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The AFF reifies identity and creates reactionary politics that fails to dispel exclusion

Bhambra ‘10

Gurminder K Bhambra, University of Warwick, and Victoria Margree, University of Brighton, “Identity Politics and the Need for a ‘Tomorrow,” academia.edu

2 The Reification of Identity

We wish to turn now to a related problem within identity politics that can be best described as the problem of the reification of politicised identities. Brown (1995) positions herself within the debate about identity politics by seeking to elaborate on “the wounded character of politicised identity’s desire” (ibid: 55); that is, the problem of “wounded attachments” whereby a claim to identity becomes over-invested in its own historical suffering and perpetuates its injury through its refusal to give up its identity claim. Brown’s argument is that where politicised identity is founded upon an experience of exclusion, for example, **exclusion** itself **becomes perversely valorised** in the continuance of that identity. In such cases, group activity operates to **maintain and reproduce** the identity created by injury (exclusion) **rather than** – and indeed, often in opposition to – **resolving the injurious** **social relations** **that generated claims around that identity in the first place**. If things have to have a history in order to have a future, then the problem becomes that of how history is constructed in order to make the future. To the extent that, for Brown, identity is associated primarily with (historical) injury, the future for that identity is then **already determined by the injury “as both bound to the history that produced it and as a reproach to the present which embodies that history**” (ibid 1995: 73). Brown’s suggestion that as it is not possible to undo the past, the focus backwards entraps the identity in reactionary practices, is, we believe, too stark and we will pursue this later in the article. Politicised identity, Brown maintains, “emerges and obtains its unifying coherence through the politicisation of exclusion from an ostensible universal, as a protest against exclusion” (ibid: 65). Its continuing existence **requires** both **a belief in** the **legitimacy of the universal ideal** (for example, ideals of opportunity, and reward in proportion to effort) and enduring exclusion from those ideals. Brown draws upon Nietzsche in arguing that such identities, produced in **reaction** to conditions of disempowerment and inequality, then **become invested in their own impotence through practices of**, for example, **reproach, complaint, and revenge**. These are “reactions” in the Nietzschean sense since they are s ubstitutes for actions or can be seen as negative forms of action. Rather than acting to remove the cause(s) of suffering, that suffering is instead ameliorated (to some extent) through “the **establishment of suffering** as the measure of social virtue” (ibid 1995: 70), and is compensated for by the **vengeful pleasures of recrimination**. Such practices, she argues, stand in sharp distinction to – in fact, provide obstacles to – **practices that would seek to dispel the conditions of exclusion.** Brown casts the dilemma discussed above in terms of a choice between past and future, and adapting Nietzsche, exhorts the adoption of a (collective) will that would become **the “redeemer of history”** (ibid: 72) through its focus on the possibilities of creating different futures. As Brown reads Nietzsche, the one thing that the will cannot exert its power over is the past, the “it was”. Confronted with its impotence with respect to the events of the past, the will is threatened with becoming simply **an “angry spectator”** mired in bitter recognition of its own helplessness. The one hope for the will is that it may, instead, achieve a kind of mastery over that past such that, although “what has happened” cannot be altered, the past can be denied **the power** of continuing to determine the present and future. It is only this **focus on the future**, Brown continues, and the capacity to make a future in the face of human frailties and injustices that **spares us** **from** a rancorous **decline into despair**. Identity politics structured by ressentiment – that is, by suffering caused by past events – can **only** break out of the cycle of “slave morality” by remaking the present **against the terms of the past**, a remaking that requires a “forgetting” of that past. An act of liberation, of self-affi rmation, this “forgetting of the past” requires an “overcoming” of the past that offers identity in relationship to suffering, in favour of a future in which identity is to be defi ned differently. In arguing thus, Brown’s work becomes aligned with a position that sees the way forward for emancipatory politics as residing in a movement away from a “politics of memory” (Kilby 2002: 203) that is committed to articulating past injustices and suffering. While we agree that investment in identities premised upon suffering can function as an obstacle to alleviating the causes of that suffering, we believe that Brown’s argument as outlined is problematic. First, following Kilby (2002), we share a concern about any turn to the future that is fi gured as a complete abandonment of the past. This is because for those who have suffered oppression and exclusion, the injunction to give up articulating a pain that is still felt may seem cruel and impossible to meet. We would argue instead that the “turn to the future” that theorists such as Brown and Grosz call for, to revitalise feminism and other emancipatory politics, need not be conceived of as a brute rejection of the past. Indeed, Brown herself recognises the problems involved here, stating that [since] erased histories and historical invisibility are themselves such integral elements of the pain inscribed in most subjugated identities [then] the counsel of forgetting, at least in its unreconstructed Nietzschean form, seems inappropriate if not cruel (1995: 74). She implies, in fact, that the demand exerted by those in pain may be no more than the demand to exorcise that pain through recognition: “all that such pain may long for – more than revenge – is the chance to be heard into a certain release, recognised into self-overcoming, incited into possibilities for triumphing over, and hence, losing itself” (1995: 74-75). Brown wishes to establish the political importance of remembering “painful” historical events but **with a crucial caveat**: that the purpose of remembering pain is to enable its release. The challenge then, according to her, is to create a political culture in which this project does not mutate into one of **remembering pain for its own sake**. Indeed, if Brown feels that this may be “a pass where we ought to part with Nietzsche” (1995: 74), then Freud may be a more suitable companion. Since his early work with Breuer, Freud’s writings have suggested the (only apparent) paradox that remembering is often a condition of forgetting. The hysterical patient, who is doomed to repeat in symptoms and compulsive actions a past she cannot adequately recall, is helped to remember that traumatic past in order then to move beyond it: she must remember in order to forget and to forget in order to be able to live in the present.7 This model seems to us to be particularly helpful for the dilemma articulated by both Brown (1995) and Kilby (2002), i nsisting as it does that “forgetting” (at least, loosening the hold of the past, in order to enable the future) cannot be achieved without first remembering the traumatic past. Indeed, this would seem to be similar to the message of Beloved, whose central motif of haunting (is the adult woman, “Beloved”, Sethe’s murdered child returned in spectral form?) dramatises the tendency of the unanalysed traumatic past to keep on returning, constraining, as it does so, the present to be like the past, and thereby, disallowing the possibility of a future different from that past. As Sarah Ahmed argues in her response to Brown, “in order to break the seal of the past, in order to move away from attachments that are hurtful, we must first bring them into the realm of political action” (2004: 33). We would add that the task of analysing the traumatic past, and thus opening up the possibility of political action, is unlikely to be achievable by individuals on their own, but that this, instead, **requires** **a “community” of participants** dedicated to the serious epistemic work of remembering and interpreting the objective social conditions that made up that past and continue in the present. The “pain” of historical injury is not simply an individual psychological issue, but stems from **objective social conditions which perpetuate**, for the most part, forms of **injustice and inequality into the present.**

This reactionary impulse is the condition of possibility for all violence—we must transcend exclusive identities and victimization.

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Dianne, Professor of Philosophy at McMaster University, The Violence of Victimhood

These are responses to suffering that may at the same time prevent the conditions that lead to further suffering, opening **possibilities rather than burning bridges,** crossing over to the other, like the acrobat refusing to look at "the separation." These individuals and groups reject the worldview of the victim, literally or figuratively laying down their arms. This is not a passive refusal but an act of political will, ignited by the very pragmatic need for a bearable life. To lay down our arms means **to refuse the dictated terms of the fight**, **exit the ring**, **reject the means of defense provided**. While this appears to leave us powerless or defenseless—the other cheek turned in a display of utter passivity—it only does so if we haven't rejected the binary terms on which the power struggle is waged. **It is not the power of the sword that the victimized need**, **or the power of a moral authority** granted to the victim, but the power of political will—a power that can arise spontaneously out of shared vulnerability. It may be an act of civil disobedience, dissent, or the slow, patient work of changing attitudes—of "reviving the person inside the suit of armor"°7—in any case, the operative principle is a refusal to march blindly to the drummer's beat without reflection**, collective deliberation**, or judgment. This is the political work that we must never "neutralize": the cultivation of civil coexistence—**of communities** of fate—**that refuse violent solutions to conflict. To prevent the conditions that lead to war**—**and** the **normalization of** politics as **violence**—we need to elaborate alternatives that embrace neither consensus and unity as **Utopian peace nor dissensus and conflict** as violence. As Balibar puts it, we have to defend politics against "the twin enemies of extreme violence and consensus."00 Obedience could be worse than intolerance in situations of rising political unrest, and disobedience more important than reconciliation. In a discussion of what peoples of the former Yugoslavia need, for example, Boris Buden states unequivocally that it isn't truth commissions or reconciliation programs. The region has undergone a "depoliticization” that no truth of the past will eradicate. To repoliticize would mean to "invent a new form of political solidarity" that transcends their national, ethnic, and religious identities—a public life that includes political argument and contestation,43 not merely, as Buruma puts it, "the soothing rhetoric of healing.'"11 Disagreement, disobedience, conflict— these are indispensable ingredients in the practical work of politics and its necessary conditions. This claim does not contradict the demand to lay down one's arms. Conflict need not lead to violence. But to be vigilant against the incursion of a politics defined by the terms of war requires above all a vigilance against becoming immune to empathy and its effects. For Remarque's Paul Baumer, restoring his enemy to humanity occurs too late. We need to ward off the process of dehumanizing one's enemy before it begins. **We are already too late** **when identities are formed on the basis of** political **ideologies and** when **victims are granted an unquestioned moral authority**. To prevent the conditions of war, we must learn to see ourselves through the eyes of others.

Identity is only ever a confirmation of contingent relationships, not metaphysics. A politics that places a shared commitment to remedying injustice can avoid securitizing difference and reactionary politics that culminate in passivity.

Bhambra ‘10

Gurminder K Bhambra, University of Warwick, and Victoria Margree, University of Brighton, “Identity Politics and the Need for a ‘Tomorrow”

1 Exclusionary Politics

It is **inexcusable** to build analyses of historical experience around exclusions, exclusions that stipulate, for instance, that only women can understand feminine experience, only Jews can understand Jewish suffering, only formerly colonial subjects can understand colonial experience (Said 1993: 35). The idea of a politics underpinned by solidarities based on “sameness” has a long history in the critical tradition. Marx’s initial conceptualisation of the standpoint of the proletariat (albeit, significantly different from those of subsequent developments of standpoint epistemology) has been used by feminist theorists as well as those arguing for a post-colonial perspective in terms of the subaltern, and, more recently, for a dalit standpoint (Hartsock 1984, Guha 1983, Rege 1998, 2000). However, while using identity as the basis of political action has been seen to be powerful (and effective), it has also increasingly become seen as problematic. The exclusionary politics of movements such as **black** **power**, much **radical and lesbian feminism**, and latterly, movements for **ethnic purity** and/or religious integrity, for example, have yielded a deep concern with the programme of separation and isolationism that such movements are often seen to be based upon. For many critics, more troubling still has been the usually accompanying claim that only women can be feminists, or only black people can work against racism, or only dalits against caste oppression, and so on. A position which states that **only those who have experienced an injustice can understand and thus act effectively** up**on** **it** seems to rest upon an **essentialist theory of identity** which assumes that the possibility of knowledge about particular situations is restricted to one’s possession of the relevant (seemingly) irreducible traits (being female, black, dalit, and so forth). Arguably, one consequence of these separatist tendencies is that they perpetuate the individualist fallacy that oppressive social relationships can be reformed **by particular subjects** **without** the **broader** **agreement** of others who, together, constitute the **social relations** within which the injustices are embedded. But even where the limitations of a purely exclusionary form of identity politics are recognised, many theorists continue, nevertheless, to argue for a form of “strategic essentialism” (Fuss 1989, Spivak 2003) suggesting that where structures of inequality overlap with categories of identity, then a politics based on those identities is both liberatory and necessary (Bramen 2002). In our view, however, the claim for a “strategic essentialism” remains fraught with problems, for at least three reasons. First, it establishes an epistemological division between those who assert a particular identity in advancing political claims and the observer who is sympathetic to those claims but “recognises” the limitations of basing such claims on a putative identity.1 There is something highly problematic in claiming to support a political movement from the basis of being able to “see” something that the individuals constituting the movement do not see, and in then not engaging with them with regard to this. This sets the observer up in a privileged position vis-à-vis other members of the movement and thus makes solidarity difficult to achieve.2 Second, the claim for “strategic essentialism” posits solidarity, that is, collective identification around a particular standpoint, as a prerequisite for collective action to address perceived injustices. This is as against recognising that solidarities can also emerge through the actions taken to correct particular injustices and can include those who recognise the injustice as the reason for action while not directly being disadvantaged themselves. Third, the assertion of “strategic essentialism” generally occurs in the context of claiming justice through an appeal to the wider community but with no explanation as to why the wider community ought to honour this claim for justice, especially when it is often not deemed possible for them to constitute a part of the movement itself. There is a requirement of inclusivity then – in terms of demanding acceptance of the validity of the claims made – at the same time, as an assertion of its impossibility across what are posited as irreducible, essential traits (for a fuller discussion see Holmwood 1995). The arguments of this paper start out from a broad agreement that developing a politics from the basis of occupying a **particular social position** or having a **specific** (singular) **identity** is problematic for the reasons identified above, as well as for covertly legitimating – “absolving and forgiving”, in Said’s (1993: 35) words – the **ignorance of those whose understanding and actions are** necessary **for countering social injustices**. It has to be recognised that issues exist between people and are not in people: that is, problems of social injustice occur in the relationships through which subjectivities are produced and thus, all those implicated in those relationships are involved in their address. For example, sexism is not a problem for women to deal with alone, but is a problem situated in the contemporary relationships of **social and material inequalities** and requires mutual engagement for its address. This is an address which we consider is best served by the solidarities generated as a consequence of the activities around perceived injustices (that is, solidarities generated through the political movements of people working towards equality, justice) as opposed to those activities having to rely on **assumed preexisting solidarities** (that is, being female, gay, black, dalit, etc). This is **not** an argument for movements against specific injustices or inequalities to be subsumed within a wider (say, socialist) movement but, rather, an argument for movements to be **conceived** inclusively as movements where membership is not restricted to those presumed to suffer the injustice or inequality. As such, a question arises as to what would happen if the “identity” in “identity politics” were rethought along the lines of the solidarities that are generated around the address of injustices rather than the solidarity that is presumed to ensue from being the victim of an injustice. Defending “identity” against a variety of critiques from the academic left, Bramen (2002) asserts that identity can also be productive in its construction of moral and other communities. Our question, however, would be why such communities – sites of resistance and the discovery of political agency – need to be constructed around **essentialising rhetoric and restricted** (this is the implication) to those who suffer the injustice. Indeed, Bramen herself recognises that “identity politics certainly has its limitations, primarily in terms of prescribing modes of behaviour that pressure individuals to conform to certain standards of authenticity” (2002: 7-8). And this surely is a real problem; that essentialist rhetoric establishes belonging to a community, and thus identity, on the basis of presumed shared attributes or experiences that are imagined to be irreducible. As such, not only may the **community itself become oppressive** to those who do not share those attributes, or who wish to articulate experiences that differ from those expressed by the majority, but the community itself may be weakened in its resistance to **other forms of oppression** by the distraction of its **internal policing against difference.** We suggest that **alternative models of identity and community are required** from those put forward by essentialist theories, and that these are offered by the work of two theorists, Satya M ohanty and Lynn Hankinson Nelson. Mohanty’s ([1993] 2000) post-positivist, realist theorisation of identity suggests a way through the impasses of essentialism, while avoiding the excesses of the postmodernism that Bramen, among others, derides as a proposed alternative to identity politics. For Mohanty ([1993] 2000), identities must be understood as **theoretical constructions** that enable subjects to read the world in particular ways; as such, substantial claims about identity are, in fact, implicit explanations of the social world and its constitutive relations of power. Experience – that from which identity is usually thought to derive – **is not something that simply occurs**, or announces its meaning and signifi cance in a self-evident fashion: rather, experience is always a work of interpretation that is collectively produced (Scott 1991). Mohanty’s work resonates with that of Nelson (1993), who similarly insists upon the communal nature of meaning or knowledge-making. Rejecting both foundationalist views of knowledge and the postmodern alternative which announces the “death of the subject” and the impossibility of epistemology, Nelson argues instead that, it is not individuals who are the agents of epistemology, but **communities**. Since it is not possible for an individual to know something that another individual could not also (possibly) know, it must be that the ability to make sense of the world proceeds from shared conceptual frameworks and practices. Thus, it is the community that is the generator and repository of knowledge. Bringing Mohanty’s work on identity as theoretical construction together with Nelson’s work on epistemological communities therefore suggests that, “identity” is one of the knowledges that is produced and enabled for and by individuals in the context of the communities within which they exist. The post-positivist reformulation of “experience” is necessary here as it privileges understandings that emerge through the processing of experience in the context of **negotiated premises** about the world, over experience itself producing self-evident knowledge (self-evident, however, only to the one who has “had” the experience). This distinction is crucial for, if it is not the experience of, for example, sexual discrimination that “makes” one a feminist, but rather, the paradigm through which one attempts to **understand acts of sexual discrimination**, then it is not necessary to have actually had the experience oneself in order **to make the identification “feminist”**. If being a “feminist” is not a given fact of a particular social (and/or biological) location – that is, being designated “female” – but is, in Mohanty’s terms, an “achievement” – that is, something worked towards through a process of analysis and interpretation – then two implications follow. First, that not all women are feminists. Second, that feminism is something that is “achievable” by men.3 While it is accepted that experiences are not merely theoretical or conceptual constructs which can be transferred from one person to another with transparency, we think that there is something **politically self-defeating** about insisting that one can only understand an experience (or then comment upon it) if one has actually had the experience oneself. As Rege (1998) argues, to privilege knowledge claims on the basis of direct experience, or then on claims of authenticity, can lead to a **narrow identity politics** that **limits** the **emancipatory potential** of the movements or organisations making such claims. Further, if it is not possible to understand an experience one has not had, then **what point is there in listening to each other?** Following Said, such a view seems to authorise privileged groups to **ignore** the **discourses of disadvantaged ones, or,** we would add, to **place exclusive responsibility for addressing injustice with the oppressed themselves**. Indeed, as Rege suggests, reluctance to speak about the experience of others has led to an assumption on the part of some white feminists that “confronting racism is the sole responsibility of black feminists”, just as today “issues of caste become the sole responsibility of the dalit women’s organisations” (Rege 1998). Her argument for a dalit feminist standpoint, then, is not made in terms solely of the experiences of dalit women, but rather a call for others to “educate themselves about the histories, the preferred social relations and utopias and the struggles of the marginalised” (Rege 1998). This, she argues, allows “**their cause**” to become “**our cause**”, not as a form of appropriation of “their” struggle, but through the transformation of subjectivities that enables a recognition that **“their” struggle is also “our” struggle**. Following Rege, we suggest that social processes can facilitate the understanding of experiences, thus making those experiences the possible object of analysis and action for all, while recognising that they are not **equally** available or **powerful for all subjects**.4 Understandings of identity as **given and essential**, then, we suggest, need to give way to understandings which accept them as **socially constructed** and **contingent** on the work of particular, overlapping, epistemological communities that agree that this or that is a viable and recognised identity. Such an understanding avoids what Bramen identifi es as the postmodern excesses of “post-racial” theory, where in this “world without borders (“racism is real, but race is not”) one can be anything one wants to be: a black kid in Harlem can be Croatian-American, if that is what he chooses, and a white kid from Iowa can be Korean-American” (2002: 6). Unconstrained choice is not possible to the extent that, as Nelson (1993) argues, the concept of the epistemological community requires any individual knowledge claim to sustain itself in relation to standards of evaluation that already exist and that are social. Any claim to identity, then, would have to be recognised by particular communities as valid in order to be successful. This further shifts the discussion beyond the limitations of essentialist accounts of identity by recognising that the communities that confer identity are constituted through their shared epistemological frameworks and not necessarily by shared characteristics of their members conceived of as irreducible.5 Hence, the epistemological community that enables us to identify ourselves as feminists is one that is built up out of a broadly agreed upon paradigm for interpreting the world and the relations between the sexes: it is not one that is premised upon possessing the physical attribute of being a woman or upon sharing the same experiences. Since at least the 1970s, a key aspect of black and/or postcolonial feminism has been to identify the problems associated with such assumptions (see, for discussion, Rege 1998, 2000). We believe that it is the identification of injustice which calls forth action and thus allows for the construction of healthy solidarities. 6 While it is accepted that there may be important differences between those who recognise the injustice of disadvantage while being, in some respects, its beneficiary (for example, men, white people, brahmins), and those who recognise the injustice from the position of being at its effect (women, ethnic minorities, dalits), we would privilege the importance of a **shared political commitment to equality** as the basis for negotiating such differences. Our argument here is that thinking through identity claims from the basis of understanding them as epistemological communities **militates against exclusionary politics** (and its associated problems) since the emphasis comes to be on participation in a shared epistemological and political project as **opposed to** notions of **fixed characteristics** – the focus is on the activities individuals participate in rather than the characteristics they are deemed to possess. Identity is thus defined further as a function of activity located in particular social locations (understood as the complex of objective forces that influence the conditions in which one lives) rather than of nature or origin (Mohanty 1995: 109-10). As such, the communities that enable identity should not be conceived of as “imagined” since they are produced by very real actions, practices and projects.

