## AC

### Framing

#### The subject does not exist a priori and is ontologically constructed through social interactions. In acting one is necessarily influencing and being influenced by the external world and the other -otherwise action would be without content. The “I” can not exist in a vacuum, for it is only through the processes of recognition and socialization that the “I” comes to know of its existence in the first place. I only know I am a debater because I have language to express this concept and because others view me as one. And, morality is necessarily relational and dependent on the subject because ethics prescribe normative obligations to the other. This means all ethical theories must begin with an account of the subject.

Butler 05 [Judith Butler, Giving an Account of Oneself New York: Fordham UP, 2005. Print.] WWEY

Adorno seems nearly Kierkegaardian in insisting upon the place and meaning of the existing individual and the necessary task of appropriating morality as well as opposing forms of ethical violence. But of course he cautions against the error to be found in the opposite position, when the ‘‘I’’ becomes understood apart from its social conditions, when it is espoused as a pure immediacy, arbitrary or accidental, detached from its social and historical conditions— which, after all, constitute the general conditions of its own emergence. He is clear that there is no morality without an ‘‘I,’’ but pressing questions remain: In what does that ‘‘I’’ consist? And in what terms can it appropriate morality or, indeed, give an account of itself? He writes, for instance, ‘‘it will be obvious to you that all ideas of morality or ethical behavior must relate to an ‘I’ that acts’’ (PMP, 28). Yet there is no ‘‘I’’ that can fully stand apart from the social conditions of its emergence, no ‘‘I’’ that is not implicated in a set of conditioning moral norms, which, being norms, have a social character that exceeds a purely personal or idiosyncratic meaning. The ‘‘I’’ does not stand apart from the prevailing matrix of ethical norms and conflicting moral frameworks. In an important sense, this matrix is also the condition for the emergence of the ‘‘I,’’ even though the ‘‘I’’ is not causally induced by those norms. We cannot conclude that the ‘‘I’’ is simply the effect or the instrument of some prior ethos or some field of conflicting or discontinuous norms. When the ‘‘I’’ seeks to give an account of itself, it can start with itself, but it will find that this self is already implicated in a social temporality that exceeds its own capacities for narration; indeed, when the ‘‘I’’ seeks to give an account of itself, an account that must include the conditions of its own emergence, it must, as a matter of necessity, become a social theorist. The reason for this is that the ‘‘I’’ has no story of its own that is not also the story of a relation—or set of relations—to a set of norms. Although many contemporary critics worry that this means there is no concept of the subject that can serve as the ground for moral agency and moral accountability, that conclusion does not follow. The ‘‘I’’ is always to some extent dispossessed by the social conditions of its emergence.3 This dispossession does not mean that we have lost the subjective ground for ethics. On the contrary, it may well be the condition for moral inquiry, the condition under which morality itself emerges. If the ‘‘I’’ is not at one with moral norms, this means only that the subject must deliberate upon these norms, and that part of deliberation will entail a critical understanding of their social genesis and meaning. In this sense, ethical deliberation is bound up with the operation of critique. And critique finds that it cannot go forward without a consideration of how the deliberating subject comes into being and how a deliberating subject might actually live or appropriate a set of norms. Not only does ethics find itself embroiled in the task of social theory, but social theory, if it is to yield nonviolent results, must find a living place for this ‘‘I.’’

