# R3 Northwestern vs West Georgia CF

# 1NC

### 1NC---T

Topicality---

#### Interpretation---the aff should only win the debate if they can prove an instance of the resolution is true.

#### The USfg is made up of three branches in Washington D.C.

Dictionary of Government and Politics ’98 (Ed. P.H. Collin, p. 292)

United States of America (USA) [ju:’naitid ‘steits av e’merike] noun independent country, a federation of states (originally thirteen, now fifty in North America; the United States Code = book containing all the permanent laws of the USA, arranged in sections according to subject and revised from time to time COMMENT: the federal government (based in Washington D.C.) is formed of a legislature (the Congress) with two chambers (the Senate and House of Representatives), an executive (the President) and a judiciary (the Supreme Court). Each of the fifty states making up the USA has its own legislature and executive (the Governor) as well as its own legal system and constitution

#### Expanding the scope requires Congressional action

King 19 – Attorney, BurnsBarton PLC

Kathryn Hackett King, Defendants State of Arizona, Davidson, and Shannon’s Reply in Support of Motion to Dismiss Complaint, Toomey v. State of Arizona, et al., US District Court for the District of Arizona, January 2019, LexisNexis

In Title VII, Congress made clear it was unlawful for an employer to discriminate “because of sex.” Plaintiff claims the State Defendants discriminated against him because of his transgender status, but as explained in the Motion (with supporting case law), (i) courts cannot expand Title VII without congressional action, and (ii) Congress has repeatedly had the opportunity to enact legislation to add gender identity to Title VII, but has not done so. (Doc. 24, p.9-10). Plaintiff cannot refute that when Title VII does not protect a particular category, legislative action is required to change that.5 Plaintiff argues Congress’s failure to enact new legislation to add gender identity is not relevant because later acts of Congress are not probative of prior legislative intent. But the point is that expanding the scope of a federal statute requires congressional, not judicial, action. Gunnison v. Comm. of Int. Rev., 461 F.2d 496, 499 (7th Cir. 1972) (“Further expansion of the favored treatment specifically provided in §402(a)(2) as an exercise of legislative grace is a function for the Congress, not for the Courts”). Yet here, Congress has failed to act to expand Title VII. Congress’s failure to act demonstrates Title VII does not include unenumerated categories. Bibby v. Phil. Coca Cola, 260 F.3d 257, 265 (3d Cir. 2011) (“Harassment on the basis of sexual orientation has no place in our society….Congress has not yet seen fit, however, to provide protection against such harassment”).

#### “Core antitrust laws” refers to the Sherman and Clayton Act

The Antitrust Division 07 – Law enforcement agency that enforces the U.S. antitrust laws

“Antitrust Division Statement Regarding the Release of the Antitrust Modernization Commission Report,” The Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, April 2007, https://www.justice.gov/archive/atr/public/press\_releases/2007/222344.htm

The AMC has made many specific recommendations in its report, and the Division is in the process of reviewing all of them. The Division commends the AMC for its three primary conclusions:

Free-market competition should remain the touchstone of United States' economic policy. The Commission's conclusion in this regard is a fundamental starting point for policy makers. Over a century of experience has shown that robust competition among businesses, each striving to be increasingly successful, leads to better quality products and services, lower prices, and higher levels of innovation.

The core antitrust laws—Sherman Act sections 1 and 2 and Clayton Act section 7—and their application by the courts and federal enforcement agencies are sound and appropriately safeguard the competitiveness of the U.S. economy.

New or different rules are not needed for industries in which innovation, intellectual property, and technological innovation are central features. Unlike some other areas of the law, the core antitrust laws are general in nature and have been applied to many different industries to protect free-market competition successfully over a long period of time despite changes in the economy and the increasing pace of technological advancement. One of the great benefits of the Sherman and Clayton Acts is their adaptability to new economic conditions without sacrificing their ability to protect competition.

#### “Prohibitions” are laws that forbid action

Sweet 03 – Judge, United States District Court, New York Southern

Robert W. Sweet, Am. Nat'l Fire Ins. Co. v. Mirasco, Inc., 249 F. Supp. 2d 303, United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, March 2003, LexisNexis

In any case, even if the word "embargo" does not stretch so far, there is no doubt that the restriction against the importation of all IBP goods constitutes a "prohibition" under Clause D. HN15 "Prohibition" is defined by Black's Law Dictionary to be "a law or order that forbids a certain action." Black's Law Dictionary 1228 (7th ed. 1999). The dictionary definition is similar: "a declaration or injunction forbidding some action." Webster's New International Dictionary, Unabridged 1978 (2d ed. 1944). The common understanding of the word "prohibition" has similar connotations, with one exception. As Mirasco points out, any governmental action -- including the rejection on which insurance coverage is based -- could potentially be deemed a prohibition under the definitions above as a declaration forbidding the entry of goods. Therefore, a prohibition must be qualitatively different from a rejection. That difference is that the prohibition occurs prior to the government's dealing with the specific cargo at issue and is of a more sweeping nature than the simple administrative function performed by customs officials determining whether or not goods should be permitted into the country. Decree # 6 is such a prohibition, in that it was a law or declaration -- issued prior to, separate from and broader than the Egyptian authorities' administrative determination of whether the M/V Spero cargo should be permitted entry -- that forbids the importation of IBP products.

#### Two impacts---

#### [1]---Role of the neg---the alternative to the resolution is no topic whatsoever---it lets the aff pick the literature base of the day and set arbitrary standards which structurally favors the aff because neg preparation is dependent on predictable stasis. The neg burden to disprove the aff does not exist sans a topical aff, because there is no structural basis for understanding how the negative should engage otherwise. It’s an impact---it does not make coherent sense to burden the neg with disproving the aff if they have not met their burden to prove an instance of the resolution true, and procedural questions are the only thing that the ballot can resolve.

#### [2]---Clash---debates over a controversial stasis point force continual iteration over the course of a year in response to new arguments. A resolutional model guarantees negative teams will always be prepared and have substantive answers to any 1AC, and abandoning it eliminates research incentives since the aff will always change the 1AC before the 2AC

#### That outweighs --- we’re cognitively biased to cling to preexisting beliefs, which breeds epistemic arrogance that culminates in Trumpism --- only submitting beliefs for reexamination by others and taking a risk of being wrong cultivates scrutiny.

Resnick 19

Brian Resnick, Science Writer for Vox, “Intellectual humility: the importance of knowing you might be wrong,” Vox. January 4, 2019. <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2019/1/4/17989224/intellectual-humility-explained-psychology-replication>

\*\*\*Modified with a strikethrough – Raffi

It’s been fascinating to watch scientists struggle to make their institutions more humble. And I believe there’s an important and underappreciated virtue embedded in this process.

For the past few months, I’ve been talking to many scholars about intellectual humility, the characteristic that allows for admission of wrongness.

I’ve come to appreciate what a crucial tool it is for learning, especially in an increasingly interconnected and complicated world. As technology makes it easier [**to lie**](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/4/20/17109764/deepfake-ai-false-memory-psychology-mandela-effect) and spread false information [incredibly quickly](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/3/8/17085928/fake-news-study-mit-science), we need intellectually humble, curious people.

I’ve also realized how difficult it is to foster intellectual humility. In my reporting on this, I’ve learned there are three main challenges on the path to humility:

In order for us to acquire more intellectual humility, we all, even the smartest among us, need to better appreciate our cognitive ~~blind~~ [limitations] spots. Our minds are more imperfect and imprecise than we’d often like to admit. Our ignorance can be invisible.

Even when we overcome that immense challenge and figure out our errors, we need to remember we won’t necessarily be punished for saying, “I was wrong.” And we need to be braver about saying it. We need a culture that celebrates those words.

We’ll never achieve perfect intellectual humility. So we need to choose our convictions thoughtfully.

This is all to say: Intellectual humility isn’t easy. But damn, it’s a virtue worth striving for, and failing for, in this new year.

Intellectual humility is simply “the recognition that the things you believe in might in fact be wrong,” as [Mark Leary](http://people.duke.edu/~leary/), a social and personality psychologist at Duke University, tells me.

But don’t confuse it with overall humility or bashfulness. It’s not about being a pushover; it’s not about lacking confidence, or self-esteem. The intellectually humble don’t cave every time their thoughts are challenged.

Instead, it’s a method of thinking. It’s about entertaining the possibility that you may be wrong and being open to learning from the experience of others. Intellectual humility is about being actively curious about your blind spots. One illustration is in the ideal of the scientific method, where a scientist actively works against her own hypothesis, attempting to rule out any other alternative explanations for a phenomenon before settling on a conclusion. It’s about asking: What am I missing here?

It doesn’t require a high IQ or a particular skill set. It does, however, require making a habit of thinking about your limits, which can be painful. “It’s a process of monitoring your own confidence,” Leary says.

This idea is older than social psychology. Philosophers from the earliest days have [grappled](https://philosophynow.org/issues/53/Socratic_Humility) with the limits of human knowledge. Michel de Montaigne, the 16th-century French philosopher credited with inventing the essay, wrote that “the plague of man is boasting of his knowledge.”

Social psychologists have learned that humility is associated with other valuable character traits: People who score higher on intellectual humility questionnaires are more open to [hearing opposing views](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15298868.2017.1361861). They more readily seek out information that conflicts with their worldview. They pay [**more attention to evidence**](https://www.templeton.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Intellectual-Humility-Leary-FullLength-Final.pdf) and have a stronger self-awareness when they answer a question incorrectly.

When you ask the intellectually arrogant if they’ve heard of bogus historical events like “Hamrick’s Rebellion,” they’ll say, “Sure.” The intellectually humble are less likely to do so. Studies have found that cognitive reflection — i.e., analytic thinking — is [correlated](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51ed234ae4b0867e2385d879/t/5b43b48b03ce6471753c78ba/1531163796071/2018+Pennycook+Rand+-+Cognition.pdf) with being better able to discern fake news stories from real ones. These studies haven’t looked at intellectual humility per se, but it’s plausible there’s an overlap.

Most important of all, the intellectually humble are more likely to admit it when they are wrong. When we admit we’re wrong, we can grow closer to the truth.

One reason I’ve been thinking about the virtue of humility recently is because our president, Donald Trump, is one of the least humble people on the planet.

It was Trump who said on the night of his nomination, “I alone can fix it,” with the “it” being our entire political system. It was Trump who once said, “[I have one of the great memories of all time](http://digg.com/2017/trump-great-memories-of-all-time).” More recently, Trump told the Associated Press, “I have a natural instinct for science,” in [dodging](http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/10/trump-i-have-a-natural-instinct-for-science.html) a question on climate change.

A frustration I feel about Trump and the era of history he represents is that his pride and his success — he is among the most powerful people on earth — seem to be related. He exemplifies how our society rewards confidence and bluster, not truthfulness.

Yet we’ve also seen some very high-profile examples lately of how overconfident leadership can be ruinous for companies. Look at what happened to Theranos, a company that promised to change the way blood samples are drawn. It was all hype, all bluster, and it collapsed. Or consider Enron’s overconfident executives, who were often hailed for [their intellectual brilliance](https://awealthofcommonsense.com/2018/05/when-intelligence-fails-miserably/) — they ran the company into the ground with risky, suspect financial decisions.

The problem with arrogance is that the truth always catches up. Trump may be president and confident in his denials of climate change, but the changes to our environment will still ruin so many things in the future.

As I’ve been reading the psychological research on intellectual humility and the character traits it correlates with, I can’t help but fume: Why can’t more people be like this?

We need more intellectual humility for two reasons. One is that our culture promotes and rewards overconfidence and arrogance (think Trump and Theranos, or the advice your career counselor gave you when going into job interviews). At the same time, when we are wrong — out of ignorance or error — and realize it, our culture doesn’t make it easy to admit it. Humbling moments too easily can turn into moments of humiliation.

So how can we promote intellectual humility for both of these conditions?

