# 1AC (5:58)

### FW

#### We’ve entered the virtual, the fourth and final order of the hyperreal. Truth becomes undistinguishable from the untruth and people are spurred into a panic over whether or not life as we know it is true or false. Society has become the new simulacra and we’ve become mere technological pieces, sitting and observing the rapid loss of objectivity around us as a part of a great technological network.

Sichler 10 (Sichler, K.. “Post Queerness : Hyperreal Gender and the End of the Quest for Origins.” (2010).)

**Within Baudrillard’s schema of hyperreality there exists four orders of understanding: counterfeit, production, simulation, and virtual**. Since the dawn of the Italian Renaissance, humanity has been slowly and steadily working its way through the levels of simulacra. As technologies have both evolved and progressed, thereby making us ever more independent from the “natural” world, society’s movement through the various orders of reality has been accelerated resulting in an ever shorter grace period between the orders. Through these four stages, an understanding of the importance of humanity’s growing interconnectedness with not only the mechanization of life but also its growing dependence on our “mediated” lives can be appreciated. Even without a definitive beginning and end point in place, one can still discuss the postmodern condition of hyperreality. While theorists from Walter Benjamin forward have discussed the loss that occurs when a “real object” is reproduced, hyperreality reconfigures the notion of loss so it becomes the loss of conventionally-held notions of reality. In Symbolic Exchange and Death, Baudrillard writes “[t]he modern sign dreams of the sign anterior to it and fervently desires, in its reference to the real, to rediscover some binding obligation. But it finds only a reason: a referential reason, the real - the ‘natural’ on which it will feed.”14 The loss is not only felt by the viewer/receiver of the sign but the sign/simulacra itself. Without a support structure, the copy may easily fall into a void of meaninglessness as an actual object on this metaphysical plane is no longer necessary. America, Disneyland and all of its inhabitants are now moving away from the third order of simulacra and are now entering a new world: the virtual. Instead of the paradigm of human existence put forth by William Shakespeare several centuries ago that equated man to actors on a stage, “we no longer exist as playwrights or actors but as terminals of multiple networks.”20 The flesh and bone and blood so central to our personal understanding of reality has been replaced by USB cords, Ethernet cords and satellite television that keeps us connected to the ultimate of conclusion of the trajectory of the hyperreal condition: the virtual. Instead of inhabiting the role of creator, individuals are now receptacles for the simulacra that constitute reality. Baudrillard has not yet definitively declared the historical event that marks the end of the simulation and begins the virtual. For simulacra in the virtual stage of existence, however, “there is no longer any equivalence natural or general. Also, there is not any law of value as such, dialectical or structural. There remains only a sort of epidemic of value, a general metastasis of value; a sort of proliferation and problematic dispersal.”21 With the removal of the need for a referent, the simulacra produced under the fourth order lack any intrinsic value or inherent meaning. The sheer number of simulacra broadcasts and ultimately erodes all self contained, inherent meaning. Yet, the third order of reality has not yet completely let go of its hold on contemporary society. In his piece entitled “Bathos of Technology and Politics in Fourth Order Simulacra,” Mike Gane attempts to make sense of the nature of the virtual in relation to the hyperreal. Gane alludes to the inherent tension when he writes: The problem is that for the reader of the thesis of the fourth order is, as a conception and definition, still in statu nascendi. Just as Baudrillard’s theory of hyperreality (and the end of the social) took over a decade to be seen as having caught the shift that has occurred in our societies, something of the same disbelief hangs over this thesis.22 Thus, to fully critique the essence and extent of the virtual is quite difficult, for discussions on the third order of simulation are difficult enough to comprehend. When considering a concept like reality that, on the one hand seems so tangible, yet defies easy definitions, debate on the nature of reality can ultimately be unsatisfying. The importance of the concept for contemporary society, however, recommends the virtual for at least a consideration as the fourth order of reality. According to Baudrillard, “the image can no longer imagine the real, because it is the real. It can no longer dream it, since it is its virtual reality. It is as though things had swallowed their own mirrors and have become transparent to themselves, entirely present to themselves in a ruthless transcription.”23 While this definition reads very similarly to that of hyperreality, the difference between the two orders comes about not in the genesis of the image but what happens after the image is created. In hyperreality, the image/simulacra is born without referent in the real world, yet the simulacra produced from the hyperreal moment give birth to the referent in the “real” or “unmediated” world. The virtual conception of reality, however, has no need and in fact demands a lack of a corresponding referent in reality either before or after its realization. With the growing power of the virtual, the traditional sense of reality loses power and meaning. In Impossible Exchange, Baudrillard writes: When the world, or reality, finds its artificial equivalent in the virtual, it becomes useless. When the only thing needed to reproduce the species is cloning, sex becomes a useless function…. When artificial memories reign supreme, our organic memories become superfluous (they are, in fact, gradually disappearing). When everything takes place between interactive terminals on the communication screen, the Other has becomes a useless function.24 One need only consider the Internet and the nature of online and offline senses of reality and existence to see how the virtual enters our lives. The lines between mediated and corporeal experiences become blurred. According to Sherry Turkle, “[a]s human beings become increasingly intertwined with the technology and with each other via technology

#### The hyperreal exists—media information is slowly becoming more and more meaningless as objectivity is being denied and rejected for the sake of catering to the public. Thus, the ROJ is to be a critical educator.

Shapiro 17 [Alan, transdisciplinary thinker who studied science-technology at MIT and philosophy-history-literature at Cornell University. He is the author of “Star Trek: Technologies of Disappearance” (Berlin: AVINUS Verlag, 2004), a leading work in science fiction studies and on the conception of futuristic technoscience. He is the editor and translator of “The Technological Herbarium” by Gianna Maria Gatti (Berlin: AVINUS Verlag, 2010), a major study of art and technology. His book “Software of the Future: The Model Precedes the Real” was published by the Walther König Verlag art books publisher of Cologne, Germany in 2014. At his website “Alan N. Shapiro, Technologist and Futurist” (www.alan-shapiro.com), he has already published more than 250 articles (by himself and others). He is recognised as one of the leading experts on the philosophy and cultural theory of Jean Baudrillard. He is currently working on a book of essays for an Italian book publisher. 01/05/2017. “Baudrillard and Trump: Simulation and Object-Orientation, Not True and False,” <http://www.alan-shapiro.com/baudrillard-and-trump-simulation-and-object-orientation-not-true-and-false-by-alan-n-shapiro/>] /

In other words, Trump is the candidate of the era of simulation. Invoking “the truth” against him does not work as a strategy. Trump is already more advanced than the discourse of truth. We are in a hyper-reality where there is no more truth and no more falsehood. Carl “The Truth” Williams, a former heavyweight boxing champion of the world, passed away in April 2013.

Alan Cholodenko comments: If hyper-reality was born for Baudrillard during or just after the Second World War, then there have already been several simulation-Presidents: JFK the first televisual President, Reagan the Hollywood actor and first TV show host (of the General Electric Theatre)-President. Trump takes his place in this lineage. He is the second TV show host (of The Apprentice)-President, the first live show, reality TV show CEO host become live show, reality TV show CEO host-President of the live show, reality TV show America, Inc.)

The mistake of the multitudes of journalists and editorialists like the Washington Post’s Greg Sargent is to not understand that the system of “truth and lies” is not some eternal, ahistorical or “scientifically objective” reality. It is an historically constructed cultural discourse or arrangement tied to an epoch which is finite in time. As Foucault might say, the concern with “true” and “false” is an epistème – an epistemological a priori, an expression of a specific power-knowledge constellation within an era – whose time has come and gone. The insistent belief in “truth and lies” is also embedded in the Plato-initiated “metaphysics” of the “human subject,” the subject-centered worldview, the sovereign (democratic or scientific) subject who “knows” and can therefore judge and determine when “knowledge” or a “fact” has been betrayed.

