### 1NC – Death of the Subject

#### Welcome to the year 2013, where the accident has already occurred and the apocalypse is unfolding—welcome, to the battleground between difference and identity, between sameness and divergence—this debate round occupies a zone of indistinction between academic competition and violent space of revolution, where arguments are thrown around like missiles and framework debates erect shields in defense of tradition and privilege.

#### The affirmative belief in authentic originary presence, a human uniqueness in identity and in the importance of social location is an excuse for the anthropocentric divide between human and nature—more profoundly, between sovereign and citizen, always caught in a violent dialectic of unfolding power and violence.

#### Their belief in the authenticity of human identity reifies power structures and merely continues the sovereign distinction between the supposedly unnaturality of the environmental disaster and the authentic space of stability in their wish to reconstruct social relations. The human is already dead—it’s time to move on.

Smith 2009 (Rachel Greenwald, Prof. Rhetoric Boston University, “Ecology Beyond Ecology: Life After the Accident in Octavia Butler’s Xenogenesis Trilogy)CJQ

The novels begin with the awakening of Lilith Iyapo from a centuries-long alien-induced coma. Her captors, the Oankali, are gene traders; they travel across the universe seeking new species with which to breed and enhance their genetic code. On Lilith's awakening, the Oankali give her an impossible project: to begin a new human colony with the knowledge that humans are to be bred out of existence in favor of an Oankali-human construct species. While Lilith plans at first to escape the Oankali, she finds herself equally at odds with the chauvinism of the humans who resist the alien species, and, by the end of the first novel in the trilogy, Dawn, she is pregnant with the first Oankali-human hybrid construct. The other two novels in the trilogy, Adulthood Rites and Imago, trace the evolution of the new species through the narrative perspectives of two of Lilith's construct children. The Oankali justify their takeover of the human species in part by the argument that the inevitability of human extinction is an expression of an unexamined genetic conflict in all humans: the combination of intelligence and hierarchical behavior. Jdahya, Lilith's first Oankali guide, argues that this genetic conflict is dangerous on its own but that, even more importantly, human intelligence does not adequately identify hierarchical behavior as a potential problem. In a conversation with Lilith in which she questions what she perceives as the genetic determinism of the Oankali worldview, Jdahya equates the human neglect of a dangerous genetic tendency to the inability to see, and unwillingness to acknowledge, a tendency toward cancer: "If you're saying we were genetically programmed to blow ourselves up—" "No. Your people's situation was more like your own with the cancer my relative cured. The cancer was small. The human doctor said you would probably have recovered and been well even if humans had discovered it and removed it at that stage. You might have lived the rest of your life free of it, though she said she would have wanted you checked regularly." (38) What is at stake in the human tendency to self-destruct, according to the Oankali, goes beyond the genetic conflict of intelligence and hierarchical behavior. Stemming both from this conflict and from the human refusal to acknowledge its danger, the unconsciously suicidal behavior of humankind echoes what Virilio calls the need for "intelligence . . . of the crisis of intelligence"—awareness that an innate and extreme danger has been woefully overlooked.12 [End Page 555] There is little in the trilogy to suggest how humans might accomplish this awareness of their ignorance of danger on their own. The bulk of the narrative runs slant of this question, concerning instead the genesis of a new species devoid of this genetic conflict altogether. Yet the trilogy does offer an implicit link between humanist assumptions about what constitutes agency, freedom and progress, and humans' stubborn unwillingness to engage with the risk of their genetic conflict. Indeed, what the Oankali tend to invoke as biologically human characteristics could just as easily (and perhaps more accurately) be described as the values of liberal humanism. For instance, when Jodahs, the narrator of Imago, confronts a resister with the belief that the only remaining human colony is doomed to extinction, the man responds by privileging freedom in the short term over species-life in the long term. Jodahs, however, is concerned about the long view: "You might last a long time, but in the end, you'll destroy yourselves."

"We could last a thousand years," the male said. "We did all right on Earth until the war."

 "You could. Your new world will be difficult. It will demand most of your attention, perhaps occupy your hierarchical tendencies safely for a while."

 "We'll be free—us, our children, their children."

 "Perhaps."

"We'll be fully Human and free. That's enough. We might even get into space again on our own someday. Your people might be dead wrong about us."