In asking that question of researchers and scholars, I’ve learned to appreciate how hard a challenge it is to foster intellectual humility.

First off, I think it’s helpful to remember how flawed the human brain can be and how prone we all are to intellectual blind spots. When you learn about how the brain actually works, how it actually perceives the world, it’s hard not to be a bit horrified, and a bit humbled.

We often can’t see — or even sense — what we don’t know. It helps to realize that it’s normal and human to be wrong.

It’s rare that a viral meme also provides a surprisingly deep lesson on the imperfect nature of the human mind. But believe it or not, the great [“Yanny or Laurel” debate](https://www.vox.com/2018/5/16/17358774/yanny-laurel-explained) of 2018 fits the bill.

For the very few of you who didn’t catch it — I hope you’re recovering nicely from that coma — here’s what happened.

An audio clip (you can hear it below) says the name “Laurel” in a robotic voice. Or does it? Some people hear the clip and immediately hear “Yanny.” And both sets of people — Team Yanny and Team Laurel — are indeed hearing the

Hearing, the perception of sound, ought to be a simple thing for our brains to do. That so many people can listen to the same clip and hear such different things should give us humbling pause. Hearing “Yanny” or “Laurel” in any given moment ultimately depends on a whole host of factors: the quality of the speakers you’re using, whether you have hearing loss, your expectations.

Here’s the deep lesson to draw from all of this: Much as we might tell ourselves our experience of the world is the truth, our reality will always be an interpretation. Light enters our eyes, sound waves enter our ears, chemicals waft into our noses, and it’s up to our brains to make a guess about what it all is.

“THE FIRST RULE OF THE DUNNING-KRUGER CLUB IS YOU DON’T KNOW YOU’RE A MEMBER OF THE DUNNING-KRUGER CLUB”

Perceptual tricks like this ([“the dress”](https://www.vox.com/2015/2/27/8119901/explain-color-dress) is another one) reveal that our perceptions are not the absolute truth, that the physical phenomena of the universe are indifferent to whether our feeble sensory organs can perceive them correctly. We’re just guessing. Yet these phenomena leave us indignant: How could it be that our perception of the world isn’t the only one?

That sense of indignation is called naive realism: the feeling that our perception of the world is the truth. “I think we sometimes confuse effortlessness with accuracy,” [Chris Chabris](http://www.chabris.com/), a psychological researcher who co-authored a book on the [challenges of human perception, tells me](https://go.redirectingat.com/?id=66960X1516588&xs=1&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.amazon.com%2FInvisible-Gorilla-How-Intuitions-Deceive%2Fdp%2F0307459667%2Fref%3Dsr_1_1%3Fie%3DUTF8%26qid%3D1545250306%26sr%3D8-1%26keywords%3Dinvisible%2Bgorilla%2Bbook). When something is so immediate and effortless to us — hearing the sound of “Yanny” — it just [feels true](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/10/5/16410912/illusory-truth-fake-news-las-vegas-google-facebook). (Similarly, psychologists find when a lie is repeated, it’s more likely to be [misremembered as being true](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/10/5/16410912/illusory-truth-fake-news-las-vegas-google-facebook), and for a similar reason: When you’re hearing something for the second or third time, your brain becomes faster to respond to it. And that fluency is confused with truth.)

Our interpretations of reality are often arbitrary, but we’re still [**stubborn**](https://jov.arvojournals.org/article.aspx?articleid=2613309) about them. Nonetheless, the same observations can lead to wildly different conclusions.

For every sense and every component of human judgment, there are illusions and ambiguities we interpret arbitrarily.

Some are gravely serious. White people often perceive black men to be bigger, taller, and more muscular (and therefore [more threatening](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/4/19/17251752/philadelphia-starbucks-arrest-racial-bias-training)) than they really are. That’s racial bias — but it’s also a socially constructed illusion. When we’re taught or learn to fear other people, our brains distort their potential threat. They seem more menacing, and we want to build walls around them. When we learn or are taught that other people [are less than human](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2017/3/7/14456154/dehumanization-psychology-explained), we’re less likely to look upon them kindly and more likely to be okay when violence is committed against them.

Not only are our interpretations of the world often arbitrary, but we’re often overconfident in them. “Our ignorance is invisible to us,” David Dunning, an expert on human blind spots, says.

You might recognize his name as half of the psychological phenomenon that bears his name: the Dunning-Kruger effect. That’s where people of low ability — let’s say, those who fail to understand logic puzzles — tend to unduly overestimate their abilities. Inexperience masquerades as expertise.

An irony of the Dunning-Kruger effect is that so many people misinterpret it, are overconfident in their understanding of it, [and get it wrong.](https://www.talyarkoni.org/blog/2010/07/07/what-the-dunning-kruger-effect-is-and-isnt/)

When people talk or write about the Dunning-Kruger effect, it’s almost always in reference to other people. “The fact is this is a phenomenon that visits all of us sooner or later,” Dunning says. We’re all overconfident in our ignorance from time to time. (Perhaps related: Some 65 percent of Americans [believe](https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0200103) they’re more intelligent than average, which is wishful thinking.)

Similarly, we’re overconfident in our ability to remember. Human memory is extremely malleable, prone to small changes. When we remember, we don’t wind back our minds to a certain time and relive that exact moment, yet many [of us think](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3149610/) our memories work like a videotape.

Dunning hopes his work helps people understand that “not knowing the scope of your own ignorance is part of the human condition,” he says. “But the problem with it is we see it in other people, and we don’t see it in ourselves. The first rule of the Dunning-Kruger club is you don’t know you’re a member of the Dunning-Kruger club.”

In 2012, psychologist Will Gervais scored an honor any PhD science student would covet: a [co-authored paper](http://science.sciencemag.org/content/336/6080/493) in the journal Science, one of the top interdisciplinary scientific journals in the world. Publishing in Science doesn’t just help a researcher rise up in academic circles; it often gets them a lot of media attention too.

One of the experiments in the paper tried to see if getting people to think more rationally would make them less willing to report religious beliefs. They had people look at a picture of Rodin’s [The Thinker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Thinker) or another statue. They thought The Thinker would nudge people to think harder, more analytically. In this more rational frame of mind, then, the participants would be less likely to endorse believing in something as faith-based and invisible as religion, and that’s what the study found. It was [catnip](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-critical-thinkers-lose-faith-god/) for science journalists: one small trick to change the way we think.

“HOW WOULD I KNOW IF I WAS WRONG?” IS ACTUALLY A REALLY, REALLY HARD QUESTION TO ANSWER

But it was a tiny, small-sample study, the exact type that is prone to yielding false positives. Several years later, another lab attempted to replicate the findings with a [much larger sample size](https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0172636), and failed to find any evidence for the effect.

And while Gervais knew that the original study wasn’t rigorous, he couldn’t help but feel a twinge of discomfort.

“Intellectually, I could say the original data weren’t strong,” he says. “That’s very different from the human, personal reaction to it. Which is like, ‘Oh, shit, there’s going to be a published failure to replicate my most cited finding that’s gotten the most [media attention](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/losing-your-religion-analytic-thinking-can-undermine-belief/).’ You start worrying about stuff like, ‘Are there going to be career repercussions? Are people going to think less of my other work and stuff I’ve done?’”

Gervais’s story is familiar: Many of us fear we’ll be seen as less competent, less trustworthy, if we admit wrongness. Even when we can see our own errors — which, as outlined above, is not easy to do — we’re hesitant to admit it.

But turns out this assumption is [false](https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0143723). As [Adam Fetterman](https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/psychology/people/adam-k-fetterman.html), a social psychologist at the University of Texas El Paso, has found in a [few](https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0143723) [studies](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0191886918305336), wrongness admission isn’t usually judged harshly. “When we do see someone admit that they are wrong, the wrongness admitter is seen as more communal, more friendly,” he says. It’s almost never the case, in his studies, “that when you admit you’re wrong, people think you are less competent.”

Sure, there might be some people who will troll you for your mistakes. There might be [a mob on Twitter that converges in order to shame you](https://www.vox.com/2016/2/29/11133822/internet-outrage-explained). Some moments of humility could be humiliating. But this fear must be vanquished if we are to become less intellectually arrogant and more intellectually humble.

Humility can’t just come from within — we need environments where it can thrive

But even if you’re motivated to be more intellectually humble, our culture doesn’t always reward it.

The field of psychology, overall, has been reckoning with a “[replication crisis](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/8/27/17761466/psychology-replication-crisis-nature-social-science)” where many classic findings in the science don’t hold up under rigorous scrutiny. Incredibly influential textbook findings in psychology — like the “[ego depletion”](https://www.vox.com/2016/3/14/11219446/psychology-replication-crisis) theory of willpower or the “[marshmallow test](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/6/17413000/marshmallow-test-replication-mischel-psychology)” — have been bending or breaking.

I’ve found it fascinating to watch the field of psychology deal with this. For some researchers, the reckoning has been personally unsettling. “I’m in a dark place,” Michael Inzlicht, a University of Toronto psychologist, [wrote](http://michaelinzlicht.com/getting-better/2016/2/29/reckoning-with-the-past) in a 2016 blog post after seeing the theory of ego depletion crumble before his eyes. “Have I been chasing puffs of smoke for all these years?”

“IT’S BAD TO THINK OF PROBLEMS LIKE THIS LIKE A RUBIK’S CUBE: A PUZZLE THAT HAS A NEAT AND SATISFYING SOLUTION THAT YOU CAN PUT ON YOUR DESK”

What I’ve learned from reporting on the “replication crisis” is that intellectual humility requires support from peers and institutions. And that environment is hard to build.

“What we teach undergrads is that scientists want to prove themselves wrong,” says [Simine Vazire](https://www.simine.com/), a psychologist and journal editor who often writes and speaks about replication issues. “But, ‘How would I know if I was wrong?’ is actually a really, really hard question to answer. It involves things like having critics yell at you and telling you that you did things wrong and reanalyze your data.”

And that’s not fun. Again: Even among scientists — people who ought to question everything — intellectual humility is hard. In some cases, researchers have refused to concede their original conclusions despite the [unveiling of new evidence](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/28/17509470/stanford-prison-experiment-zimbardo-interview). (One famous psychologist under fire recently told me [angrily](https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/28/17509470/stanford-prison-experiment-zimbardo-interview), “I will stand by that conclusion for the rest of my life, no matter what anyone says.”)

Psychologists are human. When they reach a conclusion, it becomes hard to see things another way. Plus, the incentives for a successful career in science push researchers to publish as many positive findings as possible.

There are two solutions — among many — to make psychological science more humble, and I think we can learn from them.

One is that humility needs to be built into the standard practices of the science. And that happens through transparency. It’s becoming more commonplace for scientists to preregister — i.e., commit to — a study design before even embarking on an experiment. That way, it’s harder for them to deviate from the plan and cherry-pick results. It also makes sure all data is open and accessible to anyone who wants to conduct a reanalysis.

That “sort of builds humility into the structure of the scientific enterprise,” Chabris says. “We’re not all-knowing and all-seeing and perfect at our jobs, so we put [the data] out there for other people to check out, to improve upon it, come up with new ideas from and so on.” To be more intellectually humble, we need to be more transparent about our knowledge. We need to show others what we know and what we don’t.

And two, there needs to be more celebration of failure, and a culture that accepts it. That includes building safe places for people to admit they were wrong, like the [Loss of Confidence Project](https://lossofconfidence.com/).

But it’s clear this cultural change won’t come easily.

“In the end,” Rohrer says, after getting a lot of positive feedback on the project, “we ended up with just a handful of statements.”

We need a balance between convictions and humility

There’s a personal cost to an intellectually humble outlook. For me, at least, it’s anxiety.

When I open myself up to the vastness of my own ignorance, I can’t help but feel a sudden suffocating feeling. I have just one small mind, a tiny, leaky boat upon which to go exploring knowledge in a vast and knotty sea of which I carry no clear map.

