# 2AC

#### This debate matters – use your ballot to stand in solidarity with the plan as a method to resist the possibility of nuclear war – this spillsover

HNSG (Harvard Nuclear Study Group – Albert Carnesale, UCLA Chancellor Emeritus and holds professorial appointments in UCLA’s School of Public Affairs and Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science, twenty-three year tenure at Harvard University , Pauly Doty, Founder and Director Emeritus of the Center for Science and International Affairs and Mallinckrodt Professor of Biochemistry, and an emeritus member of the BCSIA Board of Directors, Stanley Hoffmann, the Paul and Catherine Buttenweiser University Professor at Harvard University, Samuel Huntington, was an associate professor of government at Columbia University where he was also Deputy Director of The Institute for War and Peace Studies, Joseph Nye, University Distinguished Service Professor, and former Dean of the Kennedy School at Harvard, and Scott Sagan, Caroline S.G. Munro Professor of Political Science, co-director of Stanford's Center for International Security and Cooperation, and a Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute) 1983 “Living With Nuclear Weapons” p. 10

Many citizens who are concerned about nuclear weapons policy, however, are deterred from learning more about it for two basic reasons. First, they think their opinion doesn’t matter. Many Americans seem to think: why bother to learn about these issues if no one in Washington listens to what I say, anyway? Second, some people, even if they want to learn more about nuclear weapons policy, strategy and arms control, hesitate because they think these issues are too complex for them to understand. Both attitudes are wrong. Individual opinions do matter. Each citizen is not just a target of nuclear weapons; each is also an actor in the nuclear drama. The opinions of the American public play an important, thought not always determinant, role in maintaining American Security. This is true in two ways.

#### Even if it doesn’t we still have an obligation to begin with questions of policy-making

jenny Edkins and maja Zehfuss1 Review of International Studies (2005), 31,p. 454-5

What we are attempting in this article is an intervention that demonstrates how the illusion of the sovereign state in an insecure and anarchic international system is sustained and how it might be challenged. It seems to us that this has become important in the present circumstances. The focus on security and the dilemma of security versus freedom that is set out in debates immediately after September 11th presents an apparent choice as the focus for dissent, while concealing the extent to which thinking is thereby confined to a specific agenda. Our argument will be that this approach relies on a particular picture of the political world that has been reflected within the discipline of international relations, a picture of a world of sovereign states. We have a responsibility as scholars; we are not insulated from the policy world. What we discuss may not, and indeed does not, have a direct impact on what happens in the policy world, this is clear, but our writings and our teaching do have an input in terms of the creation and reproduction of pictures of the world that inform policy and set the contours of policy debates.21 Moreover, the discipline within which we are situated is one which depends itself on a particular view of the world – a view that sees the international as a realm of politics distinct from the domestic – the same view of the world as the one that underpins thinking on security and defence in the US administration.22 In this article then we develop an analysis of the ways in which thinking in terms of international relations and a system of states forecloses certain possibilities from the start, and how it might look to think about politics and the international differently.

#### Localized visions of politics collapse all political horizons and inevitably lead to passivity – only embracing localized fictions of large scale political action can move us forward and fight the existing power structure

Charlie Bertsch (Ph.D. , English at UC-Berkeley) 1995 “Useful Fictions” Bad Subjects Online Journal Issue #19 http://bad.eserver.org/issues/1995/19/bertsch.html

Obviously, if we agree that an individual's will is constructed by social forces, then it becomes impossible to say that individuals are in complete control of their actions. Likewise, if we agree that qualities like race, gender, and sexual-preference are imposed on an individual by those forces, then it becomes impossible to state that a given individual is essentially anything. More generally, if we agree with this model, we are forced to acknowledge that the notion that individuals possess identity-in-the-singular is itself a construct. That is, we must acquiesce to the superficially radical idea that all identity is a fiction. We get a very different picture of transformational identities when we consider them in the light of this model. It suggests that transformational identities are not a special case, but the norm: if there can be no fixed identities, then what we have been calling 'transformations' are the only identities we have, plain and simple. Although this model suggests that all identities are fictional, its more extreme proponents — usually called 'post-structuralists' — reserve special animosity for the idea that the different identities an individual performs can somehow add up to a coherent 'self,' an identity-in-the-singular. They imply that the more time an identity must span and the greater the number of individual actions it must therefore encompass, the more dangerous it becomes. In a way, this is to argue that the problem is not which identities are made or how they are made, but that they sustain themselves at all. Unfortunately, if we draw this sort of conclusion from the constructivist model of identity, it is nearly impossible to imagine substantive political action. Almost all political action requires concerted effort towards a definite goal over time. And such effort, in turn, requires a reasonably stable identity. After all, it is impossible for individuals to strategize unless they know that they will have the same general goals tomorrow that they have today. In radically critiquing the idea of identity-in-the-singular, the post-structuralists who draw this conclusion ultimately promote passivity. Hegemony, Ideology, and Identity Of course, it is one thing to realize that all identity is a fiction, but quite another to decide what to do with that insight. We can draw other conclusions to from the constructivist model of identity, ones which can enable political action rather than inhibit it. In order to get a better sense of what they might look like, we need to take a detour through theory more directly concerned with the workings of society as a whole. When Marxist social theorist Antonio Gramsci looked at the Western world of the 1930s, he saw that vast numbers of people appeared strangely content to live within a power structure that runs counter to their own best interests. In trying to account for this phenomenon, Gramsci realized that the ruling class in modern societies does not rule by threat of force alone. He theorized that the majority of people in such societies behave themselves, not only because they fear punishment, but also because they consent to the power structure that maintains the status quo. Indeed, since most people do not break the law or seek to overthrow this power structure, it can be said that their consent plays a bigger role in perpetuating the dominance of the ruling class than does their fear of punishment. Gramsci called the achievement and maintenance of this consent 'hegemony.' Two aspects of Gramsci's theory of hegemony are particularly significant for our thinking about identity. The first is that he describes hegemony as a kind of cultural 'glue' able to bind and hold together very different sectors of modern societies, even ones which have little or nothing in common. As Stuart Hall phrases it in an article entitled 'Gramsci and Us,' hegemony 'does not reflect, it constructs a 'unity' out of difference.' The second aspect relates to the way hegemony manages to accomplish this. Because it resolves real differences into a semblance of unity, hegemony requires the creation and sustenance of an illusion. To put this another way, hegemony depends upon a collective fantasy in which conflicting sectors are perceived to be somehow alike, a fantasy that these sectors share a common identity. Hegemony is, in other words, a fiction of collective identity. But how does this relate to the issues surrounding individual identity that we have been discussing? Gramsci doesn't talk about individuals much, except to discuss the ways in which they bond together in organizations. As I will explain later, I think it might be good to start thinking about individuals in terms of collective identity. For now, however, we can turn to another Marxist social theorist who tried to build on both Gramsci's insights into collective identity and Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic insights about individual identity. In the essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes Towards an Investigation' from which Bad Subjects derives its name, Louis Althusser revises the traditional Marxist definition of ideology. Instead of contrasting the illusions of ideology to the 'truth' of reality as Marx had implicitly done, Althusser argues that there is no escape from ideology. 'Ideology,' he writes, 'represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.' Because our minds always 'mediate' (or filter) our relation to reality, it is not possible for us to have direct access to it. Instead, we only have indirect access to reality through the socially constructed fictions with which we define ourselves and our place in the world. To rephrase this insight in terms of our topic, because identity takes shape when we distinguish between what and where we are, and because it is socially constructed, it derives from our imaginary relationship to our real conditions of existence. We could say that, if ideology represents, then identity is a principal effect of that representation. If all identity is a fiction, then it must be ideology that creates and sustains that fiction. As we can see, Althusser clearly argues for a constructivist model of identity. Where he differs from the post-structuralist proponents of this model whom we discussed earlier, however, is in his distinction between ideology-in-general and ideologies in the plural. 'Ideology-in-general' refers to the inescapable fact that we can never access reality directly: we always perceive it through what Lacan called the 'imaginary,' through fictions. Ideologies, on the other hand, are the historically specific fictions with which people of a given place and time make sense of themselves and their relation to the world. Making this distinction allows us to conclude that, while we cannot escape ideology-in-general, there is a lot at stake in determining which specific ideologies dominate our lives. This returns us to Gramsci's notion of hegemony. Since hegemony really depends on the creation and sustenance of a collective fiction of identity, it is really just a specific ideology that holds sway over the majority of people in a society. As Althusser's argument suggests, hegemony is therefore not eternal, but something that can be challenged by other specific ideologies. From a leftist perspective, challenging hegemony requires the creation of an alternative fiction of collective identity. That is, if we wish to disassemble a particular power structure, it is not enough to say that it is bad. And it certainly isn't enough to show that it is glued together by a fiction that resolves real differences into a semblance of unity. Rather, we need to provide a different logic with which to make society cohere, one in keeping with our political goals. Clearly, the idea that all identity is a fiction need not induce passivity. If, as Althusser argues, there is no political action, no 'practice except by and in an ideology,' then we must construct fictions of identity adequate to our political project. Those adherents to the constructivist model of identity who are so suspicious of identities that can be sustained over time seem to forget that, as Karl Marx puts it in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, 'men make their own history,' though 'not of their own free will; not under circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted.' They forget, in other words, that the social forces that construct identity result from the collective activity of human beings. Indeed, from Bad Subjects' leftist perspective, the strength of this model comes from its recognition that identities are made, not found. That its proponents would forget that the social forces that construct identity are themselves made, not found, seems remarkable. Useful Fictions As we mentioned earlier, we live in a society that, for all of its modernity, still reserves a prominent place for fantasies of transformation. The majority of these fantasies, however, narrate metamorphoses in which individuals change more or less independently of the society around them. When we do get narratives in which individual transformation is more closely linked to collective transformation, such as in science-fiction tales of the 1950s or Star Trek: The Next Generation's stories about the Borg, they tend to be extremely pessimistic. While becoming a vampire or murderer can give a character personality and even glamour, becoming a standardized cog in an impersonal machine cannot. What all this suggests is that, although we need to imagine transformation, we are encouraged to imagine it only as individual transformation. This is a phenomenon leftists would do well to consider. Certainly, there are times when it is useful to imagine individual transformations. As several articles in Bad Subjects have attested, autobiographical 'conversion' narratives can be a powerful way of communicating with people who might ignore an explicitly political message. In the long run, however, our goal is not just to 'reach' people, but to organize them into a new and better society. The left needs to turn the idea of transformation on its head. We do not need narratives of individual transformation within a society that does not change. Instead, we need to construct fictions of identity that inspire individuals to work for social change; fictions of identity that are predicated not on the individual's opposition to society, but on her or his integration into it; fictions of identity in which individuals act, not as autonomous individuals, but as part of a collective movement; fictions, finally, that are worth believing in.

