge and expertise. Bureaucratization and colonization also create new subjects as the objects of bureaucratic expertise. The social welfare client and the consumer citizen are the creation of bureaucratic power, not merely its target. The extension of lifeworld gender norms into the system creates the possibility for sexual harassment, job segregation, parental leave, and consensual corporate decisionmaking. Created as a part of these subjectivities are new gestures and norms of bodily behavior, such as the embarrassed shuffling of food stamps at the grocery checkout and the demeaning sexual reference at the office copier. Bodily movements are monitored and regularized by means of political opinion polls, welfare lists, sexual harassment protocols, flex-time work schedules, and so forth. Modern disciplinary power, as described by Foucault and implied by Habermas, does not merely prevent us from developing, but creates us differently as the effect of its functioning. These disciplinary techniques not only control us, but also enable us to be more efficient and more productive, and often more powerful. Focusing on the disciplinary elements of the Habermasian critique opens the door for exploring the postmodern character of Habermasian politics. Because Habermas does describe a disciplinary world, his prescription for contemporary democracy (discursive politics) ought to be sensitive to, and appropriate for, a disciplinary world. Foucault's sensitivity to the workings of disciplinary power is central to the articulation of a plausible, postmodern version of discursive politics. In the following discussion I will argue for a performative redefinition of participation that will reinvigorate the micro-politics demanded by Foucault, as well as provide a more nuanced version of the discursive politics demanded by Habermas. III. Habermas and Discursive Participation Habermas regards a public sphere of rational debate as the only possible foundation for democratic politics in the contemporary world. For Habermas, like Schumpeter, democracy is a method. Democracies are systems that achieve the formation of public opinion and public will through a correct process of public communication, and then "translate" that communicative power into administrative power via the procedurally regulated public spheres of parliaments and the judiciary. The extent to which this translation occurs is the measure of a healthy constitutional democracy. Thus, the "political public sphere" is the "fundamental concept of a theory of democracy." In this discursive definition of democracy, political participation takes on a new character. Participation equals discursive participation; it is communication governed by rational, communicatively achieved argument and negotiation. Habermas distinguishes two types of discursive participation: problem-solving or decision-oriented deliberation, which takes place primarily in formal democratic institutions such as parliaments and is regulated or governed by democratic procedures; and informal opinion-formation, which is opinion-formation "uncoupled from decisions ... [and] effected in an open and inclusive network of overlapping, subcultural publics having fluid temporal, social and substantive boundaries."" In many ways this two-tiered description of discursive participation is a radically different understanding of political participation, and one better suited to the sort of societies we currently inhabit. Habermas moves the focus of participation away from policymaking and toward redefining legitimate democratic processes that serve as the necessary background for subsequent policymaking. While only a limited number of specially trained individuals can reasonably engage in decisionmaking participation, the entire populous can and must participate in the informal deliberation that takes place outside of, or uncoupled from, formal decisionmaking structures. This informal participation is primarily about generating "public discourses that uncover topics of relevance to all of society, interpret values, contribute to the resolution of problems, generate good reasons, and debunk bad ones."" Informal participation has two main functions. First, it acts as a "warning system with sensors that, though unspecialized, are sensitive throughout society."" This system communicates problems "that must be processed by the political system."" Habermas labels this the "signal" function. Second, informal participation must not only indicate when problems need to be addressed, it must also provide an "effective problematization" of those issues; As Habermas argues, from the perspective of democratic theory, the public sphere must, in addition, amplify the pressure of problems, that is, not only detect and identify problems but also convincingly and influentially thematize them, furnish them with possible solutions, and dramatize them in such a way that they are taken up and dealt with by parliamentary complexes." Informal participation is crucial because it is the source of both legitimacy and innovation in formal decisionmaking. As long as decisionmaking is open to the influence of informal opinion-formation, then state policies are legitimate because they are grounded in free and equal communication that meets the democratic requirement of equal participation. Informal participation originating in the public sphere is also the resource for innovative descriptions and presentations of interests, preferences, and issues. If they ignore informal participation, state decisionmakers have no connection to the center of democracy: the political public sphere. Habermas's description of discursive participation is also novel and effective due to its broad construal of the participatory act. Participation is defined very broadly because the concept of the public sphere remains quite abstract. The public sphere is a "linguistically constituted public space." 