## 1

### 1NC –OFF

#### Interpretation—the aff must disclose the plan text before the round.

#### Violation—they didn't

#### First is prep and clash—two internal links—a) neg prep—4 minutes of prep is not enough to put together a coherent 1nc or update generics—30 minutes is necessary to learn a little about the affirmative and piece together what 1nc positions apply and cut and research their applications to the affirmative b) aff quality—plan text disclosure discourages cheap shot affs. If the aff isn't inherent or easily defeated by 20 minutes of research, it should lose—this will answer the 1ar's claim about innovation—with 30 minutes of prep, there's still an incentive to find a new strategic, well justified aff, but no incentive to cut a horrible, incoherent aff that the neg can't check against the broader literature.

#### Second is Small school inclusion – disclosure ensures equity of prepping resources.

Bietz 10 Mike (Coach for Harvard-Westlake) “The Case for Public Case Disclosure.” NFL Rostrum, Vol. 84, Issue 9. May 2010. <https://nationalforensicleague.org/DownloadHandler.ashx?File=/userdocs/publications/05-2010%20Complete%20Rostrum.pdf> JW

1] It harms the “little guy” because big teams will prep out everything. As I outlined above, big teams already get many, many more flows than the smaller teams just because they have more debaters, more judges, and more coaches. Open disclosure gives everyone access to the same information. Additionally, it helps the “little guy” even more because for many of these debaters, the option of going to a lot of tournaments isn’t available. Open case disclosure gives them the ability to see what other teams are running prior to showing up to the tournament. Thus, there is an added benefit of equalizing not only information at a tournament, but also equalizing (to some degree) the playing field for people who do not have the resources to travel as much.

#### Framing: You can’t coopt any of the reasons why procedurals are bad in the context of the affirmative since I don’t constrain your ability to read it– the contention is that this aff should’ve been read, just disclosed.

**Fairness outweighs and is a voter**

**1] All your arguments concede the importance of fairness since you assume your arguments will be evaluated fairly when you enter the round – even fairness impact turns.**

**2] Fairness is a prior question to effective dialogue – If fairness is bad writ large vote neg regardless of the flow because it’s unfair**

**3] The alternative to fairness is the same conditions of debate you say are bad which means if the aff is important, it necessarily means fairness is.**

**4] If the judge doesn't enforce fairness, none of your scholarship would pass since it would give them the unfair jurisdiction to reject it and vote you down. Even if they don't, rejecting fairness is a practice that would justify a bad norm, which all your arguments are predicated on anyways.**

**5] We can’t compare or interact to find the best solution to oppression if the unfair nature of your arguments prevents me from strategizing. Fairness is an integral part of your solvency.**

**6] Unfair practices would make kids quit debate if they can’t check it which means less people to spread your message to so the shell is a prior question.**

**7] It’s always safer to presume fairness vs unfairness since even if people are structurally prevented from engagement, that just means they should be added to my model of fairness rather than trashing it and accepting unfairness.**

**8] Unfairness is a material instance of debaters being structurally excluded – yours is a hypothetical in round abuse model.**

**Every reason fairness is a voter is a reason you can’t read substantive take-outs to the shell since it precludes your evaluation of them.**

## 2

### 1NC –OFF

#### Interpretation – the aff must specify the agent of action in the 1AC.

#### Violation – >they don’t<

#### Prefer it –

#### 1] *fairness* – pre-tournament negative prep is *structured* around the agent as the fundamental point of offense. All DA links, counterplan, and K competition starts at the actor. Lack of ability to identify the agent forces us to rely on generics and puts the neg at a structural disadvantage. Fairness is an *intrinsic good*, debate is a game, the only way any benefit can be produced is if both sides had an equal opportunity to prepare to engage one another’s arguments.

#### 2] *critical literacy* – the fundamental question of modern times is *praxis* – the aff’s failure to specify an agent makes debates about praxis *impossible*, as a central question of current debates on how to approach differing institutions is the question of “*who?*” absent an answer to that question, we can’t discuss the *nuances* of the aff strategy

Harcourt 18 (Bernard E., is the Isidor and Seville Sulzbacher Professor of Law, Professor of Political Science, Executive Director of the Eric H. Holder Initiative for Civil and Political Rights, and Founding Director of the Columbia Center for Contemporary Critical Thought at Columbia University, “Introduction: A Time for Praxis,” <http://harcourt.praxis.law.columbia.edu/en/open-review/part-iv-what-is-to-be-done/chapter-15-praxis-new-york-september-1-2018/>)

