### OFF

#### Interpretation and violation: the affirmative must defend the implementation and desirability of a topical plan – they don’t

#### Should means action by the agent

Ericson 3 (Jon M., Dean Emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts – California Polytechnic U., et al., The Debater’s Guide, Third Edition, p. 4)

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

#### The United States federal government 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

#### Prohibition means a law that forbids a certain action

Garner, Black’s Law Dictionary editor-in-chief, 16 [Bryan A., Black’s Law Dictionary, Fifth Pocket Edition, “prohibition”, p. 630]

prohibition. (15c) 1. A law or order than forbids a certain action.

#### The private sector mean’s the aff can’t regulate public entities

Oxford University Press, 18 (Oxford University Press, 5-17-2018, accessed on 9-18-2021, Encyclopedia, "Private Sector | Encyclopedia.com", https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/economics-business-and-labor/economics-terms-and-concepts/private-sector)//Babcii

pri·vate sec·tor

the part of the national economy that is not under direct government control.

### OFF

#### Institutions are a necessary starting point for agency and politics – critique through total refusal destroys agential potential

Leggett 13 [Will, Birmingham government and society professor, Philosophy and Social Criticism, “Restoring society to post-structuralist politics: Mouffe, Gramsci and radical democracy”, 39.3, SAGE, AM]

If politics is a hegemonic struggle to articulate political identities, then values are clearly a key mobilizing resource. Whether one understands values as being transhistorical, as the reflection of underlying social structures, or as entirely contingent, they are the mechanism through which individuals are won over politically. Although Mouffe eschews foundationalism of any kind, her arguments suggest that she recognizes that at some level agents must be motivated to act at all. For example, at the close of HSS, Laclau and Mouffe point to the ongoing need for ‘utopia’, because: ... without ‘utopia’ ... there is no possibility at all of the constitution of a radical imaginary – whether democratic or of any other type. The presence of this imaginary ... is absolutely essential for the constitution of all left-wing thought. (HSS: 190) We have seen that Mouffe has pursued this theme in her account of the role of passions in democratic politics. Indeed, in presenting her own arguments, Mouffe consistently invokes the rallying values of the left in the form of tropes such as liberty, equality and anti-capitalism. However, the broader assumptions of radical democratic theory cast doubt on its capacity to mobilize values. Mouffe stresses that a preference for deconstruction does not entail relativism (e.g. RP: ch. 1). Despite this, her post-structuralist insistence on discursive contingency means that ‘values’ can only be a provisional and always unsuccessful attempt to stabilize discourses. But broad values of the sort consistently invoked by Mouffe (liberty, equality) are more enduring than this, both across generations and in the way they are internalized by individuals over the life-course (Trainor, 2008). This is not to essentialize values; how exactly they are interpreted and mobilized will vary depending on the empirical context (discussed as ‘resonance’, below). But the a priori assumption that liberty and equality are empty of substantive content is not a promising basis from which to build enduring political support. From the point of view of the left (itself a problematic term for post-structuralists), it is precisely the malleable treatment of concepts such as ‘equality’ which enabled the rhetorical convolutions of Third Way centrism about which Mouffe is so scathing. Mouffe’s work thus recognizes the political importance of values, but simultaneously undercuts their ontological status. A related problem is that although Mouffe speaks of the need for passions and invokes values, her account of values is surprisingly functionalist. For Mouffe, values are politically useful not because of any intrinsic meaning or representation of something substantive, but because they highlight the social condition of antagonism per se. Thus, writing of the ‘integrative role that conflict plays in modern democracy’, Mouffe suggests that: A well functioning democracy requires confrontation between democratic political positions. Without this there is always a danger that democratic confrontation will be replaced by confrontation between non-negotiable moral values or essentialist forms of identification. (2002:10) On this view, the function of values (‘democratic political positions’) is primarily to make various subject positions available, thus providing an outlet for antagonisms and facilitating what we might see as Mouffe’s own meta-value of democratization (RP: ch. 9). The content of the values at stake seems to be of secondary importance; it is their democratic function which matters. With this treatment of values, Mouffe – contrary to the post-Marxist ethos of expanding the boundaries of politics – offers a surprisingly restricted vision; politics appears in terms of available, rather mainstream, ‘subject positions’. For example, Mouffe tends to cite the familiar schemata of social democracy and neo-liberalism as democratic subject positions par excellence. Although she stresses the need for democracy to provide ‘political forms of collective identification around clearly differentiated democratic positions’ (OP: 31), she further narrows this to the need for ‘a clear divide between the government and opposition’ (ibid.: 120). This is in contrast to the much broader vision of the political field in complex, plural societies that Mouffe’s post-structuralist theoretical assumptions imply. Such a narrow, traditional sense of politics is reinforced by Mouffe’s valorization (via Canetti) of the moment of ‘the vote’ in parliament (ibid.: 21–5). There are further difficulties attached to Mouffe’s foregrounding of formal political subject positions. Mouffe is clear that she does not want pluralism itself to drift into an essentialism ‘of the elements’ (RP: 7). The latter, characteristic of much postmodern theory, presents a political field consisting of an infinite variety of subject positions, potentially undermining coherent, strategic political action. However, Mouffe’s use of overarching positions such as neo-liberalism and social democracy risks the essentialism and voluntarism she wishes to avoid. On the one hand, these traditions are invoked in a reified fashion, rather than as historically contingent and contested articulations. But, at the same time, Mouffe implicitly exaggerates the autonomy of individual citizens to choose between these apparently fully formed yet also contingent political products. The result is an unlikely mix of Althusserian ideology analysis with postmodern, identity politics: the very two things Mouffe has successfully distanced herself from elsewhere. The argument here is that Mouffe’s project would benefit from recognizing values as having structural, recursive properties, and that the recovery of a Gramscian (not a rigid Althusserian) sense of ideology would assist in achieving this. It is the stable and enduring nature of ideologies – rather than rare moments of rupture – which calls for the most theoretical attention (Hunter, 1988; Torfing, 1999). Gramsci stressed the material character of ideologies, in terms of the production of everyday common sense at the level of civil society: indeed, in her earlier work, Mouffe (1979) identified this as his great achievement. Gramsci contrasted this practical, material understanding of ideology with the abstract ‘philosophies’ (e.g. 1971: 201). These are the formalized, public political discourses which Mouffe has since come to see as being essential to democracy (e.g. social democracy, neo-liberalism). Such philosophies are associated with ‘traditional’ intellectuals, rather than the ‘organic’ intellectuals Gramsci identified as bridging ideas and the lived reality of classes (e.g. ibid.: 5–14, 418–19). The effect of prioritizing abstract political positions is, as Richard Johnson argues, to reinforce a mode of theorizing ‘that separated a realm of ‘‘philosophy’’ – here of democratic political discourses – from the combined effects of economic and social pressures on people’s lives’ (2007: 101). A Gramscian approach to ideologies corrects this problem in two key respects. First, where Mouffe’s image of political subjectivity neglects how the agent’s choices over the life-course are framed by material and ideological influences (Hill, 2008), Gramsci had a sociologically richer conception of agency. He argued that man [sic] ‘cannot be conceived of except as historically determined man – i.e. man who has developed, and who lives, in certain conditions, in a particular social complex or totality of social relations’ (1971: 244). However, while being alert to the weight of past and present power relations upon individual subjectivity, Gramsci certainly did not see agents as imprisoned by them, given that ‘the will and initiative of men [sic] themselves cannot be left out of account’ (ibid.: 244). Thus, Gramsci famously described human personality as ‘strangely composite’ in its mix of ‘Stone Age’ received wisdoms as well as intimations of a better future society (ibid.: 324). Gramsci sought to understand not just the historical origins of consciousness, but also the means for changing it, to fight the battle for hearts and minds so that individuals might be won over to a new conception of themselves and society. By contrast, as Brennan Wood argues, ‘Discourse theory ... implies identities so frail that they can be ‘‘won’’ only fleetingly. Such analyses fail to understand meaning as enduring domination; they fail to grasp what makes ideology worth studying in the first place’ (1998: 409). Seen in this light, Mouffe’s view of political action tends towards being – in the language of political science – preference-accommodating: individuals have their primeval passions, and democratic politics must be sufficiently diverse to reflect them. This underplays the preference-shaping capacity both of social experiences prior to political action and, of course, political action itself. Specifying the content of values – projecting an image of the good society (or even utopia) – is integral to this process of preference-shaping, or winning hearts and minds. Mouffe seems reluctant to engage in such advocacy beyond promoting the benefits of radical democracy itself as a master imaginary. Second, Mouffe’s claim that a spread of available value positions acts as a cooling valve, ensuring peaceful, agonistic relations, ignores potential incommensurability between values. Following Gramsci’s sense of ideologies being grounded in concrete practices and interests, it is clear that certain ideas and practices are not just conceptually in tension or contradictory (e.g. liberty/equality) but empirically so. Furthermore, such positions may necessarily seek to obliterate one another as enemies, in precisely the way Mouffe claims an agonistic, radical democracy would circumvent. To take the two organized value positions that Mouffe repeatedly draws on, the logic of neo-liberalism is to obliterate the regulatory constraints of social democracy which, in its more radical versions, seeks not just to temper or roll back the market but qualitatively to go beyond (and therefore ‘obliterate’) the market form itself. Ironically, the only political position which claims to be able to finally reconcile these tensions is the Third Way, which Mouffe criticizes for precisely this reason (DP; OP). If we recognize that values are grounded in material practices and interests, it follows that for appeals to values to be politically successful, they need to achieve resonance with people’s lived experiences of the social world. However, Mouffe’s post-structuralist refusal of society precludes such resonance. An account of society is necessary for radical democracy to achieve its stated objectives, and we shall see below that Gramsci again provides the resources for such a move. We have in part judged Mouffe against her claim that radical democracy is a left political project. A key assumption of leftist politics has been that society is a verifiable entity, and that consequently political action can intervene in and improve it (McLennan, 2002). Despite this, Mouffe’s work oscillates between extremes with regard to the status of an empirical, social referent. Thus, she praises the ‘marxist tradition as having made an important contribution to our understanding of the dynamics of the capitalist system and its consequences over the ensemble of social relations’ (OP: 53–4). However, alongside this background assumption of a society framed by the effects of capital accumulation, Mouffe continues to reflect the strong anti-realism of HSS: she implies that society as such does not exist, or at least not outside of discourse. In HSS we were left in no doubt about this, with its claim that ‘‘‘Society’’ is not a valid object of discourse’ (111). Even where society is referred to, it is always instantiated by infinite political decisionmaking. Mouffe continues in this vein in her most recent work, summarizing that: Power is constitutive of the social because the social could not exist without the power relations through which it is given shape. What is at a given moment considered as the ‘natural’ order – jointly with the common sense which accompanies it – is the result of sedimented practices; it is never the manifestation of a deeper objectivity exterior to the practices that bring it into being. (OP: 18) Given this, Mouffe is scornful of sociology, and in particular the political-sociological theories of those such as Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens that present ‘supposedly neutral ... sociological evidence’ which is the ‘typical post-political gesture’ (OP: 55). Certainly, highlighting the role of power and political action in generating social arrangements enables proper consideration of agency, avoiding the view of political actors as cultural dupes. However, the ultimate defining of ‘society’ as simply another imaginary, means that necessary sociological analysis of the institutions and processes which permeate political action is shut down. It is precisely this refusal of prior social structures that limits Mouffe’s analysis on its own terms. For Mouffe’s account of the construction of democratic subject positions to work, there need to be actually existing social structures and relations for articulatory practices to resonate with. Addressing this deficit again means restoring to Mouffe’s analysis some of the key insights offered by Gramsci. Kate Nash argues that ‘Because post-Marxism cannot develop an adequate analysis of ‘‘the social’’ from within its own terms, it needs political sociology as a supplement’ (2002: 111). In what follows, the theoretical dimensions of such a supplement are developed by restoring a Gramscian reading of the social to Mouffe’s analysis of political subjectivities, without returning to Gramsci’s class reductionism. This involves, first, understanding social structures as being prior to agents, as shaping but not determining action. Second, a notion of society is necessary for political appeals to resonate with enduring, material social relations and experiences. Third, a conception of social structure enables a theorization of civil society – so integral to the Gramscian analysis – as the concrete space where hegemonic struggles are fought. Armed with an account of institutions – again underplayed in poststructuralism – we can theorize civil society as subject to pressure from ‘above’ in the form of the state, and from ‘below’ in the form of social and economic relations. Such a conception also enables theorization of the effects (but not determinations) of the economic sphere upon political identities. Post-Marxism implies an open-ended political space, with apparently infinite possibilities for constructing subjectivities. The first step in restoring society to Mouffe’s analysis is to recognize that social structures exist, and are prior to political action. Against the more voluntarist and idealist readings of Gramsci, Jonathan Joseph (2008) points to his insistence on both the existence of an objective social reality and, vitally, the constraints this imposes upon social and political possibilities. What Gramsci offers is a reading of the structural pre-conditions of politics which rejects vulgar reductionism, while acknowledging that the political is not an entirely contingent and open-ended field. This is best captured by Stuart Hall, who suggests that for Gramsci: ... one must understand the fundamental structure – the objective relations – within society ... for these set the most fundamental limits and conditions for the whole shape of historical development. From here arise some of the major lines of tendency which might be favourable to this or that line of development. The error of reductionism is then to translate these tendencies and constraints immediately into their absolutely determined political and ideological effects. ... In fact, they structure and determine only in the sense that they define the terrain on which historical forces move – they define the horizon of possibilities. (1996c: 421–2) This approach to structure can be applied to the cultural terrain upon which political subjectivity is formed, and which is critical to Mouffe’s work. Culture consists in the practices, ideas and ways of living which individuals are born into and which shape processes of identity formation (Hill, 2008). By contrast, in Mouffe’s account, identities are only constructed through political acts on the part of agents. Mouffe and other post-Marxists neglect that it is upon the social terrain of culture that subjectivities are constituted prior to their entering the hegemonic game in the political field. Post-Marxism thus lacks a thicker sense of how social and cultural forms of association are a source of identity. An example of a corrective approach is found in Michael Burawoy’s use of Gramsci in calling for a ‘sociological Marxism’. Burawoy points to the importance of specific forms of collective life and community prior to the emergence of the English working class. This class, he suggests, ‘could not be regarded as a blank slate, defenceless against market forces. It was already embodied in community, which gave it the weapons to defend itself and advance active society in its own name’ (2003: 222). Interestingly, drawing on Wittgenstein’s account of the thicker, cultural underpinnings of language games, Mouffe acknowledges that ‘It is because they are inscribed in shared forms of life ... that procedures can be accepted and followed’ (DP: 68). This indicates that identity formation cannot be made sense of without reference to prior traditions and practices. Mouffe herself notes that Gramsci was ‘perhaps the only Marxist to have understood the role of tradition’ (RP: 18). However, unlike Mouffe, Gramsci did not see culture and tradition as purely or even predominantly discursive entities, but as complex historical forces with their own materiality and the capacity to shape (but not determine) current political practices. A more sociological understanding of identity formation also throws a different light upon the passions, which Mouffe presents as motivating political action. Gramsci, too, stresses the affective dimensions of politics, but argues that ‘popular feelings’ need to be ‘studied in the way in which they present themselves objectively’ (1971: 419). Thus, the passions themselves are the historically produced, messy and complex outcomes of concrete traditions and practices, not some primeval political force. Recognizing that the social is prior to politics has important strategic consequences: political subjectivities need to resonate with actual social forces and lived experiences. This theme is pursued in Hall’s Gramscian work on the method of articulation. He criticizes Laclau and Mouffe’s collapsing of the social into an open discursive field, as this gives rise to the sense that ‘there is no reason why anything is or isn’t potentially articulatable with anything’ (1996b: 146). By contrast, Hall observes that ‘No ideological conception can ever become materially effective unless and until it can be articulated to the field of social and political forces’ (1996a: 42). On this view, as Joseph more recently explains of Gramsci, ‘Hegemonic projects are most successful when, on the one hand, they are grounded in deeper social processes, while on the other, they are further developed through state strategy’. As such, Joseph continues, ‘Rather than undermining agency [as Mouffe claims], such an approach gives agency a terrain on which to operate’ (2008: 128; emphasis added). Thus, the recognition of actual social forces does not diminish the space for politics but, on the contrary, enhances the possibilities for political articulation. By reducing identity to a matter of political instantiation, Mouffe bypasses the critical, prior influence of the social-cultural terrain. We have already seen that Mouffe presents a rather thin and abstracted conception of political philosophies (e.g. social democracy); we can now add that these are offered up for articulation with an equally thin and abstracted subject. This is no basis for a political project to resonate with people’s experiences. Of course, prior structures and historical forces do not just enable the articulation of political values with experiences – they can also present significant constraints upon what is politically possible (Nash, 2002). The post-structuralist account of the political lacks an adequate account of such constraints upon progressive political ambitions. This is no bad thing from the point of view of promoting the ‘optimism of the will’ famously called for by Gramsci, but fails to maintain his simultaneous call for a ‘pessimism of the intellect’. The latter means confronting the obduracy of the social relations and institutions of capitalist societies. For Gramsci, the struggle over identities is played out in civil society. As Burawoy notes, Gramsci certainly sees civil society as a ‘terrain of struggle’ (as do post-Marxists), but it nevertheless ‘occupies a specific institutional space within capitalism between economy and the state’ (2003: 198), and is subject to structural pressure from both. This is in contrast to the post-Marxist reading in which the social and the political are collapsed into a single discursive field. Mouffe suggests pluralist and complex late-modern societies are particularly conducive to hegemonic politics. Given this, it is surely necessary to theorize the institutional and historical specificity of civil society as the terrain of hegemonic struggle. This is particularly true of liberal democratic capitalist societies, in which a supposedly autonomous civil society continues to confound the left by reproducing dominant (neo-liberal) interests and ideologies. The issue of structural constraint brings us to the final advantage of a Gramscian supplement to radical democratic theory, and one which returns us to the heart of post-Marxism’s political ambitions. To self-identify as a left project, or to be even tangentially connected with Marxism, requires a political economy that is at least prepared to recognize how economic relations and imperatives can shape politics. Post-Marxism’s refusal of society means it cannot adequately theorize the increasing commodification of social and political institutions and identities. We need not claim any necessary relationship between the economy and other domains of social life. However, once we admit the existence of society per se, we can discuss more or less causal influences upon its character and development. This in turn allows recognition that economic logics and relations play a key role in the social and political sphere under capitalist conditions. While Gramsci had already perceived the importance of treating what we today call discourse in combination with economic analysis, in post-Marxism, as Peter Ives notes, ‘in order to expunge the ‘‘essentialist remnant’’ from Gramsci, economic analysis has to be denied altogether as does the Marxist critique of capitalism (or any systematic critique of capitalism)’ (2005: 466). Instead, I have argued that we should see Gramsci as the means to ‘bring society back in’, providing post-Marxist radical democracy with the tools to justify itself as a left project, concerned with understanding and challenging the basic structures of capitalism. The post-Marxist project – and in particular Mouffe’s programme of radical democracy focused on here – has drawn on post-structuralism to offer invaluable theoretical and political insights. Originally acknowledging its debt to Gramsci, it has shown how the left can abandon determinism and develop a hegemonic politics under social conditions of pluralism and indeterminacy. Specifically, Mouffe has suggested how the left can reclaim the mantle of democracy, thus banishing the spectre of authoritarianism. But this article has argued that the ‘postmodernization’ of Gramsci has limited the post-Marxist project in general, and Mouffe’s radical democratic theory in particular. Restoring key elements of the Gramscian heritage could address these limitations, without jettisoning radical democracy’s contemporary insights. In contrast to a discourse-centric conception of the political, with its formally elaborated ‘philosophies’, a Gramscian approach can understand values and ideologies in relation to everyday practices – including organized, systemically produced interests. In particular, such an approach can account for the structured, recursive character of ideologies. In addition, a Gramscian approach accepts the existence of society itself, rather than refusing it or subordinating it to the political. This actually enhances Mouffe’s account of political subjectivity, by allowing for the prior cultural and social terrain upon which identities are articulated and mobilized, as well as again accounting for recursive structures of domination. In particular, Gramsci allows the analytical space for civil society as a set of institutions with complex relations to both state and economy. In recovering Gramsci in this fashion, we need not go all the way back down the road with him to positing, for example, ‘fundamental classes’ as the axis of hegemony. What a Gramscian supplement to Mouffe restores are the resources for thinking about democratic left strategies within an enduring, and intensifying, capitalist environment.

