## 1AC

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#### We would like to begin by asking a few questions:

#### What allows us to be in this debate? What allows us to breathe this clean air while others struggle in polluted environments? What allows us to debate at universities and travel extensively?

#### In making the argument that is in the 1AC, we acknowledge that we speak from a position of privilege. The fact that Shyam and I have the opportunity to travel to Vanderbilt to have this debate, that we can breathe clean air while others struggle in polluted environments, and that we can debate as students from the University of Georgia are all manifestations of privilege. We’ve grown up in privileged environments, and this has shaped our experiences and patterns of thought.

#### While we are privileged, we wish to use our position within this debate space to begin a critical deconstruction of that privilege and the neoliberal system that lies at the heart of it

#### \*Big Oil has infiltrated the political by using their monetary influence to keep unnecessary tax breaks and subsidies

Leber 12 (Rebecca – Think Progress, “Three Ways Big Oil Spends Its Profits To Defend Oil Subsidies And Defeat Clean Energy”, 10/24, http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2012/10/24/1064231/three-ways-big-oil-spends-its-profits-to-defend-oil-subsidies-and-defeat-clean-energy/)

Starting tomorrow, the world’s largest oil companies — ExxonMobil, Shell, Chevron, BP, and ConocoPhillips — will begin to announce their third-quarter profits for 2012. In the first half of 2012, these companies — all ranked in the top 10 of Fortune 500 Global — earned over $60 billion. The oil industry reinvests tens of **millions of these dollars for political purposes,** including nearly all political contributions to Republicans, lobbying, and campaign ads. Through its enormous spending, these five and other Big Oil companies have fought to maintain $4 billion of their annual subsidies, while seeking to undermine clean energy investments: $105 Million On Lobbying Since 2011, 90 Percent Of Campaign Contributions To GOP: The big five companies have spent over $105 million on lobbying Congress since 2011, according to lobbying disclosures through the third quarter. The biggest spenders were Shell ($25.7 million), Exxon ($25.4 million), and ConocoPhillips ($22.9 million). The five companies’ oil PACs have donated over $2.16 million to mostly Republican candidates this election cycle. Koch Industries also spends big money to pressure Congress, with $16.2 million on lobbying and more than $1.3 million from its PAC (the top oil and gas spender). In total, the oil and gas industry sends 90 percent of its near $50 million in contributions to Republicans, far eclipsing their record spending in 2008. Misinformation Campaigns, Including Over $150 Million In Election Ads: Over $150 million has been spent on TV ads promoting fossil fuel interests, particularly oil and coal, reports the New York Times. In addition to traditional campaign donations, the oil industry has turned to outside groups running attack ads. Earlier this year, Americans For Prosperity — founded and funded by the Koch brothers — launched a bogus ad claiming that clean energy stimulus dollars went overseas. And the oil lobby American Petroleum Institute has its own campaign promoting myths about oil production and gas prices. For example, API chief Jack Gerard, rumored to be on Mitt Romney’s shortlist for a White House or agency appointment, claimed that oil production on federal land is down. This is simply not true, since oil production is up 240 million barrels on federal lands and waters under President Obama compared to the Bush administration. And oil companies hold 20 million acres of federal oil, gas leases in Gulf of Mexico that remain unexplored or undeveloped. This is just one of the many myths Big Oil has pushed this campaign cycle. Behind-The-Scenes Campaign To Defeat Clean Energy: Koch Industries and fossil fuel groups are mobilizing to defeat the extension of modest tax incentives for wind energy, even though oil tax breaks are permanent. The American Energy Alliance, which has Koch ties, aims to make the credit “so toxic” for Republicans it would be “impossible for John Boehner to sit at a table with Harry Reid.” The Koch-funded Americans For Prosperity is also campaigning against wind energy. Meanwhile, the industry has argued **its own century-old tax breaks are necessary to maintain**, despite years of record-breaking profits. Overall, these efforts to keep their tax breaks while weakening public health safeguards from pollution have paid off in Congress and for Republican candidates. The House of Representatives is the most anti-environment in Congressional history, averaging at least one anti-environment vote per day to eliminate or undermine pollution protections, many benefiting Big Oil. And the Romney/Ryan budget plan would give the big five oil companies another $2.3 billion annual tax cut beyond existing loopholes.

#### \*This system creates real effects in the everyday lives of real people – Dean Blanchard, a fisherman in Louisiana, describes the effects of oil subsidies on his livelihood…

Kistner 12 (Rocky, “Fossil Fuel Subsidies: the Answer Lies in the Gulf,” 6-22-12.

<http://theenergycollective.com/rockykistner/87692/fossil-fuel-subsidies-answer-lies-gulf>

You don’t have to go to Brazil to find out why this polluter payoff system has tragic consequences. We’ve got exhibit A right here in the good ole USA, where oil companies spend millions lobbying Congress and get billions in subsidies in return. It’s a fossil fuel free-for-all; Big Oil keeps its tax breaks while it drills its way to record profits. This week, NRDC and other environmental groups sued the Obama Administration to stop the planned sale of new oil leases in the deepwater Gulf, a reckless plan that ignores ongoing safety issues associated with drilling at even more dangerous depths, as NRDC’s David Pettit has blogged. Just talk to the fishermen in the Gulf about their faith in the oil companies these days. Seafood king Dean Blanchard of Grand Isle, LA, was once one of the most successful shrimp buyers on the coast. But that all changed in BP’s fiery explosion two years ago. Now his business is in tatters, ruined he says by the millions of gallons of oil and chemical dispersant that flooded into local waters and straight into Barataria Bay, one of the most productive commercial shrimping grounds in the country. But no longer. This year Blanchard says his once robust shrimp catch is down by about 50 percent, and he doesn’t expect it to get better anytime soon. In fact he bets it will get worse as the oil and dispersant mix works its way up the food chain, potentially wrecking havoc on future generations of seafood—threatening his fishing community's very survival. “Oil’s still coming in everyday out here, people are sick in the community, the fishing is getting worse….there’s deformed shrimp everywhere,” Blanchard says. “The oil companies have bought off all the politicians. I’m praying for a hurricane so it will stir up all the oil off the bottom and dump it on the Governor’s mansion. Then let’s see how he likes it.” Other fishermen confirm catches are down, and many say it's getting increasingly hard to make a living off the sea, while they say BP has done little to compensate them. A veteran Louisiana fisherman says he's caught shrimp recently with what appear to be tumor-like growths, weird deformities he's never seen before. He also says the shrimp are unusually small for this time of year, so small they fall through the nets. With the high price of gas, he given up trawling at a time when he normally is making good money. Like many fishermen in the Gulf, he has no idea what the future will hold. “Everything was going so good before the spill,” he said. “We finally had the shrimp prices up and then wham, the oil hit. We can fix things after a hurricane, but seems like we can’t fix things after an oil spill like this.”

#### \*Oil subsidies are part of the global neoliberal project that subjects more wealth to multinational corporations at the expense of all

Tapamor 7 (Edward – Writer for Resource Investor, “Peak Oil Passnotes: Neo-Liberalism's Ultimate Failure Part 2”, 11/16, http://www.resourceinvestor.com/2007/11/16/peak-oil-passnotes-neoliberalisms-ultimate-failure)

