# 1nc – districts round 4

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#### The text of the resolution calls for debate on hypothetical government action – they don’t meet

Ericson 03 (Jon M., Dean Emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts – California Polytechnic U., et al., The Debater’s Guide, Third Edition, p. 4)

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

**Horton 18**—(Professor of Law and Heidepriem Trial Advocacy Fellow, University of South Dakota School of Law), Horton, Thomas J. 3/20/18. University of New Hampshire Law Review. “Rediscovering Antitrust’s Lost Values,” 65.

When Congress passed such **core antitrust legislation** as the **Sherman Act** in 1890, and the **Clayton and FTC Acts** in 1914, it was fully cognizant of and wished to push forward the broad social, political, moral, and economic currents favoring equality of opportunity, fair and ethical competition, and the fear of concentrated power—both political and economic. These core American values predated the American Revolution, and sparked the Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773—a revolt against the British East India Company’s efforts to monopolize the colonial tea trade. 233

**Expanding requires a reversal of legislative intent**

**Garubo 84** --- Angelo G. Garubo, Senior Vice President and Corporate Secretary, Commercial Credit Group, Juris Doctor, magna cum laude, from California Western School of Law, “Severing the Legislativ ering the Legislative Veto Provision: The Aftermath of Chada vision: The Aftermath of Chada”, California Western law Review, Vol 21 No 1, 1984, https://scholarlycommons.law.cwsl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1559&context=cwlr

Since a veto provision can qualify as a proviso, the rule in Davis v. Wallace 147 and Frost v. Corporation Commission 148 can be applied to show that the legislative intent test is inadequate to determine if a veto provision should be severed. In Davis and Frost, the Supreme Court ruled that a proviso could not be severed if it was originally written into the statute. 149 The Court reasoned that severing such a provision would result in an extension of the scope of the statute.' 50 Such an extension would be contrary to the legislative intent of a statute by **including subject matter** which the **legislature expressly chose to exclude**.151 The Davis and Frost analysis can be applied to the "congressional veto" because (1) the veto provision can be considered a proviso 152 and (2) severing a veto provision will **expand the scope** of the statute **contrary to legislative intent**. 5 3 By severing a veto provision the executive branch would be free to expand or limit the scope of a statute through its implementation. Such an expansion or limitation **would constitute a defacto contradiction of legislative intent** by **altering the purview of the statute**.' 54 A veto provision is a control mechanism.' 55 Its mere presence in a statute indicates the legislature's desire to restrict the scope of that statute. 5 6 **By removing it, the court would affect a fundamental change in the** nature of the **statute**, which was not accounted for when the legislature enacted the law. 157 Because a veto provision is a proviso, its excise from a statute would contradict legislative intent. A test which uses legislative intent to determine if a veto provision is severable could only find that the provision is not severable. Thus, when literally applied, the legislative intent test is not adequate to determine if a veto provision should be severed from its statutory framework.

#### Vote neg – the aff is not a governmental expansion of core antitrust laws

#### Our impact is debatability:

#### Limits – A bounded topic serves as a preset stasis point for debate than ensure thematic coherence. A limitless topic destroys debate’s competitive incentives – guaranteeing a race to the margin distorting topic research

#### Ground. A pre-defined controversy ensures a vibrant lit base and in-depth clash, but it’s unreasonable to prepare for alternative frameworks with the ground allocated to us by the parameters of the resolution. All 2AC defense to this claim will rely on concessionary ground, which isn’t a stable basis for a year of debate.

**The terms of the resolution create a meta-language that offers a rubric for evaluating arguments under a deliberative framework. Discussions outside stasis are a rhetorical tactic straight out of Trump’s pocket—making the topic into a first-order question sidesteps deliberative testing, which breeds dogmatic group polarization and trades argumentation for power**

**Aikin and Talisse 17**—Assistant Professor of Philosophy AND W. Alton Jones Professor of Philosophy, Professor of Political Science, and Chair of the Philosophy Department at Vanderbilt University (Scott and Robert, “Democracy, Deliberation, And The Owl Of Minerva Problem,” The Critique, January/February 2017, dml)

To see this, consider that so many features of democratic political life **depend for their intelligibility** on the aspirations of **good argumentative culture**. News is no longer simply read, but is presented in a format of pro-and-con panel debate; journalists ask questions about reasons politicians have for policies, and test politicians’ views for internal consistency; public debates are organized prior to elections. These are all in the service of **realizing a deliberative democracy**, a mode of democratic politics where public argument is a (perhaps the) **central** civic activity. Note further that the deliberativist aspiration drives our criticism of what are generally taken to be democratically degenerative forms of political communication. Bias, spin, derp, lying, flip-flopping, glad-handing, and all the rest could hardly be regarded as deserving of political criticism **except against the backdrop** of the **ideals of deliberative democracy**. These terms would not be accusatory were it not presumed that democratic citizens are committed to a politics of **epistemically sound public argumentation**.

Though the deliberativist aspiration is widespread, and arguably constitutive of contemporary democracy, it remains an aspiration. As we all know, public argumentation among democratic citizens is at best a mixed bag. Attempts to deliberativize democracy are **fraught with hazards**. For one thing, democratic citizens tend to discuss politics **mainly with like-minded others**. This occasions the difficulties associated with the phenomenon known as **group polarization**: as like-minded people speak to each other about their shared views, their positions shift towards **more extreme versions**. Put otherwise, under conditions of doxastic homogeneity, deliberation produces extremism. And as one’s views progress towards extremity, one grows **increasingly unable** to countenance the possibility of **reasoned**, **informed**, and **sincere disagreement**. That is, group polarization feeds what Julian Sanchez has described as **epistemic closure**, the incapacity to see views that run counter to one’s own as **even intelligible**. And as one’s views become epistemically closed, one will increasingly find one’s critics to be **incompetent**, **insincere**, **dishonest**, and **ignorant**. Their points will appear as mere noise or petulant emoting. Eventually, one will see fit to simply stop listening to those who espouse opposing views. As a result, there will be progressive **all-around marginalization** of **unorthodox**, **unpopular**, and **unfamiliar political views**. Those already least likely to get a hearing will be increasingly regarded as incapable of intelligible speech. Accordingly, the deliberativists’ central democratic mechanism seems to undermine democracy.

Of course, these difficulties become only more pronounced once it is noticed that public political deliberation is of necessity largely mediated by various modern communicative technologies. No deliberative democrat explicitly calls strictly for face-to-face discussions among citizens; public deliberation must be facilitated by intermediary institutions, such as social media, television news channels, websites, and online forums of many other kinds. Despite the fact that these communication platforms all offer the potential for robust argumentative exchange among citizens who may be geographically and politically distant from one another, in practice, they tend to exacerbate the vices outlined above. A casual survey of the comments thread of nearly any news site will show that polarization, closure, and marginalization are the norm. Well-run argument is beyond scarce on the internet.

The owl of Minerva flies only at dusk. Only after we have identified these pathologies and suffered their consequences can we think about how to mitigate them. There are many fixes on offer among theorists of democracy. Some argue in favor of new and demanding civic duties that require citizens to read widely across the political spectrum. Others propose institutional interventions, ranging from the enactment of “equal time” laws for news outlets and websites, to the creation of a new national holiday devoted to professionally-orchestrated public deliberation events. Empirically-minded theorists of deliberative democracy are working vigilantly on these matters. It is safe to say that there is no easy way to inoculate deliberative democracy against these pathologies. But even if there were, we worry that another, even more foreboding difficulty lurks. There is reason to think that public argument itself, even when institutional distortions do not pervert it, yields its own pathologies.

Consider the following. Some arguments fail because they run on false premises. Other arguments fail because they draw an **obviously unwarranted conclusion** from their premises, much in the manner in which a magician pulls a rabbit out of his hat. In such cases, it isn’t difficult to see that something has gone awry. But some cases of the latter kind of failure aren’t so obviously failures. These are cases of **fallacious argument**. Fallacies are arguments that we tend to regard as good, but in fact are not. We have to **work** to **see them as failures**, and developing the ability to see them as failures requires us to craft concepts with which to diagnose the ways in which they go wrong. This calls us to **theorize arguments**. The task is notoriously difficult, as the proliferation of textbooks and college courses on Critical Thinking suggests. One trouble is that the variety of seemingly good (but in fact bad) arguments is considerably wider than the variety of diagnostic names we have for them. Moreover, this variety is itself **continually moving** and **growing**. Our apparently endlessly creative linguistic capacities occasions a similarly capacious field for the creation of new forms of fallacious argumentation. As a consequence, it is often **only in retrospect** — **after the debates are over**, **votes are cast**, and **decisions are made** — that the illusions can be **revealed for what they are**. And with the proliferation of communication outlets and argumentative forums, argumentation theory can hardly keep up.

One reason why our theories have a hard time keeping up is that our best models of argument take them centrally to be **dialogues**, between **two** people or parties, who **exchange reasons**, each with the purpose of **changing the other’s mind**. But this dyadic (two-sided) model is **no longer fitting**. It leaves out of its purview the fact that argumentative dialogues, especially when occurring by means of modern technological mediation, are performed largely for the sake of onlooking **audiences**. The two discussants may reply to each other, but their objective is actually to **move the audience**. Once we see this **triadic** (three-sided) structure to political argumentation, many otherwise strange phenomena start to **make sense**.

Consider the textbook straw man fallacy. In the case of the straw man, one takes one’s opponent’s view and restates it in a form that is more easily criticizable. One then goes after the new (and worse) version of the view with justly critical lines about it. And then one closes the discussion. For sure, this would not convince the opponent, as they would only say that this criticized version of the view is not their own. But a straw man argument can move an onlooking audience, those who may not be familiar with the issue under debate, who may not be particularly sympathetic with one side, or who may just be looking for a moment of easy clarity with the issue. The straw man strategy gives them what they are looking for.

Consider, further, that much of the textbook vocabulary concerning fallacies has made it into the vernacular. One of particular note is that of the ad hominem, the fallacy of inferring that someone is wrong from the fact that they exhibit some irrelevant personal vice. It is common to find in popular political discourse charges of the ad hominem. To be sure, the prohibitions on name-calling and insulting an interlocutor’s person in the midst of a debate is very old; but now that we have a name for the prohibited strategy, we have a critical tool to invoke in the midst of argument. That the vocabulary of “ad hominem” and “straw man” has entered the political vernacular means that public arguers have additional means with which to sort the good reasons from the bad.

But notice that when the argumentative strategy of invoking a fallacy name is used, it occurs as yet one more move in the developing argumentative exchange. One invokes the straw man or the ad hominem as a way of criticizing one’s interlocutor. So, when Donald **Trump** was criticized in the Republican Primary debates for his use of the ad hominem, he interpreted the criticism simply as **more naysaying** to contend with in the argument; he did not take the criticism to be **targeting his style of engagement**. Three specific examples are of note. The first is when Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) chastised Trump for insulting people for their looks. Trump responded, “I have never attacked Rand Paul on his looks . . . . And believe me, there’s plenty of subject matter there”. The second is when Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) impersonated Trump to open the Iowa debates (Trump was absent). Cruz began: “Let me say that I’m a maniac, and everyone on this stage is stupid, fat, and ugly. And Ben (Carson), you’re a terrible surgeon . . . . And now that we’ve got the Donald Trump portion out of the way . . . . ”. Third and finally, at the very late Texas primary debate, Trump acknowledged the effects his attacks on others, and noted, “So far, I cannot believe how civil it’s been up here”.

What is troubling here is that in these moments the vocabulary for criticizing the mode of argumentation has become **merely one more tactic** in the argument, one more way to discredit another’s views. The **whole point** of developing the diagnostic language of fallacies is to create a vocabulary with which we can **argue about the argument itself**, rather than the **first-order claims** at issue within it. In particular, the Cruz moment is important, because, in accusing Trump of relying on the ad hominem, Cruz is himself attacking Trump, the person. That is, the impersonation of Trump’s ad hominem is itself a form of ad hominem. And so, instead of being a tool for evaluating the mode of the debate, the fallacy-charge falls back into the debate itself; it becomes yet one more tactic internal to the dispute. Trump obviously sees this point very clearly, as he plays with insulting (by not insulting) Rand Paul, and goes out of his way to acknowledge and congratulate himself that he (and the others) haven’t been name-calling in the Texas debate.

We argue in our natural languages, and so often when we argue, we argue over economies, animals, environments, poverty, and so on. But arguments are **structured collections of statements** that are alleged to manifest certain kinds of logical relations; consequently, they, too, can be the subject of scrutiny and disagreement. And often in order to evaluate a claim about, say, poverty, we need to attend specifically to the argument alleged to support it. In order to discuss arguments, as arguments, we must develop a language about the argumentative use of language. That is, we must develop a **metalanguage**. The objective in developing a metalanguage about argument is to enable us to talk about a given argument’s quality **without taking a side in the debate** over the truth of its conclusion. Accordingly, with the metalanguage in place, we can assess the quality of a given argument **without reference to our own view** of the matter under dispute. Among other things, the metalanguage enables us to **criticize the arguments offered** by people with whom we agree, and it similarly allows us to recognize that sometimes **a powerful argument can be produced** for a conclusion that we know is false. But perhaps most importantly, the metalanguage enables certain **crucial self-critical assessments**; it is by means of the metalanguage that we can **assess our arguments as lacking** without thereby adopting a skeptical stance with regard to our own first-order positions. Put more simply, it is by means of the metalanguage about argument that we can **stand above the fray of our first-order disputes**, as it were, and ascend to a relatively impartial plane from which to assess not the matter under dispute, but the dispute itself. One might say that rationality itself depends upon our ability to competently wield a metalanguage about reasoning, debate, and argument.

The problem is that when the concepts of the metalanguage are **used as first-order tools** in an ongoing argument, the impartiality of the metalanguage is **dissolved**. And so **with Trump**, the language of fallacies became for all involved in the debates yet **one more competing view** about which to wrangle. The metalanguage for assessing the mode of dispute was **dragged into the dispute itself**, and, predictably, the rationality of the exchanges **dissolved precipitously**.

The owl of Minerva flies only at dusk. **Only after** the day is done, after the argument is over, are the tools of wisdom available. The tools of argument assessment, when applied **in the midst of the argument**, are **mistaken for**, or are **appropriated as**, yet more **first-order claims**. They are **entered into the breach**, and so **can no longer assess it**. Subsequent debate **flies free** of **evaluative** and rational **constraints**. And what passes for argument then is **mere power**.

**Analogies between limits and violent exclusion are faulty—argumentative exclusion is inevitable, but topicality ensures it occurs around reciprocal lines.**

**Anderson 06**—Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Humanities and English at Brown University (Amanda, “Reply to My Critic(s),” Criticism, Vol. 48, No. 2, 281-290, dml) \*edits denoted in brackets []

My recent book, The Way We Argue Now, has in a sense two theses. In the first place, the book makes the case for the importance of debate and argument to any vital democratic or pluralistic intellectual culture. This is in many ways an unexceptional position, but the premise of the book is that the claims of reasoned argument are often **trumped**, within the current intellectual terrain, by appeals to cultural **identity** and what I gather more broadly under the rubric of **ethos**, which includes cultural identity but also forms of ethical piety and charismatic authority. In promoting argument as a universal practice keyed to a human capacity for communicative reason, my book is a **critique** of relativism and identity politics, or the notion that forms of cultural authenticity or group identity have a certain **unquestioned legitimacy**, one that **cannot** or **should not** be subjected to the challenges of **reason** or **principle**, precisely because reason and what is often called "false universalism" are, according to this pattern of thinking, **always** involved in forms of **exclusion**, **power**, or **domination**. My book insists, by contrast, that argument is a form of **respect**, that the ideals of democracy, whether conceived from a nationalist or an internationalist perspective, rely fundamentally upon procedures of argumentation and debate in order to legitimate themselves and to keep their central institutions vital. And the idea that one should be **protected from debate**, that argument is somehow **injurious** to persons if it **does not honor** their desire to have their basic beliefs and claims and solidarities **accepted without challenge**, is **strenuously opposed**. As is the notion that **any** attempt to ask people to agree upon processes of **reason-giving argument** is somehow **necessarily** to impose a **coercive norm**, one that will ~~disable~~ [undermine] the **free expression** and **performance** of identities, feelings, or solidarities. Disagreement is, by the terms of my book, a form of respect, not a form of disrespect. And by disagreement, I don't mean simply to say that we should expect disagreement rather than agreement, which is a frequently voiced—if misconceived—criticism of Habermas. Of course we should expect disagreement. My point is that we should focus on the moment of dissatisfaction in the face of disagreement—the internal dynamic in argument that imagines argument might be the beginning of [End Page 281] a process of persuasion and exchange that could end in agreement (or partial agreement). For those who advocate **reconciling** ourselves to disagreements rather than **arguing them out**, by contrast, there is a **complacent**—and in some versions, even **celebratory**—attitude toward fixed disagreement. Refusing these options, I make the case for dissatisfied disagreement in the final chapter of the book and argue that people should be willing to **justify** their positions in dialogue with one another, especially if they hope to live together in a post-traditional pluralist society.