#### The impact is mass death and global violence

Adrian **Parr**, **13**. Associate Professor of Philosophy and Environmental Studies at the University of Cincinnati. *The Wrath of Capital: Neoliberalism and Climate Change Politics*. Columbia University Press. 145-7.

A quick snapshot of the twenty-first century so far: an economic meltdown; a frantic sell-off of public land to the energy business as President George W Bush exited the White House; a prolonged, costly, and unjustified war in Iraq; the Greek economy in ruins; an escalation of global food prices; bee colonies in global extinction; 925 million hungry reported in 2010; as of 2005, the world's five hundred richest individuals with a combined income greater than that of the poorest 416 million people, the richest 10 percent accounting for 54 percent of global income; a planet on the verge of boiling point; melting ice caps; increases in extreme weather conditions; and the list goes on and on and on.2 Sounds like **a ticking time bomb**, doesn't it? Well it is. It is shameful to think that massive die-outs of future generations will put to pale comparison the 6 million murdered during the Holocaust; the millions killed in two world wars; the genocides in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Darfur; the 1 million left homeless and the 316,000 killed by the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The time has come to wake up to the warning signs.3 The real issue climate change poses is that we do not enjoy the luxury of incremental change anymore. We are in the **last decade** where we can do something about the situation. Paul Gilding, the former head of Greenpeace International and a core faculty member of Cambridge University's Programme for Sustainability, explains that "two degrees of warming is an inadequate goal and a plan for failure;' adding that "returning to below one degree of warming . . . is the solution to the problem:'4 Once we move higher than 2°C of warming, which is what is projected to occur by 2050, **positive feedback mechanisms** will begin to kick in, and then we will be at the **point of no return**. We therefore need to start thinking very differently **right now**. We do not see the crisis for what it is; we only see it as an isolated symptom that we need to make a few minor changes to deal with. This was the message that Venezuela's president Hugo Chavez delivered at the COP15 United Nations Climate Summit in Copenhagen on December 16, 2009, when he declared: "Let's talk about the cause. We should not avoid responsibilities, we should not avoid the depth of this problem. And I'll bring it up again, the cause of this disastrous panorama is the metabolic, destructive system of the capital and its model: **capitalism**.”5

**The alternative is to affirm the model of the Communist Party – only the vertically structured dual power organizing can provide effective accountability mechanisms to correct unproductive tendencies, educate and mobilize marginalized communities, and connect local struggles to a movement for international liberation.**

**Escalante 18** (Alyson Escalante, you should totally read her work for non-debate reasons, Marxist-Leninist, Materialist Feminist and Anti-Imperialist activist. “PARTY ORGANIZING IN THE 21ST CENTURY” September 21st, 2018 <https://theforgenews.org/2018/09/21/party-organizing-in-the-21st-century/> rvs)