They continue –

In Foucault’s view, this opening calls into question the limits of established regimes of truth, and there a certain risking of the self becomes, he claims, the sign of virtue.11 What he does not say is that sometimes calling into question the regime of truth by which my own truth is established is motivated by the desire to recognize another or be recognized by one. The impossibility of doing so within the norms available to me compels me to adopt a critical relation to those norms. For Foucault, the regime of truth comes into question because ‘‘I’’ cannot recognize myself, or will not recognize myself, within the terms that are made available to me. In an effort to escape or overcome the terms by which subjectivation takes place, my struggle with norms is my own. His question effectively remains ‘‘Who can I be, given the regime of truth that determines ontology for me?’’ He does not ask the question ‘‘Who are you?’’ nor does he trace the way in which a critical perspective on norms might be elaborated starting out from either of those questions. Before we consider the consequences of this occlusion, let me suggest one final point about Foucault, although I will return to him later. In asking the ethical question ‘‘How ought I to treat another?’’ I am immediately caught up in a realm of social normativity, since the other only appears to me, only functions as an other for me, if there is a frame within which I can see and apprehend the other in her separateness and exteriority. So, though I might think of the ethical relation as dyadic or, indeed, as presocial, I am caught up not only in the sphere of normativity but in the problematic of power when I pose the ethical question in its directness and simplicity: ‘‘How ought I to treat you?’’ If the ‘‘I’’ and the ‘‘you’’ must first come into being, and if a normative frame is necessary for this emergence and encounter, then norms work not only to direct my conduct but to condition the possible emergence of an encounter between myself and the other.

#### Thus the metaethic is constructivism, or that moral truths are socially determined. Prefer additionally:

#### [1] Rule-following paradox—rules are infinitely regressive because they rely on more rules to explain them that are based in social understanding.

#### [2] Epistemology—the way we interpret the natural world is necessarily framed by social constructs—we don’t call trees trees because of some natural fact about trees.

#### [3] Externalism fails—even if a priori normative facts exist, they’re epistemically inaccessible because the human mind only understands reality through language - knowing 2+2=4 is contingent on socialization because there is nothing intrinsic to the symbols themselves that would tell us their truth value.

#### [4] Bindingness – language and social norms are inescapable, because the only way you can pursue ends is through others. Even if one refuses to engage in a particular enterprise, they could not escape the social context that enterprise is situated in. One could choose not to play chess, but this necessitates a social understanding of what chess is in the first place.

#### [5] Actor specificity – The resolution calls for the recognition between two entities, a government and the workers, which necessitates an ethical account that addresses obligations to the other.

#### [6] Subject formation – The subject is necessarily formed through interactions with the other. This makes the AC framing undeniable—to deny the framework and be a skeptic requires that one be recognized as a skeptic by the other, which concedes the authority of the framework.

#### The metaethic takes out all paradoxes and a prioris – they attempt to construct transcendental principles of logic but that’s impossible as truth is socially constructed. And, this functions on the highest layer – it’s a fundamental epistemological and metaphysical question that frames all other forms of reasoning and linguistics.

#### This makes subjecthood inherently precarious—because we are reliant upon the Other for our identity, there is always the possibility of being harmed by the Other. A necessary condition to recognize the precariousness of life is grievability—i.e. who matters. Maintaining structures of grievability is necessary to actualize oneself as an agent since it allows engagement in one’s own identity. Also controls the root cause of violence – absent grievability, infinite violence can be inflicted upon the other as there is no loss to be mourned and no death to register.

Butler 3 [Judith Butler, Giving an Account of Oneself New York: Fordham UP, 2005. Print.] WHS-RS recut WWBW slightly retagged by WWEY