## case

Trend lines prove the status quo form of political engagement works—opression is not over, but it definitively disproves the necessity of radical departure from the squo

Zach Beauchamp, Think Progress, 12/11/13, 5 Reasons Why 2013 Was The Best Year In Human History, thinkprogress.org/security/2013/12/11/3036671/2013-certainly-year-human-history/

Racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination remain, without a doubt, extraordinarily powerful forces. The statistical and experimental evidence is overwhelming — this irrefutable proof of widespread discrimination against African-Americans, for instance, should put the “racism is dead” fantasy to bed.

Yet the need to combat discrimination denial shouldn’t blind us to the good news. Over the centuries, humanity has made extraordinary progress in taming its hate for and ill-treatment of other humans on the basis of difference alone. Indeed, it is very likely that we live in the least discriminatory era in the history of modern civilization. It’s not a huge prize given how bad the past had been, but there are still gains worth celebrating.

Go back 150 years in time and the point should be obvious. Take four prominent groups in 1860: African-Americans were in chains, European Jews were routinely massacred in the ghettos and shtetls they were confined to, women around the world were denied the opportunity to work outside the home and made almost entirely subordinate to their husbands, and LGBT people were invisible. The improvements in each of these group’s statuses today, both in the United States and internationally, are incontestable.

On closer look, **we have reason to believe the happy trends are likely to continue**. Take racial discrimination. In 2000, Harvard sociologist Lawrence Bobo penned a comprehensive assessment of the data on racial attitudes in the United States. He found a “national consensus” on the ideals of racial equality and integration. “A nation once comfortable as a deliberately segregationist and racially discriminatory society has not only abandoned that view,” Bobo writes, “but now overtly positively endorses the goals of racial integration and equal treatment. There is no sign whatsoever of retreat from this ideal, despite events that many thought would call it into question. **The magnitude, steadiness, and breadth of this change should be lost on no one.”**

The norm against overt racism has gone global. In her book on the international anti-apartheid movement in the 1980s, Syracuse’s Audie Klotz says flatly that “the illegitimacy of white minority rule led to South Africa’s persistent diplomatic, cultural, and economic isolation.” The belief that racial discrimination could not be tolerated had become so widespread, Klotz argues, that it united the globe — including governments that had strategic interests in supporting South Africa’s whites — in opposition to apartheid. In 2011, 91 percent of respondents in a sample of 21 diverse countries said that equal treatment of people of different races or ethnicities was important to them.

Racism obviously survived both American and South African apartheid, albeit in more subtle, insidious forms. “The death of Jim Crow racism has left us in an uncomfortable place,” Bobo writes, “a state of laissez-faire racism” where racial discrimination and disparities still exist, but support for the kind of aggressive government policies needed to address them is racially polarized. **But there’s reason to hope that’ll change as well**: two massive studies of the political views of younger Americans by my TP Ideas colleagues, John Halpin and Ruy Teixeira, found that millenials were significantly more racially tolerant and supportive of government action to address racial disparities than the generations that preceded them. Though I’m not aware of any similar research of on a global scale, it’s hard not to imagine they’d find similar results, suggesting that we should have hope that the power of racial prejudice may be waning.

The story about gender discrimination is very similar: after the feminist movement’s enormous victories in the 20th century, structural sexism still shapes the world in profound ways, but the cause of gender equality is making progress. In 2011, 86 percent of people in a diverse 21 country sample said that equal treatment on the basis of gender was an important value. The U.N.’s Human Development Report’s Gender Inequality Index — a comprehensive study of reproductive health, social empowerment, and labor market equity — saw a 20 percent decline in observable gender inequalities from 1995 to 2011. IMF data show consistent global declines in wage disparities between genders, labor force participation, and educational attainment around the world. While enormous inequality remains, 2013 is looking to be the worst year for sexism in history.

Finally, we’ve made astonishing progress on sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination — largely in the past 15 years. At the beginning of 2003, zero Americans lived in marriage equality states; by the end of 2013, 38 percent of Americans will. Article 13 of the European Community Treaty bans discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, and, in 2011, the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution committing the council to documenting and exposing discrimination on orientation or identity grounds around the world. The public opinion trends are positive worldwide: all of the major shifts from 2007 to 2013 in Pew’s “acceptance of homosexuality” poll were towards greater tolerance, and young people everywhere are more open to equality for LGBT individuals than their older peers.

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Once again, these victories are partial and by no means inevitable. Racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination aren’t just “going away” on their own. They’re losing their hold on us because people are working to change other people’s minds and because governments are passing laws aimed at promoting equality. Positive trends don’t mean the problems are close to solved, and certainly aren’t excuses for sitting on our hands.

That’s true of everything on this list. The fact that fewer people are dying from war and disease doesn’t lessen the moral imperative to do something about those that are; the fact that people are getting richer and safer in their homes isn’t an excuse for doing more to address poverty and crime.

But too often, the worst parts about the world are treated as inevitable, the prospect of radical victory over pain and suffering dismissed as utopian fantasy. The overwhelming force of the evidence shows that to be false. As best we can tell, the reason humanity is getting better is because humans have decided to make the world a better place. We consciously chose to develop lifesaving medicine and build freer political systems; we’ve passed laws against workplace discrimination and poisoning children’s minds with lead.

So far, these choices have more than paid off. It’s up to us to make sure they continue to.

The aff’s totalizing rhetoric belies their benign clarification – society’s problems are specific and definable social phenomena – grouping them under a single concept is counterproductive

Annalee Newitz, journalist, Ph.D., UC Berkely, 1997, White Trash: Race and Class in America, White Savagary and Humiliation, or a New Consciousness in the Media, p. 149-150

**Rather than offering a way of understanding whiteness** as a form of identity powerfully effected by oppressive social practices, the **new abolitionists propose "abolition**" (i.e., destruction) **of an undefined white self-hood**, and "treason" to it, as a solution to the problems of social injustice. **Because** whiteness remains undefined **in this equation, one is left wondering whether to abolish white people themselves, or the social practices associated with white racism and social domination.** We are asked to demonize whiteness rather thantodeconstruct it. Although critics like Theodore Allen and Alexander Saxton have both described the way "whiteness" as a racial category was invented during the nineteenth century in order to consolidate American nationalism and pro-slavery agendas,20 "**whiteness**" in the new abolitionism **becomes the source** (rather than an effect) **of all that is wrong with American society. Abolishing whiteness** which seems to mean eliminating both whites and white power**suggests social problems are best solved through prejudicial destruction, rather than** critical self-consciousness or **progressive reconstruction**. The strategy of new abolitionism resembles nothing so much as indie rock's "underground man," for its theorists themselves become "superior" at their critical work on the basis of their ability to critique themselves before anyone else does.

The new abolitionism offers a suggestive account of racist society, but its solution is no more helpful than indie rocker Beck's ironic request that he be killed, or images of white-on-white torture. **Social problems like unequally distributed resources, class privilege, irrational prejudice, and tyrannical bureaucracy which we associate with whiteness are just that associated with whiteness**, particularly at this point in history. **They are not essential to whiteness itself**, any more than laziness and enslavement are essential to blackness, or any more than smarminess and incoherence are essential to femaleness. **Informing whites that their identities are the problem,** rather than various social practices**, makes it sound like whites should die rather than that white racism should**. The ideologies of white power which make some white people socially destructive are the symptoms of American inequality and injustice, not its principle causes. There is, in the end, an alarming sense of hopelessness, brutality, and nihilism in any political strategy like the new abolitionism that takes as its fundamental goal the destruction of a highly generalized, demonized "enemy." interestingly, even Noel Ignatiev seems to be acknowledging this possibility in his first book, *How the Irish Became White*, which is an historical treatment of how Irish immigrants to the U.S. were gradually assimilated into a racist U.S. nationalism.21 Here he is clearly sensitive to the changing historical meanings of whiteness and its status as a contestable, constructed identity.

Ultimately, I am concerned that the new abolitionism may offer whites a way of having their cake and eating it too, at least within the context of anti-racism. For **there is a danger that** reading about or enacting the **new abolitionism might function something like** the **spectacle** of The Sadist does **for a white audience. White self-representations which emphasize white self-punishment** and degradation **white abolition**, if you will **absolve whites of their guilt without explicitly suggesting** that **they do more than criticize themselves**. After all, we might ask, what would be the "praxis" of the new abolitionism? Its **proponents leave the "practice" part of "praxis"** pretty **open-ended** in their writings. I am not denying that anti-racist consciousness can change the world for the better. But is the new abolitionism the theory by which we want to conceive of our anti-racist acts? Oftentimes, **it seems to suggest** that **the only progressive task available to white anti-racists is** a kind of **contemplative self-destruction**. **Such a strategy will invite whites to confess publicly to historical and present misdeeds**often **in a way which creates a spectacle of** their **humiliation but little more. In a worst-case scenario**, as many have pointed out, **the spectacle** of white humiliation in new abolitionist criticism **might invite whites to continue** their **condescension towards non-whites**, since non-whites can't criticize whites nearly as fast as whites can. **In a luckier scenario, it** may **leave whites so humiliated that they become incapable of forging** the kinds of **interracial bonds of solidarity, friendship, and love necessary to abolish racist practice.**

Their roll of the ballot fails – hegemonic politics is inevitable

Wohlforth 9

professor of government at Dartmouth (William, “Unipolarity, Status Competition, and Great Power War,” World Affairs, January, project muse)

The upshot is a near scholarly consensus that unpolarity’s consequences for great power conflict are indeterminate and that a power shift resulting in a return to bipolarity or multipolarity will not raise the specter of great power war. This article questions the consensus on two counts. First, I show that it depends crucially on a dubious assumption about human motivation. Prominent theories of war are based on the assumption that people are mainly motivated by the instrumental pursuit of tangible ends such as physical security and material prosperity. This is why such theories seem irrelevant to interactions among great powers in an international environment that diminishes the utility of war for the pursuit of such ends. Yet we know that people are motivated by a great many noninstrumental motives, not least by concerns regarding their social status. 3 As John Harsanyi noted, “Apart from economic payoffs, social status (social rank) seems to be the most important incentive and motivating force of social behavior.”4 This proposition rests on much firmer scientific ground now than when Harsanyi expressed it a generation ago, as cumulating research shows that humans appear to be hardwired for sensitivity to status and that relative standing is a powerful and independent motivator of behavior.5 [End Page 29] Second, I question the dominant view that status quo evaluations are relatively independent of the distribution of capabilities. If the status of states depends in some measure on their relative capabilities, and if states derive utility from status, then different distributions of capabilities may affect levels of satisfaction, just as different income distributions may affect levels of status competition in domestic settings. 6 Building on research in psychology and sociology, I argue that even capabilities distributions among major powers foster ambiguous status hierarchies, which generate more dissatisfaction and clashes over the status quo. And the more stratified the distribution of capabilities, the less likely such status competition is. Unipolarity thus generates far fewer incentives than either bipolarity or multipolarity for direct great power positional competition over status. Elites in the other major powers continue to prefer higher status, but in a unipolar system they face comparatively weak incentives to translate that preference into costly action. And the absence of such incentives matters because social status is a positional good—something whose value depends on how much one has in relation to others.7 “If everyone has high status,” Randall Schweller notes, “no one does.”8 While one actor might increase its status, all cannot simultaneously do so. High status is thus inherently scarce, and competitions for status tend to be zero sum.9

Trading a narrative/performance for the ballot commodifies identity—victory subverts the 1ac’s radical intentions by becoming an exemplar of culture under indictment.

