## 1 – T (4 minutes)

#### Interpretation: the affirmative must defend the hypothetical implementation of the resolution or a subset thereof –

#### A worker is a person who works

Merriam-Webster - ("Definition of WORKER," No Publication, xx-xx-xxxx, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/worker)//va

Definition of worker ¶

1a: one that [works](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/works) especially at manual or industrial labor or with a particular materiala factory worker—often used in combination ¶

b: a member of the [working](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/working) class ¶

A strike is a work stoppage for a certain purpose

Merriam-Webster https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/strike

Definition of strike (Entry 2 of 2) ¶

1: a tool for smoothing a surface (as of a mold) ¶

2: an act or instance of [striking](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/striking) ¶

3a: a work stoppage by a body of workers to enforce compliance with demands made on an employer ¶

b: a temporary stoppage of activities in protest against an act or condition ¶

#### Unconditional means absolute

Merriam-Webster - ("Definition of UNQUALIFIED," No Publication, xx-xx-xxxx, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unqualified)//va

Definition of unconditional

1: not conditional or limited : [ABSOLUTE](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/absolute), [UNQUALIFIED](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unqualified)

#### Vote negative – there is a distinction between debate as an institution and debate as a game, and while the affs intervention may or may not be effective on an institutional level, the ballot only signifies a win or loss within debate as a game

#### We are both in this round primarily to get a win - its why we all adhere to other rules of the game like speech times and prep time, even if breaking those norms might make the debate “better” – its why you would vote neg if they read a 10 hour long AC about why speech time constraints are bad

#### Not reading a topical aff creates incredible structural advantages for the aff – they get first and last speech and perms which means without a stable advocacy they get to morph their aff into whatever minimizes direct clash, and allows for a retreat to moral high ground

#### You don’t have to disagree with the aff to vote neg. But, the ballot is fundamentally tied to the structure of the *game* of debate, not the *institution*, which means that your ballot can only ascribe who did a better job playing the game that we agreed upon before the start of the tournament.

#### There’s two Impacts –

#### Clash – Non-T affs avoid meaningful objections by preventing effective prep.. That link turns all their research and subjectivity arguments. We can’t deploy new research strategies or cultivate new dispositions to power structures if we can’t effectively evaluate the arguments. Clash is a pre-requisite to debate, because we use competitive argumentation to understand and internalize attitudes and knowledge. That’s what distinguishes debate from other forms of learning.

#### Iterative argumentative testing – for example, think about how the India aff transformed over the course of the Compulsory Voting topic. The first tournament was generic democracy and turnout arguments, but by the end of October debates centered around third level analysis of vote-banking and whether Modi’s nationalism was self-driven or a response to his voter base – the ability to subject controversial ideas to rigorous testing allows debaters to better engage in the research process, discern what arguments are most accurate, and learn how to refine our own beliefs to become more compelling advocates – not reading a plan allows a constant spew of new content that never reaches those high levels of contestation without the constraints of the topic – Even if this topic isn’t the perfect topic, the predictability of debates under it are worth potential substantive tradeoff. Limits produce a rigorous *culture of justification* instead of a culture of *assertion* or *presumption*. Without a bridge for subjecting beliefs to a rigorous test, we are left with might-makes-right. This link turns the Aff again, because our ability to develop critical subjectivities that can *strategically* challenge power structures necessitates this type of argument culture.

Cheryl MISAK Philosophy @ Toronto ‘8 “A Culture of Justification: The Pragmatist's Epistemic Argument for Democracy” *Episteme* 5 (1) p. 100-104