**To say that a life is injurable**, for instance, or that it can be lost, destroyed, or systematically neglected to the point of death, **is to underscore** not only the finitude of a life (that death is certain) but also **its precariousness** (that life requires various social and economic conditions to be met in order to be sustained as a life). **Precariousness implies living socially, that is, the fact that one's life is always in some sense in the hands of the other. It implies** exposure both to those we know and to those we do not know; a **dependency** on people we know, or barely know, or know not at all. **Reciprocally, it implies being impinged upon by the exposure and dependency of others**, most of whom remain anonymous. These are not necessarily relations of love or even of care, but constitute obligations toward others, most of whom we cannot name and do not know, and who may or may not bear traits of familiarity to an established sense of who "we" are. In the interest of speaking in common parlance, we could say that "we" have such obligations to "others" and presume that we know who "we" are in such an instance. The social implication of this view, however, is precisely that the "we" does not, and cannot, recognize itself, that it is riven from the start, interrupted by alterity, as Levinas has said, and the obligations "we" have are precisely those that disrupt any established notion of the "we." Over and against an existential concept of finitude that singularizes our relation to death and to life, **precariousness underscores our radical substitutability and anonymity in relation both to certain socially facilitated modes of dying and death and to other socially conditioned modes of persisting and flourishing.** It is not that we are born and then later become precarious, but rather that **precariousness is coextensive with birth itself** (birth is, by definition, precarious), **which means that it matters whether or not this infant being survives, and that its survival is dependent on what we might call a social network of hands.** Precisely **because a living being may die, it is necessary to care for that being so that it may live. Only under conditions in which the loss would matter does the value of the life appear. Thus, grievability is a presupposition for the life that matters.** For the most part, we imagine that an infant comes into the world, is sustained in and by that world through to adulthood and old age, and finally dies. We imagine that when the child is wanted, there is celebration at the beginning of life. But **there can be no celebration without an implicit understanding that the life is grievable, that it would be grieved if it were lost**, and that this future anterior is installed as the condition of its life. In ordinary language, **grief attends the life that has already been lived, and presupposes that life as having ended.** But, according to the future anterior (which is also part of ordinary language), **grievability is a condition of a life's emergence and sustenance**.7 The future anterior, "a life has been lived," is presupposed at the beginning of a life that has only begun to be lived. In other words, "this will be a life that will have been lived" is the presupposition of a grievable life, which means that this will be a life that can be regarded as a life, and be sustained by that regard. **Without grievability, there is no life, or, rather, there is something living that is other than life. Instead, "there is a life that will never have been lived," sustained by no regard, no testimony, and ungrieved when lost. The apprehension of grievability precedes and makes possible the apprehension of precarious life. Grievability precedes and makes possible the apprehension of the living being as living, exposed to non-life from the start.**

#### Thus the standard and the rotb is *promoting social norms that render life grievable*.

#### Impact calc –

#### 1] The framework generates political obligations – the state renders certain lives grievable through the regulation of social norms which means it ought to foster norms that render all lives grievable.

#### 2] Reject threat construction – DAs do not start at 100% risk and the marginal risk of extinction is not sufficient to overcome clearly defined ethical harm. Arguing that we should preserve the squo because of marginal risk is a colonial move to institutionalize current social norms and prevent effective resistance.

#### 3] Recognizing the other is inherently intent based as recognition involves proactively choosing whether to see the other as another agent. This means the value of social norms and actions is determined by their intrinsic features as opposed to consequences, which are contingent and fail to recognize the other as an agent as they are viewed as merely instrumental and substitutable.

#### Prefer additionally –

#### [1] All of your arguments presuppose the judge will recognize you as a valid individual whose words hold value

#### [2] You can only generate obligations if you understand yourself and others as a subject so we should accept the harms of recognition because without recognition, there is no way to take actions because obligations take the form of agent x out to do y

### Advocacy

#### Thus I affirm the resolution: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike. I defend the resolution as a general principle and implement through normal means. Check the doc for clarification and definitions, I’m willing clarify or specify whatever you want me to in CX if it doesn’t force me to abandon my maxim. Check all interps in CX, with the brightline being that I answer – I could’ve met them before the NC and abuse would’ve been solved. PICs don’t negate: General principles don’t defend an absolute action, so they tolerate exceptions.