One example of the trumping of argument by ethos is the form that was taken by the late stage of the Foucault/Habermas debate, where an appeal to ethos—specifically, an appeal to Foucault's style of ironic or negative critique, often seen as most in evidence in the interviews, where he would playfully refuse labels or evade direct answers—was used to exemplify an alternative to the forms of argument employed by Habermas and like-minded critics. (I should pause to say that I provide this example, and the framing summary of the book that surrounds it, not to take up airtime through expansive self-reference, but because neither of my respondents provided any contextualizing summary of the book's central arguments, though one certainly gets an incremental sense of the book's claims from Bruce Robbins. Because I don't assume that readers of this forum have necessarily read the book, and because I believe that it is the obligation of forum participants to provide sufficient context for their remarks, I will perform this task as economically as I can, with the recognition that it might have carried more weight if provided by a respondent rather than the author.)

The Foucauldian counter-critique importantly emphasizes a relation between style and position, but it obscures (1) the importance or value of the Habermasian critique and (2) the possibility that the other side of the debate might have its own ethos to advocate, one that has precisely to do with an ethos of argument, an ideal of reciprocal debate that involves taking distance on one's pre-given forms of identity or the norms of one's community, both so as to talk across differences and to articulate one's claims in relation to shared and even universal ideals. And this leads to the second thesis of the book, the insistence that an emphasis on ethos and character is interestingly present if not widely recognized in contemporary theory, and one of the ways its vitality and existential pertinence makes itself felt (even despite the occurrence of the kinds of unfair trumping moves I have mentioned). We often fail to notice this, because identity has so uniformly come to mean sociological, ascribed, or group identity—race, gender, class, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, and so forth. Instances of the move toward character and ethos include the later Foucault (for whom ethos is a central concept), cosmopolitanism (whose aspiration it is to turn universalism into an ethos), and, more controversially, proceduralist ethics and politics (with its emphasis on sincerity and civility). Another version of this attentiveness to ethos and character appears in contemporary pragmatism, with its insistence on casualness of attitude, or insouciance in the face of [End Page 282] contingency—recommendations that get elevated into full-fledged exemplary personae in Richard Rorty's notion of the "ironist" or Barbara Herrnstein Smith's portrait of the "postmodern skeptic." These examples—and the larger claim they support—are meant to defend theory as still living, despite the many reports of its demise, and in fact still interestingly and incessantly re-elaborating its relation to practice. This second aspect of the project is at once descriptive, motivated by the notion that characterology within theory is intrinsically interesting, and critical, in its attempt to identify how characterology can itself be used to cover or evade the claims of rational argument, as in appeals to charismatic authority or in what I identify as narrow personifications of theory (pragmatism, in its insistence on insouciance in the face of contingency, is a prime example of this second form). And as a complement to the critical agenda, there is a reconstructive agenda as well, an attempt to recuperate liberalism and proceduralism, in part by advocating the possibility, as I have suggested, of an ethos of argument.

Robbins, in his extraordinarily rich and challenging response, zeroes in immediately on a crucial issue: who is to say exactly when argument is occurring or not, and what do we do when there is disagreement over the fundamentals (the primary one being over what counts as proper reasoning)? Interestingly, Robbins approaches this issue after first observing a certain tension in the book: on the one hand, The Way We Argue Now calls for dialogue, debate, argument; on the other, its project is "potentially something a bit stricter, or pushier: getting us all to agree on what should and should not count as true argument." What this point of entry into the larger issue reveals is a kind of blur that the book, I am now aware, invites. On the one hand, the book anatomizes academic debates, and in doing so is quite "debaterly." This can give the impression that what I mean by argument is a very specific form unique to disciplinary methodologies in higher education. But the book is not generally advocating a narrow practice of formal and philosophical argumentation in the culture at large, however much its author may relish adherence to the principle of non-contradiction in scholarly argument. I take pains to elaborate an ethos of argument that is linked to democratic debate and the forms of dissent that constitutional patriotism allows and even promotes. In this sense, while argument here is necessarily contextualized sociohistorically, the concept is not merely academic. It is a practice seen as integral to specific political forms and institutions in modern democracies, and to the more general activity of critique within modern societies—to the tradition of the public sphere, to speak in broad terms. Additionally, insofar as argument impels one to take distance on embedded customs, norms, and senses of given identity, it is a practice that at once acknowledges identity, the need to understand the perspectives of others, and the shared commitment to commonality and generality, to finding a way to live together under conditions of difference.

More than this: the book also discusses at great length and from several different angles the issue that Robbins inexplicably claims I entirely ignore: the [End Page 283] question of disagreement about **what counts as argument**. In the opening essay, "Debatable Performances," I fault the proponents of communicative ethics for not having a broader understanding of public expression, one that would include the disruptions of spectacle and performance. I return to and underscore this point in my final chapter, where I espouse a democratic politics that can embrace and accommodate a **wide variety** of expressions and modes. This is certainly a discussion of what counts as dialogue and hence argument in the broad sense in which I mean it, and in fact I fully acknowledge that taking distance from cultural norms and given identities can be advanced not only through critical reflection, but through ironic critique and defamiliarizing performance as well. But I do insist—and this is where I take a position on the fundamental disagreements that have arisen with respect to communicative ethics—that when they have an **effect**, these other dimensions of experience do not remain unreflective, and insofar as they do become reflective, they are contributing to the **very form of reasoned analysis** that their champions sometimes imagine they must **refuse** in order to liberate other modes of being (the **affective**, the **narrative**, the **performative**, the **nonrational**). If a narrative of human rights violation is persuasive in court, or in the broader cultural public sphere, it is because it draws attention to a violation of humanity that is condemned on principle; if a performance jolts people out of their normative understandings of sexuality and gender, it prompts forms of understanding that can be **affirmed** and **communicated** and also can be used to justify **political positions** and **legislative agendas**.

Robbins claims that I violate my own ideal of dialogue by failing to engage those who, according to him, are "[my] most significant antagonists": Jean-François Lyotard and Jacques Rancière. But it is simply not true that I fail to address the fundamental concerns that neither of these thinkers owns in any absolute sense. I might have addressed their work particularly (there are significant differences between them), and I think the example of Rancière is a particularly fruitful one, especially given his own critique of sociological reductionism (and identity politics), and his universalism, which shares affinities with the forms of poststructuralist universalism (notably, Etienne Balibar's) that I address in the third chapter of my book. But the relevant issues of incommensurability of language games or cultural perspectives, and the question of intractable or "hardwired" exclusion, are adduced and repeatedly critiqued throughout the book, across a range of disciplines. The debate between the accommodationist position of Thomas McCarthy and the universalist position of Habermas addresses these issues straight on, and the discussion of Habermas clearly maps out the two main alternatives to his position as (1) incommensurable perspectives and (2) overlapping consensus. The analysis of Satya Mohanty and Martha Nussbaum is also directly relevant: Mohanty situates his project with respect to a well-known and parallel debate in anthropology represented by the opposed positions of Ernest Gellner and Talal Asad. My emphasis on the newer discussions of accommodation, [End Page 284] rather than the incommensurability theorists (e.g., Lyotard), is meant to argue for the Habermasian position against its newer and more interesting challengers, and I also wanted the book to move beyond the parochial reference points of literary and cultural studies to engage relevant work in political theory and political philosophy. And of course I do discuss the work of many influential theorists and literary critics who oppose the approach I take in the book generally. But I'm not going to reproduce my complete range of references: readers are free to decide for themselves how comprehensive and various the theoretical landscape is in my book. But I will say in response to Robbins that my "primary antagonist" considered as a position rather than a set of proper names is consistently present in the book, and taken on in a number of different ways.

There is a deeper issue at play in Robbins's invocation of Lyotard and Rancière, especially given where his discussion of what he calls my "argumentative normativity" ends up. On the one hand, Robbins wants to say that the argument I am taking up is no longer relevant, that "thankfully" literary critics have moved past the critique of Enlightenment. On this account I am sadly unaware that my earlier books have actually had some influence, and seem to be stuck in an agonistic position that has no traction, and that at this point constitutes a regression toward a naively pro-Enlightenment position that is likely to invite—and that at some level deserves to invite—a strong reiteration of the critique of Enlightenment. The moves need to be replayed in slow motion here to discover exactly what is going on, since the argument is quite kinetic, and involves a dubious framing of my own project. It is certainly the case that in diagnosing the state of academic argument in the humanities today, I invoke, as one of the contributing factors, the excesses involved in the critique of Enlightenment. It is not the only factor I invoke, but it is certainly adduced as a major contributing factor to the denigration of reason, critical distance, and formal argument. I do agree with Robbins that there are many critics challenging the critique of Enlightenment. There are also, as it happens, many critics who have walked away from the debate to do other things. But it remains the case, as Robbins's own response makes clear, that the stronger version of the critique has a kind of staying power, particularly as a way of asserting political pedigree in the last instance. Indeed, Robbins must insist that I resurrect a version of the very form of Enlightenment that was once the whipping boy of poststructuralism, in order to himself reintroduce a high-stakes political allegory that will imagine cultural criticism to be an immediate actor in the current international political landscape.

Let's first examine the claim that my book is "unwittingly" inviting a resurrection of the "Enlightenment-equals-totalitarianism position." How, one wonders, could a book promoting **argument** and **debate**, and promoting **reason-giving practices** as a kind of common ground that should prevail over assertions of **cultural authenticity**, somehow come to be seen as a **dangerous resurgence** of bad Enlightenment? Robbins tells us why: I want "**argument on my own terms**"—that [End Page 285] is, I want to **impose reason** on people, which is a form of **power** and **oppression**. But **what can this possibly mean**? Arguments **stand** or **fall** based on whether they are **successful** and **persuasive**, even an argument in favor of argument. It **simply is not the case** that an argument in favor of the importance of reasoned debate to liberal democracy is **tantamount to oppressive power**. To assume so is to assume, in the manner of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, that reason is itself **violent**, **inherently**, and that it will **always mask power** and **enforce exclusions**. But to assume this is to assume the **very view of Enlightenment reason** that Robbins claims we are "thankfully" well rid of. (I leave to the side the idea that any individual can proclaim that a debate is over, thankfully or not.) But perhaps Robbins will say, "I am not imagining that your argument is **directly** oppressive, but that what you argue for **would be**, if it were **enforced**." Yet my book **doesn't imagine** or **suggest it is enforceable**; I simply **argue in favor of**, I promote, an ethos of argument within a liberal democratic and **proceduralist framework**. As much as Robbins would like to think so, neither I nor the books I write can be cast as an arm of the police.

Robbins wants to imagine a far more direct line of influence from criticism to political reality, however, and this is why it can be such a bad thing to suggest norms of argument. Watch as the gloves come off:

Faced with the prospect of submitting to her version of argument—roughly, Habermas's version—and of being thus authorized to disagree only about other, smaller things, some may feel that there will have been an end to argument, or an **end** to the arguments they **find most interesting**. With current events in mind, I would be surprised if there were no recourse to the metaphor of a regular army facing a **guerilla insurrection**, hinting that Anderson wants to force her opponents to **dress in uniform**, reside in **well-demarcated camps** and **capitals** that can be **bombed**, fight by the **rules of states** (whether the states themselves abide by these rules or not), and so on—in short, that she wants to get the battle onto a terrain where her side will be **assured** of having the **upper hand**.

Let's leave to the side the fact that this is a disowned hypothetical criticism. (As in, "Well, okay, yes, those are my gloves, but those are somebody else's hands they will have come off of.") Because far more interesting, actually, is the **sudden elevation of stakes**. It is a symptom of the sorry state of affairs in our profession that it plays out repeatedly this tragicomic tendency to give a **grandiose political meaning** to every object it analyzes or confronts. We have evidence of how desperate the situation is when we see it in a critic as thoughtful as Bruce Robbins, where it emerges as the need to allegorize a point about an argument in such a way that it gets cast as the **equivalent of war atrocities**. It is especially ironic in light of the fact that to the extent that I do give examples of the importance of liberal democratic proceduralism, I invoke the disregard of the protocols of international adjudication in the days leading up to the invasion of Iraq; I also speak [End Page 286] about concerns with voting transparency. It is **hard** for me to see how my argument about proceduralism can be associated with the policies of the **Bush administration** when that administration has exhibited a **flagrant disregard of** democratic **procedure** and the rule of law. I happen to think that a renewed focus on proceduralism is a timely venture, which is why I spend so much time discussing it in my final chapter. But I hasten to add that I am **not** interested in **imagining** that proceduralism is the **sole political response** to the needs of cultural criticism in our time: my goal in the book is to argue for a liberal democratic culture of argument, and to suggest ways in which argument is not served by trumping appeals to identity and charismatic authority. I fully admit that my examples are less political events than academic debates; for those uninterested in the shape of intellectual arguments, and eager for more direct and sustained discussion of contemporary politics, the approach will disappoint. Moreover, there will always be a tendency for a proceduralist to under-specify substance, and that is partly a principled decision, since the point is that agreements, compromises, and policies get worked out through the communicative and political process. My book is mainly concentrated on evaluating forms of arguments and appeals to ethos, both those that count as a form of trump card or distortion, and those that flesh out an understanding of argument as a universalist practice. There is an intermittent appeal to larger concerns in the political democratic culture, and that is because I see connections between the ideal of argument and the ideal of deliberative democracy. But there is clearly, and indeed necessarily, significant room for further elaboration here.

There is a way to make Robbins's point more narrowly, which would run something like this: Anderson has a very restricted notion of how argument should play out, or appear, within academic culture, given the heavy emphasis on logical consistency and normative coherence and explicitness. This conception of argument is too narrow (and hence authoritarian). To this I would reply simply that logical consistency and normative coherence and explicitness **do not exhaust** the possible forms, modes, and strategies of argumentation. There is a **distinction** to be made between the **identification** of moves that **stultify** or disarm **argument**, and an **insistence** on some sort of **single manner** of reasoned argument. The former I am **entirely committed** to; the latter **not at all**, despite the fact that I obviously favor a certain style of argument, and even despite the fact that I am philosophically committed to the claims of the theory of communicative reason. I do address the issue of diverse forms and modes of argument in the first and last chapters of the book (as I discuss above), but it seems that a more direct reflection on the book's own mode of argumentation might have provided the occasion for a fuller treatment of the issues that trouble Robbins.

Different genres within academe have **different conventions**, of course, and we **can** and **do** make decisions **all the time** about what **rises** to the **level of cogency** within specific academic venues, and what **doesn't**. Some of those judgments [End Page 287] have to do with protocols of argument. The book review, for example, is judged according to whether the reviewer responsibly represents the scholarship under discussion, seems to have a good grasp of the body of scholarship it belongs to, and convincingly and fairly points out strengths and weaknesses. The book forum is a bit looser—one expects responsible representation of the scholarship under discussion, but it can be more selectively focused on a key set of issues. And one expects a bit of provocation, in order to make the exchange readable and dramatic. But of course in a forum exchange there is an **implicit norm** of argument, a tendency to **judge** whether a particular participant is making a **strong** or a **weak case** in light of the **competing claims** at play. Much of our time in the profession is taken with **judging** the quality of **all manner** of academic performance, and much of it has to do with **norms of argument**, however much Robbins may worry about their potentially coercive nature.

From time to time I myself have wondered whether my book is too influenced by the modes of academe. But when I read a piece of writing like the one that Elspeth Probyn produced, I find myself feeling a renewed commitment to the evaluative norms of responsible scholarship, and to the idea that clearly agreed-upon genres and protocols of fair scholarship benefit from explicit affirmation at times. Probyn's piece does not conform at all to the conventions of the forum response. She may herself be quite delighted that it does not. Robbins may find himself delighted that she represents a viewpoint that does not agree on my (totalitarian) fundamentals of forum responses. But I would simply say that here we do not have fair or reasoned argument, which is one of the enabling procedures of forum exchanges. Indeed, I hear a different genre altogether: the venting phone call to a friend or intimate. In this genre, which I think we are all familiar with, one is not expected or required to give reasons or evidence, as one is in academic argument. Here's how the phone call might go: "Ugh. I have to write a response to this awful book. I agreed to this because I thought the book had an interesting title; it's called The Way We Argue Now. But I can't get through it; it isn't at all what I expected. I find myself alternately bored and irritated. It's so from the center—totally American parochial, and I just hate the style: polemical in a slam-bam-thank-you-ma'am way—really quite mean-spirited. She's so arrogant. And you wouldn't believe the so-called critique of Foucault. I don't know, I think I'm just sick of abstract theory—I mean, aren't we past this? It's so stultifying. I wish there were some way to get out of the commitment. I don't know how I'm ever going to get to it anyway, with all my journalism deadlines." The friend: "That sounds awful. But just use the occasion to write about something else, something you think is important. Write about yourself. Direct attention to a book that you do like. Whatever you do, don't spend too much time on it. And definitely call her out on the American centrism."