The charge that Rorty has had to face again and again is that he really is a relativist, holding that one belief is no better than another, and that one must “treat the epistemic standards of any and every epistemic community as on a par” (Haack 1995, 136). Rorty, that is, leaves us with no way of adjudicating claims that arise in different communities. It is argued that this is not only an unsatisfactory view, but it is incompatible with his commitment to his own set of beliefs and with his practice of arguing or giving reasons for them. Peirce would join in this charge, arguing that it is the community of inquirers or reasoners that matter, not this or that local community. One of Rorty’s responses to this clutch of objections is to say that he doesn’t have to treat the epistemic standards of every community as on a par: “I prize communities which share more background beliefs with me above those which share fewer” (Rorty 1995b, 153). There is nothing incoherent about asserting that your community has it right, for all “right” amounts to is what your community agrees upon. I have argued (2000, 12ff) that this kind of comeback puts Rorty in a very difficult position, giving him nothing to say against the likes of Carl Schmitt, the fascist legal philosopher who found it natural to join the Nazi bandwagon. Schmitt, like Rorty, argued that there is no truth and rationality in politics. Rather, politics is the arena in which groups assert themselves, with the strongest coming out on top and the weaker groups disappearing. One makes an existential choice – opts for a conception of the good – and then tries to attain “substantive homogeneity” in the population. Might ends up being right and the elimination of those who disagree with us ends up being a fine method of reaching our political decisions. A democrat or liberal like Rorty has an impossible time in giving us – and himself – reasons for opting for his view rather than his fascist opponent’s view. Once you give up aiming at truth, once you give up aiming at something that goes beyond the standards of your own community, then you give up the wherewithal to argue against the might-is-right view. The charge I am trying to answer here, on behalf of the non-Rortian pragmatist, is that mixing truth and politics is dangerous. One of the points I want to make is that, whatever the dangers are in saying morals and politics aim at the truth, the dangers of denying it are even more alarming. If we were to get rid of the notion of truth, nothing would protect us from the idea that there is nothing to get right, no better or worse action, and no better or worse way of treating others. Nothing would protect us from the Schmittian worldview. Another point is that the pragmatist view encourages something which is downright salutary, not dangerous at all. It encourages a culture of justification, a culture the importance of which grows as we face the challenges of living in a global society with worldviews struggling against each other. This thought was prominent in the debate about how the new democratic order in South Africa should be conceived. Here is how Etienne Murienik put it: If the new constitution is a bridge away from a culture of authority, it is clear what it must be a bridge to. It must lead to a culture of justification – a culture in which every exercise of power is expected to be justified; in which the leadership given by government rests on the cogency of the case offered in defense of its decisions, not the fear inspired by the force of its command. The new order must be a community built on persuasion, not on coercion.4 A final point rests on the nature of the kinds of answers the pragmatist envisions. Rorty and Rawls seem to think that any view of truth carries with it the idea that there is one and only one true answer to every question. It is important to see that, whatever the case might be for other views of truth, the pragmatist’s view of truth does not entail anything about the precise nature of right answers. On the Peircean view of truth, it might be true that the best solution to a problem is to compromise in a certain way. Or a question might have a number of equally right answers: it might be true that either A or B or C is an acceptable solution to a problem. That is, bringing truth into politics need not result in a view on which one theory of the good triumphs over the others. Indeed, the pragmatist account of truth does not require agreement at the end of the day (whatever that might mean) and it does not require the consent of all who are affected by a particular decision here and now. The right answer to a question might be one that only a few see is right. A right answer is the one that would be best – would stand up to the evidence and arguments – were we to inquire into the matter as far as we fruitfully could. That is, we are not primarily aiming at agreement in deliberation – we are aiming at getting a view that will stand up to reasons and evidence**.** That said, there may be cases in moral and especially political deliberation in which we do aim for agreement because we think that what will best stand up to reasons in that case is a solution that is agreed upon by all or by all who are affected. But this will be just one kind of case amongst many. Right answers aren’t necessarily answers that are acceptable by all. Nor are right answers necessarily those that resolve a conflict with a compromise, although sometimes a compromise or cooperative solution may indeed be what is required. Nor is bargaining always not conducive to truth – in some cases, that may be exactly what is required. This view of truth does not lead to zeal, oppression, closing off of discussion, or a squashing of pluralism, even if it might happen to be the case that there is only one reasonable conception of the good out there. The idea is that we are always aiming at getting the best answer – whatever that may be – and to do that we need to take into account the views of all. 6 . WHO