Why is it that some people never seem to wrestle with those waters? That they stand on the shore, squint their eyes, and transform that sea into a puddle in their minds and then get awarded for their false certainty? “I don’t know if I can tell you that humility will get you farther than arrogance,” says [Tenelle Porter,](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/profile/tenelle_porter) a University of California Davis psychologist who has [studied](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15298868.2017.1361861) intellectual humility.

Of course, following humility to an extreme end isn’t enough. You don’t need to be humble about your belief that the world is round. I just think more humility, sprinkled here and there, would be quite nice.

“It’s bad to think of problems like this like a Rubik’s cube: a puzzle that has a neat and satisfying solution that you can put on your desk,” says [Michael Lynch](https://michael-lynch.philosophy.uconn.edu/), a University of Connecticut philosophy professor. Instead, it’s a problem “you can make progress at a moment in time, and make things better. And that we can do — that we can definitely do.”

For a democracy to flourish, Lynch argues, we need a balance between convictions — our firmly held beliefs — and humility. We need convictions, because “an apathetic electorate is no electorate at all,” he says. And we need humility because we need to listen to one another. Those two things will always be in tension.

The Trump presidency suggests there’s too much conviction and not enough humility in our current culture.

“The personal question, the existential question that faces you and I and every thinking human being, is, ‘How do you maintain an open mind toward others and yet, at the same time, keep your strong moral convictions?’” Lynch says. “That’s an issue for all of us.”

To be intellectually humble doesn’t mean giving up on the ideas we love and believe in. It just means we need to be thoughtful in choosing our convictions, be open to adjusting them, seek out their flaws, and never stop being curious about why we believe what we believe.

#### Only our model solves effective information management – overload is inevitable to some degree, but equipping students to manage it is key – the alt is inactivity and Russian active measures

Leek 16 [Danielle R. Leek, professor of communications at Grand Valley State University, “Policy debate pedagogy: a complementary strategy for civic and political engagement through service-learning,” Communication Education, 65:4, 399-405]

Through policy debate, students can develop information literacy and learn how to make critical arguments of fact. This experience is politically empowering for students who will also build confidence for political engagement. Information literacy While there are many definitions of information literacy, the term generally is understood to mean that a student is “able to recognize when information is needed , and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the information needed” for problem- solving and decision-making (Spitzer, Eisenberg, & Lowe, 1998, p. 19). Information exists in a variety of forms, in visual data, computer graphics, sound-recordings, film, and photographs. Information is also constructed and disseminated through a wide range of sources and mediums. Therefore, “information literacy” functions as a blanket term which covers a wide range of more specific literacies. Critiques of service-learning’s knowl- edge-building power, such as those articulated by Eby (1998) and Colby (2008), are chal- lenging both the emphasis the pedagogy places on information gained through experience and the limited scope of political information students are exposed to in the process. Policy debate can augment a student’s civic and political learning by fostering extended information literacies. Snider and Schnurer (2002) identify policy debate as an especially research intensive form of oral discussion which requires extensive time and commitment to learn the dimensions of a topic. Understanding policy issues calls for contemplating a range of materials, from traditional news media publications to court proceedings, research data, and institutional propaganda. Moreover, the nature of policy debate, which involves public presentation of arguments on two competing sides of a question, motivates students to go beyond basic information to achieve a more advanced level of expertise and credibility on a topic (Dybvig & Iverson, n.d.). This type of work differs from traditional research projects where students gather only the materials needed to support their argument while neglecting contrary evidence. Instead, the “debate research process encourages a kind of holistic approach, where students need to pay attention to the critics of their argument because they will have to respond to those attacks” (Snider & Schnurer, 2002, p. 32). In today’s attention economy, cultivating a sensibility for well- rounded information gathering can also aid students in recognizing when and how the knowledge produced in their social environments can be effectively translated to specific contexts. The “cultural shift in the production of data” which has followed the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies means that all students are likely “prosumers”—that is, they consume, produce, and coproduce information online all at the same time (Scoble, 2011). Coupling service- learning with policy debate calls on students to apply information across registers of public engagement, including their own service efforts and their own public argumentation, in and outside of their debates. Information is used in the service experience, which in turn, informs the use of information in debates, where students then produce new information through their argumentation. The process is what Bruce (2008) refers to “informed learning,” or “using information in order to learn.” When individuals move from learning how to gather materials for a task to a cognitive awareness and understanding of how the information-seeking process shapes their learning, they are engaged in informed learning. Through this process, students can come to recognize that information management and credibility is deeply disciplinary and historically con- textual (Bruce & Hughes, 2010). This understanding, combined with practical experience in locating information, is a critical missing element in contemporary political engage- ment. Over 20 years ago, Graber (1994) argued that one of the biggest obstacles to political engagement was not apathy, but a gap between the way news media presents information during elections, and the type of information voters need and will listen to during electoral campaigns. The challenge extends beyond elections into policy-making, especially as younger generations continue to revise their notions of citizenship away from institutional politics towards more social forms of activism (Bennett, Wells, & Freelon, 2011). For stu- dents to effectively practice more expressive forms of citizenship they need experience managing the breadth of information available about issues they care about. As past research indicates a strong correlation between service-learning experience and the motiv- ation and desire for post-graduation service, it seems likely that students who debate about policy issues related to service areas will continue their informed learning practices after they have left the classroom (Soria & Thomas-Card, 2014). Arguing facts In addition to building information literacies, students who combine policy debate with service-learning can practice “politically relevant skills,” which will help them have confidence for political engagement in the future. As Colby (2008) explains, this confidence should be tempered by tolerance for difference and differing opinions. On the surface, debating about institutional politics might seem counterintuitive to this goal. Politicians and the press have a credibility problem among college-aged students, and this leaves younger generations less inclined to feel obligated to the state or to look to traditional modes of policy- making for social change (Bennett et al., 2011; Manning & Edwards, 2014). This lack of faith in government and media outlets also makes political argument more difficult (Klumpp, 2006). Whereas these institutions once served as authoritative and trustworthy sources of information, the credibility of legislators and journalists has decreased over the last 40 years or so. Today, politicians and pundits are viewed as political actors interested in spectacle, power, and profit rather than truth-seeking or the common good. While some political controversies are rooted in competing values, Klumpp (2006) explains that arguments about policy are more often based in fact. Indeed, when engaged in public arguments over questions of policy, people tend to “invoke the authority of facts to support their positions.” Likewise, “the governmental sphere has developed elaborate legal and deliberative processes in recognition of the power of facts as the basis for a decision.” Yet, while shared values are often quickly agreed upon, differences over fact are more difficult to resolve. Without credible institutions of authority that can disseminate facts, public deliberation requires more time, information-gathering, evaluation, and reasoning. The Bush administration’s decision to take military action in Iraq, for example, was presumably based on the “fact” that Saddam Hussein had acquired weapons of mass destruction. This has now become a classic example of poor policy-making grounded in faulty factual evidence. This shortcoming is precisely why policy debate is a valuable complement to service- learning activities. Not only can students use their developing literacies to better understand social problems, they can also learn to access a broader range of knowledge sources, thereby mitigating the absence of fact-finding from traditional institutions. Fur- thermore, policy advocacy gives students experience testing the reasoning underlying claims of fact. Issues of source credibility, analogic comparisons, and data analysis are three examples of the type of critical thinking skills that students may need to apply in order to engage a question of policy (Allen, Berkowitz, Hunt, & Louden, 1999). While the effect may be to undermine government action in some instances, in others students will gain a better understanding of when and where institutional activities can work to make change. As students gain knowledge about the relationship between institutional structures and the communities they serve, they grow confidence in their ability to engage in future conversations about policy issues. Zwarensteyn’s (2012) research high- lights these sorts of effects in high school students who engage in competitive policy debate. Zwarensteyn theorizes that even minimal increases in technical knowledge about politics can translate to significant increases in a student’s sense of self-efficacy. Many students start off feeling very insecure when it comes to their mastery of insti- tutional politics; policy debate helps overcome that insecurity. Moreover, because training in policy debate encourages students to address issues as arguments rather than partisan positions, it encourages them to engage policy-making without the hostility and incivility that often characterizes today’s political scene. Indeed, it is precisely that perceived hostility and incivility that prompts many young people to avoid politics in the first place. I do not mean to imply that students who debate about their service-learning experi- ences will draw homogenous conclusions about policies. Quite the contrary. Students who engage in service-learning still bring their personal visions and history to bear on their debates. As a result, students will often have very different opinions after engaging in a shared debate experience. More importantly, the practice of debating should operate to particularize students’ knowledge of community partners and clients, working against the destructive generalizations and power dynamics that can result when students feel privileged to serve less fortunate “others.” For civic and political engagement through service-learning to be meaningful and productive, it must do more to challenge students’ concepts of the homogenous “we” who helps “them.” Seligman (2013) argues that this civic spirit can be cultivated through the core pedagogical principle of a “shared practice,” which emphasizes the application of knowledge to purpose (p. 60). Policy debate achieves this outcome by calling on students to consider and reconsider their understanding of themselves, institutions, community, and policy every time the question “should” may arise. As Seligman writes: ... the orientation of thought to purpose (having an explanation rest at a place, a purpose) is of extreme importance. We must recognize that the orientation of thought to purpose is to recognize moving from providing a knowledge of, to providing a knowledge for. This means that in the context of encountering difference it is not sufficient to learn about (have an idea of) the other, rather it means to have ideas for certain joint purposes—for a set of “to-does.” A purpose becomes the goal towards which our explanations should be oriented. (p. 61) Put another way, policy debate challenges students “to maintain a sense of doubt and to carry on a systematic and protracted inquiry” in the process of service-learning itself (Seligman, 2013, p. 60). This is precisely the type of complex, ongoing, reflective inquiry that John Dewey had in mind. Political engagement through policy debate This essay began with a discussion of the growing attention to civic engagement programs in higher education. The national trend is to accomplish higher levels of student civic responsibility during and after their time in college through service-learning experiences tied to curricular learning objectives. A challenge for service-learning scholars and teachers is to recognize a distinction between civic activities that are accomplished by helping others and political activities that require engagement with the collective institutional structures and processes that govern social life. Both are necessary for democracy to thrive. Policy debate pedagogy can help service-learning educators accomplish these dual objectives. To call policy debate a pedagogy rather than just a style of debate is purposeful. A pedagogy is a praxis for cultivating learning in others. The pedagogy of service-learning helps students to know and engage social conditions through physical engagement with their environments and communities. Policy debate pedagogy leads students to know and engage these same social conditions while also challenging them to apply their knowledge for the purpose of political advocacy. These pedagogies are natural compliments for cul- tivating student learning. Therefore, future studies should explore how well service-learn- ing combined with policy debate can resolve concerns that policy debate alone does not go far enough to invest students with political agency (Mitchell, 1998). The present analysis suggests the potential for such an outcome is likely. Moreover, research is clear that the civic effects of service-learning as an instructional method are improved simply by increasing the amount of time spent on in-class discus- sion about the service work students do (Levesque-Bristol, Knapp, & Fisher, 2010). Policy debates related to students’ service can accomplish this goal and more. Policy debates can also facilitate the political learning students need to build their political efficacy and capacity for political engagement. Through informed learning about the political process—especially in the context of service practice—students develop literacies that will extend beyond the classroom. Using this knowledge in reasoned public argument about policy challenges invites students to move beyond cynical disengagement towards a productive recognition of their own potential voice in the political world. Policy debate pedagogy brings unique elements to the process of political learning. By emphasizing the conditional and dynamic nature of political arguments and processes, debates can work to relieve students of the misconception that there is a single “right answer” for questions about policy-making and politics, especially during election time. The communication perspective on policy debates also highlights students’ collective involvement in the ever-changing field of political terms, symbols, and meanings that constitute interpretations of our social world. In fact, the historical roots of the term “communication” seem to demand that speech and debate educators call for such emphasis on political learning. “To make common,” the Latin interpretation of communicare, situ- ates our discipline as the heart of public political affairs (Peters, 1999). Connecting policy debate to service-learning helps highlight the common purpose of these approaches in efforts to promote civic engagement in higher education.

