### Cooption

#### Trading autobiographical narrative for the ballot commodifies one’s identity and has limited impact on the culture that one attempt’s to reform – when autobiographical narrative “wins,” it subverts its own most radical intentions by becoming an exemplar of the very culture under indictment

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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

#### Even if their best intention is to resist the liberal subject, autobiography is understood by its consuming audience as the assertion of the classic autonomous subject – this subverts the political potential of performance by rendering one’s experience legible to the terms of liberalism. This recreates the violence of liberalism that is the root of Western conquest

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The outsider narratives do not reflect on another feature of autobiographical discourse that is perhaps the most significant obstacle to their goal to bring to law an understanding of the human self that will supersede the liberal individual. Contrary to the outsiders' claim that their personalized discourse infuses law with their distinctive experiences and political perspectives, numerous historians and critics of autobiography have insisted that those who participate in autobiographical discourse speak not in a different voice, but in a common voice that reflects their membership in a culture devoted to liberal values. n206 As Sacvan Bercovitch puts it, American cultural ideals, including specifically the mythic connection between the "heroic individual ... [and] the values of free enterprise," are "epitomized in autobiography." n207 In his seminal essay on the subject, Professor Georges Gusdorf makes an observation that seems like a prescient warning to outsiders who would appropriate autobiography as their voice. He remarks that the practice of writing about one's own self reflects a belief in the autonomous individual, which is "peculiar to Western man, a concern that has been of good use in his systematic conquest of the [\*1285] universe and that he has communicated to men of other cultures; but those men will thereby have been annexed by a sort of intellectual colonizing to a mentality that was not their own." n208 Similarly, Albert Stone, a critic of American autobiography, argues that autobiographical performances celebrate the Western ideal of individualism, "which places the self at the center of its world." n209 Stone begins to elucidate the prescriptive character of autobiographical discourse as he notes with wonder "the tenacious social ideal whose persistence is all the more significant when found repeated in personal histories of Afro-Americans, immigrants, penitentiary prisoners, and others whose claims to full individuality have often been denied by our society." n210¶ Precisely because it appeals to readers' fascination with the self-sufficiency, resiliency and uniqueness of the totemic individual privileged by liberal political theory, there is a risk that autobiographical discourse is a fallible, even co-opted, instrument for the social reforms envisioned by the outsiders. By affirming the myths of individual success in our culture, autobiography reproduces the [\*1286] political, economic, social and psychological structures that attend such success. n211 In this light, the outsider autobiographies unwittingly deflect attention from collective social responsibility and thwart the development of collective solutions for the eradication of racist and sexist harms. Although we may suspect in some cases that the author's own sense of self was shaped by a community whose values oppose those of liberal individualism, her decision to register her experience in autobiographical discourse will have a significant effect on the self she reproduces. n212 Her story will solicit the public's attention to the life of one individual, and it will privilege her individual desires and rights above the needs and obligations of a collectivity.¶ Moreover, literary theorists have remarked the tendency of autobiographical discourse to override radical authorial intention. Even where the autobiographer self-consciously determines to resist liberal ideology and represents her life story as the occasion to announce an alternative political theory, "the relentless individualism of the genre subordinates" her political critique. n213 Inevitably, at least within American culture, the personal narrative engrosses the readers' imagination. Fascinated by the travails and triumphs of the developing autobiographical self, readers tend to construe the text's political and social observations only as another aspect of the author's personality.¶ Paradoxically, although autobiography is the product of a culture that cultivates human individuality, the genre seems to make available only a limited number of autobiographical protagonists. n214 Many theorists have noticed that when an author assumes the task of defining her own, unique subjectivity, she invariably reproduces herself as a character with whom culture already is well-acquainted. n215 While a variety of forces coerce the autobiographer [\*1287] to conform to culturally sanctioned human models, n216 the pressures exerted by the literary market surely play a significant role. The autobiographer who desires a material benefit from her performance must adopt a persona that is intelligible, if not enticing, to her audience. n217 As I will illustrate in the sections that follow, the outsider narratives capitalize on, rather than subvert, autobiographical protagonists that serve the values of liberalism.

#### Performance is not a mode of resistance – it 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 is a way of turning over one’s identity to the same reproductive economy that underwrites liberalism

Phelan 96—chair of New York University's Department of Performance Studies (Peggy, Unmarked: the politics of performance, ed published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005, 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 147 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. 148 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.”4 149 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.

#### The judge cannot escape their own privilege, assuming that you can to objectively evaluate their argument reifies the myth of the rational subject

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“Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy,” Harvard Educational Review 59:3

When educational researchers writing about critical pedagogy fail to examine the implications of the gendered, raced, and classed teacher and student for the theory of critical pedagogy, they reproduce, by default, the category of generic "critical teacher"—a specific form of the generic human that underlies classical liberal thought. Like the generic human, the generic critical teacher is not, of course, generic at all. Rather, the term defines a discursive category predicated on the current mythical norm, namely: young. White. Christian, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied, thin, rational man. Gender, race, class, and other differences become only variations on or additions to the generic human —"underneath, we are all the same."\*' But voices of students and professors of difference solicited by critical pedagogy are not additions to that norm, but oppositional challenges that require a dismantling of the mythical norm and its uses as well as alternatives to it. There has been no consideration of how voices of, for example. White women, students of color, disabled students. White men against masculinist culture, and fat students will necessarily be constructed in opposition to the teacher/ institution when they try to change the power imbalances they inhabit in their daily lives, including their lives in schools. Critical pedagogues speak of student voices as "sharing" their experiences and understandings of oppression with other students and with the teacher in the interest of "expanding the possibilities of what it is to be human."\*' Yet White women, women of color, men of color, White men against masculinist culture, fat people, gay men and lesbians, people with disabilities, and Jews do not speak of the oppressive formations that condition their lives in the spirit of "sharing." Rather, the speech of oppositional groups is a "talking back." a "defiant speech" that is constructed within communities of resistant and is a condition of survival