Coughlin 95

Anne, associate Professor of Law, Vanderbilt Law School, REGULATING THE SELF: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PERFORMANCES IN OUTSIDER SCHOLARSHIP, 81 Va. L. Rev. 1229)

Although Williams is quick to detect insensitivity and bigotry in remarks made by strangers, colleagues, and friends, her taste for irony fails her when it comes to reflection on her relationship with her readers and the material **benefits** that **her autobiographical performances have earned** for her. n196 Perhaps **Williams should be more inclined to thank**, rather than reprimand, her editors for behaving as readers of autobiography invariably do. When we examine this literary faux pas - the incongruity between Williams's condemnation of her editors and the professional benefits their publication secured her - we detect yet another contradiction between the **outsiders' use of autobiography** and their **desire to transform culture radically**. Lejeune's characterization of autobiography as a "contract" reminds us that autobiography is a lucrative commodity. In our culture, members of the reading public **avidly consume** personal stories, n197 which surely explains why first-rate law journals and academic presses have been eager **to market outsider narratives**. No matter how unruly the self that it records, an autobiographical performance **transforms that self** into a form of "**property in a moneyed economy**" n198 and into a **valuable intellectual** [\*1283] **asset** in an academy that requires its members to publish. n199 Accordingly, we must be skeptical of the assertion that the outsiders' splendid publication record is itself sufficient evidence of the success of their endeavor. n200 Certainly, publication of a best seller may transform its author's life, with the resulting commercial success and academic renown. n201 As one critic of autobiography puts it, "failures do not get published." n202 While writing a successful autobiography may be momentous for the individual author, this **success** has **a limited impact on culture**. Indeed, the transformation of outsider authors into "**success stories**" **subverts outsiders' radical intentions** by constituting them as exemplary participants **within contemporary culture**, **willing to market even themselves** **to** literary and **academic consumers**. n203 What good does this transformation do for outsiders who are less fortunate and less articulate than middle-class law professors? n204 **Although they style themselves** cultural **critics**, the [\*1284] storytellers generally do not reflect on the meaning of their own commercial success, nor ponder its entanglement with the cultural values they claim to resist. Rather, for the most part, they seem content simply to take advantage of the peculiarly American license, identified by Professor Sacvan Bercovitch, "to have your dissent and make it too." n205

## T stuff

Your decision should answer the resolutional question: Is the enactment of topical action better than the status quo or a competitive option?

1. “Resolved” before a colon reflects a legislative forum

Army Officer School ‘04

(5-12, “# 12, Punctuation – The Colon and Semicolon”, http://usawocc.army.mil/IMI/wg12.htm)

The colon introduces the following: a.  A list, but only after "as follows," "the following," or a noun for which the list is an appositive: Each scout will carry the following: (colon) meals for three days, a survival knife, and his sleeping bag. The company had four new officers: (colon) Bill Smith, Frank Tucker, Peter Fillmore, and Oliver Lewis. b.  A long quotation (one or more paragraphs): In The Killer Angels Michael Shaara wrote: (colon) You may find it a different story from the one you learned in school. There have been many versions of that battle [Gettysburg] and that war [the Civil War]. (The quote continues for two more paragraphs.) c.  A formal quotation or question: The President declared: (colon) "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." The question is: (colon) what can we do about it? d.  A second independent clause which explains the first: Potter's motive is clear: (colon) he wants the assignment. e.  After the introduction of a business letter: Dear Sirs: (colon) Dear Madam: (colon) f.  The details following an announcement For sale: (colon) large lakeside cabin with dock g.  A *formal* resolution, after the word "resolved:"

Resolved: (colon) That this council petition the mayor.

2. “USFG should” means the debate is solely about a policy established by governmental means

Ericson ‘03

(Jon M., Dean Emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts – California Polytechnic U., et al., The Debater’s Guide, Third Edition, p. 4)

The Proposition of Policy: Urging Future Action In policy propositions, each topic contains certain key elements, although they have slightly different functions from comparable elements of value-oriented propositions. 1. An agent doing the acting ---“The United States” in “The United States should adopt a policy of free trade.” Like the object of evaluation in a proposition of value, the agent is the subject of the sentence. 2. The verb *should*—the first part of a verb phrase that urges action. 3. An action verb to follow *should* in the *should*-verb combination. For example, *should adopt* here **means to put a** program or **policy into action though governmental means**. 4. A specification of directions or a limitation of the action desired. The phrase *free trade*, for example, gives direction and limits to the topic, which would, for example, eliminate consideration of increasing tariffs, discussing diplomatic recognition, or discussing interstate commerce. Propositions of policy deal with future action. Nothing has yet occurred. The entire debate is about whether something ought to occur. What you agree to do, then, when you accept the *affirmative side* in such a debate is to offer sufficient and compelling reasons for an audience to perform the future action that you propose.

They claim to win the debate for building counter-hegemonic politics. That undermines preparation and clash. It leaves one side unprepared, resulting in shallow, uneducational debate. Requiring debate on a communal topic forces argument development and develops persuasive skills critical to any political outcome.

Simualted national security law debates inculcate agency and decision-making skills—that enables activism and avoids cooption

Laura K. Donohue, Associate Professor of Law, Georgetown Law, 4/11/13, National Security Law Pedagogy and the Role of Simulations, http://jnslp.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/National-Security-Law-Pedagogy-and-the-Role-of-Simulations.pdf