We have inherited a rich tradition of critical theories that has served us well to identify and analyze our contemporary crises. So much so that the terms “crisis and critique”—Krise und Kritik—have become today homologues. With regard to critical praxis, however, we are in a slightly different situation. The trajectory of critical praxis, although influenced by similar historical forces as that of critical theory, landed us in a somewhat different place. As a result, many contemporary critical theorists are disarmed today before the most fundamental and critical question of these critical times: “What is to be done?” This predicament is the product of centuries or millennia of privileging philosophical inquiry, contemplation, and reason over what the Greeks referred to as πρᾶξις—praxis, or practice, the ethical and political form of being. The former, theoria, involved predominantly understanding and comprehension—in essence, knowing—and it was oriented towards wisdom. The latter, praxis, revolved around activity, action, performance—in essence, doing—and it was oriented towards proper behavior in ethical and political life.3 For the ancients, these were two different modes of engaging the world—two among others, poiesis being another—and these two categories have shaped human experience ever since. The early Christian writers drew on them in their struggle to square contemplative faith with acts of charity. Medieval scholars pursued the debates and refined an idea of the practical application of theoretical knowledge. With Enlightenment philosophy, from Descartes through Kant to the German Idealists, the privilege of reason tilted the field further toward the mind and away from praxis.4 Many critical thinkers during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries struggled to correct the imbalance—Marx, the first among them, as so strikingly encapsulated in his Theses on Feuerbach.5 The second thesis: “The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question.” The eighth: “Social life is essentially practical.” And, of course, the eleventh. But Marx was by no means alone in his ambition to elevate praxis. Many critical thinkers followed in his footsteps. Hannah Arendt privileged the vita activa before turning, in her later years, to the contemplative realm in The Life of the Mind. Michel Foucault extricated critical theory from the dominant Socratic way—gnōthi seauton, “know thyself”—and took the path less travelled: practices of the self, techniques of the self, or what he called “care of self.” The tension played out in different ways and under different rubrics, from the invisible hand that undermined collective action to debates over “dirty hands.” But every time that we, critical theorists, came close to praxis—from antiquity to the present—it seems we found a way to divert the conversation back to the contemplative realm. Socrates got close in the first Alcibiades and the Statesman. There, he confronted young men who wanted to live the life of praxis, rather than contemplation. But quickly Socrates made them realize they did not know much about justice or governing others, and what they needed first was to gain knowledge. So he convinced them to know themselves first. Politics is a skill. It requires techne. Like being the captain of a ship, or shepherd of a flock, there is skill and knowledge to be had. It requires wisdom first. Knowledge. Contemplation. And that then pushed everything back to philosophy. It pushed the inquiry back to the Republic and definitions of justice, and the just person. And Socrates never got back to the original question: how to act politically. Foucault got close in The Hermeneutics of the Subject and his final volumes of The History of Sexuality. We had spent too much time on Socrates’ “know-thyself,” Foucault argued there. There was a whole other tradition of practice that we had ignored. Foucault too returned to the first Alcibiades as a way to explore those practices. He interpreted the Socratic dialogue as a move toward practices of the self, toward care of self, rather than simply knowledge of self. But he then pivoted to the permanent practices of the self in the Stoics and Epicureans; and from there on, the analysis was almost exclusively trained on practices of the self. The dimension of subjectivity would dominate the analysis at the expense of the government of others. Truth-telling, parrhesia, and the courage of truth are of course essential elements to engage politics. Speaking out and denouncing injustice is central. Emile Zola’s J’accuse is a classical example—for which Zola was convicted of libel and had to flee France. Foucault too staked out important political positions in manifestos, editorials and signed statements on many occasions. But notice the model: the influential intellectual, even as a specific intellectual, taking a stance against the state, at personal risk to be sure, often alone or in a small collective, standing against authority. That may be important. It may be necessary. But surely, it cannot exhaust praxis. Yet, it seemed to, practically always. Most recently, I was reading my friend and colleague Axel Honneth’s new book, The Idea of Socialism—an engaged intervention seeking to rehabilitate socialism and breathe new life into it. A deeply committed engagement. A real crie de coeur. Then I hit this passage: I make no attempt to draw connections to current political constellations and possibilities for action. I will not be dealing with the strategic question of how socialism could influence current political events, but solely how the original intention of socialism could be reformulated so as to make it once again a source of political-ethical orientations.6 No attempt to discuss “possibilities for action”: that is our predicament. Somehow, praxis invariably takes a second seat to theory. Practice, practical knowledge, clinical activities become the handmaid of theoretical knowledge—whether in philosophy, physics, law, engineering, or critical theory. To the point where, today, in our own field, we laud critical theories, but cannot even properly identify critical praxis. No more. This has to end. It is time to take stock and begin to chart new directions for critical praxis. In times like these, there is a burning need for a new vision and renewed critical praxis. What does or should political action look like from a critical perspective today, especially when the underlying theoretical structure of the dialectical imagination has become so fractured? This is the most important question for critical theory in the twenty-first century. It is the task that I have set for this book: to counter centuries of contemplative complacency and return critical praxis to its central place in the order of things. In doing so, this book will strive to address what is, today, the most pressing question of all: What is to be done?7