16 It is neither an institution nor an organization. Rather, it is a "network for communicating information and points of view [which are] ... filtered and synthesized in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified public opinions." ''' Public spheres are defined not by a physical presence but rather by a "communication structure." According to Habermas, "the more they detach themselves from the public's physical presence and extend to the virtual presence of scattered readers, listeners, or viewers linked by public media, the clearer becomes the abstraction that enters when the spatial structure of simple interactions is expanded into a public sphere." 'I In other words, actually being present in a "concrete locale" is unnecessary for the existence of a public sphere, and hence unnecessary for active participation. Participation is not limited to large, organized discussions in formal settings; it also includes "simple and episodic encounters" in which actors "reciprocally [attribute] communicative freedom to each other."19 This abstraction makes participation easier and extremely inclusive. As Habermas describes, "every encounter in which actors do not just observe each other but take a second-person attitude, reciprocally attributing communicative freedom to each other, unfolds in a linguistically constituted public space." 20 Thus, the concerns that political scientists have had about unequal resource distribution and its effect on one's capability to act are mitigated in Habermas's broad definition of discursive participation. Even though limited resources may prevent active interventions in decisionmaking and policymaking processes, for Habermas the "communicative structures of the public sphere relieve the public of the burden of decision-making."" In a similar vein, Habermas does not limit participation to a specific set of activities, but defines it procedurally or contextually. Participation is not limited to traditional activities such as voting, campaigning, or letter-writing, but is instead designated by the discursive quality of the activity. In other words, it is not the intent to influence policy that defines participation, but rather the communication structure in which the activity takes place. That communication structure must be equitable and inclusive, social problems must be openly and rationally deliberated, and they must be thematized by people potentially affected. However, Habermas's discursive formulation is inadequate primarily because it does not explicitly and rigorously attend to the disciplinary effects of contemporary societies explained so creatively by Foucault. Habermas has been routinely criticized for ignoring the productive nature of contemporary power. His juxtaposition of system and lifeworld in The Theory of Communicative Action relies on a separation of good power from bad (communicative power v. steering media), and posits an ideal speech situation freed from the distortions of power." More importantly, Habermas's theorization of discursive participation is exceedingly abstract and does not adequately attend to the ways in which power informs discourse. A number of theorists have effectively argued that women and men do not stand in equal relationship to language. For example, Linda Zerilli argues that discursive space is a "fraternal community of unique and symbolic dimensions."23 Women utilize language in this discursive world "whose `common' and symbolic language ... enables one user to understand what another is saying; just as it compels each speaker **to constrain [themselves] within the limits of an existing political vocabulary.**"24 In this case **the content of speech is systematically limited in direct violation of the** required conditions for the **ideal speech situation.** The foundations of communication are not the ideal equal relationships that Habermas imagines, but are instead **an exclusive, learned, and gendered, symbolic heritage.** As Carole Pateman points out, women enter into public discussion on a very tenuous plane. The symbolic heritage that defines the meaning of key communicative concepts such as **consent** systematically excludes women from the category of individuals capable of consenting. 11 The mere existence of a debate over whether "no means no" with regard to consensual sexual relations and rape is a manifestation of this heritage. Women can hardly be seen as equal participants when they do not have the same opportunity to express their intent. Certainly, one might suggest that the above cases are really just failures of speech, and, therefore, not a critique of ideal speech as it is formulated by Habermas. Indeed Seyla Benhabib reformulates Habermas's speech act perspective to make it sensitive to the above critique. She argues that feminists concerned with the discourse model of democracy have often confused the historically biased practices of deliberative assemblies with the normative ideal of rational deliberation." She suggests that feminists concerned with inequities and imbalances in communication can actually benefit from the Habermasian requirement that all positions and issues be made " `public' in the sense of making [them] accessible to debate, reflection, action and moral-political transformation."" The "radical proceduralism of the discourse model makes it ideally suited to identify inequities in communication because it precludes our accepting unexamined and unjustified positions." Even such a sophisticated and sensitive approach to ideal speech as Benhabib's cannot cleanse communicative action of its exclusivity. It is not only that acquiring language is a process of mastering a symbolic heritage that is systematically gendered, **but the entire attempt to set conditions for "ideal speech" is inevitably exclusive.** The model of an ideal speech situation **establishes a norm of rational interaction that is defined by the very types of interaction it excludes.** The norm of rational debate favors critical argument and reasoned debate over other forms of communication.29 **Defining ideal speech inevitably entails defining unacceptable speech.