"No." He couldn't read the gene combinations as I could. It was as though he were about to walk off a cliff simply because he could not see it—or because he, or rather his descendants, would not hit the rocks below for a long time. (531) While the man equates freedom with the preservation of identity—in this case, species identity—and the capacity to compete, Jodahs, the hybrid-construct, sees this version of freedom as painfully constrained. This limitation is evident throughout the trilogy as human beliefs in what constitutes autonomy and progress lead to the precise repetition of previous stages of human development with no evidence of learning from past mistakes. The redevelopment of industry in the novels results, for instance, primarily in the presence of weapons used for raiding other villages and useless currency, while invocations of humanist concepts of freedom easily slip into resonances of the neoliberal tendency to equate all forms of liberty with structures [End Page 556] of ownership. Another human resister argues, for instance, that the Oankali should leave humanity alone because "They own themselves. They don't belong to you" (637). The novel thus gestures toward a critique of the very language of self-determination—an ethically difficult move that plagues the novels. Adulthood Rites, for instance, concerns a human-Oankali construct who takes up the cause for human rights even though he understands the logic of autonomy to be part of the short-sightedness and danger of humanity. From the Oankali perspective, autonomy is impossible: every organism is so intimately connected with every other that the very notion of self-ownership indicates a destructive tendency toward competition and domination. Yet when deprived of this language altogether, humanity is left in a position of genetic subordination to the Oankali, who determine where and when humans can live and reproduce. This tension ultimately remains unresolved, but expressions of human freedom and progress in the trilogy tend to result in repetition, stasis, and the production of competition-based values systems, while the sacrifice of some aspects of human self-determination in favor of an integral accident—human-Oankali breeding—leads to something truly new: the development of an entirely different species with an uncanny capacity for both self-knowledge and connection to others.

#### And, in the age of contemporary late post hypermodern structuralism, there can be no subject: It is simply impossible. As an explanation, we offer the words of Nick Land recounting the death of Jesus on the cross—in the height of the melodrama of European subjectivity, at that site where the metaphoric transcendence of the Human God was expressed through the breaking of the flesh of the quote “messiah,” he negates the desire for his own birth; God nullifies himself, standing as a negation of negation.

Land 5

(Nick, Lecturer in Continental Philosophy at Warwick University, The Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism, Pp. 54) CJQ

Christ screams on the cross: ‘Father, your parsimony disgusts me, is this a death?’ He thinks of the abortion he missed, lying wrapped in bloody rags on the floor of a cheap hostelry. He is excited by the thought of his mother in mortal sin, and of a harsher love than he ever knew. How was it possible for her to forgo the delight of hacking God’s fruit from her womb? (That was a chance for religion.) ‘for, behold, the days are coming in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck’ [John XXIII:29].Instead there was ‘an odious comedy’ [VI 85], this hollow melodrama of Easter.

#### Next, their quest to revive the Subject in the form of their affirmative is a desire to revive Jesus, to experience the completion of the ritual of Easter, complete in its banality. The elevation of the subject into a space of perfection, an indistinct being from any divine creature is itself an ironic denial of the self and will. Affirming the banality of existence onto oneself infinitely overcomes this operatic obsession with a genuine subjectivity.

Land 2005 (Nick, Lecturer in Continental Philosophy at Warwick University, *The Thirst for Annihilation: Georges Bataille and Virulent Nihilism,* Pp. 31) CJQ

Secondly: a figure of eternal recurrence, stretched between a thermodynamic baseline (Boltzmann’s theory of eternal recurrence) and a libidinal summit, a theoretical machine for transmuting ontologico-scientific discoveries into excitations. First the scientific figure: recurrence as a theory of energetic forces and their permutation; chance, tendency, energy, and information. In the play of anarchic combinations and redistributions forces tend to the exhaustion of their reserve of possible states, inclining to the circle, a figure of affirmation and intoxication, as well as a teaching, message, or signal. A ‘sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with tremendous years of recurrence, with an ebb and a flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms striving towards the most complex, out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms towards the hottest, most turbulent, most self-contradictory, and then returning home to the simple out of this abundance…without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels good will towards itself—do you want a name for this world?’ [N III 917]. Then the libidinal peak; the recurrence of impetus in the ascent through compositional strata, always noch einmal, once again, and never ceiling, horizon, achieved essence: ‘would you be the ebb of this great flow’ [N II 279]. Thirdly: a general theory of hierarchies, of order as rank-order (composition). There are no longer any transcendental limits; Schopenhauer’s ‘grades of objectification’ are decapitated, thus depolarized, opened into intensive sequences in both directions. Kant is defeated, as transcendental/empirical difference is collapsed into the scales (but it takes a long time for such events to reach us). History returns (what could timelessness mean now?) ‘[T]o speak of oppositions, where there are only gradations and a multiplicitous delicacy of steps’ [N II 589]. Fourthly: a diagnosis of nihilism, of the hyperbolic of desire. Recurrence is the return of compositional impetus across the scales, the insatiability of creative drive. This is ‘Dionysian pessimism’; the recurrence of stimulus (pain) and the exultation of its overcoming. For the exhausted ones, the Schlechtweggekommenen, this is intolerable, for they are stricken with ‘[w]eariness, which would reach the end with one leap, with a death leap, a poor unknowing weariness, which would not will once more; it is that which created all gods and after-worlds’ [N II 298]. Plato first, then Christianity, feeding on human inertia like a monstrous leech, creating humanity (the terminal animal). Nihilism completes itself in principle at once, God is conceived; a final being, a cessation of becoming, an ultimate thing beyond which nothing can be desired.

#### Our alternative is to shut our eyes to Plato’s Sun, abort Jesus, to revel in the Accident that was the birth of subjectivity; I guess they’ll want a stable text for the round, so we’ll defend that you should reject the affirmative as a way to affirm the chaos and unrepresentability of subjectivity itself. There is no Sameness, no stability, no transcendent human sovereign, but only radical divergence and difference.