## 3

#### Vote negative to endorse the counter-method of black capitalism.

#### Only encouraging black ownership of the means of production through state and federal policy can equalize access and promote self determination—solves racialized poverty

Very 12 (Ryan, Adjunct Philosophy Lecturer, Merrimack College; J.D./M.A. in Law and Philosophy candidate at Boston University. “Black Capitalism: An Economic Program for the Black American Ghetto.” International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol. 2 No. 22 Special Issue – November 2012, <http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_22_Special_Issue_November_2012/6.pdf> //shree)

Black capitalism is a political movement that encourages black ownership of the means of production. 77 Black capitalists propose state and federal governments provide the following economic solutions for blacks and black businesses exclusively: wage subsidies for workers, guaranteed purchases of manufactured goods, tax incentives, lower interest rates on loans, guaranteed loans, subsidized supplies of technical machinery, subsidized entrepreneurial education services, community development corporations to help blacks start businesses, and guaranteed insurance rates. 78 1. Black capitalism would be a better ghetto economic development strategy than corporate branch planting or dispersal. Black capitalism is both a place-oriented and a person-oriented strategy. To explain; a place-oriented development strategy’s primary objective is to improve a particular location’s economy. A person-oriented development strategy’s primary objective is to improve the economic wellbeing of individuals. Ghetto dispersal is merely a person-oriented strategy because it would encourage residents to seek out economic wellbeing at the expense of the ghetto’s economic prosperity. Corporate branch planting is merely a place-oriented strategy because its proponents seek to spur the growth of ghetto businesses by placing successful white-owned businesses there. Black capitalism, however, is both a place and person-oriented strategy. Black capitalism is a person-oriented strategy because individualized entrepreneurial education and black ownership of ghetto businesses would improve individual blacks’ economic welfare. Black capitalism is a place-oriented strategy because improving black businesses in the ghetto could create multiplier effects; for example, when a store-owner repairs the face of his or her building, neighboring businesses might feel pressured or encouraged to do the same. Black capitalism is both a place and person-oriented strategy because capable black leaders would be more likely to lend their talents to the betterment of the ghetto when they are employed inside the ghetto. Black capitalism would address the problem of market dualism better than ghetto dispersal or corporate branch planting. If the government were to provide the black sector with wage subsidies, its workers may value their jobs more, and turnover may decrease. Lower turnover would make the black sector more attractive to investors. Lower interest rates and government-backed loans for black businesses may finally provide blacks with access to capital. Access to capital should reduce barriers to entry in the over-crowded black sector. Education programs for the black sector could result in more white sector businesses hiring black sector workers, alleviating the urban fiscal crisis and increasing sector mobility. Black access to capital coupled with subsidized entrepreneurial training services would also allow more residents to start their own potentially successful businesses in the ghetto. With a sizeable government subsidy, ghetto residents could even build manufacturing plants. If ghetto residents would export enough manufactured goods, both the drain of capital and the trade deficit would decrease. 2. Black capitalism would empower blacks to eliminate the ghetto’s barriers to economic development. Corporate branch planting would require blacks look to whites for help. Ghetto dispersal would require blacks abandon their homes and communities for white communities. But black capitalism would not do either of these. Rather, it would empower residents to make their own financial decisions and “recapture their communities” by providing them with jobs, self-respect, and economic heroes. 79 Assuming politicians would be more likely to pay attention to people with money than people without money, black capitalist economic empowerment could lead to greater black political empowerment, another potential vehicle for eliminating the ghetto’s economic barriers. Black capitalism would be more likely to eliminate the ghetto’s barriers to economic development than corporate branch planting or ghetto dispersal. Corporate branch planting would sustain the ghetto’s low-wage labor market if white unions were unwilling to fight for higher wages for black workers. Ghetto dispersal would leave behind the poorest of the poor and perpetuate the ghetto’s economic isolation from the rest of the economy. However, providing residents with access to capital may reduce their dependency on the low-wage labor market. Black capitalism, if successful and well-funded, would create an economic domino effect. Successful black businesses would inspire other blacks to become businesspeople. 3. Arguments against black capitalism are unpersuasive. Some economists will point out that entrepreneurs compose a very small portion of the population. They will say that becoming a wage earner would be a much quicker path to cash. But this argument mischaracterizes black capitalism. Black capitalism is not a “get cash now” program. Black capitalism is a long-term solution for a very long-term problem. It took at least half a century to create the ghetto; it may take even longer to eliminate its barriers to economic development. Some will oppose black capitalism on ethical grounds and argue it would encourage segregation. I would grant them that black capitalism does not directly address segregation. Indeed, black capitalism grew out of a “separatist” movement to improving the wellbeing of blacks and requires blacks develop their own economy, largely without the help of whites.80 However, it does not follow that black capitalism is immoral. The black economy is already segregated, so policy makers should not be afraid to “fight fire with fire” and apply a segregationist solution to the problem of segregation. These opponents also ignore that black capitalism is a longterm solution. Creating a separate black economy and black achievement of political power would be a means to eventual integration. Other opponents will argue it would be unfair to provide government benefits on the basis of race alone. Black capitalists must reply that this argument contains an untrue premise. Black capitalism would not provide benefits strictly on the basis of race alone because black capitalism is a place-oriented movement. Black capitalism would not, for example, provide subsidies to the tiny minority of wealthy blacks living in Boston’s Back Bay. Now, even assuming black capitalism would provide preferential treatment on the basis of race, the argument ignores the fact that preferential treatment is fair where the treated individuals face an extreme disadvantage through no fault of their own. Blacks born and raised in the ghetto cannot help that they were born into a life of economic disadvantage. For this reason, arguing that black capitalism is unfair is like arguing educators act unfairly when they accommodate students with learning disabilities. If the wealth gap between blacks and whites is a legacy of the government policies of slavery and Jim Crow, policies that have systematically favored whites, then the government has a responsibility to undo the wealth gap, and should give black enterprise special attention.81 Other opponents would contend that black capitalism is too expensive. Indeed, black capitalism will not be possible without a massive federal investment. But this investment is morally and logically required. The federal government encouraged suburbanization with substantial spending on federal highway and water projects, waste treatment, defense spending, mortgage insurance, and tax subsidies for homeowners. These policies helped create the ghetto, and federal programs to improve city services and housing have only slightly offset the damaging effects of suburban sprawl. Indeed, the national “back to the city” movement has been almost entirely ineffective. 82