** What has been defined as unacceptable in Habermas's formulation is any speech that is not intended to convey an idea. Speech evocative of identity, culture, or emotion has no necessary place in the ideal speech situation, and hence persons whose speech is richly colored with rhetoric, gesture, humor, spirit, or affectation could be defined as deviant or immature communicators. Therefore, a definition of citizenship based on participation in an ideal form of interaction **can easily become a tool for the exclusion of deviant communicators** from the category of citizens. This sort of normalization creates citizens as subjects of rational debate. Correlatively, as Fraser explains, because the communicative action approach is procedural it is particularly unsuited to address issues of speech content." Therefore, by definition, it **misses the relationship between procedure and content** that is at the core of feminist and deconstructive critiques of language. A procedural approach can require that we accommodate all utterances and that we not marginalize speaking subjects. It cannot require that we take seriously or be convinced by the statements of such interlocutors. In other words, **a procedural approach does not address the cultural context that makes some statements convincing and others not.** I would suggest that Habermas recognizes this problem, but has yet to explicitly theorize it. As I noted above, Habermas requires that informal discursive participation not only identify problems but also "convincingly and influentially thematize them." A thematization is legitimate, Habermas argues, only when it stems from a communicative process that "develops out of communication taking place among those who are potentially affected."" Thus, the extent to which a position is convincing seems to rely primarily on whether the affected parties have had a say in its articulation (a procedural requirement). What Habermas does not explicitly recognize is that whether a problem is convincingly thematized is not just a matter of utilizing correct procedure.

### AT: McClean

#### Not their model of debate – traditional conceptions of government fiat misrepresent the process of government decisionmaking, and are neither educational nor predictable

Claude, 88 (Inis, Professor of Government and Foreign Affairs, University of Virginia, States and the Global System, pages 18-20)

This view of the state as an institutional monolith is fostered by the notion of sovereignty, which calls up the image of the monarch, presiding over his kingdom. Sovereignty emphasizes the singularity of the state, its monopoly of authority, its unity of command and its capacity to speak with one voice. Thus, France wills, Iran demands, China intends, New Zealand promises and the Soviet Union insists. One all too easily conjures up the picture of a single-minded and purposeful state that decides exactly what it wants to achieve, adopts coherent policies intelligently adapted to its objectives, knows what it is doing, does what it intends and always has its act together. This view of the state is reinforced by political scientists’ emphasis upon the concept of *policy* and upon the thesis that governments derive policy from calculations of national interest. We thus take it for granted that states act internationally in accordance with rationally conceived and consciously constructed schemes of action, and we implicitly refuse to consider the possibility that alternatives to policy-directed behaviour may have importance–alternatives such as random, reactive, instinctual, habitual and conformist behaviour. Our rationalistic assumption that states do what they have planned to do tends to inhibit the discovery that states sometimes do what they feel compelled to do, or what they have the opportunity to do, or what they have usually done, or what other states are doing, or whatever the line of least resistance would seem to suggest. Academic preoccupation with the making of policy is accompanied by academic neglect of the execution of policy. We seem to assume that once the state has calculated its interest and contrived a policy to further that interest, the carrying out of policy is the virtually automatic result of the routine functioning of the bureaucratic mechanism of the state. I am inclined to call this the *Genesis* theory of public administration, taking as my text the passage: ‘And God said, Let there be light: and there was light’. I suspect that, in the realm of government, policy execution rarely follows so promptly and inexorably from policy statement. Alternatively, one may dub it the Pooh-Bah/Ko-Ko theory, honouring those denizens of William S. Gilbert’s Japan who took the position that when the Mikado ordered that something e done it was as good as done and might as well be declared to have been done. In the real world, that which a state decides to do is not as good as done; it may, in fact, never be done. And what states do, they may never have decided to do. Governments are not automatic machines, grinding out decisions and converting decisions into actions. They are agglomerations of human beings, like the rest of us inclined to be fallible, lazy, forgetful, indecisive, resistant to discipline and authority, and likely to fail to get the word or to heed it. As in other large organizations, left and right governmental hands are frequently ignorant of each other’s activities, official spokesmen contradict each other, ministries work at cross purposes, and the creaking machinery of government often gives the impression that no one is really in charge. I hope that no one will attribute my jaundiced view of government merely to the fact that I am an American–one, that is, whose personal experience is limited to a governmental system that is notoriously complex, disjointed, erratic, cumbersome and unpredictable. The United States does not, I suspect, have the least effective government or the most bumbling and incompetent bureaucracy in all the world. Here and there, now and then, governments do, of course perform prodigious feats of organization and administration: an extraordinary war effort, a flight to the moon, a