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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

### 2AC – Opacity

#### Even if they win a link argument, some level of speaking for Others is inevitable and can be productive – the affirmative is a prerequisite to hearing the voice of the marginalized

Marino, 5(Lauren Marino, Macalester Department of Philosophy; “Speaking for Others,” Macalester Journal of Philosophy: Vol. 14: Iss. 1, Article 4)

If the self is located within language games the there is a commonality between those who share language games. This removes some of the barriers between selves and I do have access to the experience of those with whom I share language games. Sharing language games means sharing experience. I am able to speak for those who language games I play. There are some problems with this understanding. Alcoff thinks membership in a group is not precise or determinate. It is unclear which groups I could belong to and which of those groups I should single out to affiliate myself. More importantly, membership in a group doesn’t necessarily mean an authority to speak for the whole group. However, if we accept that the self is constituted within language, then those who share language games with me have direct access to my experience in away that no one can ever have access to a Cartesian mind. We do not need to ask for absolute identity, language and experience between speakers but just a commonality. Furthermore, Bernstein argues that we cannot speak without speaking for other people. 6 The speaker’s location is necessarily a location in relation to other people. The relationship cannot be removed, and we cannot avoid it. Speaking at all makes speaking for others inevitable. We return to the intuitive response to the struggle of oppressed groups: have the group speak for itself. Speaking becomes a type of agency in which I construct myself because contrary to a Cartesian self, selves do not exist prior to or separate from language. To lose my speech is to lose myself. The oppressed have the ability to communicate with each other and through their language game they are able to discuss their struggle with one another. Sharing languages games enables the oppressed to a specific, limited dimension of power. Their language game will always fail to communicate their struggle to those who have not been initiated into it. They have direct access to the experience of oppression and their agency, but they can only reach their own group. Those on the margin cannot reach those in the center. On the other hand, those in the center, the elites, share a language that can reach the majority of society. It is a language game they are familiar with and can use adeptly. However, they do not have the experience with or access to the language game of the oppressed. They have the power to use their language but nothing to say. The catch-22 is the choice between a group who embodies the agency and the dimensions of political struggle against oppression without a way to communicate it to the larger community, and a group with the language to reach society but is ignorant of the political struggle. There lies a need for a synergy between the experience of the oppressed on the margins and the language game of those in the center. The synergy requires a speaker who comes from the oppressed but has knowledge of the language game of the center. Such a person could incorporate the experience of the oppressed into a new language game that could be accessed by those in power. The concern is what is lost and sacrificed in translation. If the language games are so disparate that initiation in one, offers no insight into the rules of the other, than there is doubt that translation can be done at all. If translation cannot be done, the best to be hoped for is cooption forcing the margins into the mainstream.

#### The kritik creates a perpetual state of socio-political stasis by ignoring the fact that Others sometimes CANNOT speak for themselves – that means their project gets coopted by totalitarian disinformation campaigns

**Kleinman and Kleinman** **96** (Arthur – professor of anthropology at Harvard University – and Joan – Sinologist at Harvard University. “The appeal of experience; the dismay of images: Cultural appropriations of suffering in our times,” *Daedalus*. Winter 1996. Vol.125, Iss. 1;  pg. 1-24 pgs)