## Case

#### Vote neg on presumption –

#### [1] Process turn – using debate as a mode of advocacy ensures the failure of [the aff] – competition means debaters ally themselves with individuals who vote for them and alienate those who are positioned with the burden of rejoinder and forced to negate – at worst you vote negative on presumption because they don’t use debate as a stepping stone for their advocacy outside the space and don’t have a net benefit to affirming the 1ac

#### [2] Academia turn – the 1ac is a regurgitation of knowledge that already exists within academia which proves they aren’t a departure from the status quo and voting aff is not intrinsic to affirming [their method]

#### [3] Competition turn – competition ensures they refines [the aff] according to what best wins them ballots from judges not according to what actually best resolves violence for individuals outside debate – ensures their method can’t scale up and gets coopted by problematic norms in the debate community

#### Voting aff doesn’t access social change, but voting neg resolves our procedural impacts.

Ritter ‘13 (Michael J; JD from U Texas Law; 2013; “Overcoming The Fiction of “Social Change Through Debate”: What’s To Learn from 2pac’s Changes?”; National Journal of Speech and Debate, Vol. 2, Issue 1)

The structure of competitive interscholastic debate renders any message communicated in a debate round virtually incapable of creating any social change, either in the debate community or in general society. And to the extent that the fiction of social change through debate can be proven or disproven through empirical studies or surveys, academics instead have analyzed debate with nonapplicable rhetorical theory that fails to account for the unique aspects of competitive interscholastic debate. Rather, the current debate relating to activism and competitive interscholastic debate concerns the following: “What is the best model to promote social change?” But a more fundamental question that must be addressed first is: “Can debate cause social change?” Despite over two decades of opportunity to conduct and publish empirical studies or surveys, academic proponents of the fiction that debate can create social change have chosen not to prove this fundamental assumption, which—as this article argues—is merely a fiction that is harmful in most, if not all, respects. The position that competitive interscholastic debate can create social change is more properly characterized as a fiction than an argument. A fiction is an invented or fabricated idea purporting to be factual but is not provable by any human senses or rational thinking capability or is unproven by valid statistical studies. An argument, most basically, consists of a claim and some support for why the claim is true. If the support for the claim is false or its relation to the claim is illogical, then we can deduce that the particular argument does not help in ascertaining whether the claim is true. Interscholastic competitive debate is premised upon the assumption that debate is argumentation. Because fictions are necessarily not true or cannot be proven true by any means of argumentation, the competitive interscholastic debate community should be incredibly critical of those fictions and adopt them only if they promote the activity and its purposes

#### Their academic speeches short circuit solvency and doesn’t shape reality

Naomi **Zack 16**. professor of philosophy at the University of Oregon. She is author and editor of a dozen books, including White Privilege and Black Rights: The Injustice of U.S. Police Racial Profiling and Homicide (2015); The Ethics and Mores of Race: Equality after the History of Philosophy (2011); Ethics for Disaster (2009). Applicative Justice: A Pragmatic Empirical Approach to Racial Injustice. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Incorporated. Pages 147-148.