DECIDES? One of the first questions put to those who would like to think of politics as a species of truth-oriented deliberation is this: why deliberate with the ignorant multitude? Would it not be better to expose our moral and political beliefs only to the reasons and experience of experts? Science, after all, doesn’t work by asking the person in the street what he or she thinks about quantum mechanics. The reason that the pragmatist’s epistemic justification is a justification of democratic politics, rather than of a hierarchical politics, in which an elite makes decisions, is that we do not and will not ever have an identifiable pool of moral and political experts. Dewey saw this clearly. As experts become specialized, “they are shut off from knowledge of the needs which they are supposed to serve” (Dewey 1926/1984, 364). Everyone engages in moral and political deliberation and it is not obvious that having special education makes you better at it – just look at priests, politicians, and moral philosophers/political theorists and ask yourself if they seem especially decent or especially wise when it comes to practical matters. Some people are good at examining moral and politi\cal issues, but it’s not clear that they are the ones trained to do so. Even if we could identify genuinely wise people, this kind of expertise is liable to be corrupted merely by being identified – merely by the wise person starting to think of herself as a moral expert.5 And it is far from clear that the rule of the wise would really take the views and experiences of all into account better than the democratic rule of the people. So how do we distinguish deliberating well and deliberating badly if we cannot appeal to education and training? No account of deliberative democracy can ignore the call to make the distinction. The trouble is that, in saying what good, as opposed to poor, deliberation amounts to, one finds oneself facing a justificatory problem: how can we specify what good deliberation is without simply assuming that our current standards of deliberation and inquiry are the gold standards? (This is the deep and central question of pragmatism: how do genuine norms arise out of contingent practices?) It will be unsurprising that I agree with Robert Talisse that the way forward is to focus on an epistemic justification of the whole range of deliberative virtues. Some of the virtues we think important in inquiry are open-mindedness, courage, honesty, integrity, rigor, willingness to listen to the views of others and to seriously entertain challenges to one’s own views, willingness to put oneself in another’s shoes, and the like. These virtues may well have a number of kinds of justifications – justifications, for instance, with their origins in the canons of etiquette or in this or that substantive moral or religious view. Politeness and Christianity (do unto others . . . ), for instance,may both dictate that we should listen to the views of others. But this kind of justification doesn’t break out of the circle of local practices. Talisse argues that the virtues are justified because they lead to true belief. Listening to others is not merely the polite thing to do, but it is also good because we might learn something. The epistemic argument I have presented on Peirce’s behalf gets us this far: we need to expose our beliefs to the views of others if we are to follow a method that will get us good or better or true beliefs. Talisse takes us the next step – there are other characteristics that make one an inquirer who aims at the truth. Honesty is the trait of following reasons and evidence, rather than self-interest. Modesty is the trait of taking your views to be fallible. Charity is willingness to listen to the views of others. Integrity is willingness to uphold the deliberative process, no matter the difficulties encountered. The distinction between deliberating well (having deliberative virtues) and deliberating badly (having deliberative vices), that is, is drawn in terms of whether a method promotes beliefs which are responsive to and fit with the reasons and evidence. 7 . THE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY The pragmatist has offered us a compelling reason to take the views of others seriously and encourage the values associated with deliberative democratic politics. For inquirers must engage in the ongoing project of continually subjecting their beliefs to the tests of further experience and argument. The virtues inherent in a deliberative model of democratic citizenship must be cultivated if we are to come to good beliefs about how to treat others, how to resolve conflicts, and how to arrange society. The model of democratic citizenship which results is one that makes democratic citizenship part of a culture of justification. Citizens search for how best to structure our institutions and how best to live our lives. Democratic citizenship is a quest to get things right, with a genuine engagement in looking for right answers to pressing questions.We are not after mere agreement and we are not after the transformation of initial preferences into something that others can accept. We aim at getting things right – at getting beliefs that would forever stand up to scrutiny. In so aiming, citizens commit themselves to abiding by the decisions produced by the democratic procedure. For those decisions are the best we can do here and now. Here we find the justification of the coercive power of democracies. Eventually there has to be a decision in politics. The question that faces all societies is who decides and who wields the power to coerce once the decision is made? My argument is that as more people deliberate and more reasons and experience go into the mix, it will become more likely that the decisions made will account for the reasons and experience of all. The more likely, that is, that the answer will be right. Decisions produced by a democratic deliberative process are made by a rational method and so they are enforceable.