#### Policy relevance is a pre-requisite to emancipation – purely theoretical focus ensures domination by current policy elites

Jeroen Gunning (lecturer in international politics at the Department of International Politics at the University of Wales) 2007 “A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies?” Blackwell Synergy

The notion of emancipation also crystallizes the need for policy engagement. For, unless a ‘critical’ field seeks to be policy relevant, which, as Cox rightly observes, means combining ‘critical’ and ‘problem-solving’ approaches, it does not fulfil its ‘emancipatory’ potential.94 One of the temptations of ‘critical’ approaches is to remain mired in critique and deconstruction without moving beyond this to reconstruction and policy relevance.95 Vital as such critiques are, the challenge of a critically constituted field is also to engage with policy makers – and ‘terrorists’ – and work towards the realization of new paradigms, new practices, and a transformation, however modestly, of political structures. That, after all, is the original meaning of the notion of ‘immanent critique’ that has historically underpinned the ‘critical’ project and which, in Booth's words, involves ‘the discovery of the latent potentials in situations on which to build political and social progress’, as opposed to putting forward utopian arguments that are not realizable. Or, as Booth wryly observes, ‘this means building with one's feet firmly on the ground, not constructing castles in the air’ and asking ‘what it means for real people in real places’.96 Rather than simply critiquing the status quo, or noting the problems that come from an un-problematized acceptance of the state, a ‘critical’ approach must, in my view, also concern itself with offering concrete alternatives. Even while historicizing the state and oppositional violence, and challenging the state's role in reproducing oppositional violence, it must wrestle with the fact that ‘the concept of the modern state and sovereignty embodies a coherent response to many of the central problems of political life’, and in particular to ‘the place of violence in political life’. Even while ‘de-essentializing and deconstructing claims about security’, it must concern itself with ‘how security is to be redefined’, and in particular on what theoretical basis.97 Whether because those critical of the status quo are wary of becoming co-opted by the structures of power (and their emphasis on instrumental rationality),98 or because policy makers have, for obvious reasons (including the failure of many ‘critical’ scholars to offer policy relevant advice), a greater affinity with ‘traditional’ scholars, the role of ‘expert adviser’ is more often than not filled by ‘traditional’ scholars.99 The result is that policy makers are insufficiently challenged to question the basis of their policies and develop new policies based on immanent critiques. A notable exception is the readiness of European Union officials to enlist the services of both ‘traditional’ and ‘critical’ scholars to advise the EU on how better to understand processes of radicalization.100 But this would have been impossible if more critically oriented scholars such as Horgan and Silke had not been ready to cooperate with the EU. Striving to be policy relevant does not mean that one has to accept the validity of the term ‘terrorism’ or stop investigating the political interests behind it. Nor does it mean that each piece of research must have policy relevance or that one has to limit one's research to what is relevant for the state, since the ‘critical turn’ implies a move beyond state-centric perspectives. End-users could, and should, thus include both state and non-state actors such as the Foreign Office and the Muslim Council of Britain and Hizb ut-Tahrir; the Northern Ireland Office and the IRA and the Ulster Unionists; the Israeli government and Hamas and Fatah (as long as the overarching principle is to reduce the political use of terror, whoever the perpetrator). It does mean, though, that a critically constituted field must work hard to bring together all the fragmented voices from beyond the ‘terrorism field’, to maximize both the field's rigour and its policy relevance. Whether a critically constituted ‘terrorism studies’ will attract the fragmented voices from outside the field depends largely on how broadly the term ‘critical’ is defined. Those who assume ‘critical’ to mean ‘Critical Theory’ or ‘poststructuralist’ may not feel comfortable identifying with it if they do not themselves subscribe to such a narrowly defined ‘critical’ approach. Rather, to maximize its inclusiveness, I would follow Williams and Krause's approach to ‘critical security studies’, which they define simply as bringing together ‘many perspectives that have been considered outside of the mainstream of the discipline’.101 This means refraining from establishing new criteria of inclusion/exclusion beyond the (normative) expectation that scholars self-reflexively question their conceptual framework, the origins of this framework, their methodologies and dichotomies; and that they historicize both the state and ‘terrorism’, and consider the security and context of all, which implies among other things an attempt at empathy and cross-cultural understanding.102

#### Policy analysis is necessary to bring about change

David McClean (Professor of philosophy, taught philosophy at the City University of New York’s Hunter College, Rutgers University (Newark, NJ) and Molloy College philosopher and religious thinker) 2001 “The Cultural Left and the Limits of Social Hope” http://www.american-philosophy.org/archives/past\_conference\_programs/pc2001/Discussion%20papers/david\_mcclean.htm