We pointed out last week that this column does not put any faith in the current system of economics loosely known as neo-liberalism or "free markets". We have noted that despite its ideologically rigid application around the world for the last 25 years, it **has done nothing** to create a supply cushion in oil markets. Instead what it has done is pass giant profits to the most powerful organisations within the industry, **privatising the profits and socialising the costs**. One great example at the moment is biofuels. The developed world, especially the United States, wants liquid fuel for transport. So a tax has been placed on the entire world population as the transport-dependent U.S. and EU suck out available spare capacity in the agricultural market by converting corn to ethanol. Basically land has been converted to growing corn in order to provide fuels for the states most dependent on car travel. This has boosted food prices all around the globe, even for people who do not posses cars or have ever even travelled in one. What is more amazing is that this event is not some kind of economic neo-liberal happening. Like much of free market thinking, it is in fact a myth. Fifty percent of the revenues that U.S. farmers receive from growing corn for ethanol in fact do not come from anything as neo-liberal as sales and marketing. No, 50% of the revenues come from subsidies, from the taxpayer, via the government. If you are a major industrial landowner, it is a godsend. The idea of investment to "create wealth" (another wacky neo-liberal idea - we can see you printing the money supply, we are not blind) is thrown away as every taxpayer in the U.S. subsidises major industrial concerns. Secondly comes the idea that war and global "full-spectrum dominance" can safeguard the United States. It is true that war provides liquidity for economies as - once again - taxpayer subsidies in the form of war budgets send wealth flooding up the chain to the most powerful organisations and concerns on the planet. There is now little doubt that the United States, for example, has spent around $1 trillion on the invasion and destruction of Iraq. Although we can argue over how much importance the region has in terms of invasion-to-oil-and-gas-reserves, there is little doubt that securing the region for U.S. and EU "interests" was a prime motivator - maybe not all of it but certainly a very important one. But if an economy was truly democratic - unlike any on the planet - then the U.S. could have spent that money far more wisely. One trillion dollars would buy 11.77 billion barrels of oil at $85 per barrel. Of course it could also have been spent on second generation biofuels - the ones ExxonMobil [NYSE:XOM] and Total [NYSE:TOT] are so keen on - or wind farms or solar power or insulation for American homes. Instead the money has been part of the trickle-up, the process whereby money is passed from the weakest to the richest, the real underlying motivation for neo-liberalism class war. As there are no democracies on the planet, only differing forms of oligarchy, it is no surprise to see the Chinese state capitalists or the Russian state capitalists doing roughly similar versions of the same thing. Chinese per capita consumption of oil is the same as that of the U.S. in 1904, yet we hear so often that - basically - it is the "fault" of China to create a demand-led, geo-political peak oil. What this signals is that economies **need democratising, not placing in the hands of either private or state oligarchies**. But in the developed world instead what we do have is a moment where modern economies - neo-liberal ones - are exposed as failures. Investment signals and market economics, such as they are, cannot satisfy what is needed, a rise in demand led by the force feeding of capitalism-for-the-rich around the world for the last 50 years. The only possible respite for this is to have a recession - where prices drop, where the weakest are hurt the most and where, once again, the richest and most powerful benefit by cherry picking assets from the disparate, profligate and downright unlucky. When peak oil bounces the world into recession, as many in the oil industry believe it will, remember who told you first.

#### \*Moreover, the so-called “externalities” of oil production are felt disproportionately among minority communities, as degredation of the surrounding environment strips real people of their livelihoods

Juhasz 8 (Antonia – American oil and energy analyst, Investigative Journalism Fellow at the Investigative Reporting Program, “The Tyranny of Oil”, pgs 186-188)

Chevron's Richmond Refinery in Richmond, California, is one of the oldest and largest refineries in the United States. "From the beginning, among West Coast refineries, it was the colossus," reads its corporate history. Built in 1902, the refinery sits on nearly 3,000 acres of land. To refine its capacity of 87.6 million barrels of crude oil per year—240,000 barrels per day—the refinery produces over 2 million pounds of waste per year.54 The Richmond refinery shows its age. The most recent findings of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report almost three hundred pollutant spills from the refinery in just three years, from 2001 to 2003. These are highly toxic, often cancerous, **chemicals spilling directly into residential communities of families, children, the elderly, and the sick**. The EPA lists the refinery in "significant noncompliance" for air pollution standards.55 But this is nothing new. In 2001 the refinery released almost 25,000 pounds of known carcinogens into the surrounding community. From 1989 to 1995, there were more than three hundred reported accidents at the refinery, including major fires, spills, leaks, explosions, toxic gas releases, flaring, and air contamination.56 San Francisco is sixteen miles away from the Chevron refinery In January 2007, most residents of the area (I among them thought the refinery had exploded. On the news we heard the gi ant boom! and watched a yellow ball of fire and a black cloud -smoke explode into the air. A leaking corroded pipe "that shoul have been detached two decades ago," according ro investigate was to blame. The five-alarm fire burned for nine hours, and t\* 100-foot flames could be seen with the naked eye in San Fra , cisco. Almost three thousand people in nearby neighborhood f received telephone calls instructing them to stay inside with th doors and windows shut to avoid breathing the toxic fumes. Later that year, in August, another giant explosion roc! Chevron's largest U.S. refinery, in Jackson County, Mississippi. The fire burned near the heart of the Pascagoula Refinery and 200-foot flames were visible for miles down the Mississippi coast. Afterward, Chevron offered free car washes to dislodge the thick layer of black soot that had settled on nearby cars from the fire. The cause of the explosion has yet to be identified. Another old equipment part was cited as the cause of one of the worst explosions in the Richmond refinery's history. According to Chevron, a leaking valve that "was initially installed more than 30 years ago" ignited a massive explosion in March 1999.57 An 18,000-pound plume of sulfur dioxide smoke was released in rhe explosion. Ten thousand residents were told to remain inside for several hours, while those in the closest neighborhoods were evacuated. "A column of thick, acrid, foul-smelling smoke rose high in the air, cloaked the refinery and then began to drift slowly to the southeast," according to one report. "The cloud killed trees and took the fur off squirrels," reported a resident. Hundreds of people flooded local hospitals complaining of breathing difficulties and vomiting. "Will Taylor, a man in his 40s, described how instant waves of nausea brought him and his co-workers to their knees, retching and gasping for breath. 'My eyes burned. My nose ran. With each breath I got sick to my stomach.' A strong chemical taste stayed in his mouth and he felt poorly for days." "I lost my voice for six weeks," reported another resident. "And I threw up a lot. Everybody did.,,5S It takes about forty minutes on public transportation to get from San Francisco to Richmond, Richmond is the last stop on the line and has a population of about a hundred thousand people, 82 percent of whom are listed as minorities by the U.S. Census. Seventeen thousand people, including those in two public housing projects, live within just three miles of the Chevron refinery." The majority of these **residents are low-income African-American families** who moved to Richmond from the South in the 1940s in search of work. Within one mile of and abutting rhe refinery are businesses, houses, an elementary school, and playgrounds. Nationally, **it is estimated that race**, even more than income level, is the crucial factor shared by communities most exposed to toxic chemicals like those released by the Richmond refinery, with communities of color disproportionately bearing the burden of our national "cancer alleys."60

#### This system systematically degrades the possibility for robust democratic politics – Oil represents the neoliberal pursuit for wealth and power at the expense of social justice that makes a vibrant public sphere impossible and leads to exclusionary politics

Giroux 5 (Henry A. – Global Television Network Chair, Professor at McMaster University, “The Terror of Neoliberalism: Rethinking the Significance of Cultural Politics”, Winter 2005, JSTOR)