Deleuze 1990 (Gilles, Prof. Philosophy Univerite de Paris XIII, Vincennes-St. Dennis, *The Logic of Sense*, Pp. 264-5)CJQ

The secret of the eternal return is that is does not express an order opposed to the chaos engulfing it. On the contrary, it is nothing other than chaos itself, or the power of affirming chaos. There is a point where Joyce is Nietzschean when he shows that the vicus of recirculation cannot affect and cause a “chaosmos” to revolve. To the coherence of representation, the eternal return substitutes something else entirely—its own chaodyssey (chao-errance). Between the eternal return and the simulacrum, there is such a profound link that the one cannot be understood except through the other. Only the divergent series, insofar as they are divergent, return: that is, each series insofar as it displaces its difference along with all the others, and each series insofar as they complicate their difference within the chaos which is without beginning or end. The circle of the eternal return is a circle which is always eccentric in relation to an always decentered center. Klossowski is right to say of the eternal return that it is a “simulacrum of a doctrine”: It is indeed Being (Etre), but only when “being” (etre) is the simulacrum. The simulacrum functions in such a way that a certain resemblance is necessarily thrown back onto its basic series and a certain identity is, in fact, the Same and the Similar, but only insofar as they are simulated, produced by the simulation, through the functioning of the simulacrum (will to power). It is in this sense that it reverses representation and destroys the icons. It does not presuppose the Same and the Similar; on the contrary, it constitutes the only Same—the Same of that which differs, and the only resemblance—the resemblance of the unmatched. It is the unique phantasm of all simulacra (the Being of all beings). It is the power to affirm divergence and decentering and makes this power of the object of a superior affirmation. It is under the power of the false pretender causing that which is to happen again and again. And it does not make everything come back. It is still selective, it “makes a difference,” but not at all in the manner of Plato. What is selected are all the procedures opposed to selection; what is excluded, what is made not to return, is that which presupposes the Same and the Similar, that which pretends to correct divergence, to recenter the circles or order the chaos, and to provide a model to make a copy. For all its long history, Platonism happened only once, and Socrates fell under the blade. For the Same and the Similar become simple illusions when they cease to be simulated. Modernity is defined by the power of the simulacrum. It behooves philosophy not to be modern at any cost, no more than to be nontemporal, but to extract from modernity something that Nietzsche designed as the untimely, which pertains to modernity—“in favor, I hope, of a time to come.” It is not in the great forests and woodpaths that philosophy is elaborated, but rather in the towns and in the streets—even in the most artificial (factice) in them. The untimely is attained in relation to the most distant past, by the reversal of Platonism; in relation to the present, by the simulacrum conceived as an edge of critical modernity; in relation to the future, it is attained by the phantasm of the eternal return as belief in the future. The artificial and the simulacrum are not the same thing. They are even opposed to each other. The artificial is always a copy of a copy, which should be pushed to the point where it changes its nature and is reversed into the simulacrum (the moment of Pop Art). Artifice and simulacrum are opposed at the heart of modernity, at the point where modernity settles all of its accounts. For there is a vast difference between destroying in order to conserve and perpetuate the established order of representation, models, and copies, and destroying the models and copies in order to institute the chaos which creates, making the simulacra function and raising a phantasm—the most innocent of all destructions, the destruction of Platonism.

### 1NC—Ranciere

#### Don’t start politics from the demands of a particular identity called Woman—begin instead from the presupposition of radical equality. The aff’s politics of dissimilarity relies on a logic of sovereignty which divides the demos to focus and enhance domination.

Ranciere 1992 (Jacques, Prof. Phil @ European Graduate School, “Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization” October, Vol. 61)CJQ