#### Any argument that says they’re not mutually exclusive with a policy prescription isn’t substantiated with any evidence – they just say we should speak out as a coping mechanism without any evidence and their methodology assures they only gain rights to become what is currently the white upper class straight able bodied male---the critique alone is necessary to solve

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While identity politics is generally subsumed to a more material analysis in England and Europe, in the United States, identity politics is linked to a larger array of political movements, sometimes referred to as the Rainbow Coalition, to use Jesse Jackson's term for the coalition that supported his presidential bid. However, in reality, that coalition in the United States has been one in name only with the different identity groups clashing on tactics and agendas, offering a fantasy of cohesion without actually creating one. The one thing these groups have in common is the wish to have the full rights of any citizen. Indeed, in a bourgeois democracy, the issue of rights is often regarded as paramount. Yet a rights-based approach, connected with empowerment, will necessarily lead to quite a limited and conservative goal of making sure that each disenfranchised group has the rights of white middle-class males. This goal, according to Brown (1995), "only preserves capitalism from critique ... [and] sustains the invisibility and in- articulateness of class" (p. 61). Although a truly just government should establish a parity of interests for all identity groups, the larger goal would be to place the bar rather higher than set for the projected fantasy of the "middle class" in bourgeois democracies. Indeed, one can argue that, historically, the emphasis on rights, as opposed to economic inequalities, was ideologically coterminous with the foundation of Western democracy.'

### T/O

#### Identity politics function on a circular logic; one identifies a group as ‘hegemonic’ and then valorizes the qualities the hegemonic group has bestowed upon them, without questioning the validity of this definition process in the slightest, instead of researching the conditions that create poverty, violence, racism and patriarchy they resort to calls to validate their personal experience. This hampers agency by offering false hope for change that ultimately collapses when pressed on what creates the material conditions for oppression and what politics are needed to change it.

Gitlin 97—sociology, Columbia (Todd, The anti-political populism of cultural studies, Dissent; Spring, Vol. 44, Iss. 2; p 77, ProQuest)