There is a lot of philosophical prose on the general subject of social justice. Some of this is quite good, and some of it is quite bad. What distinguishes the good from the bad is not merely the level of erudition. Displays of high erudition are gratuitously reflected in much of the writing by those, for example, still clinging to Marxian ontology and is often just a useful smokescreen which shrouds a near total disconnect from empirical reality. This kind of political writing likes to make a lot of references to other obscure, jargon-laden essays and tedious books written by other true believers - the crowd that takes the fusion of Marxian and Freudian private fantasies seriously. Nor is it the lack of scholarship that makes this prose bad. Much of it is well "supported" by footnotes referencing a lode of other works, some of which are actually quite good. Rather, what makes this prose bad is its utter lack of relevance to extant and critical policy debates, the passage of actual laws, and the amendment of existing regulations that might actually do some good for someone else. The writers of this bad prose are too interested in our arrival at some social place wherein we will finally emerge from our "inauthentic" state into something called "reality." Most of this stuff, of course, comes from those steeped in the Continental tradition (particularly post-Kant). While that tradition has much to offer and has helped shape my own philosophical sensibilities, it is anything but useful when it comes to truly relevant philosophical analysis, and no self-respecting Pragmatist can really take seriously the strong poetry of formations like "authenticity looming on the ever remote horizons of fetishization." What Pragmatists see instead is the hope that we can fix some of the social ills that face us if we treat policy and reform as more important than Spirit and Utopia. Like light rain released from pretty clouds too high in the atmosphere, the substance of this prose dissipates before it can reach the ground and be a useful component in a discussion of medicare reform or how to better regulate a pharmaceutical industry that bankrupts senior citizens and condemns to death HIV patients unfortunate enough to have been born in Burkina Faso - and a regulatory regime that permits this. It is often too drenched in abstractions and references to a narrow and not so merry band of other intellectuals (Nietzsche, Bataille, Foucault, Lukács, Benjamin) to be of much use to those who are the supposed subject matter of this preternatural social justice literature. Since I have no particular allegiance to these other intellectuals, no particular impulse to carry their water or defend their reputations, I try and forget as much as I can about their writings in order to make space for some new approaches and fresh thinking about that important question that always faces us - "What is to be done?" I am, I think, lucky to have taken this decision before it had become too late. One might argue with me that these other intellectuals are not looking to be taken seriously in the construction of solutions to specific socio-political problems. They are, after all, philosophers engaged in something called philosophizing. They are, after all, just trying to be good culture critics. Of course, that isn't quite true, for they often write with specific reference to social issues and social justice in mind, even when they are fluttering about in the ether of high theory (Lukács, for example, was a government officer, albeit a minister of culture, which to me says a lot), and social justice is not a Platonic form but parses into the specific quotidian acts of institutions and individuals. Social justice is but the genus heading which may be described better with reference to its species iterations- the various conditions of cruelty and sadism which we wittingly or unwittingly permit. If we wanted to, we could reconcile the grand general theories of these thinkers to specific bureaucracies or social problems and so try to increase their relevance. We could construct an account which acts as a bridge to relevant policy considerations. But such attempts, usually performed in the reams of secondary literature generated by their devotees, usually make things even more bizarre. In any event, I don't think we owe them that amount of effort. After all, if they wanted to be relevant they could have said so by writing in such a way that made it clear that relevance was a high priority. For Marxians in general, everything tends to get reduced to class. For Lukács everything tends to get reduced to "reification." But society and its social ills are far too intricate to gloss in these ways, and the engines that drive competing interests are much more easily explained with reference to animal drives and fears than by Absolute Spirit. That is to say, they are not easily explained at all. Take Habermas, whose writings are admittedly the most relevant of the group. I cannot find in Habermas's lengthy narratives regarding communicative action, discourse ethics, democracy and ideal speech situations very much more than I have found in the Federalist Papers, or in Paine's Common Sense, or in Emerson's Self Reliance or Circles. I simply don't find the concept of uncoerced and fully informed communication between peers in a democratic polity all that difficult to understand, and I don't much see the need to theorize to death such a simple concept, particularly where the only persons that are apt to take such narratives seriously are already sold, at least in a general sense. Of course, when you are trying to justify yourself in the face of the other members of your chosen club (in Habermas's case, the Frankfurt School) the intricacy of your explication may have less to do with simple concepts than it has to do with parrying for respectability in the eyes of your intellectual brethren. But I don't see why the rest of us need to partake in an insular debate that has little to do with anyone that is not very much interested in the work of early critical theorists such as Horkheimer or Adorno, and who might see their insights as only modestly relevant at best. Not many self-respecting engaged political scientists in this country actually still take these thinkers seriously, if they ever did at all. Or we might take Foucault who, at best, has provided us with what may reasonably be described as a very long and eccentric footnote to Nietzsche (I have once been accused, by a Foucaltian true believer, of "gelding" Foucault with other similar remarks). Foucault, who has provided the Left of the late 1960s through the present with such notions as "governmentality," "Limit," "archeology," "discourse" "power" and "ethics," creating or redefining their meanings, has made it overabundantly clear that all of our moralities and practices are the successors of previous ones which derive from certain configurations of savoir and connaisance arising from or created by, respectively, the discourses of the various scientific schools. But I have not yet found in anything Foucault wrote or said how such observations may be translated into a political movement or hammered into a political document or theory (let alone public policies) that can be justified or founded on more than an arbitrary aesthetic experimentalism. In fact, Foucault would have shuddered if any one ever did, since he thought that anything as grand as a movement went far beyond what he thought appropriate. This leads me to mildly rehabilitate Habermas, for at least he has been useful in exposing Foucault's shortcomings in this regard, just as he has been useful in exposing the shortcomings of others enamored with the abstractions of various Marxian-Freudian social critiques. Yet for some reason, at least partially explicated in Richard Rorty's Achieving Our Country, a book that I think is long overdue, leftist critics continue to cite and refer to the eccentric and often a priori ruminations of people like those just mentioned, and a litany of others including Derrida, Deleuze, Lyotard, Jameson, and Lacan, who are to me hugely more irrelevant than Habermas in their narrative attempts to suggest policy prescriptions (when they actually do suggest them) aimed at curing the ills of homelessness, poverty, market greed, national belligerence and racism. I would like to suggest that it is time for American social critics who are enamored with this group, those who actually want to be relevant, to recognize that they have a disease, and a disease regarding which I myself must remember to stay faithful to my own twelve step program of recovery. The disease is the need for elaborate theoretical "remedies" wrapped in neological and multi-syllabic jargon. These elaborate theoretical remedies are more "interesting," to be sure, than the pragmatically settled questions about what shape democracy should take in various contexts, or whether private property should be protected by the state, or regarding our basic human nature (described, if not defined (heaven forbid!), in such statements as "We don't like to starve" and "We like to speak our minds without fear of death" and "We like to keep our children safe from poverty"). As Rorty puts it, "When one of today's academic leftists says that some topic has been 'inadequately theorized,' you can be pretty certain that he or she is going to drag in either philosophy of language, or Lacanian psychoanalysis, or some neo-Marxist version of economic determinism. . . . These futile attempts to philosophize one's way into political relevance are a symptom of what happens when a Left retreats from activism and adopts a spectatorial approach to the problems of its country. Disengagement from practice produces theoretical hallucinations"(italics mine).(1) Or as John Dewey put it in his The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy, "I believe that philosophy in America will be lost between chewing a historical cud long since reduced to woody fiber, or an apologetics for lost causes, . . . . or a scholastic, schematic formalism, unless it can somehow bring to consciousness America's own needs and its own implicit principle of successful action." Those who suffer or have suffered from this disease Rorty refers to as the Cultural Left, which left is juxtaposed to the Political Left that Rorty prefers and prefers for good reason. Another attribute of the Cultural Left is that its members fancy themselves pure culture critics who view the successes of America and the West, rather than some of the barbarous methods for achieving those successes, as mostly evil, and who view anything like national pride as equally evil even when that pride is tempered with the knowledge and admission of the nation's shortcomings. In other words, the Cultural Left, in this country, too often dismiss American society as beyond reform and redemption. And Rorty correctly argues that this is a disastrous conclusion, i.e. disastrous for the Cultural Left. I think it may also be disastrous for our social hopes, as I will explain. Leftist American culture critics might put their considerable talents to better use if they bury some of their cynicism about America's social and political prospects and help forge public and political possibilities in a spirit of determination to, indeed, achieve our country - the country of Jefferson and King; the country of John Dewey and Malcom X; the country of Franklin Roosevelt and Bayard Rustin, and of the later George Wallace and the later Barry Goldwater. To invoke the words of King, and with reference to the American society, the time is always ripe to seize the opportunity to help create the "beloved community," one woven with the thread of agape into a conceptually single yet diverse tapestry that shoots for nothing less than a true intra-American cosmopolitan ethos, one wherein both same sex unions and faith-based initiatives will be able to be part of the same social reality, one wherein business interests and the university are not seen as belonging to two separate galaxies but as part of the same answer to the threat of social and ethical nihilism. We who fancy ourselves philosophers would do well to create from within ourselves and from within our ranks a new kind of public intellectual who has both a hungry theoretical mind and who is yet capable of seeing the need to move past high theory to other important questions that are less bedazzling and "interesting" but more important to the prospect of our flourishing - questions such as "How is it possible to develop a citizenry that cherishes a certain hexis, one which prizes the character of the Samaritan on the road to Jericho almost more than any other?" or "How can we square the political dogma that undergirds the fantasy of a missile defense system with the need to treat America as but one member in a community of nations under a "law of peoples?" The new public philosopher might seek to understand labor law and military and trade theory and doctrine as much as theories of surplus value; the logic of international markets and trade agreements as much as critiques of commodification, and the politics of complexity as much as the politics of power (all of which can still be done from our arm chairs.) This means going down deep into the guts of our quotidian social institutions, into the grimy pragmatic details where intellectuals are loathe to dwell but where the officers and bureaucrats of those institutions take difficult and often unpleasant, imperfect decisions that affect other peoples' lives, and it means making honest attempts to truly understand how those institutions actually function in the actual world before howling for their overthrow commences. This might help keep us from being slapped down in debates by true policy pros who actually know what they are talking about but who lack awareness of the dogmatic assumptions from which they proceed, and who have not yet found a good reason to listen to jargon-riddled lectures from philosophers and culture critics with their snobish disrespect for the so-called "managerial class." A young scholar, Mark Van Hollebeke who is presenting his essay at another SAAP session, seems to me to take on Walter Benjamin in a bit of the spirit of the type of new public intellectual I would like to see more of, i.e. one willing to assume the risk of taking on the glaring analytic lacunae and self-indulgence of culture critics rooted in ontologies spun out of thin air but cloaked in enough empiricism to get themselves taken seriously. Van Hollebeke's essay, The Pathologies and Possibilities of Urban Life: Dialectical and Pragmatic Sightseeing in New York City is a critique of Benjamin's Das Passagen-Werk (The Arcades Project) in which Benjamin decries the "wish images" of commodity fetishization and the so-called "phantasmagorical" dream world induced by the false consciousness of modernity. Where Benjamin criticizes wish images (essentially connected with stuff you can buy but which also serves to take your mind off of the ideologies of cultural production which oppress you) planted in the arcade as tools of alienation, Van Hollebeke responds with the Pragmatic voice that rehabilitates and reintroduces the wish image as a necessary component of psychological health and communal life, and which need not and does not always take the harmful form of fetishization and alienation that Benjamin insists it does. For Van Hollebeke, the city is not merely an arcade, a decadent place of ideologically deceiving images and of blind subservience to producers' machinations; not merely a place devoid of "reality" and "authenticity," but the site where possibilities are created and played out, where new roles may be found or constructed, wherein we see our own futures, at least partly, in the things we desire. While Van Hollebeke does not explicitly say so - though I wish he did - Benjamin (and so perhaps we) is left facing several important, pragmatic questions. Just what is this "reality" to be had by the critique of "wish images" per se? What is the wish imagery that prompts the philosopher to become a philosopher and how different is the product of the academy from other products which are purchased with far fewer dollars? Is Benjamin's own philosophizing all just a noble pursuit, or were his pursuits of academic credentials, often failures due to the obscurity of his writing, not partly the price to be paid for entry into an elite corps in which membership is jealously guarded (as it was certainly guarded among his friends)? What made Benjamin think he was more than the product of cultural production? The friendly question I would put to Van Hollebeke is why he bothered to take Benjamin seriously to begin with. But Hollebeke is not alone. Stanley Cavell also takes Benjamin seriously, even though he has described the Arcades Project as "a production without a product (a way to think about its claim to philosophy, or rather, to philosophizing)."(2) Cavell meant this reflection to be taken non-pejoratively because he seems to take Benjamin more seriously as an aesthetician and literary metaphysician (in Rorty-speak, as a "strong poet") than as a serious, social commentator with good ideas. Keeping Benjamin and his cohorts in the box of aesthetics and metaphysics is, I believe, good intellectual policy for social critics seeking to be relevant. They should be cited for seasoning and not for meat. . . . Our new president, possessing no towering intellect, talks of a people who share a continent, but are not a nation. He is right, of course. We are only beginning to learn to put tribal loyalties aside and to let ourselves take seriously other more salutary possibilities, though we delude ourselves into believing that we have made great progress. Perhaps so-called "compassionate conservatism," though a gimmick to win a political contest, will bear a small harvest of unintended and positive consequences, although I remain dubious about this if the task of thinking through what it might actually mean remains the chore of George W. Bush. But if the not-too-Neanderthal-Right is finally willing to meet the not-too-wacky-Left at a place of dialogue somewhere in the "middle," then that is good news, provided the Left does not miss the opportunity to rendevous. Yet, there is a problem here. Both the Cultural Left and the Cultural Right tend to be self-righteous purists. The best chance, then, is for the emergence of Rorty's new Political Left, in conjunction with a new Political Right. The new Political Left would be in the better position of the two to frame the discourse since it probably has the better intellectual hardware (it tends to be more open-minded and less dogmatic) to make a true dialogue work. They, unlike their Cultural Left peers, might find it more useful to be a little less inimical and a little more sympathetic to what the other side might, in good faith, believe is at stake. They might leave behind some of the baggage of the Cultural Left's endless ruminations (Dewey's philosophical cud chewing) about commodity fetishization, or whether the Subject has really died, or where crack babies fit into neo-capitalist hegemonies, and join the political fray by parsing and exposing the more basic idiotic claims and dogmas of witless politicians and dangerous ideologues, while at the same time finding common ground, a larger "We" perspective that includes Ronald Reagan and Angela Davis under the same tent rather than as inhabitants of separate worlds. The operative spirit should be that of fraternal disagreement, rather than self-righteous cold shoulders. Yet I am not at all convinced that anything I have described is about to happen, though this essay is written to help force the issue, if only a little bit. I am convinced that the modern Cultural Left is far from ready to actually run the risks that come with being taken seriously and held accountable for actual policy-relevant prescriptions. Why should it? It is a hell of a lot more fun and a lot more safe pondering the intricacies of high theory, patching together the world a priori (which means without any real consideration of those officers and bureaucrats I mentioned who are actually on the front lines of policy formation and regulation). However the risk in this apriorism is that both the conclusions and the criticisms will miss the mark, regardless of how great the minds that are engaged. Intellectual rigor and complexity do not make silly ideas politically salient, or less pernicious, to paraphrase Rorty. This is not to say that air-headed jingoism and conservative rants about republican virtue aren't equally silly and pernicious. But it seems to me that the new public philosopher of the Political Left will want to pick better yardsticks with which to measure herself. Is it really possible to philosophize by holding Foucault in one hand and the Code of Federal Regulation or the Congressional Record in the other? Given that whatever it has meant to be a philosopher has been under siege at various levels, I see no reason why referring to the way things are actually done in the actual world (I mean really done, not done as we might imagine) as we think through issues of public morality and social issues of justice shouldn't be considered a viable alternative to the way philosophy has proceeded in the past. Instead of replacing epistemology with hermeneutics or God knows what else as the foundation of philosophical practice, we should move social philosophers in the direction of becoming more like social and cultural auditors rather than further in the direction of mere culture critics. We might be able to recast philosophers who take-up questions of social justice in a serious way as the ones in society able to traverse not only disciplines but the distances between the towers of the academy and the bastions of bureaucracies seeking to honestly and sometimes dishonestly assess both their failings and achievements. This we can do with a special advantage over economists, social scientists and policy specialists who are apt to take the narrow view of most issues. We do have examples of such persons. John Dewey and Karl Popper come to mind as but two examples, but in neither case was there enough grasp of the actual workings of social institutions that I believe will be called for in order to properly minister to a nation in need of helpful philosophical insights in policy formation. Or it may just be that the real work will be performed by philosophically grounded and socially engaged practitioners rather than academics. People like George Soros come to mind here.