A momentous consequence follows from this: politics is not the enactment of the principle, the law, or the self of a community. Put in other words, politics has no arche, it is anarchical. The very name democracy supports this point. As Plato noted, democracy has no arche, no measure. The singularity of the act of the demos-a cratein instead of an archein-is dependent on an originary dis- order or miscount: the demos, or people, is at the same time the name of a community and the name for its division, for the handling of a wrong. And beyond any particular wrong, the "politics of the people" wrongs policy, because the people is always more or less than itself. It is the power of the one more, the power of anyone, which confuses the right ordering of policy. Now for me the current dead end of political reflection and action is due to the identification of politics with the self of a community. This may occur in the big community or in smaller ones; it may be the identification of the process of governing with the principle of the community under the heading of universality, the reign of the law, liberal democracy, and so on. Or it may be, on the contrary, the claim for identity on the part of so-called minorities against the hegemonic law of the ruling culture and identity. The big community and the smaller ones may charge one another with "tribalism" or "barbarianism," and both will be right in their charge and wrong in their claim. I don't assume that they are practically equivalent, that the outcomes are the same; I only assume that they stem from the same questionable identification. For the primum movens of policy is to purport to act as the self of the community, to turn the techniques of governing into natural laws of the social order. But if politics is something different from policy, it cannot draw on such an identification. One can object that the idea of emancipation is historically related to the idea of the self in the formula of "self-emancipation of the workers." But the first motto of any self-emancipation movement is always the struggle against "selfishness." This is not only a moral statement (e.g., the dedication of the individual to the militant community); it is also a logical one: the politics of emancipation is the politics of the self as an other, or, in Greek terms, a heteron. The logic of emancipation is a heterology. Let me put this differently: the process of emancipation is the verification of the equality of any speaking being with any other speaking being. It is always enacted in the name of a category denied either the principle or the consequences of that equality: workers, women, people of color, or others. But the enactment of equality is not, for all that, the enactment of the self, of the attributes or properties of the community in question. The name of an injured community that invokes its rights is always the name of the anonym, the name of anyone. Are there universal values transcending particular identifications? If we are to break out of the desperate debate between universality and identity, we must answer that the only universal in politics is equality. But we must add that equality is not a value given in the essence of Humanity or Reason. Equality exists, and makes universal values exist, to the extent that it is enacted. Equality is not a value to which one appeals; it is a universal that must be supposed, verified, and demonstrated in each case. Universality is not the eidos of the community to which particular situations are opposed; it is, first of all, a logical operator. The mode of effectivity of Truth or Universality in politics is the discursive and practical construction of a polemical verification, a case, a demonstration. The place of truth is not the place of a ground or an ideal; it is always a topos, the place of a subjectivization in an argumentative plot. Its language is always idiomatic, which, on the contrary, does not mean tribal. When oppressed groups set out to cope with a wrong, they may appeal to Man or Human Being. But the universality is not in those concepts; it is in the way of demonstrating the consequences that follow from this-from the worker being a citizen, the black being a human being, and so on. The logical schema of social protest, generally speaking, may be summed up as follows: Do we or do we not belong to the category of men or citizens or human beings, and what follows from this? The universality is not enclosed in citizen or human being; it is involved in the "what follows," in its discursive and practical enactment. Such a universality may develop through the mediation of particular categories. For instance, in nineteenth-century France, workers might construct the logic of a strike in the form of a syllogism: Do French workers belong to the category of Frenchmen? If not, the Declaration of Rights has to be changed. If so, they must be treated as equals, and they act to demonstrate it. The question might become more paradoxical. For instance, does a French woman belong to the category of Frenchmen? The question may sound nonsensical or scandalous. However, such nonsensical sentences may prove more productive in the process of equality than the mere assumption that a woman is a woman or a worker a worker. For they allow these subjects not only to specify a logical gap that in turn discloses a social bias, but also to articulate this gap as a relation, the non- place as a place, the place for a polemical construction. The construction of such cases of equality is not the act of an identity, nor is it the demonstration of the values specific to a group. It is a process of subjectivization.

#### There are no universal lines of oppression: everyone is caught between patriarch and woman, between police officer and prisoner, stuck in the relation between standard man and abnormal woman. Reductionist identity politics try to smooth out hierarchies for pragmatism’s sake which only internalizes violent police ordering.

May 2009 (Todd, Prof. Clemson University, “There are No Queers: Jacques Ranciere and Post-Identity Politics,” Borderlands 8:2 2009)CJQ

Consonant with this type of Marxism, Rancière’s thought recognizes that political struggle cannot be ghettoized into particular non-communicating identities. What reductionist Marxism hoped to accomplish – and, for a time and to a certain extent, succeeded – was to align large swaths of oppressed people under a single banner, that of the proletariat. One might ask how accurate the term proletariat was for certain groups of people, but nonetheless it served to unite many of those who have no part, who do not count, in the capitalist order. In Rancière’s framework, the term equality performs the same function. Regardless of the specific struggle that one is engaged in, one is equal to everyone else, everyone who struggles and everyone against whom one struggles. People involved in labor organizing, for instance, can see their immediate solidarity with those engaged in gay and lesbian rights work, as long as they are both committed to a democratic politics. They share a common presupposition of equality that subtends their particular issues, a presupposition that crosses the boundaries of those issues. I would argue, in fact, that the term equality works better than the term proletariat for creating solidarity. This is for two reasons. The first is that it is unclear who is and who is not among the proletariat. The term proletariat refers to those who work for those who own the means of production. Are housewives among the proletariat? For the autonomia movement in Italy they certainly were. It is unclear, however, how they work for those who own the means of production, except perhaps indirectly. On the other side of the coin, many high-level managers, whose interests are aligned with large stockholders, do not actually own the means of production. They are aligned with the bourgeoisie, but are not technically owners (unless, of course, they also receive stock options as part of their compensation). What is it that aligns housewives with the proletariat and high-level managers with the bourgeoisie? We might say that if it is not precisely their relation to the ownership of the means of production, it is instead their place in the social order. Housewives are among the oppressed, high-level managers among the oppressors. There is, however, another way to put this point. Housewives – at least many of them – do not count; they do not have a part. Unlike high-level managers, they are presupposed by the social order to be less than equal to those better placed in the police order. Equality, then, captures more accurately the issue at stake between various kinds of oppressors and various kinds of oppressed in a given police order. One might worry, however, that this way of putting things neglects what is crucial to Marx’s analysis: the role capitalism plays in sustaining oppression. This, however, would misconceive the theoretical framework of a Rancièrean politics. In the kind of democratic politics we have sketched here, there is certainly a role for the term proletariat to play. Those who own the means of production in a capitalist economic system indeed oppress those who work for them. And this form of oppression is neither marginal nor irrelevant. In our neoliberal world, it is crucial and inescapable. One might argue about whether the proletariat is exploited in the strict Marxist sense, for example whether exploitation requires Marx’s labor theory of value and whether the labor theory of value is true. However, it is difficult to deny that large sections of the proletariat under neoliberal capitalism do not have a part to play other than to contribute their labor to sustaining it. Rancière’s political view does not deny any of this. His goal, rather, is to point out that while all forms of oppression are inegalitarian, not all forms can be given the specific economic inflection implied by the distinction between proletariat and bourgeoisie. High-level managers, while technically among the proletariat, are complicit along a variety of registers with a police order that denies various groups, including particular subgroups of the proletariat, a part to play in that order. And this is the second reason that the term equality works better than proletariat to ground solidarity among oppressed groups. What identity politics understood is that there are a variety of oppressions that, while often related, are irreducible. It could be argued that this is the founding insight of identity politics. Historically, if we see identity politics as emerging from the left’s rejection of traditional Marxist reductionism and the consequent turn to feminism, gay and lesbian politics, and African-American political expression, then it is precisely the left’s rejection of a solely class-based politics that grounds it. By invoking the concept of equality, Rancière’s democratic politics allows one to preserve this insight while, as we saw, retaining the solidarity identity politics has found so elusive. Why can it do this? The concept of equality is not only a different concept from that of the proletariat. It is also a different kind of concept. The proletariat is generally used referentially. It refers to a class of people. Sometimes, it is utilized to refer to a class in the making; that is, it might be composed of people to come as well as people already existent. And, once in his writings, Rancière refers to the historical example of Auguste Blanqui’s invocation of the concept as a form of subjectification (Rancière, 1999: 37).[7] However, he maintains that that invocation does not refer to a specific class of people defined by their place in the capitalist order.