Fredric Jameson has argued in The Seeds of Time, it has now become easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism (1994, xii). The breathless rhetoric of the global victory of free-market rationality spewed forth by the mass media, right-wing intellectuals, and governments alike has found its material expression both in an all-out attack on democratic values and in the growth of a range of social problems including: **virulent and persistent poverty, joblessness, inadequate health care, apartheid in the inner cities, and increasing inequalities between the rich and the poor.** Such problems appear to have been either removed from the inventory of public discourse and social policy or factored into talk-show spectacles in which the public becomes merely a staging area for venting private interests and emotions. Within the discourse of neoliberalism that has taken hold of the public imagination, there is no way of talking about what is fundamen tal to civic life, critical citizenship, and a substantive democracy. Neoliberalism offers no critical vocabulary for speaking about political or social transformation as a democratic project. Nor is there a language for either the ideal of public commitment or the notion of a social agency capa ble of challenging the basic assumptions of corporate ideology as well as its social consequences. In its dubious appeals to universal laws, neutrality, and selective scientific research, neoliberalism "**eliminates the very possibility of critical thinking**, without which democratic debate becomes impossible" (Buck-Morss 2003, 65-66).This shift in rhetoric makes it possible for advocates of neoliberalism to implement the most ruthless economic and political policies without having to open up such actions to public debate and dialogue. Hence, neoliberal policies that promote the cutthroat downsizing of the workforce, the bleeding of social services, the reduction of state governments to police precincts, the ongoing liquidation of job security, the increasing elimination of a decent social wage, the creation of a society of low-skilled workers, and the emergence of a culture of permanent insecu rity and fear hide behind appeals to common sense and allegedly immutable laws of nature. When and where such nakedly ideological appeals strain both reason and imagination, religious faith is invoked to silence dissension. Society is no longer defended as a space in which to nurture the most fundamental values and relations necessary to a democracy but has been recast as an ideological and political sphere "where religious fundamentalism comes together with market fundamentalism to form the ideology of American supremacy" (Soros 2004, 10). Similarly, American imperial ambitions are now legitimated by public relations intellectuals as part of the responsibilities of empire-building, which in turn is celebrated as either a civilizing process for the rest of the globe or as simply a right bestowed upon the powerful. For instance, Ann Coulter speaks for many such intellectuals when she recently argued, while giving a speech at Penn State University, that she had no trouble with the idea that the United States invaded Iraq in order to seize its oil. As she put it, "Why not go to war just for oil? We need oil. Of course, we consume most of the world's oil; we do most of the world's production" (qtd. in Colella 2004,1). In this world-view, power, money, and a debased appeal to pragmatism always trump social and economic justice. Hence, **it is not surprising for neo-conservatives to have joined hands with neoliberals** and religious fundamentalists in broadcasting to the world at large an American triumphalism in which the United States is arrogantly defined as "[t]he greatest of all great powers in world history" (Frum and Pearle qtd. in Lapham 2004b, 8).2 But money, profits, and fear have become powerful ideological elements not only in arguing for opening up new markets, but also for closing down the possibility of dissent at home. In such a scenario, the police state is cele brated by religious evangelicals like John Ashcroft as a foundation of human freedom. This becomes clear not only in the passage of repressive laws such as the USA Patriot Act but also in the work of prominent neoconservatives such as David Frum and Richard Pearle who, without any irony intended, insist that "[a] free society is not an un-policed society. A free society is a self-policed society" (qtd. in Lapham 2004b, 8). In what could only be defined as an Adam Smith joins George Orwell in a religious cult in California scenario, markets have been elevated to the status of sacrosanct temples to be worshiped by eager consumers while citizens-turned soldiers of the-Army-of-God are urged to spy on each other and dissent is increas ingly criminalized.3 Political culture, if not the nature of politics itself, has undergone revo lutionary changes in the last two decades, reaching its most debased expres sion under the administration of President George W. Bush. Within this polit ical culture, not only is democracy subordinated to the rule of the market, but corporate decisions are freed from territorial constraints and the demands of public obligations, just as economics is disconnected from its social consequences. Power is increasingly removed from the dictates and control of nation states and politics is largely relegated to the sphere of the local. Zygmunt Bauman captures brilliantly what is new about the relation ship among power, politics, and the shredding of social obligations: The mobility acquired by "people who invest"?those with capital, with money which the investment requires?means the new, indeed unprece dented ... disconnection of power from obligations: duties towards employ ees, but also towards the younger and weaker, towards yet unborn genera tions and towards the self-reproduction of the living conditions of all; in short the freedom from the duty to contribute to daily life and the perpet uation of the community. . . . Shedding the responsibility for the conse quences is the most coveted and cherished gain which the new mobility brings to free-floating, locally unbound capital. (Bauman 1998, 9-10) Corporate power increasingly frees itself from any political limitations just as it uses its power through the educational force of the dominant culture to put into place an utterly privatized notion of agency in which it becomes difficult for young people and adults to imagine democracy as a public good, let alone the transformative power of collective action. Once again, demo cratic politics has become ineffective, if not banal, as civic language is impoverished and genuine spaces for democratic learning, debate, and dialogue such as schools, newspapers, popular culture, television networks, and other public spheres are either underfunded, eliminated, privatized, or subject to corporate ownership. Under the aggressive politics and culture of neoliberalism, society is increasingly mobilized for the production of violence against the poor, immigrants, dissenters, and others marginalized because of their age, gender, race, ethnicity, and color. At the center of neoliberalism is a new form of politics in the United States, a politics in which radical exclusion is the order of the day, and in which the primary questions no longer con cern equality, justice, or freedom, but are now about the survival of the slickest in a culture marked by fear, surveillance, and economic deprivation. This is a politics that hides its own ideology by eliminating the traces of its power in a rhetoric of normalization, populism, and the staging of public spectacles. As Susan George points out, the question that currently seems to define neoliberal "democracy" is "Who has a right to live or does not" (1999,para.34). Neoliberalism is not a neutral, technical, economic discourse that can be measured with the precision of a mathematical formula or defended through an appeal to the rules of a presumptively unassailable science that conve niently leaves its own history behind. Nor is it a paragon of economic ration ality that offers the best "route to optimum efficiency, rapid economic growth and innovation, and rising prosperity for all who are willing to work hard and take advantage of available opportunities" (Kotz 2003, 16). On the contrary, neoliberalism is an ideology, a politics, and at times a fanaticism that subordinates the art of democratic politics to the rapacious laws of a market economy that expands its reach to include all aspects of social life within the dictates and values of a market-driven society. More important, it is an eco nomic and implicitly cultural theory?a historical and socially constructed ideology that needs to be made visible, critically engaged, and shaken from the stranglehold of power it currently exercises over most of the command ing institutions of national and global life. As such, neoliberalism makes it difficult for many people either to imagine a notion of individual and social agency necessary for reclaiming a substantive democracy or to be able to theorize the economic, cultural, and political conditions necessary for a viable global public sphere in which public institutions, spaces, and goods become valued as part of a larger democratic struggle **for a sustainable future and the downward distribution of wealth, resources, and power**.

#### Thus, Shyam and I wish to utilize this debate space to begin a process of the interrogation of oil subsidies, and the broader neoliberal system they are a part of. This should be recognized not as an end-point but a starting point that can help facilitate broader discussions of neoliberalism within debate and outside of it

#### Our approach is informed by our personal experiences. Having participated in debate for much of our lives, we feel that it can serve a productive role in helping us to cultivate skills to grapple with problems in our community. Toward that end, we’ve participated in and supported public debates about energy production in our community.

#### I have participated in these public debates and have helped to work with communities about the harm fossil fuel production has had in their personal lives

#### \*\*\*Our role as students in this debate room can provide a locus to challenge systems of neoliberalism – each instance of resistance is key break apart neoliberal pedagogy and revitalize the global public sphere. This should be evaluated as a prior question

Giroux 5 (Henry A. – Global Television Network Chair, Professor at McMaster University, “The Terror of Neoliberalism: Rethinking the Significance of Cultural Politics”, Winter 2005, JSTOR)

