### The AFC Narrative

#### We begin by reflecting on the forgotten – the abyss of debate’s will to productivity that is violently excluded from normativity. Hear our poem, and internalize its words:

#### *Interpretation: The negative must concede the affirmative framework.*

#### *Prefer –*

#### *Time skew – Winning the negative framework moots 6 minutes of 1AC offense and forces a 1AR restart against a 7 min 1NC – outweighs on quantifiability and reversibility – I can’t get back time lost and it’s the only way to measure abuse.*

#### *Topic Ed – Every debate would just be a framework debate which crowds out our ability to have core debates about the topic – that outweighs – we only have 2 months to debate the topic*

#### *Prep skew – We can’t predict every single negative framework before round but they know the aff coming into round which makes pre-tournament prep impossible. Especially true since there are millions of K’s and NC’s that could negate – that outweighs – A] Sequencing – It’s a perquisite engaging in-round since you need prep to debate B] Engagement – It ruins the quality and depth of discussions that make debate rounds educational.*

#### *Drop them on 1AC theory – skews put me at an unrecoverable disadvantage from the outset. Use competing interps on 1AC theory – the negative has 7 minutes to answer the shell, and you can’t reasonably concede my framework. No RVIs – you’d read a counter-interp for 7 minutes of the NC and the debate would end right there.*

#### This is the specter of bare life that debate has systematically excluded – appeals to *fairness*, *clash*, and *portable skills* brush over this simple fact: where does AFC fit in?

#### AFC is in the barebones of the fair, diminished by the façade of philosophy, and dismissed by the community at large as *fake debate*, *kills Phil ed*, and *infinite abuse*. Policy mobilizes its will towards fascism, demarcating the bounds as its shoulder impersonator – the unconscious, unknown other – ACC – creeps up behind its throat – transparent but illusory. Hear its cries! The exclusion of AFC is not an isolated event, but a structure of semiotics that structures narratives of control within debate – it’s no secret that *Condo* and *PIC*s are included within this space but AFC’s value has slowly drained from epistemology. Appeals towards reasonability are not neutral narratives – but systematically structured to exclude AFC’s structure.

#### This ferments repetitive drives within the Lacanian triad that leads to a compulsion that makes the exclusion of AFC inevitable. The subject becomes immersed in an two-tiered affective reaction – the ego reflects AFCs glory but cannot fulfill its perfection resulting in primary AFC-phobia dispelling theoretical subjectivity to correct for the shattered ego – necessitating AFC’s death.

Taubman 17 – Peter Taubman (Department of Secondary Education @ Brooklyn College, CUNY), 2017, “DEATH BY NUMBERS: A RESPONSE TO BACKER, SARIGIANIDES, AND STILLWAGGON,” Educational Theory, 67(1), 97–106, doi:10.1111/edth.12230, Agastya