#### This depoliticized, local starting point causes extinction – turns case

Carl Boggs (Los Angeles Campus Full Time Faculty Professor) 1997 “The Great Retreat”

The decline of the public sphere in late twentieth-century America poses a series of great dilemmas and challenges. Many ideological currents scrutinized here ^ localism, metaphysics, spontaneism, post- modernism, Deep Ecology ^ intersect with and reinforce each other. While these currents have deep origins in popular movements of the 1960s and 1970s, they remain very much alive in the 1990s. Despite their different outlooks and trajectories, they all share one thing in common: a depoliticized expression of struggles to combat and over- come alienation. The false sense of empowerment that comes with such mesmerizing impulses is accompanied by a loss of public engagement, an erosion of citizenship and a depleted capacity of individuals in large groups to work for social change. As this ideological quagmire worsens, urgent problems that are destroying the fabric of American society will go unsolved ^ perhaps even unrecognized ^ only to fester more ominously into the future. And such problems (ecological crisis, poverty, urban decay, spread of infectious diseases, technological displacement of workers) cannot be understood outside the larger social and global context of internationalized markets, ¢nance, and communications. Paradoxically, the widespread retreat from politics, often inspired by localist sentiment, comes at a time when agendas that ignore or side- step these global realities will, more than ever, be reduced to impotence. In his commentary on the state of citizenship today, Wolin refers to the increasing sublimation and dilution of politics, as larger numbers of people turn away from public concerns toward private ones. By diluting the life of common involvements, we negate the very idea of politics as a source of public ideals and visions.74 In the meantime, the fate of the world hangs in the balance. The unyielding truth is that, even as the ethos of anti-politics becomes more compelling and even fashionable in the United States, it is the vagaries of political power that will continue to decide the fate of human societies. This last point demands further elaboration. The shrinkage of politics hardly means that corporate colonization will be less of a reality, that social hierarchies will somehow disappear, or that gigantic state and military structures will lose their hold over people's lives. Far from it: the space abdicated by a broad citizenry, well-informed and ready to participate at many levels, can in fact be filled by authoritarian and reactionary elites ^ an already familiar dynamic in many lesser- developed countries. The fragmentation and chaos of a Hobbesian world, not very far removed from the rampant individualism, social Darwinism, and civic violence that have been so much a part of the American landscape, could be the prelude to a powerful Leviathan designed to impose order in the face of disunity and atomized retreat. In this way the eclipse of politics might set the stage for a reassertion of politics in more virulent guise ^ or it might help further rationalize the existing power structure. In either case, the state would likely become what Hobbes anticipated: the embodiment of those universal, collec- tive interests that had vanished from civil society.75

#### Global awareness is vital to build wise responses to emerging extinction threats – college curricular decisions should prioritize this question

Louis Rene, Beres (Prof. of International Law at Purdue) 2003 , Journal and Courier, June 5

The truth is often disturbing. Our impressive American victories against terrorism and rogue states, although proper and indispensable, are inevitably limited. The words of the great Irish poet Yeats reveal, prophetically, where our entire planet is now clearly heading. Watching violence escalate and expand in parts of Europe and Russia, in Northern Ireland, in Africa, in Southwest Asia, in Latin America, and of course in the Middle East, we discover with certainty that "... the centre cannot hold/Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world/The blood-dimmed tide is loosed/and everywhere The Ceremony of innocence is drowned." Our response, even after Operation Iraqi Freedom, lacks conviction. Still pretending that "things will get better," we Americans proceed diligently with our day-to-day affairs, content that, somehow, the worst can never really happen. Although it is true that we must go on with our normal lives, it is also true that "normal" has now become a quaint and delusionary state. We want to be sure that a "new" normal falls within the boundaries of human tolerance, but we can't nurture such a response without an informed appreciation of what is still possible. For us, other rude awakenings are unavoidable, some of which could easily overshadow the horrors of Sept. 11. There can be little doubt that, within a few short years, expanding tribalism will produce several new genocides and proliferating nuclear weapons will generate one or more regional nuclear wars. Paralyzed by fear and restrained by impotence, various governments will try, desperately, to deflect our attention, but it will be a vain effort. Caught up in a vast chaos from which no real escape is possible, we will learn too late that there is no durable safety in arms, no ultimate rescue by authority, no genuine remedy in science or technology. What shall we do? For a start, we must all begin to look carefully behind the news. Rejecting superficial analyses of day-to-day events in favor of penetrating assessments of world affairs, we must learn quickly to distinguish what is truly important from what is merely entertainment. With such learning, we Americans could prepare for growing worldwide anarchy not as immobilized objects of false contentment, but as authentic citizens of an endangered planet. Nowhere is it written that we people of Earth are forever, that humankind must thwart the long-prevailing trend among all planetary life-forms (more than 99 percent) of ending in extinction. Aware of this, we may yet survive, at least for a while, but only if our collective suppression of purposeful fear is augmented by a complementary wisdom; that is, that our personal mortality is undeniable and that the harms done by one tribal state or terror group against "others" will never confer immortality. This is, admittedly, a difficult concept to understand, but the longer we humans are shielded from such difficult concepts the shorter will be our time remaining. We must also look closely at higher education in the United States, not from the shortsighted stance of improving test scores, but from the urgent perspective of confronting extraordinary threats to human survival. For the moment, some college students are exposed to an occasional course in what is fashionably described as "global awareness," but such exposure usually sidesteps the overriding issues: We now face a deteriorating world system that cannot be mended through sensitivity alone; our leaders are dangerously unprepared to deal with catastrophic deterioration; our schools are altogether incapable of transmitting the indispensable visions of planetary restructuring. To institute productive student confrontations with survival imperatives, colleges and universities must soon take great risks, detaching themselves from a time-dishonored preoccupation with "facts" in favor of grappling with true life-or-death questions. In raising these questions, it will not be enough to send some students to study in Paris or Madrid or Amsterdam ("study abroad" is not what is meant by serious global awareness). Rather, all students must be made aware - as a primary objective of the curriculum - of where we are heading, as a species, and where our limited survival alternatives may yet be discovered. There are, of course, many particular ways in which colleges and universities could operationalize real global awareness, but one way, long-neglected, would be best. I refer to the study of international law. For a country that celebrates the rule of law at all levels, and which explicitly makes international law part of the law of the United States - the "supreme law of the land" according to the Constitution and certain Supreme Court decisions - this should be easy enough to understand. Anarchy, after all, is the absence of law, and knowledge of international law is necessarily prior to adequate measures of world order reform. Before international law can be taken seriously, and before "the blood-dimmed tide" can be halted, America's future leaders must at least have some informed acquaintance with pertinent rules and procedures. Otherwise we shall surely witness the birth of a fully ungovernable world order, an unheralded and sinister arrival in which only a shadowy legion of gravediggers would wield the forceps.