I would argue that within the base building movement, there is a move towards party organizing, but this trend has not always been explicitly theorized or forwarded within the movement. My goal in this essay is to argue that base building and dual power strategy can be best forwarded through party organizing, and that party organizing can allow this emerging movement to solidify into a powerful revolutionary socialist tendency in the United States. One of the crucial insights of the base building movement is that the current state of the left in the United States is one in which revolution is not currently possible. There exists very little popular support for socialist politics. A century of anticommunist propaganda has been extremely effective in convincing even the most oppressed and marginalized that communism has nothing to offer them. The base building emphasis on dual power responds directly to this insight. By building institutions which can meet people’s needs, we are able to concretely demonstrate that communists can offer the oppressed relief from the horrific conditions of capitalism. Base building strategy recognizes that actually doing the work to serve the people does infinitely more to create a socialist base of popular support than electing democratic socialist candidates or holding endless political education classes can ever hope to do. Dual power is about proving that we have something to offer the oppressed. The question, of course, remains: once we have built a base of popular support, what do we do next? If it turns out that establishing socialist institutions to meet people’s needs does in fact create sympathy towards the cause of communism, how can we mobilize that base? Put simply: **in order to mobilize the base which base builders hope to create, we need to have already done the work of building a communist party.** It is not enough to simply meet peoples needs. Rather, we must build the institutions of dual power in the name of communism. We must refuse covert front organizing and instead have a public face as a communist party. When we build tenants unions, serve the people programs, and other dual power projects, we must make it clear that we are organizing as communists, unified around a party, and are not content simply with establishing endless dual power organizations. We must be clear that our strategy is revolutionary and in order to make this clear we must adopt party organizing. By “party organizing” I mean an organizational strategy which adopts the party model. Such organizing focuses on building a party whose membership is formally unified around a party line determined by democratic centralist decision making. The party model creates internal methods for **holding party members accountable**, unifying party member action around democratically determined goals, and for educating party members in communist theory and praxis. A communist organization utilizing the party model works to build dual power institutions while simultaneously educating the communities they hope to serve. Organizations which adopt the party model focus on propagandizing around the need for revolutionary socialism. They function as the forefront of political organizing, empowering local communities to theorize their liberation through communist theory while organizing communities to literally fight for their liberation. A party is not simply a group of individuals doing work together, but is a formal organization unified in its fight against capitalism. Party organizing has much to offer the base building movement. By working in a unified party, base builders can ensure that local struggles are tied to and informed by a unified national and international strategy. While the most horrific manifestations of capitalism take on particular and unique form at the local level, we need to remember that our struggle is against a material base which functions not only at the national but at the international level. The formal structures provided by a democratic centralist party model allow individual locals to have a voice in open debate, but also allow for a unified strategy to emerge from democratic consensus. Furthermore, **party organizing allows for local organizations and individual organizers to be held accountable for their actions.** It allows criticism to function not as one independent group criticizing another independent group, but rather as comrades with a formal organizational unity working together to sharpen each others strategies and to help correct chauvinist ideas and actions. In the context of the socialist movement within the United States, such accountability is crucial. As a movement which operates within a settler colonial society, imperialist and colonial ideal frequently infect leftist organizing. Creating formal unity and party procedure for dealing with and correcting these ideas allows us to address these consistent problems within American socialist organizing. Having a formal party which unifies the various dual power projects being undertaken at the local level also allows for base builders to not simply meet peoples needs, but to pull them into the membership of the party as organizers themselves. The party model creates a means for sustained growth to occur by unifying organizers in a manner that allows for skills, strategies, and ideas to be shared with newer organizers. It also allows community members who have been served by dual power projects to take an active role in organizing by becoming party members and participating in the continued growth of base building strategy. It ensures that there are formal processes for educating communities in communist theory and praxis, and also enables them to act and organize in accordance with their own local conditions. We also must recognize that the current state of the base building movement precludes the possibility of such a national unified party in the present moment. Since base building strategy is being undertaken in a number of already established organizations, it is not likely that base builders would abandon these organizations in favor of founding a unified party. Additionally, it would not be strategic to immediately undertake such complete unification because it would mean abandoning the organizational contexts in which concrete gains are already being made and in which growth is currently occurring. What is important for base builders to focus on in the current moment is building dual power on a local level alongside building a national movement. This means aspiring towards the possibility of a unified party, while pursuing continued local growth. The movement within the Marxist Center network towards some form of unification is positive step in the right direction. The independent party emphasis within the Refoundation caucus should also be recognized as a positive approach. It is important for base builders to continue to explore the possibility of unification, and to maintain unification through a party model as a long term goal. In the meantime, individual base building organizations ought to adopt party models for their local organizing. Local organizations ought to be building dual power alongside recruitment into their organizations, education of community members in communist theory and praxis, and the establishment of armed and militant party cadres capable of defending dual power institutions from state terror. Dual power institutions must be unified openly and transparently around these organizations in order for them to operate as more than “red charities.” Serving the people means meeting their material needs while also educating and propagandizing. It means radicalizing, recruiting, and organizing. The party model remains the most useful method for achieving these ends. The use of the party model by local organizations allows base builders to gain popular support, and most importantly, to mobilize their base of popular support towards revolutionary ends, not simply towards the construction of a parallel economy which exists as an end in and of itself. It is my hope that we will see future unification of the various local base building organizations into a national party, but in the meantime we must push for party organizing at the local level. If local organizations adopt party organizing, it ought to become clear that **a unified national party will have to be the long term goal of the base building movement.** Many of the already existing organizations within the base building movement already operate according to these principles. I do not mean to suggest otherwise. Rather, my hope is to suggest that we ought to be explicit about the need for party organizing and emphasize the relationship between dual power and the party model. Doing so will make it clear that the base building movement is not pursuing a cooperative economy alongside capitalism, but is pursuing a revolutionary socialist strategy capable of fighting capitalism. The long term details of base building and dual power organizing will arise organically in response to the conditions the movement finds itself operating within. I hope that I have put forward a useful contribution to the discussion about base building organizing, and have demonstrated the need for party organizing in order to ensure that the base building tendency maintains a revolutionary orientation. The finer details of revolutionary strategy will be worked out over time and are not a good subject for public discussion. I strongly believe party organizing offers the best path for ensuring that such strategy will succeed. My goal here is not to dictate the only possible path forward but to open a conversation about how the base building movement will organize as it transitions from a loose network of individual organizations into a unified socialist tendency. These discussions and debates will be crucial to ensuring that this rapidly growing movement can succeed.

### Case

#### causes dependency on the judge as a liberator

Brown 95—prof at UC Berkeley (Wendy, States of Injury, 21-3)

For some, fueled by opprobrium toward regulatory norms or other modalities of domination, the language of "resistance" has taken up the ground vacated by a more expansive practice of freedom. For others, it is the discourse of “empowerment” that carries the ghost of freedom's valence ¶ 22¶. Yet as many have noted, insofar as resistance is an effect of the regime it opposes on the one hand, and insofar as its practitioners often seek to void it of normativity to differentiate it from the (regulatory) nature of what it opposes on the other, it is at best politically rebellious; at worst, politically amorphous. Resistance stands against, not for; it is re-action to domination, rarely willing to admit to a desire for it, and it is neutral with regard to possible political direction. Resistance is in no way constrained to a radical or emancipatory aim. a fact that emerges clearly as soon as one analogizes Foucault's notion of resistance to its companion terms in Freud or Nietzsche. Yet in some ways this point is less a critique of Foucault, who especially in his later years made clear that his political commitments were not identical with his theoretical ones (and un- apologetically revised the latter), than a sign of his misappropriation. For Foucault, resistance marks the presence of power and expands our under- standing of its mechanics, but it is in this regard an analytical strategy rather than an expressly political one. "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet. or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority to power. . . . (T]he strictly relational character of power relationships . . . depends upon a multiplicity of points of resis- tance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations.\*39 This appreciation of the extent to which resistance is by no means inherently subversive of power also reminds us that it is only by recourse to a very non-Foucaultian moral evaluation of power as bad or that which is to be overcome that it is possible to equate resistance with that which is good, progressive, or seeking an end to domination. ¶ If popular and academic notions of resistance attach, however weakly at times, to a tradition of protest, the other contemporary substitute for a discourse of freedom—“empowerment”—would seem to correspond more closely to a tradition of idealist reconciliation. The language of resistance implicitly acknowledges the extent to which protest always transpires inside the regime; “empowerment,” in contrast, registers the possibility of generating one’s capacities, one’s “self-esteem,” one’s life course, without capitulating to constraints by particular regimes of power. But in so doing, contemporary discourses of empowerment too often signal an oddly adaptive and harmonious relationship with domination insofar as they locate an individual’s sense of worth and capacity in the register of individual feelings, a register implicitly located on some- thing of an other worldly plane vis-a-vis social and political power. In this regard, despite its apparent locution of resistance to subjection, contem- porary discourses of empowerment partake strongly of liberal solipsism—the radical decontextualization of the subject characteristic of¶ 23¶ liberal discourse that is key to the fictional sovereign individualism of liberalism. Moreover, in its almost exclusive focus on subjects’ emotionalbearing and self-regard, empowerment is a formulation that converges with a regime’s own legitimacy needs in masking the power of the regime.¶ This is not to suggest that talk of empowerment is always only illusion or delusion. It is to argue, rather, that while the notion of empowerment articulates that feature of freedom concerned with action, with being more than the consumer subject figured in discourses of rights and eco- nomic democracy, contemporary deployments of that notion also draw so heavily on an undeconstructed subjectivity that they risk establishing a wide chasm between the (experience of) empowerment and an actual capacity to shape the terms of political, social, or economic life. Indeed, the possibility that one can “feel empowered” without being so forms an important element of legitimacy for the antidemocratic dimensions of liberalism.

#### Self-care rejects collective responsibility, replaces politics with therapy – only seeking community care which’s a pre-req to psychic healing

Loewe 12, B. an organizer and communicator, has served as NDLON's Communications Director, supported the Alto Arizona work against SB 1070 and Sheriff Arpaio, and participated in the organizing of the 2010 US Social Forum in Detroit [“An End to Self Care,” *Organizing Upgrade*, October 15 12, http://www.organizingupgrade.com/index.php/blogs/b-loewe/item/729-end-to-self-care]

I’m going to say it. I want to see an end to “self-care.” Can we put a nail in self-care’s coffin and instead birth a newer discussion of community care?

As I most often hear it, self-care stands as an importation of middle-class values of leisure that’s blind to the dynamics of working class (or even family) life, inherently rejects collective responsibility for each other’s well-being, misses power dynamics in our lives, and attempts to serve as a replacement for a politics and practice of desire that could actually ignite our hearts with a fuel to work endlessly.

Talking about how we sustain ourselves, honor our personal needs, and prioritize our well-being in this brusque and brutal world is a huge advance from movement culture generations before. However, centering that conversation on ‘self-care’ devoid of our place in the collective misses the central point of why we need to care for ourselves. And that is because we must have all of our strength in place to counter the systems which, without our ability to resist and transform, without the self-preservation Audre Lorde describes, would see us destroyed.

Yashna Maya Padamsee, in her article Communities of Care, Organizations of Liberation, writes

“Talking only about self-care when talking about healing justice is like only talking about recycling and composting when speaking on Environmental Justice. It is a necessary and important individual daily practice- but to truly seek justice for the Environment, or to truly seek Healing for our communities, we need to interrupt and transform systems on a broader level.

Speaking in Phoenix, Arizona in 2009 at a rally for migrant rights, Zack de la Rocha of Rage Against the Machine said in a speech, ‘The racism and hatred we are seeing here inflicts in us a collective wound. The only way to heal from those wounds and address those assaults on our dignity is to resist.’ If injustice results in collective wounds, healing comes from collective struggle.

#### Individualist ethos actively sustains neoliberal power — focus on shared class injustice is key

Fraser 17 (Nancy — professor of philosophy and politics at The New School for Social Research, 1/28/17, “Against Progressive Neoliberalism, A New Progressive Populism,” <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/nancy-fraser-against-progressive-neoliberalism-progressive-populism>)

Johanna Brenner’s reading of my essay misses the centrality of the problem of hegemony. My main point was that the current dominance of finance capital was not achieved only by force but also by what Gramsci called “consent.” Forces favoring financialization, corporate globalization, and deindustrialization succeeded in taking over the Democratic Party, I claimed, by presenting those patently anti-labor policies as progressive. Neoliberals gained power by draping their project in a new cosmopolitan ethos, centered on diversity, women’s empowerment, and LGBTQ rights. Drawing in supporters of such ideals, they forged a new hegemonic bloc, which I called progressive neoliberalism. In identifying and analyzing this bloc, I never lost sight of the power of finance capital, as Brenner claims, but offered an explanation for its political ascendance. The lens of hegemony also sheds light on the position of social movements vis-à-vis neoliberalism. Instead of parsing out who colluded and who was coopted, I focused on the widespread shift in progressive thinking from equality to meritocracy. Saturating the airwaves in recent decades, that thinking influenced not only liberal feminists and diversity advocates who knowingly embraced its individualist ethos, but also many within social movements. Even those whom Brenner calls social-welfare feminists found something to identify with in progressive neoliberalism, and in doing so, turned a ~~blind eye~~ to its contradictions. To say this is not to blame them, as Brenner contends, but to clarify how hegemony works—by drawing us in—in order to figure out how best to build a counterhegemony. The latter idea supplies the standard for assessing the fortunes of the left from the 1980s to the present. Revisiting that period, Brenner surveys an impressive body of leftwing activism, which she supports and admires, as do I. But it does not detract from that admiration to note that this activism never rose to the level of a counterhegemony. It did not succeed, that is, in presenting itself as a credible alternative to progressive neoliberalism, nor in replacing the latter’s view of who counts as “us” and who as “them” with a view of its own. To explain why this was the case would require a lengthy study, but one thing at least is clear: unwilling to frontally challenge progressive-neoliberal versions of feminism, anti-racism, and multiculturalism, leftwing activists were never able to reach the “reactionary populists” (that is, industrial working-class whites) who ended up voting for Trump. Bernie Sanders is the exception that proves the rule. Though far from perfect, his campaign directly challenged established political fault lines. By targeting “the billionaire class,” he reached out to those abandoned by progressive neoliberalism, addressing communities struggling to preserve “middle-class” lives as victims of a “rigged economy” who deserve respect and are capable of making common cause with other victims, many of whom never had access to “middle-class” jobs. At the same time, Sanders split off a good chunk of those who had gravitated toward progressive neoliberalism. Though defeated by Clinton, he pointed the way to a potential counterhegemony: in place of the progressive-neoliberal alliance of financialization plus emancipation, he gave us a glimpse of a new, “progressive-populist” bloc combining emancipation with social protection. In my view, the Sanders option remains the only principled and winning strategy in the era of Trump. To those who are now mobilizing under the banner of “resistance,” I suggest the counter-project of “course correction.” Whereas the first suggests a doubling down on progressive-neoliberalism’s definition of “us” (progressives) versus “them” (Trump’s “deplorable” supporters), the second means redrawing the political map—by forging common cause among all whom his administration is set to betray: not just the immigrants, feminists, and people of color who voted against him, but also the rust-belt and Southern working-class strata who voted for him. Contra Brenner, the point is not to dissolve “identity politics” into “class politics.” It is to clearly identify the shared roots of class and status injustices in financialized capitalism, and to build alliances among those who must join together to fight against both of them.