It is necessary to balance the account of the globalization of commercial and professional images with a vastly different and even more dangerous cultural process of appropriation: the totalitarian state's erasure of social experiences of suffering through the suppression of images. Here the possibility of moral appeal through images of human misery is prevented, and it is their absence that is the source of existential dismay. Such is the case with the massive starvation in China from 1959 to 1961. This story was not reported at the time even though more than thirty million Chinese died in the aftermath of the ruinous policies of the Great Leap Forward, the perverse effect of Mao's impossible dream of forcing immediate industrialization on peasants. Accounts of this, the world's most devastating famine, were totally suppressed; no stories or pictures of the starving or the dead were published. An internal report on the famine was made by an investigating team for the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. It was based on a detailed survey of an extremely poor region of Anwei Province that was particularly brutally affected. The report includes this numbing statement by Wei Wu-ji, a local peasant leader from Anwei: Originally there were 5,000 people in our commune, now only 3,200 remain. When the Japanese invaded we did not lose this many: we at least could save ourselves by running away! This year there's no escape. We die shut up in our own houses. Of my 6 family members, 5 are already dead, and I am left to starve, and I'll not be able to stave off death for long.(30) Wei Wu-ji continued: Wang Jia-feng from West Springs County reported that cases of eating human meat were discovered. Zhang Sheng-jiu said, "Only an evil man could do such a thing!" Wang Jia-feng said, "In 1960, there were 20 in our household, ten of them died last year. My son told his mother 'I'll die of hunger in a few days.'" And indeed he did.(31) The report also includes a graphic image by Li Qin-ming, from Wudian County, Shanwang Brigade: In 1959, we were prescheduled to deliver 58,000 jin of grain to the State, but only 35,000 jin were harvested, hence we only turned over 33,000 jin, which left 2,000 jin for the commune. We really have nothing to eat. The peasants eat hemp leaves, anything they can possibly eat. In my last report after I wrote, "We have nothing to eat," the Party told me they wanted to remove my name from the Party Roster. Out of a population of 280, 170 died. In our family of five, four of us have died leaving only myself. Should I say that I'm not broken hearted?(32) Chen Zhang-yu, from Guanyu County, offered the investigators this terrible image: Last spring the phenomenon of cannibalism appeared. Since Comrade Chao Wu-chu could not come up with any good ways of prohibiting it, he put out the order to secretly imprison those who seemed to be at death's door to combat the rumors. He secretly imprisoned 63 people from the entire country. Thirty-three died in prison.(33) The official report is thorough and detailed. It is classified neibu, restricted use only. To distribute it is to reveal state secrets. Presented publicly it would have been, especially if it had been published in the 1960s, a fundamental critique of the Great Leap, and a moral and political delegitimation of the Chinese Communist Party's claim to have improved the life of poor peasants. Even today the authorities regard it as dangerous. The official silence is another form of appropriation. It prevents public witnessing. It forges a secret history, an act of political resistance through keeping alive the memory of things denied.34 The totalitarian state rules by collective forgetting, by denying the collective experience of suffering, and thus creates a culture of terror. The absent image is also a form of political appropriation; public silence is perhaps more terrifying than being overwhelmed by public images of atrocity. Taken together the two modes of appropriation delimit the extremes in this cultural process.(35) Our critique of appropriations of suffering that do harm does not mean that no appropriations are valid. To conclude that would be to undermine any attempt to respond to human misery. It would be much more destructive than the problem we have identified; it would paralyze social action. We must draw upon the images of human suffering in order to identify human needs and to craft humane responses.

#### The alternative is silence and inaction which reinforces oppression and turns the critique

Blomley 94 (Nicholas K. Blomley – Professor of Geography at Simon Fraser University, 1994, “Activism and the Academy”, http://www.praxis-epress.org/CGR/CG\_Whole.pdf) //MD

So why the silence? Several reasons spring to mind. One likely option is that, for many, it is not an issue, given that many progressive academics seem to think that “activist” work is not **really** “intellectual” work. If people engage in “external” struggle, they do so “on their own time,” as citizens. Certainly this is something that tenure committees seem to believe. For example, my university carefully codes it as “community service” and weighs it as some small percentage of my total academic worth. That uncoupling of the categories “academic” and “activist” seems**, for me,**  difficult to sustain. I was struck by the view of one friend, who noted that she did not see herself as an academic occasionally engaged in activism, but **thought of herself** as an activist who happens to be an academic. It could also be said that such a distancing evades a special charge – what Noam Chomsky once termed the political “responsibility of intellectuals.” Intellectuals in the academy enjoy a special privilege that comes from political liberty, access to information, and freedom of expression. “For a privileged minority”, Chomsky (1969, 324) insists, “Western democracy provides the leisure, the facilities, and the training to seek the truth behind the veil of misrepresentation, ideology and class interest through which the events of current history are presented to us.” **To neglect that responsibility is,** at the very best, **to acquiesce to oppression.** There are more recent reasons for this self-silencing, perhaps, as we come to embrace a postmodern humility, and caution against speaking for the Other.Although such a prudence is laudable, it can also all too easily become a self-serving excuse for inaction. We certainly need to be alert to the perils of the academic colonization of community life, but we should also avoid any romantic assumptions of some authentically ‘pure’ field of activism. The activists I have encountered have all had complex, and occasionally self-serving, agendas. As we all occupy multiple subject positions, so activism is a field of contradiction and diversity.