Do we really want to overhear this kind of conversation when we turn to the review section of a journal like Criticism? Of what intellectual value is it to know [End Page 288] Probyn's casual reactions to a book she won't bother responsibly to describe or engage, unless of course we accord to Probyn some sort of authority in advance that makes argument unnecessary. That she herself believes in such argument-by-authority is evident when she tells us, "As Stuart Hall would say, along with any undergraduate in my classes, 'A discourse is a group of statements that provide a language for talking about a particular kind of knowledge about a topic.'" This is the extent of Probyn's searing critique of the problem with advocating debate generally. But note that it relies, first, upon the invocation of an authority, Stuart Hall, and then upon the implication that her students have all entirely absorbed her own channeling of that authority. Probyn is entirely unbothered, moreover, that the undergraduates in her classes unblinkingly accept this empty statement without protest or challenge or further inquiry into its aimless specificity.

Probyn's piece is a mixture of affective fallacy, argument by authority, and bald ad hominem. There's a **pattern** here: precisely the tendency to **personalize argument** and to foreground what Wendy Brown has called "**states of injury**." Probyn says, for example, that she "felt ostracized by the book's content and style." Ostracized? Argument here is seen as **directly harming** persons, and this is precisely the state of affairs to which I **object**. Argument is **not injurious** to persons. **Policies** are injurious to persons and institutionalized practices can **alienate** and **exclude**. But argument itself is **not directly harmful**; once one says it is, one is **very close** to a logic of **censorship**. The **most productive thing** to do in an open academic culture (and in societies that aspire to freedom and democracy) when you encounter a book or an argument that you disagree with is to **produce a response** or a book that states your disagreement. But to assert that the book itself **directly harms you** is tantamount to saying that you **do not believe** in argument or in the **free exchange** of ideas, that your claim to injury somehow **damns your opponent's ideas**.

When Probyn isn't symptomatic, she's just downright sloppy. One could work to build up the substance of points that she throws out the car window as she screeches on to her next destination, but life is short, and those with considered objections to liberalism and proceduralism would not be particularly well served by the exercise. As far as I can tell, Probyn thinks my discussion of universalism is of limited relevance (though far more appealing when put, by others, in more comfortingly equivocating terms), but she's certain my critique of appeals to identity is simply **not able to accommodate** the importance of identity in social and political life. As I make clear throughout the book, and particularly in my discussion of the headscarf debate in France, identity is likely to be at the **center** of key arguments about life in plural democracies; my point is **not** that identity is **not relevant**, but simply that it should not be used to **trump** or **stifle** argument.

#### There’s a TVA – The United States federal government should prohibit imperial violence committed via defense manufacturers by interpreting it as an anticompetitive business practice under core antitrust laws

#### Debating antitrust policy does NOT require NOR produce any particular subjectivity -- BUT solves the historical inaccessibility of legal change and are prerequisite to the efficacy of their political project

Greer and Vallas 21 (**Jeremie Greer**, Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director at Liberation in a Generation, a national movement support organization building the power of people of color to totally transform the economy, Soros Equality Fellow, racial justice activist who began his career as a community organizer in the Columbia Heights and Shaw neighborhoods in Washington, DC, and national policy expert on the causes and the policy solutions to close racial wealth gap, formerly working at the Government Accountability Office, the Local Initiative Support Corporation, and Prosperity Now (formerly CFED), MPP George Mason University, BA Social Work, University of St. Thomas, currently working on an Executive Education Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government; interviewed by **Rebecca Vallas**, senior fellow at The Century Foundation, work focuses on economic justice, formerly spent seven years at the Center for American Progress, built and lead CAP’s Poverty to Prosperity Program, and helped to establish CAP’s Disability Justice Initiative, the first disability policy project at a U.S. think tank, as well as the organization’s criminal justice reform work, her policy and advocacy work flows from her years as a legal aid lawyer, representing low-income individuals and families at Community Legal Services in Philadelphia, creator and host of Off-Kilter, a nationally distributed podcast about poverty, inequality, and everything they intersect with, JD University of Virginia, BA psychology, Emory University; “Reimagining Anti-Monopoly Activism Through Racial Justice — feat. Liberation in a Generation’s Jeremie Greer,” Off-Kilter Podcast, 3-26-2021, https://offkiltershow.medium.com/reimagining-anti-monopoly-activism-through-racial-justice-feat-e3a124c1c61)

VALLAS: So, before we get into the report — and there is so much to talk about in this report — you co-founded Liberation in a Generation with Solana Rice, as I mentioned, up top. Talk a little bit about the organization’s vision, its mission. You talk a lot about an oppression economy and a liberation economy being the goal that you’re working to build towards. Talk a little bit about why you co-founded the program.

GREER: Yeah. Thanks for having me, and thanks for that question. Yeah, Liberation in a Generation, it’s really kind of a culmination of Solana and I (Solana Rice, my co-founder) and I really working. You know, originally, both of us have a similar background. Mine is in doing community organizing in the early part of the 2000s, but then also doing a lot of national work at the policy level for kind of Washington think tanks. And it really was birthed because we were really dissatisfied with the model at which a lot of national advocacy organizations were taking to how they were doing racial and economic justice work. And our kind of governing theory of change is that one, the ideas are not bold enough to actually deliver on changing the problems that we were seeing, that the story that we were telling about why these problems were created was actually just wrong, and that we weren’t working with the people that were building the type of political power that’s necessary to make that change. So, we launched Liberation in a Generation.

And what we hope to do is to dismantle what we call the oppression economy, which is an economy that is built on an uncomfortable truth: that racism is profitable in our economy, that institutions can build their wealth, that people can build their wealth based on the existence of systemic racism. And that happens by criminalizing people of color, by operating a dual financial system that extracts from people of color, that our political system and all of its inequalities is meant to prop up this racist economy that we operate in, and that corporate power has too much of a hold over the well-being of people of color in our economy. And that what we need to replace it with is a liberation economy that does real basic things like provides for everyone’s basic needs, creates safety and security, that compensates people for the value that they bring to the economy. And our economy has too long excluded people, but we need an economy that ensures that all people of color belong. And that has to be grounded in a set of economic rights that everybody has and holds and can be entitled to. And that, again, leaders of color that are doing grassroots power building and community organizing are the ones that deliver it. So, that’s who Liberation in a Generation partners with to deliver that future.

VALLAS: Well, and hearing you mention that you’d experienced, and I think very justifiable, dissatisfaction with the way that some of the kind of traditional Washington-based think tanks work on these issues, right? Often it’s about cutting poverty or reducing homelessness, right? And just the contrast with some of what you at Liberation in a Generation and Solana and the team that you guys are building there are, the things that you’re pushing for, right, are just on a different scale. And in some ways, it’s about helping people understand that maybe we can imagine a different world rather than just tinker at the edges.

I want to read another paragraph from this report. You write, “Imagine a world where the unemployment rate for people of color is zero, the unhoused rate for people of color is zero, a world in which 100 percent of people of color have quality healthcare, a livable wage, quality education. We at Liberation in a Generation,” you write, “believe that this is possible if we strive to create a liberation economy where all people of color have their basic needs met, are safe and secure, are valued and fully belong, including people of color who are immigrants, formerly incarcerated, LGBTQ, and have a disability. You finally write, “In order to get to this liberation economy, we must dismantle the oppression economy that monopoly power has colluded with the government to maintain.” And this gets us into really talking about the topic in this report, which is anti-monopoly activism.

Start with a little bit of a primer of what we’re facing. I mentioned a couple of stats up top in the intro helping put sort of a recent and updated lens on how good it is to be a monopolist these days, right? By contrast to everybody else who’s living through this pandemic and not experiencing billions and trillions of dollars of wealth increases. Start with a little bit of a primer of what we’re facing: the rise of unchecked capitalism and monopoly power such that we’re essentially living in a new gilded era, as the report argues.

GREER: Yeah, and just, I mean, you have to, to fully understand the power of, monopoly, you have to understand it through the lens of people of color who have to deal with it. So, in Iowa, and, you know, there’s folks with People’s Action that are organizing people in rural communities around the threat of monopoly. But if you’re looking at Iowa, a corporation like Tyson Foods has managers who are sitting around on the floor (and this is documented in the media) making bets about what worker was going to get sick and die from COVID. Like, the inhumanity of that, I think, is just appalling. But it just shows the dehumanization that monopolies have created for workers, for consumers, for small businesses, and everybody that’s impacted.

And the reason why is because at the core, monopoly power is about exactly that: power, who has it and what they do with it. And what we have when you have monopolies, it’s not just about the size of the firm. There’s a lot of focus on the size of the firm. But what it’s really about is does that firm have a disproportionate amount of power, and what are they doing with that power? And what monopolies today are doing — Amazon, Moderna, Pfizer, JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Facebook, Google — they’re taking the power that they have around consumer prices, around workplace conditions, around wages, around the impact that they have in community, and the influence that they have on government, and they’re using that power to profit off of blatant systemic racism that is falling down upon Black and brown workers. And that is, for us, the real fight that we feel when you look at monopolies. And that the current system in which we use to try to govern monopoly power is totally inadequate in dealing with the kind of impact that the monopolies have on Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian-American people in this country.

VALLAS: Now, folks who are listening probably all assume that they know what a monopoly is. But I’m going to sort of poke a hole in that and say, you may think you know what a monopoly is. But Jeremie’s got a slightly broader, and I think, more updated definition that’s used in this report. How do you define a monopoly for purposes of what you guys are doing in this work? And why do you propose a somewhat broader definition?

GREER: Yeah. So, you’re right. The current kind of anti-trust definition of a monopoly really focuses on the impact that monopoly power or corporate power has on consumers, and particularly on consumer prices. So, will you pay more for a product because of the monopoly power that a company has? And as I mentioned, we believe that that’s totally inadequate to really understand the full breadth of what a monopoly is. Monopolies have, yes, they have incredible control over consumer markets and prices. And we see that in healthcare, you know. So, the price of insulin is much higher because of the monopoly power that a company, that pharmaceutical companies hold.

But monopolies also have power over worker wages, the working conditions in which workers show up to work and have to live through. They have incredible power over small businesses. All across the country, we see small businesses being crowded out by monopoly power. They have the political power to almost dictate to local communities how much they’re willing to pay in taxes, which means the crowding out of essential services that are provided to communities. And what we observe in the report is that too often, the impact of that monopoly power falls squarely on the shoulders of people of color, whether they’re workers of color, consumers of color, whether they’re small business owners of color, or whether they’re just people of color living in communities that are looking to their local government to really help them navigate life in the economy.

VALLAS: And I want to quote you, because you offer, I think, a really, really smart definition here in the report. You say, “We define monopoly as a corporate entity — a single corporation, or a group of corporations — whose sheer size and anti-competitive behavior grant it disproportionate economic power and governing influence.” And as you’ve been describing, you say, “This negatively affects the well-being of workers, consumers, markets, local communities, democratic governance, and the planet.” That’s a somewhat broader definition than maybe the sort of technical antitrust definition of monopoly. But for all the reasons you’re starting to get into, you really, you argue in this report that it’s necessary that we think a little more broadly and a little more functionally about who’s operating like a monopoly, and therefore where we need to be thinking about challenging unchecked corporate power.

You’ve already started to delve into the link between unchecked corporate power, monopolistic behavior, and the numerous types of racial injustice and structural racism that run rampant throughout the U.S. economy and our broader society. But you have a very powerful way that you phrase this in this report. You say, “Racial wealth inequality,” and you specifically are talking there about racial wealth inequality, “is the consequential disease caused by the oppression economy.” I can’t remember reading another publication about monopolistic behavior and the need for an anti-trust movement that draws such a direct causal link between monopolies and the ways that they operate, and racial wealth inequality and structural racism. Talk a little bit about how monopolies are contributing to the immense and historic levels of racial wealth inequality that folks are maybe more familiar with, but not aware of that link.

GREER: Yeah. No, thanks for that question. And what I think of an important distinction around the framing there is that, yes, it is driving, monopolies are driving racial wealth inequality. And yes, monopolies are a product of an oppressive economy that is, you know, where racism is baked into the design of the economy. But they’re also a profit tier, they are gaining profit from the existence of that oppression economy. So, it is in their interest to sustain it and maintain it and to keep it going. And an example that we draw out in the paper that I think is so important and I think really illustrates this is, as we mentioned, one of the pillars that holds up the oppression economy is the criminalization of people of color. That people of color as criminals, or defined as criminals, and mass incarceration, the over-policing of Black and brown communities is something that upholds this oppression economy. And then when you have a company like Amazon who purchases the Ring Corporation —

And for those that may not be familiar, Ring is a product that’s provided by Amazon in which they provide surveillance and home security to everyone. You can get a little Ring doorbell where someone rings the door. You could be at work, you can open it. It’s like, “Oh, cool. Leave my package there.” That’s how they market it. But what that does is that that Ring device pulls in a lot of data. And what we have is cameras in homes all across the country that can be used to surveil people. And what we know is one of the things that police do is they over-surveil Black and brown communities, which leads to the type of mass incarceration that we’ve seen in this country. Well, Amazon has contracts, in fact, 770 contracts with police departments so that they can get the data from those Ring devices. So, I think that really illustrates that not only are monopolies driving racial inequality through the low wages that they pay workers, through the way that they crowd out Back businesses, from the way that they treat immigrants at the workplace, but they’re also actively doing things to prop up and uphold this oppression economy because they are profiting from it.

VALLAS: And I really want to encourage folks to read the report, especially activists and advocates who I know we have lots who listen to the show, folks in grassroots-based work who I think are really going to find this report very much geared towards them. That’s another really, I think, significantly unique aspect about what you guys have done here. This isn’t the kind of think tank report that you traditionally read, right? In a lot of ways, you actually really wrote this for, and almost to, grassroots leaders of color as sort of a primer on anti-monopoly activism, but also as something of the beginning of a tool kit that really could help people start to take this on as part and parcel of their work. I’d love to get a little bit into kind of why you structured the report this way, why you took this somewhat different approach in writing, not just for the media and for policymakers and for the Washington elites, but actually for grassroots leaders of color on the ground.

I’m going to quote you again. You write, “This paper aims to contribute a major step in the long journey of bridging the divide between anti-monopoly researchers and policy advocates and grassroots leaders of color.” And you write, “The first step on that journey is knowledge.” What does the current anti-monopoly fight look like? And why do you believe, and Solana as well, why did you guys prioritize bridging this divide?

GREER: Yeah, so, as I mentioned in my opening about Liberation in a Generation, we believe that the leaders that are going to lead us into having a liberation economy and dismantling this oppression economy that we’ve been talking about are grassroots leaders of color who are building power in communities. And the reason why we believe that is one, they are closest to the people who are experiencing the pain and harm of systemic racism. They are in there with them, they understand, they hear their stories, and they’re organizing them for change. The other thing that we believe is so important is that they are in the business of building the power, the political power, of those people. They’re not there to serve them, which there’s people that do that. And there’s a reason for that, and it’s important. But they see their role in helping those people build power so that they can have the agency to force their government, whether it’s a local, state or federal, to act on their behalf.

And we believe that if one of the government’s roles is to curb corporate monopoly power, they should be the ones driving that change. Because they will come with experiences, which we try to reflect in the report, of how monopoly power is impacting communities. You know, how a Amazon distribution center in the Inland Empire in California is impacting not just the economic life, but the quality of life of people in those communities. They could speak to that in real terms. And that not only does the advocacy need to be informed by that, but also the policy making needs to be informed by that.

So, what we did was, with that kind of assumption, we went to groups like the Athena Coalition, who is organizing people against Amazon across the country. We went to Color of Change, who’s an organization that is focusing on curbing the power of big tech: Facebook, Amazon, Google, Apple. We went to ACRE: Action Center for Race and the Economy. And they’re doing a lot of work focusing on big banks and the corporate and monopoly power of big banks. And we said, you know, what is holding the kind of grassroots movement back from really diving in, into this anti-monopoly issue? And they came up with, there was a lot of reasons, a lot of varies they identified, and some of them that we’re working with them to solve.

But one of them was, you know, we don’t have kind of a global understanding of how monopoly power impacts people of color in particular. We understand it through the lens of a particular firm, Amazon, Bank of America, like that. But we don’t really have a good grounding in how it happens globally. Therefore, our policymaking doesn’t have kind of an eye towards how could we globally and kind of more broadly address this problem in a way that impacts people across the economy? So, that’s what we hope that this paper would do: would provide that kind of grounding for grassroots leaders so that they can begin to build the type of strategies that kind of have that massive economy-wide impact for people of color.

VALLAS: And it might be eye-opening for grassroots leaders who are learning about this issue, who are exploring whether this is something that they can get involved with. But it’s also potentially eye-opening for people who already think they know the antitrust movement or the anti-monopoly movement, given that it is incredibly rare, as you point out, for conversations about the economy to really discuss human impacts. They’re often extremely technocratic conversations, right, that have lots of facts and figures and jargon. But something that you really make a point of doing in this report, which I can’t say I’ve ever seen in a report on monopoly power or anti-trust, is you really walk through the human impacts on people of color as workers, as consumers, as residents in local communities, as small business owners and entrepreneurs, and also as subjects of surveillance, similar to the Amazon Ring concerns that you were raising before. Share some of the examples in the report of those kinds of human impacts on people of color who can obviously be more than just one of those things in that list of categories.