West's stated conditions for becoming a successful organic intellectual are an empirical claim about what is necessary, although not sufficient, for real change. If the Left did indeed lose in the decades following the civil rights movement, as West has also claimed, then that in itself would indicate that these necessary conditions are not sufficient for lasting, sustainable change.6 But West's conditions do give us an important distinction between political oppositional discourse as speech, and as action. In a society that protects free speech and recognizes academic freedom, speech by academics is not action. The answer to the question of whether academic enrollment and employment plus relevant group membership and liberatory discourse in speech or writing is enough to qualify a person as an organic intellectual is No. Academics are granted their status as intellectuals by the academy and not in the course of group activism. This is not to say that academic intellectuals might not also be activists. But for those who talk and write as a profession, action can be very difficult to undertake. While action add-ed to academic intellectual status does not confer organic intellectual status, it is beyond speech and writing. So there are two distinctions worth keeping in mind, the first between organic intellectuals and academic intellectuals and the second between academic intellectuals and activists. The main purpose of this distinction between words and action is to clear the way for an appreciation of the difficulty, uncertainty, and perplexity of real-life political activism, and how it requires dedicated (i.e., self-aware and committed) organized action over time by those who do not have official political power. The distinction thus drawn is intended to remind liberatory theorists that their words alone do not have the power to directly change the material world—people have to do things in the world if they hope to change the world, even though what they do may not have even a strong probability of getting the results they hope for. So, for example, when progressives do no more than eloquently express the shamefulness of hungry school children in a land of plenty, they remain on the side of spoken and written discourse. But if they organize a school breakfast program in a local neighborhood with real food going into the bellies of real kids, then their discourse h moved out of speech and writing, into real-life action. Or, today’s Kan-tians may argue that it is wrong for individuals to give to beggars because that supports a government system that is not doing its duty to the poor." But without assurance that the government cares about the poor and will pick up the slack in the absence of private charity, or efforts to change the meanness of the government, such argument is not activist in either speech or action. Both verbal and active forms of discourse have their value and place because there has to be a certain amount of division of labor in society. Still, liberatory participants should be aware of the nature of their projects and engagements, to avoid confusing themselves and others, and for the sake of efficiency in that division of labor. To state this is not to raise skepticism about good intent motivating the speech, writing, or even activism of some academic intellectuals, but is rather a plea for self-orientation. Academics should say whatever they want to say for its own sake, or because they think what they say will support their status in the academy, but not all discourse about injustice and “what should be done” has a discernible link to reality.

#### Knowledge is reflective and co-constitutive with power – contesting truth claims overcomes the forms of socialization they criticize.

Thompson, Associate Professor of Political Science at William Paterson University, ’15 (Michael J., “Inventing the “Political”: Arendt, Antipolitics, and the Deliberative Turn in Contemporary Political Theory,” in *Radical Intellectuals and the Subversion of Progressive Politics*, ed. Gregory Smulewicz-Zucker and Michael J. Thompson, Chapter 3)

The problem here is that she perceives “opinions” as **originating in some existentially distinctive self** rather than from social relations and the ways that ideas and opinions that people come to accept are generally **embedded** in the institutional functions of the world they inhabit. This is no place for a phenomenological “lifeworld”; the problem is cognitive: The concepts, opinions, and ideas of people **are shaped by the social relations within which they are situated**, **rather than** springing **from some existential “beginning**.” The importance of the ’αρχη´ in this sense—as rule and as origin or beginning—**is that it denotes a self that is somehow presocial** and existentially prior to any form of socialization. We are asked to believe that each person does in fact initiate an ’ αρχη´, that each individual is somehow unique and that this constitutes a valid basis for forming political knowledge about the world. In contrast to this, the problem of social power must be conceived as a problem of domination. Domination is not simply a process whereby one has legal or some other form of authority over an other; **it is a situation where social relations are** constructed **in order to extract benefit from others**, control and subordinate them for some self-interested purpose, as well as order the field of ideas and opinions to legitimate those structures of extractive power. Opinion thereby becomes victimized by a sensus communis colonized by norms **and values rooted in the** prevailing forms of legitimacy**. Opinion effectively expresses reified thought**. Without truth, each opinion must be taken and accepted on its face; each is “isonomic” in the political realm, as are their opinions.17 But if we were to accept this thesis, so crucial for Arendt’s thought, we **would find ourselves in a condition where ideological consciousness is** free to reign, where opinion about things and the world has no objective metric for us to be able to gauge its relevance. We would find ourselves adrift, **with** no way to shatter **the reified structures of consciousness** **that allow real political and social power to hold sway**. In the modern age, we cannot separate the dimension of surplus extraction from that of the constitution of values, norms, and commonly accepted opinions since they work in tandem to form the social order itself. This is one reason **why any valid conception of politics** cannot, however, **remain within the confines of opinion**. It is not the case that all knowledge, **all search for rational truths are limited to surface phenomena**. The reality is that truth-claims **constitute the** very substance **of political power and authority itsel**f. Indeed, as Rousseau and Weber knew all too well, the basic problem of political power in the modern world is the way it is made legitimate in the minds of its members.18 **Violence and coercion**, in contrast to Arendt’s thinking, **are not the main tools of those who seek domination**—rather, **it is legitimacy**. And this legitimacy is constructed by cultivating opinion, by weaving the cognitive and valueorientational prerequisites that in turn legitimate the concrete forms of power that pervade the social world. Domination, the real concern of politics, is therefore **functional in nature**: **Institutional power is built from the minds of its participants**, not from fiat. Truth is therefore a means by which we shed the ideological valences of thought that are shaped by socialization. **It colonizes precisely those capacities and forms of “thinking”** that Arendt sees as constituting freedom and “action.” Indeed, since Arendt’s project is to carve out and define a distinctive sphere of thinking and acting that is nonscientific, she is forced to rely on the phenomenological tools she has ready-at-hand. **The** denigration of truth-claims **is a major weakness in her approach**, **and it has encouraged many other subsequent theorists to dispense with the importance of truth-claims and their political import for politics**.