Just as the world has seen a more virulent and brutal form of market capitalism, generally referred to as neoliberalism, develop over the last thir ty years, it has also seen "a new wave of political activism [**which] has coalesced around the simple idea that capitalism has gone too far**" (Harding 2001, para.28). Wedded to the belief that the market should be the organiz ing principle for all political, social, and economic decisions, neoliberalism wages an incessant attack on democracy, public goods, and non-commodified values. Under neoliberalism everything either is for sale or is plundered for profit. Public lands are looted by logging companies and corporate ranch ers; politicians willingly hand the public's airwaves over to powerful broad casters and large corporate interests without a dime going into the public trust; Halliburton gives war profiteering a new meaning as it is granted cor porate contracts without any competitive bidding and then bills the U.S. government for millions; the environment is polluted and despoiled in the name of profit-making just as the government passes legislation to make it easier for corporations to do so; public services are gutted in order to lower the taxes of major corporations; schools more closely resemble either malls or jails, and teachers, forced to get revenue for their school by adopting mar ket values, increasingly function as circus barkers hawking everything from hamburgers to pizza parties?that is, when they are not reduced to prepping students to take standardized tests. As markets are touted as the driving force of everyday life, big government is disparaged as either incompetent or threatening to individual freedom, suggesting that power should reside in markets and corporations rather than in governments (except for their sup port for corporate interests and national security) and citizens. **Citizenship has increasingly become a function of consumerism** and politics has been restructured as "**corporations have been increasingly freed from social control** through deregulation, privatization, and other neoliberal measures" (Tabb 2003, 153). Corporations more and more design not only the economic sphere but also shape legislation and policy affecting all levels of government, and with limited opposition. As corporate power lays siege to the political process, the benefits flow to the rich and the powerful. Included in such benefits are reform policies that shift the burden of taxes from the rich to the middle class, the working poor, and state governments as can be seen in the shift from taxes on wealth (capital gains, dividends, and estate taxes) to a tax on work, principally in the form of a regressive payroll tax (Collins, Hartman, Kraut, and Mota 2004). During the 2002-2004 fiscal years, tax cuts delivered $197.3 billion in tax breaks to the wealthiest 1% of Americans (i.e., house Thisholds making more than $337,000 a year) while state governments increased taxes to fill a $200 billion budget deficit (Gonsalves 2004). Equally alarm ing, a recent Congressional study revealed that 63% of all corporations in 2000 paid no taxes while "[s]ix in ten corporations reported no tax liabili ty for the five years from 1996 through 2000, even though corporate prof its were growing at record-breaking levels during that period" (Woodard 2004, para. 11). Fortunately, the corporate capitalist fairytale of neoliberalism has been challenged all over the globe by students, labor organizers, intellectuals, com munity activists, and a host of individuals and groups unwilling to allow democracy to be bought and sold by multinational corporations, corporate swindlers, international political institutions, and those government politicians who willingly align themselves with multinational, corporate interests and rapacious profits. From Seattle to Genoa, people engaged in popular resistance are collectively taking up the challenge of neoliberalism and reviving both the meaning of resistance and the sites where it takes place. Political culture is **now global and resistance is amorphous,** connecting students with workers, schoolteachers with parents, and intellectuals with artists. Groups protesting the attack on farmers in India whose land is being destroyed by the government in order to build dams now find themselves in alliance with young people resisting sweatshop labor in New York City. Environmental activists are joining up with key sections of organized labor as well as groups protesting Third World debt. The collapse of the neoliberal showcase, Argentina, along with numerous corporate bankruptcies and scandals (notably including Enron), reveals the cracks in neoliberal hegemony and domination. In addition, the multiple forms of resistance against neoliberal capitalism **are not limited by a version of identity politics** **focused exclusively on particularized rights and interests**. On the contrary, identity politics is affirmed **within a broader crisis of political culture and democracy** that connects the militarization of public life with the collapse of the welfare state and the attack on civil liberties. Central to these new movements is the notion that neoliberalism has to be understood within a larger crisis of vision, meaning, education, and political agency. Democracy in this view **is not limited to the struggle over economic resources and power**; indeed, it also includes **the creation of public spheres where individuals** can be educated as political agents equipped with the skills, capacities, and knowledge they need to perform as autonomous political agents. I want to expand the reaches of this debate by arguing that any struggle against neoliberalism must address the discourse of political agency, civic education, and cultural politics(the ongoing struggle for a substantive and inclusive democracy) and the global public sphere. We live at a time when the conflation of private interests, empire build ing, and evangelical fundamentalism brings into question the very nature, if not the existence, of the democratic process. Under the reign of neoliberalism, capital and wealth have been largely distributed upwards, while civic virtue has been undermined by a slavish celebration of the free market as the model for organizing all facets of everyday life (Henwood 2003). Political culture has been increasingly depoliticized as collective life is organized around the modalities of privatization, deregulation, and commercialization. When the alleged champions of neoliberalism invoke politics, they substitute "ideological certainty for reasonable doubt," and deplete "the national reserves of political intelligence" just as they endorse "the illusion that the future can be bought instead of earned" (Lapham 2004a, 9,11). Under attack is the social contract with its emphasis on enlarging the public good and expanding social provisions?such as access to adequate health care, housing, employment, public transportation, and education? which provided both a safety net and a set of conditions upon which democracy could be experi enced and critical citizenship engaged. Politics has been further depoliticized by a policy of anti-terrorism practiced by the Bush administration that mim ics the very terrorism it wishes to eliminate. Not only does a policy of all embracing anti-terrorism exhausts itself in a discourse of moral absolutes and public acts of denunciation that remove politics from the realm of state power, it also strips community of democratic values by defining it almost exclusively through attempts to stamp out what Michael Leeden, a former counter-terror expert in the Reagan administration, calls "corrupt habits of mind that are still lingering around, somewhere"(qtd. in Valentine 2001, para.33). The appeal to moral absolutes and the constant mobilization of emergency time coded as a culture of fear configures politics in religious terms, hiding its entanglement with particular ideologies and diverse rela tions of power. Politics becomes empty as it is reduced to following orders, shaming those who make power accountable, and shutting down legitimate modes of dissent (Giroux 2004).

#### \*\*Critical reflection opens spaces of resistance by which we can reframe our relationship to systems of power in a manner that enhances human agency and threatens their existence

Giroux 6 (Henry A. – Global Television Network Chair, Professor at McMaster University, “Academic Freedom under Fire: The Case for Critical Pedagogy”, Fall 2006, JSTOR)

What makes critical pedagogy so dangerous to Christian evangelicals, neoconservatives, and right-wing nationalists in the United States is that central to its very definition **is the task of educating students to become critical agents** actively questioning and negotiating the relationship between theory and practice, critical analysis and common sense, and learning and social change. Critical pedagogy opens up a space where students **should be able to come to terms with their own power** as critical agents; it provides a sphere where the unconditional freedom to question and assert **is central to the purpose of the university**, if not democracy itself (Derrida 2001, 233). And as a political and moral practice, pedagogy should "make evident the multiplici ty and complexity of history," as a narrative to enter into critical dialogue with rather than accept unquestioningly. Similarly, such a pedagogy should cultivate in students a healthy scepticism about power, a "willingness to temper any reverence for authority with a sense of critical awareness" (Said 2001, 501). As a performative practice, pedagogy should provide the conditions for students to be able to reflectively frame their own relationship **to the ongoing project of an unfinished democracy**. It is precisely this relationship between democracy and pedagogy that is so threatening to conservatives such as Horowitz. Pedagogy always represents a commitment to the future, and it remains the task of educators to make sure that the future points the way to a more socially just world, a world in which the discourses of critique and possibility in conjunction with the values of reason, freedom, and equal ity function to alter, as part of a broader democratic project, the grounds upon which life is lived. This is hardly a prescription for political indoctrina tion, but it is a project that gives education its most valued purpose and meaning, which in part is "to encourage human agency, not mold it in the manner of Pygmalion" (Aronowitz 1998, 10?11). It is also a position that threatens right-wing private advocacy groups, neoconservative politicians, and conservative extremists because they recognize that such a pedagogical commitment goes to the very heart of what it means to address real inequalities of power at the social level and to conceive of education as a project for democracy and critical citizenship while at the same time foregrounding a series of important and often ignored questions such as: "Why do we [as edu cators] do what we do the way we do it"?W hose interests does higher edu cation serve? How might it be possible to understand and engage the diverse contexts in which education takes place? In spite of the right-wing view that equates indoctrination with any suggestion of politics, critical pedagogy is not concerned simply with offering students new ways to think critically and act with authority as agents in the classroom; it is also concerned to **provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary** for them to expand their capacities to both question deep-seated assumptions and myths that legitimate the most archaic and disempowering social practices that structure every aspect of society and to take responsibility for intervening in the world they inhabit. Education is not neutral, but that does not mean it is merely a form of indoctrination. On the contrary, as a practice that attempts to expand the capacities necessary for human agency and hence the possibilities for democracy itself, the university must nourish those pedagogical practices that promote "a concern with keeping the forever unexhausted and unfulfilled human potential open, fighting back all attempts to foreclose and pre-empt the further unravelling of human possibilities, prodding human society to go on questioning itself and preventing that questioning from ever stalling or being declared finished" (Bauman and Tester 2001, 4). In other words, critical pedagogy forges both critique and agency through a language of scepticism and possibility and a culture of openness, debate, and engagement, all elements that are now at risk **in the latest and most dangerous attack on higher education.**

#### \*Big Oil is not impenetrable – effective movements centered around unveiling corporate domination can succeed in dismantling systems of power – empirically proven

Juhasz 8 (Antonia – American oil and energy analyst, Investigative Journalism Fellow at the Investigative Reporting Program, “The Tyranny of Oil”, pgs 18-22)