GREER: Yeah, I’ll share a couple. There’s one that really, I mean, really broke my heart when I first read about it was Alec Raeshawn Smith, whose mother — and this is something that’s in the media. So, it’s not as if I’m violating any confidentiality here — but Alec Raeshawn Smith, whose mother, he aged off of his mother’s insurance plan. And this is a story we heard a lot during the ACA kind of debate and the debate around universal healthcare. But he aged off of his mother’s insurance plan, and he made this diff-, had to make this difficult choice about whether he continued to allow his mother to bear the burden of his insulin medication that he needed to regulate his diabetes, or whether he would try to do it kind of on his own. And he determined, he decided to do it on his own. And it’s a hard decision that people have to make every single day, but the cost of that insulin was so high that he was rationing it, that he wasn’t taking what the doctor prescribed. And he passed, and he died from his diabetes.

And this is the type of story that we see all too often. You know, his insulin costs were $1,300 a month without insurance. And we see that a corporation that can control pricing of pharmaceuticals for a lifesaving drug like insulin is how this plays out in real life. And we can get into a law, you know, you can get into a law classroom or into a debate on Congress, and you can start to forget about the real lives that are impacted by these policies. And the reason why we wanted to talk about these stories is because that is what organizers are dealing with every day: They’re working with people that are on insulin, you know. They are working with people who are working at a Amazon fulfillment center. They’re working with people who can’t get a bank account because Bank of America has all these fees on their credit cards and their checking accounts and things like that. So, bringing these stories out is what is going, and this real human impact, is what is going to mobilize, we believe, the type of effort that’s needed to fight back against monopoly power.

VALLAS: And I think we’ve got time for a few more examples, because it just, it isn’t the part of the conversation that usually gets any airtime. And it’s part of why I wanted to have you on the show is really to put a human face on some of the impacts. Share a few more examples that really, that popped for you as you were pulling this report together.

GREER: Sure. I’d love to talk about John Ingram, who is a Black farmer in Jackson, Mississippi, and he’s a chicken farmer. He grows chickens, and he sells his chickens to Koch Foods, K-o-c-h Foods. And they are the fifth largest poultry company in the country that provides food to places all across the country. But the model which they work with John is very much in the model of the sharecropping model from post-Civil War and on into the Jim Crow era. You know, they determine the way in which John must run his farm, like to how much he feeds his chickens, to the types of facilities he keeps his chickens in, all the way to the price that they will pay to buy his chickens. And what this does is create incredible power over Black farmers like John. And what you have is — And this is pretty much allowed to take place by the USDA.

He had complained, and Black farmers, many Black farmers complained to the Obama-era USDA. And because of the power of those poultry monopolies — you know, I mentioned one in the beginning, Tysons and Koch is another — they really didn’t do anything. And what we see across the country are Black farmers being forced out of business because of the power that these monopolies have.

Another example that I think is really good is also in Mississippi. There’s a Nissan plant that was built in Canton, Mississippi. They relocated there. And they had gotten there because they had gotten a lot of tax breaks from the local government, from the state of Mississippi. And they did so with the promise of good jobs. They talked about jobs would be between $26 and $26 an hour. Well, the type of jobs that they provided were called perma-temp jobs. And these are basically permanent temporary jobs, which I can’t really wrap my mind around what that is, because those are conflicting. Like, what is something that’s permanent and temporary? But they created these jobs that were permanent and temporary, which basically meant that they could at will fire people from their jobs.

So, these aren’t real sound jobs. The wages were low. They did not get great benefits. So, a lot of the promise that was offered was not delivered upon. And that these were primarily the jobs that were provided in this part of Mississippi, despite the millions in tax breaks that Nissan got from, again, the state of Mississippi and the local government there.

VALLAS: And there’s so many more examples throughout the report. We’ve got a link and show notes so folks can go in and can sort of page through. It’s written in an incredibly accessible way, right? So, I want to just make that point. You intentionally set this up so that you don’t have to be a lawyer to read this. You don’t have to be a deep antitrust expert to be able to read this. This is actually really for people who might be a little bit newer to the issue.

And one of the big kind of frames of the report as well is you spend a lot of time discussing how, you know, hey, we know folks are busy. We know folks are fighting a lot of fights right now and probably don’t feel like they’ve got one more to take on, space for one more to take on. But you really make the point that for folks who are working on, say, advancing the Green New Deal or the Homes Guarantee or other policies within the social and the economic and the racial justice advocacy sphere, you really make the point that challenging monopoly power is actually a prerequisite to succeeding in those other fights. What’s your message to advocates and to activists and policy folks, anyone who’s listening or who might read the report, what’s your message to them about why they should see the anti-monopoly fight as their own, even if they feel like that’s not the space that they work in?

GREER: Yeah, I mentioned Action Center for Race and the Economy. Mo BP-Weeks, who is a co-director there, often says, You just have to follow the money.” And I think organizers know that when you follow the money, you usually find exactly the targets that you need. And there’s a section in the report called Monopoly Power Is Corporate Power Magnified and Maximized. And we believe, and I think that we’re right, that if you focus in on and treat these monopolies like corporate entities, you can begin to see change in a lot of the transformative movements that people are having, for example, the Green New Deal and efforts to create a more equitable and healthy environment and to curb climate change. You know, the targets are Big Oil and Big Energy. And those institutions, while they’re large, still operate like corporations. They have a CEO, they have Board of Directors, they have shareholders. And all of those people have some stake in the company and have some culpability to the issues that you are trying to solve. So, it becomes another tool in the toolbox.

We believe that anti-monopoly advocacy is just another tool in the toolbox that could be used to curb corporate power so that you can begin to get wins on other issues that you may be focusing on, whether it is the environment, whether it is affordable housing, whether it’s creating higher wages for workers, whether it is to create a safer community free of police violence. We think that by focusing on curbing the monopoly power of the corporations that are causing that pain is just another tool that can be used in the advocacy for those broader kind of movement priorities that we hear a lot about.

VALLAS: Now, one of the things that you and I have talked about a good amount before, and something that we actually get into a lot on this podcast, is the narratives that are out there that we’re often sort of fighting against that might be invisible, but that shape people’s views about, say, the economy and economic policy, even if they’re not aware that that’s the sort of lens that they’re looking through or the pair of glasses that they’re looking through. It’s also something that you really spend a lot of time working on. And it’s very, it’s central, really, to a lot of what Liberation in a Generation is advancing, is narrative change, right? Especially dismantling, for example, the neoliberal narratives that are really at the root of so many of the social injustices that folks who listen to the show are out there fighting every day.

You talk about government, in the case of the anti-monopoly fight, as a villain and as complicit with corporations in allowing unchecked corporate power to do the damage that you’ve been talking about, that we’ve been discussing up to this point. But you actually talk about them in the context of the anti-monopoly fight government as the villain who could turn into the hero. Talk about why you think it’s so important to construct a narrative with a villain, with a hero. And we’ll get back now into kind of the policy conversation of this, why government has the potential to turn from being a villain to being a hero in this context.

GREER: Yeah, I mean, it’s really, when you look at the history of anti-monopoly advocacy, you see that there once was a time where the government was an active participant in curbing corporate power and was doing so on behalf of workers. You know, you see there were passages of transformative legislation like the Sherman Act or the Clayton Act or the Federal Trade and Commissions Act. And these were all passed in the early 20th century. And they were meant to curb this kind of corporate monopoly power in, you know, back in the Gilded Age when we saw the trust corporations, the railroads, the Carnegie steel industry. And there was this active role of government doing this.

But what we’ve seen since then is, as corporate power grew, begin to influence government more, a real devolution of that activist role the government played. And what we began to see really, you know, and probably the heyday of this for the monopolies began in the 1980s and continues on today, was actual collusion between the government and these monopolies. And that what we saw, what we see today is there have been, there were more mergers and acquisitions under Obama administration than any other administration before it. So, we’re at the point now where the government is really seen as a, it’s really a collaborator in building monopoly power.

What we need to get back to is a place where the government is playing its role in making sure that not just the, it’s not just about the size of the company, but that the company’s power is not getting to the point where they’re bringing down the standard of living for workers, particularly Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and Asian-American workers. That consumers are seeing the type of prices so that they can afford the things that they need to live a daily life. That small businesses, particularly Black businesses, are not being crowded out. And that that is a role for government. So, government can be the hero, and it should be the hero because it is our government, you know.

We are a democracy. We should have say, each and every one of us, in what our government does, and our government should be working on our behalf, not on behalf of Jeff Bezos, Warren Buffett, or Elon Musk. We should be expecting the government to play that active role, and not just recognizing that it should be done for all workers, but ensuring that workers of color in particular and people of color, households of color in particular, are being protected against the tyranny of monopoly power.

VALLAS: And one of the later chapters in the report really offers kind of a primer in some of that early 20th century history that you were just summarizing around the time when government in the U.S. actually did take action to rein in monopoly power. You mentioned the Sherman Act and the Clayton Act and the creation of the Federal Trade Commission, all of that, I would encourage folks to go in and read. And there’s probably a lot that folks don’t know about that era following the gilded era, that really was the time when the federal government in the U.S. did actually take action to check corporate power. Who are the key players with power in the federal government to do something about this? And what are some of the existing solutions that are being advanced?

GREER: Yeah. So, today, I mean, it’s your Congress, of course, has a lot of power. Because there’s an, I believe, there’s a need for new kind of legislation that new powers be created, new constructions of how we regulate monopoly that only Congress could do by passing laws. But under our current laws, the Federal Trade Commission is responsible for responding and kind of being the first, the cop on the beat to make sure that companies aren’t violating any of our current antitrust laws. They can issue criminal and civil penalties, and they are the ones who are in charge of enforcing those kind of monumental legislation that we’ve talked about.

The Justice Department also has a important role in moving legislation forward. In fact, they are the entity that when you hear about breaking up corporations, the Justice Department is the one that usually does that. And they’ve done it in the past. You know, they did it. They broke up the big railroad monopolies of the past, and they broke up AT&T in the 1970s into what they call the Baby Bells. And they currently have a lawsuit today against Google to look at Google’s monopoly power. And in the lawsuit, there’s a call for breaking it up into smaller pieces. So, there’s that.

And then there’s other agencies, you know. As it relates to banking, it’s the Department of Treasury with the Comptroller of the Currency and the Federal Deposit Insurance Agency, the CFPB in banking. In agriculture, it’s the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In energy, it’s the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency. Each of these industries kind of have their own government entity that is responsible for regulating the work that they do. And they play a role in curbing corporate power. And one other one that I’d mention is states. State Attorney Generals also have a lot of power to curb corporate power, because one thing that’s little known is that states are the ones that incorporate corporations. And so, they have a lot of ability and a lot of power to regulate agencies.

As far as solutions go, there’s a lot of solutions that are kind of out there. And what this report does not do is propose to put forth a particular solution that would work for people of color, because we actually think that that’s the work that grassroots leaders of color should embark on in the future, is designing and developing those particular solutions. But some of the solutions that we have in our toolbox today are, for example, breaking up large corporations. That is something that we can do today. We can also regulate, tightly regulate corporations using the existing tools in the toolbox. The CFPB and what it’s done in the banking industry is a good example of that.

But one idea that’s been batted around, and I think Elizabeth Warren proposes for big tech in particular, is new enforcement agencies that are more in line with the realities that we see in the economy today and the way in which monopolies form. A lot of our laws are meant, were developed to regulate railroad and steel monopolies, and those aren’t the monopolies that we’re seeing today. So, there is a group of folks out there talking and saying that there’s a real need to think about new agencies with new authorities that could regulate monopoly power.

VALLAS: And of course, it’s not exactly a pie-in-the-sky idea to think about creating those new agencies. Elizabeth Warren, who you mentioned, right, was the godmother of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the CFPB, which is pretty young as far as federal agencies go. It was created during the Obama years. Although that may feel like a different lifetime at this point in a lot of ways.

We’re going to run out of time. But the last couple of minutes that we have, I’d really love to spend delving into the recommendation that really is, in a lot of ways, the kind of central call of this report. A lot of it is really addressed to grassroots leaders, and for the reasons you’ve discussed, right, about bridging that divide. But it’s also addressed to the existing anti-monopoly tent: the folks who are already working within research and advocacy spaces on these issues. And you say very pointedly, “The anti-monopoly movement, within research and advocacy spaces especially, should embolden grassroots leaders of color to deliver anti-racist policy solutions aimed specifically to curtail monopoly power.” So, there you’re describing that agenda that you think grassroots leaders really should be centered in developing. But you continue. You actually, you sort of raise the ante with this call. You also say, “It’s not enough to speak virtuously about racial equity and economic justice. We have to intentionally center people of color in the development of policy change.”

And you call explicitly for a reimagination of this movement through a racial justice lens that broadens the tent and intentionally makes this work more accessible and more human-impact focused so that it’s not just about bringing folks in and centering the work differently. It’s actually about doing the work differently, entirely, so that it’s not just that technocratic and sort of small-tent D.C. elite approach to changing these policies. Talk a little bit about what that actually would look like. You have some pretty specific ideas that, I agree with you, would actually transform the anti-monopoly movement in ways that would reimagine it and approach the work differently. Get concrete. What would that actually look like?

GREER: Yeah, and thank you for this question, Rebecca. You know, I mentioned that history. And I think what we know about public policy and the history of public policy in the United States, whether it was this antitrust movement in response to the Gilded Age, whether it was the New Deal, is that when it’s done in a race-neutral way, it doesn’t just leave people of color behind — Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian Americans — it also harms people of color. And what we need to do is, of course, what we can learn from that history is that we should not repeat it. And we should not repeat it, by centering people of color as the core beneficiaries of the policy. Because we believe if that is done, not only will they be served, but we will all then be served because we’re ensuring that we’re not leaving anyone behind, and we’re not intentionally harming anyone. And we think that that’s so critically important in this kind of new era of antitrust policy that could come forth.

You know, we talk about this renaissance of antitrust back in the early part of the century, but at the time, many Black people could still not join a union. Many, many Black people could not get jobs in these new corporations that were being formed by the railroad, by the breaking up of the railroads. So, we have to acknowledge that the implementation of policy and ensuring that all people are a part of it are critically important. And we believe that no one is better at that than people that organize, that are in fellowship, and work with people of color every single day closest to the problem can do. And that that knowledge that they have, that expertise that they have in those folks’ lived experience, is exactly what policymakers need to craft the type of policies necessary. It is what the think tanks in Washington need. It is what the policymakers on Capitol Hill need. It is what the entire advocacy apparatus needs. And we would like to see that being applied to this area.

But what that means is not bringing people to the table in a kind of like, you know, tell us what you think, and then we’ll get back to you. We actually believe that those folks should be leading those conversations. They should be leading the crafting of that policy. And that the role of the think tank or of the policymaker or the antitrust lawyer should be to support them in that endeavor, but with them at the helm. And we think that that is critically important in all areas of policy, but especially in this one that has been so technocratic, so legalistic, so academic, and really devoid of many of the lived experiences that people have navigating the economy and fighting back against these monopolies.

VALLAS: And you’ve got some really, really, really concrete and tangible recommendations in there that I feel like if researchers or Hill staff or think tankers are listening — and I know that’s a lot of the folks who listen to this show, too — there’s stuff in there that folks can just literally put on their to-do list, like creating measures that actually assess impacts on Black and Latinx and Indigenous and Asian and Pacific Islander people, right, as they’re actually thinking about how we evaluate solutions.

GREER: Right.

VALLAS: Or you also call for just using less jargon and less abstraction and focusing maybe a little bit less on just like the markets and the efficiencies and all of those terms, right, in favor of talking a little bit more about the impact of corporate decisions on people, human people, right: the folks that are actually at the core of why we need to be challenging corporate power.

GREER: Think bold. Think big. We need to think big. We need to think boldly. We can’t get caught up into the minutia of what can get done today. We need to think big about what could happen tomorrow. So, yeah, that’s another one. Mmhmm.

### frames

**Next Off – Frame Subtraction:**

#### First – our links:

#### The 1AC twice deploys the ableist referent of *“seeing”* to outline phenomenon that’s not intrinsically visual. The impact’s ableist violence. It also turns the Aff – whatever liberative possibilities emerge re-create the very anti-inclusive normalizing tendencies the 1AC critiqued. Alts like “conceal/reveal” or “attention” solve.