The concept of simulations as an aspect of higher education, or in the law school environment, is not new.164 Moot court, after all, is a form of simulation and one of the oldest teaching devices in the law. What is new, however, is the idea of designing a civilian national security course that takes advantage of the doctrinal and experiential components of law school education and integrates the experience through a multi-day simulation. In 2009, I taught the first module based on this design at Stanford Law, which I developed the following year into a full course at Georgetown Law. It has since gone through multiple iterations. The initial concept followed on the federal full-scale Top Official (“TopOff”) exercises, used to train government officials to respond to domestic crises.165 It adapted a Tabletop Exercise, designed with the help of exercise officials at DHS and FEMA, to the law school environment. The Tabletop used one storyline to push on specific legal questions, as students, assigned roles in the discussion, sat around a table and for six hours engaged with the material. The problem with the Tabletop Exercise was that it was too static, and the rigidity of the format left little room, or time, for student agency. Unlike the government’s TopOff exercises, which gave officials the opportunity to fully engage with the many different concerns that arise in the course of a national security crisis as well as the chance to deal with externalities, the Tabletop focused on specific legal issues, even as it controlled for external chaos. The opportunity to provide a more full experience for the students came with the creation of first a one-day, and then a multi-day simulation. The course design and simulation continues to evolve. It offers a model for achieving the pedagogical goals outlined above, in the process developing a rigorous training ground for the next generation of national security lawyers.166 A. Course Design The central idea in structuring the NSL Sim 2.0 course **was to bridge the gap between theory and practice by conveying** doctrinal **material and** creating an alternative reality in which students would be forced to act upon legal concerns.167 The exercise itself is a form of problem-based learning, wherein students are given both agency and responsibility for the results. Towards this end, the structure must be at once bounded (directed and focused on certain areas of the law and legal education) and flexible (responsive to student input and decisionmaking). Perhaps the most significant weakness in the use of any constructed universe is the problem of authenticity. Efforts to replicate reality will inevitably fall short. There is simply too much uncertainty, randomness, and complexity in the real world. One way to address this shortcoming, however, is through design and agency. The scenarios with which students grapple and the structural design of the simulation must reflect the national security realm, even as students themselves must make choices that carry consequences. Indeed, to some extent, student decisions themselves must drive the evolution of events within the simulation.168 Additionally, **while authenticity matters, it is worth noting that at some level the fact that the incident does not take place in a real-world setting can be a great advantage**. That is, the simulation creates an environment where students can make mistakes and learn from these mistakes – without what might otherwise be devastating consequences. It also allows instructors to develop multiple points of feedback to enrich student learning in a way that would be much more difficult to do in a regular practice setting. NSL Sim 2.0 takes as its starting point the national security pedagogical goals discussed above. It works backwards to then engineer a classroom, cyber, and physical/simulation experience to delve into each of these areas. As a substantive matter, the course focuses on the constitutional, statutory, and regulatory authorities in national security law, placing particular focus on the interstices between black letter law and areas where the field is either unsettled or in flux. A key aspect of the course design is that it retains both the doctrinal and experiential components of legal education. Divorcing simulations from the doctrinal environment risks falling short on the first and third national security pedagogical goals: (1) analytical skills and substantive knowledge, and (3) critical thought. A certain amount of both can be learned in the course of a simulation; however, the national security crisis environment is not well-suited to the more thoughtful and careful analytical discussion. What I am thus proposing is a course design in which doctrine is paired with the type of experiential learning more common in a clinical realm. The former precedes the latter, giving students the opportunity to develop depth and breadth prior to the exercise. In order to capture problems related to adaptation and evolution, addressing goal [1(d)], the simulation itself takes place over a multi-day period. Because of the intensity involved in national security matters (and conflicting demands on student time), the model makes use of a multi-user virtual environment. The use of such technology is critical to creating more powerful, immersive simulations.169 It also allows for continual interaction between the players. Multi-user virtual environments have the further advantage of helping to transform the traditional teaching culture, predominantly concerned with manipulating textual and symbolic knowledge, into a culture where students learn and can then be assessed on the basis of their participation in changing practices.170 I thus worked with the Information Technology group at Georgetown Law to build the cyber portal used for NSL Sim 2.0. The twin goals of adaptation and evolution require that students be given a significant amount of agency and responsibility for decisions taken in the course of the simulation. To further this aim, I constituted a Control Team, with six professors, four attorneys from practice, a media expert, six to eight former simulation students, and a number of technology experts. Four of the professors specialize in different areas of national security law and assume roles in the course of the exercise, with the aim of pushing students towards a deeper doctrinal understanding of shifting national security law authorities. One professor plays the role of President of the United States. The sixth professor focuses on questions of professional responsibility. The attorneys from practice help to build the simulation and then, along with all the professors, assume active roles during the simulation itself. Returning students assist in the execution of the play, further developing their understanding of national security law. Throughout the simulation, the Control Team is constantly reacting to student choices. When unexpected decisions are made, professors may choose to pursue the evolution of the story to accomplish the pedagogical aims, or they may choose to cut off play in that area (there are various devices for doing so, such as denying requests, sending materials to labs to be analyzed, drawing the players back into the main storylines, and leaking information to the media). A total immersion simulation involves a number of scenarios, as well as systemic noise, to give students experience in dealing with the second pedagogical goal: factual chaos and information overload. The driving aim here is to teach students how to manage information more effectively. Five to six storylines are thus developed, each with its own arc and evolution. To this are added multiple alterations of the situation, relating to background noise. Thus, unlike hypotheticals, doctrinal problems, single-experience exercises, or even Tabletop exercises, the goal is not to eliminate external conditions, but to embrace them as part of the challenge facing national security lawyers. The simulation itself is problem-based, giving players agency in driving the evolution of the experience – thus addressing goal [2(c)]. This requires a realtime response from the professor(s) overseeing the simulation, pairing bounded storylines with flexibility to emphasize different areas of the law and the students’ practical skills. Indeed, each storyline is based on a problem facing the government, to which players must then respond, generating in turn a set of new issues that must be addressed. The written and oral components of the simulation conform to the fourth pedagogical goal – the types of situations in which national security lawyers will find themselves. Particular emphasis is placed on nontraditional modes of communication, such as legal documents in advance of the crisis itself, meetings in the midst of breaking national security concerns, multiple informal interactions, media exchanges, telephone calls, Congressional testimony, and formal briefings to senior level officials in the course of the simulation as well as during the last class session. These oral components are paired with the preparation of formal legal instruments, such as applications to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, legal memos, applications for search warrants under Title III, and administrative subpoenas for NSLs. In addition, students are required to prepare a paper outlining their legal authorities prior to the simulation – and to deliver a 90 second oral briefing after the session. To replicate the high-stakes political environment at issue in goals (1) and (5), students are divided into political and legal roles and assigned to different (and competing) institutions: the White House, DoD, DHS, HHS, DOJ, DOS, Congress, state offices, nongovernmental organizations, and the media. This requires students to acknowledge and work within the broader Washington context, even as they are cognizant of the policy implications of their decisions. They must get used to working with policymakers and to representing one of many different considerations that decisionmakers take into account in the national security domain. Scenarios are selected with high consequence events in mind, to ensure that students recognize both the domestic and international dimensions of national security law. Further alterations to the simulation provide for the broader political context – for instance, whether it is an election year, which parties control different branches, and state and local issues in related but distinct areas. The media is given a particularly prominent role. One member of the Control Team runs an AP wire service, while two student players represent print and broadcast media, respectively. The Virtual News Network (“VNN”), which performs in the second capacity, runs continuously during the exercise, in the course of which players may at times be required to appear before the camera. This media component helps to emphasize the broader political context within which national security law is practiced. Both anticipated and unanticipated decisions give rise to ethical questions and matters related to the fifth goal: professional responsibility. The way in which such issues arise stems from simulation design as well as spontaneous interjections from both the Control Team and the participants in the simulation itself. As aforementioned, professors on the Control Team, and practicing attorneys who have previously gone through a simulation, focus on raising decision points that encourage students to consider ethical and professional considerations. Throughout the simulation good judgment and leadership play a key role, determining the players’ effectiveness, with the exercise itself hitting the aim of the integration of the various pedagogical goals. Finally, there are multiple layers of feedback that players receive prior to, during, and following the simulation to help them to gauge their effectiveness. The Socratic method in the course of doctrinal studies provides immediate assessment of the students’ grasp of the law. Written assignments focused on the contours of individual players’ authorities give professors an opportunity to assess students’ level of understanding prior to the simulation. And the simulation itself provides real-time feedback from both peers and professors. The Control Team provides data points for player reflection – for instance, the Control Team member playing President may make decisions based on player input, giving students an immediate impression of their level of persuasiveness, while another Control Team member may reject a FISC application as insufficient. The simulation goes beyond this, however, focusing on teaching students how to develop (6) opportunities for learning in the future. Student meetings with mentors in the field, which take place before the simulation, allow students to work out the institutional and political relationships and the manner in which law operates in practice, even as they learn how to develop mentoring relationships. (Prior to these meetings we have a class discussion about mentoring, professionalism, and feedback). Students, assigned to simulation teams about one quarter of the way through the course, receive peer feedback in the lead-up to the simulation and during the exercise itself. Following the simulation the Control Team and observers provide comments. Judges, who are senior members of the bar in the field of national security law, observe player interactions and provide additional debriefing. The simulation, moreover, is recorded through both the cyber portal and through VNN, allowing students to go back to assess their performance. Individual meetings with the professors teaching the course similarly follow the event. Finally, students end the course with a paper reflecting on their performance and the issues that arose in the course of the simulation, develop frameworks for analyzing uncertainty, tension with colleagues, mistakes, and successes in the future. B. Substantive Areas: Interstices and Threats As a substantive matter, NSL Sim 2.0 is designed to take account of areas of the law central to national security. It focuses on specific authorities that may be brought to bear in the course of a crisis. The decision of which areas to explore is made well in advance of the course. It is particularly helpful here to think about national security authorities on a continuum, as a way to impress upon students that there are shifting standards depending upon the type of threat faced. One course, for instance, might center on the interstices between crime, drugs, terrorism and war. Another might address the intersection of pandemic disease and biological weapons. A third could examine cybercrime and cyberterrorism. **This is the most important determination, because the substance of the** doctrinal portion of the course and the **simulation follows from this decision**. For a course focused on the interstices between pandemic disease and biological weapons, for instance, preliminary inquiry would lay out which authorities apply, where the courts have weighed in on the question, and what matters are unsettled. Relevant areas might include public health law, biological weapons provisions, federal quarantine and isolation authorities, habeas corpus and due process, military enforcement and posse comitatus, eminent domain and appropriation of land/property, takings, contact tracing, thermal imaging and surveillance, electronic tagging, vaccination, and intelligence-gathering. The critical areas can then be divided according to the dominant constitutional authority, statutory authorities, regulations, key cases, general rules, and constitutional questions. **This**, then, **becomes a guide for the** doctrinal part of the **course, as well as the grounds on which the specific scenarios developed for the simulation** are based. The authorities, simultaneously, are included in an electronic resource library and embedded in the cyber portal (the Digital Archives) to act as a closed universe of the legal authorities needed by the students in the course of the simulation. Professional responsibility in the national security realm and the institutional relationships of those tasked with responding to biological weapons and pandemic disease also come within the doctrinal part of the course. The simulation itself is based on five to six storylines reflecting the interstices between different areas of the law. The storylines are used to present a coherent, non-linear scenario that can adapt to student responses. Each scenario is mapped out in a three to seven page document, which is then checked with scientists, government officials, and area experts for consistency with how the scenario would likely unfold in real life. For the biological weapons and pandemic disease emphasis, for example, one narrative might relate to the presentation of a patient suspected of carrying yersinia pestis at a hospital in the United States. The document would map out a daily progression of the disease consistent with epidemiological patterns and the central actors in the story: perhaps a U.S. citizen, potential connections to an international terrorist organization, intelligence on the individual’s actions overseas, etc. The scenario would be designed specifically to stress the intersection of public health and counterterrorism/biological weapons threats, and the associated (shifting) authorities, thus requiring the disease initially to look like an innocent presentation (for example, by someone who has traveled from overseas), but then for the storyline to move into the second realm (awareness that this was in fact a concerted attack). A second storyline might relate to a different disease outbreak in another part of the country, with the aim of introducing the Stafford Act/Insurrection Act line and raising federalism concerns. The role of the military here and Title 10/Title 32 questions would similarly arise – with the storyline designed to raise these questions. A third storyline might simply be well developed noise in the system: reports of suspicious activity potentially linked to radioactive material, with the actors linked to nuclear material. A fourth storyline would focus perhaps on container security concerns overseas, progressing through newspaper reports, about containers showing up in local police precincts. State politics would constitute the fifth storyline, raising question of the political pressures on the state officials in the exercise. Here, ethnic concerns, student issues, economic conditions, and community policing concerns might become the focus. The sixth storyline could be further noise in the system – loosely based on current events at the time. In addition to the storylines, a certain amount of noise is injected into the system through press releases, weather updates, private communications, and the like. The five to six storylines, prepared by the Control Team in consultation with experts, become the basis for the preparation of scenario “injects:” i.e., newspaper articles, VNN broadcasts, reports from NGOs, private communications between officials, classified information, government leaks, etc., which, when put together, constitute a linear progression. These are all written and/or filmed prior to the exercise. The progression is then mapped in an hourly chart for the unfolding events over a multi-day period. All six scenarios are placed on the same chart, in six columns, giving the Control Team a birds-eye view of the progression. C. How It Works As for the nuts and bolts of the simulation itself, it traditionally begins outside of class, in the evening, on the grounds that national security crises often occur at inconvenient times and may well involve limited sleep and competing demands.171 Typically, a phone call from a Control Team member posing in a role integral to one of the main storylines, initiates play. Students at this point have been assigned dedicated simulation email addresses and provided access to the cyber portal. The portal itself gives each team the opportunity to converse in a “classified” domain with other team members, as well as access to a public AP wire and broadcast channel, carrying the latest news and on which press releases or (for the media roles) news stories can be posted. The complete universe of legal authorities required for the simulation is located on the cyber portal in the Digital Archives, as are forms required for some of the legal instruments (saving students the time of developing these from scratch in the course of play). Additional “classified” material – both general and SCI – has been provided to the relevant student teams. The Control Team has access to the complete site. For the next two (or three) days, outside of student initiatives (which, at their prompting, may include face-to-face meetings between the players), the entire simulation takes place through the cyber portal. The Control Team, immediately active, begins responding to player decisions as they become public (and occasionally, through monitoring the “classified” communications, before they are released). This time period provides a ramp-up to the third (or fourth) day of play, allowing for the adjustment of any substantive, student, or technology concerns, while setting the stage for the breaking crisis. The third (or fourth) day of play takes place entirely at Georgetown Law. A special room is constructed for meetings between the President and principals, in the form of either the National Security Council or the Homeland Security Council, with breakout rooms assigned to each of the agencies involved in the NSC process. Congress is provided with its own physical space, in which meetings, committee hearings and legislative drafting can take place. State government officials are allotted their own area, separate from the federal domain, with the Media placed between the three major interests. The Control Team is sequestered in a different area, to which students are not admitted. At each of the major areas, the cyber portal is publicly displayed on large flat panel screens, allowing for the streaming of video updates from the media, AP wire injects, articles from the students assigned to represent leading newspapers, and press releases. Students use their own laptop computers for team decisions and communication. As the storylines unfold, the Control Team takes on a variety of roles, such as that of the President, Vice President, President’s chief of staff, governor of a state, public health officials, and foreign dignitaries. Some of the roles are adopted on the fly, depending upon player responses and queries as the storylines progress. Judges, given full access to each player domain, determine how effectively the students accomplish the national security goals. The judges are themselves well-experienced in the practice of national security law, as well as in legal education. They thus can offer a unique perspective on the scenarios confronted by the students, the manner in which the simulation unfolded, and how the students performed in their various capacities. At the end of the day, the exercise terminates and an immediate hotwash is held, in which players are first debriefed on what occurred during the simulation. Because of the players’ divergent experiences and the different roles assigned to them, the students at this point are often unaware of the complete picture. The judges and formal observers then offer reflections on the simulation and determine which teams performed most effectively. Over the next few classes, more details about the simulation emerge, as students discuss it in more depth and consider limitations created by their knowledge or institutional position, questions that arose in regard to their grasp of the law, the types of decision-making processes that occurred, and the effectiveness of their – and other students’ – performances. Reflection papers, paired with oral briefings, focus on the substantive issues raised by the simulation and introduce the opportunity for students to reflect on how to create opportunities for learning in the future. The course then formally ends.172 Learning, however, continues beyond the temporal confines of the semester. Students who perform well and who would like to continue to participate in the simulations are invited back as members of the control team, giving them a chance to deepen their understanding of national security law. Following graduation, a few students who go in to the field are then invited to continue their affiliation as National Security Law fellows, becoming increasingly involved in the evolution of the exercise itself. This system of vertical integration helps to build a mentoring environment for the students while they are enrolled in law school and to create opportunities for learning and mentorship post-graduation. It helps to keep the exercise current and reflective of emerging national security concerns. And it builds a strong community of individuals with common interests. CONCLUSION The legal academy has, of late, been swept up in concern about the economic conditions that affect the placement of law school graduates. The image being conveyed, however, does not resonate in every legal field. It is particularly inapposite to the burgeoning opportunities presented to students in national security. That the conversation about legal education is taking place now should come as little surprise. Quite apart from economic concern is the traditional introspection that follows American military engagement. It makes sense: law overlaps substantially with political power, being at once both the expression of government authority and the effort to limit the same. **The one-size fits all approach** currently **dominating the conversation in legal education, however, appears ill-suited to address the concerns raised** in the current conversation. **Instead of looking at law across the board, greater insight can be gleaned by looking at** the specific demands of the different fields themselves. This does not mean that the goals identified will be exclusive to, for instance, national security law, but it does suggest there will be greater nuance in the discussion of the adequacy of the current pedagogical approach. With this approach in mind, I have here suggested six pedagogical goals for national security. For following graduation, students must be able to perform in each of the areas identified – (1) understanding the law as applied, (2) dealing with factual chaos and uncertainty, (3) obtaining critical distance, (4) developing nontraditional written and oral communication skills, (5) exhibiting leadership, integrity, and good judgment in a high-stakes, highly-charged environment, and (6) creating continued opportunities for self-learning. They also must learn how to integrate these different skills into one experience, to ensure that they will be most effective when they enter the field. The problem with the current structures in legal education is that they fall short, in important ways, from helping students to meet these goals. Doctrinal courses may incorporate a range of experiential learning components, such as hypotheticals, doctrinal problems, single exercises, extended or continuing exercises, and tabletop exercises. These are important classroom devices. The amount of time required for each varies, as does the object of the exercise itself. But where they fall short is in providing a more holistic approach to national security law which will allow for the maximum conveyance of required skills. Total immersion **simulations**, which have not yet been addressed in the secondary literature for civilian education in national security law, may **provide an important way forward**. Such **simulations** also **cure shortcomings in other areas of experiential education**, such as clinics and moot court. It is in an effort to address these concerns that I developed **the simulation model** above. NSL Sim 2.0 certainly is not the only solution, but it **does provide a** starting point for moving forward. The approach draws on the strengths of doctrinal courses and embeds a total immersion simulation within a course. **It makes use of technology and physical space to engage students in a multi-day exercise, in which** they are given agency and responsibility for their decision making, resulting in a steep learning curve. While further adaptation of this model is undoubtedly necessary, it suggests one potential direction for the years to come.

Debate over a controversial point of action creates argumentative stasis—that’s key to avoid a devolution of debate into competing truth claims, which destroys the decision-making benefits of the activity

Steinberg and Freeley ‘13

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*Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making*, Thirteen Edition

Debate is a means of settling differences, so there must be a controversy, a difference of opinion or a conflict of interest before there can be a debate. If everyone is in agreement on a feet or value or policy, there is no need or opportunity for debate; the matter can be settled by unanimous consent. Thus, for example, it would be pointless to attempt to debate "Resolved: That two plus two equals four,” because there is simply no controversy about this state­ment. Controversy is an essential prerequisite of debate. Where there is no clash of ideas, proposals, interests, or expressed positions of issues, there is no debate. Controversy invites decisive choice between competing positions. Debate cannot produce effective decisions without clear identification of a question or questions to be answered. For example, general argument may occur about the broad topic of illegal immigration. How many illegal immigrants live in the United States? What is the impact of illegal immigration and immigrants on our economy? What is their impact on our communities? Do they commit crimes? Do they take jobs from American workers? Do they pay taxes? Do they require social services? Is it a problem that some do not speak English? Is it the responsibility of employers to discourage illegal immigration by not hiring undocumented workers? Should they have the opportunity to gain citizenship? Does illegal immigration pose a security threat to our country? Do illegal immigrants do work that American workers are unwilling to do? Are their rights as workers and as human beings at risk due to their status? Are they abused by employers, law enforcement, housing, and businesses? How are their families impacted by their status? What is the moral and philosophical obligation of a nation state to maintain its borders? Should we build a wall on the Mexican border, establish a national identification card, or enforce existing laws against employers? Should we invite immigrants to become U.S. citizens? Surely you can think of many more concerns to be addressed by a conversation about the topic area of illegal immigration. Participation in this “debate” is likely to be emotional and intense. However, it is not likely to be productive or useful without focus on a particular question and identification of a line demarcating sides in the controversy. To be discussed and resolved effectively, controversies are best understood when seated clearly such that all parties to the debate share an understanding about the objec­tive of the debate. This enables focus on substantive and objectively identifiable issues facilitating comparison of competing argumentation leading to effective decisions. Vague understanding results in unfocused deliberation and poor deci­sions, general feelings of tension without opportunity for resolution, frustration, and emotional distress, as evidenced by the failure of the U.S. Congress to make substantial progress on the immigration debate. Of course, arguments may be presented without disagreement. For exam­ple, claims are presented and supported within speeches, editorials, and advertise­ments even without opposing or refutational response. Argumentation occurs in a range of settings from informal to formal, and may not call upon an audi­ence or judge to make a forced choice among competing claims. Informal dis­course occurs as conversation or panel discussion without demanding a decision about a dichotomous or yes/no question. However, by definition, debate requires "reasoned judgment on a proposition. The proposition is a statement about which competing advocates will offer alternative (pro or con) argumenta­tion calling upon their audience or adjudicator to decide. The proposition pro­vides focus for the discourse and guides the decision process. Even when a decision will be made through a process of compromise, it is important to iden­tify the beginning positions of competing advocates to begin negotiation and movement toward a center, or consensus position. It is frustrating and usually unproductive to attempt to make a decision when deciders are unclear as to what the decision is about. The proposition may be implicit in some applied debates (“Vote for me!”); however, when a vote or consequential decision is called for (as in the courtroom or in applied parliamentary debate) it is essential that the proposition be explicitly expressed (“the defendant is guilty!”). In aca­demic debate, the proposition provides essential guidance for the preparation of the debaters prior to the debate, the case building and discourse presented during the debate, and the decision to be made by the debate judge after the debate. Someone disturbed by the problem of a growing underclass of poorly educated, socially disenfranchised youths might observe, “Public schools are doing a terri­ble job! They' are overcrowded, and many teachers are poorly qualified in their subject areas. Even the best teachers can do little more than struggle to maintain order in their classrooms." That same concerned citizen, facing a complex range of issues, might arrive at an unhelpful decision, such as "We ought to do some­thing about this” or, worse, “It’s too complicated a problem to deal with." Groups of concerned citizens worried about the state of public education could join together to express their frustrations, anger, disillusionment, and emotions regarding the schools, but without a focus for their discussions, they could easily agree about the sorry state of education without finding points of clarity or potential solutions. A gripe session would follow. But if a precise question is posed—such as “What can be done to improve public education?”—then a more profitable area of discussion is opened up simply by placing a focus on the search for a concrete solution step. One or more judgments can be phrased in the form of debate propositions, motions for parliamentary debate, or bills for legislative assemblies, The statements "Resolved: That the federal government should implement a program of charter schools in at-risk communities” and “Resolved; That the state of Florida should adopt a school voucher program" more clearly identify specific ways of dealing with educational problems in a manageable form, suitable for debate. They provide specific policies to be investigated and aid discussants in identifying points of difference. This focus contributes to better and more informed decision making with the potential for better results. In aca­demic debate, it provides better depth of argumentation and enhanced opportu­nity for reaping the educational benefits of participation. In the next section, we will consider the challenge of framing the proposition for debate, and its role in the debate. To have a productive debate, which facilitates effective decision making by directing and placing limits on the decision to be made, the basis for argument should be clearly defined. If we merely talk about a topic, such as ‘"homeless­ness,” or “abortion,” Or “crime,” or “global warming,” we are likely to have an interesting discussion but not to establish a profitable basis for argument. For example, the statement “Resolved: That the pen is mightier than the sword” is debatable, yet by itself fails to provide much basis for dear argumen­tation. If we take this statement to mean *Iliad* the written word is more effec­tive than physical force for some purposes, we can identify a problem area: the comparative effectiveness of writing or physical force for a specific purpose, perhaps promoting positive social change. (Note that “loose” propositions, such as the example above, may be defined by their advocates in such a way as to facilitate a clear contrast of competing sides; through definitions and debate they “become” clearly understood statements even though they may not begin as such. There are formats for debate that often begin with this sort of proposition. However, in any debate, at some point, effective and meaningful discussion relies on identification of a clearly stated or understood proposition.) Back to the example of the written word versus physical force. Although we now have a general subject, we have not yet stated a problem. It is still too broad, too loosely worded to promote weII-organized argument. What sort of writing are we concerned with—poems, novels, government documents, web­site development, advertising, cyber-warfare, disinformation, or what? What does it mean to be “mightier" in this context? What kind of physical force is being compared—fists, dueling swords, bazookas, nuclear weapons, or what? A more specific question might be, “Would a mutual defense treaty or a visit by our fleet be more effective in assuring Laurania of our support in a certain crisis?” The basis for argument could be phrased in a debate proposition such as “Resolved: That the United States should enter into a mutual defense treaty with Laurania.” Negative advocates might oppose this proposition by arguing that fleet maneuvers would be a better solution. This is not to say that debates should completely avoid creative interpretation of the controversy by advo­cates, or that good debates cannot occur over competing interpretations of the controversy; in fact, these sorts of debates may be very engaging. The point is that debate is best facilitated by the guidance provided by focus on a particular point of difference, which will be outlined in the following discussion.