All hyperlinked and from Merriam Webster –

“a/n” is [used as a function word before singular nouns when the referent is unspecified](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/a)

“just” is defined as [conforming to a standard of correctness](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/just)

“government” is defined as [the body of persons that constitutes the governing authority of a political unit or organization](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/government)

“ought” is [used to express obligation](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ought)

“to” is [used to indicate that the following verb is in the infinitive form](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/to)

“recognize” is defined as [to accept and approve of (something) as having legal or official authority](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/recognize)

“unconditional” is defined as [not conditional or limited](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unconditional)

“right” is defined as [something to which one has a just claim](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/right)

“strike” is defined as [to stop work in order to force an employer to comply with demands](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/strike)

### Offence

#### Labor strikes are a form of nonviolence that are key to breaking free from exploitation and for grievable workers to persist by asserting their own worth. Butler 20 Judith Butler; Judith Butler on Rethinking Vulnerability, Violence, Resistance; Vesro Books; 06 March 2020; https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4583-judith-butler-on-rethinking-vulnerability-violence-resistance

**The ties that potentially bind us across zones of geopolitical violence can be unknowing and frail, freighted with paternalism and power, but they can be strengthened through transversal forms of solidarity that dispute the primacy and necessity of violence.** The sentiments of solidarity that persist are those that accept the transversal character of our alliances, the perpetual demand for translation as well as the epistemic limits that mark its failures, including its appropriations and effacements. **To avow vulnerability not as an attribute of the subject, but as a feature of social relations, does not imply vulnerability as an identity, a category, or a ground for political action. Rather, persistence in a condition of vulnerability proves to be its own kind of strength, distinguished from one that champions strength as the achievement of invulnerability**. That condition of mastery replicates the forms of domination to be opposed, devaluing those forms of susceptibility and contagion that yield solidarity and transformational alliances. Similarly, the prejudice against nonviolence as passive and useless implicitly depends upon a gendered division of attributes by which masculinity stands for activity, and femininity for passivity. No transvaluation of those values will defeat the falsehood of that binary opposition. Indeed, the power of nonviolence, its force, is found in the modes of resistance to a form of violence that regularly hides its true name. **Nonviolence exposes the ruse by which state violence defends itself against black and brown people, queer people, the migrant, the homeless, the dissenters—as if they were, taken together, so many vessels of destruction who must, for “security reasons,” be detained, incarcerated, or expelled**. The “soul force” that Gandhi had in mind was never fully separable from an embodied stance, a way of living in the body and of persisting, precisely under conditions that attack the very conditions of persistence. Sometimes continuing to exist in the vexation of social relations is the ultimate defeat of violent power. **To link a practice of nonviolence with a force or strength that is distinguished from destructive violence, one that is manifest in solidarity alliances of resistance and persistence, is to refute the characterization of nonviolence as a weak and useless passivity**. Refusal is not the same as doing nothing. The hunger striker refuses to reproduce the prisoner’s body, indicting the carceral powers that are already attacking the existence of the incarcerated**. The strike may not seem like an “action,” but it asserts its power by withdrawing labor that is essential to the continuation of a capitalist form of exploitation.** Civil disobedience may seem like a simple “opting out,” but it makes public a judgment that a legal system is not just. It requires the exercise of an extra-legal judgment**. To breach the fence or the wall that is designed to keep people out is precisely to exercise an extra-legal claim to freedom, one that the existing legal regime is failing to provide for within its own terms. To boycott a regime that continues colonial rule, intensifying dispossession, displacement, and disenfranchisement for an entire population, is to assert the injustice of the regime, to refuse to reproduce its criminality as normal**. For nonviolence to escape the war logics that distinguish between lives worth preserving and lives considered dispensable, it must become part of a politics of equality. Thus, **an intervention in the sphere of appearance**—the media and all the contemporary permutations of the public sphere—**is required to make every life grievable, that is, worthy of its own living, deserving of its own life. To demand that every life be grievable is another way of saying that all lives ought to be able to persist in their living without being subject to violence, systemic abandonment, or military obliteration**.