### 1NC---K

#### The 1AC is dogmatism --- their out of hand rejection of institutional politics chooses polarization over epistemic self-reflexivity critical for developing and defending their own convictions more robustly. The alternative chooses critical self-reflexivity about the possibilities of institutional engagement

--Need to expose our reasoning to contrary arguments – must have a role for the negative

--Otherwise, polarization and confirmation bias – we have more and more extreme views that aren’t effective bc not tested

--Even if we don’t agree or reach consensus, process of introducing contrary arguments is good bc we’ll improve our position

--Only competitive structures of debate incentivize us to find flaws – scalia more helpful for improving a liberal argument than breyer

--Aff has to have a defense of why we switch sides and ask the judge to vote – if they’re just right about the world, why doesn’t the judge just vote off the bat and spare us the time debating?

Poscher 16

Ralf Poscher, Diat the Institute for Staatswissenschaft and Philosophy of Law at the University of Freiburg “Why We Argue About the Law: An Agonistic Account of Legal Disagreement”, Metaphilosophy of Law, Tomasz Gizbert-Studnicki/Adam Dyrda/Pawel Banas (eds.), Hart Publishing. 2016.

Hegel’s dialectical thinking powerfully exploits the idea of negation. It is a central feature of spirit and consciousness that they have the power to negate. The spirit “is this power only by looking the negative in the face and tarrying with it. This […] is the magical power that converts it into being.”102 The tarrying with the negative is part of what Hegel calls the “labour of the negative”103. In a loose reference to this Hegelian notion Gerald Postema points to yet another feature of disagreements as a necessary ingredient of the process of practical reasoning. Only if our reasoning is exposed to contrary arguments can we test its merits. We must go through the “labor of the negative” to have trust in our deliberative processes.104

This also holds where we seem to be in agreement. Agreement without exposure to disagreement can be deceptive in various ways. The first phenomenon Postema draws attention to is the group polarization effect. When a group of like‐minded people deliberates an issue, informational and reputational cascades produce more extreme views in the process of their deliberations.105 The polarization and biases that are well documented for such groups106 can be countered at least in some settings by the inclusion of dissenting voices. In these scenarios, disagreement can be a cure for dysfunctional deliberative polarization and biases.107 A second deliberative dysfunction mitigated by disagreement is superficial agreement, which can even be manipulatively used in the sense of a “presumptuous ‘We’”108. Disagreement can help to police such distortions of deliberative processes by challenging superficial agreements. Disagreements may thus signal that a deliberative process is not contaminated with dysfunctional agreements stemming from polarization or superficiality. Protecting our discourse against such contaminations is valuable even if we do not come to terms. Each of the opposing positions will profit from the catharsis it received “by looking the negative in the face and tarrying with it”.

These advantages of disagreement in collective deliberations are mirrored on the individual level. Even if the probability of reaching a consensus with our opponents is very low from the beginning, as might be the case in deeply entrenched conflicts, entering into an exchange of arguments can still serve to test and improve our position. We have to do the “labor of the negative” for ourselves. Even if we cannot come up with a line of argument that coheres well with everybody else’s beliefs, attitudes and dispositions, we can still come up with a line of argument that achieves this goal for our own personal beliefs, attitudes and dispositions. To provide ourselves with the most coherent system of our own beliefs, attitudes and dispositions is – at least in important issues – an aspect of personal integrity – to borrow one of Dworkin’s favorite expressions for a less aspirational idea.

In hard cases we must – in some way – lay out the argument for ourselves to figure out what we believe to be the right answer. We might not know what we believe ourselves in questions of abortion, the death penalty, torture, and stem cell research, until we have developed a line of argument against the background of our subjective beliefs, attitudes and dispositions. In these cases it might be rational to discuss the issue with someone unlikely to share some of our more fundamental convictions or who opposes the view towards which we lean. This might even be the most helpful way of corroborating a view, because we know that our adversary is much more motivated to find a potential flaw in our argument than someone with whom we know we are in agreement. It might be more helpful to discuss a liberal position with Scalia than with Breyer if we want to make sure that we have not overlooked some counter‐argument to our case.

It would be too narrow an understanding of our practice of legal disagreement and argumentation if we restricted its purpose to persuading an adversary in the case at hand and inferred from this narrow understanding the irrationality of argumentation in hard cases, in which we know beforehand that we will not be able to persuade. Rational argumentation is a much more complex practice in a more complex social framework. Argumentation with an adversary can have purposes beyond persuading him: to test one’s own convictions, to engage our opponent in inferential commitments and to persuade third parties are only some of these; to rally our troops or express our convictions might be others. To make our peace with Kant we could say that “there must be a hope of coming to terms” with someone though not necessarily with our opponent, but maybe only a third party or even just ourselves and not necessarily only on the issue at hand, but maybe through inferential commitments in a different arena.

f) The Advantage Over Non‐Argumentative Alternatives

It goes without saying that in real world legal disagreements, all of the reasons listed above usually play in concert and will typically hold true to different degrees relative to different participants in the debate: There will be some participants for whom our hope of coming to terms might still be justified and others for whom only some of the other reasons hold and some for whom it is a mixture of all of the reasons in shifting degrees as our disagreements evolve. It is also apparent that, with the exception of the first reason, the rationality of our disagreements is of a secondary nature. The rational does not lie in the discovery of a single right answer to the topic of debate, since in hard cases there are no single right answers. Instead, our disagreements are instrumental to rationales which lie beyond the topic at hand, like the exploration of our communalities or of our inferential commitments. Since these reasons are of this secondary nature, they must stand up to alternative ways of settling irreconcilable disagreements that have other secondary reasons in their favor – like swiftness of decision making or using fewer resources. Why does our legal practice require lengthy arguments and discursive efforts even in appellate or supreme court cases of irreconcilable legal disagreements? The closure has to come by some non‐argumentative mean and courts have always relied on them. For the medieval courts of the Germanic tradition it is bequeathed that judges had to fight it out literally if they disagreed on a question of law – though the king allowed them to pick surrogate fighters.109 It is understandable that the process of civilization has led us to non‐violent non‐ argumentative means to determine the law. But what was wrong with District Judge Currin of Umatilla County in Oregon, who – in his late days – decided inconclusive traffic violations by publicly flipping a coin?110 If we are counting heads at the end of our lengthy argumentative proceedings anyway, why not decide hard cases by gut voting at the outset and spare everybody the cost of developing elaborate arguments on questions, where there is not fact of the matter to be discovered?

#### Their affirmation leads to abstraction and hubris as an end in itself – radical democratic politics is the only way to attack underlying logics of power

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(Gregory and Michael J., “Introduction,” in *Radical Intellectuals and the Subversion of Progressive Politics*, pg. 1-32)

Radical politics in contemporary Western democracies finds itself in a state of crisis. When viewed from the vantage point of social change, a progressive transformation of the social order, political radicalism is **found wanting**. This would seem to go against the grain of perceived wisdom. As an academic enterprise, radical theory has blossomed. Figures such as Slavoj Žižek openly discuss Marxism in popular documentaries, **new journals have emerged** touting a radical “anti-capitalism,” and whole conferences and subfields are dominated by questions posed by obscure theoretical texts. Despite this, there is a profound lack in substantive, meaningful political**, social, and cultural criticism** of the kind that once made progressive **and rational left political discourse** relevant **to the** machinations of real politics **and the broader culture** . Today, leftist political theory in the academy has fallen under the spell of ideas so far removed from actual political issues that the question can be posed whether the traditions of left critique that gave intellectual support to the great movements of modernity—from the workers’ movement to the civil rights movement—**possess a** critical mass **to sustain future struggles.** Quite to the contrary, **social movements have lost political momentum**; they are generally focused on questions of culture and shallow discussions of class and **obsessed with issues of identity**— racial, sexual, and so on—rather than on the great “social question” **of unequal** economic power, which once served as the driving impulse for political, social, and cultural transformation. As these new radical mandarins spill ink on futile debates over “desire,” “identity,” and illusory visions of anarchic democracy, **economic inequality has ballooned into** oligarchic proportions, working people have been increasingly marginalized, and ethnic minority groups turned into a coolie labor force.

This has been the result, we contend, of a lack of concern with real politics in contemporary radical theory. Further, we believe that this is the result of a transformation of ideas, that contemporary political theory on the Left has witnessed a decisive shift in focus in recent decades—a shift that has produced nothing less than the incoherence **of the tradition of progressive politics in our age.** At a time when the Left is struggling to redefine itself and respond to current political and economic crises, a series of trends in contemporary theory has reshaped the ways that politics is understood and practiced. Older thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Jacques Derrida, and newer voices like Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière, David Graeber, and Judith Butler, among others, have risen to the status of academic and cultural icons while their ideas have become embedded in the “logics” of new social movements. As some aspects of the recent Occupy Wall Street demonstrations have shown, political discourse has become increasingly dominated by the impulses of neo-anarchism, identity politics, **postcolonialism**, and other intellectual fads. This new radicalism has made itself so irrelevant with respect to real politics that it ends up serving as a kind of cathartic space for the justifiable anxieties **wrought by late capitalism,** further stabilizing its systemic and integrative power rather than disrupting it. These trends are the products as well as unwitting allies of that which they oppose.

The transformation of radical and progressive politics throughout the latter half of the twentieth and the early decades of the twenty-first centuries is characterized by both a sociological shift as well as an intellectual one. A core thesis has been that the shift from industrial to postindustrial society has led to the weakening of class politics. But this is unsatisfying. There is no reason why class cannot be seen in the divisions of mental and service labor as it was with an industrial proletariat. There is no reason why political power rooted in unequal property and control over resources, in the capacity for some to command and to control the labor of others as well as the consumption of others **ought not to be a** basic political imperative**.** To this end, what we would call a rational radical politics should **seek not the utopian end of a “post-statist” politics**, but rather to enrich common goods, **erode the great divisions of wealth and class,** **democratize all aspects of society and economy**, and seek to orient the powers of individuals and the community toward common ends. Indeed, only by widening the struggles of labor **and rethinking the ends of the labor movement**—connecting the struggles of labor to issues beyond the workplace, to education, the environment, p**ublic life, issues of** racial **and** gender equality, culture, and the nature of the social order more broadly—can we envision a revitalization of a workers’ movement, one **that would have no need of the** alienated theory **of the new radicals**.1

#### Proactively forwarding truth claims is necessary for effective critique – the alternative is basing politics on opinion, which is untenable and culminates in inequality and violence

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(Michael J., “Inventing the “Political”: Arendt, Antipolitics, and the Deliberative Turn in Contemporary Political Theory,” in *Radical Intellectuals and the Subversion of Progressive Politics*, ed. Gregory Smulewicz-Zucker and Michael J. Thompson, Chapter 3)

But as I have argued above, this view is untenable as a means to understanding political power. Opinions and the reliance on the “enlarged mentality” that supposedly results from taking in the opinions of others is supposed to support the weightier political claims of a deliberative, localized conception of the “political.” **But it is** truth, not opinion, **that gets us to the real essence of political power** and domination. Opinion, doxa, is trapped within the phenomenological, within the realm of “appearance” **and therefore** misleading **at what is actually true.2**1 The most basic conflict between essence and appearance has no place in Arendt’s thought, instead she asks us to simply take appearance and subjective, particularist views as valid. Any critical form of judgment must advance truth-claims about the prevailing social arrangements and the forms of legitimate authority that are deployed and accepted by members of the community. Truth-claims are therefore distinctly political in the sense that they shape the cognitive foundations for less cognitive frames of thinking (opinion, worldviews, evaluative judgments, and so on). Truth as a criterion in political thought **should not be reduced to the positivistic kind of thinking** that Arendt opposed. Hence, if we think about how certain inequalities are justified, how they can be established in law and within the prevailing ideas of political subjects, it is because they rest on the pretension **of some kind of truth-claim**. Indeed, any enlightened understanding of politics must seek to base legitimate rule and authority on positions that are rationally valid **in some basic sense**. When we ground politics **in opinion**, in the sharing of opinions and subjective perspectives instead of truth-claims, we are not democratizing power, we are instead allowing illusions to guide the convictions of citizens. The educative function of politics does not come from sharing opinions per se. **Opinion can be tamed by facts** only through theory; only by the explanation of how the mechanisms of power operate within the world can opinion—the shallowest form of reflection, and the most tainted by ideological consciousness—migrate into the realm of truth, **into knowledge**. Arendt’s philosophical musings take no consideration of the most basic and consistent findings of social psychology: that facts do not persuade, that opinions do not originate in some arche, some “natality” of phenomenological perception. They are instead the result of socialization, of the permeation of social values and, particularly in mass society, made of ideas embedded in the macro institutions of economy no less than the provincial worldviews of the suburb.