Decisionmaking is the most portable and flexible skill—key to all facets of life and advocacy

Steinberg and Freeley ‘13

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In the spring of 2011, facing a legacy of problematic U.S, military involvement in Bosnia, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and criticism for what some saw as slow sup­port of the United States for the people of Egypt and Tunisia as citizens of those nations ousted their formerly American-backed dictators, the administration of President Barack Obama considered its options in providing support for rebels seeking to overthrow the government of Muammar el-Qaddafi in Libya. Public debate was robust as the administration sought to determine its most appropriate action. The president ultimately decided to engage in an international coalition, enforcing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 through a number of measures including establishment of a no-fly zone through air and missile strikes to support rebels in Libya, but stopping short of direct U.S. intervention with ground forces or any occupation of Libya. While the action seemed to achieve its immediate objectives, most notably the defeat of Qaddafi and his regime, the American president received both criticism and praise for his mea­sured yet assertive decision. In fact, the past decade has challenged American leaders to make many difficult decisions in response to potentially catastrophic problems. Public debate has raged in chaotic environment of political division and apparent animosity, The process of public decision making may have never been so consequential or difficult. Beginning in the fall of 2008, Presidents Bush and Obama faced a growing eco­nomic crisis and responded in part with '’bailouts'' of certain Wall Street financial entities, additional bailouts of Detroit automakers, and a major economic stimu­lus package. All these actions generated substantial public discourse regarding the necessity, wisdom, and consequences of acting (or not acting). In the summer of 2011, the president and the Congress participated in heated debates (and attempted negotiations) to raise the nation's debt ceiling such that the U.S. Federal Govern­ment could pay its debts and continue government operations. This discussion was linked to a debate about the size of the exponentially growing national debt, gov­ernment spending, and taxation. Further, in the spring of 2012, U.S. leaders sought to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapon capability while gas prices in the United States rose, The United States considered its ongoing military involvement in Afghanistan in the face of nationwide protests and violence in that country1 sparked by the alleged burning of Korans by American soldiers, and Americans observed the actions of President Bashir Al-Assad and Syrian forces as they killed Syrian citizens in response to a rebel uprising in that nation and considered the role of the United States in that action. Meanwhile, public discourse, in part generated and intensified by the cam­paigns of the GOP candidates for president and consequent media coverage, addressed issues dividing Americans, including health care, women's rights to reproductive health services, the freedom of churches and church-run organiza­tions to remain true to their beliefs in providing (or electing not to provide) health care services which they oppose, the growing gap between the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans and the rest of the American population, and continued high levels of unemployment. More division among the American public would be hard to imagine. Yet through all the tension, conflict was almost entirely ver­bal in nature, aimed at discovering or advocating solutions to growing problems. Individuals also faced daunting decisions. A young couple, underwater with their mortgage and struggling to make their monthly payments, considered walking away from their loan; elsewhere a college sophomore reconsidered his major and a senior her choice of law school, graduate school, or a job and a teenager decided between an iPhone and an iPad. Each of these situations called for decisions to be made. Each decision maker worked hard to make well-reasoned decisions. Decision making is a thoughtful process of choosing among a variety of options for acting or thinking. It requires that the decider make a choice. Life demands decision making. We make countless individual decisions every day. To make some of those decisions, we work hard to employ care and consider­ation: others scorn to just happen. Couples, families, groups of friends, and co­workers come together to make choices, and decision-making bodies from committees to juries to the U.S. Congress and the United Nations make deci­sions that impact us all. Every profession requires effective and ethical decision making, as do our school, community, and social organizations. We all engage in discourse surrounding our necessary decisions every day. To refinance or sell one’s home, to buy a high-performance SUV or an eco­nomical hybrid car, what major to select, what to have for dinner, what candi­date to vote for, paper or plastic, all present us with choices. Should the president deal with an international crisis through military invasion or diplomacy? How should the U.S. Congress act to address illegal immigration? Is the defendant guilty as accused? Should we watch The Daily Show or the ball game? And upon what information should I rely to make my decision? Certainly some of these decisions are more consequential than others. Which amendment to vote for, what television program to watch, what course to take, which phone plan to purchase, and which diet to pursue—all present unique challenges. At our best, we seek out research and data to inform our decisions. Yet even the choice of which information to attend to requires decision making. In 2006, Time magazine named YOU its "Person of the Year.” Congratulations! Its selection was based on the participation not of “great men” in the creation of his­tory, but rather on the contributions of a community of anonymous participants in the evolution of information. Through blogs, online networking, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, and many other “wikis," and social networking sites, knowledge and truth are created from the bottom up, bypassing the authoritarian control of newspeople, academics, and publishers. Through a quick keyword search, we have access to infinite quantities of information, but how do we sort through it and select the best information for our needs? Much of what suffices as information is not reliable, or even ethically motivated. The ability of every decision maker to make good, reasoned, and ethical deci­sions' relies heavily upon their ability to think critically. Critical thinking enables one to break argumentation down to its component parts in order to evaluate its relative validity and strength, And, critical thinking offers tools enabling the user to better understand the' nature and relative quality of the message under consider­ation. Critical thinkers are better users of information as well as better advocates. Colleges and universities expect their students to develop their critical thinking skills and may require students to take designated courses to that end. The importance and value of such study is widely recognized. The executive order establishing California's requirement states; Instruction in critical thinking is designed to achieve an understanding of the relationship of language to logic, which would lead to the ability to analyze, criticize and advocate ideas, to reason inductively and deductively, and to reach factual or judgmental conclusions based on sound inferences drawn from unambigu­ous statements of knowledge or belief. The minimal competence to be expected at the successful conclusion of instruction in critical thinking should be the ability to distinguish fact from judgment, belief from knowledge, and skills in elementary inductive arid deductive processes, including an under­standing of die formal and informal fallacies of language and thought. Competency in critical thinking is a prerequisite to participating effectively in human affairs, pursuing higher education, and succeeding in the highly com­petitive world of business and the professions. Michael Scriven and Richard Paul for the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking Instruction argued that the effective critical thinker: raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely; gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively; comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards; thinks open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing, and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical con­sequences; and communicates effectively with others in figuring our solutions to complex problems. They also observed that critical thinking entails effective communication and problem solving abilities and a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism,"1 Debate as a classroom exercise and as a mode of thinking and behaving uniquely promotes development of each of these skill sets. Since classical times, debate has been one of the best methods of learning and applying the principles of critical thinking. Contemporary research confirms the value of debate. One study concluded: The impact of public communication training on the critical thinking ability of the participants is demonstrably positive. This summary of existing research reaffirms what many ex-debaters and others in forensics, public speaking, mock trial, or argumentation would support: participation improves die thinking of those involved,2 In particular, debate education improves the ability to think critically. In a com­prehensive review of the relevant research, Kent Colbert concluded, "'The debate-critical thinking literature provides presumptive proof ■favoring a positive debate-critical thinking relationship.11'1 Much of the most significant communication of our lives is conducted in the form of debates, formal or informal, These take place in intrapersonal commu­nications, with which we weigh the pros and cons of an important decision in our own minds, and in interpersonal communications, in which we listen to argu­ments intended to influence our decision or participate in exchanges to influence the decisions of others. Our success or failure in life is largely determined by our ability to make wise decisions for ourselves and to influence the decisions of’ others in ways that are beneficial to us. Much of our significant, purposeful activity is concerned with making decisions. Whether to join a campus organization, go to graduate school, accept a job offer, buy a car or house, move to another city, invest in a certain stock, or vote for Garcia—these are just a few Of the thousands of deci­sions we may have to make. Often, intelligent self-interest or a sense of respon­sibility will require us to win the support of others. We may want a scholarship or a particular job for ourselves, a customer for our product, or a vote for our favored political candidate. Some people make decision by flipping a coin. Others act on a whim or respond unconsciously to “hidden persuaders.” If the problem is trivial—such as whether to go to a concert or a film—the particular method used is unimportant. For more crucial matters, however, mature adults require a reasoned methods of decision making. Decisions should be justified by good reasons based on accurate evidence and valid reasoning.

Unbridled affirmation outside the game space makes research impossible and destroys dialogue in debate

Hanghoj 8

http://static.sdu.dk/mediafiles/Files/Information\_til/Studerende\_ved\_SDU/Din\_uddannelse/phd\_hum/afhandlinger/2009/ThorkilHanghoej.pdf

Thorkild Hanghøj, Copenhagen, 2008

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Institute of Education at the University of Bristol and the institute formerly known as Learning Lab

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professor.

Debate games are often based on pre-designed scenarios that include descriptions of issues to be debated, educational goals, game goals, roles, rules, time frames etc. In this way, debate games differ from textbooks and everyday classroom instruction as debate scenarios allow teachers and students to actively imagine, interact and communicate within a domain-specific game space. However, instead of mystifying debate games as a “magic circle” (Huizinga, 1950), I will try to overcome the epistemological dichotomy between “gaming” and “teaching” that tends to dominate discussions of educational games. In short, educational gaming is a form of teaching. As mentioned, education and games represent two different semiotic domains that both embody the three faces of knowledge: assertions, modes of representation and social forms of organisation (Gee, 2003; Barth, 2002; cf. chapter 2). In order to understand the interplay between these different domains and their interrelated knowledge forms, I will draw attention to a central assumption in Bakhtin’s dialogical philosophy. According to Bakhtin, all forms of communication and culture are subject to centripetal and centrifugal forces (Bakhtin, 1981). A centripetal force is the drive to impose one version of the truth, while a centrifugal force involves a range of possible truths and interpretations. This means that any form of expression involves a duality of centripetal and centrifugal forces: “Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear” (Bakhtin, 1981: 272). If we take teaching as an example, it is always affected by centripetal and centrifugal forces in the on-going negotiation of “truths” between teachers and students. In the words of Bakhtin: “Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction” (Bakhtin, 1984a: 110). Similarly, the dialogical space of debate games also embodies centrifugal and centripetal forces. Thus, the election scenario of The Power Game involves centripetal elements that are mainly determined by the rules and outcomes of the game, i.e. the election is based on a limited time frame and a fixed voting procedure. Similarly, the open-ended goals, roles and resources represent centrifugal elements and create virtually endless possibilities for researching, preparing, presenting, debating and evaluating a variety of key political issues. Consequently, the actual process of enacting a game scenario involves a complex negotiation between these centrifugal/centripetal forces that are inextricably linked with the teachers and students’ game activities. In this way, the enactment of The Power Game is a form of teaching that combines different pedagogical practices (i.e. group work, web quests, student presentations) and learning resources (i.e. websites, handouts, spoken language) within the interpretive frame of the election scenario. Obviously, tensions may arise if there is too much divergence between educational goals and game goals. This means that game facilitation requires a balance between focusing too narrowly on the rules or “facts” of a game (centripetal orientation) and a focusing too broadly on the contingent possibilities and interpretations of the game scenario (centrifugal orientation). For Bakhtin, the duality of centripetal/centrifugal forces often manifests itself as a dynamic between “monological” and “dialogical” forms of discourse. Bakhtin illustrates this point with the monological discourse of the Socrates/Plato dialogues in which the teacher never learns anything new from the students, despite Socrates’ ideological claims to the contrary (Bakhtin, 1984a). Thus, discourse becomes monologised when “someone who knows and possesses the truth instructs someone who is ignorant of it and in error”, where “a thought is either affirmed or repudiated” by the authority of the teacher (Bakhtin, 1984a: 81). In contrast to this, dialogical pedagogy fosters inclusive learning environments that are able to expand upon students’ existing knowledge and collaborative construction of “truths” (Dysthe, 1996). At this point, I should clarify that Bakhtin’s term “dialogic” is both a descriptive term (all utterances are per definition dialogic as they address other utterances as parts of a chain of communication) and a normative term as dialogue is an ideal to be worked for against the forces of “monologism” (Lillis, 2003: 197-8). In this project, I am mainly interested in describing the dialogical space of debate games. At the same time, I agree with Wegerif that “one of the goals of education, perhaps the most important goal, should be dialogue as an end in itself” (Wegerif, 2006: 61).

Dialogue is a prior issue—the process of discussion precedes any truth claim by magnifying the benefits of any discussion

Morson 4

<http://www.flt.uae.ac.ma/elhirech/baktine/0521831059.pdf#page=331>

Northwestern Professor, Prof. Morson's work ranges over a variety of areas: literary theory (especially narrative); the history of ideas, both Russian and European; a variety of literary genres (especially satire, utopia, and the novel); and his favorite writers -- Chekhov, Gogol, and, above all, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy. He is especially interested in the relation of literature to philosophy.

A belief in truly dialogic ideological becoming would lead to schools that were quite different. In such schools, the mind would be populated with a complexity of voices and perspectives it had not known, and the student would learn to think with those voices, to test ideas and experiences against them, and to shape convictions that are innerly persuasive in response. This very process would be central. Students would sense that whatever word they believed to be innerly persuasive was only tentatively so: the process of dialogue continues.We must keep the conversation going, and formal education only initiates the process. The innerly persuasive discourse would not be final, but would be, like experience itself, ever incomplete and growing. As Bakhtin observes of the innerly persuasive word: Its creativity and productiveness consist precisely in the fact that such a word awakens new and independent words, that it organizes masses of our words from within, and does not remain in an isolated and static condition. It is not so much interpreted by us as it is further, that is, freely, developed, applied to new material, new conditions; it enters into interanimating relationships with new contexts. . . . The semantic structure of an innerly persuasive discourse is not finite, it is open; in each of the new contexts that dialogize it, this discourse is able to reveal ever newer ways to mean. (DI, 345–6) We not only learn, we also learn to learn, and we learn to learn best when we engage in a dialogue with others and ourselves. We appropriate the world of difference, and ourselves develop new potentials. Those potentials allow us to appropriate yet more voices. Becoming becomes endless becoming. We talk, we listen, and we achieve an open-ended wisdom. Difference becomes an opportunity (see Freedman and Ball, this volume). Our world manifests the spirit that Bakhtin attributed to Dostoevsky: “nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is in the future and will always be in the future.”3 Such a world becomes our world within, its dialogue lives within us, and we develop the potentials of our ever-learning selves. Letmedraw some inconclusive conclusions, which may provoke dialogue. Section I of this volume, “Ideologies in Dialogue: Theoretical Considerations” and Bakhtin’s thought in general suggest that we learn best when we are actually learning to learn. We engage in dialogue with ourselves and others, and the most important thing is the value of the open-ended process itself. Section II, “Voiced, Double Voiced, and Multivoiced Discourses in Our Schools” suggests that a belief in truly dialogic ideological becoming would lead to schools that were quite different. In such schools, the mind would be populated with a complexity of voices and perspectives it had not known, and the student would learn to think with those voices, to test ideas and experiences against them, and to shape convictions that are innerly persuasive in response. Teachers would not be trying to get students to hold the right opinions but to sense the world from perspectives they would not have encountered or dismissed out of hand. Students would develop the habit of getting inside the perspectives of other groups and other people. Literature in particular is especially good at fostering such dialogic habits. Section III, “Heteroglossia in a Changing World” may invite us to learn that dialogue involves really listening to others, hearing them not as our perspective would categorize what they say, but as they themselves would categorize what they say, and only then to bring our own perspective to bear. We talk, we listen, and we achieve an open-ended wisdom. The chapters in this volume seem to suggest that we view learning as a perpetual process. That was perhaps Bakhtin’s favorite idea: that to appreciate life, or dialogue, we must see value not only in achieving this or that result, but also in recognizing that honest and open striving in a world of uncertainty and difference is itself the most important thing. What we must do is keep the conversation going.