#### Energy POLICY matters and we need policy action to address the pressing energy needs of the US and the world- Must evaluate consequences

Wirth, Gray & Podesta, ‘3 The Future of Energy Policy Timothy E. Wirth, C. Boyden Gray, and John D. Podesta Timothy E. Wirth is President of the United Nations Foundation and a former U.S. Senator from Colorado. C. Boyden Gray is a partner at Wilmer, Cutler & Pickering and served as Counsel to former President George H.W. Bush. John D. Podesta is Visiting Professor of Law at Georgetown University Law Center and served as Chief of Staff to former President Bill Clinton. Volume 82 • Number 4 Foreign Affairs 2003 Council on Foreign Relations

¶ A century ago, Lord Selborne, the ﬁrst lord of the Admiralty,¶ dismissed the idea of fueling the British navy with something other than¶ coal, which the island nation had in great abundance. “The substitution¶ of oil for coal is impossible,” he pronounced, “because oil does not¶ exist in this world in su⁄cient quantities.” Seven years later, the young¶ Winston Churchill was appointed ﬁrst lord and charged with winning¶ the escalating Anglo-German race for naval superiority. As Daniel¶ Yergin chronicled in The Prize, Churchill saw that oil would increase¶ ship speed and reduce refueling time—key strategic advantages—and¶ ordered oil-burning battleships to be built, committing the navy to¶ this new fuel. Churchill’s was a strategic choice, bold, creative, and¶ farsighted. The energy choices the world faces today are no less¶ consequential, and America’s response must be as insightful. ¶ Energy is fundamental to U.S. domestic prosperity and national¶ security. In fact, the complex ties between energy and U.S. national¶ interests have drawn tighter over time. The advent of globalization,¶ the growing gap between rich and poor, the war on terrorism, and¶ the need to safeguard the earth’s environment are all intertwined¶ with energy concerns.¶ The profound changes of recent decades and the pressing challenges¶ of the twenty-ﬁrst century warrant recognizing energy’s central role in¶ America’s future and the need for much more ambitious and creative¶ approaches. Yet the current debate about U.S. energy policy is mainly¶ about tax breaks for expanded production, access to public lands, and¶ nuances of electricity regulation—di⁄cult issues all, but inadequate for¶ the larger challenges the United States faces. The staleness of the policy¶ dialogue reﬂects a failure to recognize the importance of energy to¶ the issues it aªects: defense and homeland security, the economy, and the¶ environment. What is needed is a purposeful, strategic energy policy,¶ not a grab bag drawn from interest-group wish lists.¶ U.S. energy policies to date have failed to address three great challenges. The ﬁrst is the danger to political and economic security¶ posed by the world’s dependence on oil. Next is the risk to the global¶ environment from climate change, caused primarily by the combustion¶ of fossil fuels. Finally, the lack of access by the world’s poor to modern¶ energy services, agricultural opportunities, and other basics needed¶ for economic advancement is a deep concern.¶ None of these problems of dependence, climate change, or poverty¶ can be solved overnight, but aggressive goals and practical short-term¶ initiatives can jump-start the move to clean and secure energy practices.¶ The key challenges can be overcome with a blend of carefully targeted¶ policy interventions that build on the power of the market, publicprivate partnerships in ﬁnancing and technology development, and,¶ perhaps most important, the development of a political coalition¶ that abandons traditional assumptions and brings together energy¶ interests that have so far engaged only in conﬂict. Turning this¶ ambitious, long-term agenda into reality requires a sober assessment¶ of the United States’ critical energy challenges and the interests that¶ can be mobilized for the necessary political change.

#### Racialized descriptions of society reinscribe same racial binaries- constitutes the subject around race

Hartigan 2005- prof of anthropology @ UT, PhD from University of California, Santa Cruz

(John, South Atlantic Quarterly 104.3, Summer, “Culture against Race: Reworking the Basis for Racial Analysis”)

These racial identities define the type of subjects that Visweswaran advocates bringing into view via ‘‘a conception of race which is socially dynamic but historically meaningful,’’ even though their objectification potentially risks contributing, unintentionally, to the current resurgence in sociobiological notions of race. Visweswaran’s approach brings race to the fore of critical analysis, but the problem is that it also risks reproducing racial thinking in much the way ‘‘culture’’ has been accused of perpetuating race. Herbert Lewis highlights the perils in efforts to articulate this broader sensibility concerning race.8 Where Visweswaran strives to reanimate the ‘‘richly connotative 19th century sense of ‘race,’ ’’ with its invocations of ‘‘blood’’ as a form of collectivity that encompasses ‘‘numerous elements that we would today call cultural,’’ Lewis cautions against a ‘‘return to the pre-Boasian conception that combines race, culture, language, nationality and nationality in one neat package’’ (980). And though the equation of racial identity with the forms of persecution and exploitation highlighted by Visweswaran is insightful, Lewis observes that, pursued further, this logic reactivates a concept that ‘‘indissolubly connects groups of people and their appearance with beliefs about their capacity and behavior’’ (ibid.).Given the criteria she lists, Lewis argues, ‘‘it follows presumably that we should recognize as ‘races’ all those who have suffered one or another form of ill-treatment. Certainly Jews would now return to the status of a ‘racial’ group (as the Nazis contended), as do Armenians, Gypsies (Rom), ‘Untouchables’ (Dalits) in India, East Timorese, Muslim and Croats in Bosnia and Serbs in Croatia, educated Cambodians in Pol Pot’s Cambodia, both Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi’’ (ibid.). Every similarly subjected group would be reinscribed and reidentified with the very terms used initially to distinguish them for exploitation and persecution. Dominguez’s concerns about culture’s propensity for ‘‘perpetuating the very terms—of hierarchies of differential values—that constitute the hegemony’’ seem equally relevant to this attempt to ensconce race at the forefront of critical social analysis. There follow interminable questions of subdividing and distinguishing such races. Visweswaran’s description of the processes that produce ‘‘Chicanos and Puerto Ricans as races’’ leads Lewis to ask, ‘‘Are these two different ‘races’ or one? Can rich, powerful, and selfassured Puerto Ricans belong to this ‘race’? Do Dominicans, Ecuadorians, and Cubans each get to be their own race, or can they all be in one race with Chicanos and Puerto Ricans because they all speak (or once spoke) Spanish? Can Spanish-speakers from Spain belong, too?’’ (980). The problem with formulating research in terms of race is that it becomes very difficult to proceed without reproducing various racialized logics that promote the notion that groups are essentially differentiated—experientially and in terms of innate capacities and dispositions—by race.9 This is a problem that Gilroy takes as a basis for his critique of ‘‘raciology,’’ which I will examine further below.

#### Wildersons argument denies Black agency and fails to come up with effective solutions

Saër Maty Ba (Professor of Film – University of Portsmouth and Co-Editor – The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration) “The US Decentred: From Black Social Death to Cultural Transformation” September 2011 , Cultural Studies Review, 17(2), , p. 385-387)

A few pages into Red, White and Black, I feared that it would just be a matter of time before Wilderson’s black‐as‐social‐death idea and multiple attacks on issues and scholars he disagrees with run (him) into (theoretical) trouble. This happens in chapter two, ‘The Narcissistic Slave’, where he critiques black film theorists and books. For example, Wilderson declares that Gladstone Yearwood’s Black Film as Signifying Practice (2000) ‘betrays a kind of conceptual anxiety with respect to the historical object of study— ... it clings, anxiously, to the film‐as‐text‐as‐legitimateobject of Black cinema.’ (62) He then quotes from Yearwood’s book to highlight ‘just how vague the aesthetic foundation of Yearwood’s attempt to construct a canon can be’. (63) And yet Wilderson’s highlighting is problematic because it overlooks the ‘Diaspora’ or ‘African Diaspora’, a key component in Yearwood’s thesis that, crucially, neither navel‐gazes (that is, at the US or black America) nor pretends to properly engage with black film. Furthermore, Wilderson separates the different waves of black film theory and approaches them, only, in terms of how a most recent one might challenge its precedent. Again, his approach is problematic because it does not mention or emphasise the inter‐connectivity of/in black film theory. As a case in point, Wilderson does not link Tommy Lott’s mobilisation of Third Cinema for black film theory to Yearwood’s idea of African Diaspora. (64) Additionally, of course, Wilderson seems unaware that Third Cinema itself has been fundamentally questioned since Lott’s 1990s’ theory of black film was formulated. Yet another consequence of ignoring the African Diaspora is that it exposes Wilderson’s corpus of films as unable to carry the weight of the transnational argument he attempts to advance. Here, beyond the US‐centricity or ‘social and political specificity of [his] filmography’, (95) I am talking about Wilderson’s choice of films. For example, Antwone Fisher (dir. Denzel Washington, 2002) is attacked unfairly for failing to acknowledge ‘a grid of captivity across spatial dimensions of the Black “body”, the Black “home”, and the Black “community”’ (111) while films like Alan and Albert Hughes’s Menace II Society (1993), overlooked, do acknowledge the same grid and, additionally, problematise Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (STEP) policing. The above examples expose the fact of Wilderson’s dubious and questionable conclusions on black film. Red, White and Black is particularly undermined by Wilderson’s propensity for exaggeration and blinkeredness. In chapter nine, ‘“Savage” Negrophobia’, he writes: The philosophical anxiety of Skins is all too aware that through the Middle Passage, African culture became Black ‘style’ ... Blackness can be placed and displaced with limitless frequency and across untold territories, by whoever so chooses. Most important, there is nothing real Black people can do to either check or direct this process ... Anyone can say ‘nigger’ because anyone can be a ‘nigger’. (235)7 Similarly, in chapter ten, ‘A Crisis in the Commons’, Wilderson addresses the issue of ‘Black time’. Black is irredeemable, he argues, because, at no time in history had it been deemed, or deemed through the right historical moment and place. In other words, the black moment and place are not right because they are ‘the ship hold of the Middle Passage’: ‘the most coherent temporality ever deemed as Black time’ but also ‘the “moment” of no time at all on the map of no place at all’. (279) Not only does Pinho’s more mature analysis expose this point as preposterous (see below), I also wonder what Wilderson makes of the countless historians’ and sociologists’ works on slave ships, shipboard insurrections and/during the Middle Passage,8 or of groundbreaking jazz‐studies books on cross‐cultural dialogue like The Other Side of Nowhere (2004). Nowhere has another side, but once Wilderson theorises blacks as socially and ontologically dead while dismissing jazz as ‘belonging nowhere and to no one, simply there for the taking’, (225) there seems to be no way back. It is therefore hardly surprising that Wilderson ducks the need to provide a solution or alternative to both his sustained bashing of blacks and anti‐ Blackness.9 Last but not least, Red, White and Black ends like a badly plugged announcement of a bad Hollywood film’s badly planned sequel: ‘How does one deconstruct life? Who would benefit from such an undertaking? The coffle approaches with its answers in tow.’ (340)