From the late 1960s onward, as I have said, the insurgent energy was to be found in movements that aimed to politicize specific identities-racial minorities, women, gays. If the "collective behavior" school of once-conventional sociology had grouped movements in behalf of justice and democratic rights together with fads and fashions, cultusral studies now set out to separate movements from fads, to take seriously the accounts of movement participants themselves, and thereby to restore the dignity of the movements only to end up, in the 1980s, linking movements with fads by finding equivalent dignity in both spheres, so that, for example, dressing like Madonna might be upgraded to an act of "resistance" equivalent to demonstrating in behalf of the right to abortion, and watching a talk show on family violence was positioned on the same plane. In this way, cultural studies extended the New Left symbiosis with popular culture. Eventually, the popular culture of marginal groups (punk, reggae, disco, feminist poetry, hip-hop) was promoted to a sort of counterstructure of feeling, and even, at the edges, a surrogate politics-a sphere of thought and sensibility thought to be insulated from the pressures of hegemonic discourse, of instrumental reason, of economic rationality, of class, gender, and sexual subordination. The other move in cultural studies was to claim that culture continued radical politics by other means. The idea was that cultural innovation was daily insinuating itself into the activity of ordinary people. Perhaps the millions had not actually been absorbed into the hegemonic sponge of mainstream popular culture. Perhaps they were freely dissenting. If "the revolution" had receded to the point of invisibility, it would be depressing to contemplate the victory of a hegemonic culture imposed by strong, virtually irresistible media. How much more reassuring to detect "resistance" saturating the pores of everyday life! In this spirit, there emerged a welter of studies purporting to discover not only the "active" participation of audiences in shaping the meaning of popular culture, but the "resistance" of those audiences to hegemonic frames of interpretation in a variety of forms-news broadcasts (Dave Morley, The `Nationwide ' Audience, 1980); romance fiction (Janice Radway, Reading the Romance, 1984); television fiction (Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz, The Export of Meaning, 1990; Andrea Press, Women Watching Television, 1991); television in general (John Fiske, Television Culture, 1987); and many others. Thus, too, the feminist fascination with the fictions and talk shows of daytime "women's television"-in this view, the dismissal of these shows as "trivial," "banal," "soap opera," and so on, follows from the patriarchal premise that what takes place within the four walls of the home matters less than what takes place in a public sphere established (not coincidentally) for the convenience of men. Observing the immensity of the audiences for Oprah Winfrey and her legions of imitators, many in cultural studies upended the phenomenon by turning the definitions around. The largely female audiences for these shows would no longer be dismissed as distracted voyeurs, but praised as active participants in the exposure and therefore politicizing of crimes like incest, spousal abuse, and sexual molestation. These audiences would no longer be seen simply as confirming their "normality" with a safe, brief, well bounded, vicarious acquaintanceship with deviance. They could be understood as an avant-garde social movement. Above all, in a word, cultural studies has veered into populism. Against the unabashed elitism of conventional literary and art studies, cultural studies affirms an unabashed populism in which all social activities matter, all can be understood, all contain cues to the social nature of human beings. The object of attention is certified as worthy of such not by being "the best that has been thought and said in the world" but by having been thought and said by or for "the people"-period. The popularity of popular culture is what makes it interesting-and not only as an object of study. It is the populism if not the taste of the analyst that has determined the object of attention in the first place. The sociological judgment that popular culture is important to people blurs into a critical judgment that popular culture must therefore be valuable. To use one of the buzzwords of "theory," there is a "slippage" from analysis to advocacy, defense, upward "positioning." Cultural studies often claims to have overthrown hierarchy, but what it actually does is invert it. What now certifies worthiness is the popularity of the object, not its formal qualities. If the people are on the right side, then what they like is good. This tendency in cultural studies-I think it remains the main line-lacks irony. One purports to stand four-square for the people against capitalism, and comes to echo the logic of capitalism. The consumer sovereignty touted by a capitalist society as the grandest possible means for judging merit finds a reverberation among its ostensible adversaries. Where the market flatters the individual, cultural studies flatters the group. What the group wants, buys, demands is ipso facto the voice of the people. Where once Marxists looked to factory organization as the prefiguration of "a new society in the shell of the old," today they tend to look to sovereign culture consumers. David Morley, one of the key researchers in cultural studies, and one of the most reflective, has himself deplored this tendency in recent audience studies. He maintains that to understand that "the commercial world succeeds in producing objects. . . which do connect with the lived desires of popular audiences" is "by no means necessarily to fall into the trap . . . of an uncritical celebration of popular culture." But it is not clear where to draw the line against the celebratory tendency when one is inhibited from doing so by a reluctance to criticize the cultural dispositions of the groups of which one approves. Unabashedly, the populism of cultural studies prides itself on being political. In the prevailing schools of cultural studies, to study culture is not so much to try to grasp cultural processes but to choose sides or, more subtly, to determine whether a particular cultural process belongs on the side of society's angels. An aura of hope surrounds the enterprise, the hope (even against hope) of an affirmative answer to the inevitable question: Will culture ride to the rescue of the cause of liberation? There is defiance, too, as much as hope. The discipline means to cultivate insubordination. On this view, marginalized groups in the populace continue to resist the hegemonic culture. By taking defiant popular culture seriously, one takes the defiers seriously and furthers their defiance. Cultural studies becomes "cult studs." It is charged with surveying the culture, assessing the hegemonic import of cultural practices and pinpointing their potentials for "resistance." Is this musical style or that literary form "feminist" or "authentically Latino"? The field of possibilities is frequently reduced to two: for or against the hegemonic. But the nature of that hegemony, in its turn, is usually defined tautologically: that culture is hegemonic that is promoted by "the ruling group" or "the hegemonic bloc," and by the same token, that culture is "resistant" that is affirmed by groups assumed (because of class position, gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, and so on) to be "marginalized" or "resistant." The process of labeling is circular, since it has been predetermined whether a particular group is, in fact, hegemonic or resistant. The populism of cultural studies is fundamental to its allure, and to the political meaning its adherents find there, for cultural studies bespeaks an affirmation of popularity tout court. To say that popular culture is "worth attention" in the scholarly sense is, for cultural studies, to say something pointed: that the people who render it popular are not misguided when they do so, not fooled, not dominated, not distracted, not passive. If anything, the reverse: the premise is that popular culture is popular because and only because the people find in it channels of desire pleasure, initiative, freedom. It is this premise that gives cultural studies its aura of political engagement-or at least political consolation. To unearth reason and value, brilliance and energy in popular culture is to affirm that the people have not been defeated. The cultural student, singing their songs, analyzing their lyrics, at the same time sings their praises. However unfavorable the balance of political forces, people succeed in living lives of vigorous resistance! Are the communities of African-Americans or AfroCaribbeans suffering? Well, they have rap! (Leave aside the question of whether all of them want rap.) The right may have taken possession of 10 Downing Street, the White House, and Congress-and as a result of elections, embarrassingly enough!