Arendt never provides us with a mechanism for overcoming these deliberative problems. Instead, we are asked to place our trust in ideas about “disclosure” and the innate capacity to reach judgment from a plethora of opinion. But in truth, **opinion cannot serve as the substance of political judgment.**22 Arendt’s deeply flawed notion about “opinion” is that it is generated spontaneously: “Opinions are formed in a process of open discussion and public debate, and where no opportunity for the forming of opinions exists, there may be moods . . . but no opinion.”23 **For it to be critical**, and for it to foster progressive ends, **it must find some validity not simply in agreement or consensus**—for this leads us to the problem identified by Plato where illusory notions about the world are able to govern the forms of thought of participants, indeed, as opinion, as doxa—**but in an** ontological claim **that is valid** in some objective sense **as a truth-claim.** I must be able to make a judgment about the world that in some way is valid for others in the world; not according to my or their opinions—which are subject to the errors of subjectivism—but according to the way that the organization of power, of resources, of the ways that norms orient actions and institutions affect and shape the world we live in together. This does not mean that any valid political principle **must be true in some analytic sense**—such as the form if X then Y—but it must have some kind of ontological refereant in a dialectical sense: where any subject is seen as functionally related to the totality of which it is a part. These are objective judgments—subject to argumentation and debate to be sure—but they are not opinions. They postulate truth-claims about the world, not phenomenologically **spontaneous expressions of experience**, **but claims about the actual structures** and mechanisms that operate and shape our reality.

I cannot simply use **opinion to orient judgments** about abortion, about race, about the distribution of wealth, and so on. Indeed, for persuasion to be genuinely political it would need to grounded in concepts that achieve this kind of truth-validity since without this, deliberative encounters, “action,” in Arendt’s sense, **would devolve into a plethora of value-judgments**, none more valid than the other. We would be cast back into the same problem that Arendt sought to overcome: **the collapse of meaning** and an inertia of political judgment. Perhaps worse, we would be in a situation of relativism where individuals clump into groups and subgroups bounded by their subjective opinion-structures. What is needed is a form of critical judgment that can shatter ideological consciousness, and Arendt’s philosophical pathway is no way to achieve this end. Indeed, since her project sought to place friendship at the core of social solidarity, and of a distinctive understanding of “power,” she ends up placing too much weight on what the Greeks called πει´θειν, or “persuasion,” as opposed to διαλε´γεσθαι, or a more focused form of conversation, which she falsely refers to as “philosophical speaking” thereby misleadingly collapsing it into speculative rationality.24 Instead, she urges us to overturn the privileging of philosophical thinking in favor of persuasion: “Persuasion appears in Aristotle as the opposite of διαλε´γεσθαι, the philosophical form of speaking, precisely because this type of dialogue was concerned with knowledge and the finding of truth and therefore demanded a process of compelling proof.”25 But why should we vest the act of persuasion, of πει´θειν, with any inherent political power? Of course, Arendt is blind to the ways that distorted forms of consciousness and **defective forms of socialization** affect opinions, as I argued above. And if this is the case, then persuasion does not occur for rational reasons, but because I find some affinity—emotional, ideological, or whatever— with others.

This, however, has been welcomed by contemporary political theorists. On one level, with the decline of Marxism, her ideas were well-fashioned to provide a theoretical framework for the logic of the new social movements. The crucial move here was toward an understanding of politics and social power that was distinct from the materialist, class-based forms of realism that was characteristic of Marxism. Arendt’s ideas become attractive in a post–workers’ movement conception of left politics because it now is open to all; it allows, in the most superficial sense, for the inclusion of the other. The problem here, as I began arguing above, is that there is a need for some kind of foundational claim to orient the capacity of critical judgment. Arendt equates judgment with the synthesis of a plurality of perspectives, but there is no way to secure a judgment, nor to anchor it in a systematic way of judging what is good from what is bad.26 By robbing political life of any access to truth, to rationality, to an appeal to rational universals, **she thereby** destroys**, not rejuvenates, critical-political judgment.** Once we collapse *knowledge about the world* into *praxis within the world* we depart from **any ground for proper political judgment**, indeed, for rational critique itself. The thesis that we can somehow achieve a form of thinking about the world through praxic activity makes no sense unless there is some means by which we can judge the content of the opinions being articulated. Although Aristotle was correct in his notion that citizenship was an activity and not a status, something Arendt would accept, his idea about phronesis is not detached from the cognition of the social totality—i.e., from a cognitive and an ontological claim about human beings and the way they live together and live together best. For Aristotle, Book III of his Politics is devoted first to the nature of active citizenship, to πολιτευε´σθαι, the remainder of the book is devoted to the analysis of constitutions. And it is here that the balance between political activity (subsuming the categories of πολιτευε´σθαι, διαλε´γεσθαι, and together through the concept of judgment. For Aristotle’s thesis is that “correct” (ο’´ρθαι) as opposed to “perverted” (η‘μαρτει´μεναι) forms of constitution are to be judged based on whether they serve the common interest of the polis or only a particular part of it. But this judgment is not simply an opinion, a view that is to be accepted through mere persuasion. Rather, it is grounded in the discussion found in Book I where the nature of human beings is found to be social; that all individuals are interdependent on others and, as a result, the most highly evolved form of social organization, the polis, is judged to be the best since all require the thick relations the polis can provide. Hence, the distinction between “correct” and “perverted” forms of political activity—i.e., good and bad citizens—can be judged not on the basis of their action as such, but rather on the basis of whether or not they further the concerns of the public or common good. Aristotle’s basic argument therefore links the concerns of political activity and practical wisdom, phronesis, with the objective postulates about the nature of the good life seen not in mere value terms, but rooted in the material–social conditions of human life.

#### Unreflexive commitments to transgression as moral imperative disavow traditional normative language that makes condemnation of oppression coherent

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(Mari, *Distillations: Theory, Ethics, Affect*, Bloomsbury, pg. 52-53)

In this chapter, I want to consider two attitudes that have become so predictable in contemporary critical theory that it seems legitimate to label them as the field's bad—distracted and therefore largely unreflexive—habits. The first of these habits is the tendency to leap from the (justified) critique of the autonomous and sovereign subject of humanist metaphysics to the (in my opinion preposterous) notion that all efforts at subjective recentering should be discouraged, that, indeed, the more thoroughly pulverized the subject gets, the more "ethical" it will be. The second bad habit is the logical outcome of this pulverization of the subject, namely the idea that radical antinormativity—the blanket rejection of the kind of normative ethics that makes judgments about right and wrong—constitutes an adequate ethical stance.

Regarding the latter of these habits, I admit to a degree of admiration. I have written extensively, and mostly sympathetically, about the Lacanian-Zizekian ethics of the real, Alain Badiou's ethics of the event, and queer theory's ethics of antisocial negativity, all of which start from the premise that antinormativity is the only effective antidote to our society's corrupt normativity (see Ruti 2015b, 2017). As a response to structural violence, this claim—which on some level hearkens back to Benjamin's notion of divine violence—is difficult to contest. Yet it underestimates the degree to which normative judgments hover at the background of antinormative theories. Simply put, the minute we hold values of any kind, we have to have some grounds for holding them.

Let us assume that I want to argue—as I do in "real" life—that racism, sexism, homophobia, and economic inequality are oppressive (i.e., wrong). On what basis do I posit this? On the basis of norms that I have come to accept as valid. To the extent that antinormative theories deny this basic insight, they cannot even begin to approach the core of contemporary ethical dilemmas. As my discussion of Eisenstein and McGowan in the previous chapter implies, I am not interested in resurrecting an ahistorical, transcendent system of normative ethics that would be metaphysically grounded: the Enlightenment notion of universal values is not what I am after. Rather, I believe that inasmuch as we are willing to entertain Eisenstein and McGowan's argument that the universal arises contextually—or more precisely, that the universal as a liberatory force emerges from a rupture that defeats an oppressive context—it should be possible for us to conceptualize historically specific values that nevertheless become universally (and normatively) binding. In the second half of this chapter, I will consider the possibility of such historically specific normative values. The first half of the chapter explains why I think that the habitual slaying of the humanist subject represents a theoretical dead end.

#### Unfettered neoliberalism leads to mass violence and environmental destruction – radical engagements towards institutional change are key

Rees, professor at the University of British Columbia’s School of Community and Regional Planning, originator of “ecological footprint analysis,” founding member and former president of the Canadian Society for Ecological Economics, ‘15

(William, “Economics vs. the Economy,” http://www.greattransition.org/publication/economics-vs-the-economy)

Economic theories, though social constructions, can reflect reality to varying degrees. **In the face of** dire environmental challenges, **adopting a** realistic theory **is key to the** survival of global civilization. The neoliberal emphasis on limitless growth and monetary flows, a relic of nineteenth century thinking, **abstracts away from biological conditions**. By contrast, ecological economics—as distinct from environmental economics, which remains wedded to the neoliberal growth paradigm—understands the economy as a subsystem of the ecosphere and envisions a steady-state economy embedded **within natural constraints**. Achieving this equitably **will require significant redistribution** of wealth and income, reduction of material throughput, and a transition away from fossil fuels. Although the neoliberal paradigm remains dominant, its lack of fitness to current realities gives hope that an ecological alternative could ascend.

Social Constructs and Social Reality

Is there anything we can say about economics that takes us beyond pure “conjecture”? How can we tell whether one theorist’s interpretation of the economic process **is any “better” than another’s?**

These questions are not as simple as they seem. Of the many unique qualities that set Homo sapiens apart from other sentient beings, one of the most important is that we humans tend to create our own “realities.” To be more precise, we make up stories about almost everything, give tenacity to these stories through social discourse and repetition, and then “act out” the stories as if they were reality. Tribal myths, religious doctrines, political ideologies, academic paradigms, and grand cultural narratives are just some of the fabrications that can make or ruin individual lives and set the course for whole societies. Sociologists call the general phenomenon the “social construction of reality” (though it would be more accurate to refer to the social construction of shared perceptions). The fact of “social construction” provides a useful frame through which to assess the relative merits of neoliberal growth economics versus Herman Daly’s steady-state ecological economics for a full world.1

To begin, it is important to distinguish between “the economy” and “economics.” Both are made-up concepts, but with a significant difference. We define the economy as that set of activities by which human agents identify, develop/exploit, process, and trade in scarce resources. It generally encompasses everything associated with the production, allocation, exchange, and consumption of valuable goods and services, including the behavior of various agents engaged in economic activity. Different economies vary considerably in sophistication and organizational structure. However, **all economies are** real phenomena; people in every human society from primitive tribes through modern nation-states engage in economic activities as defined.

“Economics,” by contrast, **is pure abstraction**. It is that academic discipline dedicated to dissecting, analyzing, modeling, and otherwise describing the economy in simplified terms. Academic economists engage in the social construction of formalized models—verbal and arithmetic “paradigms”—about how the real economy works.