#### Social Death is an incomplete and unproductive frame for academic discussion

Daniel E. Rossi-Keen ( Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Stetson University in

DeLand, Florida) Review Essay: The Life-Giving Gift of Acknowledgment (A Philosophical and Rhetorical Inquiry). By Michael J. Hyde. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2006; pp.

xviii + 336. $34.95 paper. Rhetoric & Public Affairs, Volume 11, Number 4, Winter 2008,

pp. 659-677 (Review) – obtained via Project Muse

Emphasis on philosophy abounds in the first half of the book. This is especially so in Hyde's treatment of the relationship between acknowledgment and the origins of existence (chapter 2), his examination of the reciprocity of acknowledgment and conscience (chapter 3), his consideration of how acknowledgment transforms space and time into common dwelling places (chapter 4), his explanation of the generation of a "home" by way of such rhetorical acts of acknowledgment (chapter 5), and his suggestion that acknowledgment functions as a caress (chapters 6 and 7). Though certainly not lacking [End Page 664] philosophical depth, the remaining chapters of the text are a bit more readily accessible to the nonspecialist. Herein, Hyde explores the relationship between acknowledgment and teaching (chapter 8), social death (chapter 9), and computer mediated culture (chapter 10). The book closes with an examination of the rhetoric surrounding the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (chapter 11), explaining how the rhetor may function in society as a hero. In the process of weaving together such seemingly disparate cases, Hyde gestures toward numerous resources for considering the role of rhetoric in guiding, shaping, and challenging prevailing enactments of public life. In fact, one of the most exciting features of this book is that it lends itself to so many extensions and applications. Within this text exists a philosophy of rhetoric, an ethic of human action, an anthropology, a statement both of humankind's origin and of its telos, a critique of contemporary culture, and much more. For this reason, Hyde's writing defies either simple categorization or casual reading. And this is, I think, precisely the strength and intent of the text. The text itself acts as what Hyde (2001) labels a "rhetorical interruption" (77–78), a call to stop and reckon with the state of the world as we currently perceive it. As such, The Life-Giving Gift of Acknowledgment does not always proceed in traditional ways, and some readers may therefore find themselves wanting more careful treatments of themes raised throughout the text. The rhetorician, for example, may wish for a more focused, traditional, and systematic treatment of the relationship between rhetoric and acknowledgment. The philosopher might hope for a more sustained analysis of Heidegger and Levinas. The scientist may call for further examination of the role of acknowledgment in the origins of existence. The theologian may be somewhat disappointed by Hyde's suggestive employment of religious themes. And the student of public affairs may wish for a more explicit statement of the implications of Hyde's work for communal human existence. In one sense, each of these disciplinarians would be justified in wanting more from Hyde's text, for Hyde admittedly leaves much unsaid and unexplored. In another sense, however, it is precisely this kind of narrowness that The Life-Giving Gift of Acknowledgment sets out to avoid. What Hyde has produced is an interdisciplinary treatment of the role of acknowledgment in varied aspects of human existence, and he justifiably demands that the reader do much of his or her own work in expanding and applying this theoretical construct.

#### Ontology focus at the expense of action causes paralysis

McClean 2001 David McClean (philosopher, writer and business consultant, conducted graduate work in philosophy at NYU) 2001 “The cultural left and the limits of social hope” http://www.american-philosophy.org/archives/past\_conference\_programs/pc2001/Discussion%20papers/david\_mcclean.htm

There is a lot of philosophical prose on the general subject of social justice. Some of this is quite good, and some of it is quite bad. What distinguishes the good from the bad is not merely the level of erudition. Displays of high erudition are gratuitously reflected in much of the writing by those, for example, still clinging to Marxian ontology and is often just a useful smokescreen which shrouds a near total disconnect from empirical reality. This kind of political writing likes to make a lot of references to other obscure, jargon-laden essays and tedious books written by other true believers - the crowd that takes the fusion of Marxian and Freudian private fantasies seriously. Nor is it the lack of scholarship that makes this prose bad. Much of it is well "supported" by footnotes referencing a lode of other works, some of which are actually quite good. Rather, what makes this prose bad is its utter lack of relevance to extant and critical policy debates, the passage of actual laws, and the amendment of existing regulations that might actually do some good for someone else. The writers of this bad prose are too interested in our arrival at some social place wherein we will finally emerge from our "inauthentic" state into something called "reality." Most of this stuff, of course, comes from those steeped in the Continental tradition (particularly post-Kant). While that tradition has much to offer and has helped shape my own philosophical sensibilities, it is anything but useful when it comes to truly relevant philosophical analysis, and no self-respecting Pragmatist can really take seriously the strong poetry of formations like "authenticity looming on the ever remote horizons of fetishization." What Pragmatists see instead is the hope that we can fix some of the social ills that face us if we treat policy and reform as more important than Spirit and Utopia.

#### Their scientific data is methodologically bankrupt- multiple reasons.

-confusion of speculation with fact

-penchant for generalizing from a small number of imperfectly examined instances

-selective reporting of raw data to fit the latest theoretical enthusiasm

-indifference to rival explanations and to mainstream science

Every item has been conceded by psychoanalysts who are still unready to take in the total picture.

Crews, 2004

(Frederick Crews, Professor Emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley and a fellow of the Institute for Science in Medicine, Butterflies and Wheels, “Reply to Holland” August 10, http://www.butterfliesandwheels.org/2004/reply-to-holland/)

But how can Holland be sure that those results have been overlooked? One could not tell from his paper that he has read a single page of the revisionist scholarship and reasoning that have revolutionized our perception of the psychoanalytic movement and its claims of scientific validation. His 64 references include no dissenters’ texts; and only one dissenter’s name, my own, is briefly mentioned. Moreover, Holland’s characterization of my position, that I find all of psychoanalytic theory untestable and therefore merely “literary” in nature, is off the mark. I regard psychoanalytic doctrine not as literature but as partly unfalsifiable, partly falsified pseudoscience which, when it was widely believed, caused harm to people whom it demeaned, stigmatized, and misdiagnosed. [2, 3, 4; see also 5] Unfortunately, the facts and arguments that Holland ignores bear crucially on the question he proposes to answer: whether psychoanalysis deserves to be called a science. He could have learned much, for example, from the work of two major Freud scholars, Frank Cioffi [6] and Malcolm Macmillan [7], who have extensively traced Freud’s initial confusions and misrepresentations, the many unclarities and cross-purposes that have continued to plague psychoanalytic doctrine, and the chronic flight from exposure to potential disconfirmation that has typified the entire record from Freud’s day through our own. Science is as science does. If neither Freud nor his successors have shown a due regard for objections to their pet ideas, psychoanalysis is ipso facto not a science. Condensing the findings of Cioffi, Macmillan, and other knowledgeable philosophers of science and historians such as Adolf Grünbaum [8], Edward Erwin [9], and Allen Esterson [10], I have elsewhere put into one long sentence the anti-empirical features of the psychoanalytic movement [3, pp. 61n-62n]: They include its cult of the founder’s personality; its casually anecdotal approach to corroboration; its cavalier dismissal of its most besetting epistemic problem, that of suggestion; its habitual confusion of speculation with fact; its penchant for generalizing from a small number of imperfectly examined instances; its proliferation of theoretical entities bearing no testable referents; its lack of vigilance against self-contradiction; its selective reporting of raw data to fit the latest theoretical enthusiasm; its ambiguities and exit clauses, allowing negative results to be counted as positive ones; its indifference to rival explanations and to mainstream science; its absence of any specified means for preferring one interpretation to another; its insistence that only the initiated are entitled to criticize; its stigmatizing of disagreement as “resistance,” along with the corollary that, as Freud put it, all such resistance constitutes “actual evidence in favour of the correctness” of the theory (SE, 13:180); and its narcissistic faith that, again in Freud’s words, “applications of analysis are always confirmations of it as well” (SE, 22:146). This indictment is sometimes dismissed by Freudians as the raving of an unhinged mind. The justice of every item, however, has been conceded piecemeal by a number of psychoanalysts who are still unready to take in the total picture. And other previously sanguine pro-psychoanalytic commentators now grant that the Freudian community has shown none of the traits we associate with serious investigators. Robert F. Bornstein, for example, whom Holland repeatedly cites as a compiler of positive experimental evidence, recently published an article, significantly entitled “The Impending Death of Psychoanalysis,” in which he charged analysts with “the seven deadly sins” of “insularity, inaccuracy, indifference, irrelevance, inefficiency, indeterminacy [that is, conceptual vagueness], and insolence.” [11] Bornstein portrays a self-isolated sect that is not just out of step with the march of knowledge but incapable of understanding where it went wrong. In order for Bornstein to bring his revised view into full alignment with that of the revisionist critics (whom Holland is pleased to malign en masse as “the bashers”), he need only grasp that the dysfunctional attitudes he has listed are traceable to Freud’s own arbitrary system building, to his dismissal of the need to reconcile psychoanalytic theory with mainstream science, to his heaping of scorn on all who questioned his authority, and to his declarations that backsliders from his movement had fallen into psychosis.