In the new epistemological system beyond “truth and lies” to which Trump is finely attuned, of which he is the master, and which liberals do not get, the object itself is the hot thing. The spotlight is on objects (conceptual not physical), and they are a relationship, an association which knows nothing of whether they are real or fake. They transcend and straddle true and false. “Things have found a way of avoiding a dialectics of meaning that was beginning to bore them: by proliferating indefinitely, increasing their potential, outbidding themselves in an ascension to the limit, an obscenity that henceforth becomes their immanent finality and senseless reason.” (Baudrillard, Fatal Strategies; p.7) Trump will change what he says on any given topic from day to day, or on any given Sunday. The liberal media will “prove him wrong” with evidence, but this demonstration will have an effect exactly the opposite than that intended upon and for the “silent majority” of half of Americans for whom they are the liars. When did this happen (when was the “Canetti point”)? Impossible to say. To know the point of origin of that would be to overstate the claims of knowledge, to violate the methodological recursivity of our awareness of being lost within the culture of simulation (as Baudrillard has taught us in his fascinating lengthy discussions of the “Canetti point,” and as Gerry Coulter has taught us, for example, in his essay on America).

When Trump said that thousands of Muslims were celebrating on rooftops in Jersey City, New Jersey on 9/11, he was right. 100% right, as he later tweeted. Within the epistemology (theory of knowledge) of the humanist-democratic subject and of truth, the alleged rooftop event of course “did not take place.” Yet in the hyper-modernist epistemology, the rhetorical and emotional power of the words invoked and the mental images evoked by Trump (the advent of hyper-imagination) carry the weight and dynamic force of the image-immersed beyond-chimerical “object” of those evil Muslim celebrators. Probably Trump saw on TV in September 2001 some cynical celebrations in the Palestinian territories. The clandestine wormhole connection between physically remote points in space is plausibly extant. In the culture of virtual images, it is perfectly OK to transpose the bin Laden-sympathetic revelers from one geographical location to another, the hyper-space of Trump’s creative memory mingled with the hyper-dimensional expanding televisual space on the interior of the flatscreen.

Fantasy is possible in a world that is still real. A fantasy could be said to be not true, some sort of illusion (in the non-Baudrillardian meaning of this word) or deception. But when images are everywhere, and they are universally exchangeable with each other, the made-up mental images become hyper-real. Which now (literally) means (hyper-means) more real than real. Meaning becomes hyper-meaning.

Would not the ubiquity of video documentation and recording devices of every kind increase the availability of truth? Whipping the cam around, looking amazing from every angle? No, the effect is just the opposite. When documentation and recording are everywhere, then they are nowhere. They cease to exist in any meaningful sense. They serve no purpose whatsoever anymore. They are pure technology fetish in the bad sense, decoupled through their excess from what they were supposed to enhance or invent. As a hybrid radical-leftist-and-mainstreamer, I do believe that there is a good side to surveillance, a deterrence of crime. But if surveillance is everywhere, then this good side no longer functions. This is the same paradoxical logic that is operative for all virtual and digital media technologies. Yes, all of these wonderful new things are available to us, but we omitted the step of thinking carefully about the appropriate measure of their application. We forgot to humanly judge this. Hybrid posthumanist and humanist. We never took seriously the great thought of Albert Camus, that in almost every area, we need to have a sense of limits (as Dominick LaCapra pointed out). Academic referentiality – which Baudrillard was opposed to – is like this too. If you overdo it, become obsessed with footnotes, then you enter into the twilight zone of hyper-referentiality and then the whole business does not function anymore. You do it because you have to do it and the original purpose is lost.

The “proof” (ha ha!) is now upon us that Baudrillard was right all along. We are now fully in the era of simulation and telemorphosis, of the New Truth of the omnipresent image (both picture-image and word-image – the multi-media of the screen having transformed written words from texts into images). The New Truth is not a lie – that would be too easy and the claim is retrograde. The New Truth institutes its own hyper-reality, which is at present our only reality. The only way to contest simulation and the New Truth would be a strategy or perspective of “taking the side of objects” (see, for example, my most recent IJBS essay, for an elaboration of this). We would have to get to know the codes which underlie and instantiate simulation and reverse them. Reversibility of the code comes from “objects” within the code which want more objecthood. Until we can start to do that, to paraphrase David Cronenberg’s Videodrome: LONG LIVE THE NEW TRUTH!

#### Thus, I affirm Resolved: In a democracy, a free press ought to prioritize objectivity over advocacy.

### FW Offense

#### As it becomes harder and harder to locate objective truth, our world edges closer and closer to be completely void of meaning. However, the first order of hyperreal (the most objective form of society) was the purest and truest form of itself.

Baudrillard 94 (Baudrillard, Jean. Simulacra and Simulation. Translated by Sheila Glaser, University of Michigan Press, 1994.)

Such would be the successive phases of the image: it is the reflection of a profound reality; it masks and denatures a profound reality; it masks the absence of a profound reality; it has no relation to any reality whatsoever; it is its own pure simulacrum. In the first case, the image is a good appearance - representation is of the sacramental order. In the second, it is an evil appearance - it is of the order of maleficence. In the third, it plays at being an appearance - it is of the order of sorcery. In the fourth, it is no longer of the order of appearances, but of simulation. The transition from signs that dissimulate something to signs that dissimulate that there is nothing marks a decisive turning point. The first reflects a theology of truth and secrecy (to which the notion of ideology still belongs). The second inaugurates the era of simulacra and of simulation, in which there is no longer a God to recognize his own, no longer a Last Judgment to separate the false from the true, the real from its artificial resurrection, as everything is already dead and resurrected in advance.

### Contention: Disaster Imagery

#### Breaking news! Currently, objectivity is being twisted and tainted by media advocacy. The images of catastrophe and destruction advocacy journalism/media presents are like a drug, used by the first world nations to feed off the suffering of the rest of the world. Their efforts to solve these problems are coproductive with the disasters themselves, and this constant search for the new spectacle will lead to the destruction of the human species as the ultimate reality TV show.

Baudrillard in 94 [Jean, “The Illusion of the End” p. 66-71]