successful hostage-rescue operation. More often, states have to make do with governments that are not notably clear about their purposes or coordinated and disciplined in their operations. This means that, in international relations, states are sometimes less dangerous, and sometimes less reliable, than one might think. Neither their threats nor their promises are to be taken with absolute seriousness. Above all, it means that we students of international politics must be cautious in attributing purposefulness and responsibility to governments. To say the that the United States was informed about an event is not to establish that the president acted in the light of that knowledge; he may never have heard about it. To say that a Soviet pilot shot down an airliner is not to prove that the Kremlin has adopted the policy of destroying all intruders into Soviet airspace; one wants to know how and by whom the decision to fire was made. To observe that the representative of Zimbabwe voted in favour of a particular resolution in the United Nations General Assembly is not necessarily to discover the nature of Zimbabwe’s policy on the affected matter; Zimbabwe may have no policy on that matter, and it may be that no one in the national capital has ever heard of the issue. We can hardly dispense with the convenient notion that Pakistan claims, Cuba promises, and Italy insists, and we cannot well abandon the formal position that governments speak for and act on behalf of their states, but it is essential that we bear constantly in mind the reality that governments are never fully in charge and never achieve the unity, purposefulness and discipline that theory attributes to them–and that they sometimes claim.

### AT: Portable Skills

#### Their claims about portable skills, limits and community rely on an understanding of education which frames subjects as units of rationality to be bettered through civilizing practices. This form of dispassionate subject construction eliminates care and dooms millions to suffering and death.

**Mourad, 1**

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EDUCATION FOR IMPROVEMENT, OR “KICKING THE DOG” Too many lost names too many rules to the game Better find a focus or you’re out of the picture.48 The idea that the fundamental issue of the just civil state is to find the right balance between preserving individual freedom and constraining individual threat has served as a tacit foundation within which belief and debate about educational philosophy, policy, and practice develop. This statement is not intended to suggest that there is some direct and specific historical connection that can be unequivocally demonstrated to exist between foundational political theory and mainstream educational theories and practices. However, I want to propose that there is a compatibility between them that has important consequences for a new critique of organized formal education. In the remainder of this paper, my aim is to argue that the tenor of the theories that I have summarized is endemic in the ordinary ways that we think about and engage in organized education. How is the idea of the basic human being that is posed as the fundamental social, political, and pedagogic problem for modern civilization, this human being that must be managed in order to keep it from harming itself and others, played out in educational presuppositions? The tacit, unchallenged belief is that through education, the human being must be made into something better than it was or would be absent a formal education. There are all kinds of versions of this subject and of what it should become: potential achiever, qualified professional, good citizen, “leader,” independent actor, critical thinker, change agent, knowledgeable person. In all cases, the subject before education is viewed to be, like the subject before civilization, something in need of being made competent—and safe—in the mind of the educator. From this vantage point, the pedagogic relationship between teacher and student, between competent adult and incompetent child ~or adult!, contains within it a possibility that it seeks to overcome, namely, a rejection of the socialization program of the former by the latter. There is an implicit conflict between individuals as soon as the student walks into the school or college classroom door from outside the civility that the teacher would have that student become. It must be resolved, or contained in some way; and this is done immediately by rendering the student a rule follower ~a follower of the social order!both in and out of the classroom. Or the student must be rendered a challenger of the social order, in favor of an order that overcomes oppression—to become a competent comrade. The individual must be taught how to be an individual in accordance with this balance. Being an individual means being “free”—it means being “self-determined,” it means competing, and it means obeying the law. This is the case, even if the teaching is done with kindness and sensitivity. The responsibility for dealing with suffering and limitation lies almost solely with this individual, not the state. In fact, if suffering is viewed at all, it tends to be viewed as something that is good for the individual to endure or to fight in order to overcome it. Limitation is not acknowledged, unless the individual is deemed disadvantaged in some way, and the remedy tends to be to provide the person with an opportunity to become competent. Is it any wonder that parents of children with disabilities, aided by many educators, often must fight for educational and other services? This situation simply reflects that the basic logic of organized formal education and, more generally, the state, is not predicated upon a recognition that the human being is susceptible to suffering or that the state’s reason for being should be to care for people. If caring for its inhabitants were the basic purpose of the civil state, then there would be no need to fight for this recognition. Is it any wonder that the education of the ordinary child is mainly