### 2AC – Wilderson

#### Wilderson presents a naïve and undifferentiated view of racial relations in the US. The neg’s understanding of structural antagonism destroys the possibility for engaging the complexities necessary to tackle whiteness.

**Janani 2013**

“What's Wrong With the Term 'Person of Color',” <http://blackgirldangerous.org/new-blog/2013/3/21/whats-wrong-with-the-term-person-of-color/>

Black cultural theorist Frank Wilderson's Red, White, and Black argues that early US America was constructed in a racial triangle of Settler/Savage/Slave. White people, White men really, claimed this land and because they were able to use Black bodies for slave labor, they were able to launch a genocide on Indigenous peoples. That is, the dehumanization and exploitation of Black people scaffolded the erasure of Native peoples. This was the racial order set in place in the early formation of the US as a White supremacist state. This model leaves a whole lot of us out, of course. API folks, Latinos, Middle Eastern folks, and many more of us don't fit into that racial triangle. We're not White, and we bring our own histories of colonization. Many of us were colonized by the US itself, and White people have supremacy over all of us in various and different ways. But the fact is our land and resources were not stolen from us in this space and our ancestors were not brought here as slaves (with some important exceptions). That place-based specificity is what the term 'person of color' doesn't deal with adequately. As an identifier, 'person of color' can be slippery for a lot of politicized, non-Black, non-indigenous, non-White people in the US, for 2 reasons: 1) US/Western imperialism is so widespread that it even imposes its ways of doing racism on the rest of the world, and on people of color. For example, my family is upper caste, and that caste position is partly what enabled our immigration to the US. It also means that we're lighter-skinned South Asians (read: closer to Aryan British colonizers). Using the term 'POC' as my identifier rather than 'South Asian' or 'Desi' means I never unpack these non-Western racial systems that are also at play. 2) Many of our communities have benefited variously from racism. South Asian communities I've been involved in use antiblack racism as one strategy of assimilation. Because as White people have established, the easiest way to shore up your racial supremacy is to be antiblack, displayed in everything from microaggressions to employment discrimination to violence. We know that people of color can be racist towards each other. What I'm saying is that many of us also reap systematic advantages from the racist attitudes and structures that are held by our entire communities. How do we, as politicized people of color, acknowledge the very limits of the term 'people of color' and the way it can mask our actual racial situations? For example, why do we keep using the phrase 'communities of color' as targets of police and state violence when we primarily mean Black and Latino folks? What races are we trying to contain in the word 'brown'? Why are we afraid to point to the specificities of racism? Do we think it will divide us? Do we think we are really not capable of understanding and working from the different ways we experience racism? As long as the vocabularies of our struggle derive from the homogenizing actions of White supremacy, we will be that much farther from racial liberation.

#### **Anti-blackness cannot explain orientalist violence against Islam which preceded the Enlightenment**

Charoenying (citing Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Prof of Ethnic Studies, UC Berkeley) 8

(Timothy, Islamophobia & Anti-Blackness: A Genealogical Approach, http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/islamophobia-anti-blackness-genealogical-approach)

The year 1492 marked a major  turning point in the trajectory of Western Civilization. Elementary age children are taught this as the year Columbus famously crossed the Atlantic. An equally significant event that year, was the Spanish conquest of al-Andalus–a Moorish province on the southern Iberian peninsula established eight centuries earlier–and more importantly, the last major Muslim stronghold on the European continent. Critical race scholars have argued that these two events would not only shift the geopolitical balance of power from the Orient to the Occident, but fundamentally alter conceptions about religious and racial identity. According to Nelson Maldonado-Torres, of the University of California, Berkeley, the expulsion of the Moors from continental Europe marked a transition from an age of imperial relations between Christian and Muslim empires, to an age of European colonial expansion throughout the known world. The “discovery” of “godless” natives in the Americas would also inspire the great debates between Las Casas and Sepúlveda in 1550 on the nature of the human soul. Such a geopolitical and philosophical shift, Maldonado-Torres argues, would lead to a Eurocentric, re-categorization of humanity based upon religous—and ultimately racial—differences. Maldonado-Torres has proposed that anti-black racism is not simply an extension of some historical bias against blacks, but rather, is an amalgam of old-world Islamophobia linked to the history of the Iberian Peninsula, and to the notion of soulless beings embodied in popular conceptions about the indigenous natives of the Americas. These beliefs would contribute to an ideological basis for, and justification of, colonial conquests in the name of cultural and religious conversion, as well as pave the way for the enslavement and human trafficking of sub-Saharan Africans.