In fact, economists have advanced various competing economic paradigms to describe our modern, techno-industrial, mainly capitalist national and global economies. These differ substantially in terms of foundational principles, analytic tools, systemic scope, conclusions, and policy implications, particularly where the biophysical “environment” is concerned. This diversity should be no surprise: whatever their seeming conceptual elegance and analytic rigor, every economic paradigm is, at bottom, a socially-constructed figment of the human imagination, one that necessarily reflects the starting beliefs, values, and assumptions of its authors. And beliefs, values, and assumptions vary a great deal.

These insights should give us pause. Paradigms of all kinds, even those with demonstrably sketchy origins, assert enormous power over expressed human behavior. Indeed, it is truly remarkable that individuals and whole societies live in the real biophysical world guided by the parameters of various myths, paradigms, social norms, and cultural narratives that may have only a tenuous grip on that same reality.

This brings us back to wondering how reasonable people might choose between neoliberal growth economics and steady-state economics, particularly in a time of ecological turmoil. Postmodernists of the extreme relativist persuasion might argue that, **since all knowledge is socially constructed**, **there is no objective reality.** **Competing paradigms are therefore equally valid** (as in “my vision of the economy is as good as yours!”). This is dangerously wrong-headed: humans construct only their beliefs, not reality. **Relativistic equivalence** is itself a constructed fiction. Culture critic Neil Postman astutely observed, “You may say, if you wish, that all reality [i.e., perception] is social construction, but you cannot deny **that some constructions are ‘**truer’ than others**.** **They are not ‘truer’ because they are privileged; they are privileged because they are ‘truer.’**”2

To be clear, we should acknowledge that **many social constructs are pure illusion** with no counterpart in nature (e.g., the tooth fairy or the notion of a fiery hell); others specify entities that actually exist in total indifference to how people conceive of them (e.g., the law of gravity or the biogeochemical **cycling of nutrients**). Postman is referring to constructs in the latter category. All social constructions of real phenomena are conceptual models, **but a “truer” model will be supported by** tangible evidence, not opinion or wishful thinking. “**Truer” constructions are** better maps **that more fully and faithfully represent the real-world landscapes they purport to represent.**

It is also important to recognize that while belief in some illusory constructs (e.g., “the sun rises in the East”) is inconsequential, allegiance to **others can determine the fates of nations**. **How a society conceives of its economy**, for example, really matters. Indeed, operating from a realistic economic paradigm may even be a key to the survival of global civilization.

Neoliberal Mechanics or Eco-thermodynamics?

So, what do we know about real-world economic activities that might guide us in constructing a “true” economic paradigm? By “true,” I mean one that, among other requirements, adequately reflects the energy/material flows and biophysical processes basic to all living things, including human beings. It is not an exaggeration to say that such a paradigm is a matter of survival. After all, the human system functions like a multi-cellular organism except that, in addition to our bio-metabolic demands, we also have to account for humanity’s unique industrial metabolism. Six facts about humanity and the natural world seem particularly relevant:

1. All human economies are confined to planet Earth, i.e., they function within the ecosphere.

2. The entire human enterprise—our physical bodies, our possessions, and the infrastructure needed to maintain the functional integrity of the whole—is made from energy and materials that we extract from ecosystems and inanimate nature (i.e., from self-producing and non-renewable forms of so-called “natural capital”).

3. All energy and material flows/processes associated with economic activity are governed by well-known laws of physics and chemistry.

4. Real economies, societies, and ecosystems **are complex systems characterized** by lags, thresholds, and other forms of nonlinear behavior (complex systems dynamics) that make their trajectories under stress inherently difficult to predict.

5. The energy and material pathways associated with the acquisition of resources and the disposal of wastes require people to interact with both other species (ecosystems) and inanimate nature. In fact, a qualitative and quantitative record of these flows would describe humanity’s material ecological niche; the goods economy roughly maps the human ecosystem.

6. **The ecosphere is a finite entity with variable**, **but ultimately limited, regenerative and waste assimilation capacities.**

The next question is, how well do mainstream economics and Daly’s ecological economics respectively incorporate these framing constraints? The short answer for the neoliberal paradigm is “virtually not at all.” The dominant economics in this twenty-first century of increasing ecological turmoil is a relic of nineteenth century thinking. Its intellectual founders, motivated by the remarkable success of Newtonian physics, set out explicitly to model economics as the “mechanics of utility and self-interest.” The discipline consequently lost sight of the social context and purpose of economies and became totally abstracted from biological reality. Practitioners increasingly based their models on mechanical cause-effect logic and other simplistic assumptions in the service of analytic tractability. Growth through efficiency gradually became its raison d’être.

Analytic mechanics may have been a suitable platform for the design of early automobile engines, but it is grossly inadequate to reflect the lags, tipping points, multiple equilibria, irreversible transformations, and other complex dynamics of industrial economies or of the social and ecological systems within which they are embedded. However, since the scale of human activity relative to “the environment” was initially negligible, neoclassical economists were able to ignore biophysical context with impunity until the 1960s.

As pollution and general eco-dysfunction finally **became embarrassingly visible** (giving birth to modern environmentalism), the mainstream response was “environmental economics,” essentially an extension of the neoclassical growth-based paradigm. If environmental assets were being degraded, the solution was to monetize nature and let free markets do their magic. Put a price on pollution (i.e., “internalize the externalities”) and depend on market and technological efficiency gains to ease resource scarcity. Where that fails, human ingenuity, stimulated by rising prices**, will find substitutes for any failing good or service provided by nature.** As Nobel laureate economist Robert Solow famously wrote, “[t]he world can, in effect, get along without natural resources.”3 There was no perceived need to question the structural premises of the neoliberal model or its goal of unending growth through efficiency and technological progress. There are arguably no constraints on human ingenuity.

### Case

#### 2. Even if entirely objective truth is impossible – we can judge truer ways to view the world and identify certain material points of analysis – they collapse the search for truth into abstraction which doesn’t solve and promotes arbitrary violence

Postman, chairman of the Department of Culture and Communication @ NYU, ‘99

(Neil, *Building a bridge to the 18th century*, Pg. 77-81)

This is a form of radical relativism that would have befuddled many Enlightenment thinkers. If I may be permitted another "thought experiment," I can imagine a synoptic reply by the advocates of reason that would go like this: "There are words that do not seem to refer to anything in the world of non-words. **And there are 'truths' that cannot be verified**, and which gain their authority from other words **that cannot be verified.** But many words are reflections of reality. To be sure, the reflections are at varying levels of abstraction, e.g., 'tree is more abstract than 'oak/ which is more abstract than 'this eight-foot oak which you are leaning against.' **But it is the** key to intelligence, if not sanity, to be able to assess with some accuracy **the extent to which words refer to the world of non-words**. Modern medicine is better than witchcraft **precisely because its language is a more** accurate depiction **of the world of non-words.** 'More accurate1 **means closer to reality**; that is, 'truer' or 'more objective.' You may say, if you wish, that all reality is a social construction, **but you cannot deny that some constructions are** 'truer' than others. They are not 'truer' because they are privileged; **they are privileged because they are 'truer**. As for procedures that are effective, **e.g., inoculations** against smallpox, sending astronauts to the moon and returning them safely to Earth, and two hundred million other procedures executed daily by sane people, they work because they are derived from sets of propositions **whose** 'truths' have been tested **and shown to be in** accord **with our** limited understanding **of the** structure of reality."

Nothing I have said above means to imply that there can be certainty about our knowledge. It is the quest for certainty that the best-known "postmodernist," Jacques Derrida, has found dangerous, and which he suggests is embedded in the Enlightenment tradition. He calls it "logocentrism." There is no doubt that there were some Enlightenment philosophers, inspired perhaps by Descartes, who can fairly be charged with believing in the possibility of certain knowledge. The most notorious expression of this is found in an essay by Pierre-Simon de Laplace published in 1814. He wrote:

A mind that in a given instance knew all the forces by which nature is animated and the position of all the bodies of which it is composed, if it were vast enough to include all these data within his analysis, could embrace in one single formula the movements of the largest bodies of the universe and of the smallest atoms; nothing would be uncertain for him; the future and the past would be equally before his eyes.8

There is, of course, no scientist today who believes this, and there were very few in the eighteenth century. Then, as now, the idea of certainty functions, for most, as a kind of metaphor, reflecting the thrill of discovering something that appears to be true for everyone at all times, e.g., that blood circulates through the body, that the Earth revolves around the sun, that the rights of human beings derive from God and nature, that the market is self-regulating. Enlightenment scientists and political and social philosophers wrote of these ideas "as if" they were immutable and universal. Some of these ideas, e.g., that human rights are derived from God and nature, are highly debatable, and led in the eighteenth century to arguments about the sources of the origin and authority of human rights. One need only read the quarrels between Edmund Burke and Tom Paine to get a sense of the status of such "truths." These quarrels continue to this day, and one may wish to argue that these "truths," if they are such, are applicable only to Western culture. The term "Eurocentric" is sometimes used (always as a pejorative) to suggest that such "truths" are limited in their scope, and, in fact, may be thought of as mere prejudices. Of course, if one does deny the universality of these "truths," one must explain why some of them—for exam-pie, "those who govern must do so by the will of the governed"— appeal to people all over the world, why even the most repressive regimes will call themselves "a people's democracy." Is it possible that there is at least a universal resonance to these ideas? To label an idea "Eurocentric" does not necessarily mean it does not have universal application. After all, the claim that the blood circulates through the body or that the speed of light is 186,000 miles per second is "Eurocentric," at least in origin. Are these "truths" mere prejudice or are we entitled to treat them as if they are universal and immutable?

If postmodernism **is simply** skepticism **elevated to the** highest degree, **we may give it muted applause.** The applause must be muted because even skepticism requires nuance and balance. To say that all reality is a social construction is interesting, indeed provocative, but requires, nonetheless, that distinctions be made between what is an unprovable opinion and a testable fact. And if one wants to say that "a testable fact" is, itself, a social construction, a mere linguistic illusion, **one is moving dangerously close to a kind of** Zeno's paradox. One can use a thousand words, in French or any other language, to show that a belief is a product of habits of language—**and graduate students by the carload can join in the fun**—**but blood still circulates through the body** **and the AIDS virus still makes people sick** and the moon is not made of green cheese**.**

One may also say something like this about the "postmodern" view of texts. Roland Barthes is frequently cited as the originator of the announcement of "the death of the author." He is usually taken to mean that readers create their own meanings of a text irrespective of the author's intentions. Thus, the meanings of texts are always shifting and open to question, depending on what the reader does with the text. If this means that texts (including spoken words) may have multiple meanings, then the idea is a mere commonplace. But if it is taken to mean that there is no basis for privileging any meaning given to a text over any other meaning, then it is, of course, nonsense. You can "deconstruct" Man Kampf until doomsday **and** it will not occur to you **that the text is a paean of praise to the Jewish people**. Unless, of course, you want to claim that **the text can be read as irony,** that Hitler is spoofing anti-Semitism. No one can stop you from doing this. **No one can stop anyone from misreading anything** or rationalizing anything or excusing anything. Derrida, with whom the word "deconstruction" is most commonly associated, gave a superb example of how one may choose to misread, in his defense of Paul de Mans pro-Nazi writings during the German occupation of Belgium. De Man is one of the founders of the postmodern school of "deconstructing" texts, and when his pro-Nazi articles were discovered after the war, he wrote a letter to Harvard's Society of Fellows explaining himself. In such a circumstance, it is convenient, to say the least, to represent the view that all meanings are indeterminate, that there can be no definitive interpretations of any text. In any case, de Man s letter was filled with ambiguities and even outright lies, about which Derrida commented: "Even if sometimes a minimum of protest stirs in me, I prefer, upon reflection, that he chose not to take it on himself to provoke, during his life, this spectacular and painful discussion. It would have taken his time and energy. He did not have very much and that would have deprived us of a part of his work."9 As Anthony Julius puts it in describing the affair: Derrida is saying that telling the truth should be avoided because it is time-consuming.