#### The right to strike turns the law against itself, and the right being unconditional prevents the state from controlling and limiting the right to strike. Crepon 19 MARC CRÉPON; The Right to Strike and Legal War in Walter Benjamin’s “Toward the Critique of Violence”; CRITICAL TIMES 2:2; AUGUST 2019

First, **is it legitimate to present the strike as a form of violence**? Who has a vested interest in such a representation? In other words, how can we trace a clear and unequivocal demarcation between violence and nonviolence? Are we not always bound to find residues of violence, even in those actions that we would be tempted to consider nonviolent? The second line of questioning is just as important and is rooted in the distinction established by Georges Sorel, in his Reflections on Violence, between the “political strike” and the “proletarian general strike,” to which Benja­ min dedicates a set of complementary analyses in §13 of his essay. Here, again, we are faced with a question of limits**. What is at stake is the possibility for a certain type of strike (the proletarian general strike) to exceed the limits of the right to strike— turning**, in other words**, the right to strike against the law itself**. **The phenomenon is that of an autoimmune process, in which the right to strike that is meant to protect the law against the possible violence of class strugles is transformed into a means for the destruction of the law**. The diference between the two types of strikes is nevertheless introduced with a condition: “**The validity of this statement, however, is not unrestricted because it is not unconditional**,” notes Benjamin in §7. We would be mistaken in believing that the right to strike is granted and guaranteed uncondi­ tionally. Rather, it is structurally subjected to a conflict of interpretations, those of the workers, on the one hand, and of the state on the other**.**

### Underview

#### [1] Independently, each life improved solves an existential catastrophe.

Kaczmarek 17 – Patrick Kaczmarek, PhD at the University of Glasgow, a Senior Researcher at Effective Giving, Visiting Researcher at the Future of Humanity Institute at the University of Oxford and a Visiting Scholar at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh. [How Much is Rule-Consequentialism Really Willing to Give Up to Save the Future of Humanity? Utilitas, 29(2), https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/utilitas/article/how-much-is-ruleconsequentialism-really-willing-to-give-up-to-save-the-future-of-humanity/F867301151A79F7DA566A14DF71749B3]//BPS

Notice, the problem can be cast two different ways. First, the loss associated with humanity's premature extinction is so great that even if the probability of a catastrophic event is very low, an expected value calculation suggests that we should strive to prevent its possible occurrence**. And yet, there is something deeply puzzling about ruining the lives of all actual persons for the sake of humanity eking out a longer stay in the universe. Second, you may have realized that the above implication bears close resemblance to the dreaded Repugnant Conclusion.** The Repugnant Conclusion states that for any population**, all with a very high quality of life, there must be some larger imaginable population whose existence, all else being equal, would be better despite their lives being barely worth living**.19The mistake, as countless critics have noted, is that quantity (that is, size of population) should not be able to compensate for a stark reduction to their average quality of life. I'm inclined to agree that this looks worrisome**. For some, if this were the end of the story, it would surely act as a reductio ad absurdum of the view. But this is not the full story. In setting out our earlier comparison of the two populations it was assumed that only costs go up, never benefits. That is to say, A was fixed and the total sum of goods went up merely because the size of the population grew, despite internalization costs reducing average quality of life.** Colouring in the picture, this corresponds to the scenario where, all else being equal, existential threats are directly targeted. To illustrate, this could amount to putting a lot of resources towards asteroid deflection programmes.**20 I now wish to argue that we could instead reduce existential risk by indirect means, and in so doing make the world in two ways go better. As noted earlier, we would prolong humanity's place in the cosmos. Furthermore, an indirect approach improves the average welfare of persons, particularly the worse-off in our population**. Certainly, it would be a mistake to concentrate exclusively on indirectly lowering the probability of doomsday. Returning to our earlier example, reducing global poverty cannot prevent an Earth-bound asteroid the size of Texas from making impact. **Nevertheless, if we were also to adopt an indirect approach, then this would contribute to existential risk reduction by curbing the negative ripple effects of readily preventable illnesses, global hunger, and so forth**. Ripple effects are a class of phenomena that affect the far future in significant ways, shaping how our history unfolds over time.21A ripple effect is initiated by a particular event that has some causal influence on the course of events that follow it. These events, in turn, may have their own impact on how further events play out**. And so on it goes, reaching wider and wider as time passes. Consider the following example. A doctor is in a position to cure some infant's blindness.** Sure, the infant will probably have a better life after the operation. Most of us are quick to hone-in on this feature of the situation. And many other goods go unacknowledged by us as a result**. Just a few of the proximate advantages we might reasonably expect to find after curing the infant's blindness include: her parents will be less worried about her, subsequently finding more free time to develop their own personal projects; the government will spend fewer resources on providing her education; this child will grow up with more opportunities, as well as perhaps being inspired to start a grassroots initiative or develop an anti-malarial drug**. All of these consequences will have some role in shaping our future due to their own ripple effects. **This network of ripple effects might go so far as causing '[her] country's economy to develop very slightly more quickly, or make certain technological or cultural innovations arrive more quickly'**.22