**Their focus on representational politics is ineffective---neoliberalism has subordinated the role of representative politics in support of cultural commodification.**

**Eagleton 16** – Visiting Professor of Cultural Theory at Yale [Terry, “The Hubris of Culture: And the Limits of Identity Politics,” *Commonwealth*, 15 Apr 2016, p. 19-22, Emory Libraries]

The conventional postmodern wisdom is that this system has now taken a cultural turn. From the rough-spoken old industrial world, we have now evolved to capitalism with a cultural face. The role of the so-called “creative” industries, the power of the new cultural technologies, the prominent role of sign, image, brand, icon, spectacle, lifestyle, fantasy, design, and advertising: all this is taken to testify to the emergence of an “aesthetic” form of capitalism, in transit from the material to the immaterial. What this amounts to, however, is that capitalism has incorporated culture for its own material ends, not that it has fallen under the sway of the aesthetic, gratuitous, self-delighting, or self-fulfilling. On the contrary, this aestheticized mode of capitalist production has proved more ruthlessly instrumental than ever. “Creativity,” which for Karl Marx and William Morris signified the opposite of capitalist utility, is pressed into the service of acquisition and exploitation.

There is no clearer example of the way capitalism is intent on assimilating what once seemed its opposite (“culture”) than the global decline of the universities. Along with the fall of Communism and the Twin Towers, it ranks among the most momentous events of our age, if somewhat less spectacular in nature. A centuries-old tradition of universities as centers of humane critique is currently being scuppered by their conversion into pseudocapitalist enterprises under the sway of a brutally philistine managerial ideology. Once arenas of critical reflection, academic institutions are being increasingly reduced to organs of the marketplace, along with betting shops and fast-food joints. They are now for the most part in the hands of technocrats for whom values are largely a matter of real estate. A new intellectual proletariat of academics is assessed by how far their lectures on Plato or Copernicus boost the economy, while unemployed graduates constitute a kind of lumpen intelligentsia. Students who are currently charged fees by the year will no doubt soon find their tutors charging by the insight. In moving some of its academic staff to new premises, one British university recently issued an edict severely restricting their ability to keep books in their minuscule offices. The dream of our universities’ boneheaded administrators is of a bookless and paperless environment, books and paper being messy, crumply stuff incompatible with a gleaming neo-capitalist wasteland consisting of nothing but machines, bureaucrats, and security guards. Since students are also messy, crumply stuff, the ideal would be a campus on which no such inconvenient creatures were in sight. The death of the humanities is now an event waiting on the horizon.

What ought finally to have discredited the faith that capitalism has shifted to a new cultural mode was the financial debacle of 2008. One consequence of such upheavals is that, for an inconvenient moment, they strip the veil of familiarity from a form of life that has ceased to be regarded as a specific historical system. By throwing its inner workings into relief, they allow that life-form to be framed, objectified, and estranged. As such, it ceases to be the invisible color of everyday life and can be seen instead as a historically recent mode of civilization. Significantly, it is in the throes of such crises that even those who are supposed to run the system begin for the first time to use the word “capitalism,” rather than to speak more euphemistically of Western democracy or the Free World. They thus steal a march on some sectors of the cultural left, which in their zeal for a discourse of difference, diversity, identity, and marginality ceased to use the word “capitalism” – let alone “exploitation” or “revolution” – some decades ago. **Neoliberal capitalism has no difficulty** with terms like **“diversity” or “inclusiveness,”** as it does with the language of class struggle.

It is imprudent for the Masters of the Universe to talk of capitalism, since in doing so they acknowledge that their form of life is simply one among many, that like all other such life-forms it has a specific origin, and that what was born can always die. It may be that capitalism is simply human nature, but it is hard to deny that there was a time when there was human nature but not capitalism. What the crisis of 2008 put most embarrassingly on show, however, was **how little the system had fundamentally changed**, for all the excited talk of lifestyle and **hybridity, flexible identities** and immaterial labor, rhizome-like organizations and CEOs in opennecked shirts, the disappearance of the working class and the shift from industrial labor to information technology and the service industry. Despite these innovations, the momentary crackup of the system revealed that we were still languishing in a world of mass unemployment and obscenely overpaid executives, gross inequalities and squalid public services, one in which the state was every bit as obedient a tool of ruling-class interests as the most resolutely vulgar of Marxists had ever imagined. What was at stake was not image and icon but gargantuan fraud and systemic plunder. The true gangsters and anarchists wore pinstripe suits, and the robbers were running the banks rather than raiding them.

The idea of culture is traditionally bound up with the concept of distinction. High culture is a question of rank. One thinks of the great hautbourgeois families portrayed by Marcel Proust and Thomas Mann, for whom power and material wealth are accompanied by a lofty cultural tone and bear with them certain moral obligations. Spiritual hierarchy goes hand in hand with social inequality. The aim of advanced capitalism, by contrast, is to **preserve inequality while abolishing hierarchy**. In this sense, its material base is at odds with its cultural superstructure. You do not need to proclaim your superiority to other peoples in order to raid their natural resources, as long as by doing so you maintain the material inequalities between them and yourself. Whether Americans regard themselves as superior to Iraqis is really neither here nor there, given that it is political and military control over an oil-rich region they have in their sights. Culturally speaking, **late capitalism is** for the most part a matter not of hierarchy but **hybridity** – of mingling, merging, and multiplicity – while, materially speaking, the gulf between social classes assumes ultra-Victorian proportions. There are plenty of exponents of cultural studies who take note of the former but not the latter. While the sphere of consumption is hospitable to all comers, the domain of property and production remains rigidly stratified. Divisions of property and class, however, are partly masked by the levelling, demotic, spiritually promiscuous culture in which they are set, as they were not in the era of Proust and Mann. In contrast to that stately milieu, cultural and material capital now begin to split apart. The brokers, jobbers, operators, and speculators who float to the top of the system in their spiritual weightlessness are hardly remarkable for their aesthetic wisdom.

The breaking down of cultural hierarchies is clearly to be welcomed. For the most part, **however**, it is less the upshot of a genuinely democratic spirit than an **effect of the commodity form**, which levels existing values rather than contesting them in the name of alternative priorities. Indeed, it represents an assault less on cultural supremacism than on the notion of value as such. The very act of discrimination becomes suspect. Not only does it involve exclusion, but it must inevitably imply the possibility of a superior vantage point, which seems offensive to the egalitarian spirit. Those who prefer Billie Holliday to Liam Gallagher (and what right have they to judge in any case?) are simply being elitist. Since nothing is more common than evaluation in pubs and sports stadiums, this aversion to ranking is itself an elitist posture. Distinctions give way to differences. The cuisine of Florence, Arizona, is neither better nor worse than that of Florence, Italy – simply different. To discriminate is unjustly to demean one thing while falsely absolutizing another. To judge that Donald Trump has less humility than Pope Francis is to thrust Trump self-righteously into the outer darkness, thereby flouting the absolute value of inclusivity; and who am I to arrogate such authority? From what odiously Olympian standpoint has one the right to pontificate that feeding a gerbil is preferable to microwaving it?

The bogus populism of the commodity – its warm-hearted refusal to rank, exclude, and discriminate – is based on a blank indifference to absolutely everyone. Careless for the most part of distinctions of class, race, and gender, impeccably even-handed in its favors, it will yield itself, in the spirit of a whorehouse, to anyone with the cash to buy it. A similar indifference underlies the historic advance of multiculturalism. If the human species now has a chance, for the first time in its history, to become thoroughly hybrid, it is largely **because the capitalist market** will buy the labor-power of anyone willing to sell it, whatever their cultural origins. There are, to be sure, some transitional tensions at work here. At present, it is the economy that is promiscuously open to all comers, and a certain current of racist culture that wishes to discriminate. A capitalist market accustomed to being culturally embedded in the nation state, whose military firepower and social homogeneity served it well over the centuries, now pitches different ethnic groups together; and the racist and neo-fascist forces that this unleashes threaten to splinter the national cohesion on which a globalized economic system continues to depend.

For the moment, then, culture and the economy are in some sense out of synchrony. While the latter can go global, it is not so simple for the former to wax cosmopolitan. One can, to be sure, hang around polyglot cafés or enjoy the music of a score of nations, but **culture** in this sense of the term **lacks the depth in which values** and convictions **need to be rooted**. There are indeed international allegiances for which men and women have been ready to die, not least in the socialist tradition; but culture, as Edmund Burke was aware, draws much of its resilience from local loyalties. It is hard to imagine the citizens of Bradford or Bruges throwing themselves on the barricades crying “Long live the European Union!” Far from producing citizens of the world, transnational capitalism tends to breed parochialism and insecurity among a large swathe of those subject to its sway; and it is toward racism and chauvinism, not into cosmopolitan cafés, that this insecurity is likely to impel them.

While some forms of culture have increased in significance, others have diminished. Nobody believes any longer that art can fill the shoes of the Almighty. Culture as a critique of civilization has been increasingly **eroded**, undermined among other things by the postmodern prejudice that any such critique must address itself to an illusory social totality from an equally illusory standpoint of absolute knowledge. It has also come under siege from the intellectual treason of the universities. The critical or utopian dimensions of the concept of culture are rapidly declining. If **culture signifies a corporate way of life**, as it does when we speak of deaf culture, beach culture, police culture, café culture, and so on, then it is hard for it to serve at the same time as a yardstick by which to assess such forms of life, or to evaluate social existence in general. So-called identity politics are not remarkable for their self-critical spirit. The point of engaging in, say, English folk culture is to affirm English folksiness, not to question it. Nobody becomes a Morris dancer in order to satirize the whole sorry business.

At the same time, there are political cultures (gay, feminist, ethnic, musical, and so on) that are indeed deeply critical of the status quo. They inherit the dissenting impulse of Kulturkritik while jettisoning its spiritual elitism. They also reject its abstract utopianism for a specific way of life. If they challenge the patrician remoteness of the tradition that passes from Friedrich Schiller to D. H. Lawrence, with its disdain for modernity, they also differ from those corporate life-forms that exist simply to affirm a particular social identity, rather than to cast a cold eye on the social order as a whole. Nobody but the **most sorely misguided of citizens becomes a Morris dancer in order to overthrow capitalism**, whereas many a feminist has greeted the prospect with acclaim. Political cultures of this kind combine critique with solidarity in something like the style of the traditional labor movement.

Yet though identity politics and multiculturalism can be radical forces, **they are not** for the most part **revolutionary** ones. Some of these political currents have largely abandoned their hopes in this regard, while others never entertained them in the first place. They differ in this respect from the powers that drove the British from India and the Belgians from the Congo. Those campaigns were quite properly a matter of expulsion and exclusion, not in the first place of plurality and inclusivity. They also **envisaged a world beyond the horizon of capitalist reality**, even if those visions were to be for the most part thwarted. Today’s cultural politics, by contrast, is not generally given to challenging those priorities. It speaks the language of gender, identity, marginality, diversity, and oppression, **but not** for the most part the idiom of state, property, class-struggle, ideology, and exploitation. Roughly speaking, it is the difference between anti-colonialism and postcolonialism. Cultural politics of this kind are in one sense the very opposite of elitist notions of culture. Yet they share in their own way that **elitism’s** overvaluing of cultural affairs, as well as its **distance from** the prospect of **fundamental change**.

What, finally, of the so-called War on Terror? Is it not here that we should look for the persistence of cultural questions in political society? Perhaps one might see the collapse of the World Trade Center as a surreal explosion of archaic cultural forces at the very heart of modern civilization. The clash between Western capitalism and radical Islam, however, is primarily a geopolitical affair, not a cultural or religious one, rather as the recent conflict in Northern Ireland had little to do with religious conviction. There has been much talk in the region of the need for an amicable encounter between what is blandly known as “the two cultural traditions,” Unionist and nationalist. It is thus that a history of injustice and inequality, of Protestant supremacy and Catholic subjugation, can be converted into an innocuous question of alternative cultural identities. Culture becomes a convenient way of **displacing politics**.

As in the case of revolutionary nationalism, culture may supply some of the terms on which material and political battles are joined, but it does not constitute their substance. By and large, fundamentalism is the creed of those who feel abandoned and humiliated by modernity, and the forces responsible for this pathological state of mind, like those that give birth to multiculturalism, are far from cultural in themselves. In fact, the central questions that confront a humanity moving into the new millennium are not cultural ones at all. They are far more mundane and material than that. War, hunger, drugs, arms, genocide, disease, ecological disaster: all of these have their cultural aspects, but culture is not the core of them. If those who speak of culture cannot do so without inflating the concept, it is perhaps better for them to remain silent.