Derrida, so far as I know, has not argued that any meaning can be attributed to a text, **only that there are wider possibilities** than are usually accepted or expected. Perhaps there are no postmodernists who argue that any meaning can be justified. But in surveying the work of well-known postmodernists, I find no clarity about—indeed, no interest in—**the** standards **by which certain meanings may be** excluded. **The process of making meaning** from a text **involves as much withholding meanings as adding them**, and knowing the rules that govern when it is appropriate to do either is at the core of reasonable interpretation. Derrida, in fact, **knows this as well as anyone,** since his famous analyses of the contradictions in the texts of Plato and Edmund Husserl, among others, are as good a demonstration of how to read deeply as any we have. But there are those who have taken the act of postmodern reading and writing to the edge of absurd^ the case of The Great Postmodern Spoof of 1997. Alan physicist at New York University, submitted a long essay to journal Social Text, noted for its commitment to postmodern thought. After the essay was published, Sokal revealed that it Was complete gibberish from beginning to end. Not error-laden not overstated, not even an exercise in fantasy. Gibberish. Appar-ently, this was not noticed by the editors of Social Text, or if it was, they felt that gibberish is as good as any other form of discourse. Sokal has continued his assault on postmodern writing by joining with John Bricmont, a Belgian physicist, in writing Fashtonabk Nonsense, a devastating critique of the writings of Regis Ddbm Jacques Lacan, and Jean Baudrillard, among others. Of Bau-drillard's theories about "multiple refraction in hyperspace," Sokal (in an interview with the London Times) said: "In physics, the word 'space' exists, as does hyperspace and refraction. But multiple refractions in hyperspace? ... It appears to be scientific, but in fact it is as pompous as it is meaningless."10

Pomposity we can survive. But meaninglessness is another matter. Fortunately, **most of us have not succumbed to the pleasures of meaningless language**. We struggle as best we can to connect **our words with the world of non-words**. Or, at least, to use words that will resonate **with the experiences of those whom we address**. But one worries, nonetheless, that a generation of young people may become entangled in an academic fashion **that will increase their difficulties in** solving real problems—indeed, in facing them. Which is why, **rather than their reading Derrida**, **they ought to read Diderot, or Voltaire**, Rousseau, Swift, Madison, Condorcet, or many of the writers of the Enlightenment period who believed that, **for all of the difficulties** in mastering language, it is possible to say what you mean, to mean what you say, **and to be silent when you have nothing to say**. They believed that it is possible to use language to say things about the world that are true—true, meaning that they are testable and verifiable, that there is evidence for believing. Their belief in truth included statements about history and about social life, although they knew that such statements were less authoritative than those of a scientific nature. They believed in the capacity of lucid language to help them know when they had spoken truly or falsely. Above all, they believed that the purpose of language is to communicate ideas to oneself and to others. Why, at this point in history, so many Western philosophers are teaching that language is nothing but a snare and a delusion, that it serves only to falsify and obscure, **is mysterious** to me. Perhaps it comes as a consequence of our disappointments in the twentieth century. Perhaps some of our philosophers have been driven to a Caliban-like despair: You taught me language and my profit on it is that I know how to kill and be cruel." If so, it is understandable but not acceptable. Can we go into the future believing that gibberish is as good as any other form of language?

#### 3. Their rejection of universalist ethics causes takeover by the Alt-Right by undermining narratives necessary to check the growth of the alt right

Tuttle 16

Ian Tuttle is a National Review Institute Buckley Fellow in Political Journalism, The Racist Moral Rot at the Heart of the Alt-Right, April 5, 2016, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/433650/alt-rights-racism-moral-rot>

Last week, Breitbart writers Allum Bokhari and Milo Yiannopoulos took it upon themselves to pen an apologia for the “Alternative Right,” or Alt-Right — the grab bag of ostensibly right-wing anti-liberal ideologies whose disciples, of late, are thrilling to the rise of Donald Trump. The Alt-Right has evangelized over the last several months primarily via a racist and anti-Semitic online presence. But for Bokhari and Yiannopoulos, the Alt-Right consists of fun-loving provocateurs, valiant defenders of Western civilization, daring intellectuals — and a handful of neo-Nazis keen on a Final Solution 2.0, but there are only a few of them, and nobody likes them anyways. In other words, anyone familiar with Yiannopoulos’s theatrics, or Breitbart’s self-appointment as Donald Trump’s Pravda, will not be surprised to learn that the article is a 5,000-word whitewash. But it is valuable, in this way: It exhibits, albeit inadvertently, the moral and intellectual rot at the heart of the Alt-Right. The Alt-Right’s origin story will sound familiar: Conservatives, the Breitbart writers say, refused to defend “humanism, liberalism, and universalism” against “black and feminist identity politics” and “left-wing moral relativism.” They “turned a blind eye to the rise of tribal, identitarian movements on the Left while mercilessly suppressing any hint of them on the Right.” (Something like this tale of woe is used by Trump supporters to explain, and to justify, his rise.) This is largely false. It’s simply nonsense to suggest that American conservatism was willfully complicit in the rise of the identity-politics Left. It’s simply nonsense to suggest that American conservatism was willfully complicit in the rise of the identity-politics Left, or that conservatives have wholly forsaken their commitment to constitutional, and generally Judeo-Christian, values. For decades, conservatives have fought against racial favoritism, against the normalization of sexual perversion, against the “Hey, hey, ho, ho! Western Civ has got to go!” ethos that animates so much of progressivism. Furthermore, it’s entirely plausible that, where conservatives have endorsed policies — high levels of immigration, for example — that have ended up undermining certain “core Western values” (the importance of the rule of law, say), it was out of a commitment to other high-minded principles also in keeping with the Western tradition. SHARE ARTICLE ON FACEBOOKSHARE TWEET ARTICLETWEETBut this is not about the Gang of Eight bill. Most on the Alt-Right do not only reject the “conservative Establishment” or some other contemporary bogeyman; they also reject the ideals of classical liberalism as such. That rejection grounds the thinking of Jared Taylor, and Richard Spencer, for instance — representative “intellectuals” of the Alt-Right, according to Bokhari and Yiannopoulos. These men — the founders of the publications American Renaissance and Radix Journal, respectively — have not simply been “accused of racism.” They are racist, by definition. Taylor’s “race realism,” for example, co-opts evolutionary biology in the hopes of demonstrating that the races have become sufficiently differentiated over the millennia to the point that the races are fundamentally — that is, biologically — different. Spencer, who promotes “White identity” and “White racial consciousness,” is beholden to similar “scientific” findings. RELATED: Why White-Nationalist Thugs Thrill to Trump And it’s worth noting that the favorite slur the Alt-Right flings at conservatives they dislike is at bottom about miscegenation: “Cuckservative” refers to a form of sexual fetish in which a man, usually white, is aroused by watching his wife have sex with another man, usually black. As the curator of the “Dark Enlightenment” blog writes: “Among the central principles of neo-reaction — one of the top two, I’d say — is that long-separated human populations differ, innately, in significant ways, and that human cultures, when correctly understood to be part of our extended phenotype, reflect this underlying biological variation.” “The Dark Enlightenment” is the name, first and foremost, of a fuzzily argued manifesto of sorts, penned by Nick Land, formerly a lecturer in continental philosophy at the University of Warwick, and another of Bokhari’s and Yiannopoulos’s go-to “intellectuals.” Land is a more sophisticated thinker than Taylor or Spencer, but his “neo-reaction” is rooted in the same fundamental rejection of egalitarianism. The differences are less important than the similarities; the race realists call on evolutionary biology and cognitive science; Land and his followers invoke postmodern philosophy. Both, with the help of an influential Alt-Right contingent among computer scientists, draw on cognitive science. There is, then, contra Bokhari and Yiannopoulos, continuity on the Alt-Right, from the more interesting thinkers to the “1488ers.” This label comes from 14, for the “14 Words” of neo-Nazism (“We Must Secure the Existence of Our People and a Future for White Children”), and 88, for the eighth letter of the alphabet, H, doubled, HH, ergo “Heil Hitler.” Clever, eh? Some want to put people in ovens; some just want an ability to “exit” multicultural society for an ethno-national arrangement. But they’re all in agreement: “All men are created equal” is not true. What follows is a 21st-century version of Blut und Boden — Blood and Soil — on one hand, or technological apocalypticism, on the other. But the two are not so different, as the Nazis understood. (And to that point, it’s telling that, as Bokhari and Yiannopoulos note, some Alt-Right thought has its roots in the thinking of Giulio Evola, a mid-century Italian philosopher whose apocalyptic vision of the world derived from his own woolly syncretism and eccentric mysticism.) Adherents of the Alt-Right not only conceive of the “Establishment” as traitorous; they also seem to think that liberal democracy itself was an abstraction tyrannically imposed on an unwilling populace. It wasn’t. It was a slowly and painfully forged response to centuries of challenges. The Western, liberal-democratic order is wracked with problems, of course; but it always has been. The question is, Has it been more fruitful, more liberating, more constructive in promoting the common good than have the various orders that came before it? And if so, is there a compelling reason for throwing it over in favor of the ancient belief that some men are, indeed, born with saddles on their backs, and a favored few born booted and spurred, entitled to ride them? This is the question the Alt-Right poses. As it happens, it’s an old question, and one to which our forebears gave powerful answers. But every generation has to relearn them. The larger the Alt-Right grows, the clearer it is that ours hasn’t.

#### 4. The politics of academic refusal are a disaster – they assume a transformative potential from small moments of resistance that simply does not exist.

Reed 16 (Adolph, Jr., Prof. of Political Science @ Penn., “Splendors and Miseries of the Antiracist “Left”” *Nonsite*, http://nonsite.org/editorial/splendors-and-miseries-of-the-antiracist-left-2)

More than a decade and a half ago I criticized similar formulations of a notion of “infrapolitics,” understood as the domain of pre-political acts of everyday “resistance” undertaken by subordinated populations, which was then all the rage in cultural studies programs. Proponents of the political importance of this domain insisted that, because insurgent movements emerge within such cultures of quotidian resistance, a) examining them could help in understanding the processes through which insurgencies develop and/or b) they therefore ought to be considered as expressions of an insurgent politics themselves. Several factors accounted for the popularity of that version of the argument, which mainly had to do to with the political economy of academic life, including the self-propulsion of academic trendiness and the atrophy of the left outside the academy, which encouraged flights into fantasy for the sake of optimism. The infrapolitics idea also resonated with the substantive but generally unadmitted group essentialism underlying claims that esoteric, insider knowledge is necessary to decipher the “hidden transcripts” of the subordinate populations; put more bluntly, elevating infrapolitics to the domain on which the oppressed express their politics most authentically increased its interpreters’ academic capital.8

I discussed those factors in my critique. However, the point in that argument most pertinent for evaluating Birch and Heideman’s confidence that the contradictions they acknowledge in BLM should be seen only as growing pains of a “new movement” is the following:

At best, those who romanticize “everyday resistance” or “cultural politics” read the evolution of political movements teleologically; they presume that those conditions necessarily, or even typically, lead to political action. They don’t. Not any more than the presence of carbon and water necessarily leads to the evolution of Homo sapiens. Think about it: infrapolitics is ubiquitous, developed political movements are rare.9

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## Case

**Individual actions are context specific have a material impact in spite of the linguistic economy.**

**Mattson**, professor of German politics and culture, Rhodes College, **‘12**

(Michelle, “Rebels Without Causes: Contemporary German Authors Not in Search of Meaning,” Monatshefte Volume 104, Number 2, Summer 2012)

While I find Liesegang’s argument plausible, **there are other explanations for this apparent disinterest and disengagement outside of Baudrillard’s theory of the postmodern condition** or a desire to neutralize the German past, although it does have to do with socio-economic status. One of the things that many of us familiar with German culture admire about it is the state’s commitment to creating livable conditions for virtually all of its citizens. The social welfare network in Germany (indeed in Western Europe more broadly) may be under siege in the current economic climate, but from health care to housing the state has managed to offer its citizens a level of basic support that Americans cannot really fathom and—as the most recent health care debate demonstrated—in large numbers appear not to condone. Thus, the glaring need for individual citizens to offer their services to their fellow human beings has remained somewhat underdeveloped in Germany (Wiedermann and Held) and has led to a set of expectations that the government will address the society’s most basic needs. Recent studies of volunteerism in Germany **indicate that this is changing and that a substantive portion of the population** **now gives of its time to myriad social organizations** in ways that would seem entirely futile to the characters in the texts analyzed here.13 Furthermore, sociological and social psychological studies indicate that people who volunteer do feel a greater connection to other people and a greater level of personal satisfaction than those who do not.14 The findings of this research, as mentioned above, [End Page 258] have led me to question whether the literature analyzed in this article reflects the perspective of a highly specific section of German society far more than it offers a broader portrait of central European society today, namely that of a disaffected, disengaged intellectual class that no longer sees itself as called upon to participate in the improvement of society now that the great German political problem of the 20th century appears to have been “solved.” This may have something to do with the specific situation of Germany in the first decades after the fall of the Wall but it may also be a result of the socio-economic structures of the Federal Republic.