We have long denounced the capitalistic, economic exploitation of the poverty of the 'other half of the world' [['autre monde]. We must today denounce the moral and sentimental **exploitation** of that poverty - charity cannibalism being **worse** than oppressive violence. The extraction and humanitarian reprocessing of a destitution which has become the equivalent of oil deposits and gold mines. The extortion of the spectacle of poverty and, at the same time, of our charitable condescension: a worldwide appreciated surplus of fine sentiments and bad conscience. We should, in fact, see this not as the extraction of raw materials, but as a waste-reprocessing enterprise. Their destitution and our bad conscience are, in effect, all part of the waste-products of history- the main thing is to recycle them to produce a new energy source. We have here an escalation in the psychological balance of terror. World capitalist oppression is now merely the vehicle and alibi for this other, much more ferocious, form of moral predation. One might almost say, contrary to the Marxist analysis, that material exploitation is only there to extract that spiritual raw material that is the misery of peoples, which serves as psychological nourishment for the rich countries and media nourishment for our daily lives. The 'Fourth World' (we are no longer dealing with a 'developing' Third World) is once again beleaguered, this time as a catastrophe-bearing stratum. The West is whitewashed in the reprocessing of the rest of the world as waste and residue. And the white world repents and seeks absolution - it, too, the waste-product of its own history. The South is a natural producer of raw materials, the latest of which is catastrophe. The North, for its part, specializes in the reprocessing of raw materials and hence also in the reprocessing of catastrophe. Bloodsucking protection, humanitarian interference, Medecins sans frontieres, international solidarity, etc. The last phase of colonialism: the New Sentimental Order is merely the latest form of the New World Order. Other people's destitution becomes our adventure **playground**. Thus, the humanitarian offensive aimed at the Kurds - a show of repentance on the part of the Western powers after allowing Saddam Hussein to crush them - is in reality merely the second phase of the war, a phase in which charitable intervention finishes off the work of extermination. We are the consumers of the ever delightful spectacle of poverty and catastrophe, and of the moving spectacle of our own efforts to alleviate it (which, in fact, merely function to secure the conditions of **reproduction** of the catastrophe market); there, at least, in the order of moral profits, the Marxist analysis is wholly applicable: we see to it that extreme poverty is reproduced as a symbolic deposit, as a fuel essential to the moral and sentimental equilibrium of the West. In our defence, it might be said that this extreme poverty was largely of our own making and it is therefore normal that we should profit by it. There can be no finer proof that the distress of the rest of the world is at the root of Western power and that the spectacle of that distress is its crowning glory than the inauguration, on the roof of the Arche de la Defense, with a sumptuous buffet laid on by the Fondation des Droits de l'homme, of an exhibition of the finest photos of world poverty. Should we be surprised that spaces are set aside in the Arche d' Alliance. for universal suffering hallowed by caviar and champagne? Just as the economic crisis of the West will not be complete so long as it can still exploit the resources of the rest of the world, so the symbolic crisis will be complete only when it is no longer able to feed on the other half's human and natural catastrophes (Eastern Europe, the Gulf, the Kurds, Bangladesh, etc.). We need this drug, which serves us as an aphrodisiac and hallucinogen. And the poor countries are the best suppliers - as, indeed, they are of other drugs. We provide them, through our media, with the means to exploit this paradoxical resource, just as we give them the means to exhaust their natural resources with our technologies. Our whole culture lives off this catastrophic cannibalism, relayed in cynical mode by the news media, and carried forward in moral mode by our humanitarian aid, which is a way of encouraging it and ensuring its continuity, just as economic aid is a strategy for perpetuating under-development. Up to now, the financial sacrifice has been compensated a hundredfold by the moral gain. **But when the catastrophe market itself reaches crisis point**, in accordance with the implacable logic of the market, when distress becomes scarce or the marginal returns on it fall from overexploitation, **when we run out of disasters from elsewhere or when they can no longer be traded like coffee or other commodities, the West will be forced to produce its own catastrophe for itself, in order to meet its need for spectacle and that voracious appetite for symbols which characterizes it even more than its voracious appetite for food.** It will reach the point where it devours itself. When we have finished sucking out the destiny of others, we shall have to invent one for ourselves. The Great Crash, the symbolic crash, will come in the end from us Westerners, but only when we are no longer able to feed on the hallucinogenic misery which comes to us from the other half of the world. Yet they do not seem keen to give up their monopoly. The Middle East, Bangladesh, black Africa and Latin America are really going flat out in the distress and catastrophe stakes, and thus in providing symbolic nourishment for the rich world. They might be said to be overdoing it: heaping earthquakes, floods, famines and ecological disasters one upon another, and finding the means to massacre each other most of the time. The 'disaster show' goes on without any let-up and our sacrificial debt to them far exceeds their economic debt. The misery with which they generously overwhelm us is something we shall never be able to repay. The sacrifices we offer in return are laughable (a tornado or two, a few tiny holocausts on the roads, the odd financial sacrifice) and, moreover, by some infernal logic, these work out as much greater gains for us, whereas our kindnesses have merely added to the natural catastrophes another one immeasurably worse: the demographic catastrophe, a veritable epidemic which we deplore each day in pictures. In short, there is such distortion between North and South, to the symbolic advantage of the South (a hundred thousand Iraqi dead against casualties numbered in tens on our side: in every case we are the losers), that one day everything will break down. One day, the West will break down if we are not soon washed clean of this shame, if an international congress of the poor countries does not very quickly decide to share out this symbolic privilege of misery and catastrophe. It is of course normal, since we refuse to allow the spread of nuclear weapons, that they should refuse to allow the spread of the catastrophe weapon. But it is not right that they should exert that monopoly indefinitely. In any case, the under-developed are only so by comparison with the Western system and its presumed success. In the light of its assumed failure, they are not under-developed at all. They are only so in terms of a dominant evolutionism which has always been the worst of colonial ideologies. The argument here is that there is a line of objective progress and everyone is supposed to pass through its various stages (we find the same eyewash with regard to the evolution of species and in that evolutionism which unilaterally sanctions the superiority of the human race). In the light of current upheavals, which put an end to any idea of history as a linear process, there are no longer either developed or under-developed peoples. Thus, to encourage hope of evolution - albeit by revolution - among the poor and to doom them, in keeping with the objective illusion of progress, to technological salvation is a criminal absurdity. In actual fact, it is their good fortune to be able to escape from evolution just at the point when we no longer know where it is leading. In any case, a majority of these peoples, including those of Eastern Europe, do not seem keen to enter this evolutionist modernity, and their weight in the balance is certainly no small factor in the West's repudiation of its own history, of its own utopias and its own modernity. It might be said that the routes of violence, historical or otherwise, are being turned around and that the viruses now pass from South to North, there being every chance that, five hundred years after America was conquered, 1992 and the end of the century will mark the comeback of the defeated and the sudden reversal of that modernity. The sense of pride is no longer on the side of wealth but of poverty, of those who - fortunately for them - have nothing to repent, and may indeed glory in being privileged in terms of catastrophes. Admittedly, this is a privilege they could hardly renounce, even if they wished to, but natural disasters merely reinforce the sense of guilt felt towards them by the wealthy – by those whom God visibly scorns since he no longer even strikes them down. One day it will be the Whites themselves who will give up their whiteness. It is a good bet that repentance will reach its highest pitch with the five-hundredth anniversary of the conquest of the Americas. We are going to have to lift the curse of the defeated - but symbolically victorious - peoples, which is insinuating itself five hundred years later, by way of repentance, into the heart of the white race. No solution has been found to the dramatic situation of the under-developed, and none will be found since their drama has now been overtaken by that of the overdeveloped, of the rich nations. The psychodrama of congestion, saturation, super abundance, neurosis and the breaking of blood vessels which haunts us - the drama of the excess of means over ends – calls more urgently for attention than that of penury, lack and poverty. That is where the most imminent danger of catastrophe resides, in the societies which have run out of emptiness. **Artificial catastrophes**, like the beneficial aspects of civilization, **progress much more quickly than natural ones**. The underdeveloped are still at the primary stage of the natural, unforeseeable catastrophe. We are already at the second stage, that of the manufactured catastrophe - imminent and foreseeable - and **we shall soon be at that of the pre-programmed catastrophe**, the catastrophe of the third kind, **deliberate and experimental.** And, **paradoxically, it is our pursuit of the means for averting natural catastrophe** - the unpredictable form of destiny - **which will take us there.** Because it is unable to escape it, humanity will pretend to be the author of its destiny. **Because it cannot accept being confronted with an end which is uncertain or governed by fate, it will prefer to stage its own death as a species.**

#### Advocates historically use shocking or horrific imagery to make their point - objectivity doesn't do this. Horrific imagery can create a lasting impression, after all.

Snyder 21 Snyder, Beth. “How Moral Shock Makes An Impression.” Faunalytics. January 19, 2021. <https://faunalytics.org/how-moral-shock-makes-an-impression/>.