#### The alternative is to presuppose equality.

#### This is not a mere reworking of existing social relations but rather a demonstration that identity politics is NO politics at all. We can never identify ourselves with some mysterious transhistorical woman, but we CAN disassociate ourselves from the standard man in whose name she has been oppressed.

Ranciere 1992 (Jacques, Prof. Phil @ European Graduate School, “Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization” October, Vol. 61)CJQ

Let me rephrase this: a subject is an outsider or, more, an in-between. Proletarians was the name given to people who are together inasmuch as they are between: between several names, statuses, and identities; between humanity and inhumanity, citizenship and its denial; between the status of a man of tools and the status of a speaking and thinking being. Political subjectivization is the enactment of equality-or the handling of a wrong-by people who are to- gether to the extent that they are between. It is a crossing of identities, relying on a crossing of names: names that link the name of a group or class to the name of no group or no class, a being to a nonbeing or a not-yet-being. This network has a noticeable property: it always involves an impossible identification, an identification that cannot be embodied by he or she who utters it. "We are the wretched of the earth" is the kind of sentence that no wretched of the world would ever utter. Or, to take a personal example, for my generation politics in France relied on an impossible identification-an identification with the bodies of the Algerians beaten to death and thrown into the Seine by the French police, in the name of the French people, in October 1961. We could not identify with those Algerians, but we could question our identification with the "French people" in whose name they had been murdered. That is to say, we could act as political subjects in the interval or the gap between two identities, neither of which we could assume. That process of subjectivization had no proper name, but it found its name, its cross name, in the 1968 assumption "We are all German Jews"-a "wrong" identification, an identification in terms of the denial of an absolutely essential wrong. If the movement began with that sentence, its decline might be emblematized by an antithetical statement, which served as the title of an essay published some years after by a former leader of the movement: "We were not all born proletarians." Certainly we were not; we are not. But what follows from this is an inability to draw consequences from a "being" that is a "nonbeing," from an identification with an anybody that has no body. In the demonstration of equality the syllogistic logic of the either/or (are we or are we not citizens or human beings?) is intertwined with the para- tactic logic of a "we are and are not." In sum, the logic of political subjectivization, of emancipation, is a heterology, a logic of the other, for three main reasons. First, it is never the simple assertion of an identity; it is always, at the same time, the denial of an identity given by an other, given by the ruling order of policy. Policy is about "right" names, names that pin people down to their place and work. Politics is about "wrong" names-misnomers that articulate a gap and connect with a wrong. Second, it is a demonstration, and a demonstration always supposes an other, even if that other refuses evidence or argument. It is the staging of a common place that is not a place for a dialogue or a search for a consensus in Haber- masian fashion. There is no consensus, no undamaged communication, no settlement of a wrong. But there is a polemical commonplace for the handling of a wrong and the demonstration of equality.