**Their focus on creating individual carelessness within this space and institutional spaces makes collective struggle impossible and essentializes black experience.**

Adolph **Reed**, September **2018**. Professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania. “The Trouble With Uplift.” No. 41. https://thebaffler.com/salvos/the-trouble-with-uplift-reed.

The notion that black Americans are political agents just like other Americans, and can forge their own tactical alliances and coalitions to advance their interests in a pluralist political order is **ruled out** here on principle. Instead, blacks are **imagined as so abject** that only extraordinary intervention by committed black leaders has a prayer of producing real change. This **pernicious assumption** **continually subordinates** actually existing history to imaginary cultural narratives of individual black heroism and helps drive the intense – and myopic – opposition that many antiracist activists and commentators express to Bernie Sanders, **social democracy**, and a politics centered on economic inequality and working-class concerns.

Class Is Dismissed

The **striking hostility** to such a politics within the higher reaches of antiracist activism illustrates the extent to which what bills itself as black politics today **is in fact a class politics**: it is not interested in the concerns of working people of whatever race or gender. Indeed, a spate of recent media reports have retailed evidence that upper-class black Americans may be experiencing stagnant-to-declining social mobility – which is taken as prima facie evidence of the stubbornly racist cast of the American social order: Even rich professionals like us, elite commentators suggest, are denied the right to secure our own class standing. It is also telling that the study that provoked the media reports – Raj Chetty, et al., “Race and Economic Opportunity in the United States: An Intergenerational Perspective” – rehearses the hoary recommendation that “reducing the intergenerational persistence of the black-white income gap will require policies whose impacts cross neighborhood and class lines and increase upward mobility specifically for black men.” These include “mentoring programs for black boys, efforts to reduce racial bias among whites, or efforts to facilitate social interaction across racial groups within a given area.” That’s **pretty thin gruel**, warmed over bromides and all too familiar paternalism and no actually redistributive policies at all.

In this context the pronounced animus trained on the figure of the “white savior” emerges as litmus test for the critical role of racial gatekeeper in respectable political discourse. The gatekeeping question has, for more than a century, focused on who speaks for black Americans and determines the “black agenda.” And the status of black leader, spokesperson, or “voice” has always been a direct function of contested class prerogative, dating back a century and more to Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, and Anna Julia Cooper. Specifically, the gatekeeping function is the obsession of the professional-managerial strata who pursue what Warren has described as “managerial authority over the nation’s Negro problem.” How do “black leaders” become recognized? The answer is the same now as for Washington in the 1890s; recognition as a legitimate black leader, or “voice,” requires ratification by elite opinion-shaping institutions and individuals.

Gatekeeping hasn’t been the exclusive preoccupation of Bookerite conservatives or liberals like Du Bois. Even militant black nationalists and racial separatists like Marcus Garvey and the leaders of the Nation of Islam have pursued validation as black leaders from dominant white elites to support programs of racial “self-help” or uplift. From Black Power to Black Lives Matter, claimants to speak on behalf of the race have courted recognition from the Ford Foundation and other white-dominated nonprofit philanthropies and NGOs. And the emergence of cable news networks and the blogosphere have exponentially expanded the number and types of entities that can anoint race leaders and representative voices.

This new welter of platforms and voices seeking to promulgate and validate the acceptable terms of black leadership has made the category seem all the more beyond question, as black racial voices pop up all over the place all the time. So, for example, the self-proclaimed black voice Tia Oso was brought front and center in the 2015 Netroots Presidential Town Hall featuring Martin O’Malley and Bernie Sanders, where she proclaimed that “black leadership must be foregrounded and central to progressive strategies.” Likewise, the presumed moral authority of race leadership enabled Marissa Johnson and Mara Jacqueline Willaford to prevent Sanders from speaking at a Social Security rally in Seattle – as though the long-term viability of Social Security were not a black issue. The instant recourse to a posture of leadership is how random Black Lives Matter activists and a vast corps of pundits and bloggers are able to issue ex cathedra declarations about which issues are and are not pertinent to black Americans.

Voices in a Political Vacuum

The freelance black leader – and its more recent, superficially more pluralist incarnation, the black “voice” – is a legacy harking back to the era of massive black disfranchisement at the end of the nineteenth century. It also has drawn considerable staying power from the amorphous concept of “race relations,” according to which, in the judgment of historian Michael R. West in his 2006 study The Education of Booker T. Washington, “blacks and whites – or ‘black America’ and ‘white America’ – are basic, indivisible units of political interest. . . . The race relations framework appealed to white elites because it sidestepped the troublesome fact of blacks’ constitutional claims to full and equal citizenship by proposing a focus on the evanescent issue of how the ‘races’ relate as an alternative to matters like denial of rights and equal protection under the law.” West also notes that “interests and aspirations of politicians and ministers, workers and businessmen, parents and teachers would no longer be expressed by way of the normal, if potentially messy, institutional channels through which Americans settled their conflicts and competition. Instead, they would be mediated through the good offices of ‘Negro leaders,’ ever mindful of where their mandate comes from and the requirement placed on them as a first principle ‘to cement the friendship of the two races.’” The warrant to cement the friendship of the races, of course, meant framing racial comity on terms acceptable to the dominant white elites who ratified claims to black leadership and decided which of those claims were “responsible” or “right-thinking.”

The race-relations mindset also shaped the ideological outlook of racial advocacy and uplift groups like the National Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Both groups, for example, were hesitant to support labor organization for black workers during the Great Depression since they relied on donations from liberal funders steeped in anti-union sentiments; also, apostles of racial uplift tended to come from a professional-managerial background themselves, again highlighting the extent to which there has always been a class dimension to black politics.

None of this is to suggest that claimants to race leadership even in the Bookerite era were dupes or supplicants who were not sincerely committed “race men” and “race women” in the parlance of the time. Rather, as Warren, West, and others have argued, the stratum of the black population that tended to incubate aspiring race leaders also cohered around views of proper racial agendas – what the “race” needed and how its position in the world could be advanced, i.e., what constituted “uplift” – that also **reflected the priorities of philanthropic elites**. These mutually dependent groups were likely to share a baseline sense of how American society should be structured – and specifically of how to manage existing class hierarchies so as to better navigate blacks’ place within them. That said, most racial advocates were doubtless more committed than their patrons to the pursuit of full equality of opportunity.

The Revolution Will Be Televised

The terms of this tacit social contract shifted with the victories of the civil rights movement and the cultural insurgencies of the 1960s and 1970s; suddenly, raw racial subordination no longer commanded uncritical assent from the liberal wing of the American power elite. At the same time, though, this civil rights revolution and its aftermath worked to obscure the striking continuity in the underlying socioeconomic dynamics that continue to validate race leaders, spokespersons, or representative voices. The open – or at least public – performance of supplication before powerful elites is no longer necessary or desirable for validation. Indeed, Black Power “militancy” and various cultural-separatist projects aligned with black nationalism supported new claimants’ discourse of authenticity – one that gained wider credence via assertive demands for equal power instead of humble requests for recognition.

On the **surface**, at least, it now appeared that the essentially dependent relation between white liberal arbiters or power and their black counterparts had morphed into something more radical. And this new assertive liturgy of dependence works to the benefit of both grantors and grantees of political legitimacy and economic largess – players who all shared a stake in projecting an appearance of the anointed’s racial authenticity.

Today, this **liturgy** is everywhere on display – along with the same power dynamics that sustain it. In academic institutions and programs, op-ed pages, magazines and blogs, and of course cable television newschat programs, we see a steady stream of racial voices and leaders plotting out the permissible boundaries of black authenticity and black leadership values. This surface accord within the charmed circle of soi-disant black leaders **reinforces the illusion**, just as was the case in the aftermath of the civil rights era, that they have all emerged from the grassroots.

The increasing significance of the corporate newsfotainment industry means that things could scarcely seem otherwise to most casual viewers and audiences. The leading platforms of respectable black discourse – including the various internet platforms that encourage freelance chatter – reinforce the sense that those **purporting** to express the black point of view arise naturally from within the quasi-mythic “black community.” But of course the immediacy of all these venues, despite their many claims to have vanquished old-guard “gatekeepers” and “legacy media” forums, has rendered the selection processes behind the elevation of this or that leadership “voice” almost completely opaque. Not all points of view can gain a hearing, after all. Terms like “responsible” and “right-thinking” seldom slip into public discussion anymore because they evoke explicit subordination; nevertheless, sporadic calls for recognized black voices to distance themselves from “extremist” or otherwise unacceptable views expressed by other black “voices” – most recently via another predictably vile anti-Semitic utterance from Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan – reveal that such criteria are critical in setting the boundaries of public legitimacy for aspiring black leaders. Another telling instance of the same dynamic ocurred when Keith Ellison, the African American Muslim congressman from Minnesota, sought to chair the Democratic National Committee as a Sanders supporter; here again, the sensible centrist consensus counteroffensive depicted Ellison as simply too fringe and divisive a figure to command authority in the sacred political mainstream.

Alongside the close vetting of respectable black voices in the media mainstream there’s been a prolonged atrophy of popular political mobilization behind issues of economic equity for black Americans. Taken together, these trends have opened a shortcut path to broader public recognition for self-styled race leaders. For more than a decade, it has been common to encounter young people who enter graduate programs in order to prepare for careers as racial voices or “public intellectuals,” hoping to obtain a credential that can procure valuable space on the Huffington Post, the root.com, or MSNBC. In the quest for mediagenic legitimacy, some eager race pundits have launched organizations that are **barely more than letterhead or résumé entries**; these feints are likewise often accompanied by Potemkin-style protest activism, including many of the donor-driven groups aligned with Black Lives Matter, or glorified photo-ops intended to evoke mass agitation. Among this cohort of racial voices, the essential qualification for recognition seems to be inclination to declaim on the intractability of an undifferentiated, **ahistorical racism** as a fetter on all black Americans’ life chances across the sweep of the nation’s history. As a corollary, they’re **required** to insist that objection to generic racial disparities constitutes the totality of black political concerns.

Reduced and Abandoned

The politics thus advanced is **profoundly race-reductionist**, discounting the value of both political agency and the broad pursuit of political alliances within a polity held to be intractably and irredeemably devoted to white supremacy. This **fatalistic outlook** works seamlessly to reinforce the status of racial voices who emphasize the interests and concerns of a singular racial collectivity. Central to these pundits’ message is the assertion that blacks have it worse, in every socio-cultural context that might be adduced.

This refrain is also **consistent** in two important ways with the **reigning ideology of neoliberal equality**. First, the insistence that disparities of racial access to power are the most meaningful forms of inequality strongly reinforces the neoliberal view that inequalities generated by capitalist market forces are **natural** and lie beyond the scope of intervention. And second, if American racism is an intractable, **transhistorical** force – indeed, an **ontological one**, as Ta-Nehisi Coates has characterized it – then it lies beyond structural political intervention. In other words, Coates and other race-firsters diminish the significance of the legislative and other institutional victories won since Emancipation, **leaving us with only exhortations to individual conversion and repentance as a program**.

This is why, for example, Coates and other proponents of reparations seem unconcerned with the **strategic problem** of piecing together the kind of interracial popular support **necessary to actually prevail on the issue**. Such problems do not exist for them because the role of the representative black leader or voice is precisely to **function as an alternative to political action**. Instead, the order of the day is typically to perform **racial authenticity** in a way that doubles as an appeal for moral recognition from those with the power to bestow it. Winning anything politically – policies or changes in power relations – is not the point. That is why the jeremiads offered by contemporary racial voices so commonly boil down to calls for “conversations about race” or equally vapid abstractions like “racial reckoning” or “coming to terms with” a history defined by racism.

The black leadership role was always **at best** an **accommodation to disfranchisement**, going back to its first modern incarnation with Booker T. Washington and his cohort of racial advocates. It is a **politics of elite transaction**. That is not in itself necessarily a bad thing – President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s “black cabinet,” or Federal Council of Negro Affairs, advised him on matters related to black Americans. But unlike today’s freelance racial voices, they were administration functionaries, and most had standing in racial advocacy, education, labor, and government institutions prior to joining the “cabinet.” The backdoor dealings between King and Johnson during the Selma campaign that DuVernay found too messy to include in her portrait of King’s heroic persona were also part of mundane political maneuvering, the inside-outside game of institutional politics. King and the SCLC, like FDR’s black cabinet, had constituencies that underwrote their standing as representatives of racial interest – which in turn gave them leverage to make political demands and pursue policy agendas. A. Philip Randolph used the March on Washington Movement to pressure President Roosevelt in 1941 to issue “Executive Order 8802,” prohibiting racial discrimination in the national defense industry. Randolph, Bayard Rustin, the Negro American Labor Council, and others organized the 1963 March on Washington as part of an inside-outside strategy to build support for a jobs program and passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

All this painstaking political effort could not be farther from the careerist pursuits of contemporary racial voices, whose standing depends entirely on the favor of powerful opinion-shaping elites in corporate media and elsewhere. Thus, for example, Touré Neblett and others in MSNBC’s stable were unceremoniously expunged from the lineup of talking heads when the network reconfigured its marketing priorities. More dramatically, Melissa Harris-Perry, apparently believing that her viewing audience gave her leverage, openly rebuffed the network’s demand to reorient her program to fit in with its election coverage. In short order, she and her program vanished without a trace from its schedule. Such incidents, and scores of others like them, make it indelibly clear where the lines of authority run when it comes to winning elite-media recognition as a black voice.