Explicitly violent visuals of nonhuman animals have been used by animal advocates throughout the history of the movement. Undercover footage and photos of animals in factory farms, slaughterhouses, and laboratories are key components of the strategies of animal advocacy groups worldwide. Thiscan be a highly impactful and effective tool for making an impression on those not yet in the movement, and for maintaining motivation among advocates. To better understand the role of graphic images in animal advocacy, the author of this study conducted interviews with 60 animal advocates in Denmark, Sweden, and Spain to learn what effect explicit visuals of animal exploitation have had on them, and how they have used these visuals in their advocacy work. She recruited interview subjects using the snowball method, with participants referring her to additional participants. The participant pool was diverse in age, gender, years of activism, and advocacy strategies, though it was skewed in the same ways as the animal advocacy movement at large — female, educated, young, and white. Interviewees reported that exposure to graphic visuals often causes a reaction of moral shock — a visceral reaction to something ethically appalling that impels someone to action. It is the very fact that these images are so jarring that makes them effective at rousing people from apathy and ignorance to action. In most circumstances we try to avoid subjecting ourselves or others to the kind of distress that graphic visuals cause, but sanitized depictions cannot fully convey the urgency and magnitude of the problem. This is why some advocates take it upon themselves to periodically revisit graphic footage and photos in spite of the distress it causes them. They find it motivates them to continue to work to alleviate the suffering they see. Some also see it as a moral duty to bear witness to the true nature of human animals’ exploitation of nonhuman animals. Other advocates find that repeated exposure to the horrors of animal exploitation merely makes them feel hopeless, and has a negative impact on their work. This is one among several potential drawbacks of the moral shock strategy, which must be carefully navigated in order to advocate most effectively. Some advocates believe that over-use of violent images could desensitize viewers and normalize the violence shown. It can also undermine the dignity of the individuals depicted. In an attempt to expose the exploitation of nonhuman animals, we may inadvertently commodify them further in the eyes of those we are trying to reach. Others share a concern that visuals that are too graphic will backfire, and leave viewers so upset that they avoid the issue altogether. Those who are sensitive to the suffering of nonhuman animals can become highly motivated advocates, but not if we alienate them before they have a chance to engage with the issue.

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#### Empowerment through images become reactionary and reproduces structural violence.

Brown 1995 Brown, Wendy. “States Of Injury: Power And Freedom In Late Modernity.” Princeton University Press. July 23, 1995. <https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691029894/states-of-injury>.

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

#### Advocacy forces bystanders to witness violence and pretends to hold empathy - this is the foundation for all modern violence.

Berlant 1998 Berlant, Lauren. “Poor Eliza.” American Literature. 1998. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2902712>.

What distinguishes these critical texts are the startling ways they struggle to encounter the Uncle Tom form without reproducing it, declining to pay the inheritance tax. The postsentimental does not involve an aesthetic disruption to the contract sentimentality makes between its texts and readers -that proper reading will lead to better feeling and therefore to a better self. What changes is the place of repetition in this contract, a crisis frequently thematized in formal aesthetic and generational terms. In its traditional and political modalities, the sentimental promises that in a just world a consensus will already exist about what constitutes uplift, amelioration, and emancipation, those horizons toward which empathy powerfully directs itself. Identification with suffering, the ethical response to the sentimental plot, leads to its repetition in the audience and thus to a generally held view about what transformations would bring the good life into being. This presumption, that the terms of consent are transhistorical once true feeling is shared, explains in part why emotions, especially painful ones, are so central to the world-building aspects of sentimental alliance. Postsentimental texts withdraw from the contract that presumes consent to the conventionally desired outcomes of identification and empathy. The desire for unconflictedness might very well motivate the sacrifice of surprising ideas to the norms of the world against which this rhetoric is being deployed. What, if anything, then, can be built from the very different knowledge/experience of subaltern pain? What can memory do to create conditions for freedom and justice without reconfirming the terms of ordinary subordination? More than a critique of feeling as such, the postsentimental modality also challenges what literature and storytelling have come to stand for in the creation of sentimental national subjects across an almost two-century span. Three moments in this genealogy, which differ as much from each other as from the credulous citation of Uncle Tom's Cabin we saw in The King and I and Dimples, will mark here some potential within the arsenal that counters the repetition compulsions of sentimentality. This essay began with a famous passage from James Baldwin's “Everybody's Protest Novel,” a much-cited essay about Uncle Tom's Cabin that is rarely read in the strong sense because its powerful language of rageful truth-telling would shame in advance any desire to make claims for the tactical efficacy of suffering and mourning in the struggle to transform the United States into a postracist nation. I cited Baldwin's text to open this piece not to endorse its absolute truth but to figure its frustrated opposition to the sentimental optimism that equates the formal achievement of empathy on a mass scale with the general project of democracy. Baldwin's special contribution to what sentimentality can mean has been lost in the social-problem machinery of mass society, in which the production of tears where anger or nothing might have been became more urgent with the coming to cultural dominance of the Holocaust and trauma as models for having and remembering collective social experience.20 Currently, as in traditional sentimentality, the authenticity of overwhelming pain that can be textually performed and shared is disseminated as a prophylactic against the reproduction of a shocking and numbing mass violence. Baldwin asserts that the overvaluation of such redemptive feeling is precisely a condition of that violence. Baldwin's encounter with Stowe in this essay comes amidst a general wave of protest novels, social-problem films, and film noir in the U.S. after World War Two: Gentleman's Agreement, The Postman Always Rings Twice, The Best Years of Our Lives. Films like these, he says, “emerge for what they are: a mirror of our confusion, dishonesty, panic, trapped and immobilized in the sunlit prison of the American dream.” They cut the complexity of human motives and self-understanding “down to size” by preferring “a lie more palatable than the truth” about the social and material effects the liberal pedagogy of optimism has, or doesn't have, on “man's” capacity to produce a world of authentic truth, justice, and freedom.21 Indeed, “truth” is the keyword for Baldwin. He defines it as “a devotion to the human being, his freedom and fulfillment: freedom which cannot be legislated, fulfillment which cannot be charted.”22 In contrast, Stowe's totalitarian religiosity, her insistence that subjects “bargain” for heavenly redemption with their own physical and spiritual mortification, merely and violently confirms the fundamental abjection of all persons, especially the black ones who wear the dark night of the soul out where all can see it. Additionally, Baldwin argues that Uncle Tom's Cabin instantiates a tradition of locating the destiny of the nation in a false model of the individual soul, one imagined as free of ambivalence, aggression, or contradiction. By “human being” Baldwin means to repudiate stock identities as such, arguing that their stark simplicity confirms the very fantasies and institutions against which the sentimental is ostensibly being mobilized. This national-liberal refusal of complexity is what he elsewhere calls “the price of the ticket” for membership in the American dream.23 As the Uncle Tom films suggest, whites need blacks to “dance” for them so that they might continue disavowing the costs or ghosts of whiteness, which involve religious traditions of self-loathing and cultural traditions confusing happiness with analgesia. The conventional reading of “Everybody's Protest Novel” sees it as a violent rejection of the sentimental.24 It is associated with the feminine (Little Women), with hollow and dishonest capacities of feeling, with an aversion to the real pain that real experience brings. “Causes, as we know, are notoriously bloodthirsty,” he writes.25 The politico-sentimental novel uses suffering vampirically to simplify the subject, thereby making the injunction to empathy safe for the subject. Of course there is more to the story. Baldwin bewails the senti- mentality of Richard Wright's Native Son because Bigger Thomas is not the homeopathic Other to Uncle Tom after all, but one of his “children,” the heir to his negative legacy.26 Both Tom and Thomas live in a simple relation to violence and die knowing only slightly more than they did before they were sacrificed to a white ideal of the soul's simple purity, its emptiness. This addiction to the formula of redemption through violent simplification persists with a “terrible power”: it confirms that U.S. minorities are constituted as Others even to themselves through attachment to the most hateful, objectified, cartoon-like versions of their identities, and that the shamed subcultures of America really are, in some way, fully expressed by the overpresence of the stereotypical image.

#### Advocates often claim that they have to use shocking imagery to protest something - this fails.

Baudrillard 06 Baudrillard, Jean. “Our Society’s Judgment And Punishment.” International Journal of Baudrillard Studies. July, 2006. <https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/our-societys-judgment-and-punishment/>.

What or who can stop globalization? Surely not anti-globalization forces, whose real aim is only to slow deregulation. The anti-globalization forces have considerable political influence but their symbolic impact is non existent. The violence of the protestors is simply one more event that system will absorb while continuing to control the game. Singularities however confound the system. Singularities are neither positive nor negative and they do not represent alternatives. They are outside of the system and they cannot be evaluated by value judgments or through principles of political reality. They correspond to both the best and the worst. Singularities play by another set of rules which they determine themselves allowing them to stand as impediments to the single-track thinking of the dominant mode of thought (although they are only one kind of challenge to the system). Singularities are not inherently violent – they represent unique characteristics of language, art, culture, and the body. Violent singularities such as terrorism do also exist. Violent singularities attempt to avenge the various cultures that disappeared in the face of an emerging global power. What we have before us is not so much a clash of civilizations as an anthropological struggle pitting a monolithic universal culture against all manifestations of otherness, wherever they may be found.