Nearly 75 percent of Americans believe that big business has too much influence over the federal government, according to a 2006 Gallup poll. In fact, the only industry that Americans like less than Big Oil is the U.S. government.3 Many people also believe that the power of corporations over the U.S. government—especially that of Big Oil—is impenetrable. If history is a guide, this simply is not true. One hundred years ago, mass movements of people across the United States joined together to fundamentally **rewrite the relationship between corporations, the government, and the public**. It was one of the most radical and transformative periods in U.S. history and a period to which our own time bears much resemblance. Corporate executives were working hand in glove with elected officials to advance interests widely held to be contrary to the overall economic health of the people and the nation, including waging wars for corporate profit and imperial expansion. In response, people organized against unchecked and unprecedented corporate power in what is today known as the Populist or Progressive Era. Ultimately, this era did not yield the more radical changes desired by some, but it did bring about regulation: specifically, the first federal laws in the United States to protect labor and regulate corporate activity, and the financing of political campaigns. The Sherman Antitrust Act was among these new regulatory tools to rein in the nation's "epidemic" of megacorpo-rations. Then, as now, oil lay at the heart of much of the struggle, while John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil, like its largest descendant today—ExxonMobil—reigned as the most formidable corporate power. Standard Oil's rise was part of a mass consolidation of economic and political power into the hands of a few mega-corporations in the decades following the Civil War. In 1865 these companies emerged from the war heavily supported by the U.S. government with tax breaks, subsidies, and protection from both foreign and domestic competition. They were also free from government regulation—including the absence of just about any worker rights and consumer protections. These policy choices were justified, their supporters contended, because the companies needed unimpeded growth to match the expansion of the American economy. Unregulated, the corporation did what it does naturally: whatever it could to enrich the bottom line. In describing the tactics and practices used by Standard Oil, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the first regulatory commission in U.S. history, did not mince words: "unjust discrimination," "intentional disregard of rights," "unexcused," "illegal," "excessive," "extraordinary," "forbidden," so obvious and palpable a discrimination that no discussion of it is necessary," "wholly indefensible," "patent and provoking discrimination for which no rational excuse is suggested, "obnoxious," "absurd and inexcusable," "gross disproportions and inequalities," and "the most unjust and injurious discrimination." Rockefeller built Standard Oil into the first major industrial monopoly in the United States and established the model that all others would seek to follow. Ida Tarbell writes in the introduction to her 1904 book The History of the Standard Oil Company that Standard Oil "was the first in the field, and it has furnished the methods, the charter, and the traditions for its followers. It is the most perfectly developed trust in existence; that is, it satisfies most nearly the trust ideal of entire control of the commodity in which it deals."5 The New York State Senate concluded after its hallmark investigation of Standard Oil in 1888, "Its success has been the incentive to the formation of all other trusts or combinations. It is the type of a system which has spread like a disease through the commercial system of this country.'\* Following Standard Oil's lead, the nation's largest companies merged and consolidated their own efforts by forming trusts. A "trust" is a combination of corporations where a board of trustees holds the stock of each individual company and manages the business of all. At the time, the word trust quickly became synonymous with any large corporation. The trusts gobbled up their smaller competitors and forced out of business those that they could not buy. The companies then **used their size and economic clout to influence political decision-making on their behalf**. Again Rockefeller set the standard, perfecting the art of the political contribution. As power was consolidated in the hands of a few great companies, the rights **of workers, farmers, consumers, and smaller businesses shrank accordingly**. All across the country, people responded with resistance, rebellion, **and a demand for fundamental change**, including new legal structures to support not only their rights but also the nation's flagging democracy. Farmers, women and children factory workers, African-American railway workers, longshoremen, suffragists, Anarchists, Communists, Socialists, Wobblies, and many other groups organized for change. On May 1, 1886, 350,000 workers at over 11,500 establishments all across the United States went on strike. In the course of that year, there were more than 1,400 strikes involving some half a million workers. By 1904, there were on average more than 4,000 strikes per year.7 The objectives of the strikers sound almost trite today, as they are rights that most American citizens now take largely for granted: the eight-hour workday, the forty-hour workweek, a minimum wage, worker safety, the right to form unions, compensation when injured on the job, and the right to work under legal contracts enforcing mutual commitments between employers and workers. The 1890 Sherman Antitrust Act was designed to protect small businesses—and thereby support the overall economy; to keep business within the realm of government regulation—and thereby protect workers and consumers; and to keep businesses small enough so that economic clout did not become political clout— and thereby protect democracy. The law would ultimately be used to bring down Standard Oil, and it remains the foundation of all U.S. antitrust policy today. However, from the 1980s until today, the original intent of the law has been all but forgotten, and the mergers of megacorporations, including the descendants of Standard Oil, have been allowed to proceed virtually without restriction. At the center of the Progressive and Populist Movements were the "muckrakers," journalists **who dug up the dirt and brought sunlight** to shine on the crimes committed by corporations and the politicians who supported them. While she hated the nomenclature, Ida Tarbell, author, historian, and journalist, was one of the most influential muckrakers of her day. Her blistering sixteen-part, two-year-long expose of John D. Rockefeller and his Standard Oil Company ran in McClure's Magazine from 1902 to 1904. When the series was released as a book in 1904, one journal described it as "the most remarkable book of its kind ever written in this country." Daniel Yergin, in his landmark book The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power, describes TarbelPs book, saying "Arguably, it was the single most influential book on business ever published in the United States."8 It was the nail in the coffin for the nation's most hated trust and its premier robber baron. As for Rockefeller, Yergin describes him as "the single most important figure in shaping the oil industry."9 It is a common characterization and is undoubtedly true. However, Rockefeller earned this and even greater acclaim despite the fact that neither he nor his company contributed to the discovery of oil. He did not develop the technology to drill for oil, pump it out of the earth, turn crude into kerosene for lamps or gasoline for cars, or move it through pipelines around the earth. On the contrary, Rockefeller did more than just about any other individual in history to undercut the efforts of those who made these discoveries and to push them out of the oil business altogether. Nor did Rockefeller found the first oil company, introduce the ideas of vertical or horizontal integration to the oil industry, or invent the concept of the corporate trust. Yet Rockefeller unquestionably deserves Yergin's title, because he mastered the fine art of mass consolidation and achieving unprecedented profit with little regard for the human, social, or broader economic costs of his actions. In Rockefeller's words, "The growth of a large business is merely a survival of the fittest."10 For more than a century, the direct descendants of Standard Oil, including ExxonMobil, Chevron, and Conoco-Phillips, **have dutifully followed Rockefeller's business model.** Yet all of Standard Oil's descendants should pay heed, for John D. Rockefeller personally sowed the seeds of his own demise: a peoples' movement **committed to, and ultimately successful in, breaking up the Standard Oil Company.**

## 2AC

#### The permutation is a linkage of struggles – without an affirmation of solidarity there’s no chance for change

Giroux 11 (Henry A. Giroux, Global TV Network Chair in English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University, 9 October 2011, “An Interview With Henry Giroux: Youth Movement in a Culture of Hopelessness”, <http://www.truth-out.org/interview-henry-giroux-youth-movement-culture-hopelessness/1318092302>)

AJE: Police have used batons and pepper spray against some protesters in New York, and have arrested more than 800 of them. In your latest article, you describe non-physical government repression in the US - especially within the education system. Can you describe that, in the context of why people are angry enough to camp out for weeks on end in protest? HG: The theoretical framework for that is that one of the things you have to realise is that democracy doesn't work without the formative culture that makes possible the skills, the knowledge, the ideas, the modes of dialogue, the modes of exchange, that can actually provide the foundation for people to be critical and engaged social and individual agents. If you don't have that formative culture, democracy becomes empty. What you end up with is actually a culture that is so wedded, in this particular case, to a neoliberal logic, that people can only see themselves as individuals, they can only see themselves as competitive, they hate the social state, they have no understanding of solidarity; and what I have been arguing for at least 35 years is that you have to take seriously that education is a fundamental part of politics, and that we're not just talking about schools. We're talking about, as C Wright Mills said, an entire cultural apparatus that now has an enormously educational function. All you have to do is look at Fox News in the US, or look at the right wing takeover of talk radio, which is overwhelming. The fact is that these media don't entertain, they produce subjectivities, they produce identities, they produce desires, they create framing mechanisms for how people understand politics and their relationship to immigrants and to each other and to a larger global audience. It seems to me that until this question of pedagogy - of the articulation of knowledge through experience and how people relate to the world - until education is seen as a fundamental dimension of politics, we're in real trouble, because if you don't do that you can't understand social media as a profoundly important political educational tool. If you don't do that, you can't understand how people come to internalise understandings of themselves that are at odds with their own possibilities for freedom. That's why I believe the dominant media finds this movement so threatening. They're hysterical. What it suggests is not that young people are simply protesting. It suggests that they're not buying the crap that comes out of the dominant media, they're challenging it, and secondly, they're setting up their own circuits of knowledge and education. That's frightening to think that young people can actually create a culture in which questions of dialogue, dissent, critical engagement, global responsibility, can come into play - that truly frightens, in my estimation, financial and dominant elites.