Wilson-Becerril ‘18

Michael Wilson-Becerril is a Mexico City native, an activist researcher, a 2017–2018 Peace Scholar at the US Institute of Peace, and a professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at Colgate University. open space – “‘invisibilise’ this: ocular bias and ableist metaphors in anti-oppressive discourse” - Source: Feminist Review , November 2018, No. 120, Currents (November 2018), pp. 130-134 - #E&F – obtained via J-Stor Database

It’s difficult to escape the visual bias of the English language. (Although to be fair, this criticism applies also to my first language, Spanish, so perhaps the unconscious preference is present in many languages and across Western discourses more broadly.) It is not so surprising that people are inclined to use metaphors such as ‘observations’, ‘viewpoints’ or ‘seeing’ as if they represent feelings and perception as a whole. What is surprising is how prevalent these practices are within platforms that label themselves feminist and anti-oppressive.

Whether in a recent episode of Full Frontal with Samantha Bee, 1 in memes or videos by ‘woke’ Instagram users, in journalism or in peer-reviewed journal articles and books, the language of visibility is a popular stand-in for attention, noticing and erasure. For example, you may have come across otherwise excellent discussions of how women of colour’s labour or political agency has been systematically ‘invisibilised’ in dominant social science accounts, or a TED Talk about how women’s roles in non-violent conflict have been similarly downplayed (see Bacha, 2016). You also may have encountered content, on and offline, about efforts to add ‘visibility’ to things like menstruation in order to destigmatise them in society (see Manica and Rios, 2017); about how terms like ‘womxn’ and ‘Latinx’ can de-gender language and ‘visibilise’ non-binary, trans and queer folks (see Padilla, 2016); about how women’s activism is bringing reframed attention to native and tribal communities (see Miranda, 2016); or about black people in Spain seeking greater ‘visibilisation’ in their society (see Rosati, 2017), just to name a few examples.

Documenting and theorising these struggles is a necessary component of organising for social change, and the contributions made by these analyses should not be understated. My own work and activism have been deeply influenced by these anti-oppressive theories and frameworks, well before and especially going into my recent research about violence and mining in Peru. During my fieldwork, I witnessed processes of erasure, exposure, concealment, selective attention and normalisation playing out in mining conflicts, and I scrutinised how these processes reflected broader structures of oppression and exploitation, such as white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, classism and imperialism. However, while there, I also realised there was a problem with the very language of ‘invisibilisation’ and ‘silencing’ that I was using to refer to these processes.

One particular moment during my long-term stay in Peru sparked and crystallised this realisation. I was arriving in a northern, coastal region to conduct the first case study for my dissertation, about local agency and extractive industries. I had already been in touch with a key contact, who had participated in and covered the mining conflict I was there to study. He sent me via email an essay, which he hoped we could discuss during our first meeting in person. The morning before we met, we arranged our encounter via telephone, and I casually mentioned how clearly and lucidly his ‘vision’ had come across in his writing, which had been a pleasure to read. Although perhaps my word choice seemed to me innocent over the phone, I realised my mistake as soon as we met: he was blind. Of course, my contact made nothing of the matter; instead, he opened himself to assist my study, into which he was immediately invested. He became a good friend, a writing partner and a vital source of information and contacts. Rather than confronting me about my mistake, we developed a reciprocal and ongoing friendship, where I agreed to translate his publications into English in exchange for his help. Through the rest of my field research, I continued meeting people who were alternatively abled. It was in thinking with them during the course of my study that I realised a problem with centring sight or hearing to express issues of recognition and erasure: it can be ableist.

Given the useful dynamics to which these metaphors attend, generating activism that is changing the systematic erasure of peoples, it is ironic that, at the same time, reaffirming sight erases the lives and agency of the visually impaired. Likewise, reaffirming ‘voice’ or ‘listening’ might do this to people who are deaf or mute. As useful as they may be, such metaphors presume able-bodiedness, and thus discount the roles and experiences of people with ocular, aural or vocal disabilities. Relying on these is a type of bias, an unchecked assumption about people’s bodies, and a form of imposing normativity over human experience. It is the kind of thing that you may not notice when it doesn’t apply to you—but it if it does apply to you, it happens often, it stings every time, and it is a pain that accumulates, slowly eroding your confidence and dignity.

Questioning the language of ‘invisibility’ is a useful opportunity for feminist scholars to refine challenges to oppression. To be sure, feminists are not the only people responsible for this ableist metaphor, but it is a community that has deeply theorised invisibilisation and among which the metaphor is particularly salient, given how well it describes the systematic erasure of women and femmes. As Shireen Roshanravan (2014) has stated, feminist thought is by no means a unified corpus or genre of thought; yet this bias is prevalent across various subfields, conceptual frameworks and regional loci. Chances are that, if you’ve read at least a handful of feminist analyses, then you’ve come across the visibility/ invisibilisation metaphor. It is even possible that you (like me) have used it non-reflexively in the past, in conversations or writing. But as a metaphor, it is ableist, and it is time to drop it from popular lexicons, especially from anti-oppressive analyses. Feminist and disability rights activists are uniquely positioned to lead in that direction.

One valid criticism of a mainstreamed and superficial ‘woke’ culture (or of postmodernism more generally) is the trap of overstating the role of discourse while ignoring material circumstances altogether, or at least failing to link how language shapes lived experience and vice versa. However, using words differently has the potential to create new possibilities to resist oppression.

Transgressing oppressive norms and practices in language may seem insignificant, but feminists do this precisely because it is hugely consequential. It is the same reason why people are increasingly using terms like ‘Latine’ and ‘Latinx’ (to decentre masculinity as the standard in Iberian languages and recognise non-binary queer and trans folks); why you should not be describing things as ‘lame’ when you mean ‘uncool’; why it is important to not refer to the United States as ‘America’, the name of two entire continents (imperialising much?); why the term ‘womyn’ has been popularised in the past decades; and why the Associated Press and others have dropped their use of the word ‘illegal’ to describe human beings: because words and language matter.

#### Our Alt: We can defend the rest of their advocacy and negate only certain parts. 2NR consolidation is the best alt:

#### One – no plan means any part of the 1AC can become the nexus question by the 2AR, we should reciprocally get to conditionally critique their frames and narrow the debate to parts of disagreement by the 2NR.

#### Two – – Praxis: our model teaches a form of engagement that corrects flaws in political strategies. Rejecting our approach is normatively worse for the Aff’s own cause.

Williams ‘15

Douglas Williams is a third-generation organizer, He earned his BA in Political Science at the University of Minnesota at Morris and his MPA at the University of Missouri Columbia, where he was also a Thurgood Marshall Fellow and a Stanley Botner Fellow. He is currently a doctoral student in political science at Wayne State University in Detroit, where his research centers around public policy as it relates to disadvantaged communities and the labor movement. From the article: “The Dead End of Identity Politics” - From: The South Lawn - March 10, 2015 – Internally quoting Freddie DeBoer, Lecturer, Purdue University. DeBoer holds a PhD in Rhetoric and Composition from Purdue and an MA in English, concentration in Writing and Rhetoric from The University of Rhode Island, Modified for potentially objectionable language. In one instance a capital “B” was adjusted to a lower case “b” in a manner that boosted readability, but did not alter context. https://thesouthlawn.org/2015/03/10/the-dead-end-of-identity-politics/

Freddie DeBoer makes a great point in his piece on what he calls “critique drift“: “This all largely descends from a related condition: many in the broad online left have adopted a norm where being an ally means that you never critique people who are presumed to be speaking from your side, and especially if they are seen as speaking from a position of greater oppression. I understand the need for solidarity, I understand the problem of undermining and derailing, and I recognize why people feel strongly that those who have traditionally been silenced should be given a position of privilege in our conversations. B(b)ut critique drift demonstrates why a healthy, functioning political movement can’t forbid tactical criticism of those with whom you largely agree. Because critical vocabulary and political arguments are common intellectual property which gain or lose power based on their communal use, never criticizing those who misuse them ultimately disarms (hampers) the left. Refusing to say ‘*this* is a real thing, but you are not being fair or helpful in making *that* accusation right now’ alienates potential allies, contributes to the burgeoning backlash against social justice politics, and prevents us from making the most accurate, cogent critique possible.”

----- (Williams is now no longer quoting DeBoer)

Look, I am Black. Also, sometimes, I can be wrong. Those two things are not mutually exclusive, and yet we have gotten to a point where any critique of tactics used by oppressed communities can result in being deemed “sexist/racist/insert oppression here-ist” and cast out of the Social Justice Magic Circle. And listen, maybe that is cool with some folks. Maybe the revolution that so many of these types speak about will simply consist of everyone spontaneously coming to consciousness and there will be no need for coalitions, give-and-take, or contact with people who do not know every word or phrase that these groups use as some sort of litmus test for the unwashed. But for the rest of us who reside in a reality-based world, where every social interaction is not tailored for your idiosyncratic indignations, we know that casting folks out for the tiniest of offenses will lead to a Left that will forever be marginalized and ineffective. I have stated before that the kind of people who put out these lists and engage in the kind of identitarian caterwauling that has become rote copy on the Internet might actually want that, as a world where left-wing activism is made potent and transformative will be one where they cannot simply take comfort in their cocoon of self-righteousness. But damn them when I can turn on my computer and see one Black person after another being gunned down by police. Damn them when we have a president that can sit there with a straight face and speak the words of freedom and liberation while using the power at his disposal to deny those very concepts to others. And damn them when we can get thousands of words on Patricia Arquette drunk at a party or how it is privileged to not like the same musicians that they do, but we cannot seem to get any thoughts on how the biggest moment for communities of color since the 1960s is being squandered in a hail of intergenerational squabbling. And do not even get me started on people writing articles that malign long-standing activist organizations without a whiff of evidence that there has been any wrongdoing on their part.

#### Three – contingent agreement is good: negating the whole aff makes only the most extreme retorts strategic, like prejudice is good. We should debate framing strategies rather than impact turns to injustice

#### Four – its fair: frame subtraction auto gives the aff ground – just defend the args placed in the 1AC. This applies to all frames that we may critique.

## case

### presumption

#### Vote NEG on presumption:

#### 1 – inherency’s a burden of proof – they already performed – NO reason ballot is key

#### 2 – turns case – symbolically affirming their method despite its disconnection from the material ONLY strengthens the logistical forces they’re trying to resist

Rigakos and Law 9 (George Rigakos, Assistant Professor of Law at Carleton University, and Alexandra Law, PhD, Legal Studies, Carleton University, “Risk, Realism and the Politics of Resistance,” Critical Sociology 35(1) 79-103, dml)

McCann and March (1996: 244) next set out the ‘justification for treating everyday practices as significant’ suggested by the above literature. First, the works studied are concerned with proving people are not ‘duped’ by their surroundings. At the level of consciousness, subjects ‘are ironic, critical, realistic, even sophisticated’ (1996: 225). But McCann and March remind us that earlier radical or Left theorists have made similar arguments without resorting to stories of everyday resistance in order to do so. Second, everyday resistance on a discursive level is said to reaffirm the subject’s dignity. But this too causes a problem for the authors because they:

query why subversive ‘assertions of self’ should bring dignity and psychological empowerment when they produce no greater material benefits or changes in relational power … By standards of ‘realism’, … subjects given to avoidance and ‘lumping it’ may be the most sophisticated of all. (1996: 227)

Thus, their criticism boils down to two main points. First, everyday resistance fails to tell us any more about so-called false consciousness than was already known among earlier Left theorists; and second, that a focus on discursive resistance ignores the role of material conditions in helping to shape identity.

Indeed, absent a broader political struggle or chance at effective resistance it would seem to the authors that ‘powerlessness is learned out of the accumulated experiences of futility and entrapment’ (1996: 228). A lamentable prospect, but nonetheless a source of closure for the governmentality theorist. In his own meta-analysis of studies on resistance, Rubin (1996: 242) finds that ‘discursive practices that neither alter material conditions nor directly challenge broad structures are nevertheless’ considered by the authors he examined ‘the stuff out of which power is made and remade’. If this sounds familiar, it is because the authors studied by McCann, March and Rubin found their claims about everyday resistance on the same understanding of power and government employed by postmodern theorists of risk. Arguing against celebrating forms of resistance that fail to alter broader power relations or material conditions is, in part, recognizing the continued ‘real’ existence of identifiable, powerful groups (classes). In downplaying the worth of everyday forms of resistance (arguing that these acts are not as worthy of the label as those acts which bring about lasting social change), Rubin appears to be taking issue with a locally focused vision of power and identity that denies the possibility of opposing domination at the level of ‘constructs’ such as class.

Rubin (1996: 242) makes another argument about celebratory accounts of everyday resistance that bears consideration:

[T]hese authors generally do not differentiate between practices that reproduce power and those that alter power. [The former] might involve pressing that power to become more adept at domination or to dominate differently, or it might mean precluding alternative acts that would more successfully challenge power. … [I]t is necessary to do more than show that such discursive acts speak to, or engage with, power. It must also be demonstrated that such acts add up to or engender broader changes.

#### The 1AC and Bifo’s poetic method fails and links to itself

Sturgeon 12 (Jonathon Kyle Sturgeon, senior editor at The American Reader, “On Theory and Finance: Review of Berardi’s "The Uprising",” The American Reader, December 2012, <https://theamericanreader.com/on-theory-and-finance-review-of-berardis-the-uprising/>) \*added [hero]

Franco “Bifo” Berardi’s newly translated book The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance is light on two things: poetry and finance. What Berardi gives the reader instead is a poetics loaded with quasi-literary keywords and bits of post-Marxist critique, a poetics that is semiotized and Search Engine Optimized for the reader of contemporary theory. If we were to give this poetics a name, we might call it reverse symbolism, for Berardi means quite literally to reverse the project of symbolist poetry, or what he calls “the main thread of twentieth century poetic research.” The symbolist culprit, the moving target of Berardi’s reversionism, is what he calls the “dereferentialization” of language, the tearing apart of the signifier and the referent. To put this in another way, The Uprising argues that symbolist experiments with language in the early twentieth century have found their deepest expression in our current predicament. We now find ourselves in the throes of a symbolist “semio-capitalism” where the word and the world are no longer linked together in meaning.

Semio-capitalism is a portable concept; it is easy to pack and travels light. In parable form, it goes something like this:

Financialization and the virtualization of human communication are obviously intertwined: thanks to the digitization of exchanges, finance has turned into a social virus that is spreading everywhere, transforming things into symbols. The symbolic spiral of financialization is sucking down and swallowing up the world of physical things, of concrete skills and knowledge. The concrete wealth of Europeans is vanishing into a black hole of pure financial destruction.

Now, I’ve never seen a symbol “suck down” or “swallow up” anything—including matter, skills, and knowledge—but Berardi does tie another knot between symbolist poetry and finance: deregulation. Citing Rimbaud’s phrase “dérèglement des sens et des mot,” Berardi, through sleight of hand, hitches the symbolist (or proto-symbolist) “deregulation (or derangement) of the senses and the word” to the economic project of financial deregulation that took place throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s in Europe and America. The idea is that symbolism “deregulated” language by divorcing it from the world in much the same way that financial deregulation led to a disconnect between financial instruments and the value of labor.

This is a tidy metaphor, but more on that later. The first problem with Berardi’s analogy between poetry and finance is that it bears no relation to the reality of either.

Financial deregulation was not meant to divorce money from matter or value; its purpose was to get government out of the way of finance. The result, we know from no less than two financial crises, was not the loss of connection between money and matter, it was the wild proliferation of connections, of speculative positions taken on anything and everything. Or, as a financial regulator once told me, “It isn’t the speculation on ‘nothing’ that keeps me up at night, it’s the gambling on all of the things that matter.”

So there was nothing symbolist about the development of modern finance. In Berardi’s version of symbolism, nothing means anything. In global finance, every signifier is forced to mean something. Every speculative position is tethered to some good or commodity or service, or some permutation thereof. This is why financial regulators are trying, and failing, to put limits on the number of positions speculators can take on commodities.

What’s worse, Berardi never identifies the beneficent regulator of symbolist poetry, the good guy [hero] we need to reinstate in order reverse symbolism and bring meaning back to language. Who was such a regulator in the time of the symbolist poet? Perhaps it was bourgeois morality or the real and violent government censor? Or maybe what we need is general intellect in high-minded agreement, synchronized en masse by Berardi’s poetics?

The Uprising revels in the commonplace that financial instruments are fictional, as in not real. But if these contracts are merely “fictional” or “symbolic,” how did they manage to sink the global economy? If the same logic applied to literature, we’d be living in a world of flesh and blood Hans Castorps, and we would also have very little need for novels or poetry. Speculation leads to failure. In a contract where one person bets on one thing, and another person bets on its opposite, someone will lose. No one loses this way in literature (except for the writer blurbed by Jay McInerney).

If Berardi is right about one thing, it is that financial capitalism is semiotic. It thrives on interpretive value, on the meaning we have too long attributed to money as a medium. More than that, though, finance is properly aesthetic. The French philosopher Jacques Rancière, a friend to symbolist poets like Mallarmé, has identified the “aesthetic regime of art” with the period when literary representation broke down. The “aesthetic regime” began when the mass circulation of novels and poetry reduced the classical hierarchy of roles to a scrapheap. In the aesthetic age—we’re still in it—no privileged connection between form and social position remains intact; in fact, the emergence of the aesthetic led us to a moment when everything, even idle matter, can speak. Ours is an age where a writer can find the whole history of oppression in the mute speech of the Pergamon Altar.