#### They have conflated “experimental” with “empirical”—and, science is on our side.

-studies have been conducted by people holding a prior affinity for psychoanalysis

-they are riddled with confirmation bias

-signs of unconscious cognitive operations have been misidentified as evidence of Freudian unconscious

-replication by independent investigators has not been achieved or even sought

Its overweening claims met with no scientific consilience at all

Crews, 2004

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It would be surprising if such an undisciplined and retrograde movement had received support from well-designed experiments, and it would be no less surprising if the critics of psychoanalysis had failed to address the experimental literature. In fact, Holland’s claims on both counts are false. An extensive body of penetrating and disillusioning commentary about pro-Freudian experimentation can be found, beginning with Eysenck and Wilson’s small masterpiece of 1973 [13] and running through Edward Erwin’s meticulous study of 1996. [9] It is apparent that Holland, who innocently equates the terms “experimental” and “empirical,” hasn’t pondered these widely discussed and important works. Yet if he had attended to no other writings than my own, he would have found me engaged in pertinent debate with several of the psychodynamically committed experimental authorities on whom he relies: Seymour Fisher, Roger P. Greenberg, Lester Luborsky, and Matthew H. Erdelyi. [2, 3, 4] As its scientific critics have shown, most of the research admired by Holland suffers from grave and obvious flaws. These studies, having been conducted by people holding a prior affinity for psychoanalysis, are riddled with confirmation bias and demand characteristics: Instead of testing psychoanalytic hypotheses against rival ones that might have fared better under Ockham’s razor, the experimenters have used Freudian theory as their starting point and have looked for confirming instances, which have been located with the same facility with which Holland once found oral and anal images suffusing the world’s literature. Terms have been construed with suspect broadness; strong causal claims have been reinterpreted as weak descriptive ones; and generous psychoanalytic rules of interpretation have helped to shape positive results. Freudian propositions have been assessed through the application of such questionable instruments as the psychoanalytically tendentious Blacky pictures and the Rorschach test, which already lacked validity before believers in Freudian projection twisted it to their own purposes. [14] (Holland himself twice appeals to psychoanalytic Rorschach findings as sound evidence.) Signs of unconscious cognitive operations have been misidentified as evidence of the very different Freudian unconscious at work. [15] (Holland’s paper indulges in the same confusion.) Replication of tentative outcomes by independent investigators-an essential requirement of experimentation in any field-has not been achieved or even sought. It is Holland’s countenancing of these lax and biased practices that allows him to proclaim that research “supports an oedipal stage,” that “the penis=baby equation” has been vindicated, that “links between depression and oral fixation” have been found, and that “Freud’s account of paranoia gets confirmation.” Such “confirmation” is a strictly parochial affair, and that is why it has been left out of account by scientifically responsible textbook authors. Critics of psychoanalysis hold that no distinctively psychoanalytic hypotheses, such as those just mentioned, have earned significant evidential backing. Freudians, however, typically credit psychoanalysis with having introduced broader notions that were, in fact, already commonplace in the middle of the nineteenth century. As the great historian of psychiatry Henri F. Ellenberger observed in 1970, “The current legend attributes to Freud much of what belongs, notably, to Herbart, Fechner, Nietzsche, Meynert, Benedikt, and Janet, and overlooks the work of previous explorers of the unconscious, dreams, and sexual pathology. Much of what is credited to Freud was diffuse current lore, and his role was to crystallize these ideas and give them an original shape.” [16, p. 548] It is only Freud’s novelties and unique adaptations, along with those of his most emulated revisers, that ought to concern us here. Self-evidently, support for ideas that originated elsewhere, much less those that express the traditional wisdom of the ages, cannot be counted as favoring psychoanalysis. Apparently, however, Holland does not consider himself bound by this axiom. Holland reports, for example, that research has validated such assertedly psychoanalytic propositions as that “much mental life . . . is unconscious,” that “stable personality patterns form in childhood and shape later relationships,” that “mental representations of the self, others, and relationships guide interactions with others . . . ,” and that “personality development is . . . moving from immature dependency to mature interdependency.” Insofar as these vapid truisms constitute the ground to which psychoanalysis has now fled in its retreat from Freud’s heedless guesswork, they illustrate the bankruptcy, not the scientific vindication, of his movement. In the second half of his argument, Holland seeks to confer respectability on psychoanalysis by assimilating it to sciences that enjoy unchallenged recognition as such. His reasoning here is notably fallacious. By progressing from single inductions to themes and patterns that are then checked for adequacy, he writes, psychoanalysts employ the same “holistic” method as social scientists and some physical scientists as well; and since neither psychoanalysis nor geology nor astronomy attempts to predict the future, “psychoanalysis is not that far removed from geology or astronomy.” (Nor, in that one respect, is phrenology or the channeling of ancestors.) Needless to say, a perceived or imagined resemblance between the data gathering in one field and that in another tells us nothing about whether their eventual hypotheses are comparably parsimonious and well supported. Holland labors to portray the psychoanalytic clinician as a scientist in his own right who cautiously moves from a theory-free study of word associations to hypotheses that make full sense of the resultant inferences. Yet he approvingly quotes a pair of experts who point out that the analyst “listens for noises that signify in psychoanalytic terms” (emphasis added); he further admits that “Freudians will see Freudian patterns” everywhere; and he adds that “Freudian patients have Freudian dreams and make Freudian statements and focus on Freudian issues”-thus providing the analyst, we may be sure, with more Freudian evidence for the confirmation of his Freudian hunches. Perversely, however, Holland still clings to his ideal vision of the tabula rasa clinician-scientist. Freud, Holland maintains, arrived at his theory in just this inductive manner, building hypotheses from sheer attentive listening in the consulting room. We now know, however, that this hoary legend, propagated by Freud himself and his inner circle, is utterly untrue. Far from suspending judgment as a clinician, Freud typically demanded that his patients agree with his theory-driven accusations of incestuous desires, homosexual leanings, and early masturbation. As a theorist Freud was a rashly deductive bioenergetic speculator who routinely invented “clinical evidence” to fit his predetermined ideas and who altered the facts again when a new speculation required adornment. Contemporaries accused him with good reason of having plagiarized some of his most basic notions, including repression, infantile sexuality, and “universal bisexuality.” When it proved impossible for him to deny such unacknowledged borrowings, he brazenly ascribed them to psychodynamically induced “amnesia.” [16, 17, 18] Holland’s illustrations of Freud’s supposed method show that he has not fathomed the cardinal difference between the first psychoanalyst’s actual means of reaching conclusions and his seductive rhetorical reconstructions, which offered the trusting reader sequences of ingeniously solved little puzzles that may or may not have preceded his theorizing. Freud’s subtle diagnostic skill as manifested in the Wolf Man case history, for example, earns Holland’s praise; no one has told him about the cunning fibs in that story that were uncovered by the psychoanalyst Patrick Mahony 20 years ago. [19] And in reading Freud’s famous “aliquis slip” narrative in The Psychopathology of Everyday Life, Holland takes at face value a (probably fictitious) young man’s narrated “associations” of liquefied blood and calendar saints. Alas, it has been ascertained that Freud lifted those and other references from a current newspaper article and worked them into a self-flattering and mendacious yarn about Sherlock Holmes-like psychic detection on his part. [20] Of course, the fact that Freud himself didn’t faithfully employ “the psychoanalytic method” doesn’t impugn that method in other hands. Yet it is impugned, as Adolf Grünbaum in particular has shown, by the circular procedures that Holland now dimly perceives to be a problem. Whereas Holland would like to believe that a clinician need only exercise “integrity” to avoid imposing his presuppositions on the patient, Grünbaum makes it clear that question begging in the therapeutic interchange is structurally unavoidable. [8, 21] Grünbaum’s demonstration is devastating to the claim, still advanced by Holland, that modern psychoanalysis rests on a secure knowledge base. “Psychoanalytic method”-the analysis of (allegedly) free associations, of dreams and slips, and of the “transference”-is much the same as it was a hundred years ago, and it is helpless against the contaminating effect of suggestion. That is why we see so many warring psychoanalytic schools, each boasting “clinical validation” of its tenets. Holland’s final misstep is to bracket psychoanalysis with plate tectonics and natural selection, which met with resistance until they were eventually vindicated by consilient findings. The fate of psychoanalysis has been exactly the reverse; it quickly won popular acclaim through its emphasis on taboo breaking but then gradually lost favor as its overweening claims met with no scientific consilience at all. It is that absence of corroboration, not “deep-seated prejudice” or the efforts of debunkers such as myself, that chiefly accounts for the moribund state of psychoanalysis today.