#### Challenging neoliberalism in this space is key – institutional spaces are becoming privatized – resulting in more exclusion

Fish 9 (Stanley – Professor of humanities and law at Florida International University, in Miami, and dean emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago, “Neoliberalism and Higher Education”, 3/8, http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/08/neoliberalism-and-higher-education/)

What I’ve learned (and what some readers of this column no doubt already knew) is that neoliberalism is a pejorative way of referring to a set of economic/political policies based on a strong faith in the beneficent effects of free markets. Here is an often cited definition by Paul Treanor: “Neoliberalism is a philosophy in which the existence and operation of a market are valued in themselves, separately from any previous relationship with the production of goods and services . . . and where the operation of a market or market-like structure is seen as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, and substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs.” (“Neoliberalism: Origins, Theory, Definition.”) In a neoliberal world, for example, tort questions — questions of negligence law — are thought of not as ethical questions of blame and restitution (who did the injury and how can the injured party be made whole?), but as economic questions about the value to someone of an injury-producing action relative to the cost to someone else adversely affected by that same action. It may be the case that run-off from my factory kills the fish in your stream; but rather than asking the government to stop my polluting activity (which would involve the loss of jobs and the diminishing of the number of market transactions), why don’t you and I sit down and figure out if more wealth is created by my factory’s operations than is lost as a consequence of their effects? As Ronald Coase put it in his classic article, “The Problem of Social Cost” (Journal of Law and Economics, 1960): “The question to be decided is: is the value of the fish lost greater or less than the value of the product which the contamination of the stream makes possible?” If the answer is more value would be lost if my factory were closed, then the principle of the maximization of wealth and efficiency directs us to a negotiated solution: you allow my factory to continue to pollute your stream and I will compensate you or underwrite the costs of your moving the stream elsewhere on your property, provided of course that the price I pay for the right to pollute is not greater than the value produced by my being permitted to continue. Notice that “value” in this example (which is an extremely simplified stand-in for infinitely more complex transactions) is an economic, not an ethical word, or, rather, that in the neoliberal universe, ethics reduces to calculations of wealth and productivity. Notice too that if you and I proceed (as market ethics dictate) to work things out between us — to come to a private agreement — there will be no need for action by either the government or the courts, each of which is likely to muddy the waters (in which the fish will still be dying) by introducing distracting moral or philosophical concerns, sometimes referred to as “market distortions.” Whereas in other theories, the achieving of a better life for all requires a measure of state intervention, in the polemics of neoliberalism (elaborated by Milton Friedman and Friedrich von Hayek and put into practice by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher), state interventions — governmental policies of social engineering — are “presented as the problem rather than the solution” (Chris Harman, “Theorising Neoliberalism,” International Socialism Journal, December 2007). The solution is the privatization of everything (hence the slogan “let’s get governments off our backs”), which would include social security, health care, K-12 education, the ownership and maintenance of toll–roads, railways, airlines, energy production, communication systems and the flow of money. (This list, far from exhaustive, should alert us to the extent to which **the neoliberal agenda** has already succeeded.) The assumption is that if free enterprise is allowed to make its way into every corner of human existence, the results will be better overall for everyone, even for those who are temporarily disadvantaged, let’s say by being deprived of their fish. The objection (which I am reporting, not making) is that in the passage from a state in which actions are guided by an overarching notion of the public good to a state in which individual entrepreneurs “freely” pursue their private goods, values like morality, justice, fairness, empathy, nobility and love are either abandoned or redefined in market terms. Short-term transactions-for-profit **replace long-term planning designed to produce a more just and equitable** **society**. Everyone is always running around doing and acquiring things, but the things done and acquired provide only momentary and empty pleasures (shopping, trophy houses, designer clothing and jewelry), which in the end amount to nothing. Neoliberalism, David Harvey explains, delivers a “world of pseudo-satisfactions that is **superficially exciting but hollow at its core**.” (“A Brief History of Neoliberalism.”) Harvey and the other critics of neoliberalism explain that once neoliberal goals and priorities become embedded in a culture’s way of thinking, institutions that don’t regard themselves as neoliberal will nevertheless engage in practices that mime and extend neoliberal principles — **privatization**, **untrammeled competition**, the retreat from social engineering, **the proliferation of markets**. These are exactly the principles and practices these critics find in the 21st century university, where (according to Henry Giroux) the “historical legacy” of the university conceived “as a crucial public sphere” **has given way to a university “that now narrates itself in terms that** are more instrumental, commercial and practical.” (“Academic Unfreedom in America,” in Works and Days.) This new narrative has been produced (and necessitated) by the withdrawal of the state from the funding of its so-called public universities. If the percentage of a state’s contribution to a college’s operating expenses falls from 80 to 10 and less (this has been the relentless trajectory of the past 40 years) and if, at the same time, demand for the “product” of higher education rises and the cost of delivering that product (the cost of supplies, personnel, information systems, maintenance, construction, insurance, security) skyrockets, a huge gap opens up that will have to be filled somehow. Faced with this situation universities have responded by (1) raising tuition, in effect passing the burden of costs to the students who now become consumers and debt-holders rather than beneficiaries of enlightenment (2) entering into research partnerships with industry and thus courting the danger of turning the pursuit of truth into the pursuit of profits and (3) hiring a larger and larger number of short-term, part-time adjuncts who as members of a transient and disposable workforce are in no position to challenge the university’s practices or agitate for an academy more committed to the realization of democratic rather than monetary goals. In short , universities have embraced neoliberalism.

#### Business encroachment on deliberative spheres is happening rapidly, it is incumbent upon us to resist that influence and preserve a space for non-institutional argument

Edwards 9 (Michael, Oxford, Senior Fellow at Demos, former Regional Director for Oxfam – Southern Africa, director of the Ford Foundations’ Governance and Civil Society Program, Civil Society, p. viii-ix, Polity Press)

The second set of challenges have come from the economic arena, and specifically from the increasing encroachment of business and the market into areas traditionally seen as the preserve of civil society (if indeed one sees these institutions as separate). For many years, there has been tension between radical and neo-liberal interpretations of civil society the former seeing it as the ground from which to challenge the status quo and build new alternatives, and the latter as the service-providing not-for-profit sector necessitated by "market failure." Today, "philanthrocapitalism" the belief that business and the market can solve social problems as well as create an economic surplus - is as "big an idea" as civil society perhaps even bigger. It remains to be seen whether the global financial crisis of 2008 dampens enthusiasm for this new trend but, for now, social enterprise, social entrepreneurs, venture philanthropy, corporate social responsibility and "creative capitalism" occupy a central position in public and political debate. Civil society is part of this debate, of course, both as a source of positive influence on business and as a potential beneficiary of stronger financial management and market-based strategies for financial sustainability but there is also skepticism among philanthrocapitalists about the power of collective action, social movements, democratic decision-making, community organizing and the non-commercial values of solidarity, service and cooperation, "A society that reduces everything to a market inevitably divides those who can buy from those who cannot, undermining any sense of collective responsibility, and with it, democracy." Will philanthrocapitalism and increased government regulation undermine civil society's transformative potential by reducing the ability or willingness of citizens' groups to hold public and private power accountable for its actions, generate alternative ideas and policy positions, push for fundamental changes in the structures of power, and organize collective action on a scale large enough to force through long-term shifts in politics, economics and social relations?

## 1AR

#### Even if they win we don’t adequately utilize style, Pure injection of style into this debate space undermines those pedagogies and prevents effect public debate

Giroux 12 (Henry A. Giroux, Global TV Network Chair in English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University, 19 June 2012, “Beyond the Politics of the Big Lie: The Education Deficit and the New Authoritarianism”, http://truth-out.org/opinion/item/9865-beyond-the-politics-of-the-big-lie-the-education-deficit-and-the-new-authoritarianism)