Engagement the law solves their impacts, even if bottom-up approaches are ultimately better

Andrews, associate professor of law – University of San Francisco, ‘3

(Rhonda V. Magee, 54 Ala. L. Rev. 483)

The following argument relies on a few important assumptions. The first is the assumption that legal rules have consequences that reach far beyond their intended application from the standpoint of legal analysis. Legal rules play an important part in shaping concrete and metaphysical aspects of the world that we know. Thus, the impact of equal protection doctrine on the meta-narrative of race in America is more than merely symbolic. The Supreme Court's pronouncements on race are presumptively to be followed by lower courts, and together these opinions and their consequences influence the representations of race in federal and state social policies, in the media, in literature, and in the arts. n18 As Justice Brennan noted from the bench, every decision of the court has "ripples" which impact society and social processes. n19 Perhaps in no other area is this basic sociological insight more demonstrably true than in the area of race law. In a very real sense, the history of American civil rights law is the history of America's socio-legal construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of what it means to be a constitutionally protected human being. In the aftermath of the war required to preserve the Union itself, the architects of the First Reconstruction n20 took on [\*491] the task of reforming the Constitution to provide federal protection for newly "freed" Americans. The law they made not only created a new world in which the centuries-old institution of slavery was virtually **impossible**, n21 but perhaps more importantly, marked the beginning of the reshaping of American **thinking** about the very nature of humanity through the powerful symbolism and mechanisms of the law. n22 Thus, the continuing evolution of what it means to be a human being, and refinement of the state's obligations to human beings subject to its laws, are among the most significant of the unstated objectives of the reconstruction of post-slavery America, and the law itself will play a central role.

Creativity requires the challenge of creating within constraints—our framework is more productive for their notion freedom/creativity

Mayer 6

Marissa Ann Mayer, vice-president for search products and user experience at Google, February 13, 2006, “Creativity Loves Constraints,” online: <http://www.businessweek.com/print/magazine/content/06_07/b3971144.htm?chan=gl>

When people think about creativity, they think about artistic work -- unbridled, unguided effort that leads to beautiful effect. But if you look deeper, you'll find that some of the most inspiring art forms, such as haikus, sonatas, and religious paintings, are fraught with constraints. They are beautiful because creativity triumphed over the "rules." Constraints shape and focus problems and provide clear challenges to overcome. Creativity thrives best when constrained.

But constraints must be balanced with a healthy disregard for the impossible. Too many curbs can lead to pessimism and despair. Disregarding the bounds of what we know or accept gives rise to ideas that are non-obvious, unconventional, or unexplored. The creativity realized in this balance between constraint and disregard for the impossible is fueled by passion and leads to revolutionary change.

A few years ago, I met Paul Beckett, a talented designer who makes sculptural clocks. When I asked him why not do just sculptures, Paul said he liked the challenge of making something artistically beautiful that also had to perform as a clock. Framing the task in that way freed his creative force. Paul reflected that he also found it easier to paint on a canvas that had a mark on it rather than starting with one that was entirely clean and white. This resonated with me. It is often easier to direct your energy when you start with constrained challenges (a sculpture that must be a clock) or constrained possibilities (a canvas that is marked).

The “war powers authority” of the President is his Commander-in-Chief authority

Gallagher, Pakistan/Afghanistan coordination cell of the U.S. Joint Staff, Summer 2011

(Joseph, “Unconstitutional War: Strategic Risk in the Age of Congressional Abdication,” *Parameters*, http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/Articles/2011summer/Gallagher.pdf)

First, consider the constitutional issue of power imbalance. Central to the Constitution is the foundational principle of power distribution and provisions to check and balance exercises of that power. This clearly intended separation of powers across the three branches of government ensures that no single federal officeholder can wield an inordinate amount of power or influence. The founders carefully crafted constitutional war-making authority with the branch most representative of the people—Congress.4

The Federalist Papers No. 51, “The Structure of Government Must Furnish the Proper Checks and Balances Between the Different Departments,” serves as the wellspring for this principle. Madison insisted on the necessity to prevent any particular interest or group to trump another interest or group.5 This principle applies in practice to all decisions of considerable national importance. **Specific to war powers authority**, **the Constitution empowers the legislative branch with the authority to declare war but endows the Executive with the authority to act as Commander-in-Chief.**6 This construct designates Congress, not the president, as the primary decisionmaking body to commit the nation to war—a decision that ultimately requires the consent and will of the people in order to succeed. By vesting the decision to declare war with Congress, the founders underscored their intention to engage the people—those who would ultimately sacrifice their blood and treasure in the effort.

That means the military

Random House Dictionary 2013

(http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/commander+in+chief)

commander in chief

noun, plural commanders in chief.

1.

Also, Commander in Chief. the supreme commander of the armed forces of a nation or, sometimes, of several allied nations: The president is the Commander in Chief of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air force.

2.

an officer in command of a particular portion of an armed force who has been given this title by specific authorization.

Philippines are at the heart of the topic – “targeted killing” in the war on terror

Noble, activist with Rochester against War, No Date

(Doug, http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article31925.htm2)

In the Philippines, in 1986, Reagan increased CIA involvement in Philippine counterinsurgency operations, carried out by more than 50 death squads. In 2001, before 9/11, the Bush administration sent a unit of SOF to the Philippines “to help train Philippine counter terrorist forces fighting against Muslim separatists” within groups like Abu Sayyaf. After 9/11 US-Filipino cooperation was stepped up and the ongoing separatist conflict was cast, to the benefit of both sides, as “the second front in the war on terror.”[30] In Feb, 2012, a US drone strike targeting leaders of Abu Sayyaf and other separatist groups killed 15 people, the first use of killer drones in Southeast Asia. [31]

The history of the Philippines are an argument against the “introduction of U.S. armed forces”

PBS No Date

(http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/macarthur/peopleevents/pandeAMEX87.html)

America's "splendid little war" with Spain may have been "little" in one respect -- as a military conflict -- but its historical consequences have been anything but small. With its victory and subsequent annexation of the Philippines, Hawaii, Guam, and Puerto Rico, the United States stood poised to enter the 20th century as an imperial power.

Congress approved President McKinley's request for a declaration of war on April 25, 1898; yet the Spanish-American War was the culmination of decades of pressure toward U.S. expansionism. Since mid-century, proponents of America's "Manifest Destiny" had been arguing that the country should flex its newfound muscles and join the ranks of colonial powers. Egged on by "yellow" journalists like William Randolph Hearst, who in the 1890s gave inordinate attention to the suffering of Cubans at the hands of their Spanish colonizers, public opinion grew steadily in favor of annexing Spain's holdings nearest the United States. When the American battleship Maine exploded in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898, the drift toward war became inexorable despite Spain's attempts to negotiate a face-saving withdrawal from Cuba.

Although the victory of Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders at San Juan Hill remains the most lasting image of the war, Admiral Thomas Dewey's exploits in the Philippines also captured the public's imagination and in the long run proved more significant. Dewey, having steamed quickly from Hong Kong, slipped into Manila Bay on May 1 and destroyed the obsolete Spanish fleet anchored there. While Dewey blockaded the islands, the U.S. quickly organized an army to dislodge the 35,000 Spanish soldiers trapped in Manila. Brigadier General Arthur MacArthur, then a Colonel in the Adjutant General's Office, was given command of the 1st Brigade of General Wesley Merritt's 8th Army Corps, which arrived in Manila on July 31. His involvement in the war would be the highlight of his public career, and offers a useful lens on what happened there.

– and it’s timely today

AFP 8/30/2013

(http://news.yahoo.com/us-philippines-discuss-expanding-military-presence-071259169.html)

The United States and the Philippines are moving towards an agreement that will expand the American military's presence in the Philippines, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said Friday during a visit to Manila.

Hagel and President Benigno Aquino "reaffirmed the progress being made" in talks begun earlier this month to allow a bigger military footprint in the Philippines, the Pentagon chief said.

"This progress is welcome and encouraging. I noted that our negotiating teams are working hard to finish the framework agreement in the near future," he told reporters.

Hagel's optimistic comments appeared to open up the possibility that the negotiations, which resumed this week in the US capital, could be wrapped up in time for President Barack Obama's expected visit to Southeast Asia later this year.

An accord opening the way to a more visible role for the American military marks a shift in relations between the two countries, more than two decades after the United States closed down large bases amid anti-American sentiment.

Topical version of the aff solves

Orly Lobel, University of San Diego Assistant Professor of Law, 2007, The Paradox of Extralegal Activism: Critical Legal Consciousness and Transformative Politics,” 120 HARV. L. REV. 937, http://www.harvardlawreview.org/media/pdf/lobel.pdf

V. RESTORING CRITICAL OPTIMISM IN THE LEGAL FIELD

“La critique est aisée; l’art difficile.”

A critique of cooptation often takes an uneasy path. Critique has always been and remains not simply an intellectual exercise but a political and moral act. The question we must constantly pose is how critical accounts of social reform models contribute to our ability to produce scholarship and action that will be constructive. To critique the ability of law to produce social change is inevitably to raise the question of alternatives. In and of itself, the exploration of the limits of law and the search for new possibilities is an insightful field of inquiry. However, the contemporary message that emerges from critical legal consciousness analysis has often resulted in the distortion of the critical arguments themselves. This distortion denies the potential of legal change in order to illuminate what has yet to be achieved or even imagined. Most importantly, cooptation analysis is not unique to legal reform but can be extended to any process of social action and engagement. When claims of legal cooptation are compared to possible alternative forms of activism, the false necessity embedded in the contemporary story emerges — a story that privileges informal extralegal forms as transformative while assuming that a conservative tilt exists in formal legal paths. In the triangular conundrum of “law and social change,” law is regularly the first to be questioned, deconstructed, and then critically dismissed. The other two components of the equation — social and change — are often presumed to be immutable and unambiguous. Understanding the limits of legal change reveals the dangers of absolute reliance on one system and the need, in any effort for social reform, to contextualize the discourse, to avoid evasive, open-ended slogans, and to develop greater sensitivity to indirect effects and multiple courses of action. Despite its weaknesses, however, law is an optimistic discipline. It operates both in the present and in the future. Order without law is often the privilege of the strong. Marginalized groups have used legal reform precisely because they lacked power. Despite limitations, these groups have often successfully secured their interests through legislative and judicial victories. Rather than experiencing a disabling disenchantment with the legal system, we can learn from both the successes and failures of past models, with the aim of constantly redefining the boundaries of legal reform and making visible law’s broad reach.

## 1nr

The alternative’s method creates a politics of never-ending reform—a ceaseless commitment to transforming dominant structures that create oppression and thus identity. The permutation is impossible because the affirmative is premised on an internally coherent identity which forecloses engagement with others ---- they only focus on their identities as a means of hope – that locks in a reactionary identity.

Bhambra ‘10

Gurminder K Bhambra, University of Warwick, and Victoria Margree, University of Brighton, “Identity Politics and the Need for a ‘Tomorrow,” academia.edu

Conclusion: The Need for a Tomorrow

Social constructionist understandings of identity are often taken to be antithetical to forms of essentialism. However, to the extent that identities, even on the social constructionist account, are understood to be self-referential, they are therefore, posited in terms of a supposed **internal coherence,** rather than being about **engaging with others, learning, and potentially changing.** In this case, we would argue, coherence can then be seen as a form of **essentialism**. Brown’s understanding of identity as obtaining “a unifying coherence” (1995: 65), for example, does not acknowledge that it is the very attempt to create coherence that can lead to the removal of opportunities for dialogue within and across communities. If something is coherent, in its own terms, there is no overlap with others and no engagement with what is present or missing. Lack of integration, or dissension, can then appear to the identity group as **an external “threat”** to the identity in question, as opposed to being a measure of dialogue within and between communities making particular identity claims. This is, we believe, an unacknowledged danger haunting Brown’s account, since the “us” that she identifies in her examination of politicised identities is the specific “us” which is directly suffering. This focus on the specific “us” does not acknowledge the wider “us” who might potentially be engaged with the relief of that suffering; that is, Brown does not recognise here the overlapping epistemological communities that make up any “us”. The absence of such recognition is logically contradictory, since any claim to suffering is always implicitly an appeal to others to recognise their implication in its conditions. Political mobilisation around suffering engenders solidarities between those who are suffering and those who afford recognition of (and then action around) that suffering. Those who suffer generally claim their common humanity with others in asking for people to look beyond the specific circumstances of their suffering, and in doing so, the request is to address those specific circumstances on the basis of a humanity not bound to the circumstances. The mistake of some forms of identity politics, then, **is to associate identity with suffering.** While a recognition of historical (and contemporary) suffering is an important aspect of the political process of seeking redress for the conditions of suffering, it does not constitute identity singularly. “Wounded attachments”, we would argue, do not represent the general condition of politicised identities, but rather, are **problematic constructions of identities which fail to recognise** (or accept) **the processes of change associated with movements.** The accumulation of different sorts of challenges around similar issues generally leads to the gradual amelioration of the conditions which generated the identity (and the associated movement) in the first instance. If the emphasis in the movement is on identity then successful reform (even partial reform) reduces the injury and thus diminishes the power of the identity claim based upon that injury. This is because reform is necessarily uneven in terms of the impact it has. This then poses a problem for those within the movement who would wish the reforms to go further and who see in the reforms a weakening of the identity that they believe is a necessary prerequisite for political action. As they can no longer mobilise the injured identity – and the associated suffering – as common to all (and thus requiring address because of its generalised effect), there is often, then, a perceived need to privilege that suffering as particular and to institute a **politics of guilt** with regard to addressing it – truly the politics of ressentiment. The problems arise by insisting on the necessity of political action being constituted through **pre-existing identities and solidarities** (for example, those of being a woman). If, instead, it was recognised that equality for women is not separable from (or achievable separated from) wider issues of justice and equality within society then **reforms could be seen as steps towards equality**. A movement concerned with issues of social justice (of which gender justice is an integral aspect) would allow for **provisional reforms** to prevailing conditions of injustice without calling into question the basis for the movement – for there would always be more to be achieved.8 **Each achievement would** itself **necessitate further revision of what equality would look like**. And it would also necessitate revision of the particular aims that constitute the “identity” afforded by participating in that movement. In this way, identity becomes more appropriately understood as being, in part at least, about participating in a series of dialogues about what is desired **for the future** **in terms of** understandings of social **justice**. **Focusing on the future**, on how we would like things to be tomorrow, based on an understanding of where we are today, would allow for partial **reforms to be seen as** gains and not threats. It is only if one believes that political action can only occur in the context of identification of past injustices as opposed to future justice that one has a problem with (partial) reforms in the present. Political identity which exists only through an enunciation of its injury and does not seek to dissolve itself as an identity can lead to the **ossification of injured relations**. The “wounded attachment” occurs when the politicised identity can see no future without the injury **also constituting** an aspect of **that future**. Developing on the work of Brown, we would argue that not only does a “reformed” identity politics need to be based upon desire for the future, but that that desire should actually be a desire for the dissolution (in the future) of the identity claim. The complete success of the feminist movement, for instance, would mean that feminists no longer existed, as the conditions that caused people to become feminist had been addressed. Similarly, with the dalit movement, its success would be measured by the dissolution of the identity of “dalit” as a salient political category. There would be no loss here, only a gain. As we have argued, following Mohanty ([1993] 2000) and N elson (1993), it is participation in the processing of one’s own and other’s experiences into knowledge about the world, in the context of communities that negotiate epistemological premises, which confers a notion of politicised identity. Since it is an understanding of “tomorrow” (what that would be, and how it is to be achieved) that establishes one as, for example, a feminist, such an identity claim does not **exclude others** **from participation**, and it does not solicit the reification of identity around the fact of historical or contemporary suffering. By removing these obstacles to progress, the **“tomorrow**” that is the goal, is more readily achievable. Identity politics, then, “needs a tomorrow” in this sense: that the raison d’être of any politicised identity is the bringing about of a tomorrow in which the social injustices of the present have been overcome. But identity politics also needs that tomorrow – today – in the sense that politicised identities need to inscribe that tomorrow into their self-definition in the present, in order to avoid consolidating activity around the **maintenance of** the **identity** rather than the overcoming of the conditions that generated it. That the tomorrow to be inscribed – today – in the selfdefi nition of one’s political identity, is one in which that identity will no longer be required, is not a situation to be regretted, since it is rather the promise of success for any movement for justice.