The dark underbelly of the aesthetic or semiotic condition is that it allows for any and every object to become a medium, to speak for something else. In the case of the financial economy, money has been fetishized—by the theorist as much as the nefarious financier—as a medium more capable of exchange than language. This mediatization of money is the fever dream of Hofmannsthal’s narrator in his great Letter of Lord Chandos, the work that perhaps more than any other announced the semiotic age of language:

And the whole thing is a kind of feverish thinking, but thinking in a medium more immediate, more liquid, more glowing than words.

The Uprising is a concise, even powerful expression of Lord Chandos’ nightmare, of the idea that money is hyper-exchangeable whereas poetry is the “language of nonexchangeability.” In this sense we might consider Berardi’s theory the crystallization of semiotic critique, and we might call Berardi himself the diamond of theory.

Berardi’s book is meant to galvanize “the general intellect” into believing that poetry is a non-exchangeable form of language. This because Berardi (admirably) wants us to believe in another world altogether, one we are transported to by poetry as “the excess of language, a hidden resource which enables us to shift from one paradigm to another.” In Berardi’s work, as in much of contemporary theory, literature becomes a vanishing mediator, a throwaway wormhole that takes us to another community. But communities must be built before they are found. Poetry can only build a community if it is exchanged, and exchangeability lies at the very etymological root of the word literature, of letters shared among friends. Perhaps it is Berardi’s own semiotization that has led to his alienated view of poetry; it is ironic that he considers Google to be an evil algorithmic plot driven by semio-capitalism even when his name registers more than two million search results.

The mistakes of The Uprising speak to a much larger crisis within the evolution of theory in general. In fact, if contemporary finance is analogous to something in literature, it isn’t symbolist poetry but theory itself. Denationalized, decontextualized, divorced from its origins in philosophy and criticism, theory has assumed totally deregulated positions on everything from literature to politics and beyond. With its uncountable speculations and tightly commoditized, catchworded language, theory has become the swaps market of thought.

### poetry turn

#### Poetry and theory are both effective individually but their rhetorical connection between poetry and explanatory theory terminally destroys the effectiveness of both. Vote neg to affirm either the poem or the theory

Kennedy 17 Kevin Kennedy, American University of Paris, “Heterology as Aesthetics: Bataille, Sovereign Art and the Affirmation of Impossibility,” *Theory, Culture & Society* July 28, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276416644506> {DK}

Sovereign Art and Contemporary Aesthetics Bataille’s postwar reconfiguration of the heterogeneous as aesthetic immediacy is concurrent with a renewed focus on the social meaning or function of art, literature and poetry.10 In Literature and Evil, from 1957, poetry is defined as ‘the means by which [man] can escape from being reduced to the reflection of things’, in other words, as an escape from the homogenizing and objectifying discourses of science and philosophy. However, ‘the very means of avoiding reduction to the reflection of things constitute a desire for the impossible’ (2006b: 45). Sovereign art, as it is developed in Bataille’s later work, is a conscious display of its illusory character, a medium which addresses and answers this desire for the beyond of objectivity without, however, charging it with a specific truth content or telos. Yet sovereign art not only addresses itself to this need but also, due to its fictional, unreal, phantasmic nature, ultimately reveals the impossibility of ever satisfying it. Connecting Bataille’s earlier work on the heterogeneous with his later reflections on sovereignty, one could thus claim that the purpose of sovereign art lies in the dramatization of both the desire and the inevitable failure to ever access the heterogeneous; it provides an experience of radical alterity, which is simultaneously an experience of its (logical) impossibility. As Carolyn J. Dean aptly describes it: ‘The heterogeneous or other can thus be rendered only as art, as spectacle, through a mimetic gesture that gives expression to its unassimilable forces’ (1992: 229).

Bataille’s conception of sovereign art, as something that essentially withdraws from discourse, exhibits certain similarities with Graham Harman’s object-oriented ontology, which claims that the essential feature of all objects lies in their withdrawal from or unavailability to precise or exhaustive definition. In an essay on the fiction of H.P. Lovecraft, Harman argues that philosophy and art are similar in that they both probe but never fully explain this withdrawal (see Harman, 2008). While Harman’s account is illuminating regarding the potential strangeness of all objects, he nonetheless fails to consider that philosophy, by systematizing this strangeness, inevitably reduces it. It thereby (to use Bataille’s diction) deprives the strange of its heterogeneous character. In the fiction of H.P. Lovecraft or Edgar Allan Poe, the strange, uncanny or heterogeneous can be experienced because they are not subsumed within a general theory of strangeness, which would immediately diminish the feeling of horror and confusion their stories so masterfully provoke. In order for sovereign art (such as the works of Lovecraft) to have the desired effect (confusion, elation, attraction, repulsion, etc.) its aesthetic sovereignty needs to resist the anaesthetic effects of theory. In Bataille’s essay on William Blake he clarifies this point in relation to ‘the confusion that is provoked’ (2006b: 94) by the works of the English poet. Here the attempts of criticism and philosophy to account for this confusion by forcing it into some kind of conceptual straightjacket are likened to a state of sleep, which always petrifies and numbs the sovereign power of the work: ‘As we try to escape from it, we pass from waking and awareness of the confusion to the sleep of logical explanation’ (2006b: 94).

Bataille’s later account of art is closer to Rancière’s delineation of Schiller’s aesthetic theory, which also insists on the radical incongruence between heterogeneous art and homogeneous thought: ‘Free appearance is the power of the heterogeneous sensible element … it is foreign to all volition, to every combination of means and end … inaccessible for the thought, desires and ends of the subject contemplating it’ (2009: 34). However, unlike Schiller, for whom, according to Rancière, ‘this strangeness … this radical unavailability … bears the mark of man’s full humanity and the promise of a humanity to come, one at last in tune with the fullness of its essence’ (2009: 34), Bataille’s conception of sovereign art is radically divorced from any notion of utopian fulfillment. In the third part of The Accursed Share, simply entitled Sovereignty, he explains the difference between traditional forms of sovereignty (such as the idea of god, the feudal lord or the fascist leader) and his notion of sovereign art: ‘Sovereign art is such only in the renunciation of, indeed in the repudiation of the functions and the power assumed by real sovereignty. From the viewpoint of power, sovereign art is an abdication. It throws the responsibility for managing things back onto things themselves’ (1993: 421). In his work of the 1930s, as we have seen, art is rejected because of its lack of revolutionary or political leverage. In Bataille’s later work this lack of efficacy in the socio-political realm becomes the mark of its sovereignty, of its sovereign rejection of responsibility and accountability. Bataille now insists that the much decried distance or separation between the artistic and the political realm in modern society **needs to be maintained or even made more trenchant, as any attempt at fusion would instantly compromise art’s sovereign immediacy**, its freedom to celebrate confusion, disorder and incoherence.11 For this reason **it should never be expected to create blueprints or models for** a possible future society: ‘I have continually placed the present moment against a concern for the future and for me poetry is defined by concern for the present moment’ (2006a: 86).

Conversely, political action is now placed squarely in the realm of the homogeneous, as it is always guided by a concern for the future, which, according to Bataille’s definition, is a rational concern. Every work of art is always an act ‘against the unacceptable world of rational utility’ (2006a: 70), as it is aimed at an experience of immediacy beyond the practical and future-oriented considerations of everyday life. However, ‘the refusal this involves would gain from not being confounded with the reasoned refusal of unreasonable conditions of life’ (2006a: 70). In other words, it would be a mistake to attempt to enlist the heterogeneous, immediate nature of art and poetry to combat the ‘unreasonable conditions of life’, as this always requires a sober analysis of those conditions, devoid of the effusive powers of attraction and repulsion: ‘the mastery of [intellectual aptitude] remains the key to rigorous emancipation’ (2006a: 50). Bataille’s postwar insistence on the separation between these two spheres, the political/rational (homogeneous) and artistic/aesthetic (heterogeneous), then presents an attempt to solve the immanent contradiction that surfaced in his initial theory of heterogeneity. If, as we have seen, the sovereign/heterogeneous is posited as that which resists instrumentalization (for revolutionary or utopian goals), this new disassociation is not only warranted but implicit in Bataille’s account of heterogeneity from the very first. He now argues that the attempt to apply the heterogeneous to the realm of homogeneity, the immediate to mediating categories, **art to politics, constitutes a disservice to both realms**: on the one hand it denies the effusive, strange, opaque dimension of the sovereign artwork and reduces the latter to the flatness of a formula or a service rendered: ‘In modes of thought in which the rational and the poetic remain confounded, the mind cannot elevate itself to the conception of poetic liberty, it subordinates the instant to some ulterior goal’ (2006a: 65). On the other hand, to infuse politics with the perplexing power of the heterogeneous precludes a clearheaded and rational appraisal of the real conditions of social life, which is a prerequisite for any meaningful attempt to bring about political change.

### bifo

#### There is no single collective unconscious of the pandemic – only the same, agonistic plurality of humanity that ever was

Mac Cormaic 21 (Ruadhán Mac Cormaic, Assistant Editor in The Irish Times, “Covid could turn an incipient generational divide into a major schism,” Irish Times, 10-30-2021, https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/covid-could-turn-an-incipient-generational-divide-into-a-major-schism-1.4714243)

We refer to the pandemic, singular, but there has been be no single experience of Covid-19. The same virus made its way indiscriminately around the world, finding immunologically naïve populations wherever it went, but this, it turned out, would be no great leveller. When it came up against history, geography, age, employment status, ethnicity, income and health – all the things that shape an unequal world, in other words – the turmoil it provoked affected people in very different ways.

Those divergent experiences of the upheaval of the past two years could profoundly shape the post-pandemic era, entrenching old divisions and creating new ones.

#### Semiotic exhaustion and collapse is nonsense

Harris 11 – Malcolm Harris, Senior Managing Editor and Columnist for The New Inquiry, Writer and Editor for Sharable, “I Sure Hope Bifo Doesn’t Count Vibrators as Tools of Estrangement”, Destructural, 2-20, <https://destructural.wordpress.com/2011/02/20/i-sure-hope-bifo-doesnt-count-vibrators-as-tools-of-estrangement/> [Note – Bifo is the pen/nickname for Franco Berardi – they’re the same person]

I just finished Franco Berardi’s The Soul at Work, and though there’s a lot to agree with in there, the conclusion left me feeling argumentative. In reviving Baudrillard’s critique of the politics of desire, Berardi argues that horizontalism and affirmation – two cornerstones of Deleuze and Guatarri’s schizo thought – have been irredeemably co-opted by capital. Our social pathology is no longer Freudian repression, but overabundance of affirmation, of injunctions to consume and desire that produce panic and depression. When our very affective expressions have been colonized, the multitude is nothing but a robotic swarm:

“The multitude can speak hundreds of thousands of languages, but the language that enables it to function as an integrated whole is that of the economic automatisms embodied in technology. Seized in a game of mirrors of indeterminacy and precariousness, the multitude manifests its dark side and follows automatisms that turn its wealth into misery, its power into anguish and its creativity into dependency.”

“The effective exercise of politics (that is to say of political government) presupposes a conscious possibility of elaborating of the information collectively shared by the social organism. But the information circulating within digital society is too much: too fast, too intense, too thick and complex for individuals or groups to elaborate it consciously, critically, reasonably, with the necessary time to make a decision. Therefor the decision is left to automatisms, and the social organism seems to function ever more often according to evolutionary rules of an automatic kind, inscribed in the genetic cognitive patrimony of individuals. The swarm now tends to become the dominant form of human action.”

As the ultimate horror, Berardi looks to a biotechnological post-humanism as described by Bill Gates. The idea of a literal hive-mind, a freely flowing general intellect, is too much for Berardi; he offers the only solution he can think of to this dangerous acceleration of affective communication: slow down. In a more recent article, he calls, in the middle of the largest wave of global youth insurrection in over forty years, for a process of growing old. “[T]he process of senilization may open the way to a cultural revolution based on the force of exhaustion, of facing the inevitable with grace, discovering the sensuous slowness of those who do not expect any more from life than wisdom—the wisdom of those who have seen a great deal without forgetting, who look at each thing as if for the first time.” The assumption underlying this call to inaction is that the system of semiocapital is nearing its inevitable collapse. Berardi sounds like an aged and depressive Saint-Simon when he writes a hopeful narrative in which the machines will make stuff for us which, combined with income delinked from employment, will give us all the necessary time we need to play mahjong and dominoes, which is the goal of life. Actually, to be fair, Berardi never ceases to use sex as the goal, the time necessary to fuck is what we must carve away from capitalist control.

Baudrillard’s critique of Foucault and Deleuze that Berardi revives was prescient in some ways. He saw the appropriation of affirmation by capital coming, and he asks essentially how we can stand to read Deleuze while wearing Nike. “Affirm your desires” is an advertising slogan, and it could handle even the queer negation of Gregg Araki which it transformed into Hot Topic. In the final scene of Araki’s breakout film The Living End, two HIV-positive lovers are entangled half-fighting half-fucking in the desert. While one sucks off a pistol, the other yells at him to “just do it!” – four years after it became a shoe slogan. Berardi thinks we’ve been overtaken and the only solution is switching into reverse. (Which is going to happen whether we like it or not because semiocapital is collapsing anyway.) Always already co-opted, the multitude has no choice but to break down its constitutive links and start over. The only thing left is catastrophe: made by us, but not done by us.

Okay, my issues:

1. Berardi should be the last one to think a brain of any sort is univocal. He’s horrified by Bill Gates’s idea of business at the speed of thought, but what is the speed of thought really? Brains can be and are used to produce value for the market, but any friend of Felix Guattari should know brains are chaotic. They produce ideas for the boss, but they inevitably produce jokes and nightmares as well. Just because capital has organized a social brain – transcending more spatial and interpersonal barriers than ever before – doesn’t make it the hive’s necessary owner. The processes that Berardi outlines (“wealth into misery, power into anguish, creativity into dependency”) present the possibility that it could be otherwise, that there could be a reverse movement. What capital offers is this impoverished multitude, but we ought not treat this as an offer to be either accepted or refused.

2. I feel pretty derisive about this fear of speed. Certainly a lot of his critiques about the schizogenic nature of contemporary knowledge-work are valid, but the worry that society is not able to deliberate “reasonably” at these speeds is misplaced. The swarm has been empirically capable of making decisions contrary to its instructions in Egpyt, Tunisia, The UK, Wisconsin, etc., and these actions have been successful to the degree that they’ve been fast and unreasonable. Crisis calls on creativity and innovation, and sabotage requires the multitude to seize the boss’ networks. In Madison, WI, the Capitol occupiers are engaged in the sabotage of the labor of citizenship, which is, as Tahrir Square was/is in Egypt, productive of new relations and subjectivities. Berardi points to the role of prescription drugs in pacifying and anesthetizing young people as intrinsically related to the speed technology requires, but I’m willing to bet there are a bunch of students in Madison who may be on Twitter, but haven’t needed to take their ADD meds.

#### It’s all BS with no underlying data or case studies

Yilmaz 10 – Onur Yilmaz, Master’s Degree in New Media and Digital Culture from the University of Amsterdam, “Review: Franco Berardi-Precarious Rhapsody”, Masters of Media, 9-19, https://mastersofmedia.hum.uva.nl/blog/2010/09/19/review-franco-berardi-precarious-rhapsody/

When Franco “Bifo” Berardi invokes McLuhan in the introduction to Precarious Rhapsody, it gives a strong indication of what to expect in the coming pages. Not necessarily regarding his arguments and theories- Berardi is more clearly aligned with the Marxist school of thought than McLuhan’s technological determinism. But the associative, almost philosophical rhetoric can feel very familiar at times.

Berardi argues that history can be seen as “an infinite series of bifurcations”, as we are continually presented with different paths to take. However, we are not free to choose which path to take. Instead we are at the mercy of “concatenations: machines for the liberation of desires and mechanisms of control over the imaginary”. Starting in 1977 and drawing upon his own experiences as a young activist in Italy, Berardi attempts to show how to optimistic revolts against the capitalist institutions of the day were distorted into the semiocapitalism that dominates our lives presently. As labor is disconnected from actual physical conditions and moves into the realm of information, the relationship between labor and capital changes and time itself becomes commodified. The worker is no longer the unit which is bought and subjugated by capital; time itself is.

Berardi presents several more arguments in his book: about intellectual labor and its appropriation by capitalist institutions, about the disconnect between the amount of information generated within networks (cyberspace) and the human inadequacy of processing this information fast enough (cybertime), about the collapse of democracy under the influence of the capitalist free-market system. Some of his arguments are reasonable and interesting; others can be tenuous and veer into the metaphysical at times, like his connection between the semiocapitalist system and pathological disorders. However, the true problem with Berardi’s work is in the way the book is structured.