The democratic deficit is not, as many commentators have argued, reducible to the growing (and unparalleled) inequality gap in the United States, the pervasiveness of lending fraud, favorable tax treatment for the wealthy, or the lack of adequate regulation of the financial sector. These are important issues, but they are more symptomatic than causal in relation to the democratic decline and rise of an uncivil culture in America. The democratic deficit is closely related, however, to an unprecedented deficit in critical education. The power of finance capital in recent years has not only targeted the realm of official politics, but also directed its attention toward a range of educational apparatuses - really, a vast and complex ideological ecosystem that reproduces itself through nuance, distraction, innuendo, myths, lies and misrepresentations. This media ecosystem not only changes our sense of time, space and information; it also redefines the very meaning of the social and this is far from a democratic process, especially as the architecture of the Internet and other media platforms are largely in the hands of private interests.(13) The educational pipelines for corporate messages and ideology are everywhere and have for the last twenty-five years successfully drowned out any serious criticism and challenge to market fundamentalism. The current corrupt and dysfunctional state of American politics is about a growing authoritarianism tied to economic, political and cultural formations that have hijacked democracy and put structural and ideological forces in place that constitute a new regime of politics, not simply a series of bad policies. The solution in this case does not lie in promoting piecemeal reforms, such as a greater redistribution of wealth and income, but in dismantling all the institutional, ideological and social formations that make gratuitous inequality and other antidemocratic forces possible at all. Even the concept of reform has been stripped of its democratic possibilities and has become a euphemism to "cover up the harsh realities of draconian cutbacks in wages, salaries, pensions and public welfare and the sharp increases in regressive taxes."(14) Instead of reversing progressive changes made by workers, women, young people, and others, the American public needs a new understanding of what it would mean to advance the ideological and material relations of a real democracy, while removing American society from the grip of "an authoritarian political culture."(15) This will require new conceptions of politics, social responsibility, power, civic courage, civil society and democracy itself. If we do not safeguard the remaining public spaces that provide individuals and social movements with new ways to think about and participate in politics, then authoritarianism will solidify its hold on the American public. In doing so, it will create a culture that criminalizes dissent, and those who suffer under antidemocratic ideologies and policies will be both blamed for the current economic crisis and punished by ruling elites. What is crucial to grasp at the current historical moment is that the fate of democracy is inextricably linked to a profound crisis of contemporary knowledge, characterized by its increasing commodification, fragmentation, privatization and a turn toward racist and jingoistic conceits. As knowledge becomes abstracted from the rigors of civic culture and is reduced to questions of style, ritual and image, it undermines the political, ethical and governing conditions for individuals to construct those viable public spheres necessary for debate, collective action and solving urgent social problems. As public spheres are privatized, commodified and turned over to the crushing forces of turbo capitalism, the opportunities for openness, inclusiveness and dialogue that nurture the very idea and possibility of a discourse about democracy cease to exist. The lesson to be learned in this instance is that political agency involves learning how to deliberate, make judgments and exercise choices, particularly as the latter are brought to bear on critical activities that offer the possibility of change. Civic education as it is experienced and produced throughout an ever-diminishing number of institutions provides individuals with opportunities to see themselves as capable of doing more than the existing configurations of power of any given society would wish to admit. And it is precisely this notion of civic agency and critical education that has been under aggressive assault within the new and harsh corporate order of casino capitalism. Anti-Public Intellectuals and the Conservative Re-Education Machine The conservative takeover of public pedagogy with its elite codifiers of neoliberal ideology has a long history extending from the work of the "Chicago Boys" at the University of Chicago to the various conservative think tanks that emerged after the publication of the Powell memo in the early seventies.(16) The Republican Party will more than likely win the next election and take full control over all aspects of policymaking in the United States. This is especially dangerous given that the Republican Party is now controlled by extremists. If they win the 2012 election, they will not only extend the Bush/Obama legacy of militarism abroad, but likely intensify the war at home as well. Political scientist Frances Fox Piven rightly argues that, "We've been at war for decades now - not just in Afghanistan or Iraq, but right here at home. Domestically, it's been a war [a]gainst the poor [and as] devastating as it has been, the war against the poor has gone largely unnoticed until now."(17) And the war at home now includes more than attacks on the poor, as campaigns are increasingly waged against the rights of women, students, workers, people of color and immigrants, especially Latino Americans. As the social state collapses, the punishing state expands its power and targets larger portions of the population. The war in Afghanistan is now mimicked in the war waged on peaceful student protesters at home. It is evident in the environmental racism that produces massive health problems for African-Americans. The domestic war is even waged on elementary school children, who now live in fear of the police handcuffing them in their classrooms and incarcerating them as if they were adult criminals.(18) It is waged on workers by taking away their pensions, bargaining rights and dignity. The spirit of militarism is also evident in the war waged on the welfare state and any form of social protection that benefits the poor, disabled, sick, elderly, and other groups now considered disposable, including children. The soft side of authoritarianism in the United States does not need to put soldiers in the streets, though it certainly follows that script. As it expands its control over the commanding institutions of government, the armed forces and civil society in general, it hires anti-public intellectuals and academics to provide ideological support for its gated communities, institutions and modes of education. As Yasha Levine points out, it puts thousands of dollars in the hands of corporate shills such as Malcolm Gladwell, who has become a "one man branding and distribution pipeline for valuable corporate messages, constructed on the public's gullibility in trusting his probity and intellectual honesty."(19) Gladwell (who is certainly not alone) functions as a bought-and-paid mouthpiece for "Big Tobacco Pharma and defend[s] Enron-style financial fraud ... earning hundreds of thousands of dollars as a corporate speaker, sometimes from the same companies and industries that he covers as a journalist."(20) Corporate power uses these "pay to play" academics, anti-public intellectuals, the mainstream media, and other educational apparatuses to discredit the very people that it simultaneously oppresses, while waging an overarching war on all things public. As Charles Ferguson has noted, an entire industry has been created that enables the "sale of academic expertise for the purpose of influencing government policy, the courts and public opinion [and] is now a multibillion-dollar business."(21) It gets worse, in that "Academic, legal, regulatory and policy consulting in economics, finance and regulation is dominated by a half dozen consulting firms, several speakers' bureaus and various industry lobbying groups that maintain large networks of academics for hire specifically for the purpose of advocating industry interests in policy and regulatory debates."(22) Such anti-public intellectuals create what William Black has called a "criminogenic environment" that spreads disease and fraud in the interest of bolstering the interests, profits and values of the super wealthy.(23) There is more at work here than carpet bombing the culture with lies, deceptions and euphemisms. Language in this case does more than obfuscate or promote propaganda. It creates framing mechanisms, cultural ecosystems and cultures of cruelty, while closing down the spaces for dialogue, critique and thoughtfulness. At its worst, it engages in the dual processes of demonization and distraction. The rhetoric of demonization takes many forms: for example, calling firefighters, teachers, and other public servants greedy because they want to hold onto their paltry benefits. It labels students as irresponsible because of the large debts they are forced to incur as states cut back funding to higher education (this, too, is part of a broader effort by conservatives to hollow out the social state). Poor people are insulted and humiliated because they are forced to live on food stamps, lack decent health care and collect unemployment benefits because there are no decent jobs available. Poor minorities are now subject to overt racism in the right-wing media and outright violence in the larger society. Anti-public intellectuals rail against public goods and public values; they undermine collective bonds and view social responsibility as a pathology, while touting the virtues of a survival-of-the-fittest notion of individual responsibility. Fox News and its embarrassingly blowhard pundits tell the American people that Gov. Scott Walker's victory over Tom Barrett in the Wisconsin recall election was a fatal blow against unions, while in reality "his win signals less a loss for the unions than a loss for our democracy in this post-Citizens United era, when elections can be bought with the help of a few billionaires."(24) How else to explain that Tea Party favorite Walker raised over $30.5 million during the election - more than seven times Barrett's reported $3.9 million - largely from 13 out-of-state billionaires?(25) This was corporate money enlisted for use in a pedagogical blitz designed to carpet bomb voters with the rhetoric of distraction and incivility. The same pundits who rail against the country's economic deficit fail to connect it to the generous tax cuts they espouse for corporations and the financial institutions and services that take financial risks, which sometimes generate capital, but more often produce debts and instability that only serve to deepen the national economic crisis. Nor do they connect the US recession and global economic crisis to the criminal activities enabled by an unregulated financial system marked by massive lending fraud, high risk speculation, a corrupt credit system and pervasive moral and economic dishonesty. The spokespersons for the ultrarich publish books arguing that we need even more inequality because it benefits not only the wealthy, but everyone else.(26) This is a form of authoritarian delusion that appears to meet the clinical threshold for being labeled psychopathic given its proponents' extreme investment in being "indifferent to others, incapable of guilt, exclusively devoted to their own interests."(27) Nothing is said in this pro-market narrative about the massive human suffering caused by a growing inequality in which society's resources are squandered at the top, while salaries for the middle and working classes stagnate, consumption dries up, social costs are ignored, young people are locked out of jobs and any possibility of social mobility and the state reconfigures its power to punish rather than protect the vast majority of its citizens. The moral coma that appears characteristic of the elite who inhabit the new corporate ethic of casino capitalism has attracted the attention of scientists, whose studies recently reported that "members of the upper class are more likely to behave unethically, to lie during negotiations, to drive illegally and to cheat when competing for a prize."