**The alternative can ENCOMPASS their identities but rather than focus on it for hope --- we CHANNEL it towards a means of collective action for engaging politics CHALLENGE the squo**

Their conception of whiteness is our link—it creates a monolithic enemy that results in victim politics and turns the case.

hooks ‘12

bell, *Writing Beyond Race: Living Theory and Practice*, Routledge

To **refuse victimization** we must exercise the healing power of the mind. In his work on decolonization. Ivan Van Sertima continually insisted that both our minds and our imaginations have been colonized. This colonization of mind and imagination has been one of the **primary reasons** many black folks remain wedded to white supremacist thought and practice. There are so few psychological texts, self-help books, and or mental health therapies that teach disempowered black folks of all classes how to discipline the mind. When anyone embraces victimization, **they surrender control**. They have given their minds over to a system of thought and practice that will keep suffering alive. When an individual sees themselves as always and only a victim, they are often beset by intense and powerful emotions. In his book The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living, the Dalai Lama teaches: "We also often add to our pain and suffering by being overly sensitive, overreacting to minor things, and sometimes taking things too personally. We tend to take small things too seriously and blow them up out of proportion, while at the same time we often remain indifferent to the really important things, those things which have profound effects on our lives and long-term consequences and implications." Certainly, when we ponder why so many young black folk, many of whom come from affluent families where they received emotional care, have poor self-esteem and destructive habits of being, we need look no farther than the mind. **When any black person embraces the notion** that **the "white" world** **is an** all-powerful constant enemy, **they lose the will to live fully**. Let's be clear that **this thought is an aspect of white supremacist thinking.** Without mental programs that help black people decolonize and discipline the mind there **will be continued psychological confusion and suffering**. Holocaust survivors, survivors of genocidal attacks all over the world have identified the role the mind can play in allowing us to be self-actualized, to be compassionate, to find inner strength, to be peaceful. It is no accident that many citizens of our nation have looked to different spiritual paths, such as Buddhism, to teach us how to eliminate negative states of mind. Buddhism has helped me move beyond all politics of blame. It has offered a spiritual path to awakening that enables me to connect compassionately with myself and with other sentient beings.

Performance gives too much power to the audience because the performer is structurally blocked from controlling the (re)presentation of their representations. Appealing to the ballot turns over one’s identity to the reproductive economy that underpins liberalism.

Phelan ‘96

Peggy, chair of New York University's Department of Performance Studies, Unmarked: the politics of performance, 146-9

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Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to **enter the economy of reproduction** it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance’s being, like the ontology of subjectivityproposed here, becomes itself through disappearance. The pressures brought to bear on performance to succumb to thelaws of the reproductive economy are **enormous**. For only rarely in this culture is the “now” to which performance addresses its deepest questions valued. (This is why the now is supplemented and buttressedby the documenting camera, the video archive.) Performance occursover a time which will not be repeated. It can be performed again, butthis repetition itself marks it as “different.” The document of a performance then is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present. The other arts, especially painting and photography, are drawnincreasingly toward performance. The French-born artist Sophie Calle,for example, has photographed the galleries of the Isabella StewartGardner Museum in Boston. Several valuable paintings were stolen fromthe museum in 1990. Calle interviewed various visitors and membersof the muse um staff, asking them to describe the stolen paintings. She then transcribed these texts and placed them next to the photographs of the galleries. Her work suggests that the descriptions and memories of the paintings constitute their continuing “presence,” despite the absence of the paintings themselves. Calle gestures toward a notion of the interactive exchange between the art object and the viewer. While such exchanges are often recorded as the stated goals of museums and galleries, the institutional effect of the gallery often seems to put the masterpiece under house arrest, controlling all conflicting and unprofessional commentary about it. The speech act of memory and description (Austin’s constative utterance) becomes a performative expression when Calle places these commentaries within the representation of the museum. The descriptions fill in, and thus supplement (add to, defer, and displace) the stolen paintings. The factthat these descriptions vary considerably—even at times wildly—onlylends credence to the fact that the interaction between the art objectand the spectator is, essentially, performative—and therefore resistantto the claims of validity and accuracy endemic to the discourse of reproduction. While the art historian of painting must ask if thereproduction is accurate and clear, Calle asks where seeing and memoryforget the object itself and enter the subject’s own set of personalmeanings and associations. Further her work suggests that the forgetting(or stealing) of the object is a fundamental energy of its descriptiverecovering. The description itself does not reproduce the object, it ratherhelps us to restage and restate the effort to remember what is lost. Thedescriptions remind us how loss acquires meaning and generatesrecovery—not only of and for the object, but for the one who remembers.The disappearance of the object is fundamental to performance; itrehearses and repeats the disappearance of the subject who longs alwaysto be remembered. For her contribution to the Dislocations show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1991, Calle used the same idea but this time she asked curators, guards, and restorers to describe paintings that were on loan from the permanent collection. She also asked them to draw small pictures of their memories of the paintings. She then arranged the texts and pictures according to the exact dimensions of the circulating paintings and placed them on the wall where the actual paintings usually hang. Calle calls her piece Ghosts, and as the visitor discovers Calle’s work spread throughout the museum, it is as if Calle’s own eye is following and tracking the viewer as she makes her way through the museum.1 Moreover, Calle’s work seems to disappear because it is dispersed throughout the “permanent collection”—a collection which circulates despite its “permanence.” Calle’s artistic contribution is a kind of self-concealment in which she offers the words of others about other works of art under her own artistic signature. By making visible her attempt to offer what she does not have, what cannot be seen, Calle subverts the goal of museum display. She exposes what the museum does not have and cannot offer and uses that absence to generate her own work. By placing memories in the place of paintings, Calle asks that the ghosts of memory be seen as equivalent to “the permanent collection” of “great works.” One senses that if she asked the same people over and over about the same paintings, each time they would describe a slightly different painting. In this sense, Calle demonstrates the performative quality of all seeing.I Performance in a strict ontological sense is nonreproductive. It is this quality which makes performance the runt of the litter of contemporary art. Performance clogs the smooth machinery of reproductive representation necessary to the circulation of capital. Perhaps nowhere was the affinity between the ideology of capitalism and art made more manifest than in the debates about the funding policies for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).2 Targeting both photography and performance art, conservative politicians sought to prevent endorsing the “real” bodies implicated and made visible by these art forms. Performance implicates the real through the presence of living bodies. In performance art spectatorship there is an element of consumption: there are no left-overs, the gazing spectator must try to take everything in. Without a copy, live performance plunges into visibility—in a maniacally charged present—and disappears into memory, into the realm of invisibility and the unconscious where it eludes regulation and control. Performance resists the balanced circulations of finance. It saves nothing; it only spends. While photography is vulnerable to charges of counterfeiting and copying, performance art is vulnerable to charges of valuelessness and emptiness. Performance indicates the possibility of revaluing that emptiness; this potential revaluation gives performance art its distinctive oppositional edge.3 To attempt to write about the undocumentable event of performance is to invoke the rules of the written document and thereby alter the event itself. Just as quantum physics discovered that macro-instruments cannot measure microscopic particles without transforming those particles, so too must performance critics realize that the labor to write about performance (and thus to “preserve” it) is also a labor that fundamentally alters the event. It does no good, however, to simply refuse to write about performance because of this inescapable transformation. The challenge raised by the ontological claims of performance for writing is to re-mark again the performative possibilities of writing itself. The act of writing toward disappearance, rather than the act of writing toward preservation, must remember that the after-effect of disappearance is the experience of subjectivity itself. This is the project of Roland Barthes in both Camera Lucida and Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes. It is also his project in Empire of Signs, but in this book he takes the memory of a city in which he no longer is, a city from which he disappears, as the motivation for the search for a disappearing performative writing. The trace left by that script is the meeting-point of a mutual disappearance; shared subjectivity is possible for Barthes because two people can recognize the same Impossible. To live for a love whose goal is to share the Impossible is both a humbling project and an exceedingly ambitious one, for it seeks to find connection only in that which is no longer there. Memory. Sight. Love. It must involve a full seeing of the Other’s absence (the ambitious part), a seeing which also entails the acknowledgment of the Other’s presence (the humbling part). For to acknowledge the Other’s (always partial) presence is to acknowledge one’s own (always partial) absence. In the field of linguistics, the performative speech act shares with the ontology of performance the inability to be reproduced or repeated. “Being an individual and historical act, a performative utterance cannot be repeated. Each reproduction is a new act performed by someone who is qualified. Otherwise, the reproduction of the performative utterance by someone else necessarily transforms it into a constative utterance.”4 Writing, an activity which relies on the reproduction of the Same(the three letters cat will repeatedly signify the four-legged furry animalwith whiskers) for the production of meaning, can broach the frame of performance but cannot mimic an art that is nonreproductive. Themimicry of speech and writing, the strange process by which we put words in each other’s mouths and others’ words in our own, relies on a substitutional economy in which equivalencies are assumed and re-established. Performance refuses this system of exchange and resists the circulatory economy fundamental to it. **Performance honors the idea that a limited number of people in a specific time/space frame can have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace afterward**. **Writing about it** necessarily cancels the “tracelessness” inaugurated within this performative promise. Performance’s independence from mass reproduction, technologically, economically, and linguistically, is its greatest strength. But buffeted by the encroaching ideologies of capitaland reproduction, it frequently devalues this strength. Writing aboutperformance often, unwittingly, encourages this weakness and falls inbehind the drive of the document/ary. Performance’s challenge to writingis to discover a way for repeated words to become performative utterances, rather than, as Benveniste warned, constative utterances.

At: exclusion good

Politics rooted in the abstract affirmation difference produces political ambivalence, passivity, and recreates hierarchy

Thomas Nail, Post-doctoral Lecturer in European Philosophy at the University of Denver, 2013, Deleuze, Occupy, and the Actuality of Revolution, Theory & Event Volume 16, Issue 1

(1) Political Ambivalence

“Affirming Difference in the state of permanent revolution [affirmer la Différence dans l’état de révolution permanente],” as Deleuze says in Difference and Repetition (75/53),8 may escape the previous problems of vanguardism and the party-state, **but it also poses a new danger: that the “pure affirmation of Difference” will be ultimately** ambivalent. Revolution may provide a new non-representational space of liberty, or it may provide a ruptured “open” domain for a new discourse of rights and military occupation by the state, or it may merely reproduce a complicity with the processes of capitalist deterritorialization necessary for new capitalist reterritorializations. Slavoj Žižek, in particular, frequently attributes this capitalist ambivalence to Deleuze and Guattari’s politics (2004, 184). But to say, with Alain Badiou, that **affirming the** potentiality **for transformation as such is to affirm a “purely ideological radicality” that** “inevitably **changes over into its opposite**: **once the mass festivals of democracy and discourse are over, things make place for the modernist restoration of order** among workers and bosses,” would be to overstate the problem (Badiou and Balmès 1976, 83). Rather, it would be much more appropriate to say, with Paolo Virno, that “[t]he multitude is a form of being that can give birth to one thing but also to the other: ambivalence” (Virno 2003, 131). Accordingly, the affirmation of this ambivalence as a political commitment, and the “politico-ontological optimism and unapologetic vitalism” it assumes in Hardt, Negri, and Deleuze’s work, according to Bruno Bosteels, remains radically insufficient (2004, 95). While the purely creative power of the multitude may be the condition for global liberation from Empire, it is also the productive condition for Empire as well. With no clear political consistency to organize or motivate any particular political transformation “vitalist optimism” is politically ambivalent, speculative, and spontaneous. Showing the non-foundational or ungrounded nature of politics provides no more of a contribution for organized politics than does the creative potentiality of desire. “A subject’s intervention,” Bosteels suggests, “cannot consist merely in showing or recognizing the traumatic impossibility, void, or antagonism around which the situation as a whole is structured” (2004, 104). Rather, following Badiou, a “political organization is necessary in order for the intervention, as wager, to make a process out of the trajectory that goes from an interruption to a fidelity. In this sense, organization is nothing but the consistency of politics” (Badiou 1985, 12). And in so far as Deleuze and Guattari, and those inspired by their work, do not offer developed concepts of political consistency and organization that would bring differential multiplicities into specific political interventions and distributions, they remain, at most, ambivalent toward revolutionary politics. (2) Virtual Hierarchy In addition to this first danger of revolutionary ambivalence, Deleuze’s concept of revolution, according to Badiou and Hallward, risks a second danger; namely, that of creating a political hierarchy of virtual potential. Badiou argues at length in The Clamor of Being that, … contrary to all egalitarian or “communitarian” norms, Deleuze’s conception of thought is profoundly aristocratic. Thought only exists in a hierarchized space. This is because, for individuals to attain the point where they are seized by their preindividual determination and, thus, by the power of the One-All—of which they are, at the start, only meager local configurations—they have to go beyond their limits and endure the transfixion and disintegration of their actuality by infinite virtuality, which is actuality’s veritable being. And individuals are not equally capable of this. Admittedly, Being is itself neutral, equal, outside all evaluation … But ‘things reside unequally in this equal being’ (Deleuze 1994, 60/37). And, as a result, it is essential to think according to ‘a hierarchy which considers things and beings from the point of view of power’ (Deleuze 1994, 60/37; Badiou 1999, 12–13). **The political thrust of this argument is that, if we understand revolutionary change as the pure potential for change as such, and not** actual **change** for or against certain forms, **then, contrary to any kind of egalitarianism, there will instead** be a hierarchy of actual political beings that more or less participate in this degree of pure potential transformation. The more actual political beings renounce their specific and local determinations and affirm their participation in the larger processes of difference-in-itself, the more powerful they become. Thus, if the point of examining any local political intervention is in every case to show to what degree it renounces its concrete determinations and might “become other than it is” (as a virtuality or potentiality), there is, according to Badiou, a risk of “asceticism” and hierarchy in such a relationship of potential (Badiou 1999, 13). Similarly, Peter Hallward has argued that Deleuze’s political philosophy is “indifferent to the politics of this world” (2006, 162). Hallward claims that “once a social field is defined less by its conflicts and contradictions than by the lines of flight running through it” any distinctive space for political action can only be subsumed within the more general dynamics of creation, life, and potential transformation (2006, 62n16). And since these dynamics are “themselves anti-dialectical if not anti-relational, there can be little room in Deleuze’s philosophy for relations of conflict and solidarity” (2006, 162). If each concrete, localized, actual political being is important only in so far as it realizes a degree of pure potentiality of a virtual event, “and every mortal event in a single Event” (Deleuze 1990, 178/152), then the processional “telos” of absolute political deterritorialization is completely indifferent to the actual politics of this world (2006, 97). By valorizing this pure **potentiality** for transformation as such against all actual political determinations, Hallward argues, Deleuze is guilty of affirming an impossible utopianism. “By posing the question of politics in the starkly dualistic terms of war machine or state,” Hallward argues, “by posing it, in the end, in the apocalyptic terms of a new people and a new earth or else no people and no earth—the political aspect of Deleuze’s philosophy amounts to little more than utopian distraction” (2006, 162). (3) Subjective Paralysis The differential reading of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of revolution may be able to avoid the problem of representational subjectivity—that it can reject or affirm particular desires but never change the nature of the “self that desires”—but it does so only at the risk of diffusing the self into an endless multiplicity of impersonal drives: a self in perpetual transformation. This leads to the third danger, that of subjective paralysis. Firstly, to read Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of revolutionary subjectivity as the “simple fact of one's own existence as possibility or potentiality” (Agamben 1993, 43), or as Paul Patton calls it, one’s “critical freedom” (“the freedom to transgress the limits of what one is presently capable of being or doing, rather than just the freedom to be or do those things” (2000, 85) suggests an ambivalence of action. What are the conditions and factors by which one might decide to take an action or not? Emancipation and enslavement in this sense are merely just different things to be done. Secondly, without a pre-given unity of subjectivity, how do agents qua multiplicities deliberate between and distinguish (in themselves) different political decisions? Without the representational screen of reason, or the state-guaranteed grounds of political discourse, what might something like a dispute or agreement look like? If “becoming other is not a capacity liberated individuals possess to constitute themselves as autonomous singularities,” but “what defines ‘autonomy’ itself” (2006, 146), as Simon Tormey argues, then the political danger, according to Hallward, is that the subject is simply replaced by the larger impersonal process of transformation as such: “pure autonomy.” **The radical affirmation of the ambivalen**t and unlocalizable processes of subjective potentiality (qua pure multiplicities) **seems then to have nothing to contribute to an analysis of the basic function of participatory democracy and collective decision-making, which remains at** the core **of** many of **today’s radical political struggles** (See Starr, Martinez-Torres, and Rosset 2011). Insofar as a theory of subjectivity is defined only by its potential for transformation, it is stuck in a kind of paralysis of endless potential change no less disempowering than subjective stasis. Or, as Hallward frames this criticism, Deleuze “abandons the decisive subject in favor of our more immediate subjection to the imperative of creative life or thought” (2006, 163).