#### Frame procedural impacts through a lens of optimization – we don’t need to win that they make the game impossible, just relatively less effective. In the same way you would vote aff to reject a bad process CP even if there are theoretically solvency deficits based on certainty and immediacy – the fact that we still have some neg ground doesn’t mean that reading the cap k for the 87th time against a survival strategy aff is a good debate to have for anyone involved

#### They have no offense

#### View T impacts as a process, not a product – any education impact about their content being important are solved by reading a book – filter impacts through what is unique to the process of debating itself

#### They get to read it on the neg – if their k of being topical is true then reading the aff as a K on the neg means they get auto-wins, we still access their education

#### The TVA solves – they could have read an aff that that highlighted the benefits of union and strike protection to trans people or pointed out how strikes can be used to redress economic inequality between trans and cis people. They could even have made arguments about how topical analyses of trans oppression deserve more weight because of the disregarding of trans lives and issues in the debate space, solving for their epistemological claims- this would allow a discussion of the aff in a forum that allows us to have nuanced responses – yes, it isn’t perfect, but those imperfections are neg ground – if they aren’t forced to defend a controversy, then the meaning of any wins they get become hollow anyway which takes out solvency

## 2 – Indefinite Critique K

**The affirmative calls for an indefinite questioning and breaking down of subject positions**

**The infinitely regressive search for the perfectly authentic subject position, free of the influences of ideology, forces the subject to disregard the immediate responsibility created by human vulnerability and dependence on others. The methodology of the AC would have us forgo opportunities to redress the suffering of others for lack of perfect confidence that we aren’t reproducing some harmful ideology. Our responsibility to the other means that we have to gesture in two directions, both questioning our identities but also suspending that questioning to act on our obligations to others. Berstein ‘91**

**Richard J. Bernstein [Prof of Philosophy, New School for Social Research], “An Allegory of Modernity/Postmodernity: Habermas and Derrida,” The Derrida-Habermas Reader. Ed: Lasse Thomassen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 71-97. Orignially in The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991). AT**

Derrida is echoing and reinforcing a point made by many critics of the modern bias that the primary task of moral and political philosophy is to specify and justify the universal rules that ought to govern our decisions and actions. But Derrida is also critical of those who think that an appeal to judgment or phronesis gets us out of this bind.42 He radicalizes the openness that he takes to be characteristic of responsibility and decision by emphasizing the experience of the undecidable. We have to think and act without banisters and barriers – or rather with the realization that it is ‘we’ who construct and deconstruct these barriers. Nevertheless, **responsibility, action, and decision ‘here and now’ demand that we at least temporarily suspend constant questioning. (Otherwise we would slip into inaction and non-commitment** which are also modes of action and commitment.) **This is** his point about **gesturing ‘in opposite directions’. We cannot escape from the responsibilities and obligations that are** thrust upon us – **thrust upon us by the Other. Given our radical contingency we can never know or control when we are called upon to respond. We must always be prepared to confront new unpredictable responsibilities**.43 So when Derrida speaks of his ‘perpetual uneasiness’ he is not merely expressing an idiosyncratic subjective state of mind but rather expressing a condition of undecidability which – to speak in a non-Derridean manner – is built into ‘the human condition’.¶ Derrida has an acute sense that, at least since the ‘rupture’ we call Nietzsche, **we can no longer be content with self-satisfied appeals to moral and political foundations,** first principles and archai. We are compelled to question these. **But** he is equally acute in his realization that such a questioning doesn’t ‘solve’ anything. We cannot assume a permanent frozen stance of an-arche. For this is another fixed metaphysical position. **We cannot escape responsibility, decision, choice.** They are thrust upon us by the Other. **Furthermore, we cannot simply dismiss or ignore those ethical and political principles that are constitutive of our traditions. The problem** – and it is a problem **for which there cannot be any final or permanent ‘solution’ – is to live this perpetual uneasiness in a way in which we ‘gesture in opposite directions at the same time’, where we keep alive the distance of questioning and are prepared to act decisively ‘here and now’ – where we do not hide in bad faith from the double binds that we always confront.**