(28) But there is more at stake here than the psychological state of those who inhabit the boardrooms of Wall Street. We must also consider the catastrophic effects produced by their values and policies. In fact, Stiglitz has argued that, "Most Americans today are worse off than they were fifteen years ago. A full-time worker in the US is worse off today then he or she was 44 years ago. That is astounding - half a century of stagnation. The economic system is not delivering. It does not matter whether a few people at the top benefitted tremendously - when the majority of citizens are not better off, the economic system is not working."(29) The economic system may not be working, but the ideological rationales used to justify its current course appear immensely successful, managing as they do to portray a casino capitalism that transforms democracy into its opposite - a form of authoritarianism with a soft edge - as utterly benign, if not also beneficial, to society at large. Democratic Decline and the Politics of Distraction Democracy withers, public spheres disappear and the forces of authoritarianism grow when a family, such as the Waltons of Walmart fame, is allowed "to amass a combined wealth of some $90 billion, which is equivalent to the wealth of the entire bottom 30 percent of US society."(30) Such enormous amounts of wealth translate into equally vast amounts of power, as is evident in the current attempts of a few billionaires to literally buy local, state and federal elections. Moreover, a concentration of wealth deepens the economic divide among classes, rendering more and more individuals incapable of the most basic opportunities to move out of poverty and despair. This is especially true in light of a recent survey indicating that, "Nearly half of all Americans lack economic security, meaning they live above the federal poverty threshold but still do hot have enough money to cover housing, food, healthcare and other basic expenses.... 45 percent of US residents live in households that struggle to make ends meet. That breaks down to 39 percent of all adults and 55 percent of all children."(31) The consequential impacts on civic engagement are more difficult to enumerate, but it does not require much imagination to think about how democracy might flourish if access to health care, education, employment, and other public benefits was ensured equally throughout a society and not restricted to the rich and wealthy alone. And yet, as power and wealth accrue to the upper 1 percent, the American public is constantly told that the poor, the unions, feminists, critical intellectuals and public servants are waging class warfare to the detriment of civility and democracy. The late Tony Judt stated that he was less concerned about the slide of American democracy into something like authoritarianism than American society moving toward something he viewed as even more corrosive: "a loss of conviction, a loss of faith in the culture of democracy, a sense of skepticism and withdrawal" that diminishes the capacity of a democratic formative culture to resist and transform those antidemocratic ideologies that benefit only the mega corporations, the ultrawealthy and ideological fundamentalists.(32) Governance has turned into a legitimation for enriching the already wealthy elite, bankers, hedge fund managers, mega corporations and executive members of the financial service industries. Americans now live in a society in which only the thinnest conception of democracy frames what it means to be a citizen - one which equates the obligations of citizenship with consumerism and democratic rights with alleged consumer freedoms. Antidemocratic forms of power do not stand alone as a mode of force or the force of acting on others; they are also deeply aligned with cultural apparatuses of persuasion, extending their reach through social and digital media, sophisticated technologies, the rise of corporate intellectuals and a university system that now produces and sanctions intellectuals aligned with private interests - all of which, as Randy Martin points out, can be identified with a form of casino capitalism that is about "permanent vigilance, activity and intervention."(33) Indeed, many institutions that provide formal education in the United States have become co-conspirators with a savage casino capitalism, whose strength lies in producing, circulating and legitimating market values that promote the narrow world of commodity worship, celebrity culture, bare-knuckle competition, a retreat from social responsibility and a war-of-all-against-all mentality that destroys any viable notion of community, the common good and the interrelated notions of political, social and economic rights. University presidents now make huge salaries sitting on corporate boards, while faculty sell their knowledge to the highest corporate bidder and, in doing so, turn universities into legitimation centers for casino capitalism.(34) Of course, such academics also move from the boardrooms of major corporations to talk shows and op-ed pages of major newspapers, offering commentary in journals and other modes of print and screen culture. They are the new traveling intellectuals of casino capitalism, doing everything they can to make the ruthless workings of power invisible, to shift the blame for society's failures onto the very people who are its victims and to expand the institutions and culture of anti-intellectualism and distraction into every aspect of American life. Across all levels, politics in the United States now suffers from an education deficit that enables a pedagogy of distraction to dictate with little accountability how crucial social problems and issues are named, discussed and acted upon. The conservative re-education machine appears shameless in its production of lies that include insane assertions such as: Obama's health care legislation would create death panels; liberals are waging a war on Christmas; Obama is a socialist trying to nationalize industries; the founding fathers tried to end slavery; and Obama is a Muslim sympathizer and not a US citizen. Other misrepresentations and distortions include: the denial of global warming; the government cannot create jobs; cuts in wages and benefits create jobs; Obama has created massive deficits; Obama wants to raise the taxes of working- and middle-class people; Obama is constantly "apologizing" for America; and the assertion that Darwinian evolution is a myth.(35) Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney continues spinning this spider web of lies unapologetically, even when members of his own party point out the inconsistencies in his claims. For instance, he has claimed that, "Obamacare increases the deficit,"(36) argued that Obama has "increased the national debt more than all other presidents combined" and insisted that Obama has lied about "his record on gay rights." He has falsely claimed that, "Obama promised unemployment below eight percent,"(37) dodged the truth regarding "his position on climate change" and blatantly misrepresented the truth in stating that, "he pays a 50% tax rate."(38) Diane Ravitch has recently pointed out that in making a case for vouchers, Romney has made false claims about the success of the DC voucher program.(39) The politics of distraction should not be reduced merely to a rhetorical ploy used by the wealthy and influential to promote their own interests and power. It is a form of market-driven politics in which educational force of the broader culture is used to create ideologies, policies, individuals and social agents who lack the knowledge, critical skills and discriminatory judgments to question the rule of casino capitalism and the values, social practices and power formations it legitimates. Politics and education have always mutually informed each other as pedagogical sites proliferate and circulate throughout the cultural landscape.(40) But today, distraction is the primary element being used to suppress democratically purposeful education by pushing critical thought to the margins of society. As a register of power, distraction becomes central to a pedagogical landscape inhabited by rich conservative foundations, an army of well-funded anti-public intellectuals from both major parties, a growing number of amply funded conservative campus organizations, increasing numbers of academics who hock their services to corporations and the military-industrial complex, and others who promote the ideology of casino capitalism and the corporate right's agenda. Academics who make a claim to producing knowledge and truth in the public interest are increasingly being replaced by academics for hire who move effortlessly among industry, government and academia. Extreme power is now showcased through the mechanisms of ever-proliferating cultural/educational apparatuses and the anti-public intellectuals who support them and are in turn rewarded by the elites who finance such apparatuses. The war at home is made visible in the show of force aimed at civilian populations, including students, workers, and others considered disposable or a threat to the new authoritarianism. Its most powerful allies appear to be the intellectuals, institutions, cultural apparatuses and new media technologies that constitute the sites of public pedagogy, which produce the formative culture necessary for authoritarianism to thrive. While a change in consciousness does not guarantee a change in either one's politics or society, it is a crucial precondition for connecting what it means to think otherwise to conditions that make it possible to act otherwise. The education deficit must be seen as intertwined with a political deficit, serving to make many oppressed individuals complicit with oppressive ideologies. As the late Cornelius Castoriadis made clear, democracy requires "critical thinkers capable of putting existing institutions into question.... while simultaneously creating the conditions for individual and social autonomy."(41) Nothing will change politically or economically until new and emerging social movements take seriously the need to develop a language of radical reform and create new public spheres that support the knowledge, skills and critical thought that are necessary features of a democratic formative culture. Getting beyond the big lie as a precondition for critical thought, civic engagement and a more realized democracy will mean more than correcting distortions, misrepresentations and falsehoods produced by politicians, media talking heads and anti-public intellectuals. It will also require addressing how new sites of pedagogy have become central to any viable notion of agency, politics and democracy itself. This is not a matter of elevating cultural politics over material relations of power as much as it is a rethinking of how power deploys culture and how culture as a mode of education positions power. James Baldwin, the legendary African-American writer and civil rights activist, argued that the big lie points to a crisis of American identity and politics and is symptomatic of "a backward society" that has descended into madness, "especially when one is forced to lie about one's aspect of anybody's history, [because you then] must lie about it all."(42) He goes on to argue "that one of the paradoxes of education [is] that precisely at the point when you begin to develop a conscience, you must find yourself at war with your society. It is your responsibility to change society if you think of yourself as an educated person."(43) What Baldwin recognizes is that learning has the possibility to trigger a critical engagement with oneself, others and the larger society - education becomes in this instance more than a method or tool for domination but a politics, a fulcrum for democratic social change. Tragically, in our current climate "learning" merely contributes to a vast reserve of manipulation and self-inflicted ignorance. Our education deficit is neither reducible to the failure of particular types of teaching nor the decent into madness by the spokespersons for the new authoritarianism. Rather, it is about how matters of knowledge, values and ideology can be struggled over as issues of power and politics. Surviving the current education deficit will depend on progressives using history, memory and knowledge not only to reconnect intellectuals to the everyday needs of ordinary people, but also to jumpstart social movements by making education central to organized politics and the quest for a radical democracy.