#### [2] 1ar theory – the aff gets it otherwise infinite abuse as it would be impossible to check NC abuse and it’s a reciprocity issue. Competing Interps: Reasonability is arbitrary and invites judge intervention – collapses to CI because it becomes a debate about brightlines. Drop the Debater: Time crunched 1ar makes this uniquely key otherwise the neg can just outspread me and collapse to a different layer making this the only real way to check abuse. No neg RVIs: Illogical shouldn’t win for meeting basic burdens, incentivizes a 2n dump which makes it impossible for me to win on theory. No time skew bc I had to initiate the shell in a time crunched 1ar. Fairness is a voter debate is a competitive activity wins/losses prove that requires fairness for objective evaluation. Education – the only portable thing from debate and the goal of the activity.

#### [3] Presumption and permissibility affirm – a) We always default to assuming something true until proven false, or it would be almost impossible to make any claim at all b) If agents had to reflect on every action they take and justify why it was a good one we would never be able to take an action because we would have to justify actions that are morally neutral. If I had to justify my action every time I decided upon a course of action I would never be able to make decisions which lead to action freeze, it’s a practical requirement of action c) Negating an obligation means proving a prohibition of that act, means permissibility affirms because negating is prohibiting the aff action. d) The Law of Excluded Middles - if something is not false, it must be true, which means that if something is not prohibited, it must be obligatory, and permissibility is the same as obligatory

#### [4] Affirming is harder – all theory arguments have an implicit aff flex standard because of huge side bias – outweighs neg fairness arguments unless they prove how it uniquely outweighs the disparity since it’s structural. Put away your evidence ethics claims, this is from 2021 and the author does endorse substantive compensation for the aff

Sachin Shah 21 (Former debater and statistician) “A Statistical Study of Side Bias on the 2021 January-February Lincoln-Douglas Debate Topic by Sachin Shah” NSD Update, 2021, http://nsdupdate.com/2021/a-statistical-study-of-side-bias-on-the-2021-january-february-lincoln-douglas-debate-topic-by-sachin-shah/?fbclid=IwAR0xUs8IfbaV31bR1Vv66o6yxa8m0buAGnWNoSrTdtphVinz3YI-UtXmQ1Q. Accessed 10-15-2021, WWEY

It is also interesting to look at the trend over multiple topics. Of the 243 bid distributing tournaments from August 2015 to present, the negative won 52.30% of rounds (p-value < 10^-34, 99% confidence interval [51.82%, 52.78%]). Of elimination rounds, the negative won 55.85% of rounds (p-value < 10^-18, 99% confidence interval [54.16%, 57.54%]). Additionally, after fitting logistical regression to the entire dataset, the offset was found to be 12.57. That translates to 9% of rounds for the negative where the debater predicted to win changed as a result of the bias. This continues to suggest the negative side bias might be structural and not topic specific as this analysis now includes 18 topics. Although debaters commonly use theoretical arguments that negating is harder in rounds i.e., judge psychology, affirmatives speak first and last, etc., these arguments are superseded by the empirical evidence. Even if these arguments correctly point out an advantage for the affirmative, the data shows that after accounting for all advantages and disadvantages (for both sides), negating is still easier. Given a structural advantage for the negative, the affirmative may be justified in being granted a substantive advantage to compensate for the structural skew. This could take various forms such as granting the affirmative presumption ground, tiny plans, or framework choice. Whatever form chosen should be tested to ensure the skew is not unintentionally reversed.