#### The media's presentation of suffering creates traumatic experiences that are packaged up and distributed to each household.

Berlant 1999 Berlant, Lauren. “The Subject Of True Feeling: Pain, Privacy, And Politics.” Left Legalism / Left Critique. 1999. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv11hpn4c?turn\_away=true>.

Ravaged wages and ravaged bodies saturate the global marketplace in which the United States seeks desperately to compete “competitively,” as the euphemism goes, signifying a race that will be won by the nations whose labor conditions are most optimal for profit? In the United States the media of the political public sphere regularly register new scandals of the proliferating sweatshop networks “at home” and “abroad,” which has to be a good thing, because it produces feeling and with it something at least akin to consciousness that can lead to action.3 Yet even as the image of the traumatized worker proliferates, even as evidence of exploitation is found under every rock or commodity, it competes with a normative/utopian image of the U.S. citizens who remains unmarked, framed, and protected by the private trajectory of his life project which is sanctified at the juncture where the unconscious meets history: the American Dream.4 in that story one’s identity is not borne of suffering, mental, physical, or economic. If the U.S. Worker’s lucky enough to live at an economic moment that sustains the Dream he gets to appear at his least national when he is working and at his most national at leisure, with his family or in semipublic worlds of other men producing surplus manliness (e.g., via sports). In the American dreamscape his identity is private property, a zone in which structural obstacles and cultural differences fade into an ether of prolonged, deferred, and individuating enjoyment that he has earned and that the nation has helped him to earn. Meanwhile, exploitation only appears as a scandalous nugget in the sieve of memory when it can be condensed into an exotic thing of momentary fascination, a squalor of the bottom too horrible to be read in its own actual banality. The exposed traumas of workers in ongoing extreme conditions do not generally induce more than mourning on the part of the state and the public culture to whose feeling based opinions the state is said to respond. Mourning is what happens when a grounding object is lost, is dead, no longer living (to you). Mourning is an experience of irreducible boundedness: I am here, I am living, he is dead, I am mourning. It is a beautiful, not sublime, experience of emancipation: mourning supplies the subject the definitional perfection of a being no longer in flux. It takes place over a distance: even if the object who induces the feeling of loss and helplessness is neither dead nor at any great distance from where you are? In other words, mourning can also be an act of aggression, of social deathmaking: it can perform the evacuation of significance from actually-existing subjects. Even when liberals do it, one might say, are ghosted for a good cause.6 The sorrow songs of scandal that sing of the exploitation that is always “elsewhere” (even a few blocks away) are in this sense aggressively songs of mourning. Play them backward, and the military march of capitalist triumphalism (The Trans-Nationale) can be heard. Its Lyric, currently creamed by every organ of record in the United States, is about necessity. It exhorts citizens to understand that the “bottom line” of national life is neither utopia nor freedom but survival, which can only be achieved by a citizenry that eats its anger, makes no unreasonable claims on resources or controls over value, and uses its most creative energy to cultivate intimate spheres while scrapping a Life together flexibly in response to the market world’s caprice8.In this particular moment of expanding class unconsciousness that looks like consciousness emerges a peculiar, though not unprecedented, here: the exploited child. If a worker can be infantilized, pictured as young, as small, as feminine or feminized, as starving, as bleeding and diseased, and as a (virtual) sieve, the righteous indignation around procuring his survival resounds everywhere. The child must not be sacrificed to states or to profiteering. His wounded image speaks a truth that subordinates narrative: he has not “freely” chosen his exploitation; the optimism and play that are putatively the right of childhood have been stolen from him. Yet only “voluntary” steps are ever taken to try to control this visible sign of what is ordinary and systemic amid the chaos of capitalism, in order in make its localized nightmares seem uninevitable. Privatize the atrocity, delete the visible sign, make it seem foreign. Return the child to the family, replace the children with admits who can look dignified while being paid virtually the same revoking wage. The problem that organizes so much feeling then regains livable proportions, and the uncomfortable pressure of feeling dissipates, like so much gas. Meanwhile, the pressure of feeling the shock of being uncomfortably political produces a cry for a double therapy—to the victim and the viewer. But before “we” appear too complacently different from the privileged citizens who desire to caption the mute image of exotic suffering with an aversively fascinated mooning (a desire for the image to be dead, a ghost), we must note that this feeling culture crosses over into other domains, the domains of what we call identity politics, where the wronged take up voice and agency to produce transformative testimony, which depends on an analogous conviction about the self-evidence and therefore the objectivity of painful feeling. The central concern of this essay is to address the place of painful feeling in the making of political worlds. In particular, I mean to challenge a powerful popular belief in the positive workings of something I call national sentimentality, a rhetoric of promise that a nation can be built across fields of social difference through channels of affective identification and empathy. Sentimental politics generally promotes and maintains the hegemony of the national identity form, no mean feat in the face of continued widespread intercultural antagonism and economic cleavage. But national sentimentality is more than a current of feeling that circulates in a political field: the phrase describes a longstanding contest between two models of US. citizenship. In one, the classic made}, each citizen’s value is secured by an equation between abstractness and emancipation: a cell of national identity provides juridically protected personhood for citizens regardless of anything specific about them. In the second model, which was initially organized around labor, feminist, and antiracist struggles of the nineteenth-century United States, another version of the nation is imagined as the index of collective life. This nation is peopled by suffering citizens and noncitizens whose structural exclusion from the utopian-American dreamscape exposes the state's claim of legitimacy and virtue to an acid wash of truth telling that makes hegemonic disavowal virtually impossible, at certain moments of political intensity. Sentimentality has long been the means by which mass subaltern pain is advanced, in the dominant public sphere, as the true core of national collectivity. It operates when the pain of intimate others burns into the conscience of classically privileged national subjects, such that they feel the pain of flawed or denied citizenship as their pain. Theoretically, to eradicate the pain those with power will do whatever is necessary to return the nation once more to its legitimately utopian order. Identification with pain, a universal true feeling, then leads to structural social change. In return, subalterns scarred by the pain of failed democracy will reauthorize universalist notions of citizenship in the national utopia, which involves in a redemptive notion of law as the guardian of public good. The object of the nation and the law in this light is to eradicate systemic social pain, the absence of which becomes the definition of freedom. Yet, since these very sources of protection—the state, the law, patriotic ideology— have traditionally buttressed traditional matrices of cultural hierarchy, and since their historic job has been to protect universal subject I citizens from feeling their culture} and corporeal specificity as a political vulnerability, the imagined capacity of these institutions to assimilate to the affective tactics of subaltern counterpolitics suggests some weaknesses, or misrecognitions, in these tactics. For one thing, it may be that the sharp specificity of the traumatic model of pain implicitly mischaracterizes what a person is as what a person becomes in the experience of social negation; this model also falsely premises a sharp picture of structural violence's source and scope, in tum promoting a dubious optimism that law and other visible sources of inequality, for example, can provide the best remedies for their own taxonomizing harms. It is also possible that counterhegemonic deployments of pain as the measure of structural injustice actually sustain the utopian image of a homogeneous national metaculture, which can look like a healed or healthy body in contrast to the scarred and exhausted ones. Finally, it might be that the tactical use of trauma to describe the effects of social inequality so overidentifies the eradication of pain with the achievement of justice that it enables various confusions: for instance, the equation of pleasure with freedom or the sense that changes in feeling, even on a mass scale, amount to substantial social change. Sentimental politics makes these confusions credible and these violences bearable, as its cultural power confirms the centrality of inter-personal identification and empathy to the vitality and viability of collective life. This gives citizens something to do in response to overwhelming structural violence. Meanwhile, by equating mass society with that thing called “national culture,” these important transpersonal linkages and intimacies are too frequently serve as proleptic shields, as ethically uncontestable legitimating devices for sustaining the hegemonic field.9

#### Additionally, disaster news creates information conflation and rapid content desensitization.

Pittaro 19 Pittaro, Michael. “Exposure To Media Violence And Emotional Desensitization.” Psychology Today. May 06, 2019. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-crime-and-justice-doctor/201905/exposure-media-violence-and-emotional-desensitization>.