**Thus the alternative is to embrace a politics of “I want” instead of “I am”. Use identity as merely a jumping off point for demanding change and investing in the future instead of getting caught up in a continuous cycle of focusing one’s subject positions and how society has failed that position. Brown ’95**

Wendy Brown [Professor of political science at Berkeley], States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity (Princeton University Press) (1995), pp. 75-76.

What if it were possible to incite a slight shift in the character of political expression and political claims common to much politicized identity? **What if we sought to supplant the language of "I am" -with its defensive closure on identity, its insistence on the fixity of position, its equation of social with moral positioning-with the language of "I want this for us"? (This is an "I want" that distinguishes itself from a liberal expression of self-interest by virtue of its figuring of a political or collective good as its desire.)** What if we were to rehabilitate the memory of desire within identificatory processes, the moment in desire-either "to have" or "to be''-prior to its wounding?~2 What if "wanting to be" or "wanting to have" were taken up as modes of political speech that could destabilize the formulation of identity as fixed position, as entrenchment by history, and as having necessary moral entailments, even as they affirm "position" and "history" as that which makes the speaking subject intelligible and locatable, as that which contributes to a hermeneutics tor adjudicating desires? If every "I am" is something of a resolution of the movement of desire into fixed and sovereign identity, then this project might involve not only learning to speak but to read "I am" this way: as potentially in motion, as temporal, as not-I, as deconstructable according to a genealogy of want rather than as fixed interests or experiences. 43 The subject understood as an effect of an (ongoing) genealogy of desire, including the social processes constitutive of, fulfilling, or frustrating desire, is in this way revealed as neither sovereign nor conclusive even as it is affirmed as an "I.'' In short, if framed in a political language, this deconstruction could be that which reopens a desire for futurity where Nietzsche saw it foreclosed by the logics of rancor and ressentiment. Such a slight shift in the character of the political discourse of identity eschews the kinds of ahistorical or utopian turns against identity politics made by a nostalgic and broken humanist Left as well as the reactionary and disingenuous assaults on politicized identity tendered by the Right. **Rather than opposing or seeking to transcend identity investments, the replacement**-even the admixture-**of the language of "being" with "wanting" would seek to exploit politically a recovery of the more expansive moments in the genealogy of identity formation, a recovery of the moment prior to its own foreclosure against its want, prior to the point at which its sovereign subjectivity is established through such foreclosure and through eternal repetition of its pain. How might democratic discourse itself be invigorated by such a shift from ontological claims to these kinds of more expressly political ones, claims that, rather than dispensing blame for an unlivable present, s**

# Case

1. They read no advocacy and no solvency evidence. They say the aff advocates for pre-fiat change, but they don't say what that change is. That means:a) you should assume the Aff doesn't solve anything. How does the aff force the recognition of violence? How does it make trans folx model debaters? How does it spread queer epistemology beyond this one speech act? How does it start a discussion that combats trans oppression? These are important goals and they should have the burden of showing they solve for them. If they don't materially change oppressive conditions for trans folks, then their Aff only serves to affect a catharsis that undercuts the impetus for future action.b) This is another link into T-framework. Their Aff is an extensive description of the oppression of trans-folx, there is no way to negate it unless they advocate for some course of action.
2. Because their only advocacy is “trans people are oppressed,” they force us to either deny or minimize that oppression – by running this as an aff, they suggest that the oppression of trans people is debatable – turns case. Their aff doesn’t solve if it’s not contestable because debate is educational precisely thanks to its ability to create a rigorous contest of ideas
3. There’s no case argument that says that using the state as a mechanism to resolve trans issues is bad. Their whole aff is listing ways that anti-trans violence is institutionalized in the government, so clearly they agree that governmental and social structures are a source of violence for trans people – they should have to advocate for policies that change those things

#### Their refusal to engage in political discourse is harmful -- reform makes revolution more likely. Rejecting it condescendingly asserts the possibility of radical change is better than the certainty of real improvement.