For Their Own Good

The race voices I’ve discussed express a particular class perspective among black Americans, one that harmonizes with left-neoliberal notions of justice and equality. That harmony may help explain why those racial voices – like the black political class in general – are so intent on disparaging the **social-democratic politics** associated with Bernie Sanders, even though a 2017 Harvard-Harris survey found that Sanders was far more popular with African Americans than with any other demographic category except declared Democrats. He boasted a 73 percent favorable rating among black voters – higher than his approval numbers among Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and considerably higher than those for whites or even 18-34 year-olds.

This disjunction between popular opinion and the priorities of the black chattering class underscores the extent to which the racial programs and priorities advanced by those recognized black voices remain much as they were in the Age of Washington. Now as then, we have a leadership stratum dedicated to the class-skewed pursuit of “managerial authority over the nation’s Negro problem.” And the net effect of this top-down model of black discourse is to tether a politics of racial representation to the ruling-class agendas that generate and intensify inequality and insecurity for working people across American society, including among the ranks of black Americans.

Black Clintonites, like Congressmen John Lewis (D-GA), James Clyburn (D-SC) and Cedric Richmond (D-LA), all clearly displayed this commitment during the 2016 Democratic primaries when they attacked Sanders as “irresponsible” in calling for non-commodified public goods in education, health care, and other areas. Richmond’s rebuke was especially telling in that he couched it in terms of his role as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus and the group’s “responsibility to make sure to know that young people know that” a social-democratic agenda is “too good to be true.” Richmond’s invocation of civic instruction for the young may be revealing in another way. Lurking beneath that piety is the deeply sedimented common sense of underclass ideology, which posits a population mired in pathologies and hemmed in by an overwhelming racism, and the corollary of interventions aiming to enhance capabilities for individual mobility. (It is, indeed, this same tacit rhetoric of permanent crisis that fuels the notion that black young people must be raised on a diet of inspirational movies.)

This vision of unyielding black pathology is yet another testament to the harmony of antiracist and neoliberal ideologies – and it, too, harks directly back to the origins of the black leadership caste at the dawn of the last century. Washington and Du Bois, together with Garvey and other prominent racial nationalists, envisioned their core constituency as a politically mute black population in need of tutelage from their ruling-class-backed leaders. Touré F. Reed persuasively argues that the mildly updated version of this vision now serves as an essential cornerstone of the new black professional-managerial class politics. Underclass mythology grounds professional-class claims to race leadership, while providing the normative foundation of uplift programs **directed toward enhancing self-esteem rather than the material redistribution of wealth and income**.

Exhortations to celebrate and demand accolades, career opportunities, and material accumulation for black celebrities and rich people – e.g., box office receipts for black filmmakers or contracts and prestigious appointments for other well-positioned black people – as a racial politics are consistent with the sporadic eruptions of “Buy Black” campaigns since the 1920s and 1930s. Such efforts stood out in stark contrast to more working-class based “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaigns that demanded employment opportunities in establishments serving black neighborhoods. Like “Buy Black” campaigns, which seem to have risen again from the tomb of petit-bourgeois wishful thinking, projections of successes for the rich and famous as generic racial victories depend on a sleight-of-hand that treats benefits for any black person as benefits for all black people. This brings to mind comedian Chris Rock’s quip that he went to his mailbox every day for two weeks after the not guilty verdict in the O.J. Simpson murder trial looking for his “O. J. prize,” only to be disappointed.

Pain and Proprietorship

At times, this tendency to **absorb the plural into the singular** can be strikingly crude and transparently self-interested. The torrent of hostility directed at Rachel Dolezal for having represented herself as black rested on groundless – sometimes entirely made up – claims that she had appropriated jobs, awards, and other honorifics intended for blacks. In addition to the annual contretemps over whether blacks win enough of the most prestigious Oscars, recent racial controversies in the art world illustrate how easily the narrowest guild concerns can masquerade as burning matters of racial justice. The Brooklyn Museum’s hiring of a white person as consulting curator of African art sparked objections that the hire perpetuated “pervasive structures of white supremacy in the art field.” The 2017 furor over the Whitney Biennial’s display of Dana Schutz’s “Open Casket” – inspired by the infamous 1955 photograph of Emmett Till’s brutalized body – reduced to a question of ownership of “black suffering,” or more accurately, of the right to represent and materially benefit from the representation of black suffering. The protesters’ objection, as Walter Benn Michaels put it succinctly, was that “black pain belongs to black artists.”

It’s worth noting that one of the leading critics of the painting and its display was Hannah Black, who contended that “non-black people must accept that they will never embody and cannot understand” the gesture Till’s mother, Mamie, made in insisting on an open-casket funeral. Black, who not only called for the painting to be removed from display, but also offered an “urgent recommendation” that it be destroyed, is a Briton who lives in Berlin. From a different standard of cultural proprietorship, one might argue that Schutz, as an American, has a stronger claim than Black to interpret the Till story. After all, the segregationist Southern order and the struggle against that order, which gave Till’s fate its broader social and political significance, were historically specific moments of a distinctively American experience. In fact, most claims of cultural ownership and charges of appropriation are **bogus**. While sometimes they provide an instrumental basis for tortious claims, as in pursuit of restitution for Nazi and other imperialists’ looting of artifacts, more often they posit a **dead-end conflation** of fixed and impermeable racial identity with cultural expression. As Michaels has argued for more than twenty-five years, the discourse of cultural ownership stems from the pluralist mindset that treats “culture” as a key marker of social groups and thereby **inscribes it as racial essentialism**.

In order to legitimate what Michaels describes as “racial rent-seeking,” a curiously inflexible brand of race-first neoliberalism has taken root in American political discourse, proposing a trickle-down model of racial progress, anchored in the mysticism of organic black community. Against this exoticized backdrop, neoliberal race leaders stage the beguiling fantasy that individual “entrepreneurialism” is the key path to rising above one’s circumstances – i.e., the standard American social myth that obscures the deeper need to combat systemic inequalities. The most tragic, and pathetic, expressions of this faith are the versions of the “gospel of prosperity,” which fuse pop self-realization psychology and a barely recognizable Christianity to **exploit desperation** and the desire for life with dignity and respect among their black-majority congregations. The **false hopes** of the **prosperity gospel** encourage already vulnerable people to fall prey to all sorts of destructive get-rich-quick schemes; they are the “sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions” channeled through a market-idolatrous Protestant psychobabble. Black ministers and other proponents of entrepreneurialist ideology as racial uplift also played a largely unrecognized role in pushing subprime mortgages, and even payday loans, in black communities.

The racial trickle-down success myth is partly a vestige of an earlier era, during which individual black attainments could be seen as testaments to the race’s capacities – and a refutation of the white-sanctioned view of black people as generally inferior. Even then, however, this model of black uplift was enmeshed in the race theory of the time – notably the belief that a race’s capacities were indicated by the accomplishments of its “best” individuals – and it was always inflected with the class perspectives of those who saw themselves as such individuals. The class legacies of this foundational moment in modern black politics may well contribute to the firm insistence among today’s “black voices” that slavery and Jim Crow mark the transcendent truth of black Americans’ experience in the United States – and that an irreducible racism is the source of all manifest racial inequality. That diagnosis certainly **masks class asymmetries** among black Americans’ circumstances as well as in the remedies proposed to improve them.

Nevertheless, we continue to indulge the politically wrong-headed, counterproductive, and even reactionary features of the “representative black voice” industry in whatever remains of our contemporary public sphere. And we never reckon with the truly disturbing presumption that any black person who can gain access to the public microphone and performs familiar rituals of “blackness” should be recognized as expressing significant racial truths and deserves our attention. This presumption rests on the unexamined premise that blacks share a common, singular mind that is at once radically unknowable to non-blacks and readily downloaded by any random individual setting up shop as a racial voice. And despite what all of our age’s many heroic narratives of individualist race-first triumph may suggest to the casual viewer, **that premise is the essence of racism**.