A 2016 New York Times article summed it up best. A killer seeks out a nightclub, a church, an airport, a courthouse, a school, a college campus. The number of possible targeted locations is endless. Someone is shot on video, sometimes by the police, and protesters fill the streets. The accused are immediately deemed guilty by the court of social media even though accurate information is scarce at best. A terrorist attack is carried out in France, America, Turkey, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Tunisia, Nigeria, and then claimed and celebrated by another radical, extremist terror group of domestic or foreign origin. Our phones constantly vibrate with breaking news alerts. The cable news captions read “breaking news” in red as the powerful words scroll across the bottom of our TV screens and rapidly infiltrate social media. In response, rumors and misinformation abound. The comments erupt on Twitter, Facebook, and other social media sites. It is a choreographed pattern that has become commonplace while some of us, but not all, try to discern what is real and what is fake news. How did we get here and why have we become so vocal in openly sharing our political, social, religious, and personal beliefs without regard for its potential impact on the feelings and emotions of others? What happened to that thing we once called empathy? Why do we judge the actions of a few and project those thoughts on the many? Why do we stereotype an entire group of people based on the actions of a few crazed, rogue, or extremist radicals? Lately, largely in response to the above, I find myself constantly reminiscing about my own childhood. Of course, there were acts of violence. Of course, there were child abductions, murders, global conflicts, etc., but they did not seem to consume every waking hour of our daily lives. We rode our bikes to visit our friends, we played outside, and we spent hours together in our bedrooms or at a local park listening to music. We took long drives in our cars blasting the music with our windows down, and for the most part, life seemed to be more relaxing, less stressful, and less complicated. Was life truly better back then or am I simply being naïve and gullible? Maybe I am missing something or for some reason; maybe I blocked out negative experiences from my childhood, but as I remember it, we had some good times. Last week, I received an email from my children’s high school principal announcing a mandatory ALICE training. ALICE is an acronym for “Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate,” in reference to mandatory mass school shooting drills, which occur quite frequently. School shootings do occur and preventative measures to combat a potential incident are absolutely necessary because that is the reality of the world we live in. I am not ignorant of that fact. And yes, I do realize that children who were raised in the early age of nuclear weapons had to participate in “duck and cover” drills; nonetheless, my position is that today’s children, adolescents, and young adults are being exposed to too much violence and negativity to the point where another school shooting simply becomes another school shooting without evoking the emotions we would expect in a kid raised in the 1970s, 80s, or 90s.

#### Desensitization turns any argument read against the aff - give us leeway when answering disadvantages and critiques.

Abbinett 12 Abbinett, Ross. “Machiavelli's Double: Power, Simulation, And Hyper-Sovereignty.” International Journal of Baudrillard Studies. October, 2012. <https://baudrillardstudies.ubishops.ca/machiavelli-double-power-simulation-and-hyper-sovereignty/>.

The concept of evil and its relationship to regimes of representation is a theme that runs throughout Baudrillard’s later work. In particular, The Transparency of Evil, The Intelligence of Evil, and finally Ventriloquous Evil, present the emergence of a sphere of technological representation from which the last traces of symbolic life have been expelled. As a result, ‘the political’ has been fatally transformed; it has ceased to be a symbolic exchange between opposing positions that might produce some form of dialectical synthesis or revolutionary rupture, and has become a process of simulation in which every position is an equally valid model of reality (Baudrillard, 1995: 3-13). Feminism, gay liberation, black power - each is recognized as a ‘lifestyle choice’ that has its place in the cultural mélange of the postmodern world. So where, we might ask, is the evil? Where is the malignity that is concealed in this liberal attitude towards difference? Baudrillard’s answer to this question is that the symbolic economy of politics depends on the existence of real differences within the body of the social, the differences to which feminism, gay liberation, and black power sought to give political expression. What has happened to these differences is that they have become hyperrealized; their political narratives have split off from the symbolic economy of the social, and have become subject to the same logic of aesthetic representation that is characteristic of the ‘serial, circular, spectacular’ arrangement of consumption (Baudrillard, 2000: 77). It is this constant re-aestheticization of political ideologies that determines the fate of politics in Western societies. For as the symbolic economies of sex, race, and gender become egregious simulations of themselves, so they are absorbed into a ‘communicative democracy’ that seeks to bring them into discursive-dialogical unity (Baudrillard, 1995: 13). For Baudrillard however this project is a massive anthropological gamble; it is the absorption of the whole of social life into the aesthetics of performativity, and as such, its relationship to anything that exists outside of its ambit (theocracies, primitive civilizations, etc.) is simultaneously fascinated, anxious, and destructive (Baudrillard, 2010: 88).

#### To clarify - talking about violence is fine, but the way that the media uses disastrous images is both disrespectful and unproductive - choose a more objective path.

Abbass nd Abbas, Asma. “Liberalism And Human Suffering: Materialist Reflections On Politics, Ethics, And Aesthetics.”