**Delgado ’87 -** Delgado, Richard [teaches civil rights and critical race theory at University of Alabama School of Law. He has written and co-authored numerous articles and books], “The Ethereal Scholar:  Does Critical Legal Studies Have What Minorities Want?”, Harvard Civil Rights - Civil Liberties Law Review, 1987

Critical scholars reject the idea of piecemeal reform. Incremental change, they argue, merely postpones the wholesale reformation that must occur to create a decent society.38 Even worse, an unfair social system survives by using piecemeal reform to disguise and legitimize oppression. 39 Those who control the system weaken resistance by pointing to the occasional concession to, or periodic court victory of, a black plaintiff or worker as evidence that the system is fair and just.40 In fact, Crits believe that teaching the common law or using the case method in law school is a disguised means of preaching incrementalism and thereby maintaining the current power structure.41 To avoid this, CLS scholars urge law professors to abandon the case method, give up the effort to find rationality and order in the case law, and teach in an unabashedly political fashion. 42

**The** CLS **critique of piecemeal reform is** familiar, **imperialistic and wrong.** **Minorities know from bitter experience that occasional court victories do not mean the Promised Land is at hand.**43 **The critique** is imperialistic in that it **tells minorities and other oppressed peoples how they should interpret events affecting them.**44 **A court order directing a housing authority to disburse funds for heating** in subsidized housing **may postpone the revolution, or it may not. In the meantime, the order keeps a number of poor families warm.** This may mean more to them than it does to a comfortable academic working in a warm office. **It smacks of paternalism to assert that the possibility of revolution later outweighs the certainty of heat now**, unless there is evidence for that possibility**.** The Crits do not offer such evidence.

Indeed, some **incremental changes may bring revolutionary changes closer**, not push them further away**.** Not all **small reforms** induce complacency; some may **whet the appetite for further combat.** The welfare family may hold a tenants' union meeting in their heated living room. CLS scholars' **critique of piecemeal reform** often **misses these possibilities, and neglects the question of whether total change, when it comes, will be what we want.**

#### Practicing policy making in debate is the best way to promote activism. Coverstone *2005*[[1]](#footnote-1)*:*

However, contest debate teaches students to combine personal experience with the language of political power. Powerful personal narratives unconnected to political power are regularly co-opted by those who do learn the language of power. One need look no further than the annual state of the Union Address where personal story after personal story is used to support the political agenda of those in power. The so-called role-playing that public policy contest debates encourage promotes active learning of the vocabulary and levers of power in America. Imagining the ability to use our own arguments to influence government action is one of the great virtues of academic debate. Gerald Graff (2003) analyzed the decline of argumentation in academic discourse and found a source of student antipathy to public argument in an interesting place.¶ I’m up against…their aversion to the role of public spokesperson that formal writing presupposes. It’s as if such students can’t imagine any rewards for being a public actor or even imagining themselves in such a role. This lack of interest in the public sphere may in turn reflect a loss of confidence in the possibility that the arguments we make in public will have an effect on the world. Today’s students’ lack of faith in the power of persuasion reflects the waning of the ideal of civic participation that led educators for centuries to place rhetorical and argumentative training at the center of the school and college curriculum. (Graff, 2003, p. 57)¶ The power to imagine public advocacy that actually makes a difference is one of the great virtues of the traditional notion of fiat that critics deride as mere simulation. Simulation of success in the public realm is far more empowering to students than completely abandoning all notions of personal power in the face of governmental hegemony by teaching students that “nothing they can do in a contest debate can ever make any difference in public policy.” Contest debating is well suited to rewarding public activism if it stops accepting as an article of faith that personal agency is somehow undermined by the so-called role playing in debate. Debate is role-playing whether we imagine government action or imagine individual action. Imagining myself starting a socialist revolution in America is no less of a fantasy than imagining myself making a difference on Capitol Hill. Furthermore, both fantasies influenced my personal and political development virtually ensuring a life of active, pro-social, political participation. Neither fantasy reduced the likelihood that I would spend my life trying to make the difference I imagined. One fantasy actually does make a greater difference: the one that speaks the language of political power. The other fantasy disables action by making one a laughingstock to those who wield the language of power. Fantasy motivates and role-playing trains through visualization. Until we can imagine it, we cannot really do it. Role-playing without question teaches students to be comfortable with the language of power, and that language paves the way for genuine and effective political activism.¶ Debates over the relative efficacy of political strategies for pro-social change must confront governmental power at some point. There is a fallacy in arguing that movements represent a better political strategy than voting and person-to-person advocacy. Sure, a full-scale movement would be better than the limited voice I have as a participating citizen going from door to door in a campaign, but so would full-scale government action. Unfortunately, the gap between my individual decision to pursue movement politics and the emergence of a full-scale movement is at least as great as the gap between my vote and democratic change. They both represent utopian fiat. Invocation of Mitchell to support utopian movement fiat is simply not supported by his work, and too often, such invocation discourages the concrete actions he argues for in favor of the personal rejectionism that under girds the political cynicism that is a fundamental cause of voter and participatory abstention in America today.

#### Using the government as a heuristic is better pragmatically and forces us to truly investigate political structures in search of ways to improve instead of using abstract solutions for concrete impacts.

**Zannoti ’13 -** Zannoti, Laura, associate professor of Political Science at Virginia Tech., Ph.D. from the University of Washington in 2008 and joined the Purdue University faculty in 2009. “Governmentality, Ontology, Methodology: Re-thinking Political Agency in the Global World”, originally published online 30 December 2013, DOI: 10.1177/0304375413512098, P. Sage Publications MC

By questioning substantialist representations of power and subjects, inquiries on the possibilities of political agency are reframed in a way that focuses on power and subjects’ relational character and the contingent processes of their (trans)formation in the context of agonic relations. **Options for resistance**