#### [5] The neg may not read utilitarianism or any consequentialist ethical theory as a standard – a) resolvability: 1] Induction fails—induction assumes that things will always happen the same way in the future as they have in the past which begs the question of how we know what happened in the past will happen in the future. 2] Moral cluelessness—consequences are wholly unknowable and any action can lead to a domino effect which means it can’t guide action 3] Infinite consequences—any harm stretches on into the infinite future and makes it impossible to compare harms—results in calculative regress 4] Aggregation fails— other people’s happiness is epistemically inaccessible, so you can’t compare across people—also can’t compare 10 headaches to a migraine to the value of friendship b) psychological violence: util and other consequentialist theories justify atrocities such as slavery if it benefits a marginal majority or for hypothetical benefits that might not even materialize

### Method

#### [1] A Post-Hegelian understanding of mutual recognition is fundamentally liberatory – it provides general grounds for critiquing oppression and avoids reliance on colonial structures.

Harfouch 19 [Ali S. Harfouch, (Lecturer at the American University of Beirut where he also received his Master of Arts (2017) in Political Studies.) “Hegel, Fanon, And The Problem Of Recognition” In: Frantz Fanon And Emancipatory Social Theory, 9-13-2019, https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004409200/BP000008.xml?language=en, DOA:9-19-2020 // WWBW]

* Explains oppression generally – i.e. prior to start of k’s theory of power
  + Reliance on colonizer for identity absent general theory
  + Something can only be oppressive if it transcends correct order – that requires a moral fw
* K makes specific ontological/metaphysical presumptions but can’t warrant them absent general theory
* K can’t explain distinction between good and bad power