#### Changing academic discourses leaves broader racial inequality unchecked.

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ACADEMIC INJUSTICE DISCOURSE Just law can coexist with unjust practice and both are parts of “empirical law” or what Bendey called “the process of government.” Empirical law is constantly changing and some theorists are optimistic that verbal discourse has the ability to make written law more just, even though the same unjust practices recur or new ones emerge. These theorists, some of whom are or may aspire to become public intellectuals, hope that someday public political discourse on behalf of those who are treated unjustly will have the power to interrupt a cycle of just written law accompanied by continued unjust practice. That is, the “right” discourse perennially holds the promise of changing the beliefs, values, and goals of everyone in the public auditorium, so that the same kind of unjust practices do not perpetually chase the same kinds of just laws.11 This search for “magic words” is futile for academics who are professionally confined to dry and abstract prose. Our verbiage does not have the power to move the multitudes who do not read or listen to it anyway. But even when multitudes are inspired and emotionally stirred by great orators, action that follows is unlikely to result in lasting change, without the support of powerful interests. After the 1960s, academics began a robust practice of liberatory discourse about injustice that seems to grow more impassioned and intense each year. The quest for demographic diversity among students and faculty in higher education has weathered judicial defeat of explicit affirmative action policies, but only partly for the sake of justice. There are pragmatic prizes if the academy can justify itself by producing a racially integrated leadership and managerial class for business, politics, and the military. Top leaders throughout society realize that they need such racial diversity for broad consumption, voter support, and boots on the ground, and the expression of that need is evident in amicus curiae briefs submitted to the US Supreme Court as it has been torturously dismantling affirmative action, piece by piece, since Bakke in 1978.12 Academic political discourse has been deeper than polemics and debate, exactly because of its disciplined intellectual origins in different fields of study (i.e., discipline imposed by distinct “disciplines”). But it has been swimming upstream against a more rarefied and older academic tradition, particularly among many philosophers and their gate keepers outside of the profession. Even Hannah Arendt (see chapter 2) spoke approvingly of the life of the mind as cut off from real political activity that occurred in the realm of “opinion.” In her 1970 interview with Adelbert Reif, Arendt addressed the phenomenon of college-stu-dent protestors, noting that they had brought social change through optimistic belief in their ability to make a better world, while at the same time discovering joy in civic participation. Arendt credited such protests with the success of the civil rights movement and progress toward ending the Vietnam War.13 As discussed in chapter 4, it is doubtful that Arendt was correct that student protests caused the success of the civil rights movement. A historical analysis of the end to the Vietnam War is beyond the present scope, but what we already know about empirical Bentleyan analyses would warrant skepticism about Arendt’s causal thesis there as well. In the same interview, Arendt warned that demonstrations by student activists could be self-defeating in democratic Euro-American contexts, because in attacking their universities, they were attacking the very entities that made their protests possible, American universities, especially large state schools that were the sites of the protests Arendt had in mind, have perforce developed very different financial structures since 1970. These schools have become increasingly dependent on private corporate and philanthropic funding, with state government funds now a much reduced part of their budget. While this structural change is not generally viewed as an incursion on academic freedom, it has been coincident with a very flat era of student protest and activism. Still, Arendt's notion of the "life of the mind” remains useful if we consider that the progressive/change-seeking output of professional academics since 1970 has been professionally accepted in the institutions that employ its participants. Also, much of today’s liberatory academic discourse can be viewed as the legacy of earlier student protest, furthering a tradition that may have been founded when some of the 1960s student radicals became professors. This indicates that the connection between academic radicals and the hands that feed them is not as simple as Arendt thought. In the United States, everything now points to both the existence of real academic freedom and its real ineffectiveness. Progressive academic writers ply a craft of formal speech that deals with contemporary injustice through complex theoretical frameworks, with requisite scholarly apparatuses and without translation into more simple views of the world;there is often also a lack of translation from one discipline to another or between subdisciplines in the same field. The audience is other academics and students. Neither specialization nor the limited and partly captive audience should be viewed as problematic because that is the nature of academic work, given broad social divisions of labor. But there is a problem with the delusional nature of so much of this work. The delusion consists of a naive view of the power of academic speech to directly change reality. The rhetorical mode of address used by academics writing cultural criticism, political philosophy, social philosophy, or what is now called social-political philosophy (which combines the other subfield approaches), often proceeds as though its authors are making grand entries in a planetary cabala, where words have the immediate power to become their intended referents. Those who do not write and speak cabalistically may subscribe to the Trickle-Down Good Ideas Theory that can be traced from Plato to John Stuart Mill to John Rawls. Subscription to that theory is immediately self-flattering, but it lacks reliable empirical support.16 Although, after the US civil rights movement, there has been an uncanny coincidence of race-blind formal racial equality with the hegemony in political philosophy of Rawls’s requirement that those who plan fundamental social institutions do so in ignorance of their own societal environments. As we saw in chapter 1, Rawls was quite explicit about this: I assume that the parties do not know the particular circumstances of their own society. That is, they do not know its economic or political situation, or the level of civilization and culture it has been able to achieve. The persons in the original position have no information as to which generation they belong.17 Both race-blind racial equality and Rawlsian ideals are compatible with race-based real inequality. There are, of course, counter-examples, such as Katherine MacKinnon’s work on sexual harassment in the workplace as expressed in current law and institutional policy.18 Nevertheless even very good academic political discourse about justice and injustice cannot be relied upon to attract implementation or application in real life. This may be because there has not been sufficient time for the development of training programs for a new profession of “bridgers,” who could translate good ideas in the academy for those who govern and make policy. An internal problem for such translators would be to decide where to anchor their bridges in fields—every humanistic field—where experts disagree. However, the current tradition of progressive academic writing and speech is less than half a century old and if and when such translators emerge, they will develop their own professional criteria for choosing among contending experts. Public media, as a democratic analogue to disagreement within academic discourse, supports the idea that expressing and airing views in day-to-day practices or special “national conversations” also have immediate practical results. It is not evident how there could be such results, when opposing views and opinions are treated with the same respect and have equal access to the same mass auditorium that lacks rules for evidence or valid argument. As with academic discourse, there is no structured connection to official decision processes. The only reliable result of participation in such unbinding referenda is that those who participate are able to express themselves and get attention that may benefit them in the marketplace of their related endeavors. Public expression also serves to, represent and create collective atmospheres of belief, attitude, and opinion. These atmospheres are implicitly known by a majority of people in the culture, even though such knowledge is difficult to validate. Ambiguities cannot be resolved by recourse to public opinion polls, because understanding the results of those polls requires creative interpretive skills that draw on what is already known about relevant atmospheres. For example, suppose that more blacks than whites believe that white privilege is real and that O.J. Simpson was innocent, or that more whites than blacks believe that white American police officers are not, in general, racially biased. Are the views of whites evidence of racial bias or racial oblivion? Are the views of blacks evidence of racial preference or paranoia? Moreover, such polls almost always have a large racial overlap of opinion: If 29 percent of blacks compared to 71 percent of whites believe X, then 71 percent of blacks and 29 percent of whites do not believe X. Does this mean that the percentages of each group that does not contribute to the discrepancy in belief recorded in the polls are in some degree of agreement? Experiments in social psychology could be designed to answer such questions and others like them, but it is important to decide beforehand why the data is important and what it does and does not indicate. For instance, testing the claim that white privilege is a reality of contemporary life requires some prior definition of what is meant by “white privilege,” which can range from injustice to social courtesies. In a widely discussed 2013 experiment conducted in Queensland, Australia, economists Redzo Mujcic and Paul Frijters found that the majority of free bus rides, based on conductor generosity, were dispensed to whites, with blacks least likely to receive this courtesy, compared to all other racial groups among commuters. Journalist Britni Danielle, writing for a general audience on Yahoo News, touted this study as evidence that “white privilege is real,” without distinguishing between an amenity such as a free bus ride and recognition of one’s rights by not being subject to arbitrary stops and frisks by police officers.19 Conservatives reading Mujcic and Frijter’s study might say that the bus driver may have been acting rationally based on past experience with unruly black passengers. From a progressive perspective, more specifics would need to be introduced to defend the claim that this study revealed white privilege, such as controls for the apparent social class and gender of passengers, as well as the preexisting racial climate among bus commuters in Queensland, as well as the broader racial atmosphere throughout Australia in 2013. The 2015 Academy Awards What is racial atmosphere and climate? A US example that is also global could help clarify these vague ideas, provided that it is understood beforehand that in this context, as in most public references to "race," ‘racial” means “pertaining to racism.” From beginning to end, the 2015 Academy Awards ceremony hit racist notes that slid by unchecked, because it was an occasion of celebration. Neil Patrick Harris, the host, began with what might have been a critical remark about the lack of racial diversity among audience members and award winners: “Tonight we honor Hollywood’s best and whitest, sorry, bright est.” For those who were uncomfortable with the lack of robust racial diversity among audience members and award winners, his remark might have validated their unease. But those who would have been uncomfortable with more racial diversity may have been heard “best and whitest” as support for their social values. (The discourse of white privilege as a critique of contemporary anti-nonwhite racism is, as indicated, that kind of double-edged sword.) Midway through the ceremony, Patricia Arquette called for people of color and members of the lesbian, bisexual, gay, and transgender (LBGT) community to support legislation for equal pay for women and to commit themselves to supporting women, thereby overlooking the women who were either or both people of color and members of the LGВТ community. This kind of oversight may perhaps be excused by Arquette’s ignorance of what academics have been for decades analyzing as “intersectionality.” But Sean Penn’s remark at the grand finale awarding for Best Picture to Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, the Mexican director of Birdman, was simply, explicitly, racist: "Who gave this son of a bitch a green card?” Inarritu later brushed off the insult by saying he found it "hilarious,” because “Sean and I have that kind of brutal relationship. I think it was very funny.”20 Inarritu attempt at a “save” for Penn does not address the impact of Penn’s insult on other Mexicans and Mexican Americans, including those without green cards who struggle to remain employed in the face of anti-immigrant prejudice and discrimination. (That such a moment of maximum recognition was brought so low by a racist crack is not unusual in US culture, where the nastiest forms of racist insult are often let loose on people of color who have succeeded.) As a spectacle watched by almost thirty-four million, the 2015 Oscars, despite ratings lower than recent years, was a global public event.21 Symbolically, it has no peer for the display of beauty, talent, and artistic creativity. Its subtext inevitably has implications about current American race relations, which influence their future. The racial implications of the Oscars replays in millions of minds at countless other public celebrations and entertainment venues, as well as in private interactions (for a year at least). Such spectacles are forms of public discourse and what they represent or fail to represent about US racial demographics and the attitude of the dominant white group creates or augments a specific racial climate that in 2015 is part of a more general racial atmosphere of ambiguity and indeterminacy. At the 2015 Academy Awards, for many critical observers, the issue or subject pertaining to race (insofar as it is understood that subjects of race are subjects of racism), was recognition.22 The beauty, talent, and artistic creativity of people of color was not fully recognized. Some people of color did get awards and some audience members were people of color, so recognition, along with diversity, was not completely absent. But there appeared to be insufficient racial diversity for audience and award winners to be considered racially integrated. And that appearance was symbolic. However, the symbolic meaning is ambiguous: Were there people of color who were deserving of awards but did not get them because they were people of color? Is race a factor in who I becomes a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences? In the future, will the racial makeup of award winners become more or less representative of their proportions in the motion picture industry? If the proportion of people of color in the motion picture industry is not proportional to their presence in the population at large, why is that? The answers to these questions are undetermined in the symbolic spectacle of the 2015 Academy Awards. The observer does not know if recognition of the achievements of people of color in the movie industry will improve, stay the same, or get worse, and she does not know how to find out. The racial (i.e., in regards to racism) climate of the Academy Awards is cloudy, subject to many different interpretations, some of them conflicting. It is an epistemologically unstable racial climate, because people of color do not know what the weather is in that climate, as a basis for prediction, and neither do they know how to find out. The shared judgment throughout the American atmosphere of race in the early twenty-first century is that racism is morally bad. This judgment is a general principle that leaves the nature of racism undefined throughout the atmosphere and most of the climates and subclimates of race. The overriding shared judgment is a bitter and ineffective refuge for nonwhites, because it does not protect them from either First Amendment-protected racist expressions or actions that turn out to be indirectly racist. Energetic self-aware racist whites can try to evade the judgment that they are racist through coded language for racial difference, and the use of intermediate activities and traits as subjects of direct action. That is, something other than race, which nonetheless does a good job of picking out members of a specific racial group, can be used instead of the race of that group to maintain prejudice and legitimize discrimination. The term “racial climate” has a history of meaning “micro-aggressions” based on race, small cuts, insults, and slights that can have a cumulative effect of individual harm.24 In using the term “racial atmosphere,” reference may be made to other issues of harm to people of color, such as ignorance of black history and contemporary racism or discrimination in career advancement.25 The implication of these meanings is that the micro-aggressions add up to what is perceived as a general predisposition of white people to treat people of color in unjust ways. But, at this time, ideas of racial atmosphere and climate also work as metaphors for what is unknown about race relations and attitudes; they capture the vagueness and unpredictability of racial prejudice and discrimination that occur in a society where nonwhites remain disadvantaged, even though there is formal equality. This “vague weather” aspect of atmosphere and climate is an epistemological condition of indecision that may or may not constitute a lasting crisis, although some syndromes of political injustice should be viewed as crises. A crisis is a period of indecision and uncertainty that requires a resolution before life can go on. Will blacks and other people of color achieve more equality with whites, or is the United States—and with it the world, because US racism is exported with business practices, tour-ism, and entertainment products—on the brink of a new era of explicitlу direct oppression of people of color? Are most white Americans, whose race-neutral economic and social activities have racist effects on nonwhites, genuinely ignorant of how the system in which they operate works, or are they secretly but knowingly hearts-and-minds not clear that this indeterminate aspect of present racial atmosphere and climates must be resolved now. We do not know if life can go on if it is not resolved or what it means for life to go on, or not. We do not even know if the putative crisis can be resolved at this time, because there is as yet no systematic and sustained, impassioned, liberatory dis- course for our condition of ambiguity, a time with a black president and police killing with impunity of unarmed black youth, a time of voting rights for everyone but new restrictions and requirements that disproportionately affect African Americans.26 Except for what academics write and say and how important they think their discourse is (among themselves), American discourse of racial liberation is at a standstill. And insofar as academic discourse is uttered and received in a closed system, with a semicaptive audience and no reliable means for it to affect the real world, that standstill remains at the disposal of history, where history is understood to be the unpredictable result of contingent events. However, if academic oppositional political discourse can be related to a longer historical trend, a more coherent and optimistic picture might emerge. Cornel West's ideas about the American black prophetic tradition appears to be a relation to such a trend.

# 2NC

## T

### 2NC --- TVA (Slavery Aff)

#### TVA: The United States federal government should expand the scope of its antitrust law to include slavery as an anticompetitive business practice

**Hunt, 21** (Breann Hunt, Bachelors degree from Brigham Young University majoring in Strategic Management, April 2021, accessed on 6-21-2021, Scholarsarchive.byu, "Eliminating Forced Labor in American Corporations and Their Supply Chain: Existing Solutions and Failures", https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1346&context=byuplr)//Babcii