#### **Orientalist Otherization creates a dyad between faiths, making genocidal violence inevitable**

Batur, 7 (Pinar Batur, Professor of Sociology and Director of Environmental Studies at Vassar College; “Heart of Violence: Global Racism, War, and Genocide,” 2007, “Handbook of the Sociology of Racial and Ethnic Relations,” “Heart of Violence: Global Racism, War, and Genocide”)

Albert Memmi argued that “We have no idea what the colonized would have been without colonization, but we certainly see what happened as a result of it”(Memmi, 1965: 114). Events surrounding Iraq and Katrina provide three critical points regarding global racism. The first one is that segregation, exclusion, and genocide are closely related and facilitated by institutions employing the white racial frame to legitimize their ideologies and actions. The second one is the continuation of violence, either sporadically or systematically, with single- minded determination from segregation, to exclusion, to genocide. The third point is that legitimization and justification of violence is embedded in the resignation that global racism will not alter its course, and there is no way to challenge global racism. Together these three points facilitate the base for war and genocide In 1993, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Samuel P. Huntington racialized the future of global conflict by declaring that “the clash of civilizations will dominate global politics” (Huntington 1993: 22). He declared that the fault line will be drawn by crisis and bloodshed. Huntington’s end of ideology meant the West is now expected to confront the Confucian-Islamic “other.” Huntington intoned “Islam has bloody borders,” and he expected the West to develop cooperation among Christian brethren, while limiting the military strength of the “Confucian-Islamic” civilizations, by exploiting the conflicts within them. When the walls of communism fell, a new enemy was found in Islam, and loathing and fear of Islam exploded with September 11. The new color line means “we hate them not because of what they do, but because of who they are and what they believe in.”

Exclusive focus on blackness fails

**Perea 97** (Juan F. Perea – Professor of Law at Loyola University Chicago, 10/31/97, “The Black/White Binary Paradigm of Race: The Normal Science of American Racial Thought”, http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1605&context=californialawreview) //MD

One might object that I am distorting history by suggesting that slavery and the experience of Black Americans has not been of central importance in the formation of American society. I believe this objection misunderstands my argument. There can be no question, I think, that slavery and the mistreatment of Blacks in the United States were crucial building blocks of American society. 24 The fact that the text of the Constitution protects slavery in so many places demonstrates the importance of slavery in the foundation of the country.2 5 The constitutional, statutory and judicial attempts to create more equality for Blacks, imperfect as these all have been, correspond to the history of mistreatment of Blacks. My argument is not that this history should not be an important focus of racial studies. Rather, my argument is that the exclusive focus on the development of equality doctrines based solely on the experience of Blacks, and the exclusive focus of most scholarship on the Black-White relationship, constitutes a paradigm which obscures and prevents the understanding of other forms of inequality, those experienced by non-White, non-Black Americans. The Black/White binary paradigm, by defining only Blacks and Whites as relevant participants in civil rights discourse and struggle, tends to produce and promote the exclusion of other racialized peoples, including Latinos/as, Asian Americans and Native Americans, from this crucial discourse which affects us all. This exclusion is both the power and the stricture of the Black/White binary paradigm. Its power derives from the fact that a limited subject of inquiry makes possible the study of the Black-White relationship in extraordinary detail and with great insight. Its stricture, however, is that it has limited severely our understanding of how White racism operates with particularity against other racialized peoples. Furthermore, the binary paradigm renders the particular histories of other racialized peoples irrelevant to an understanding of the only racism-White racism against Blacks-that the paradigm defines to be important. This perceived irrelevance is why the history of Latinos/as, Asian Americans, and Native Americans is so frequently missing from the texts that structure our thinking about race.