In Martha Nussbaum’s celebration of cosmopolitanism, the familiar move of the invocation of the worst sufferings of mankind is bound to shut up and line everyone else in submission, not to the pain of others (as it may appear), but more fundamentally to iterations of who I am as one who suffers, as one who responds to suffering, and as one troubled by each of those questions rather than having settled them.47 Nussbaum or Shklar, in their philosophical commitments to different metaphysics (even in explicit noncommitments to metaphysics), do not even consider that their invocation of events of unimaginable suffering as cautionary tales for all of humanity is beholden to the sublime in ways complicit with liberalism’s political economy of suffering. In being so, they inadvertently evacuate the political in favor of some formalistic ethical certitude that may carry its own violent obliterations, dysfunctionalizing political judgment in submission to ethical judgments already made for us. The ethicization of discourse on suffering, and the submission to the violence of violence, is a parallel to the death of the political. Similarly, as long as the aesthetic follows this logic—that representation is unethical and violent in nature and that we must somehow leave it behind—it will be limited in its vision, unable to see the deep and necessary ontological connection between suffering and representation. Beyond considering aesthetics at play in the artistry of rights and interests that privileges the Western scopic and rhetoricist regimes, the aesthetic must be seen as more closely derived from aisthesis (perception from the senses). The resulting essential, ontic, and experiential proximity to suffering may allow us to radically reimagine our subjection to injuries, interests, and rights. The elements of a historical materialism of suffering introduced over the course of this chapter—necessity, hope, and a materialist sensuous ethos—reconsider woundedness and victimhood in order to illuminate the multiplicity of relations that are, and can be, had to our own and others’ suffering. They expose the presumptions and certainties regarding the imperatives suffering poses for sufferers that codify a basic distance from suffering and an inability to insinuate the question of suffering in our comportments, orientations, and internal relations of simultaneity to the world. A righteous or tolerant pluralism of sufferings, enacted wounds, and relations to our own and others’ suffering is not my objective here. One only has to consider, to build to a different end, how the judgments, actions, and reactions of many among us cannot help but reject consolations that come from codified knowledges and certitudes, such as those pertaining to what suffering is, how we must despise it, and how we must fix it. Then, one only has to question the imperatives these knowledges and certitudes pose for all of us, and examine the utilitarian charm of the beguiling tragedy of “powerless” institutions and other conscriptions of sympathy, empathy, voice, and desire for a markedly different world. This may involve not giving liberal institutions or fervent recruiters of various marginalities the power to set the terms of honoring the suffering and hope of others, and not giving them the power to corner our pathos, in a moment of ethical noblesse, by emphasizing how another’s suffering is impenetrable and unknowable. As much as this ethical noblesse upholds the letting be of the other, it is a preservation, first and foremost, of oneself—perversely reminiscent of the confusing touch-me-not of the Christ back from the dead, a Christ whose triumph over death ironically inspires entire cultures built on surplus fear, suffering, and death as offerings for those with terminal senses but endless lives (often the courtesy of the same historical cryogenics). It is imperative to reject both the righteous or tolerant pluralism of sufferings and the touch-me-not version of seemingly other-centered politics in favor of seeing our sufferings and our labors as coconstitutive of the world we inhabit. What would it mean, as Louis puts it to the Rabbi, to “incorporate sickness into one’s sense of how things are supposed to go,” to convoke a politics that is “good with death” but asks for “more life”? Perhaps the sufferer not be incidental to the suffering when suffering is defined as a problem only in the terms we can pretend to solve, only to fail at that, too. Perhaps liberal politics should accept that statistics of diseases, mortalities, and morbidities, calculated in terms of the loss in human productivity, on the one hand, and those of prison populations and philanthropic gifts, on the other, are not graceful confessions of its mastery of suffering or death. It is not that there are no sufferings to be named, interpreted, and tended to. However, it is important to remember that this is not a random, altruistic, or unmediated process, and it benefits those with the agency and position to act on another’s suffering. Perhaps politics should be able to speak to, and for, the reserve army of those with abject, yet-to-be-interpreted-and-recompensed sufferings, and those who have no ability to be injured outside of the terms native to liberal capitalist discourse. Perhaps politics can diverge from its reliance on certain frames of suffering in order to address the ubiquity and ordinariness of human tragedy and suffering. Perhaps, still, if politics is concerned with the creation and maintenance of forms of life, then the activities of this making, when they negotiate with the past, present, and future, necessitate a look at the way old and new wounds are enacted in order to yield forms that are different. Ultimately, perhaps liberalism’s colonization of suffering, and its moral dominion over it, needs to be resisted and loosened. Questioning the forms in which we suffer and are told to do so is not the same as altogether questioning the reality or centrality of suffering and our responsibility to it. The ways in which we suffer tell us what we need and do not need, what our bodies can and cannot bear. Politics must be pushed to engineer the passing of certain forms of suffering, not the passing of suffering altogether. The claim to having nailed the problem of suffering becomes suspect when politics learns from suffering not via the question of justice but, more immediately, as it responds to the suffering that is life; when it is urgent to understand those ways of suffering that do not follow liberal logics; when attending to bodies who suffer, remember, and act out of their wounds differently is extremely necessary; when the question of the suffering of action is inseparable from the actions of the suffering; when our experience of the world and its ethical, political, and aesthetic moments is not prior to or outside of justice, but constitutive of it; and when the need to understand necessity, the lack of choice, and the ordinariness of tragedy is part of the same story as the clumsiness of our responses to grand disaster. This is an offering toward a politics that is not modeled on the liberal, capitalist, and colonizing ideals of healthy agents who are asked to live diametrically across from the pole of victimhood. Such an approach would factor in the material experiences of destruction, tragedy, violence, defeat, wounds, memory, hope, and survival that risk obliteration even by many well-meaning victim-centered politics. The imagining of such a politics is not merely premised on suffering as something to be undone. Rather, it holds on to the ability to suffer as something to be striven for, grasped anew, and salvaged from the arbitrary dissipations imposed on it by global powers who not only refuse to take responsibility for the plight that they have every role in creating and locating but also shamelessly arbitrate how the wounded can make their suffering matter. Modern schemes for solving the problem of human suffering succumb to their own hubris, even as they set the terms of joy and sorrow, love and death, life and hope, salvation and freedom, that those subject to these schemes ought to have a role in determining. Maybe these schemes have no relevance to those who suffer abjectly, or maybe the latter have lost their senses living among the dead who tyrannize us and the dead who beseech us. It is time that we confront the nauseating exploitations and self-affirming decrepitude of Western liberal capitalist arbitrations of where suffering must live and where it must die—these moralities keep themselves alive and ascendant by always invoking their choice exceptions, fixating on those marginal relations to suffering and life signified in the savage acts of, say blowing up one’s own and others’ bodies, often regarded as savage for no other reason than their violation of some silly rational choice maxim. There are many other exceptions that confront these dominations, not the least of which are the forms of acculturations, past and present, that see the realm of ethics as deeper and richer than the space of individual moralities acted out. Similarly, some of these exceptions to learn from hold and honor suffering as an inherently social act, as a welcome burden to carry with and for each other. If it is indeed the case that the world is so because the colonized have not stopped regurgitating, then the incipient fascisms in the metropoles today ought to make us wonder whether our problem as people of this world is not that there is not enough liberalism, but that, at best, liberalism is insufficient, and, at worst, it is complicit. Perhaps the majority of the world needs a politics that is material enough to speak to, and with, their silences, their pain, their losses, their defeats, their victories, their dispensabilities, their mutilations, their self-injuries, their fidelities, their betrayals, their memories, their justice, their humor, and their hope. At stake in such an imagining is nothing less than the possibility of newer forms of joy, desire, hope, and life itself.

#### This trickles down to debate too - the desire to find the biggest impact card, to say we're doing a good thing, it's all just a game at the end of the day.

Shapiro 92 Shapiro, Michael. “That Obscure Object Of Violence: Logistic And Desire In The Gulf War.” The Political Subject of Violence. 1992. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40644755>.