The first two chapters of Precarious Rhapsody contain the entirety of Berardi’s arguments. However, these chapters are written in a dense, labyrinthine manner that makes it nigh on impossible to ascertain just what it is that is being argued. Berardi introduces all his concepts at once without defining them, and forgets to explain just how this premise leads to that conclusion. Over the course of the book the same points are repeated over and over again, becoming more clearer as the tightly spun manifesto of the opening chapters unspools into more intelligible arguments and lines of reasoning. It is as if Berardi placed the summary of his thesis at the very beginning of the book and worked backwards from there.

Besides the obfuscating prose and circuitous way of presenting his arguments, the repeating pattern of the book leads to a great deal of redundancy. Some parts are repeated word for word from one chapter to the next, and deja vu sets in quite often. Part of this seems to owe to the fact that many of the chapters have appeared in various forms before being collected in this book. Whatever the case may be, Precarious Rhapsody would have benefitted a great deal from a bit of editing.

Another issue is the underlying current of nostalgia that is present throughout. It is no surprise that Berardi places the last moment of true, hopeful revolt against the capitalist domination of everyday life in his student years. The notion that everything used to be better in the past and kids these days just don’t understand nags around the corner of every page. When Berardi argues that the disconnect between cyberspace and cybertime leads to an empty lifestyle where people have lost the ability to love, to imagine, to enjoy life, it comes across as condescending. Moreover, he fails to provide any evidence for his claims. No case studies or statistics. The same is the case when he states that pathological disorders like depression spring from labor relations in semiocapitalism. These are interesting claims, but they are built solely on rhetoric.

### subjectivity

#### Any subjectivity effects are NOT sticky – AND practice faking it is independently valuable to preserve academic space for projects like the 1AC

Stein 18 (Sharon Stein, Assistant Professor of Higher Education at the University of British Columbia, PhD University of British Columbia, MA The Ohio State University, BA University of Virginia, “Higher Education and the Im/possibility of Transformative Justice,” Critical Ethnic Studies, 4(1), Spring 2018, pp.130-153, JSTOR)

To recognize that U.S. higher education has always been violent, and that its imagined student has tended to be the modern subject, even as the particulars have shifted over time, does not require that we immediately give up on the university, nor dismiss the possibility of situated, strategic actions within it. Just as making demands on the state does not necessarily signal confidence in its ability or intention to deliver justice, making demands in/of the university does not necessarily signal earnest belief or investment in the possibility of its reform, nor a desire for its restoration to an earlier form.83 Is it possible to resist the continuing tide of university privatization without employing the foil of a benevolent state, or an innocent public? Benevolent or not, it is difficult to turn away from the state as a preferred source of material support for the foreseeable future, given the available alternatives (onerous student loans or suspect private donors). Even if so, we can nonetheless signal that these are contingent, harm reduction strategies, rather than the ultimate ends of transformation. As Tiffany Lethabo King argues, “temporarily resuscitating the subject, specifically within the context of the neoliberal university, may be necessary even to those interrogating the very terms and existence of the subject,” for instance, to ensure that demands are legible to administrators in the context of organized labor campaigns.84 Yet, she also suggests, even as this “important strategizing is occurring, having the capacity to move in, between, through, and outside of subject formations is essential.”85

### liberalism

#### Liberalism and individualism are ethically and strategically valuable. Endorsing it doesn’t require naïve optimism, but assuming its failure in advance stifles the chance for positive change.

Mills, 21—former Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at The Graduate Center, City University of New York (Charles, interviewed by Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins, “Charles Mills Thinks Liberalism Still Has a Chance,” <https://www.thenation.com/article/culture/charles-mills-thinks-theres-still-time-to-rescue-liberalism/>, dml)

CM: Liberalism is attractive on both principled and strategic grounds. You’re completely right, of course, about the failures of actual historical liberalism, which are manifest, indeed ubiquitous, all around us. But what is the source of these failures? If liberalism has never lived up to its ostensible principles and values, that goes no way in proving that the principles and values are themselves unattractive ones. The illuminating way to understand these violations of (ideal) liberal norms, I suggest in the book, is not as the consequence of an intrinsically self-undermining “illiberalizing” dynamic within liberalism but rather as a manifestation of the corrupting results of group power, whether of the privileged classes, men, or the dominant race, for liberal theory and practice. Hence the creation of a bourgeois, patriarchal, or racial liberalism (usually all three combined, of course).

But we can appeal to the idealized, non-group-restricted versions of liberal principles and values to critique the exclusionary versions—indeed, that is precisely what most American progressive social movements have historically done. Particularly at the present time of authoritarian ethnonationalism’s attack on liberal norms, it is all the more reason to affirm them. Moreover, liberalism as I understand it is certainly not committed to an opposition to socialism in the social democratic sense—arguably, that’s just left-liberalism. And any other variety of hypothetical socialism—market socialism, workers’ democracy—would presumably strive to sell itself by promising a deeper and more extensive realization of liberal values, not their abandonment. So I would claim that the socialist case can indeed be made within a liberal framework. It’s noteworthy that Rawls—surely a respectable liberal!—says explicitly in A Theory of Justice that his theory “includes no natural right of private property in the means of production.”

As for the strategic reasons: Liberalism (in the broad-spectrum sense that includes right-wing “classical” liberals) has uncontroversially been the dominant political ideology in US history, albeit in the restrictive incarnations just delineated. So in trying to win over a broad political audience rather than preach to the choir, as I presume progressives want to do, one immediately has the immense advantage of invoking the political ideology nominally endorsed by the majority. You don’t have to require them to first convert to Marxism or Foucauldian-ism or whatever; you can just say, “If you’re a good liberal, you should support this.” That doesn’t mean that you can’t get valuable insights from Marx or Foucault, of course, but they are ultimately going to have to be “translated” into a liberal framework.

And insofar as legal change will be crucial for progressive structural reform—necessary if not sufficient—need I make the obvious point that the American and broader Western juridical systems are founded on liberal principles and assumptions? The “Black radical liberalism” I am advocating will thus be able to engage directly with its conservative juristic opponents in a way that nonliberal political ideologies will not. The Republicans generally, and the Federalist Society specifically, are certainly in no doubt themselves about the importance of fighting for particular interpretations of the Constitution and the law, which is precisely why they set out years ago to gain control of the courts. Black rights, and nonwhite rights in general, will have to be advanced by liberal arguments and liberal jurisprudence in this liberal (in the broad sense) arena.

DSJ: In a retrospective 2015 forum devoted to The Racial Contract in the journal Politics, Groups, and Identities, you issued a response to your critics which you entitled “The Racial Contract revisited: still unbroken after all these years.” What do you see as remaining fundamentally unbroken, and given your commitment to liberalism, what, if anything, has changed? What gives you hope?

CM: What I saw as unbroken at the time was the continuing reality of unjust structural white domination and unjust structural white advantage, even in the final years of the Obama presidency. The racial contract can survive such changes of personnel in governing circles; what counts, as I’ve emphasized throughout, are the structures and institutions. And I should stress that liberalism is not, in my reading, committed to the optimistic Whig progressivism traditionally ascribed to it, especially when we need to think of it as predominantly a racialized liberalism historically.

In my 2015 response, I cited a statistic mentioned by New York Times columnist Charles Blow that a 2011 survey had revealed that a majority of white Americans saw themselves as the primary victims of racial discrimination. Not an encouraging figure! But even before the Floyd killing, and before last summer’s huge multiracial demonstrations, such white racial attitudes had shifted. So that is the kind of development that gives me hope, along with the potentiality for the huge wealth disparities of the “New Gilded Age” to create the objective basis for a transracial class alliance of the socially disadvantaged. But a nonzero chance of positive racial change, however small, is obviously going to be diminished even further if one adopts a political quietism predicated on assuming its hopelessness in advance.

#### AND, the impact’s backwards – all the interventions and wars bits are about the 90s and early aughts, no-one supports global policing anymore – liberal order’s NOT the only cause nor justification for any of the violence listed – AND rejection results in comparably unethical forms of violence that liberal interventions prevent

Davidson 12 (Joanna Davidson, B.A. International Politics and Italian, University of Leeds, “Humanitarian Intervention as Liberal Imperialism: A Force for Good?” POLIS Journal, vol.7, Summer 2012, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d3ed/3f32f42f92719edf40352aeaaa7a3fee706c.pdf?\_ga=2.167909673.96988093.1569518358-1935190830.1569518358)

5.2. The Consequences of Non-Intervention The War on Terror has raised concerns over the future of the practise of humanitarian intervention. Indeed it would seem the liberal agenda, despite its ideological foundations of universalism and cosmopolitanism, has exhausted what little political will and strategic capabilities existed for true humanitarian intervention in the pursuit of Western security in an increasingly insecure world. Yet to respond to the ever darkening cloud the War on Terror is casting over humanitarian intervention by dismissing the practise entirely is to render a valuable instrument in the protection of human rights as undeservedly useless (Heinze 2006: 31). Proponents of humanitarian intervention have argued that those who dismiss humanitarian intervention as simply a vehicle through which liberal regimes wish to extend their control are ―condemning other people to death‖ (Rieff 1999) and ―leaving the innocent to suffer the world over‖ (Ramos-Horta 2005: 284) through being overtly politically correct. It is difficult to counter such arguments when we consider the consequences of nonintervention in Rwanda, as well as the consequences of intervention where political commitment to the cause is lacking, as was the case with the Srebenica massacre. Such morally abhorrent events were allowed to happen as a direct consequence of a lack of strategic interest for the states with the power to intervene, and have led to commentators such as Richard Just to argue that despite the controversies the War on Terror has wrought upon the practise of humanitarian intervention, to respond by saying that it is wrong for the United States to intervene to spread its own moral universal values is to condemn the interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo which stopped ethnic cleansing and possibly genocide, and to agree with the decision not to intervene in Rwanda as right (Just 2005: 212), a position which most would find morally unacceptable. Here then we can clearly see the crux of the problem, in that non-intervention is intolerable, but humanitarian intervention, as has clearly been demonstrated in previous chapters, remains impossible (Falk 1993: 757). Such a problematic of humanitarian intervention requires confrontation if future human rights atrocities are to be halted, and if the unchecked spread of liberal technologies of governance and control is to be challenged. It is not enough simply to denounce humanitarian intervention as reflecting only the imperial interests of ˑpowerful western governments, as ex-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan highlighted when he posed the question, ―If humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica—to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?‖ (Annan 2000) Even if one were to argue for an absolute rule of non-intervention so as to avoid abuse of the humanitarian sentiment by liberal regimes, one need only look at the interventions in Kosovo and Iraq to note that international legitimization is not a necessary precursor to liberal intervention. Given the power Western liberal states have to override international legal norms to intervene in situations which threaten their interests and security, and given the fact that there exists many parts of the world where the humanitarian situation remains intolerable, to respond to the liberal crusade towards intervention by calling for a steadfast rule of non-intervention is not only impossible, but also immoral. Conclusion The debate over the legitimacy and conduct of humanitarian intervention continues to rage fiercely within the international community, particularly in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and the declaration of the War on Terror. From growing calls for more humanitarian action and political involvement to solve the humanitarian crises of the 90s, to international scepticism and condemnation of the liberal interventions in the Middle East following the events of 9/11, it comes as no surprise that humanitarian intervention is generally deemed to be ―in crisis‖ (Rieff 2002). As this essay has demonstrated, the waning of state sovereignty and the subsequent rise in humanitarian‘ interventions has been an emergent reality throughout the 1990s; yet far from being the result of a growing humanism amongst the powerful liberal states, such a shift in concern from the state to the individual is in reality part of a much more sinister liberal enterprise which is quintessentially concerned with the art of global governance (Gordon 1991: 14). The repercussions of the implication of liberal self- interests alongside the achievement of humanitarian goals has been highlighted only too clearly in an analysis of the development of humanitarian intervention throughout the 1990s, during which time it became painfully clear that intervention undertaken for purely humanitarian concerns, if it occurs at all, has generally been underfunded and insufficient (Falk 2000: 333), therefore leading to interventions which arguably did more harm than good. Rwanda provides us with a clear example of what happens when, despite grave humanitarian concerns, there exists no strategic interests for the states with the power to intervene, whilst events in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo illustrated the fact that in the absence of state selfinterest, there exists little political will to pay the costs of blood and gold in order to ensure that ―humanitarian war is conducted in a humanitarian manner.‖ (Falk 2000: 331) The 1990s then, far from being the ‗golden era of humanitarian intervention‘ (Bellamy and Wheeler 2008), were in reality an experimentation in liberal expansionism, yet where there existed few security concerns for the liberal states, there existed little political will to commit to the mission. It is only when national interests are implicated that states are willing to accept the costs and stay the duration necessary to alter the humanitarian situation in any meaningful way (Weiss 2004: 37). As has been noted throughout this essay, the vital interests of the intervening states are grounded in liberal notions of human security; that is to say entire swathes of the world‘s population are re-conceptualized as a threat to humanity which requires pacification through assimilation into the liberal world order or, failing that, destruction. In liberalisms quest to expand its control and influence across the world, the remit of intervention has been broadened to include within its scope democracy spreading, nation building, and regime change, as has been demonstrated in Iraq, Afghanistan, and more recently, Libya. It would seem undeniable that humanitarian intervention is essentially a veil behind which liberal imperialism can disguise itself, despite protestations of liberals heralding a ―revolution of moral concern‖. Indeed, we can see clear similarities between the old rhetoric of empire and current discussions surrounding liberal imperialism. As Nardin has noted, in the old days of empire humanitarianism was used to justify the imposition of foreign power on populations at the margins of the ‗civilized‘ world in order to uphold the standards of civilized morality; essentially in order to protect the population from themselves. We can see that little has changed between then and now when we note that current rhetoric on humanitarian intervention constructs the third world as a threat to itself and to the rest of the world, and therefore the barbarity of tyranny and terrorism that these ‗uncivilized‘ regions breed ―must be countered, in the name of humanity, by the exercise of imperial power‖ (Nardin 2006: 25). In construing humanitarian intervention as liberal imperialism, the motives behind liberal intervention become clearer, in that essentially liberal regimes wish to subjugate and impose indirect control on those portions of the population securitization discourse has constructed as a threat to global security. Whilst it is true that the days of territorial expansion are over, what we are experiencing now is by no means a waning of imperial ambition, as through the spread of liberal values and the imposition of liberal structures, through force if necessary, liberalism is extending its ‗universal‘ values across the world, justifying any means by the end which is indisputably morally right (Bishai 2004: 51). Indeed, as was highlighted in chapter four, there exists a significant cognitive dissonance between liberal universalism, with its proclaimed notions of a cosmopolitan humanitarianism, and liberal imperialism, which finds its expression through intervention which is justified on a humanitarian basis, yet which in reality functions through the eradication or exclusion of all life forms which do not conform to liberalism (McCarthy 2009: 166). It would seem that the obvious conclusion to draw would be one which wholly condemns the practise of humanitarian intervention as a front for the furthering of a liberal ideology which functions through the subjugation of morally inferior‘ populations so as to extend its own remit of control and power. Humanitarian intervention is less about a moral concern for the suffering of people, than a method through which Western liberal states can secure their own populations from a global imaginary of threat. Yet such a damning analysis of liberal intervention is incomplete, as it fails to give a sufficient analysis of the effects these interventions have on the populations concerned, not to mention the effects non-intervention could have on those populations