#### Prefer valid, descriptive theories of the world as a form of explanatory critique – otherwise, epistemic shifts from Eurocentric thought are impossible.

Jones ’4 (Branwen Gruffydd; PhD in Development Studies from the University of Sussex, Senior Lecturer in International Political Economy at Goldsmiths University of London; 8/04, Annual Conference of the International Association for Critical Realism, University of Cambridge, “From Eurocentrism to Epistemological Internationalism: power, knowledge and objectivity in International Relations,” <http://www.csog.group.cam.ac.uk/iacr/papers/Jones.pdf>, DOA: 7/31/17)

The rejection of positivism which is a central element of recent critiques of mainstream IR has tended to extend to rejection of the notion and possibility of science itself. Science, often written in quotation marks ‘science’, is seen as inherently part of the project of Enlightenment-modernity, a mode of technical instrumental knowledge which is necessarily a means of control and domination of both society and nature 22 . An important component of the critique of the positivist orthodoxy is exposure of its coincidence with the interests of the powerful. Dominant ideas and methods which rest on claims of value-free scientificity and neutrality are shown to mask or legitimise the interests of the powerful and the exercise of power and domination. The very claim to be able to produce value-free, neutral scientific truth is rejected in a world of inherently conflicting interests. Instead, the ‘illusion of objectivism must be replaced with the recognition that knowledge is always constituted in reflection of interests’ (Ashley 1981: 207). There are two kinds of conflation which are embedded within this critical stance. The first conflates the contents of natural scientific knowledge with the uses to which it is put in society. Much scientific knowledge, in both natural and social sciences, has indeed been produced by and in the explicit interests of the powerful, an integral part of the construction and maintenance of unequal and oppressive social orders, and the administration of accumulation and imperialism. But it is important not to conflate the contents of knowledge with its social conditions of production and use. When scientific knowledge is developed for and utilised in the service of oppression or commercial profit as opposed to the increased satisfaction of human needs, the oppression results from social forces, not from the cognitive properties of scientific knowledge 23: Even assuming all the results of a research project are objectively true, the area chosen for investigation may be determined by contentious ideological assumptions or practical interests. Thus it is likely that drug companies have concentrated on artificially synthesized drugs to the detriment of research into those occurring naturally in plants; and it is certain that military might and commercial profit are the chief determinants of which secrets of nature get uncovered. In a world where science was funded with a view to satisfying human needs and conserving planetary resources, quite different discoveries might be made – neither more or less objective than the findings of modern science, but useful for different purposes. (Collier 1994: 180; see also Collier 1979). The second conflation reduces scientific method to a positivist approach, equating positivist social science with social science per se with technical instrumentality. It is often asserted that the problem with positivist IR is that it applies the method of natural sciences or ‘the scientific method’ to the study of social phenomena 24 . This is a mischaracterisation of the real nature of the problem, which is that positivism first misunderstands the method of natural science, and then applies these misunderstood methodological principles to the study of social phenomena (Bhaskar 1997). Recognition of this enables us to retrieve the possibility of a particular form of social inquiry which can be called scientific or objective from abandonment along with positivism 25 . A positivist understanding of scientific inquiry rests on a Humean notion of cause as constant conjunction between empirical variables or events, and explanation as the discovery of empirical regularities and correlations. When such empirical regularities are discovered they can be used to make predictions. This assumes an empiricist ontology and epistemology: the world consists only of that which is available to direct experience, and the only source of knowledge is through direct sensory experience. Critiques of positivism are correct to question these assumptions about knowledge and the world, but they are not correct in equating this with scientific method. Positivism consists of philosophers’ misunderstanding of the actual practice of natural science. The practice of experiment is central to the method of some natural sciences. A scientific experiment involves establishing closure: creating an artificial environment where the external and internal conditions are controlled so as to isolate particular features and mechanisms. This enables scientists to discover about aspects of reality which are not empirical : the causal properties and necessary ways-of-operating of specific mechanisms in nature which are real because they have the capacity to bring about change, given appropriate conditions and inputs, but are not empirical – they cannot be seen, only the effects of their operation can be seen. This non-positivist, philosophical realist theory of science, epistemology and ontology is very different from the positivist misunderstanding of scientific method and explanation. Scientific theories and the discovery of natural laws refer to real properties and causal powers of structured entities, not empirical events and regularities (Bhaskar 1997). What are the