Within a Lacanian frame, the objects of desire are substitutable signs related to the subject's self-constitution and coherence. They are thus never destined to provide the self with satisfaction. Accordingly, during the recent Gulf War, discursively engendered understandings and desires found distant objects of attention, not only for those involved in combat – however technologically mediated that involvement was – but also for the viewing public, who watched the war on television and experienced the destruction of people and things at another technological level of remove. The highly mediated relationship, in which linguistic, and weapons technologies intervened, rendered the relationship between viewing and fighting subjects complex, for the targets of violence were rarely available to anyone's direct vision and were hardly ever available for direct contact. There was very little actual touching. It was indeed telling when one airforce pilot praised his sighting devices and weapons by remarking of his recently vanquished enemy, 'we could reach out and touch him, but he could not touch us' (a bit of discursive flotsam left over from AT&T's advertisement) one service remote touching of 'someone' was involved. In most senses, then, the objects of violence in the Gulf War were obscure and remote, both in that they were removed from sight and other human senses and that they emerged as appropriate targets through a tortuous signifying chain. More generally, they were remote in terms of the meanings they had for their attackers and the attackers' legitimating and logistical supporters. To place the implications for how hostile actions can be understood in such a peculiar, modern condition, it is appropriate to turn to Luis Bunuel's film Cet Obscur Objet du Desir (This/That Obscure Object of Desire), which contains not only a structure and dynamic that fits the array of subjects acting, in as well as following, the story of the Gulf War but also is implicitly structured within a Lacanian frame that fits the approach to interpreting the Gulf War to follow. This/that obscure object of desire At the level of its primary narration, Bunuel's film is the story of a failed seduction, told in flashbacks by the middle-aged Mathieu Fabert to his (accidental?) travelling companions, sharing a compartment in a train to Paris. At a more abstract level, the film is governed by a Lacanian view of the opacity or deeply encoded non-comportment between desire and its objects. Ambiguities abound from the outset, not the least of which is the absence of a designation in the title that a woman is the object in question, which adds to the this/that (close or remote) ambiguity of the Cet in the French title. Moreover, as is shown (but necessarily evident to all viewers of the film) Conchita, whom Fabert names as the object of his amorous quest, is two different women (she is represented by two different actresses), and this is seemingly never apparent to Fabert or his listeners in the train compartment. Apart from the various mediations between the various desiring subjects and objects in the film, however (Fabert's audience in his train compartment are straining with attention to the narrative), as viewers, we also have desires, and they remain unconsummated as the narrative and images frustrate our attempt to attain completion, to grasp a coherent episode unless we work to help make it coherent. Despite the seeming confidence with which Fabert delivers his story, what one sees, especially the dualistic Conchita and other enigmatic images and events, deprive us of confidence that we have a story we can understand.Ultimately, the imposition of meaning (by the viewers among others) on the ambiguous and arbitrary aspects of Fabert's story are organised within the frame of a Lacanian view of the functioning of desire. Bunuel leaves many hints that Lacan hovers in the background, and most significant for thepurposes at hand, the lessons of the film transfer to the US actions in the Gulf for it developed narrative of the derealisation of the targets of violence developed above.Because Lacanian desire operates through a series of substitutions, there is a compatibility between the functioning of desire and logistical abstraction as they work together to locate targets of violence in modern warfare, despite how recalcitrant those targets may actually be to the meaning frames that direct the enemy-perceiving gaze. The operation of desire in a war works on the basis of a different process from that of an individual's search for erotic completion. It is connected to a national-level rather than individual-level work on the production of a coherent self. As has already been suggested in the analysis of Clausewitz's duplicitous discourse, what is represented as a quest for accomplishing political and military objectives obfuscates a more fundamental, ontological quest, the attempt for the national subject at completion through the display of courage and the lack of inhibition against using force in a violent confrontation with an enemy.For a deeper appreciation of how desire complements the historically emerging, logistical narrative in which the enemy/object has been derealised, it is necessary to recognise that within the Lacanian view, desire is formed at the time when the subject first enters the realm of the symbolic. Residing as an infant in the domain of the imaginary, where there is no recognition of oneself as separate from others, the subject's entry into the symbolic is a dual alienation. First, it is a separation from the maternal source of satisfaction and, second, through becoming a named beings withal language, it is a loss of control over meaning and the bonds of affect; it amounts to a subjugation to the law of the signifier. The compensation for this alienation is of course the ability to participate in the domain of the symbolic, but it is also the birth of desire, which, given the unlawfulness of achieving the satisfactions longed for but lost, takes the form of a series of substitutions. It is the always-obscuring acts, based on the ways in which the subject is divided from itself, that impose significance on the objects of desire, and within the Lacanian model, these impositions follow the twists and turns of linguistic, figural mechanisms. More specifically, Lacan notes in one place, 'desire is metonymy, however funny people may find the idea'.'The metonymical structure of desire is displayed unambiguously in Bunuel's film when Conchita gets in bed with Fabert in a chastity-protecting undergarment tied tightly with little knots that he cannot undo. As he weeps in frustration, she names the various parts of her that he already possesses and expresses puzzlement that he is so resolute in his quest for the one part denied him. During the Gulf War, President Bush and many television commentators seemed caught in a similar signifying structure. What eluded final consummation in their case was not someone's maidenhead. It was Saddam Hussein's destruction. All the parts associated with him were possessed. Kuwait was freed, his army was routed, his 'weapons of mass destruction' largely eliminated. But as long as Saddam remained the ruling leader of Iraq, the 'victory in the desert' seemed empty. The narrative was left uncompleted. But perhaps 'Saddam Hussein' (the 'Hitler', the 'Arab fanatic', the 'ruthless dictator') needs to survive. Without him, there would remain no arch-enemy. Without Saddam Hussein, perhaps the US would not be.able to justify remaining so armed and alert. Indeed, this is precisely what Fabert says in response to his cousin, the arbiter/judge who asks why he doesn't just marry Conchita. Fabert says, Si je'epousais, je serais desarme.' (If Saddam had been destroyed or removed, no sense of fulfilment would have lasted because the conditions of possibility for producing desire would re-emerge. For example, of late in the United States there is a national debate over towards whom the reduced nuclear weapons arsenal ought to be aimed. National desire is searching for new dangerous objects). At this moment, at least, Fabert seems to understand much of what is driving his narrative, but there is also much evidence that the more fundamental part, remains obscure, for his story continually turns the incredible - e.g. encountering Conchita almost everywhere - into the credible. This is because the object of desire for Fabert (Mathieu for one Conchita and Mateo for another), like the enemy/object of violence for the United States, is in part a product of a damaged subjectivity in search of reestablishing a coherence as an effective and virile male entity. In the case of the United States, the damaged collective subjectivity (often called the 'Vietnam syndrome') is a result of a lost and muddled war in the recent past. In the case of Fabert his manly subjectivity is similarly uncertain. First, his wife of many years is recently deceased and he has had no substitute prior to his pursuit of Conchita. Second, he is a law-abiding, obviously well-established and well-off citizen and, in his pursuit of Conchita uses his spending power rather than his male strength (until the very end when driven to the limit with frustration). Meanwhile, all around him, he witnesses a series of acts of violence, car bombings, political assassinations, etc., apparently carried out by terrorist groups. At one point we overhear a radio report claiming that the bombings, which are randomly dispersed in his narrative, are attributed to coalitions of political groups that form the acronyms, PRIQUE and RUT. The virile young terrorists, with which one version of Conchita seems to be associated, serve as an affront to Fabert, who cannnot show his potence (cannot use his prick). Similarly, the collective subjectivity of the US prior to the Gulf War (the Vietnam syndrome) and its leader's potence (the 'wimp factor') had been affronted by the violence of others not restricted by law-abiding inhibitions. Hence the increasingly frenzied complaints from the White House against terrorists (similar complaints issue from Fabert about the terrorist acts around him). Thus the comparison—two levels of incomplete and increasingly provoked subjectivity in need of an episode of completion. But perhaps, major similarity that suggests the Gulf War is the similarity in the dynamics governing the meanings of the objects of attention. In Fabert's narrative, Conchita appears as both lack (as an elusive object ofdesire) and excess (she appears everywhere Fabert goes). At one point, Fabert's servant likens women to a sac d'excrement. Rather than simply a sexist disparagement, this can be read as reference to the object of desire's excess, of all that is imposed on it by a restless, driven subjectivity. Conchita flees Fabert's employ as a servant after his initial advances, and then he encounters her as a restaurant coatcheck person, as part of a youthful gang in Switzerland, as a flamenco dancer in Seville. She is excessive, inexplicably appearing everywhere. With each encounter, she seems to promise herself to Fabert and then does something extraordinary to frustrate him. Similarly, as the Gulf War progressed, Saddam's resistance capability was easily overcome, but the superiority in the air and the decisive land battle left Saddam where he was, a defiant leader of an Iraqi nation that was badly bruised but had never been completely possessed, never made to totally capitulate. What substitutes for a final and telling violence in the Gulf War, is a fitful and ambiguous attempt to force the object, Saddam, to comply with the law (the United Nations resolution). Within a Lacanian frame and, accordingly, in Bunuel's film, the relationship between the law and desire is complex. The law cannot still the operation of desire in the direction of seeking consummation may -even provoke it. In a telling episode, Fabert attempts to use the law, his cousin the judge, to send the object of desire away. His cousin uses his influence to have the police exile Conchita and her mother, sending them back to Spain. As the decree is read, we learn that Conchita is a name related to her official/legal name which is Concepcion, and that her mother's name is Encarnacion, deepening our suspicion that their existence and significance is largely a function of the work of the subject, Fabert, and his desire-driven imagination. Fabert decides to take an arbitrary trip to forget his frustration, but after he chooses Singapore by pointing to a map while blindfolded, he ends up travelling to Seville, where Conchita is. The arbitrary is always controlled at some level by desire. It is not wholly clear what the signifying elements are that turn Singapore (etymologically, 'Lion city') into Seville (etymologically, merely 'city'). Perhaps it is that the lion represents virility and reminds Fabert of his quest to consummate it. What energes most significantly is the need for a woman to complete the self for Fabert (in the way that the US needed an enemy and Bush needed to get tough for self-completion), and here again the law does not quiet desire; it seems only to inflame it. Moreover, the love or violent object is arbitrary inasmuch as it does not summon on the basis of what is intrinsic to it. It acquires its force from the signifying practices that erupt out of a subjectivity pursuing it, a subjectivity that lacks a reflective rapport with itself.