### Case – Discourse

#### Doty is wrong – representations don’t come first – it’s our reality that structures our existence

Wendt 2k Alexander Wendt (Professor of IR at Ohio State University); Review of International Studies, 2000, 26: 165–180

Having been a classmate of hers in graduate school I am not surprised that Roxanne Doty believes her cats exist, and I am sure that upon meeting them most other postpositivists in IR would agree with her. To my knowledge not even the most hardened postmodernists have explicitly denied that the objects of everyday experience exist.9 Given this agreement on at least a ‘commonsense realism’,10 however, it is then instructive to consider how Doty knows her cats exist. I can only speculate, but my guess is that she knows it because she has seen them with her own eyes, and because believing that her cats are real has enabled her to deal more successfully with them. If so, note that this reasoning reproduces, in a lay science context, exactly what a positivist would say about professional science: she has used empirical observations and instrumental success to test the correspondence, the truth, of her theory of cats against the world. To be sure, things get more complicated when moving to things of greater interest to IR scholars like states, which are neither directly observable (thwarting commonsense realism) nor completely separable from observing subjects (unlike cats, states depend on actors’ beliefs for their existence). Having conceded commonsense realism, however, it becomes harder to deny scientific realism. It can be done—that is the empiricist version of positivism—but in the book I develop a lengthy argument against empiricism, which Doty does not challenge. That leaves the unique features of social kinds as the last line of defence for a radical denial of positivism in IR. Perhaps there positivism finally collapses, though I argue to the contrary, but Doty has not supplied an argument to that effect either. Raising the question of the ontological status of cats is useful because it calls attention to the fact that postmodern epistemology is not nearly as radical in practice as it sounds in theory. I don’t want to tar postmodernists with the brush of ridiculous views: I want to know why they hold such conventional ones. Thus, in her own empirical work on representations of subordinate peoples in imperial discourses, Doty proceeds more or less as any positivist would—amassing data and developing the best narrative she can to make sense of them.11 The same could be said about the empirical work of other IR scholars who are identified with postmodernism, like David Campbell or Cynthia Weber. Yet, if in practice postmodernists do not deny the existence, and even knowability, of a world outside of discourse, then what exactly are they saying? That all observation is theory-laden? That theories cannot be tested directly against the world but only against other theories? That as a result knowledge can never have perfectly secure foundations? These are all positions held by sophisticated positivists today. The straw man here in fact tends to be naive versions of positivism, which even if still believed by some are hardly a challenging target for post-positivist ire. Be that as it may, Doty has made an important move in explicitly embracing what has previously been only an implicit commonsense realism; now going a step further and addressing why she and other postmodernists are just like the rest of us in this respect might show that there is less at stake in the positivism wars than is often thought.

#### For the aff, our relations to the world are intermediated through symbolic fields of text and discourse. This perspective is profoundly anthropocentric, omitting the lively influence held by material and non-discursive machines.

Bryant ’12 Levi Bryant, teaches philosophy at Collin College, “RSI, Discursivity, Critique, and Politics,” Larval Subjects, 7/18/2012, http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2012/07/18/rsi-discursivity-critique-and-politics/

So in response to a previous post, a lot of folks gave me grief about the following passage: I do think, however, that OOO can problematize our current political thought and open new avenues of political engagement and theorization. As it stands, cultural studies is dominated by a focus on the discursive. We hear endless talk about signs, signifiers, “positions” or positionality, narratives, discourses, ideology, etc. Basically we see the world as a fetishized text to be decoded and debunked. None of this should, of course, be abandoned, but I do think we’re encountering its limitations. In the few years I’ve been writing on these issues, I’ve been surprised to discover just how hard it is to get people to sense that there is a non-discursive power of things; a form of power that is not about signs, ideology (as text), beliefs, positions, narratives, and so on. It’s as if these things aren’t on the radar for most social and political theorists. I get the sense that the reason for this has something to do with what Heidegger diagnosed in his analysis of the ready-to-hand. Heidegger argues that when the ready-to-hand is working it becomes invisible. We don’t notice it. It recedes into the background. Us academics live in worlds that work pretty well as far as material infrastructure goes. We are, for the most part, in a world where things work: food is available, electricity and water function, we have shelter, etc. As a consequence, all this disappears from view and we instead focus on cultural texts because often this is a place where things aren’t working. In response to these remarks, I was told that 1) of course no one has the naive belief that everything is text (what a relief! of course, the question is whether this belief registers itself in theoretical practice), and 2) that, in fact, these things are all the rage in the world of theory. I’m well aware that there is a tradition of theorists that don’t fit this mold, and perpetually refer to many of these theorists in my own work. Theorists that come to mind are figures such as Haraway, Stengers, Latour, Kittler, Ong, McLuhan, Elizabeth Grosz, Jane Bennett, Stacy Alaimo, Karen Barad, Kevin Sharpe, Jennifer Andersen et al, Cathy Davidson, Braudel, DeLanda, Pickering, etc. They exist. The point is not that they don’t exist, but that these forms of theory, I think, have been rather marginal in the academy; especially philosophy. In discussing these things, I’m not making some claim to being absolutely original or to be originating something full cloth. I’m more than happy to play some small role in bringing attention to these things; things that I believe to be neglected. I think, for example, that the new materialist feminists predate OOO/SR by 5-10 years, have many points of overlap with OOO, and have not nearly gotten the attention that they deserve. I think Latour and Stengers are almost entirely invisible in the world of philosophy conferences and departments; and I think that there are systematic reasons for this pertaining to the history of continental theory coming out of German idealism, the linguistic turn, and phenomenology. In German idealism you get a focus on spirit and the transcendental structure of mind. In the linguistic turn, you get a focus on how signifiers and signs inform our relation to reality (for example, Lacan’s famous observation that the difference between the men’s room and lady’s room results from the signifier in “The Agency of the Letter”, and Barthes’ claim that language is a primary modeling system in The Fashion System). In phenomenology you get a focus on the lived experience of the cogito, Dasein, or lived body and how it “constitutes” (Husserl’s language, not mine) the objects of its intentions. read on! In each instance we get a focus on the differences that humans are contributing, with a relative indifference to the differences that non-humans contribute. Material entities, as Alaimo observes in Bodily Natures, are treated as blank screens for human intentions, language, concepts, signs. The metaphor of the screen is here important, for a screen is that which contains no difference of its own beyond being a smooth and white surface, and is therefore susceptible to whatever we might wish to project upon it with a camera. This has been the dominant mode of theorizing that I’ve encountered in the last decade in my discipline of philosophy (and I have a fair background in rhetoric and literary theory as well). Phenomenology and the linguistic turn, I think, are the dominant positions represented at SPEP, for example, the main professional conference for continental philosophy (though thankfully things are beginning to change). When it is said that something is “dominant”, the claim is not that nothing different from it exists, but merely that a certain style of theorizing enjoys hegemony among that population. In media studies, I think, the situation is better. I think it’s better in geography as well. It depends on what population of theorists we’re looking at (a point entailed, incidentally, by my thesis that signifiers are material entities that must travel throughout populations).