**to governmental scripts are not limited**

**to ‘‘rejection,’’ ‘‘revolution,’’ or ‘‘dispossession’’ to regain** a pristine ‘‘freedom from all constraints’’ or **an immanent ideal social order. It is found** instead **in** multifarious and contingent **struggles** that are **constituted within the scripts of governmental rationalities and at the same time exceed and transform them. This approach questions oversimplifications** of the complexities **of liberal political rationalities and** of their interactions with non-liberal political players and **nurtures a radical skepticism about identifying universally good or bad actors or abstract solutions to political problems.** International power interacts in complex ways with diverse political spaces and within these spaces it is appropriated, hybridized, redescribed, hijacked, and tinkered with. **Governmentality as a heuristic focuses on performing complex diagnostics of events.** It invites historically situated explorations and careful differentiations rather than overarching demonizations of ‘‘power,’’ romanticizations of the ‘‘rebel’’ or the ‘‘the local.**’’** More broadly, theoretical formulations that conceive the subject in non-substantialist terms and focus on processes of subjectification, on the ambiguity of power discourses, and on hybridization as the terrain for political transformation, open ways for reconsidering political agency beyond the dichotomy of oppression/rebellion. **These alternative formulations** also **foster an ethics of political engagement,** to be continuously taken up through plural and uncertain practices, **that demand continuous attention to ‘‘what happens’’ instead of fixations on ‘‘what ought to be.’’**83 **Such ethics of engagement would not await the revolution to come** or hope for a pristine ‘‘freedom’’ to be regained**. Instead, it would constantly attempt to twist the working of power by playing with whatever cards are available and would require intense processes of reflexivity on the consequences of political choices.** To conclude with a famous phrase by Michel Foucault ‘‘my point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to hyper- and pessimistic activism.

#### Policy nihilism cedes politics to Trump---reject their anti-politics

Claudio 16 – assistant professor of development studies and Southeast Asian studies at the Ateneo de Manila University (Lisandro, “Intellectuals have ushered the world into a dangerous age of political nihilism,” http://qz.com/721914/intellectuals-have-ushered-the-world-into-a-dangerous-age-of-political-nihilism/)

On the surface, it would seem that intellectuals have nothing to do with the rise of global illiberalism. The movements powering Brexit, Donald Trump and Third-World strongmen like Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte all gleefully reject books, history and [higher education](http://news.abs-cbn.com/focus/05/16/16/duterte-blasts-elitists-yung-valedictorian-trabahante-ko-ngayon) in favor of railing against common enemies like outsiders and globalization. And you’ll find few Trump supporters among the largely [left-wing American professoriate](http://dailysignal.com/2016/01/14/liberal-professors-outnumber-conservative-faculty-5-to-1-academics-explain-why-this-matters/). Yet intellectuals are accountable for the rise of these movements—albeit indirectly. Professors have offered stringent criticisms of neoliberal society. But they have failed to offer the public viable alternatives. In this way, they have promoted a political nihilism that has set the stage for new movements that reject liberal democratic principles of tolerance and institutional reform. Intellectuals have a long history of critiquing liberalism, which [relies](https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/illiberalism-worldwide-crisis/) on a “philosophy of individual rights and (relatively) free markets.” Beginning in the 19th century, according to historian Francois Furet, left-wing thinkers began to arrive at a consensus “that modern liberal democracy was threatening society with dissolution because it atomized individuals, made them indifferent to public interest, weakened authority, and encouraged class hatred.” For most of the 20th century, anti-liberal intellectuals were able to come up with alternatives. Jean-Paul Sartre famously defended the Soviet Union even when it became clear that Joseph Stalin was a mass murderer. French, American, Indian, and Filipino university radicals were hopelessly enamored of Mao Zedong’s Cultural Revolution in the 1970s. The collapse of Communism changed all this. Some leftist intellectuals began to find hope in small revolutionary guerrillas in the Third World, like Mexico’s Subcomandante Marcos. Others fell back on pure critique. Academics are now mostly gadflies who rarely offer strategies for political change. Those who do forward alternatives propose ones so vague or divorced from reality that they might as well be proposing nothing. (The Duke University professor of romance studies Michael Hardt, for example, thinks the evils of modern globalization are so pernicious that only [worldwide love](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioopkoppabI) is the answer.) Such thinking promotes political hopelessness. It rejects gradual change as cosmetic, while patronizing those who think otherwise. This nihilism easily spreads from the classroom and academic journals to op-ed pages to [Zuccotti Park](http://fortune.com/2016/03/23/occupy-wall-street-donald-trump-rise/), and eventually to the public at large. For academic nihilists, the shorthand for the world’s evils is “neoliberalism.” The term is used to refer to a free market ideology that forced globalization on people by reducing the power of governments. The more the term is used, however, the more it becomes a vague designation for all global drudgery. Democratic politics in the age of neoliberalism, according to Harvard anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff, is “something of a pyramid scheme: the more it is indulged, the more it is required.” They argue that our belief that we can use laws and constitutional processes to defend our rights is a form of “fetishism” that is ultimately “chimerical.” For the University of Chicago literary theorist Lauren Berlant, the democratic pursuit of happiness amid neoliberalism is nothing but “cruel optimism.” The materialist things that people desire are “actually an obstacle to your flourishing,” she writes. According to this logic, we are trapped by our own ideologies. It is this logic that allows left-wing thinkers to implicitly side with British nativists in their condemnation of the EU. The radical website Counterpunch, for example, describes the EU as a “[neoliberal prison](http://www.counterpunch.org/2016/06/28/the-neoliberal-prison-brexit-hysteria-and-the-liberal-mind/).” It also views liberals seeking to reform the EU as “coopted by the right wing and its goals—from the subversion of progressive economic ideals to neoliberalism, to the enthusiastic embrace of neoconservative doctrine.” Across the Atlantic, Trump supporters are singing a similar tune. Speaking to a black, gay, college-educated Trump supporter, [Samantha Bee was told](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWlUgI4cB4M): “We’ve had these disasters in neoconservatism and neoliberalism and I think that he [Trump] is an alternative to both those paths.” The academic nihilists and the Trumpists are in agreement about a key issue: The system is fundamentally broken, and liberals who believe in working patiently toward change are weak. For the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “indifference” is the “the hallmark of political liberalism.” Since liberals balance different interests and rights, Santos writes, they have no permanent friends or foes. He proposes that the world needs to “revive the friend/foe dichotomy.” And in a profane way, it has: modern political movements pit Americans against Muslims, Britain against Europe, a dictatorial government against criminals. Unfortunately, academic anti-liberalism is not confined to the West. The Cornell political scientist Benedict Anderson once described liberal democracy in the Philippines as a “[Cacique Democracy](https://newleftreview.org/I/169/benedict-anderson-cacique-democracy-and-the-philippines-origins-and-dreams),” dominated by feudal landlords and capitalist families. In this system, meaningful reform is difficult, since the country’s political system is like a “well-run casino,” where tables are rigged in favor of oligarch bosses. Having a nihilist streak myself, I once echoed Anderson when I chastised Filipino nationalists for projecting “hope onto spaces within an elite democracy.” Like Anderson, I offered no alternative. The alternative arrived recently in the guise of the Duterte, the new president of the Philippines. Like Anderson and me, [Duterte complained](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38Jy6C-27oc) about the impossibility of real change in a democracy dominated by elites and oligarchs. But unlike us, he proposed a way out: a [strong political leader](http://qz.com/691533/the-philippines-new-president-is-no-trump-of-the-east-but-hes-terrifying-in-his-own-right/) who was willing to kill to save the country from criminals and corrupt politicians. The spread of global illiberalism is unlikely to end soon. As this crisis unfolds, we will need intellectuals who use their intellects for more than simple negation—professors like the late New York University historian Tony Judt, who argued that [European-style social democracy could save global democracy](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrePxnR4HcE). Failing that, we need academics who acknowledge that liberal democracy, though slow and imperfect, enables a bare minimum of tolerance in a world beset by xenophobia and hatred. For although academics have the luxury of imagining a completely different world, the rest of us have to figure out what to do with the one we have.