By connecting the viciously punitive aspects of melancholia to what increasingly appears as our ferocious drive toward death, I hope to widen the discussion of melancholia in education to include current social and political conditions in education that sustain melancholia and intensify the death drive. These conditions destroy our sense of self-worth, deaden our psyches, and put each of us at risk. These conditions, not unlike those that Backer, Sarigianides, and Stillwaggon describe, stifle dialogue, ignore the losses education demands, and intensify racial melancholia. My aim here is to build on their work. My response essay assumes that all of us, teachers and students alike, suffer inexpressible losses that we cannot publicly grieve, that melancholy is not foreign to any of us. However, it seems that the depression or melancholia I and many of my colleagues, both teachers and teacher educators, are experiencing today is related to something more insidious than the inability to express a real or imagined loss. It seems related to an increasing drive to turn ourselves and others into numbers, even into machines — that is, into inert matter. Or, to put it differently, I can’t help wonder if we are driving ourselves and our students to death. The Death Drive Freud’s speculations about a death drive began with his consternation over the pleasure principle, which he tended to define in terms of the release of built-up tension or excitation and the avoidance of unpleasure. If, as he seemed to argue in most of his early work, we pursue pleasure — even our dreams, for example, fulfill a disguised wish — how then, he asked, can we account for our own sabotaging of such pleasure? Why do we return to traumatic events in our dreams? Why do we repeat painful behaviors or experiences? Why do we resist perspectives that might interrupt these dangerous or damaging repetitive patterns? And what, he struggled to understand, could account for the atrocities humans inflict on one another? These questions prompted Freud’s speculations in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle.” There he wrote that based upon his observations of behavior in the transference and upon the life histories of men and women, he was forced to conclude that “there really does exist in the mind a compulsion to repeat [painful experiences] which overrides the pleasure principle.”8 This compulsion to repeat, he wrote, “gives the appearance of some daemonic force at work.”9 Freud labeled this “daemonic force” the “death drive.” Freud speculated that this “daemonic force” emerges in, is revealed by, and offers an explanation for our compulsion to repeat painful experiences. It is also, as Freud suggested in his later writings, responsible for the destructive forces that threaten our “civilization.” I want to focus on three claims Freud makes in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” and that he elaborates in later work. These are (1) the claim that the death drive compels us to return to an inanimate or inert state; (2) the claim that the death drive is “historically determined”; and (3) the claim that Eros opposes the death drive and is “the preserver of life.”10 I want to explore the first two claims together, in that I will consider how particular corporate-driven education reforms provoke and shape the death drive, a drive that calls on and intensifies the aggression that is so much a part of melancholia. First and Second Claims: The Death Drive Compels Us to Return to an Inanimate State, and It Is Historically Determined Freud’s initial claim was that the death drive compels us to return to an inanimate or inert state.11 What if we were to read the death drive not in the literal sense but rather in the figurative sense, as a drive to put an end to memory, and history, and therefore to feelings? What if the death drive kills that which, in fact, makes us human? What if we have within us as individuals or groups a drive that, provoked and shaped by particular constellations of social and historical forces or by particular conditions, impels us to create psychic dead zones, to render ourselves and others less than human? As Michael Eigen said, “When one is dead, one fears being alive.”12 The Death of History If repetition results from not remembering or is a form of remembering without working through, if it is a way, as Adam Phillips suggests, of “making memory impossible,” of “determinedly wishing not to know” or creating “states of mind in which there is nothing left to remember,”13 then can we not read the death drive in terms of a force that destroys history and memory? Might not the compulsion to repeat, in which Freud initially located the death drive, be seen in the repetition compulsion of education, returning again and again to the same purported panaceas as a way to avoid the trauma of its inherent impossibility? “To be locked in the past,” James Baldwin wrote, “means that one has no past, since one can never assess it, or use it, and if one cannot use the past, one has no present.”14 One is, as Baldwin warns, stuck in a perpetual youth, a corrupt innocence. Can we not see such corrupt innocence in education reform’s insistence on its newness, its certainty, and its “nowness”? Anyone who opposes ed reform is cast as living in a dead past. Can we not see this blind innocence in the failure to work through histories and dreams of and dependence on, for example, white supremacy or misogyny? Certainly in the United States, the inability to face the trauma of race and the resistance to looking at the role of white supremacy in the formation of identities, fortunes, and education policies create not only racial melancholia but psychic dead zones and reveal the workings of a death drive. Sarigianides suggests as much in her reading of American Born Chinese. 15 As Ta-Nehisi Coates writes, the “tenacious dream of white, straight, male exceptionalism that thrives on generalization, limiting questions, and privileging immediate answers” numbs memory and erases history.16 This drive to forget, to not remember, is evident, too, in the contention by education reformers in the United States that the history of education is irrelevant to becoming a teacher and in the denigration of foundation courses in teacher education. If history is offered, it is as what Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno referred to as a fixed order of time, not something living but transformed into the “material to be used for the ideology of progress.”17 When education reformers offer medicine, engineering, and architecture as analogies for teaching, or when they base their views of teaching in the learning sciences, they effectively remove teaching from the world of history. The Death of Feelings But if memory and history disappear, what happens to feelings? Let us follow Brian Massumi and take feelings to be both personal and biographical. They are, he writes, body-based sensations, checked against remembered experiences that emerge in language.18 What will happen to feelings if memory and history vanish and the language in which feelings take form diminishes? If the language of education reform increasingly constricts the symbolic — I imagine many of us have had the experience of feeling suffocated or flattened by that language at meetings — and if it makes relationships suspect — I imagine, too, we have all felt interpersonal exchanges rushed, diminished, or mistrusted under the glare of audit — might we not also venture that such language diminishes the world of feelings? Certainly we know that education reform culls its language from the worlds of finance and business, which reduce all behavior to the bottom line; from the learning sciences, which render knowledge and wisdom as information and insist on predictability and replicability; from the military, with its focus on command and control; and from the world of sports, which knows only winners and losers. The language of these worlds evacuates our subjectivity, except insofar as it demands that we endlessly monitor, control, and improve ourselves and others. This demand for constant improvement, a kind of superego of education reform, lacerates us with the harsh and narrow language of failure, substituting imperious judgment for conversation and, as Adam Phillips suggests in Unforbidden Pleasures, submitting our lives to one, often cruel, “correct” interpretation.19 The self-denigration with which Freud distinguished melancholia from mourning appears in the impoverished language of the superego that harbors the drive to turn us into objects. The language of the superego, Phillips further suggests, is filled with petty and cruel demands and vicious charges that we are never enough.20 There is no dialogue, no poetry, no interpretive flexibility. There is only the one right answer, and we are reduced to an object whipped and rendered inert, left with only depression or, turned outward, rage, and a lingering affect provoked by the constrictions of deadened identities and numbed and numbered selves. The superego — that stuck record that endlessly reiterates its scathing criticism in its impoverished vocabulary — first turns us into an object by telling us who we are before it unleashes its scorn on us. As Phillips writes, “[T]he superego treats the ego like an object not a person.”21 Can we not see the work of the death drive in the way teachers and students are articulated as bundles of skills, lists of rules and procedures, and scripts written, designed, and packaged somewhere else? It’s no wonder that education reformers talk so much of “building” a better teacher. Through various vocabularies and practices of quantification, we are rendered and render ourselves as machines: efficient, predictable, and easily programmed, machines that elicit and process numerical data. The impoverishment of language results not only from the barrage of terms culled from the worlds of business, the learning sciences, the military, and sports, but also from ed reform’s fascination with and promotion of technology. Sherry Turkle, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has perhaps written most persuasively about the role of technology in the transformation of our feeling life. She is particularly worried about the decline in empathy among young people and the blurring of boundaries between machines and humans, as robots come to be programmed to give the appearance of feeling.22 If feelings disappear or emerge only in terms of spatial descriptions — I feel high, low, flat, as Fredric Jameson so many years ago claimed was happening in our postmodern state23 — what happens to thought? Deprived of feeling, does not thought itself dry up? Bound by rules of statistical evidence, empirical verifiability, experimental design, and linear sequential logic, rendered always in terms of cognitive operations or in terms of Bloom’s taxonomy, thinking hardens. The rigor demanded by education reformers becomes rigor mortis.