D. Forced Labor and Its Effect on the Free Market and Antitrust Violations The federal government of the United States has developed legislation to promote rigorous business competition in the marketplace. Examples include **antitrust laws** and SEC requirements which **ensure** fair **competition and freedom** of information in the market by breaking up market monopolies and issuing property rights. In relation to supply chain management, antitrust laws enforced by the FTC examine firms’ supply chains. The FTC claims that, “A vertical [supply chain] arrangement may violate the antitrust laws [...] if it reduces competition among firms at the same level (say among retailers or among wholesalers) or prevents new firms from entering the market.”22 Supreme Court precedent dictates that antitrust issues be examined through a reasonable framework that includes a consideration of the effect of a firm’s actions on competition within the market. The FTC claims that, “[price advantage through supply chain] must be weighed against any reduction in competition from the restrictions.”23 While price advantage is not illegal, gaining market high ground through forced labor creates an unfair vertical supply chain that tilts economic competition in favor of the company with human rights violations. According to the FTC, “a vertical arrangement may violate the antitrust laws, however, if it reduces competition among firms at the same level (say among retailers or among wholesalers) or prevents new firms from entering the market.”24 Sourcing goods through illegal labor reduces competition by unfairly lowering the cost of goods sold for firms, thus enabling them to undercut competitor pricing. This does have the effect of reducing the advantages of free market competition and prevents new firms from entering the market. For example, a study done on the price increase upon Fair Trade certification of coffee brands (an industry often associated with forced labor in its supply chains), researchers found that price increases did not reflect the consumer’s willingness to pay.25 A Fair Trade certification is a third party supply chain certification that audits participating businesses to ensure their subcontracted labor is well paid and free from slave labor.26 The study further claims that, “Fair Trade Certification has an impact of raising the price of coffee 22% compared to non-Fair Trade coffees,” while “Fair Trade Certification increases the premium consumers are willing to pay for coffee by 1.1%.”27 Thus, while **brands that secure their supply chains from** human rights violations must necessarily **increase their prices**, **there is not a corresponding willingness to pay the additional price f**rom consumers. The study cited deals with a common consumer good, coffee, where firms compete with similar prices and four brands represent more than 55% of total market share.28 Other common consumer goods have similar industry structures, such as Nestle, where large competitors compete on price for market share. When industries compete on price, the likelihood of ethical supply chain efforts creating an effective competitive advantage with the majority of consumers decreases. While there is certainly evidence of forced labor within coffee supply chains,29 **ethically sourced** coffee **brands have not made a significant entrance** into the mainstream market. This represents how dominant, global firms with no legal repercussions for their human rights violations suppress the expansion of ethically sourced U.S. competitors. In the Supreme Court filings for Doe v. Nestle, competitors claim that Nestle violated their right to the free market. According to several firms who had taken measures to ethically source their product, “As slave-free cocoa and chocolate companies, [we] are at a competitive disadvantage to companies that source cheap cocoa produced with forced child labor. The higher production costs associated with compliance with international human rights norms require [us] to sell chocolate at higher prices.”30 If other firms are operating with **legally sourced labor**, they **will be less likely to sustain profits and compete** in markets where some firms are illegally benefiting from cheaper labor. Economic scholars Kynak et al. argue that, “The competitive environment, heating up with the emergence of new and powerful competitors in the markets with regard to all sectors, tempts entities to perform unethical maneuvers in their commercial relations with the aim of gaining a competitive advantage.”31 Unethical maneuvers to gain competitive advantage in the market are often hard to detect and costly to investigate. Indeed, “transaction and auditing costs of the entities increase due to the fact that such operations based on the derivation of unfair advantage are difficult to detect.”32 As mentioned above, becoming a Fair Trade certified brand requires rigorous standards and will increase the cost to the firm for goods sold. This includes associated overhead costs. Other certifications for sustainability such as the B Lab, which includes similar standards for labor within the supply chain, represent high costs to firms who decide to engage in such third-party labels.33 While these certifications are not necessary for firms to engage in ethical practices, they represent the overall cost disadvantage for firms that refuse to compromise ethical sourcing standards for price cuts. Thus, for this reason, national **antitrust legislation can define the federal** government’s **obligation to address forced labor in supply chains**, and provide additional context in courts for understanding the quantifiable damage done to free markets by illicit supply chain management.

# Case

**Political performance isn’t a basis for politics---they provide no recourse for dealing with atrocities.**

**Sherwin 15**—New York Law School [Richard, “Too Late for Thinking: The Curious Quest for Emancipatory Potential in Meaningless Affect and Some Jurisprudential Implications,” Law, Culture and the Humanities, 13 Oct 2015, p. 1-13]

In the history of western culture we can point to three historic moments of epistemological de-centering. The Copernican revolution taught humanity that we do not dwell at the center of the universe. The Freudian revolution taught us that the ‘‘I’’ is a lonely island besieged on all sides by a raging sea of irrational, unconscious forces. Then quantum theory taught us that the universe is indeterminate: subject to uncanny chance operations. Affect theory, perhaps as an extension of the Darwinian evolutionary account of selective adaptation, humbles rationalist pretensions further by subordinating mind to material, bio-chemical processes. If thinking is always an after-thought, an after-the-fact construction, then we can **never reliably account for how we’ve actually been affected by things** and others in the world around us. How oppressive never to escape the grip of contingent social constructs. How depressing, if endless deconstruction **yields only more fragmentation**. Surely something must abide, some Higgs Boson-like elementary particle that can withstand deconstruction’s powerful blows. Is there anything real enough to withstand critique? Is there any basis left to hope for emancipation from the destabilizing mutability of human fabrication? In Brian Massumi’s view, there is. As he puts it: “The world always already offers degrees of freedom ready for amplification.”22 This takes us to the heart of the vitalist/ liberation impulse, namely: “escape from crystallized power structures.”23 In Massumi’s writings, affect operates as a cipher – a black box into which he can pack his emancipatory ideal.24 (“‘Affect’ is the word I use for ‘hope.’”25) What Massumi does not and perhaps cannot, or simply does not care to do is **formulate a coherent basis for political judgment**. While he at some points expresses a preference for “caring” and “belonging,”26 he offers no basis in affect theory for why those forms of behavior are preferable to other perhaps more intense alternatives, such as “anger” and “shock,” which he also embraces.27 **But choices must be made**. As Martha Nussbaum has noted, a society that cultivates conditions of anger and disgust, for example, is different from one that promotes empathy, dignity, and love.28 Massumi is enamored of the anti-structural,29 the spontaneous emergent process that Deleuze called “pure immanence.” But with affective intensity as his ultimate value30 **Massumi remains trapped in a double bind**. No critical judgment is forthcoming so long as intensity may be amplified.31 Because of this Massumi cannot coherently critique manifestly oppressive political structures (**such as** futurism, **Nazism**, and other intensity-fueled political regimes). How could he if the masses have opted to embrace such regimes for the intensity they provide? Massumi’s resistance to making judgments is consistent with his theory, which minimizes to the vanishing point the human capacity for choice. For Massumi, the very notions of ‘‘individual will’’ and ‘‘subjective reflection’’ are a **fiction**. (“There is no individual outside its own trans-individual becoming.”32) Body is always conditioning mind – presumably without our conscious awareness. In the end, “events decide.”33 What could human freedom mean under such conditions? The upshot is plain: in Massumi’s politics of affect, human freedom loses its capacity to signify. Choices are a fiction, and in any event no apparent normative basis exists for affirming, much less institutionalizing a preferred set of power structures. Affective intensity lacks structure by definition. Indeed, that is its appeal. (“Intensity is a value in itself.”34) But as Anthony Kronman has eloquently argued, without coherent structures, the legal, political, and cultural conditions necessary for the meaningful exercise of freedom (including political judgment) are unlikely to emerge – and if they do, they are unlikely to be sustainable.35 The latter point is borne out by the very political events that Massumi identifies as exemplary of his theory. If the “Arab Spring” and the “Occupy Movement”36 illustrate anything it is the effervescence of political action based on spontaneous intensity. In the absence of adequate political structures, this kind of political action is destined to pass with the next day’s tide. The emancipatory cri du coeur that can be heard echoing in the work of cultural theorists like Massumi may have landed on “trans-individual” affect as the intensive Higgs Boson wave-particle of political science. Its indeconstructability promises freedom from subjective and cultural contingency – the prison house of “crystallized power structures.” But there is a price to be paid. The radical devaluation of reflective consciousness produces a species of **freedom that signifies nothing**. Perhaps this is what it is like to embrace a Zeitgeist of “de-humanism.”37 In Massumi’s politics of affect we can discern the impetus for ‘‘vitalist/liberation’’ ideology. As Ben Anderson writes: “There is always already an excess [affect] that power must work to recuperate but is destined and doomed to miss. It is that excess that is central to the creativity of bio-political production and thus the power of naked life.”38 Affect in this sense is “a movement of creative production” that always eludes capture. And this is what conveys a sense of its emancipatory power.39 The intensity of affect liberates us from bondage to contingent cultural entanglement. Corporeal ontology precedes cultural epistemology. This move away from the centrality of cognition marks the demise not only of identity politics, but **of identity itself**, perhaps even of psychology.40 Simply stated, affect theorists like Massumi romanticize the unknowable “fluid materiality of excitable networks” as a way of disrupting familiar social and cultural hierarchies.41 In so doing, they elevate raw process over social and cultural regimentation and subjugation. It is the **neurobiological equivalent of Rousseau’s primitive origin of society**, an updated version of the Romantics’ myth of enchantment. If only questions about freedom and responsibility for shared values, justice included, could be resolved by so simple an expedient as the vitalist/liberation category shift from human agency to ‘‘trans-individual affective process.’’ Much can be learned about the various forms of political violence that affective intensity has assumed over the course of human history. But one needn’t take the historical path to discern trouble for Massumi’s emancipatory project. One can start with neuroscience itself.42 Theorists like Massumi play down (as they must) a variety of obstacles that stand in the way of affective emancipation: from the **constraints of evolution to the biological programming of the amygdala itself**.43 Indeed, what constitutes ‘‘fearfulness,’’ for example, depends upon programming the amygdala based on a habituated pattern of external stimuli.44 There are other problems as well. For instance, a great deal of uncertainty surrounds the question of how communication occurs among different levels of the mind/body complex. As Steve Pile writes, for theorists like Massumi “affect is defined in opposition to cognition, reflexivity, consciousness and humanness.”45 Feelings, on the other hand, occupy a space between non-cognitive affect and highly socialized emotions. Feelings in this sense are pre-cognitive (“a response to transpersonal affects”).46 Our response to affects personalizes them. Through feelings we associate affects with the subject who experiences them. For their part, emotions reflect a shift from pre-cognitive subjectivity to the cognitive domain of socially constructed experience.47 Emotions, in this sense, are how I interpret what I’m feeling through language and other representational or cultural symbolic practices. Affect theorists like Massumi insist that my choices and perhaps even my feelings may turn out to have nothing to do with the affect my body has already processed without my knowing it. This view preserves the purity of affective intensity by **keep**ing **it free of subjective or social significance**. If you are in the ‘‘vitalist/liberation’’ camp of affect theory along with Massumi, affect can never be symbolized, which means it can never be cognized. Affect, in this view, is always beyond consciousness. It’s like the dark matter that makes up the universe: we know it’s there, we just can’t say anything about it. The problem for ‘‘vitalist/liberation’’ theorists like Massumi is that they want to **eat their cake and have it too**. Affects for them are ciphers – free-ranging radicals incapable of signifying. Yet, at the same time, many of these same theorists engage in searing critiques of those “in power” who use mass media along with other instrumentalities of affective manipulation for purposes of enhancing social or political control.48 The difficulty is this: If affect is being actively engineered to manipulate people’s behavior – whether in the form of habits of consumption, political judgments, or jury verdicts – it is incumbent upon the theorists to account for how exactly this manipulation is being carried out. As Pile cogently notes, how are the agents of affective manipulation able to “know the unknowable” sufficiently well to control their course and impact in society?49 Thrift’s recourse to metaphors such as “pipes and cables” is hardly sufficient to bear the **burden of scientific explanation**. Indeed, the nomenclature that has emerged to account for the engineering of affect – ranging from “affect flow between bodies,” “transmissions,” and “contagion”50 – all seem to **suffer from the same fundamental lack of explanatory power**. **If we cannot know what affects are**, it stands to reason **that we cannot know how to control their flow and impact in society**.

### AT: exhaustion

#### Moderate hope is key to resolve some of the problems fatigue

Smith et al ‘12 (William, Associate Professor in the Department of Education, Culture & Society and Associate Professor, Ethnic Studies Program (African American Studies division). He serves as the Associate Dean for Diversity, Access, & Equity in the College of Education and has a Presidential Appointment as the Special Assistant to the President & Faculty Athletics Representative, Dr. Smith coined the term racial battle fatigue as a theoretical framework to better understand how the biopsychosocial approach is a valuable method for examining the impact of race-related stress to the biological, psychological, and social factors and their complex interactions in the health of People of Color, Man Hung, Assistant Professor in the Department of Orthopaedics at the University of Utah. She is also affiliated with the Huntsman Cancer Institute, the Center for Clinical & Translational Science, and the Division of Epidemiology, Department of Internal Medicine at the University of Utah, & Jeremy D. Franklin, doctoral student in the Department of Education, Culture & Society at the University of Utah, “Between Hope and Racial Battle Fatigue: African American Men and Race-Related Stress,” Journal of Black Masculinity, Vol.2, No. 1)

Hope appears to play a different role for the African American men in this study when compared to previous research. Race-related socialization appears to influence how much hope is healthy or realistic (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Brown, 2008; Fischer & Shaw, 1999; Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, & Sellers, 2006). African American men with high to moderate levels of hope had more stress associated with racial microaggressions and societal problems than did men who had low hope. Like similar findings in the study by Danoff-Burg, Prelow, and Swenson (2004), we are encouraged from our findings that hope works differently for African American men. Hope appears to be correlated with a more realistic assessment of the possibilities of experiences that African American men might face. Possessing a more realistic understanding of the potential for racist discrimination offers these men additional avenues for coping. Hope does not always have to be based in reality. Therefore, by having a more accurate understanding of racial microaggressions and societal problems, these men learn to avoid extremely harmful external control behaviors that can destroy typical or mainstream avenues for reaching their goals. It should be clear that we are not suggesting that African American men with low or moderate levels of hope are playing into a negative self-fulfilling prophecy or that they are not reaching their expected goals. However, we are suggesting that low and moderate hope men are taking into account additional realities that their high hope peers appear to overlook and therefore they are struggling with more self-reported stressors. Under these circumstances, the opening quote from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is still appropriate in the present lives of African American men. Moreover, in our study, to be an African American man is to hope against hope that racial microaggressions, societal problems, and racial battle fatigue will diminish in the near future. Thus, we agree with Stevenson (1997), African American men must possess three important forms of racial socialization as forms of coping: proactive, protective, and adaptive.