training for a far-off, abstract future that is destined to be better than life at present? Why must school be about overcoming anything? We talk about equipping children and adults to “solve problems.” Yet, problems do not fall from the sky; they do not exist as such until a human being gives them a name. In contrast, the concept of contention suggests that the practical role of reason should be used to understand the human being as subject to suffering and to act accordingly as moral agents. That is very different from an educational philosophy, policy, and practice that views reason as an instrument by which to overcome obstacles and to conform to the social order. It may be argued that modern education is about reason, about how to think and live reasonably and, therefore, how to live well and to care for oneself and for others. Yet it is commonly expressed that we live in a “complex world” and that children and adults must “learn how to learn,” in order to “succeed in a world of rapid change.” The question that needs to be asked is: Why should a person have to? In effect, education expects the human being to have an unlimited ability to think and act with reason sufficient to cope with increasingly complex situations that require individual intellect to adequately recognize, evaluate, and prioritize alternative courses of action, consider their consequences, and make good decisions. For the most part, the increasing complexity of civil society and the multiplicity of factors that intellect is expected to deal with in different situations are not questioned in education. Is this what education is rightly about? Education is as much about the use of intelligence to avoid suffering and feelings of limitation and about fending off feelings of fear as it is about learning. It is about acting upon other people and upon the civil order to deal with perceived threats. One must be an “active learner” or else. Why? The individual must be acted upon and rendered into an entity that engages reality in the ways that are deemed just by many educators, lawmakers, and others with a stake in the perpetuation of the given social order. Thus, the individual is exhorted to “do your best,” “make an effort,” “earn a grade,” “be motivated,” “work hard,” “overcome obstacles,” “achieve.” Why should education be about any of these things? Unfortunately, the culture of scholarship is thoroughly consistent with these precepts. When we question them, we challenge the ends that they serve but not the ideas themselves. We believe that education is rightly about improvement. This philosophy of improvement is not necessarily consistent with enhancement of living. It often has the opposite effect. How is this result justified? Certainly, it can feel good to accomplish something or to overcome obstacles. Does that mean that adversity should be a positive value of the civil state? The modern idea, beginning with Descartes and established through Lockean empiricism ~and made pedagogic by Rousseau’s Emile!, that anyone can be rational leads quickly to the idea that everyone is responsible for being wholly rational, as that word is understood according to the social order. The perpetuation of the given social order in education as elsewhere is about gaining advantage and retaining power. It is about cultural politics and about marginalization of various groups and about class and about socializing children to believe in capitalism as if it is a natural law. Yet under the analysis that I have made here, these major problems are symptoms of something more basic. The more basic problem that I have emphasized here is inextricable from the problem of the just civil state. It is about the intense pressures on people to think and act in ways that serve broader interests that are not at all concerned with their well-being in a variety of contexts including psychological, social, economic, political, and cultural. It is no answer to ground pedagogy in the notion of “building community.” The idea that something must be built implies that something must be made better in order for it to be tolerated. Moreover, “community” carries with it the prerequisite that one be made competent to be a member— again, the presumption that something must be done to the person to make it better in some way. I do not mean to say that educators have bad intent. I do mean that this ethos of betterment through competency will inevitably fail to fulfill the dreams of reformers and revolutionaries. It does not consider the human being as an entity to care for but rather as something to be equipped with skills and knowledge in order to improve itself. This failure is not only because there are millions of children and adults that live in poverty in the wealthiest countries in human history. It is because the state of mind that can tolerate such suffering is the same state that advances and maintains the ethos of civility as betterment, rather than civility as caring for people because they are subject to suffering. The alternative that I have only introduced in a very abbreviated way under the rubric that I called “contention” is intended to be pragmatic in the ways that Foucault and Richard Rorty are pragmatic in their respective approaches to the subject of the state.49 It is intended to address an unacceptable state of contemporary Western civilization, namely, its repetitive and even escalating incidence of disregard for suffering and harm in many forms, despite intellectual, social, medical, legal, educational, scientific, and technological “progress.” We have had two hundred years of modern educational principles, and two hundred years of profound suffering along with them. The problem of the individual calls for a new formulation and for a proper response—one that cares for the individual rather than makes it competent. The “modern project” of betterment through competency and opportunity must be challenged and replaced by an emotionally intelligent ethos that expressly and fundamentally acknowledges suffering and limitation in philosophy, policy, and practice.