implications of this non-positivist theory of science for social inquiry? The fact of human reflexivity rules out the possibility of experiment and prediction in social inquiry, because it is impossible to establish closure in the social world 26 . Ideas are causally efficacious: through informing social action ideas have causal efficacy in codetermining or influencing what actually happens, including (usually as an unintended outcome) the reproduction of social relations. This means that ideas are part of the object of social inquiry, as is fore-grounded by all variants of so-called reflexive approaches in International Relations (Keohane 1988). When we study society part of what we study includes the ideas that are held in that society. But we also study other aspects of society which are irreducible to ideas or individuals – real but non-empirical structures of social relations, historically-specific socially-produced material conditions, and so on. This non-positivist theory of knowledge and the world gives rise to a notion of objectivity which does not entail the positivist commitment to value-free neutrality. Philosophical realism holds that the world consists of natural and social objects or entities which exist and have particular properties and causal powers independently of what, if anything, is known about them 27 . Knowledge about different aspects of the material and social world can be non-existent, partial, more or less adequate, more or less right or wrong. This informs a notion of objectivity which refers to what is the case, regardless of what is thought or believed to be the case: The first and central use of the word “objectivity” is to refer to what is true independently of any subject judging it to be true. To say that it is an objective fact that the Earth is the third planet from the Sun is to say that this is so whether or not anyone knows or believes it, or even is able to formulate the statement. To say that kindness is an objective value is to say that it is a value, whether or not anyone judges it to be a value; it would be a value even if the whole of society regarded it as a culpable weakness and it was only practised shamefacedly as a private foible. (Collier 2003: 134-5). This notion of objectivity does not entail a belief that human beings can acquire absolute truth and certain knowledge about either social or natural phenomena. It is possible to acknowledge that knowledge is always inherently fallible and socially constructed while retaining a notion of the objective reality which ideas are about. This allows commitment to judgemental rationality – the possibility of judging between different ideas on the basis of their relative adequacy, in terms of their relation to objective reality 28 . In social inquiry objectivity does not imply some form of external position of independence ‘outside’ society 29 . All knowledge is socially produced; but all knowledge is also about something which exists independently of the knowledge about it. (This is the case even for knowledge about ideas). The ‘common-sense’ view pervading recent discussions of epistemology, ontology and methodology in IR asserts that objectivity implies value-free neutrality. However, objective social inquiry has an inherent tendency to be critical, in various senses. To the extent that objective knowledge provides a better and more adequate account of reality than other ideas, such knowledge is inherently critical (implicitly or explicitly) of those ideas. 30 In other words critical social inquiry does not (or not only) manifest its ‘criticalness’ through self-claimed labels of being critical or siding with the oppressed, but through the substantive critique of prevailing ideas. Objective social knowledge constitutes a specific form of criticism: explanatory critique. The critique of dominant ideas or ideologies is elaborated through providing a more adequate explanation of aspects of the world, and in so doing exposing what is wrong with the dominant ideology. This may also entail revealing the social conditions which give rise to ideologies, thus exposing the necessary and causal relation between particular social relations and particular ideological conceptions. In societies which are constituted by unequal structures of social relations giving rise to unequal power and conflicting interests, the reproduction of those structured relations is in the interests of the powerful, whereas transformation of existing structured relations is in the interests of the weak. Because ideas inform social action they are casually efficacious either in securing the reproduction of existing social relations (usually as an unintended consequence of social practice), or in informing social action aimed at transforming social relations. This is why ideas cannot be ‘neutral’. Ideas which provide a misrepresentation of the nature of society, the causes of unequal social conditions, and the conflicting interests of the weak and powerful, will tend to help secure the reproduction of prevailing social relations. Ideas which provide a more adequate account of the way society is structured and how structured social relations produce concrete conditions of inequality and exploitation can potentially inform efforts to change those social relations. In this sense, ideas which are false are ideological and, in serving to promote the reproduction of the status quo and avoid attempts at radical change, are in the interests of the powerful. An account which is objective will contradict ideological ideas, implicitly or explicitly criticising them for their false or flawed accounts of reality. The criticism here arises not, or not only, from pointing out the coincidence between ideologies and the interests of the powerful, nor from a prior normative stance of solidarity with the oppressed, but from exposing the flaws in