-but at least one is engage in cultural studies. Consolation: here is an explanation for the rise of academic cultural studies during precisely the years when the right has held political and economic power longer and more consistently than at any other time in more than a half century. Now, in effect, "the cultural is political," and more, it is regarded as central to the control of political and economic resources. The control of popular culture is held to have become decisive in the fate of contemporary societies-or at least it is the sphere in which opposition can find footing, find breathing space, rally the powerless, defy the grip of the dominant ideas, isolate the powers that be, and prepare for a "war of position" against their dwindling ramparts. On this view, to dwell on the centrality of popular culture is more than an academic's way of filling her hours; it is a useful certification of the people and their projects. To put it more neutrally, the political aura of cultural studies is supported by something like a "false consciousness" premise: the analytical assumption that what holds the ruling groups in power is their capacity to muffle, deform, paralyze, or destroy contrary tendencies of an emotional or ideological nature. By the same token, if there is to be a significant "opposition," it must first find a base in popular culture-and first also turns out to be second, third, and fourth, since popular culture is so much more accessible, so much more porous, so much more changeable than the economic and political order. With time, what began as compensation hardened-became institutionalized-into a tradition. Younger scholars gravitated to cultural studies because it was to them incontestable that culture was politics. To do cultural studies, especially in connection with identity politics, was the politics they knew. The contrast with the rest of the West is illuminating. In varying degrees, left-wing intellectuals in France, Italy, Scandinavia, Germany, Spain and elsewhere retain energizing attachments to Social Democratic, Green, and other left-wing parties. There, the association of culture with excellence and traditional elites remains strong. But in the Anglo-American world, including Australia, these conditions scarcely obtain. Here, in a discouraging time, popular culture emerges as a consolation prize. (The same happened in Latin America, with the decline of left-wing hopes.) The sting fades from the fragmentation of the organized left, the metastasis of murderous nationalism, the twilight of socialist dreams virtually everywhere. Class inequality may have soared, ruthless individualism may have intensified, the conditions of life for the poor may have worsened, racial tensions may have mounted, unions and social democratic parties may have weakened or reached an impasse, but never mind. Attend to popular culture, study it with sympathy, and one need not dwell on unpleasant realities. One need not be unduly vexed by electoral defeats. One need not be preoccupied by the ways in which the political culture's center of gravity has moved rightward-or rather, one can put this down to the iron grip of the established media institutions. One need not even be rigorous about what one opposes and what one proposes in its place. Is capitalism the trouble? Is it the particular form of capitalism practiced by multinational corporations in a deregulatory era? Is it patriarchy (and is that the proper term for a society that has seen an upheaval in relations between women and men in the course of a half-century)? Racism? Antidemocracy? Practitioners of cultural studies, like the rest of the academic left, are frequently elusive. Speaking cavalierly of "opposition" and "resistance" permits-rather, cultivates-a certain sloppiness of thinking, making it possible to remain "left" without having to face the most difficult questions of political selfdefinition. The situation of cultural studies conforms to the contours of our political moment. It confirms-and reinforces-the current paralysis: the incapacity of social movements and dissonant sensibilities to imagine effective forms of public engagement. It substitutes an obsession with popular culture for coherent economic-political thought or a connection with mobilizable populations outside the academy and across identity lines. One must underscore that this is not simply because of cultural studies' default. The default is an effect more than a cause. It has its reasons. The odds are indeed stacked against serious forward motion in conventional politics. Political power is not only beyond reach, but functional majorities disdain it, finding the government and all its works contemptible. Few of the central problems of contemporary civilization are seriously contested within the narrow band of conventional discourse. Unconventional politics, such as it is, is mostly fragmented and self-contained along lines of racial, gender, and sexual identities. One cannot say that cultural studies diverts energy from a vigorous politics that is already in force. Still, insofar as cultural studies makes claims for itself as an insurgent politics, the field is presumptuous and misleading. Its attempt to legitimize the ecstasies of the moment confirms the collective withdrawal from democratic hope. Seeking to find political energies in audiences who function as audiences, rather than in citizens functioning as citizens, the dominant current in cultural studies is pressed willy-nilly toward an uncritical celebration of technological progress. It offers no resistance to the primacy of visual and nonlinear culture over the literary and linear. To the contrary: it embraces technological innovation as soon as the latest developments prove popular. It embraces the sufficiency of markets; its main idea of the intellect's democratic commitment is to flatter the audience. Is there a chance of a modest redemption? Perhaps, if we imagine a harder headed, less wishful cultural studies, free of the burden of imagining itself to be a political practice. A chastened, realistic cultural studies would divest itself of political pretensions. It would not claim to be politics. It would not mistake the academy for the larger society. It would be less romantic about the world-and about itself. Rigorous practitioners of cultural studies should be more curious about the world that remains to be researched and changed. We would learn more about politics, economy, and society, and in the process, appreciate better what culture, and cultural study, do not accomplish. If we wish to do politics, let us organize groups, coalitions, demonstrations, lobbies, whatever; let us do politics. Let us not think that our academic work is already that.