I do not wish to present here an overly simplified and naïve argument that Hermann’s characters should go out and get involved in volunteer organizations and that doing so would make the pervasive sense of sadness and ennui vanish. Nor would it necessarily reorient the consumerist attitudes or patterns of consumption of Naters’ group of friends or Regener’s Herr Lehmann into more socially productive outlets. **However, I do question the individual, social, and even aesthetic value of wallowing in indecision and isolation and presenting them as representative of a crisis in human subjectivity**. Steven Best describes the world according to Baudrillard **as “an abstract non-society devoid of cohesive relations**, social meaning, and collective representation” (Best 51). The characters of Mau Mau, Herr Lehmann, and the stories of Sommerhaus, später and Nichts als Gespenster inhabit the same or at least a similar world to Baudrillard’s. Thus Baudrillard’s work offers an effective tool in understanding the implications of the world these literary characters inhabit and their creators’ perspective on contemporary German society. Their world, however**, is itself a human projection**, **a choice. It is an interpretation of reality that allows individuals to become resigned and passive.** Furthermore, it is a perspective possible only from a position of relative affluence.

I shall not venture to judge whether Baudrillard’s diagnosis of postmodern society is accurate, although it appears that many of Germany’s current writers agree with him or were influenced by postmodern theories of late 20th-century consumerist societies. I can, however**, say in conclusion that it is not helpful or productive on either an individual or social level in imagining ways of living in today’s world**. As Steven Best points out:

Baudrillard’s radical rejection **of referentiality is premised upon a one-dimensional,** No-Exit world of self-referring simulacra. But, however, reified and self-referential postmodern semiotics is, **signs do not simply move in their own signifying orbit**. **They are historically produced and circulated and while they may not translucently refer to some originating world, they none the less can be socio-historically contextualized, interpreted, and critiqued.**(57)

In other words, **human beings generate the simulacra in specific historical contexts that are subject to interpretation and challenge.** **Regardless of how pervasively the media spin our reality, real people suffer and**—occasionally [End Page 259] **prosper**—**because of political decisions made at the local, national, and international level**. **Media images may overpower us, but they shouldn’t make us lose sight of the real ramifications of political and economic development**.

Many critics have suggested that Baudrillard’s chief accomplishment was to serve as an agent provocateur. In an interview with Mike Gane, Baudrillard himself saw his method of reflection as “provocative, reversible, [ . . . ] a way of raising things to the ‘N’th power [ . . . ] **It’s a bit like a theory-fiction”** (Poster 331). One could argue that this is precisely the function of such novels and short stories as the ones examined here: to provoke us. **But to what end?** Naters, Regener, and Hermann all write very readable literature, and they challenge us to understand the world of the insipid, self-centered, and myopic characters that they have created. It would indeed be a disservice to the authors to imply that they do not view their own characters with **critical distance**. Thus, I am not suggesting that they believe their readers should emulate the characters they have created. They have not, however, successfully demonstrated either why we should care about them or—more importantly—what we can learn from them.

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#### Their propaganda strategy is wrong. It creates a political vacuum that makes it easier to sustain ideological domination

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(Joseph, “Being Postmodern While Late Modernity Burned: On the Apolitical Nature of Contemporary Self-Defined “Radical” Political Theory,” in *Radical Intellectuals and the Subversion of Progressive Politics*, ed. Gregory Smulewicz-Zucker and Michael J. Thompson, Chapter 7)

In 1995, political theorist Jeffrey Isaac, in an article entitled “The Strange Silence of Political Theory,” posed the following question: “given the historical, political, and seemingly theoretical significance of the Eastern European revolution against Soviet communism, why have American political theorists failed to hardly address the topic?”1 In 2015, one might pose a similar question: given the historical, political, and seemingly theoretical significance of the radical increase in inequality over the past 30 years in the United States, **why have American political theorists** failed **to hardly address the topic?** This essay explores how and why mainstream political theory has largely failed to conceive of the rise of neoliberal capitalism as a major threat to democracy in the United States and the world. Over the past 30 years, the predominant form of work in self-identified “radical” political theory has focused on the ontological and epistemological **issues of “**difference” and “the fiction of the coherent self.”2 Political theory, however, has devoted very little attention to how the right went about constructing a new dominant ideology during this same period. For the past 30 years, post-structuralist and difference theorists have attacked the rational chooser of Rawlsian liberalism **as a “falsely universal” subject**; meanwhile, the center-right consensus in favor of neoliberal capitalism has **succeeded in creating a** new hegemonic universal subject—the entrepreneurial, self-sufficient, competitive individual. A simple gleaning of the titles of the three hundred or so articles published between 1990 and the present in Political Theory, the “cutting-edge” journal of the subdiscipline, reveals less than ten articles that explicitly study the relationship between inequality and democracy.3 By a factor of 30-fold or more the casual observer would find articles on “identity,” “difference,” and “deconstruction.” This is not to deny the importance that “difference” plays within a democratic pluralist society, or the intellectual validity of interrogating how dominant institutional “norms” can constrict identity and choice. But the problem that vexed Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, and Marx remains more relevant than ever: How do inequalities in wealth, income, power, and life-opportunity **contradict the formal commitment of liberal democracy** to the equal moral worth of persons? Theorists of “difference” contend that the differential needs of members of particular groups means that one-size-fits-all social policies cannot achieve true equality of life chances for each citizen. But what most theorists of difference have neglected to note **is that a political majority no longer exists in favor of social equality**, whether a pluralist conception of equality or not. While worrying about the “homogenizing” nature of social welfare liberalism, **radical political theory failed to notice that a new “universal” had triumphed** within the popular imaginary: the fair treatment of each and all through competition in the unregulated market. The post-structuralist turn in political theory in part arose as a reaction to fears that “difference politics” “essentialized” and homogenized the status of the self within groups. Post-structuralism rejected not only Rawlsian liberalism’s belief in a coherent, rational chooser, but also the granting of primacy by “identity politics” to the group as the shaper of individual identity. Instead, post-structuralist analysis emphasized the labile, incoherent, shifting nature of a “self ” constituted by “performative discursive iteration” of social norms. Post-structuralist theorists emphasized the agonal nature of politics and the ever-present possibilities that the “discursive self ” could “performatively resist” hegemonic norms.4 Ironically, just as allegedly radical theorists discerned the “radical Nietzschean” possibilities of individual “resistance,” the social and political options of working class and people of color in the United States were being severely constrained by rapidly growing social, economic, and political inequality.5

This essay analyzes how contemporary political philosophy’s primary focus upon epistemological and ontological questions has **hindered the field’s ability to speak forthrightly in favor of** social solidarity and democratic equality. **But this is not an exercise in political nostalgia**. There will be no romantic longing here **for a solidaristic, working class–based “left”** that unequivocally embraced a “universal” politics of social justice. We have had plenty of these rather unsophisticated paeans to the “old” majoritarian left.6 Unlike some who write in that vein, **I am well aware that forms of racial, national, and gender exclusion helped construct past forms of working-class solidarity**. Moreover, the “working class” has never been a truly homogenous and “universal class”; its identity and consciousness is constructed and contested in complex ways that reflect the intersectionality of not only race, class, gender, and sexuality, but also of ideology and culture.

Yet, absent a revival of a pluralist, majoritarian left it is hard to imagine how “difference” (or in old school terms, “pluralism”) **can be** institutionalized in an egalitarian manner. In some ways, the blindness of some theorists of “difference” to the reality that “difference” (or “diversity”) can (and is) being institutionalized on a radically inegalitarian social terrain (in which some “different” groups have much more power and opportunity than others) mimics the intellectual blindspot of the liberal pluralist theorist that dominated political theory in the 1950s and 1960s. Then, radical theorists pointed out that liberal pluralist society failed to be fully democratic because some groups had inordinate economic and political power as compared to their small numbers.7 Today, the same critique of “difference” can be made. “Different” groups certainly do not have power proportionate to their democratic numbers. And the “performative” options of working-class individuals, persons of color, women, and LGBTQ individuals are constrained by the structural distribution of racial, economic, and gendered forms of power.

#### The aff is the exact opposite of the alt – taking a step back to ridicule their politics is essential

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(Gregory and Michael J., “Introduction,” in *Radical Intellectuals and the Subversion of Progressive Politics*, pg. 1-32)

These four elements of the new radical intellectuals and the movements they have influenced are in direct contradiction to the rational radicalism that we implicitly espouse here. On our reading, there is not only a theoretical but also a deeply political difference between what these theorists search for and the Enlightenment-inspired radical view **of a social order marked by solidarity** around common goods, civic virtue oriented toward the defense of the public welfare, well-ordered political institutions with public purpose as their aim, constitutionalism that secures individual rights, and the democratization of economic life as the criterion of social justice. The alternative move, marked by claims that have given shape to radical and critical thought since the Enlightenment, not to mention the common sense that the thinkers we address have sought to evade. We believe that the success of these thinkers and ideas marks a real and disturbing departure from the more rationalist, more realist **understanding of progressive and radical politics** that marked the more **successful movements** of the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century.

The basic thesis that organizes the essays that follow is that these thinkers and their ideas have had a disintegrating effect on the nature of progressive politics, and each chapter in this book shows how this has taken place and, of equal importance, contrasts this with a more lucid, more compelling account of what progressive political and social criticism ought to be able to achieve. **Our purpose is to indict a** style **of theory** and thinking that has become so esoteric and self-referential that it has divorced itself from the historic concerns of progressive politics: from remedying inequality, confronting forces eroding our public goods, **or** challenging **the** entrenched power of political and economic elites. Whether it is a rampant irrationalism, a **rejection of any sense of realism** in politics, naive antistatism, theories of power and oppression that have no empirical basis, or simply an incoherent, confused set of texts upon which one can project and read whatever one wants, these thinkers have been able to seduce a generation **into an understanding of politics that privileges an** abstract, self-regarding “politics” **over the concrete analysis of power and a politics based on the public good.**

We believe that the appeal of these thinkers and ideas is symptomatic of a crisis in progressive politics—a crisis that cannot be simply solved. The essays collected here make no pretense to a comprehensive and systemic critique of the various trends in contemporary radical political theory. Nor do they seek to construct a new radicalism. What they do, however, seek to accomplish is to point to critical problems within the impulses of this new radical theory and to provide this from the point of view of a more rationally informed, more realistic account of the nature and import of real politics. Our fear is that the proliferation of these theories and the ideas that they make common **will penetrate so deeply that an effective, politically relevant Left** will all but collapse. To renew radical political theory along rational lines will require much work, but **we believe it** begins with critique.With this in mind, these essays are offered in the hope that those who encounter these new radical mandarins will reflect more critically on the false self-confidence of their ideas and political prescriptions and realize that another, more satisfying and productive, **tradition of radicalism once existed and is** once again possible.