dominant ideologies through a more adequate account of the nature and causes of social conditions 31 . A normative commitment to the oppressed must entail a commitment to truth and objectivity, because true ideas are in the interest of the oppressed, false ideas are in the interest of the oppressors. In other words, the best way to declare solidarity with the oppressed is to declare one’s commitment to objective inquiry 32 . As Nzongola-Ntalaja (1986: 10) has put it: It is a question of whether one analyses society from the standpoint of the dominant groups, who have a vested interest in mystifying the way society works, or from the standpoint of ordinary people, who have nothing to lose from truthful analyses of their predicament. The philosophical realist theory of science, objectivity and explanatory critique thus provides an alternative response to the relationship between knowledge and power. Instead of choosing perspectives on the basis of our ethical commitment to the cause of the oppressed and to emancipatory social change, we should choose between contending ideas on the basis of which provides a better account of objective social reality. This will inherently provide a critique of the ideologies which, by virtue of their flawed account of the social world, serve the interests of the powerful. Exemplars of explanatory critique in International Relations are provided in the work of scholars such as Siba Grovogui, James Gathii, Anthony Anghie, Bhupinder Chimni, Jacques Depelchin, Hilbourne Watson, Robert Vitalis, Sankaran Krishna, Michel-Rolph Trouillot 33 . Their work provides critiques of central categories, theories and discourses in the theory and practice of IR and narratives of world history, including assumptions about sovereignty, international society, international law, global governance, the nature of the state. They expose the ideological and racialised nature of central aspects of IR through a critical examination of both the long historical trajectory of imperial ideologies regarding colonized peoples, and the actual practices of colonialism and decolonisation in the constitution of international orders and local social conditions. Their work identifies the flaws in current ideas by revealing how they systematically misrepresent or ignore the actual history of social change in Africa, the Caribbean and other regions of the Third World, both past and present – during both colonial and neo-colonial periods of the imperial world order. Their work reveals how racism, violence, exploitation and dispossession, colonialism and neo-colonialism have been central to the making of contemporary international order and contemporary doctrines of international law, sovereignty and rights, and how such themes are glaring in their absence from histories and theories of international relations and international history. Objective social knowledge which accurately depicts and explains social reality has these qualities by virtue of its relation to its object, not its subject. As Collier argues, “The science/ideology distinction is an epistemological one, not a social one.” (Collier 1979: 60). So, for example, in the work of Grovogui, Gathii and Depelchin, the general perspective and knowledge of conditions in and the history of Africa might be due largely to the African social origins of the authors. However the judgement that their accounts are superior to those of mainstream IR rests not on the fact that the authors are African, but on the greater adequacy of their accounts with respect to the actual historical and contemporary production of conditions and change in Africa and elsewhere in the Third World. The criteria for choosing their accounts over others derives from the relation between the ideas and their objects (what they are about), not from the relation between the ideas and their subjects (who produced them). It is vital to retain explicitly some commitment to objectivity in social inquiry, to the notion that the proper criterion for judging ideas about the world lies in what they say about the world, not whose ideas they are. A fundamental problem which underlies the origin and reproduction of IR’s eurocentricity is the overwhelming dominance of ideas produced in and by the west, and the wilful and determined silencing of the voices and histories of the colonised. But the result of this fundamental problem is flawed knowledge about the world. Eurocentricity is therefore a dual problem concerning both the authors and the content of knowledge, and cannot be resolved through normative commitments alone. It is not only the voices of the colonised, but the histories of colonialism, which have been glaring in their absence from the discipline of International Relations. Overcoming eurocentricity therefore requires not only concerted effort from the centre to create space and listen to hitherto marginalised voices, but also commitment to correcting the flaws in prevailing knowledge – and it is not only ‘the Other’ who can and should elaborate this critique. A vitally important implication of objectivity is that it is the responsibility of European and American, just as much as non-American or non-European scholars, to decolonise IR. The importance of objectivity in social inquiry defended here can perhaps be seen as a form of epistemological internationalism. It is not necessary to be African to attempt to tell a more accurate account of the history of Europe’s role in the making of the contemporary Africa and the rest of the world, for example, or to write counter-histories of ‘the expansion of international society’ which detail the systematic barbarity of so-called Western civilisation. It is not necessary to have been colonised to recognise and document the violence, racism, genocide and dispossession which have characterised European expansion over five hundred years.