#### Alternative/Role of the Ballot

#### Engaging in politics around group identifications and personal experience freezes identity categories as created by white cultures of imperialism. Their methodology at best can cope with oppressive power structures, and at worst actively reinforce and invigorate them.

#### We should NOT ever forget about wounded attachments We should hear stories of victimization and acknowledge the multiplicities of privilege that exist within our identities---but you should not use your ballot to affirm them unless they are tied to a political proposition in terms of the resolution, shifting language from "I am" to the language of "I want” is crucial to prevent a psychology of constant conflict

Minow 96 (Martha Prof of Law and Dean @ Harvard University, “SPEECH: Not Only for Myself: Identity, Politics, and Law,” Oregon Law Review 75 Or. L. Rev. 647 Lexis)

To identify fluidity, change, border-crossing, and unstable categories is not to deny the real force and power that some people have accorded group labels and categories, to the clear detriment of others. 59 What else could explain a regime that, in historian Barbara Fields's words, "considers a white woman capable of giving birth to a black child but denies that a black woman can give birth to a white child"? 60 As another historian, David Hollinger, puts it in his recent book, Post-Ethnic America, "Racism is real, but races are not." 61 The power to create groups and oppress them is real, but the rationale for those groups or for the assignment of members is not. Benedict Anderson's book Imagined Communities artfully traces the creation of nations as official eff- [\*663] orts by dynastic regimes to control workers and peasants; in the process, colonial powers created census categories that in turn stamped racial categories to replace previous religious, status, and anonymous identities. 62 Thomas Scheff argues that these cognitive maps of difference join with emotions of pride and shame to fuel prejudice and oppression. 63 In this view, group-based differences need not have a foundation in biology, or anything but historic oppressions, to make them real enough to warrant recognition and mobilization. 64 We do not need refined understandings of identities to acknowledge how much people in power have hurt others along lines producing the harsh reality of identities. The Nazis resolved the question of who is a Jew in the most definitive way. 65 Similarly, "black means being identified by a white racist society as black." 66 Thus, Catharine MacKinnon locates gender difference not in biology but historic oppression when she asks, "Can you imagine elevating one half of a population and denigrating the other half [\*664] and producing a population in which everyone is the same?" 67 Judith Butler argues that the meaning of anyone's gender is troubled and unfixed except by exercises of convention and authority. 68 Marilyn Frye and Peggy MacIntosh, among others, have detailed the ways in which part of the comforts enjoyed by those with more power is the distance from other people's pain and the seeming invisibility of their own privileges. 69 Empirical studies of individuals' self-understandings highlight the impact of societal views about groups and discrimination by more powerful groups. 70 Regardless of the theoretical arguments against essentialism and for intersectionality, many people believe and perceive that their identities are bound up with experiences of subordination along simplistic group lines. 71 Experiences of mistreatment along group lines influence how individuals view people from their own groups, and people in other groups. Todd Gitlin's book, which is chiefly an attack - from the progressive left - on identity politics as a distraction from deeper issues of poverty and economic dislocation, nonetheless asserts confidently that "blacks are more likely than whites to doubt the promise of America; women more likely than men to care about children and fear rape; Jews more likely than Buddhists to study the Holocaust." 72 The racial divide in public responses to the verdict in the murder trial of O.J. Simpson is only one recent confirmation [\*665] of this perception. 73 Focusing on historical and ongoing oppression cannot, however, fully rehabilitate identity politics. 74 The problem here is less incoherence than the personal, psychological, and political costs of engaging in politics around group identifications. Individuals' experiences of membership in more than one group may produce complicated responses to discrimination. For example, a study suggests that some young African-American males develop an exaggerated conception of male power and devaluation of females, apparently as a coping response to racial and economic disadvantage. 75 Privilege and oppression both can mark a person's experience, even simultaneously. Simply validating experience affords no guarantee of ending a person's own role in dominating others. Mobilizing African-American males is a current development in identity politics, as in the Million Man March, but that strategy risks splintering men and women who could be working together. 76 That strategy also could seem to condone sexist attitudes that undermine the vision of equality and human liberation behind identity politics. Here, then, is a place where the errors of essentialism, the insights of intersectionality, and the basic incoherence of group identities run up against the case of adopting categories that were never designed to help those assigned to them. Mobilizing in resistance to oppression based on a group trait may strengthen that oppression and the conceptions that it unleashes. As one observer recently put it: This politics of being, essentializing or fixing who we are, is in actuality often an inversion or continuation of ascribed colonial identities, though stated as "difference." The stereotypi- [\*666] cal contents of Africanness or Indianness, for example, are in the end colonial constructs, harbouring the colonizer's gaze. We look at ourselves with his eyes and find ourselves both adorned and wanting. 77 The internalized sense of inferiority and the assumption that human relationships must be marked by hierarchy and domination are legacies of oppression. A piece of the oppressor, then, lies within each person, as Franz Fanon, Albert Memmi, George W. Hegel, and so many observers recount. 78 Paulo Freire has argued that the true focus of revolutionary change is never merely the oppressive situation, but also the piece of the oppressor which is implanted within each person and which knows only the oppressor's tactics and relationships. 79 This insight undergirds Jacques Ranciere's observation that emancipation is never the simple assertion of an identity; it is always, at the same time, the denial of an identity given by the ruling order. 80 Efforts to reclaim identities produced by oppression can express creative resistance, 81 but it is not clear they can extirpate either the specific category's origins or the reductionism of categorical thinking. Besides strengthening the categories and methods of oppression, identity politics may freeze people in pain and also fuel their dependence on their own victim status as a source of meaning. Wendy Brown has written powerfully about these dangers; she argues that identity-based claims re-enact subordination along the lines of historical subjugation. 82 This danger arises, in her view, not only because of the ready acceptance of those very [\*667] lines of distinction and oppression in a society that has used them, but also because people become invested in their pain and suffering, or in her terms, their "wounded attachments." 83 She writes: Politicized identity, premised on exclusion and fueled by the humiliation and suffering imposed by its historically structured impotence in the context of a discourse of sovereign individuals, is as likely to seek generalized political paralysis, to feast on generalized political impotence, as it is to seek its own or collective liberation through empowerment. Indeed, it is more likely to punish and reproach ... than to find venues of self-affirming action. 84 Brown urges efforts to shape a democratic political culture that would actually hear the stories of victimization while inciting victims to triumph over their experiences through political action. 85 Toward this end, she proposes shifting the focus from identity toward a focus on desires and wants, from the language of "I am" to the language of "I want." 86 In this way, perhaps politics could move beyond the artificially fixed and frozen identity positions and blame games toward expressive and engaged political action, but Brown has yet to sketch a language of solidarity rather than individual self-interest. Therapeutic understandings of trauma and recovery support this call to shift from what an individual lacks to what an individual, with others, can envision and seek. Judith Herman's work on child abuse, incest, rape, and war-time trauma emphasizes the crucial importance to individual psychological health of recovering memories and learning to speak about atrocity. 87 She also stresses the significance of moving on through mourning, acting [\*668] and fighting back, and reconnecting with others. 88 Identity politics risks directing all energy and time to pain without moving through recovery, action, and reconnection with larger communities. There remains a crucial place for anger and recrimination, as well as forgiveness and reconciliation. 89 But when identity politics takes the form of claiming excuses due to past victimization, it even makes it difficult for others to remember and acknowledge past wrongdoings and harms. 90

#### Vote negative to make debate an agonistic theater of argumentation geared towards future policy changes; partial dissolution of sovereignty into desire for policy change transforms; the affirmatives ontological grounding of identity closes politics off to future possibilities

Brown 93 (Wendy, is a Professor of Political Science at the University of California Berkeley, “Wounded Attachments,” Political Theory Vol 21 No. 3, pp 390-410, JSTOR)