#### Psychoanalysis fails to generate real, substantiative change and only results in poitical quietism and passivity locking in status quo violence

Paul **Gordon** (psychotherapist living and working in London) **2001** “Race & Class”, v. 42, n. 4, p. 30-1

The postmodernists' problem is that they cannot live with disappointment. All the tragedies of the political project of emancipation -- the evils of Stalinism in particular -- are seen as the inevitable product of men and women trying to create a better society. But, rather than engage in a critical assessment of how, for instance, radical political movements go wrong, they discard the emancipatory project and impulse itself. The postmodernists, as Sivanandan puts it, blame modernity for having failed them: `the intellectuals and academics have fled into discourse and deconstruction and representation -- as though to interpret the world is more important than to change it, as though changing the interpretation is all we could do in a changing world'.58 To justify their flight from a politics holding out the prospect of radical change through self-activity, the disappointed intellectuals find abundant intellectual alibis for themselves in the very work they champion, including, in Cohen's case, psychoanalysis. What Marshall Berman says of Foucault seems true also of psychoanalysis; that it offers `a world-historical alibi' for the passivity and helplessness felt by many in the 1970s, and that it has nothing but contempt for those naive enough to imagine that it might be possible for modern human- kind to be free. At every turn for such theorists, as Berman argues, whether in sexuality, politics, even our imagination, we are nothing but prisoners: there is no freedom in Foucault's world, because his language forms a seamless web, a cage far more airtight than anything Weber ever dreamed of, into which no life can break . . . There is no point in trying to resist the oppressions and injustices of modern life, since even our dreams of freedom only add more links to our chains; however, once we grasp the futility of it all, at least we can relax.59 Cohen's political defeatism and his conviction in the explanatory power of his new faith of psychoanalysis lead him to be contemptuous and dismissive of any attempt at political solidarity or collective action. For him, `communities' are always `imagined', which, in his view, means based on fantasy, while different forms of working-class organisation, from the craft fraternity to the revolutionary group, are dismissed as `fantasies of self-sufficient combination'.60 In this scenario, the idea that people might come together, think together, analyse together and act together as rational beings is impossible. The idea of a genuine community of equals becomes a pure fantasy, a `symbolic retrieval' of something that never existed in the first place: `Community is a magical device for conjuring something apparently solidary out of the thin air of modern times, a mechanism of re-enchantment.' As for history, it is always false, since `We are always dealing with invented traditions.'61 Now, this is not only nonsense, but dangerous nonsense at that. Is history `always false'? Did the Judeocide happen or did it not? And did not some people even try to resist it? Did slavery exist or did it not, and did not people resist that too and, ultimately, bring it to an end? And are communities always `imagined'? Or, as Sivanandan states, are they beaten out on the smithy of a people's collective struggle? Furthermore, all attempts to legislate against ideology are bound to fail because they have to adopt `technologies of surveillance and control identical to those used by the state'. Note here the Foucauldian language to set up the notion that all `surveillance' is bad. But is it? No society can function without surveillance of some kind. The point, surely, is that there should be a public conversation about such moves and that those responsible for implementing them be at all times accountable. To equate, as Cohen does, a council poster about `Stamping out racism' with Orwell's horrendous prophecy in 1984 of a boot stamping on a human face is ludicrous and insulting. (Orwell's image was intensely personal and destructive; the other is about the need to challenge not individuals, but a collective evil.) Cohen reveals himself to be deeply ambivalent about punitive action against racists, as though punishment or other firm action against them (or anyone else transgressing agreed social or legal norms) precluded `understanding' or even help through psychotherapy. It is indeed a strange kind of `anti-racism' that portrays active racists as the `victims', those who are in need of `help'. But this is where Cohen's argument ends up. In their move from politics to the academy and the world of `discourse', the postmodernists may have simply exchanged one grand narrative, historical materialism, for another, psychoanalysis.62 For psychoanalysis is a grand narrative, par excellence. It is a theory that seeks to account for the world and which recognises few limits on its explanatory potential. And the claimed radicalism of psychoanalysis, in the hands of the postmodernists at least, is not a radicalism at all but a prescription for a politics of quietism, fatalism and defeat. Those wanting to change the world, not just to interpret it, need to look elsewhere.

#### Calculation is good and doesn’t devalue life

Revesz 2008 Richard L. Revesz (Dean and Lawrence King Professor of Law at New York University School of Law, JD Yale Law School) and Michael A Livermore. (JD NYU School of Law, Executive Director of the Institute for Policy Integrity, and Managing director of the NYU Law Review). Retaking Rationality How Cots-Benefit Analysis Can Better protect the Environment and Our Health. 2008. P. 1-4.

Governmental decisions are also fundamentally different from personal decisions in that they often affect people in the aggregate. In our individual lives, we come into contact with at least some of the consequences of our decisions. If we fail to consult a map, we pay the price: losing valuable time driving around in circles and listening to the complaints of our passengers. We are constantly confronted with the consequences of the choices that we have made. Not so for governments, however, which exercise authority by making decisions at a distance. Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of governmental decisions is that they require a special kind of compassion—one that can seem, at first glance, cold and calculating, the antithesis of empathy. The aggregate and complex nature of governmental decisions does not address people as human beings, with concerns and interests, families and emotional relationships, secrets and sorrows. Rather, people are numbers stacked in a column or points on a graph, described not through their individual stories of triumph and despair, but by equations, functions, and dose-response curves. The language of governmental decisionmaking can seem to—and to a certain extent does—ignore what makes individuals unique and morally important. But, although the language of bureaucratic decisionmaking can be dehumanizing, it is also a prerequisite for the kind of compassion that is needed in contemporary society. Elaine Scarry has developed a comparison between individual compassion and statistical compassion.' Individual compassion is familiar—when we see a person suffering, or hear the story of some terrible tragedy, we are moved to take action. Statistical compassion seems foreign—we hear only a string of numbers but must comprehend "the concrete realities embedded there."' Individual compassion derives from our social nature, and may be hardwired directly into the human brain.' Statistical compassion calls on us to use our higher reasoning power to extend our natural compassion to the task of solving more abstract—but no less real—problems. Because compassion is not just about making us feel better—which we could do as easily by forgetting about a problem as by addressing it—we have a responsibility to make the best decisions that we can. This book argues that cost-benefit analysis, properly conducted, can improve environmental and public health policy. Cost-benefit analysis—the translation of human lives and acres of forest into the language of dollars and cents—can seem harsh and impersonal. But such an approach is also necessary to improve the quality of decisions that regulators make. Saving the most lives, and best protecting the quality of our environment and our health—in short, exercising our compassion most effectively—requires us to step back and use our best analytic tools. Sometimes, in order to save a life, we need to treat a person like a number. This is the challenge of statistical compassion. This book is about making good decisions. It focuses on the area of environmental, health and safety regulation. These regulations have been the source of numerous and hard-fought controversies over the past several decades, particularly at the federal level. Reaching the right decisions in the areas of environmental protection, increasing safety, and improving public health is clearly of high importance. Although it is admirable (and fashionable) for people to buy green or avoid products made in sweatshops, efforts taken at the individual level are not enough to address the pressing problems we face—there is a vital role for government in tackling these issues, and sound collective decisions concerning regulation are needed. There is a temptation to rely on gut-level decisionmaking in order to avoid economic analysis, which, to many, is a foreign language on top of seeming cold and unsympathetic. For government to make good decisions, however, it cannot abandon reasoned analysis. Because of the complex nature of governmental decisions, we have no choice but to deploy complex analytic tools in order to make the best choices possible. Failing to use these tools, which amounts to abandoning our duties to one another, is not a legitimate response. Rather, we must exercise statistical compassion by recognizing what numbers of lives saved represent: living and breathing human beings, unique, with rich inner lives and an interlocking web of emotional relationships. The acres of a forest can be tallied up in a chart, but that should not blind us to the beauty of a single stand of trees. We need to use complex tools to make good decisions while simultaneously remembering that we are not engaging in abstract exercises, but that we are having real effects on people and the environment. In our personal lives, it would be unwise not to shop around for the best price when making a major purchase, or to fail to think through our options when making a major life decision. It is equally foolish for government to fail to fully examine alternative policies when making regulatory decisions with life-or-death consequences. This reality has been recognized by four successive presidential administrations. Since 1981, the cost-benefit analysis of major regulations has been required by presidential order. Over the past twenty-five years, however, environmental and other progressive groups have declined to participate in the key governmental proceedings concerning the cost-benefit analysis of federal regulations, instead preferring to criticize the technique from the outside. The resulting asymmetry in political participation has had profound negative consequences, both for the state of federal regulation and for the technique of cost-benefit analysis itself. Ironically, this state of affairs has left progressives open to the charge of rejecting reason, when in fact strong environmental and public health pro-grams are often justified by cost-benefit analysis. It is time for progressive groups, as well as ordinary citizens, to retake the high ground by embracing and reforming cost-benefit analysis. The difference between being unthinking—failing to use the best tools to analyze policy—and unfeeling—making decisions without compassion—is unimportant: Both lead to bad policy. Calamities can result from the failure to use either emotion or reason. Our emotions provide us with the grounding for our principles, our innate interconnectedness, and our sense of obligation to others. We use our powers of reason to build on that emotional foundation, and act effectively to bring about a better world.