This is a response to the chapter “Striking Back At Empire: A Postmodern Resistance to Neoliberalism and Globalization” within the context of your discussion with Professor Choi. It is therefore a limited response that focuses on what I understood to be the points that you were making in your discussion, but it is also a limited response in that I am not going to analyze/critique the entire chapter. I am going to focus primarily on the last section of the chapter “Postmodernism and Resistance,” because I believe it to be the most important relative to your discussion. Briefly, if I understood you correctly, you were saying that Professor Choi was inconsistent, he argued on position in the chapter, a position you were arguing, but he refused to acknowledge that his position was the same as yours. And as I understand it, the position that you were supporting, and you believed that he should be affirming if he followed his argument through to its logical conclusion, is that globalization/Empire is in the process of undermining, or already has undermined, any possibility of human agency. If I misunderstood you, let me continue, and I think I can clarify something about Choi’s position. Also, I should point out that he mentioned to me just in passing that he had moved away from postmodernism. He and I have not talked about it much, but I believe the position to which he has moved is sociological phenomenology

The argument which the authors develop in the chapter is that postmodernism creates the possibility of resistance to globalization, as Empire. Their argument consists of three parts: first, a reconstruction of Hart and Negri’s concept of Empire; second, a critique of that concept focusing primarily on two claims that H/N make regarding postmodernism and Empire; and, third, a defense of postmodernism as resistance. This last part is the main focus of the short last section, “Postmodernism and Resistance,” and that upon which I am going to focus.

H/N make two claims about postmodernism and Empire. The first is that postmodernism has been easily appropriated by the ideologues of Empire, especially its deconstruction of the grand narratives of modernity, most importantly the narrative of Reason/Truth. In this sense, it has undermined the possibility of critique and therefore resistance to Empire. H/A’s second claim follows logically, because the idea of Truth and critique have been undermined, postmodernism has no “social utility,” in the sense that it cannot provide any kind of direction towards creating and shaping other possible worlds.

The authors argue in response that these two claims involve a misreading or misunderstanding of postmodernism. They site Lyotard’s argument that truth still exists, they refer to Lyotard’s concept of petite narratives. These truths, the authors argue, are not based upon criteria legitimated by the grand narratives, but upon lived experience, and further these truths emerge and survive even in the face of Empire. Understanding postmodernism from this perspective, the authors argue that postmodernism reveals the possibility of resistance through the concrete, lived lives of the victims of Empire. In contrast to H/A claim that resistance to Empire is only possible until Empire is a final totality, the authors argue that resistance is a phenomenological present, and affirm that despite the absence of universals “. . . human will and praxis can serve to organize society.”

As I said, I am primarily looking at the chapter in the context of your argument with Prof Choi. I believe that I know Prof Choi’s position in relation to human agency, whether postmodern or phenomenological, and it is embodied in that quote. I would call it an existential position; it is existential in the sense of Buber’s distinction between two types of faith: *pistis*, a Greek term that means a categorical faith, I believe in this or that proposition to be true, and nothing is required of the person of faith, understood as pistis, other than affirmation of the belief. According to Buber there is another type of faith, or *emunah*, a Hebrew term that means I trust and demands from the person action despite there being no guarantees. This is why it is called existential.