In its emergence as a protest against marginalization or subordination, politicized identity thus becomes attached to its own exclusion both because it is premised on this exclusion for its very existence as identity and because the formation of identity at the site of exclusion, as exclusion, augments or "alters the direction of the suffering" entailed in subordination or marginalization by finding a site of blame for it. But in so doing, it installs its pain over its unredeemed history in the very foundation of its political claim, in its demand for recognition as identity. In locating a site of blame for its powerlessness over its past, as a past of injury, a past as a hurt will, and locating a "reason" for the "unendurable pain" of social powerlessness in the present, it converts this reasoning into an ethicizing politics, a politics of recrimination that seeks to avenge the hurt even while it reaffirms it, discursively codifies it. Politicized identity thus enunciates itself, makes claims for itself, only by entrenching, dramatizing, and inscribing its pain in politics and can hold out no future—for itself or others—that triumphs over this pain. The loss of historical direction, and with it the loss of futurity characteristic of the late modern age. is thus homologically refigured in the structure of desire of the dominant political expression of the age—identity politics. In the same way. the generalized political impotence produced by the ubiquitous yet disconlinuous networks of late modern political and economic power is reiterated in the investments of late modern democracy's primary oppositional political formations. What might be entailed in transforming these investments in an effort to fashion a more radically democratic and emancipatory political culture? One avenue of exploration may lie in Nietzsche's counsel on the virtues of "forgetting." for if identity structured in part by ressentiment resubjugates itself through its investment in its own pain, through its refusal to make itself in the present, memory is the house of this activity and this refusal. Yet erased histories and historical invisibility are themselves such integral elements of the pain inscribed in most subjugated identities That the counsel of forgetting. at least in its unreconstructed Nietzschean form, seems inappropriate, if not cruel." Indeed, it is also possible that we have reached a pass where we ought to part with Nietzsche, whose skills as diagnostician usually reach the limits of their political efficacy in his privileging of individual character and capacity over the transformative possibilities of collective political invention, in his remove from the refigurative possibilities of political conversation or transformative cultural practices. For if I am right about the problematic of pain installed at the heart of many contemporary contradictory demands for political recognition, all that such pain may long for more than revenge is the chance to be heard into a certain reprieve, recognized into self-overcoming, incited into possibilities for triumphing over, and hence losing, itself. Our challenge, then, would be to configure a radically democratic political culture that can sustain such a project in its midst without being overtaken by it, a challenge that includes guarding against abetting the steady slide of political into therapeutic discourse, even as we acknowledge the elements of suffering and healing we might be negotiating. What if it were possible to incite a slight shift in the character of political expression and political claims common to much politicized identity? What if we sought to supplant the language of "I am"—with its defensive closure on identity, its insistence on the fixity of position, and its equation of social with moral positioning—with the language of reflexive "wanting"? What if it were possible to rehabilitate the memory of desire within identificatory processes, the moment in desire—either "to have" or "to be"—prior to its wounding and thus prior to the formation of identity at the site of the wound? What if "wanting to be" or "wanting to have" were taken up as modes of political speech that could destabilize the formulation of identity as fixed position, as entrenchment by history, and as having necessary moral entailments, even as they affirm "position" and "history" as that which makes the speaking subject intelligible and locatable, as that which contributes to a hermeneutics for adjudicating desires? If every "I am" is something of a resolution of desire into fixed and sovereign identity, then this project might involve not only learning to speak but to read "I am" this way, as in motion, as temporal, as not-I. as deconstructable according to a genealogy of want rather than as fixed interests or experiences. The subject understood as an effect of a (ongoing) genealogy of desire, including the social processes constitutive of, fulfilling, or frustrating desire, is in this way revealed as neither sovereign nor conclusive even as it is affirmed as an "I." In short, this partial dissolution of sovereignty into desire could be that which reopens a desire for futurity where Nietzsche saw it sealed shut by festering wounds expressed as rancor and ressentiment. "This instinct for freedom pushed back and repressed ... incarcerated within."" Such a slight shift in the character of the political discourse of identity eschews the kinds of ahistorical or Utopian turns against identity politics made by a nostalgic and broken humanist Left as well as the reactionary and disingenuous assaults on politicized identity tendered by the Right. Rather than opposing or seeking to transcend identity investments, the replacement— even the complex admixture—of the language of "being" with "wanting" would seek to exploit politically a recovery of the more expansive moments in the genealogy of identity formation. It would seek to reopen the moment prior to its own foreclosure against its want, prior to the point at which its sovereign subjectivity is established through such foreclosure and through eternal repetition of its pain. How might democratic discourse itself be invigorated by such a shift from ontological claims to these kinds of more expressly political ones, claims which, rather than dispensing blame for an unlivable present, inhabited the necessarily agonistic theater of discursively forging an alternative future?

#### There is no voice for an entire group-there is inevitable dissent and disagreement-the affs method papers over that and picks and chooses what voices it wants to hear which is depolitisizing and does violence to the very people they try to save---advocating for policy on the merits is a better alternative

Brueig 12 (Matt, author and advocate for Rawlsian Justice, “A problem with one facet of identity politics,” http://mattbruenig.com/2012/03/03/a-problem-with-one-facet-of-identity-politics/)

Formalized identity politics grew out of the insufficiency of left politics in the middle of the 20th century. At the time and in subsequent years, proponents of identity politics (identitarians) raised a series of devastatingly precise criticisms that have fundamentally changed the way the left operates. The left’s almost uniform focus on class oppression has been supplemented with coequal focuses on racism, sexism, ableism, imperialism, homophobia, and other identitarian concerns. The left has also internalized — albeit imperfectly — the identitarian critiques against traditional left-wing organizational structures, which white men tended to dominate. Although the list of identitarian successes could iterate for volumes, some identitarian ideas, recommendations, and practices strike me as incoherent. At its core, identity politics is about pursuing the interests of marginalized and oppressed identity groups. This immediately poses a methodological problem: how do you know what the interests of those groups are? There are two ways to answer that question. In the first way, one analyzes the position of an identity group through the lens of one’s own political views, determining from that analysis what that identity group needs in order to access justice. In the second way, one simply listens to what members of an identity group have to say. Identitarians seem to regard the first approach as inferior to the second one, and perhaps even paternalistic. Although the second approach seems more empowering and deferential, it poses its own methodological problem: to whom should one listen? Consider the case of abortion. Identitarians often claim that abortion access aligns with the self-interest of female identity groups. There are many persuasive arguments in favor of abortion access, but the identitarian case is rather slim. Using the deferential identitarian approach, how do we know that abortion access aligns with the self-interest of women? If women were almost unanimously in favor of abortion, then I think a pretty easy case could be made. But when polled, women sharply divide on the abortion issue. In 2011, 60 percent of women answered that abortions should be illegal in all circumstances or most circumstances, and 44 percent of women described themselves as pro-life, only 6 percent less than the number that described themselves as pro-choice. So to whom should a person actually deferential to the voice, agency, and subjectivity of women listen: the 50% of women who identify as pro-choice or the 50% of women who do not? When identitarians carve out an issue as one governed by identity considerations, they implicitly — and oftentimes explicitly — claim that almost everyone would agree with them if they were members of the identity group in question. So, identitarians will say things like “if men could get pregnant, then they would definitely support abortion access.” But is that true? Judging from the polling data, it seems quite obviously false: those capable of pregnancy actually sharply divide on the necessity of abortion access. In reality, members of any given identity group disagree with one another about what their interests are and what should be done. This necessarily requires identitarians to select the viewpoint of one subset of an identity group over another subset. For instance, to be deferential to the subjectivity and interests of women on abortion, an identitarian must pick some women’s voices over other women’s voices. But how would a truly committed identitarian do something like that? On what principled criteria could such a decision ever be based? There are a few possible options, but they all eventually collapse down into picking the voices of those who hold one’s own political opinions. One could invoke the concept of intersectionality to cut the polling data even finer: sure maybe women as a whole are fairly split on abortion, but queer women of color with disabilities are much more supportive. But using intersectionality concepts to get out of the bind fails for two reasons. First, one has to decide which intersectional slice to prefer, a decision that will inevitably be motivated by a desire to find some intersectional slice that mirrors one’s own political views. And second, when taken to its logical extreme, intersectionality undercuts the idea that there is such a thing as coherent categories of identities with unified interests: every person has layers and layers of identities that make them unique from almost everyone else. In addition to the intersectional side-step, someone might just try to depend on the majoritarian preferences of that group. But this seems like a very strange criterion. On this approach, the self-interest of an identity group could change daily so long as enough people in the identity group change their mind. More than that, identitarians do not actually rely on aggregate information about the preferences of oppressed groups. For instance, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist activists seem to unanimously be upset at the basically colonial situation of modern-day Puerto Rico, preferring Puerto Rican independence instead. Meanwhile, less than 5% of Puerto Ricans ever vote in favor of independence when given the option to do so, with the rest preferring Puerto Rican’s territorial status or statehood instead. What people represent as deference to the interests, subjectivity, and ideas of marginalized identities is really nothing more than tokenization and rhetorical shell games. People who suggest their politics are based upon those things are actually just finding people within marginalized identity groups who mirror their own political viewpoints. That is the only remotely plausible method one could use to pick between the different opinions of those within specific identity groups. So a person who supports Puerto Rican independence finds someone in the 5% of Puerto Ricans who do so, then lifts up their voice and suggests their own political viewpoints are dictated and colored by solidarity with Puerto Rican people. Of course, that’s a lie. None of this is to say that identity politics is inherently flawed; it isn’t. It has some problems here and there — for instance, the self-interests of marginalized identities are not always in harmony, and the framework has no real way of picking winners — but by and large, the overall thrust of it is completely dead on. The pretension however that identitarians are deferential to the voiced preferences of marginalized groups is just that, a pretension. Instead of playing a shell game of tokenized voices, I think identitarian-leaning people — especially those identifying as allies — should make direct substantive analysis about issues instead. It is a more persuasive approach and ultimately more honest.