#### Next, we reflect on the community – a story of violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside – neither subject nor object – ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. AFC’s positionality lies at the corpse of the human, and the air grows thick with the smell of its rotting flesh – destroying the very capacity for certainty within the pure body – composed of semiotic combinations of *Nebel T,* *Spec Enforcement,* and *Condo PICs*.

#### AFC is, therefore, in a process of becoming corpse – a state between epistemology and solipsism. We now reflect on September 5th – as a freshman immersed in AFCs mystery, includes its teachings within his constructive.

**Wen** – Wen, J. (n.d.). Strake Jesuit Wen Aff. Strake Jesuit Wen Aff - XWiki. Retrieved December 4, 2021, from https://hsld.debatecoaches.org/Strake%20Jesuit/Wen%20Aff.

Interpretation: The negative must concede the affirmative framework. Violation: It’s preemptive. Prefer- 1] Time skew- Winning the negative framework moots 6 minutes of 1AC offense and forces a 1AR restart against a 7 min 1NC – outweighs on quantifiability and reversibility – I can’t get back time lost and it’s the only way to measure abuse. 2] Topic Ed- Every debate would just be a framework debate which crowds out our ability to have core debates about the topic – that outweighs- A] Time Frame- We only have 2 months to debate the topic B] Inclusion- Phil and K literature is incredibly dense and requires a vast amount of prior knowledge and experience which excludes novices while topic literature is less esoteric 3] Prep skew- We can’t predict every single negative framework before round but they know the aff coming into round which makes pre-tournament prep impossible. Especially true since there are millions of K’s and NC’s that could negate. Prep skew outweighs A] Sequencing- It’s a perquisite engaging in-round since you need prep to debate B] Engagement- It ruins the quality and depth of discussions that make debate rounds educational.

1AC theory is DTD and Competing interps No RVI on 1AC theory

#### And, as the community lashes back, extending its monstrous head to impose its will upon an earnest Justin Wen – AFC disappears – vanishes, from his mind, expelled from the very condition of thought and language to create a conception of the self.

#### Thus, vote affirmative to embrace AFC-pessimism – in the face of endless anti-AFC violence – the only ethical alternative is to watch the world burn. Our 1AC is a performative affective intervention by diverting from what is expected in a space that is meant to purposefully exclude AFC in the name of productivity – a reminder of the failed AFC movement launched by Agastya that debate instantly terminated in the name of *accessibility*. Only a refusal of this world addresses AFC as the basis of communication—we defend the 1AC’s affective pessimism as an example of a die-in within topic discussions, a refusal to breathe life into the resolution. Pessimistic die-ins break from institutional participation as a starting point for politics in favor of disrupting the circulation of discourses predicated upon optimism and AFC’s death. This destroys communicative spheres by purposefully fore-fronting discussions of AFC’s kill-ability.