There are several reasons why we must take the Hegelian dialectic seriously. First and foremost**, the dialectic provides the basis for a *general* theory of oppression as opposed to the post-colonial theorization of one mode-of-oppression** (colonization). That is to say, **we can conceptualize the origins and modalities of oppression reducing oppression to colonial oppression.** Paradoxically, **this reduction of oppression to a singular moment** (the colonial trauma) – this inter-subjective relationship (the colonized and the colonizer) **becomes the constitutive element in the colonized’s self-recognition, one in which the very identity of the colonized is based on a negation** (that is to say, a negation of the colonizers’ negation).[2](https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004409200/BP000008.xml?language=en#FN000317) Thus, **the slave/colonized attains self-recognition vis-à-vis a negation of the master/the colonizer. Otherwise, the “new” man who emerges from the colonial trauma could not have been without the colonizer.** To be is to negate, and to negate is to recognize (the colonizer); the “Other” remains “the theme of his action [the colonized].” As McClintock explains: “post-colonial,” despite its critical deconstruction of post-Enlightenment binaries, “re-orients the globe once more around a single, binary opposition: colonial/post-colonial.”[3](https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004409200/BP000008.xml?language=en#FN000318) **This new colonial/post-colonial and/or colonizer/colonized binary becomes, paradoxically, universalized and comes to serve as the new “master-narrative.”** At the level of praxis, the colonized/slave is left in a quandary; Post-colonial discourse tells us little of what those occupying Tahrir Square or Wall Street *ought* to do, or how to proceed? To speak of “strategic essentialism” is to oscillate a thin line between liberational-emancipatory politics on one hand, and pragmatic self-essentialization on another; between liberating the colonized from the confines of identity-politics to recreating an equally problematic identity-politics based fundamentally on a negation. If, as the post-colonialist bemoans; the hegemonic colonial matrices of power are rooted in an exclusionary and racist logic of exploitative capitalism, and that this logic is sustained through the State’s omnipresent and all-pervading machinations of power, what is to be done vis-à-vis the State? Perhaps, this is why the reception of the work of Edward Said in the Arab-Muslim world was less prophetic than its reception in Western academia. Furthermore, **the post-colonial reading of the Master-Slave dialectic reduces reality to that which is created through the reified inter-subjective relations between the Master and the Slave. It does not**, **however**, **tell us about the world outside of this dialectic. It displaces ontology through an elusive latent ontology** (the ontology of no ontologies), **which replaces questions of metaphysics and ontology with questions relating to power. This is fallacious in that** (1) **it is blind to its own metaphysics and ontology assumptions**; (2) **it negates the very same epistemic grounds according to which it can make such assumptions**, and (3) **it displaces any form of emancipatory praxis-politics by failing to recognize that power**, “as a quantum in which less of it is good and more of it is bad: **the issue is not the concentration of power, but its accountability.**”[4](https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004409200/BP000008.xml?language=en#FN000319) As Jason Schulman aptly notes, “**a movement that rejects seeking power is ultimately rejecting the possibility of lasting radical change**.”[5](https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004409200/BP000008.xml?language=en#FN000320) **Power can corrupt, it is not intrinsically corrupt – it is merely a capacity that can be used to mediate between the oppressed and the emergence of a “new order,” or a capacity that can sustain a subversive order.** Power, from this perspective, becomes an instrument for liberation rather than a philosophy of fatalism (*à la* Foucault). To return to the first two points made above; **any normative proposition on what ought-to be is predicated on a consciousness of what-is, i.e. the “natural” order of things, and the extent to which an oppressive reality is not in accordance with what-is***.*[6](https://brill.com/view/book/edcoll/9789004409200/BP000008.xml?language=en#FN000321) **To speak of oppression is to speak of the transgression of certain boundaries, and such boundaries cannot escape ontological considerations.** In other words, **how is it possible for the slave to attain self-recognition, or as Paulo Freire would put it, a critical consciousness, when the consciousness of the slave is determined positively or negatively by the ontological consciousness of the Master**? To what extent can the slave *step out* of the Master-Slave dialectic in his engagement with nature and objects? **Otherwise, we must claim that beyond the ontology of the colonizer-master** (that is, the imputation of an epistemic perspective onto the world and conflating it with ontology) **there is nothingness.** The Arabs have a name for such blindness: *al-Jahl* (ignorance). For the Arabs, *Jahl* is not only the absence of knowledge, but rather knowledge which is not in accord with reality. But they went a step further: to be ignorant of one’s ignorance is *Jahl Murakab* (compound ignorance/double-ignorance). However, I am not sure the Arabs have a word for a “philosophy” that makes truth-claims on the basis of professed ignorance (the “incredulity with meta-narratives”). We will have more to say about this later on.

#### [2] Only our theory can accurately combat violence. All other ethical theories fail without an accurate understanding of life itself. Butler 5 Judith. “Giving an Account of Oneself.” Verso Press, Berkley University. 2003. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1566427>

**One might**, for instance, **believe in the sanctity of life or adhere to a general philosophy that opposes violent action of all kinds against sentient beings**, and one might invest powerful feelings in such a belief**. But if certain lives are not perceivable as lives**, and this includes sentient beings who are not human, **then the moral prohibition against violence will be only selectively applied** (and our own sentience will be only selectively mobilized). **The critique of violence must begin with the question of the representability of life itself: what allows a life to become visible in its precariousness and its need for shelter, and what is it that keeps us from seeing or understanding certain lives in this way?** The problem concerns the media, at the most general level, since a life can be accorded a value only on the condition that it is perceivable as a life, **but it is only on the condition of certain embedded evaluative structures that a life becomes perceivable at all.**