### Kurr

#### Doesn’t access our offense because the topic is not about debate it’s about war powers authority. Specific engagement on the nitty gritty policy mechanisms is crucial to rupture presidential hegemony which results in excessive imperial violence

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Bridging Competitive Debate and Public Deliberation on Presidential War Powers

http://public.cedadebate.org/node/14

The second major function concerns the specific nature of deliberation over war powers. Given the connectedness between presidential war powers and the preservation of national security, deliberation is often difficult. Mark Neocleous describes that when political issues become securitized; it “helps consolidate the power of the existing forms of social domination and justifies the short-circuiting of even the most democratic forms.” (2008, p. 71). Collegiate debaters, through research and competitive debate, serve as a bulwark against this “short-circuiting” and help preserve democratic deliberation. This is especially true when considering national security issues. Eric English contends, “The success … in challenging the dominant dialogue on homeland security politics points to efficacy of academic debate as a training ground.” Part of this training requires a “robust understanding of the switch-side technique” which “helps prevent misappropriation of the technique to bolster suspect homeland security policies” (English et. al, 2007, p. 224). Hence, competitive debate training provides foundation for interrogating these policies in public. Alarmism on the issues of war powers is easily demonstrated by Obama’s repeated attempts to transfer detainees from Guantanamo Bay. Republicans were able to launch a campaign featuring the slogan, “not in my backyard” (Schor, 2009). By locating the nexus of insecurity as close as geographically possible, the GOP were able to instill a fear of national insecurity that made deliberation in the public sphere not possible. When collegiate debaters translate their knowledge of the policy wonkery on such issues into public deliberation, it serves to cut against the alarmist rhetoric purported by opponents. In addition to combating misperceptions concerning detainee transfers, the investigative capacity of collegiate debate provides a constant check on governmental policies. A new trend concerning national security policies has been for the government to provide “status updates” to the public. On March 28, 2011, Obama gave a speech concerning Operation Odyssey Dawn in Libya and the purpose of the bombings. Jeremy Engels and William Saas describe this “post facto discourse” as a “new norm” where “Americans are called to acquiesce to decisions already made” (2013, p. 230). Contra to the alarmist strategy that made policy deliberation impossible, this rhetorical strategy posits that deliberation is not necessary. Collegiate debaters researching war powers are able to interrogate whether deliberation is actually needed. Given the technical knowledge base needed to comprehend the mechanism of how war powers operate, debate programs serve as a constant investigation into whether deliberation is necessary not only for prior action but also future action. By raising public awareness, there is a greater potential that “the public’s inquiry into potential illegal action abroad” could “create real incentives to enforce the WPR” (Druck, 2010, p. 236). While this line of interrogation could be fulfilled by another organization, collegiate debaters who translate their competitive knowledge into public awareness create a “space for talk” where the public has “previously been content to remain silent” (Engels & Saas, 2013, p. 231). Given the importance of presidential war powers and the strategies used by both sides of the aisle to stifle deliberation, the import of competitive debate research into the public realm should provide an additional check of being subdued by alarmism or acquiescent rhetorics. After creating that space for deliberation, debaters are apt to influence the policies themselves. Mitchell furthers, “Intercollegiate debaters can play key roles in retrieving and amplifying positions that might otherwise remain sedimented in the policy process” (2010, p. 107). With the timeliness of the war powers controversy and the need for competitive debate to reorient publicly, the CEDA/Miller Center series represents a symbiotic relationship that ought to continue into the future. Not only will collegiate debaters become better public advocates by shifting from competition to collaboration, the public becomes more informed on a technical issue where deliberation was being stifled. As a result, debaters reinvigorate debate.