Discourse does not shape reality—geography determines where cities get built, not language. Default to materialism, ignore their hand-waving.

Bryant 2012 (Levi, Prof. Phil at Collin Colleege, “Why OOO?” <http://larvalsubjects.wordpress.com/2012/11/13/why-ooo/>) CJQ

Deleuze and Lacan were my master-figures throughout all of graduate school, and remain my master figures today alongside Luhmann who I discovered in my third year when exploring systems and complexity theory. I read Lacan through Deleuze and read Deleuze through Lacan. I still remember discovering Zizek in my first year. He felt like the holy grail of theory. I had struggled with Lacan’s Ecrits, making little headway, had made a little more progress with Encore, but devoured Zizek’s Sublime Object of Ideology like a pulp horror novel, suddenly feeling as if I was “getting it”. My axioms during this time were “the universe is the flower of rhetoric” (Lacan, Seminar XX), and “there is nothing outside the text”. In other words, I was a thoroughgoing structuralist semiotician that believed that language diacritically structured everything, and deeply impressed by Lacan’s analysis of the structuring function of language in “The Agency of the Letter” in Ecrits. I believed that it was solely the signifier that introduced difference into the world, that partitioned the world, not anything in the world itself. Hjelmslev was an important influence here as well, as was Levi-Strauss. And, of course, there was Blanchot. Just as Derrida said at the beginning of Of Grammatology, and as Foucault said in his own way in The Order of Things and The Archeology of Knowledge, I believed the world could be read as a fabric of signifiers, as an effect of discourses and Heidegger’s “language as the house of being”. To be sure, there was the Real, that which always escapes the signifier, but as Zizek argued, this was itself an effect of deadlocks inherent to attempts to totalize the universe of signifiers. So what happened? First there was my encounter with DeLanda’s Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy and A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History, both of which brought non-signifying differences and material processes to the fore and led me to read Deleuze in a very different way. I was spitting mad and simultaneously fascinated when I encountered these books. Was he really arguing that ocean currents and wind patterns (non-diacritical, a-signifying differences) played a key role in where European and American cities developed? Preposterous! But he got me reading the historian Braudel and his dry as dirt yet magnificent Capitalism and Civilization. I then encountered Harman’s Prince of Networks, which attuned me– contra Koyre and Bachelard –to the importance of lab equipment and the materials worked with, the experimental setting, etc. (again things that were not of the order of the signifier). Meanwhile, another friend had me reading Havlock (Preface to Plato), Kittler, Ong, McLuhan, and Haraway, all of whom emphasized the materiality of media, its non-signifying dimension, what a monumental difference writing technologies and inscription systems make, and what differences technologies contribute. Later there would be encounters with the “poor-man’s” Braudel in the work of theorists such as Jared Diamond in Guns, Germs, and Steel, who would thoroughly demolish biological and cultural racisms through their analysis of geography or the material features of the environment in which people lived, as well as other historians like William McNiell. I add cultural racism, because text-based/signifier-based theorists are thoroughly unable to explain why certain cultures rose to prominence in the world without appealing to something “superior” in the signifying-systems of those cultures that rose to dominance. We see it, for example, in Zizek’s claim that there’s something superior in the European, Christian legacy that gave them dominance. Theorists like Diamond, McNiell, and Braudel are thoroughly able to demolish this cultural racism, this idea that there was something “special” about the Greeks, by analyzing geography, the prevalence of domesticatible animals and plants, available metals, growing seasons, etc. For them it wasn’t the culture, but the geography; and this based on the axiom that peoples always make maximal use of the resources available to them because, well, folks are smart wherever they live. Again, non-signifying differences, non-rhetorical differences. These were material differences that were more Marxist than the Marxist (Marx himself excepted). So my universe, my universe structured by the fabric of the signifier, was collapsing. I could no longer claim, as Barthes’ claimed in The Fashion System, that language, the signifier, was a “primary modeling system”, i.e., a system that diacritically structured everything else.