Demands for authenticity create a subject-object relationship that denies agency and overly-essentializes black life—it turns the case

Anyabwile ‘12

THABITI, Senior Pastor of First Baptist Church of Grand Cayman in the Grand Cayman Islands and a Council member with The Gospel Coalition, “Performing “Race” Sincerely: A Review of John L. Jackson’s “Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity”,” http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/thabitianyabwile/2012/08/29/performing-race-sincerely-or-authentically/?comments#comments

Second, Johnson distinguishes between “authenticity,” which figures prominently popular notions of race and in a lot of ethnographic studies of race, and “sincerity,” which he prefers as a lens onto racial identity. While we commonly use the words as synonyms, Johnson uses the words’ etymology to unveil important conceptual contrasts: Sincerity… comes from the Latin term sincerus (originally applied to things, not people), meaning without wax, unadulterated, not doctored. Authenticity, however, derives from the Greek authenteo: to dominate or have authority over, even to kill…. Sincerity was once about things, and authenticity about relationships between people. In the present, their connotations have been reversed. To talk exclusively in terms of racial authenticity is to risk **ossifying race** into a simple subject-object equation, reducing **people** to little more than **objects of racial discourse**, **characters in racial scripts**, dismissing race as only and exclusively the primary cause of social domination and death. At the same time, this position kills some of what is most interesting about the hows and whys of racial living (p. 15). Why does the notion of “racial authenticity” kill? According to Johnson, “Authenticity conjures up images of people, **as animate subjects**, verifying inanimate objects. Authenticity presupposes this kind of relationship between an **independent, thinking subject** and a dependent, unthinking thing. The defining association is one of **objectification**, “thingification”: a specialist applying his or her expertise to a seventeenth-century silver candlestick, or a newly discovered Picasso, or any item dusted off from a dead grandfather’s attic and brought before the appraisers of PBS’ Antiques Roadshow. Authenticity presupposes a relation between subjects (who authenticate) and objects (dumb, mute, and inorganic) that are interpreted and analyzed from outside, **because they cannot simply speak for themselves**” (pp. 14-15). So, authenticity kills because it first reduces the observed person(s) to **object status** then renders a verdict on their “realness” while disallowing them subjective, interior speech. In the authenticator’s hand/mind is a script that they apply to the behavior, speech, and ways of the observed. Those who conform to the script are deemed authentic and those who do not conform are rejected as inauthentic, fake, not real. Here’s where our racial scripts (“Real Black people are like…” or “Real White people are like…”) become prisons. Here’s where the gaze of others become the **warden’s** incarcerating **stares**, judgments and executions based not on what a person is subjectively but on what they’re perceived to be objectively (as objects). What Difference Does All This Make? How does a shift to “racial sincerity” help? Johnson contends that **sincerity** establishes a subject-to-subject relationship. Objects cannot be sincere even if they are authentic. Only subjects can be sincere, which requires we allow the person the freedom to conform to their deeper personal selves. Sincerity “presumes one another’s humanity, interiority, and subjectivity” (p. 15). Sincerity requires a look at the **person** rather than the scripts. Now here is the trick, captured well in a George Burns quote about Hollywood: “Sincerity is key. If you can fake that, you’ve got it made.” Even though sincerity undermines the scripts of racial authenticity, sincerity itself may be faked. Race becomes so many layers of performance, compliance to external social scripts and even a drama of making and re-making the interior self (sincerity). Johnson maintains that we can never quite be sure that what we’re observing is, in fact, “the real thing.” We’re prone to two mistakes: either rejecting as inauthentic someone who is indeed very sincere or accepting as authentic someone who performs the script insincerely. ”We cannot take racial performances at face value” (p. 18). Think back to Mishna Wolff’s father “Wolfy.” He’s a white-skinned man convinced he’s “Black.” He walks, talks, and acts “Black,” that is, according to the social script titled “Blackness.” She contends that he was not pretending; it’s who he really was. If “real blackness” requires black skin or genealogy, then clearly Wolfy is not authentic. If, however, sincerity matters most then Wolfy has a good case for his Black bona fides, as does Eminem and a few others we might consider. These white guys who “keep it real” earn their proverbial “ghetto pass” not simply as a matter of trying to obey the script but as a consequence of perceived sincerity. That’s why Eminem receives a pass and Vanilla Ice doesn’t it. Though Ice could in some sense mimic the script, he never presented as sincere. Johnson uses a very powerful example of this tension between authentic and sincere when he recalls the story of Leo Felton. Felton made national media when arrested as a neo-Nazi skinhead passing counterfeit bills in a scheme to destroy Jewish monuments throughout the city. After his arrest, police determined that the light-skinned would-be Italian Felton was actually the son of a Black man and a white mother. ”The Aryan racist was black!” Felton not only passed for white, but for a white neo-Nazi skinhead that attacked Blacks and Jews. How could that be? Felton later told an interviewer that all his life he felt white inside. In his own mind, Felton lived the deeper truth of racial sincerity–an ugly sincerity to be sure. The script of authenticity would falsify Felton on both tests of whiteness and blackness, but Felton had a truth, a sincerity, that couldn’t be measured by the external scrips of authenticity. And, as John points out, “One of the wonderfully troubling ironies in all of this… is that Felton can maintain this spiritualist reading of his own racial sincerity at the same time that his record of physical violence against other people is steeped in the very racial materialism he otherwise disavows” (p. 21). In other words, Felton could fall back on “racial sincerity” in his self-understanding but applied the meaner logic of “racial authenticity” in his violence against Blacks and Jews. Felton illustrates how “authenticity and sincerity are at each other’s throats;” they are “at war with one another, battling for hegemony and explanatory efficacy vis-à-vis everyday displays of racial self-making” (pp. 18, 21). In this battle, “Authenticity attempts to domesticate sincerity, rein it in, control its excesses” (pp. 17-18). But Johnson has given us a tool for resisting the soul-killing, identity-stealing weaponry of authenticity. He’s helped us see that a less-fettered sincerity holds promise for **freeing us from the prison of the Authenticity Police.** He joins others in shifting the ground of racial identity from ontology and essentialism to something resembling Tourè’s **individualism**, framed here as sincerity. Johnson’s Real Black becomes another crack in the defenses of the retreating, embattled phalanx of racial hegemony. Should the ground shift **from authenticity** to sincerity we might just see **greater gains** on the stubborn ground of racial freedom.

“Privilege” is an empty signifier that installs a reactionary identity politics—this collapses common goals and entrenches the structural factors that create privilege in the first place.

Rob the Idealist, Carleton College, JD candidate, 10/1/13, Tim Wise & The Failure of Privilege Discourse, www.orchestratedpulse.com/2013/10/tim-wise-failure-privilege-discourse/

I don’t find it meaningful to criticize Tim Wise the person and judge whether he’s living up to some anti-racist bona fides. Instead, I choose to focus on the paradigm of “White privilege” upon which his work is based, and its conceptual and practical limitations. **Although the personal is political, not all politics is personal; we have to attack** systems. To paraphrase the urban poet and philosopher Meek Mill: there are levels to this shit. How I Define Privilege There are power structures that shape individuals’ lived experiences. Those structures provide and withhold resources to people based on factors like class, disability status, gender, and race. It’s not a “benefit” to receive resources from an unjust order because ultimately, injustice is cannibalistic. Slavery binds the slave, but destroys the master. So, the point then becomes not to assimilate the “underprivileged”, but to instead eradicate the power structures that create the privileges in the first place. The conventional wisdom on privilege often says that it’s “benefits” are “unearned”. However, this belief ignores the reality and history that privilege is earned and maintained through violence. Systemic advantages are allocated and secured as a class, and simply because an individual hasn’t personally committed the acts, it does not render their class dominance unearned. The history and modern reality of violence is why Tim Wise’ comparison between whiteness and tallness fails. White supremacy is not some natural evolution, nor did it occur by happenstance. White folks \*murdered\* people for this thing that we often call “White privilege”; it was bought and paid for by blood and terror. White supremacy is not some benign invisible knapsack. The same interplay between violence and advantage is true of any systemic hierarchy (class, gender, disability, etc). Being tall, irrespective of its advantages, does not follow that pattern of violence. Privilege is Failing Us **Unfortunately, I think our use of the term “privilege” is no longer a productive way for us to gain a thorough understanding of systemic injustice, nor is it helping us to develop collective strategies to dismantle those systems**. Basically, I never want to hear the word “privilege” again because the term is so thoroughly misused at this point that it does more harm than good. Andrea Smith, in the essay “The Problem with Privilege”, outlines the pitfalls of misapplied privilege theory. Those who had little privilege did not have to confess and were in the position to be the judge of those who did have privilege. Consequently, people **aspired to be oppressed**. Inevitably, those with more privilege would develop **new** heretofore unknown **forms of oppression** from which they suffered… Consequently, the goal became not to actually end oppression but to be as oppressed as possible. **These rituals** often **substituted confession for political movement-building**. Andrea Smith, The Problem with Privilege Dr. Tommy Curry says it more bluntly, “It’s not genius to say that in an oppressive society there are benefits to being in the superior class instead of the inferior one. That’s true in any hierarchy, that’s not an ‘aha’ moment.” Conceptually, privilege is best used when narrowly focused on explaining how structures generally shape experiences. However, **when we overly personalize the problem, then privilege becomes a tit-for-tat exercise in blame, shame, and guilt**. In its worst manifestations, this dynamic becomes “oppression Olympics” and people tally perceived life advantages and identities in order **to invalidate one another**. At best, we treat structural injustice as a personal problem, and moralizing exercises like “privilege confessions” inadequately address the nexus between systemic power and individual behavior. The undoing of privilege occurs **not by** individuals confessing their privileges or trying to think themselves into a new subject position, but through the creation of collective structures that dismantle the systems that enable these privileges. The activist genealogies that produced this response to racism and settler colonialism were not initially focused on racism as a problem of individual prejudice. Rather, the purpose was for individuals to recognize how they were shaped by structural forms of oppression. Andrea Smith, The Problem with Privilege Bigger than Tim Wise However, the problem with White privilege isn’t simply that Tim Wise, a white man, can build a career off of Black struggles. As I’ve already said, White people need to talk to White people about the historical and social construction of their racial identities and power, and the foundation for that conversation often comes from past Black theory and political projects. The problem for me is that **privilege work has become a cottage industry of self-help moralizing that** in no way attacks **the systemic ills that create the personal injustices in the first place**. A substantive critique of privilege requires us to get beyond identity politics. It’s not about good people and bad people; it’s a bad system. It’s not just White people that participate in the White privilege industry, although not everyone equally benefits/profits (see: Tim Wise). Dr. Tommy Curry takes elite Black academics to task for their role in profiting from the White privilege industry while offering no challenge to White supremacy. These conversations about White privilege are not conversations about race, and certainly not about racism; it’s a business where Blacks market themselves as racial therapists for White people… The White privilege discourse became a bourgeois distraction. **It’s a tool that we use to morally condemn whites for not supporting the political goals of** elite black academics that take the vantages of white notions of virtue and reformism and persuade departments, journals, and presses into making concessions for the benefit of a select species of Black intellectuals in the Ivory Tower, without seeing that the white racial vantages that these Black intellectuals claim they’re really interested in need to be dissolved, **need to be attacked** all the way **to the** very **bottom of American society**. Dr. Tommy Curry, Radio Interview The truth is that a lot of people, **marginalized groups included**, simply want more access to existing systems of power. They don’t want to challenge and push beyond these systems; they just want to participate. **So if we continue to play identity politics and persist with a personal privilege view of power, then** we will lose the struggle. Barack Obama is president, yet White supremacy marches on, and often with his help (record deportations, expanded a drone war based on profiling, fought on behalf of US corporations to repeal a Haitian law that raised the minimum wage). Adolph Reed, writing in 1996, predicted the quagmire of identity politics in the Age of Obama. In Chicago, for instance, we’ve gotten a foretaste of the new breed of foundation-hatched black communitarian voices; one of them, a smooth Harvard lawyer with impeccable do-good credentials and vacuous-to-repressive neoliberal politics, has won a state senate seat on a base mainly in the liberal foundation and development worlds. His fundamentally bootstrap line was softened by a patina of the rhetoric of authentic community, talk about meeting in kitchens, small-scale solutions to social problems, and the predictable elevation of process over program — the point where identity politics converges with old-fashioned middle-class reform in favoring form over substance. I suspect that his ilk is the wave of the future in U.S. black politics. Adolph Reed Jr., Class Notes: Posing As Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene Although it has always been the case, Obama’s election and subsequent presidency has made it starkly clear that it’s not just White people that can perpetuate White supremacy. Systems of oppression condition all members of society to accept systemic injustice, and there are (unequal) incentives for both marginalized and dominant groups to perpetuate these structures. Our approaches to injustice must reflect this reality. **This isn’t a naïve plea for “unity”,** **nor am I saying that talking about identities**/experiences **is** **inherently “divisive**”. Many of these privilege discussions use empathy to build personal and collective character, and there certainly should be space for us to work together to improve/heal ourselves and one another. People will always make mistakes and our spaces have to be flexible enough to allow for reconciliation. Though we don’t have to work with persistently abusive people who refuse to redirect their behavior, **there’s a difference between establishing boundaries and puritanism**. Fighting systemic marginalization and exploitation requires more than good character, and we cannot fetishize personal morals over collective action.