suffering human rights abuses. Of course a proclaimed interest in saving strangers‘ will only ever be put into action when the strategic interests of liberal states are at stake, meaning liberal cries of a duty to intervene‘ and a responsibility to protect‘ in those situations that shock the moral conscience of mankind must be regarded with scepticism. Such scepticism, however, should not be translated into an absolute rule of nonintervention, as to do so would be to turn our backs completely on the suffering of those that need our help, in whatever form such help may come in. Indeed, the spread of liberal imperialism does not necessarily signify the death of humanitarian sentiments; rather the two can coincide, and when they do, a greater window of opportunity is created for those wishing to act on the humanitarian impulse in the Security Council (Weiss 2004: 37). When we consider the globalizing effect the War on Terror has had on liberal intervention, however, as we move further into the new millennium it is becoming ever clearer that liberal intervention is being stretched to its limits. Ten years after the invasion of Afghanistan and eight years after the invasion of Iraq, 99,000 and 46,000 US troops remained in each country respectively (New York Times 2011), highlighting the extensive nature of the liberal imperial mission in the aftermath of 9/11. The ‗unending war‘ against terrorism seems to have taken its toll on Western liberal states capacity to intervene, meaning that, rather than coinciding, the requirements of the war against terrorism will have to be balanced against the more distant demands of humanity (Macfarlane et al 2007: 985), and it is not difficult to work out which will prevail. Indeed, since the coming to power of the Bush administration in 2001, humanitarian intervention where no national interests were at stake has been dismissed as ―blunting the purpose of the military‖ (Ignatieff 2003), yet quite paradoxically Bush pinned continuing support for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on humanitarian rhetoric regarding nation-building and the promotion of democracy for the Afghan and Iraqi people. In doing so it would seem that the US has manipulated the idea of a responsibility to protect to include a much broader remit for intervention, embracing not just the ―responsibility to react‖ but the ―responsibility to prevent‖ and the ―responsibility to rebuild‖ as well (Evans and Sahnoun 2002: 101), stretching the language of humanitarianism to suit liberalisms own political agenda. As has been evidenced by the growing disillusionment with the on-going operations in the Middle East in which thousands of western troops have been killed, the continued threat of terrorist attacks, and more recently the lack of political support for further meaningful interventions in Libya and Syria, it would seem that liberal interventionism has not only lost sight of the universal humanitarian notions that lie at its roots, but is struggling to retain its omnipotence in the face of widespread opposition to the invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Whilst the 9/11 attacks may have had a ‗rally round the flag‘ effect within the US, the most ardent exporter of international liberalism, it has had the opposite effect across the rest of the international community, which has sought to distance itself from the aggressively Western liberal interventionist stance that provoked such terrorist attacks (Ignatieff 2003). All things considered, it would seem that Fukuyama‘s prediction in 1992 that the rise to predominance of Western liberal democracy would signal the ‗End of History‘ in that it would become the universal and final form of human government (Fukuyama 1992) is increasingly being challenged. The rise in militant Islam and terrorist attacks against the West highlights inescapably that the proclaimed universal moral righteousness of the liberal mission is in reality far from universal, whilst the rising spectre of China as the new superpower on the international stage could diminish Western liberalisms power and influence in years to come. This being said, the reality remains that, for now at least, Western liberal regimes retain hegemony on the global stage, and therefore hegemony in decisions to intervene or not. As we have seen, liberal humanitarian‘ intervention is deeply flawed; oftentimes the primary motives for intervention are far from humanitarian, and there is much resentment in the international community regarding the omnipotence of the Western liberal states wishing to impose their world view on weaker states. What is more, the War on Terror has only exemplified such concerns, highlighting the way in which liberal states have manipulated humanitarian sentiments to justify intervention with other motives (Ayoob 2002) and allowed liberalism to broaden its scope of expansion globally (Evans 2010). Yet the reality is that liberal intervention, however imperfect and unpalatable it may be is currently the only choice the international community has if it is to avoid another Rwanda, or another Srebenica, to avoid once again becoming a bystander to genocide. As we have seen, where no other interests exist, attempts at humanitarianism will flounder. To argue for intervention motivated by purely humanitarian motives and conducted in a completely humanitarian manner is to ignore the realities of the world in which we live. The reality is that, as Weiss quite succinctly put it, the rise to predominance of liberal imperialism and the resultant convergence of humanitarian values and liberal security interests ―has not brought utopia, but made the world a somewhat more liveable place than it would have been otherwise‖ (2001: 104). Whether this remains the case in the aftermath of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, in a seemingly endless War against Terror, and in a world where Western liberalism is increasingly feeling threatened yet where political support and capacity for liberal intervention is low, remains to be seen.

# 2NC

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**Ceding the policy development space to monopolies BOTH outside AND inside the debate community** (Greer & Vallas says “within research and advocacy spaces especially”) **only magnifies the power and resilience of violent structures**

**Rice et al 21** (**Solana Rice**, Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director at Liberation in a Generation, Soros Equality Fellow, former Director of State & Local Policy at Prosperity Now, former director for financial security initiatives at PolicyLink, MCP (Master of City Planning) MIT, BA architecture, Washington University in St. Louis; **Jeremie Greer**, Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director at Liberation in a Generation, a national movement support organization building the power of people of color to totally transform the economy, Soros Equality Fellow, racial justice activist who began his career as a community organizer in the Columbia Heights and Shaw neighborhoods in Washington, DC, and national policy expert on the causes and the policy solutions to close racial wealth gap, formerly working at the Government Accountability Office, the Local Initiative Support Corporation, and Prosperity Now, MPP (Master of Public Policy) George Mason University, BA Social Work, University of St. Thomas, currently working on an Executive Education Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government; and **Stacy Mitchell**, co-director of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, as an advisor to policymakers and grassroots organizations, Mitchell has developed and helped enact city, state, and federal policies that curb corporate power and strengthen communities, serves on the board of the Maine Center for Economic Policy; interviewed by **Jess Del Fiacco**, host of the Building Local Power podcast and Communications Manager at the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, BA Macalester College; “Centering Racial Justice in the Antimonopoly Fight — Episode 128 of Building Local Power,” 6-10-2021, https://ilsr.org/liberation-in-a-generation-episode128/)

**Stacy Mitchell:** How has, you wrote this report, I think one of the things I really liked about it is it’s written for an activist community, for activists in particular, and for just the general public who are interested in these issues. It’s a **very accessible** report. But I’m curious how **folks who’ve been working on**, organizations who’ve been working on **racial equity** **but** maybe **hadn’t been thinking about monopoly power** in their work. I’m curious about the reaction that you’ve had from them to do the report and to the arguments that you’re making.

**Solana Rice:** We’re seeing early glimmers of the ahas about the way, especially the way that we’re describing the barriers. I think folks are starting to see like, oh yeah, that is part of the reason why I can’t advance affordable housing. Or, I can’t make sure that small business owners in my community have access to capital. But this is just the beginning. The report is the first foray into this conversation. And I think that what we want to make sure is that the organizers, the folks that are **building power and community**, are actually starting to **not only make the connections** across their topics about corporate power and corporate concentration, **but also** being in community to **develop the solutions that actually address** that corporate power. And so what we hope to do is continue the conversation from the report to really launch thinking around a **policy agenda**, a **research agenda**, and also just collaboration in thought partnership so that we’re telling the story in a compelling way.

**Solana Rice:** I think the folks at Athena, for example, have been doing a great job of that kind of work focusing on Amazon. And now I think there’s just really a broader field of folks that are like, yes, Amazon and all these other tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, all these other corporations. And we know how to take on individual corporations. And how do we take on the regulations and the **rules that actually govern those corporations**. And defining a new role for corporations. I think for a while, well, I think it’s a question for organizers. What I’ve heard frequently is that there’s no rule for corporations. Corporations are terrible, right? We need to take down corporations. I **don’t think corporations are going away soon**. And so if we are to **redefine the role of corporations** in our democracy and our economy, what role do we want and how do we measure that we’re moving it towards some kind of balance of power in the **short term**?

**Jeremie Greer:** That was right on. Particularly that last point. And here’s the thing, **antitrust** activity in its **historic roots** were about that. Like, what is the role of corporations in our society, and **how do we as** the government and the **people govern that?** Corporations used to have to demonstrate that they were going to create some public good out of their existence. There’s no responsibility of that right now. It’s basically, can you make profits, is the ultimate question that’s asked. And the government says, well, if you’re going to make profits, you must be doing something good.

**Jeremie Greer:** And then they back off, and they don’t have to answer these questions about what value they’re bringing. And they actually, in many of them as we talk about in the report, are extracting value out of communities and aren’t being held accountable for it. And that’s the stuff that I think community folks really want to get at. Like, how can we stop them from pulling this stuff out of communities and actually being of some use in our communities. And use to us, not to some shareholder living on the Upper East Side of New York.

**Jess Del Fiacco:** Related to all that is, I guess, how do you see the future of the anti-monopoly movement? The movement itself, how should it evolve in order to build this kind of future?

**Solana Rice:** The first point is really centering folks that are building power in communities that can actually organize, that can mobilize, that are directly impacted by the outflow in the existence of monopolies. And **arming** those **organizers** with the **tools** and the analysis that can **clearly state why and how monopoly power is impacting their everyday lives**. I personally, starting to get into this work, have read a lot about anti-monopoly and antitrust.

**Solana Rice:** And honestly, I’m like, it’s really bureaucratic and it’s **really jargony**. And I think one of the first things is just, which is also what we’re trying to do with the report, is just **help people navigate** who’s making decisions about what, and what are the terms and **language that folks use**. Because we, at Liberation in a Generation fully agree and believe that **the economy is not a mystery**. That everybody operates in it and that we make it. And that the **wonkiness**, if you will, and the bureaucratic nature of things is really just to **make things abstract** and to **hold close power**. And that we just don’t have the liberty of maintaining that sort of exclusionary posture anymore. Especially as **more people on the streets are recognizing the role of monopolies and corporate concentration in their communities**, and will be demanding and are **demanding new alternatives**.

**Jeremie Greer:** Yeah. I love all of that. And I just think that we’ve **let the monopolists set the terms of the debate**. And we’re arguing on a debate stage around questions that they’ve written and about it through a frame that they’ve created. And it is around these questions around why does the corporation exist in the first place? **If** it would exist **to create shareholder returns**, which is what we’ve come to understand is the role of business, **then** we know that **that means that the corporation is there to benefit a shareholder community that is 90% white**.

**Jeremie Greer:** But like, that is what it is if we’re allowing it to be on those terms. **What if** we’re actually saying that the **corporation needs to** exist to okay, provide returns to your shareholders, but also to **strengthen communities**. To ensure that workers have a livable wage and a lifestyle that allows them to be a complete human being when they come to work. Meaning they get to have a bathroom break to go to the bathroom, right?

**Jeremie Greer:** That basic level. All the way to have health benefits and paid time off and are earning a wage that allows them to live in the city of their choice, in the community of their choice. Right? Allows them to know that they’re not feeding the company unnecessarily through exploitation of the data that we provide as consumers. Right? There’s so much that **if we redefine the bounds in which a corporation is supposed to serve the public good**, then we’re **getting to a place** in **now we can have a conversation** about how are we, how a corporation is being actually **advancing racial equity** rather than being a forced to fight against racial equity.

**Jeremie Greer:** I think that’s the **confines** of what I’d **like to see the debate to go**. Because **if we stay where we are in the current debate as they defined it, there’s no room**. There’s **no way to expect that we will see racial equity**. Because again, **if they’re only accountable to a set of human beings that are 90% white, we’re never, never going to get there**. And by the way, I didn’t make that number up it’s in the report. That’s not just me being flippant with the data it’s literally 90% of shareholders are white. So, no.

**Stacy Mitchell:** Yeah. It’s one of the great, it’s one of the great tax. You have a number of illustrations too that like are, it’s just a really, it’s a really great report that kind of crystallizes a lot of those things in really clear terms. I really appreciated that. And I couldn’t agree more with both of the points you just made about how, it is how the conversation is framed, who’s framing it and what the boundaries of it are and what it’s oriented around that’s so crucial.

**Stacy Mitchell:** And then also this point that Solana made about **antitrust** monopoly has been really turned into this **highly technical conversation that only elite lawyers and economists working for corporations basically are allowed to have**. And the doors by our enforcement agencies, they have shut their doors to the public. And I feel like that’s a big **part of what has gone wrong**. And I’m so appreciative of your work because it is really about **widening that conversation and bringing everyone into it** in a completely different way. So thanks so much for everything you do.

**Jeremie Greer:** Well, thanks for having me. Thank you for what you do and for having this discussion because it’s so important to give this discussion space and platform. So thank you for that.

**Solana Rice:** Yeah, thanks for this conversation.

## Case

**It spills over to the real world - prioritizing affect gives the far right a tool---think about how Trump has said everything racist and nothing meaningful but people say he “talks tough”.**

**Schaefer 13** *Lauren Berlant, Cruel Optimism. Duke University Press, $24.95 (paper) $89.95 (cloth). pages. ISBN 978-0-8223-5111-5 (pb) 978-0-8223-5097-2 (hc) –* Donovan O. Schaefer is a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Haverford College's Hurford Center for the Arts and Humanities, with a cross-appointment in Religion. In his research and teaching, he looks at the intersection of religion and affect, using feminist and poststructuralist approaches. He is currently revising his dissertation as a manuscript with the title Animal Religion: Evolution, Embodiment, and the Affective Turn in Religious Studies and preparing a new project on atheism. Theory & Event > Volume 16, Issue 2, 2013 – available via Project Muse

Although both Ahmed and Berlant write about the uses of affect as a **phenomenological** bridge to the political, and the slipperiness of happiness or the good life—the way that pleasure can be wrapped up with a strain of unease— there is a distinction between their respective scopes of inquiry. Where Ahmed's book is about frustration/promise/deferral, Berlant's is about addiction. When I asked my students to come up with examples of cruel optimism, they brainstormed the following list: heroin, abusive relationships, candy, horcruxes. Each of these instances suggests a vital but destructive need, an ambivalent compulsion—an addiction, where the tectonic plates of the body's affects shift in friction with one another. Cruel optimism indexes these moments where a body desires and needs an arrangement of the world that is also frustrating or corrosive. Politics is one of these zones of fractious attraction. Berlant writes, for instance, that Intensely political seasons spawn reveries of a different immediacy. People imagine alternative environments where **authenticity trumps ideology**, truths cannot be concealed, and communication feels intimate, face-to-face" (Berlant: 2011, 223). Politics produces fantasies, tethers that draw us forward to particular attachments in the form of images, narratives, bodily practices. But these fantasies **also contain the elements of their own frustration** or refusal. President George W. Bush, for example, is able to use the **affective elements** of statecraft (a practice which, Berlant assures us, is decidedly non-partisan) to **create a façade that diverts attention from** his **flailing foreign and economic policies** (Berlant: 2011, 226). Berlant's focus in Cruel Optimism is on politics as a field of attachments, a skein of affectively pulsing tissues linking bodies together. "Pace Žižek," she writes, ... the energy that generates this sustaining commitment to the work of undoing a world while making one requires fantasy to motor programs of action, to distort the present on behalf of what the present can become. It requires a surrealistic affectsphere to counter the one that already exists, enabling a confrontation with the fact that any action of making a claim on the present involves bruising processes of detachment from anchors in the world, along with optimistic projections of a world that is worth our attachment to it (Berlant: 2011, 263). Berlant looks at how politics pulls on bodies using the ligaments of affect, how politics becomes irresistible, even when it is self-frustrating. Ahmed's focus is very different: she is interested in thinking through politics as the space of unhappiness and deferment. In a section of Chapter 5 entitled "The Freedom to Be Unhappy," Ahmed writes that revolutionary practices may need to follow from the willingness to suspend happiness, to dissolve the imbricated promises of happiness that produce hermetically sealed political systems. **Affect aliens are forged** in the pressure of unfulfilled or unfulfillable promises of happiness, **sealed in** a relationship of **anticipation** pinned to the guarantee **of ultimate good**. Thus Ahmed writes that "**a**ny **politics of justice will involve causing unhappiness even if that is not the point of our action**. So much happiness is premised on, and promised by, the concealment of suffering, the freedom to look away from what compromises one's happiness" (Ahmed: 2010, 196). The revolutionary politics Ahmed wants to advance is willing to put happiness at risk, to dissolve promises of happiness. Ahmed is clear, though, that this is not to make politics about unhappiness: It is not that unhappiness becomes our telos: rather, if we no longer presume happiness is our telos, unhappiness would register as more than what gets in the way. When we are no longer sure of what gets in the way, then 'the way' itself becomes a question Neither happiness nor unhappiness is the telos of revolutionary politics. Rather, Ahmed wants to connect the political back to the "hap" of happiness. Rather than a critique of happiness, I would suggest that the broader channel of her project is best understood as a critique of promise. Thus she ends Chapter 5 with the later work of Jacques Derrida, indicating the need to keep politics open to the event, to the unexpected possibilities to-come. She proposes a vision of happiness that "would be alive to chance, to chance arrivals, to the perhaps of a happening" (Ahmed: 2010, 198). Where for Berlant the event is in the past, the ancestor of our tensed bodily habits today, for Ahmed, the event is ahead, the always-anticipated but radically unknown future. There is also a complementarity to these books, a sense in which both come at the relationship between affect and the political from different sides of the problem, but are nonetheless hurtling towards a common point of impact. Is Ahmed describing scenes where cruel optimism unravels under the internal pressure of a frustrated promise? Is cruel optimism the deferral of happiness implicit in the temporal structure of the promise? These are not fully resolved or resolvable questions, in part because Ahmed and Berlant roll their theoretical lens over such a wide range of circumstances. I would suggest that deepening the conversation between these approaches will hinge in part on exploring the relationship between affect and time—a question that is surfaced by both of these texts but not resolved. Ahmed wants to play inside the deconstructive thematics of the promise that allows us to view affect as a state of deferral. But Ahmed comes closest to Berlant when she writes that "[i]f we hope for happiness, then we might be happy as long as we can retain this hope (a happiness that paradoxically allows us to be happy with unhappiness)" (Ahmed: 2010, 181). Is deferred happiness really divided from happiness? What if fantasies—what Silvan Tomkins calls "images"7 —are so crucial to the production of affect that to save and savor fantasies in one's near sphere is "worth" their eventual frustration? What if a promise deferred is itself a form of happiness—even if the deferral turns out, in retrospect, to have been endless? What happens while we wait? This is in no way to acquiesce to those situations, sketched by Ahmed in the inner chapters of the book, where promises are made that produce affect aliens— investment in a community of promise that will never materialize as happiness. But it is to suggest that the economic flows of affect **are more complex** than a simple binary of presence/deferment.