Wilderson’s ontology makes fatalism inevitable and offers no alt

Bâ, 11 (teaches film at Portsmouth University (UK). He researches ‘race’, the ‘postcolonial’, diaspora, the transnational and film ‘genre’, African and Caribbean cinemas and film festivals)

(Saër Maty, The US Decentred, Cultural Studies Review, volume 17 number 2 September 2011)

In chapter nine, ‘“Savage” Negrophobia’, he writes: The philosophical anxiety of Skins is all too aware that through the Middle Passage, African culture became Black ‘style’ ... Blackness can be placed and displaced with limitless frequency and across untold territories, by whoever so chooses. Most important, there is nothing real Black people can do to either check or direct this process ... Anyone can say ‘nigger’ because anyone can be a ‘nigger’. (235)7 Similarly, in chapter ten, ‘A Crisis in the Commons’, Wilderson addresses the issue of ‘Black time’. Black is irredeemable, he argues, because, at no time in history had it been deemed, or deemed through the right historical moment and place. In other words, the black moment and place are not right because they are ‘the ship hold of the Middle Passage’: ‘the most coherent temporality ever deemed as Black time’ but also ‘the “moment” of no time at all on the map of no place at all’. (279) Not only does Pinho’s more mature analysis expose this point as preposterous (see below), I also wonder what Wilderson makes of the countless historians’ and sociologists’ works on slave ships, shipboard insurrections and/during the Middle Passage,8 or of groundbreaking jazz‐studies books on cross‐cultural dialogue like The Other Side of Nowhere (2004). Nowhere has another side, but once Wilderson theorises blacks as socially and ontologically dead while dismissing jazz as ‘belonging nowhere and to no one, simply there for the taking’, (225) there seems to be no way back. It is therefore hardly surprising that Wilderson ducks the need to provide a solution or alternative to both his sustained bashing of blacks and anti‐ Blackness.9 Last but not least, Red, White and Black ends like a badly plugged announcement of a bad Hollywood film’s badly planned sequel: ‘How does one deconstruct life? Who would benefit from such an undertaking? The coffle approaches with its answers in tow.’ (340)

#### **Turns the K – greatest comparative threat**

Miah quoting West in 94

(Malik Miah, Cornel West's Race Matters, May-June, http://www.solidarity-us.org/node/3079)

In the chapter, “Nihilism in Black America,” West observes “The liberal/conservative discussion conceals the most basic issue now facing Black America: the nihilistic threat to its very existence. This threat is not simply a matter of relative economic deprivation and political powerlessness -- though economic well-being and political clout are requisites for meaningful Black progress. It is primarily a question of speaking to the profound sense of psychological depression, personal worthlessness, and social despair so widespread in Black America.” (12-13) “Nihilism,” he continues, “is to be understood here not as a philosophic doctrine ... it is, far more, the lived experience of coping with a life of horrifying meaningless, hopelessness, and (most important) lovelessness.” (14) “Nihilism is not new in Black America. . . . In fact,” West explains,” the major enemy of Black survival in America has been and is neither oppression nor exploitation but rather the nihilistic Threat -- that is, loss of hope and absence of meaning. For as long as hope remains and meaning is preserved, the possibility of overcoming oppression stays alive. The self-fulfilling prophecy of the nihilistic threat is that without hope there can be no future, that without meaning there can be no struggle.” (14-15)

#### **Wilderson’s logic of social death replicates the violence of the middle passage – rejection is necessary to honor the dead**

Brown, 9 (Vincent Brown, professor of history and of African and African American Studies specializing in Atlantic Slavery; “Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery,” http://history.fas.harvard.edu/people/faculty/documents/brown-socialdeath.pdf)