### Davidson

#### Bosnian mothers, East Timorese Christians, Ethiopian Jews, tribal peoples of northern India and indigenous rebels in Sri Lanka are all footnoted bodies that the 1AC does not address. Most importantly in their discussion of the body they strategically avoided a discussion of the disabled body; an abelist move to mask the privilege that we all have been seeing, speaking and walking around this room.

#### The implication is not that they should lose ethically for not speaking to these questions; rather it exposes the inevitable failure of their politics, policing actions must turn inward upon themselves otherwise no one is watching the watcher.

#### This process is infinitely regressive and becomes increasingly imprecise in its search for the perfect recognition of all identity. Their binary arguments presume there to be some neutral description of identity out there which is the precisely what gave rise to the rational autonomous liberal subject whose privilege has become the basis for the exclusions they critique. This calls into question all of their knowledge production and link arguments, if they don’t defeat this claim they can’t access any of their specific applications of their argument. They are so effective at explaining everything with their sweeping claims they can ultimately explain nothing. This card is long

Davis 1 (Lennard, is an internationally known specialist in disability studies, Distinguished Professor of English at the University of Illinois, “Identity Politics, Disability, and Culture,” Handbook of Disability Studies, Sage Publications. http://isc.temple.edu/neighbor/ds/read/identitypolitics.pdf)

The lack of attention paid to disability by those in the forefront of identity and multicultural studies dramatically shows that the Occam's razor, used to evaluate critical works ("Docs it focus on race, gender, or sexual orientation?") is a dull razor indeed. Rather, one can say that identity politics, as a method of literary analysis, will necessarily reflect the biases of its own time. While our consciousness of some selected and canonized identities has certainly been raised, the biases of those within the confines of the canon remain confirmed by their invisibility. Identity studies is no more perfect, value free, and objective than hermeneutics, structuralism, or any other applied discourse. Perhaps people of the future will be astounded, puzzled, and disturbed that works by scholars such as Eve Sedgewick, Judith Butler, Henry Louis Gates, bell hooks, and others managed to steer so completely away from any discussion of disability. I should make clear that my solution to the problem of identity is not inclusion of disability to the roster of favored identities. Rather, the point is that identity studies itself is limited in our time by the necessarily taxonomic peculiarity of its endeavor. Inclusiveness will not solve the problem. The list of identities will only grow larger, tied to an ever-expanding idea of inclusiveness. After all, when all identities are finally included in the roster, how can there be this particular kind of identity? If alterity is subsumed under the rubric of identity, then what can identity mean, particularly if this kind of cultural identity is somehow actually based on a binary opposition between self and other? Identity becomes so broad a category that it cannot contain identity. In other words, identity politics, while useful during the latter part of the twentieth century in securing civil rights for some disenfranchised groups, has by the twenty-first century reached a paradoxical resolution to a problem that started as a logical extension of a discussion about rights. It is Wendy Brown's (1995) point citing Foucault, that "the universal juridical ideal of liberalism," combined with "the normalizing principle of disciplinary regimes and taken up within the discourse of politicized identity," yields a new kind of subject "reiterative of regulatory, disciplinary society," which "ceaselessly characterizes, classifies, and specializes," working through "surveillance, continuous registration, perpetual assessment, and classification" and through a social machinery "that is both immense and minute" (p. 65). In other words, the classificatory and judgmental system inherent in an identity critique of novels will necessarily end up surveilling texts through an ever-expanding and therefore increasingly imprecise grid. This framework will therefore yield less and less information about more and more works and will become a system that explains everything, thus ultimately explaining nothing. For example, if the function of identity criticism has been to point out the sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia, and so on in canonical texts, then this policing action will eventually turn in on itself. In this case, the ever-increasing trolling for missed identities or stereotypical characters will have to, by its own logic, begin to critique itself. Critics will then point to other critics who have failed to notice incidents of particular "isms." And so on. Likewise, identity critics can point favorably at other texts that exhibit positive images of oppressed identities. Finally, there is also the possibility of locating "resistant" texts that appeared in more oppressive periods but that managed to tactically and strategically pass muster of the dominant culture while offering transgressive and elusive readings that allowed certain collusive readers to find resistance to that dominant paradigm. That seems to be the extent of identity critique, and this kind of work seems to have a built-in half-life. How long can any particular critic perform this particular activity? What will be perpetually needed are new identities on the block to keep the process going, although methodologically not much new will be happening in that street game. To complicate this already complicated critique further, I want to point to the inability of identity politics to include disability under its tent in some way other than with second-class status. My point is to question the following: How effective is an antidiscriminatory stance, based on identity politics, when the watchman always needs to be watched? Another way of putting this point is that no coalition of identity-based activists or scholars will ever be able to avoid marginalizing and minoritizing some group. Bosnian mothers. East Timorese Christians, or Ethiopian Jews will always be out of favor and, if not them, then tribal peoples of northern India or indigenous rebels in Sri Lanka. The point is that an inherent limitation of permitted or favored identities is precisely built into the definition of the project. Furthermore, the contradiction becomes more acute when we realize that much of identity politics in the United States is a reaction to a rights-based model rather than an economically egalitarian, political one, as it is in the United Kingdom. In the former case, then, the necessity for identity is actually a compromise formation in theory tailored to a largely middle-class—precisely. First World— audience seeking reassurance about the parameters of liberal thought and politics. Likewise, the interest in identity in novel criticism is a ratification of this reassurance. If one can say, for example, that women are depicted in a binary way in novels to be either the madwoman or the angel, an alternative to either of these roles is held out as a norm. What is that alternative but some superscription of the ideal of white middle-class men with full rights? Likewise, the benchmark for people of color is the depiction of the middle class or gentry as full-fledged members of society. As Brown (1995) writes, "Without recourse to the white masculine middle- class idea, politicized identities would forfeit a good deal of their claims to injury and exclusion, their claims to the political significance of their difference" (p. 61).