#### Masculinity and femininity are hollow signifiers with precisely NO meaning; the AFFIRMATIVE ascribes meanings to these metaphors as soon as they talk of them. This is an assumption grounded in a pre-existing idea of sexual difference; this assumes they naturally complete themselves and retreats into heteronormative essentialisms.

Copjec 1994 Joan Copjec, professor of comparative literature at SUNY Buffalo, Supposing the Subject, 1994, p. 40-41

To return to our discussion of sexual difference, there should now be no confusion about the fact that if the man, unlike the woman, can be claimed to exist, his exsistence, or being, remains inaccessible nevertheless, since it escapes the conceptual or symbolic field in which his existence takes shape. If the differences among men may be disregarded, and one man can be substituted for another because they are manifestations of the same thing, what this thing is is still unknown and must remain so. Correlatively, no man can boast that he embodies this thing — masculinity — any more than any concept can be said to embody being. All pretensions to masculinity are, then, sheer imposture, just as every display of femininity is sheer masquerade. Through his desubstantialization of sex, Lacan has allowed us to perceive the fraudulence at the heart of every claim to positive sexual identity. And he has done this equally for men and for women. Which is not to say that he has treated them symmetrically or conceived of them as complements of each other. A universe of man and women is inconceivable; one category does not complete the other, make up for what is lacking in the other. Were one to believe in the possibility of such a universe, one would believe in the sexual relation, with all its heterosexist implications. But Lacan does not. On the contrary, he shows us exactly why the heterosexist assumption — which may be formulated thus: men love women and women love men — is not a legitimate proposition. For it presupposes that a universal quantifier, an all, modifies both men and women, and this is precisely what the formulas contest. While the universe of women is, as we have argued at length, simply *impossible,* a universe of men is possible only on the condition that we except something from this universe. The universe of men is, then, an illusion fomented by a prohibition: do not include everything in your all! Rather than defining a universe of men that is complemented by a universe of women, Lacan defines man as the prohibition against constructing a universe and woman as the impossibility of doing so. The sexual relation fails for two reasons: it is impossible and it is prohibited. Put these two failures together, you will never come up with a whole.

#### And, one is not born, but rather becomes a woman—Gender does not stem from timeless sexual difference but is premised upon a series of unstable and fluid performances.

Butler 1988 (Judith, Prof. Comp. Lit and Rhetoric UC-Berkeley, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” Theater Journal 41:4)CJQ

When Simone de Beauvoir claims, "one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman," she is appropriating and reinterpreting this doctrine of constituting acts from the phenomenological tradition.' In this sense, gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceede; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time -an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self. This formulation moves the conception of gender off the ground of a substantial model of identity to one that requires a conception of a constituted social temporality. Significantly, if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the appearance of substance is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief. If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or sub- versive repetition of that style.

#### Focus on representations takes out solvency for their alternative

Churchill ’96 Ward Churchill, Keetoowah Cherokee, 25+ year member of the American Indian Movement and prof of Indigenous Studies at University of Colorado Boulder. From a Native Son, 1996 p460

There can be little doubt that matters of linguistic appropriateness and precision are of serious and legitimate concern. By the same token, however, it must be conceded that such preoccupations arrive at a point of diminishing return. After that, they degenerate rapidly into liabilities rather than benefits to comprehension. By now, it should be evident that much of what is mentioned in this article falls under the latter category; it is, by and large, inept, esoteric, and semantically silly, bearing no more relevance in the real world than the question of how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. Ultimately, it is a means to stultify and divide people rather than stimulate and unite them. Nonetheless, such “issues” of word choice have come to dominate dialogue in a significant and apparently growing segment of the Left. Speakers, writers, and organizers or persuasions are drawn, with increasing vociferousness and persistence, into heated confrontations, not about what they’ve said, but about how they’ve said it. Decisions on whether to enter into alliances, or even to work with other parties, seem more and more contingent not upon the prospect of a common agenda, but upon mutual adherence to certain elements of a prescribed vernacular. Mounting quantities of a progressive time, energy, and attention are squandered in perversions of Mao’s principle of criticism/self-criticism – now variously called “process,” “line sharpening,” or even ‘struggle” – in which there occurs a virtually endless stream of talk about how to talk about “the issues.” All of this happens at the direct expense of actually understanding the issues themselves, much less doing something about them. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the dynamic at hand adds up to a pronounced avoidance syndrome, a masturbatory ritual through which an opposition nearly paralyzed by its own deeply felt sense of impotence pretends to be engaged in something “meaningful.” In the end, it reduces to a tragic delusion at best, cynical game playing or intentional disruption at worst. With this said, it is only fair to observe that it’s high time to get off this nonsense, and on with the real work of effecting positive social change.