But this was not the emphasis of Patterson’s argument. As a result, those he has inspired have often conflated his exposition of slaveholding ideology with a description of the actual condition of the enslaved. Seen as a state of being, the concept of social death is ultimately out of place in the political history of slavery. If studies of slavery would account for the outlooks and maneuvers of the enslaved as an important part of that history, scholars would do better to keep in view the struggle against alienation rather than alienation itself. To see social death as a productive peril entails a subtle but significant shift in perspective, from seeing slavery as a condition to viewing enslavement as a predicament, in which enslaved Africans and their descendants never ceased to pursue a politics of belonging, mourning, accounting, and regeneration. In part, the usefulness of social death as a concept depends on what scholars of slavery seek to explain—black pathology or black politics, resistance or attempts to remake social life? For too long, debates about whether there were black families took precedence over discussions of how such families were formed; disputes about whether African culture had “survived” in the Americas overwhelmed discussions of how particular practices mediated slaves’ attempts to survive; and scholars felt compelled to prioritize the documentation of resistance over the examination of political strife in its myriad forms. But of course, because slaves’ social and political life grew directly out of the violence and dislocation of Atlantic slavery, these are false choices. And we may not even have to choose between tragic and romantic modes of storytelling, for history tinged with romance may offer the truest acknowledgment of the tragedy confronted by the enslaved: it took heroic effort for them to make social lives. There is romance, too, in the tragic fact that although scholars may never be able to give a satisfactory account of the human experience in slavery, they nevertheless continue to try. If scholars were to emphasize the efforts of the enslaved more than the condition of slavery, we might at least tell richer stories about how the endeavors of the weakest and most abject have at times reshaped the world. The history of their social and political lives lies between resistance and oblivion, not in the nature of their condition but in their continuous struggles to remake it. Those struggles are slavery’s bequest to us.

#### Black social death theory ignores the plurality of life affirming possibilities available even to the fungible body and fails to explain the oppression of other groups

**Bales, 5** (Kevin Bales, co-founder of Free the Slaves, PhD in economics at the London School of Economics, MA in sociology from the University of Mississippi, “Understanding Global Slavery: A Reader,” p56-7)

The concept of social death highlights the essentialism and totality of enslavement, but it begs certain questions. The effect of enslavement on the life of the slave shares certain characteristics with the effect of immersion on the lives of inmates in total institutions, such as concentration camps. Elie Wiesel, for example, discussed the resocialization of inmates of Nazi concentration camps: the dissolution of their personalities, the fading from memory of their previous lives, the invention of a new being tailored to the demands and context of the camp.47 Like slavery, life in a concentration camp was a state marked by the loss of autonomy, a lack of free will, and subjugation to extreme and violent control. But could inmates in such camps be said to be socially dead? Slavery is, after all, a social and economic relationship between (at least) two people. It may be marked by an extreme imbalance of power, by ongoing exploitation, and by the potential for violence, but it remains a relationship understood and recognized (if not agreed to) by both parties. From historical slavery comes extensive accounts of the interdependence of slaves and masters and of the sometimes rich and caring relationships that grew between them.48 In Mauritania in 1997, David Hecht found an Afro-Mauritanian walking hand in hand with a White Moor dressed in matching robes. They told him that they were master and slave as well as best friends.49 It may be that the concept of social death works best when social life is defined as existing in a state of autonomy and free will, but autonomy varies enormously in human relationships. Slavery may occupy one end of the continuum, a relationship marked by the least amount of autonomy, but it remains a social relationship. Two other factors prompt questions about the concept of social death. The first is the difference in psychological and social adjustments to enslavement by people of different ages. Having interviewed a number of slaves, I find it worth noting that those who have been enslaved from a very early age often show an acceptance of slavery and a willingness to define themselves in relation to their masters. They tend to have a clear idea of their location in the social universe, as “belonging” to a certain family or individual slaveholder. Yet the state holds within itself a social and personal history, one that the slaves will easily recount when asked. For example, recall the reply given in chapter 2 by the bonded laborer in India who said, “We have always lived here. I do not know about before my grandfather, but he said we have always lived here.” People who are enslaved as adults, on the other hand, carry with them the memory of their former state. This memory often becomes the emblem of their desire for freedom. Having known some form of freedom, they are unlikely to accept a view of themselves as socially dead, but instead see themselves as abused, coerced, or controlled against their will. Given these self definitions, we can assert that neither those enslaved as children nor those enslaved as adults cease to be social beings.