#### Reject ethics first – the aff’s political irrelevance magnifies the power of the Right – their criticism of the state requires political action to reverse its power

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In this polemical piece I have just been talking about how, following an ethos of radicalism as withdrawal from the state, some from the radical Left were incapable of being able to respond to the new stakes of radical politics. In particular, they were not found at the state, where the passive public turned to resolve the crisis. I will now go on to examine how in recent years significant parts of the radical Left have also tended to prioritise raising awareness of our ethical responsibilities, over capturing state power. I am going to say that it is important to create this awareness. However, in an effort to draw attention to the stakes of politics as we find them now, post-2008, I will also point out that we should not place too much faith in this approach alone.∂ Against the backdrop of what I have just been saying, it is important to remember that while much attention is focused upon President Obama, in many other parts of the world the Right and fundamentalism are gaining strength through capturing state power. The perception that the USA has changed is accompanied by a sense of relief among many radicals. However, the European Elections of 2009, the largest trans-national vote in history, heralded a continent-wide shift to the Right (and far Right) in many places—in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Estonia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portgual, Slovenia, Spain, Romania, as just some examples (Wall Street Journal, 2009). Despite Obama’s election and a near depression, neo-liberalism continues to be implemented through a world spanning apparatus of governmental and intergovernmental organisations, think tanks and trans-national corporations (Massey, 2009; Castree, 2009). The power of the Right in countries like Iran, while checked, remains unchallenged by the Left. Albertazzi et al. (2009) draw attention to how a disconnected Left is leaving power in the hands of the Right in many other countries nationally, like Italy for example. Reflecting upon contemporary radical politics, the British Labour politician Clare Short (2009, p. 67) concludes:∂ In the fog of the future, I see a rise of fascistic movements . . . I am afraid it will all get nastier before we see a rise in generous, radical politics, but I suspect that history is about to speed up in front of our eyes and all who oppose the radicalisation of fear, ethnic hatred, racialism and division have to be ready to create a new movement that contains the solutions to the monumental historical problems we currently face.∂ So, the stakes of politics are clear. The Right is on the rise. Neo-liberal ideology is still dominant. How is the Left responding to these stakes? I have already discussed how some from the radical Left are placing too much faith in civil society organisations that seek to withdraw from the state. I will now turn to how others have too much faith in the power of raising awareness of our ethical responsibilities.∂ Post-crisis, the increasing popularity of David Chandler’s (2004, 2007, 2009a, 2009b) work reflects the sense that radicals too often celebrate the ethical individual as a radical force, at the expense of wider representational programmes for change. His central argument is that this leaves radicals impotent. Chandler (2009a, p. 78–79) says that many radicals∂ argue that there is nothing passive or conservative about radical political activist protests, such as the 2003 anti-war march, anti-capitalism and anti-globalisation protests, the huge march to Make Poverty History at the end of 2005, involvement in the World Social Forums or the radical jihad of Al-Qaeda. I disagree; these new forms of protest are highly individualised and personal ones— there is no attempt to build a social or collective movement. It appears that theatrical suicide, demonstrating, badge and bracelet wearing are ethical acts in themselves: personal statements of awareness, rather than attempts to engage politically with society.∂ In one way, Chandler’s reflective insight here is not particularly unique. Many others also seem to think that radicals today are too isolated and disengaged (Martin, 2009).5 Neither is it particularly original to say that there is too much emphasis upon creativity and spontaneity (what Richard Sennett, 2004, calls ‘social jazz’), and not enough upon representational politics. Indeed, go to many radical blogs and you find radicals themselves constantly complaining about how it has become too easy to sign up to ethical web petitions, email complaints, join a variety of ethical causes, without actually developing the political programmes themselves that matter. So it is not Chandler’s point about radicals being disengaged from instrumental politics that concerns me here. It is his related point—that there has been a flight into ethics, away from political accountability and responsibility that I find intriguing. Personal statements of ethical awareness have become particularly important within radical politics today. It is therefore interesting to note, as I will now discuss, that we have been here before.∂ In his earlier writings Karl Marx (1982) criticised the German Idealists for retreating into ethics, instead of seizing the institutions of power that mattered for themselves. Unwilling to express their self-interests politically through capturing power, the Idealists would rather make statements about their ethical awareness. Such idealism, along with an unwillingness to be held accountable for political power, often goes hand in hand. For Marx, it is necessary to feel the weight, but also the responsibility of power.∂ Chandler argues that, just as when the early Marx critiqued German Idealism, we should now be drawing attention to the pitfalls of the flights to ethics today. He says:∂ In the case of the German bourgeoisie, Marx concludes that it is their weakness and fragmentation, squeezed between the remnants of the ancien re´gime and the developing industrial proletariat, which explains their ideological flight into values. Rather than take on political responsibility for overthrowing the old order, the German bourgeoisie denied their specific interests and idealised progress in the otherworldly terms of abstract philosophy, recoiling from the consequences of their liberal aspirations in practice. (Chandler, 2007, p. 717)∂ Today we are witnessing a renewed interest in ethics (Laı¨di, 1998; Badiou, 2002). Fragmented, many radicals retreat into abstract ethical slogans like ‘another world is possible’, ‘global human rights’, or ‘making poverty history’. As discussed above, we are also of course seeing the return of Kant’s cosmopolitanism. While I think we should not attack the ethical turn for its values, as many of these around environmental issues and human rights are admirable, it is equally important to say that the turn to ethics seems to reflect a certain lack of willingness to seize power and be held accountable to it. For the flight to ethics, as it often plays out in radical politics today, seems to be accompanied by scepticism toward representational politics.∂ Continuing with this theme for a moment, Slavoj Z ˇ izˇek (2008) also sheds some more light upon why ethics (when compared to representational politics) has become so important to the Left in recent years. He says that many of us (he is of course writing for the Left) feel that we are unable to make a real difference through representational politics on a larger scale, when it comes to the big political problems of life. Z ˇ izˇek (2008, p. 453) talks of this feeling that ‘we cannot ever predict the consequences of our acts’; that nothing we do will ‘guarantee that the overall outcome of our interactions will be satisfactory’. And he is right to make this point. Today, our geographical imaginations are dominated by a broader sense of chaos and Global Complexity (Urry, 2003; Stengers, 2005).∂ These ways of thinking, deep in the psyche of many radicals on the Left may be one other reason why so many have retreated into ethics. When we do not really believe that we can change the world through developing fine detailed instruments, capturing the state, or predictive models, we are naturally more hesitant. It is better to try and raise ethical awareness instead. Whereas in the past power was something to be won and treasured, something radicals could use to implement a collective ideology, today, with the risk posed by representation in fragmented societies, top-down power often becomes a hazard, even an embarrassment, for many on the Left (Laı¨di, 1998). This is, as I have already discussed, where the Right and neo-liberal ideologues are seizing the opportunity of the moment.∂ Putting what I have just said another way, there is a need to be clear, perhaps more so in these interdisciplinary times—ethics and politics (particularly representational politics) are different. Of course they are related. You cannot do politics without an ethical perspective. But my point here is that the Right and neo-liberal ideologues will not simply go away if the Left adopt or raise awareness of alternative ethical lifestyles. The Right are willing to capture state power, particularly at this time when the state is increasingly powerful. When we compare the concerted political programme of neo-liberalism, first developed by Reagan, Thatcher, the IMF, the World Bank, NATO, multi-national banks, and the G20, as just some of many examples, ethical individuals across the world offer some counter-resistance. But the 2008 crisis, and the response of protests like the Alternative G20, demonstrated how weak ethical resistance is in the face of the institutions of the neo-liberal economy.

1. Alan H. Coverstone**,** 2005 **–** masters in communication from Wake Forest and longtime debate coach. “Acting on Activism: Realizing the Vision of Debate with Pro-social Impact,” Paper presented at the National Communication Association Annual Conference, 11/17/05. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)