#### Their fetishization for ‘rethinking’ overwhelms perm solvency—the entire reason they employ these shifty strategies is to critique, critique, critique, and avoid the material difficulties of change. The aff and the perm beget more ‘thinking’—the alt opens this debate to praxis.

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/

If I get worked up about these issues, then this is because I think they’ve created serious lacuna in our political theory and practice. Suppose I focus on norms, for example. Great, I’ve developed a theory of norms and how they contribute to the social fabric. Yet while Kant claims that “ought implies can”, I’m not so sure. You’ve shown that something is unjust or that this would be the reasonable way to proceed. But at the real-material level people are caught in sticky networks that suck them into life in particular ways. They ought, for example, to drive an electric car, but what if it’s not available where they are or what if they can’t afford it? Well they should do whatever they can to get it? But what of their other obligations such as eating, sheltering themselves, taking care of their children, paying their medical bills, etc? It would be so nice if we just had mistaken beliefs or failed to recognize the right norms. Things would be so easy then. But there’s life, there’s the power of things. Sometimes the issues aren’t ones of ideology– and yes, of course, I recognize that ideology is probably involved in making electric cars expensive and hard to obtain, but not for them always –sometimes they’re simply issues of the power of things. And if we treat things as blank screens we’ll have difficulty seeing this and we’ll miss out on other opportunities for engagement. Long ago I used to keep track of my blog. I had a map that showed me where all my visits were coming from about the world. I noticed that the interior portions of the United States were largely dark with no visits and that the coasts and cities had a high volume of traffic. Given that my blog talks about all sorts of things ranging from weather patterns to beavers to mantis shrimps to octopi (I get all these random visits from folks searching for these things), it followed that the absence of traffic from these regions of the country couldn’t be explained in terms of a lack of interest in French and continental philosophy (yes, I recognize that there are also cultural reasons folks from these reasons might shy away from such things). What then was it? I think the answer must be that there’s a lack easy and inexpensive internet access from these portions of the country. Notice also that these regions of the country are also the most conservative regions of the country. Could there be a relation between lack of access and conservatism? I am not suggesting that lack of access is the cause of conservatism and fundamentalism. Clearly there’s a whole history in these regions and an entire set of institutions that exercise a particular inertia. I’m saying that if the only voices you hear are those in your immediate community, how much opportunity is there to think and imagine otherwise? You’re only exposed to the orthodoxy of your community and their sanctions. I am also not saying that if you give people the internet they’ll suddenly become radical leftists. Minimally, however, they’ll have a vector of deterritorialization that allows them to escape the constraints of their local social field. All of this begs the question of who critique is for. If it can’t get to the audience that you want to change, what’s it actually doing? Who’s it addressed to? Sometimes you get the sense that the practice of radical political philosophy and critical theory is a bit like the Underpants Gnomes depicted in South Park: The Underpants Gnomes have a plan for success: collect underwear —>; ? [question mark] —->; profit. This is like our critical theorists: debunk/decipher —>; ? [question mark] —->; revolution! The problem is the question mark. We’re never quite sure what’s supposed to come between collecting the underwear and profit, between debunking and revolution. This suggests an additional form of political engagement. Sometimes the more radical gesture is not to debunk and critique, but to find ways to lay fiber optic cables, roads, plumbing, etc. How, for example, can a people rise up and overturn their fundamentalist dictators if they’re suffering from typhoid and cholera as a result of bad plumbing and waste disposal? How can people overturn capitalism when they have to support families and need places to live and have no alternative? Perhaps, at this point, we need a little less critique and a little more analysis of the things that are keeping people in place, the sticky networks or regimes of attraction. Perhaps we need a little more carpentry. This has real theoretical consequences. For example, we can imagine someone writing about sovereignty, believing they’re making a blow against nationalism by critiquing Schmitt and by discussing Agamben, all the while ignoring media of communication or paths of relation between geographically diverse people as if these things were irrelevant to nationalism occurring. Ever read Anderson on print culture and nationalism? Such a person should. Yet they seem to believe nationalism is merely an incorporeal belief that requires no discussion of material channels or media. They thereby deny themselves of all sorts of modes of intervention, hitching everything on psychology, attachment, and identification. Well done!

#### The reduction of Being to sensory experience or phenomenological moments places responsibility for being squarely in the hands of the observer, replicating the anthropocentric divide between Being and the things which are said to exist.

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When the empiricist arrives at discussions of causality, she thus has no recourse but to discuss claims about causality as claims about constant conjunctions of events or impressions. For the empiricist, a causal claim is no more nor less than a constant conjunction of sensations in experience. Above all, causal claims are not claims about powers that reside in objects, precisely because we have no access to these hidden powers. As Hume puts it, “[t]he bread which I formerly eat, nourished me; that is, a body of such sensible qualities, was, at that time, endowed with such secret powers: But does it follow, that other bread must also nourish me at another time, and that like sensible qualities must always be attended with like secret powers?”[26] What we are given is not the powers of the object—in this case bread—but rather a constant connection of sensations: the visual appearance of the bread followed by the sensations of our painful hunger being satiated. The causal relation is nothing but the mental association of these sensations in the order of time. We are now in a position to better appreciate Bhaskar's point. Were the empiricist thesis correct, there would be no point to the activity of experiment, for causal knowledge would be nothing but constant conjunctions of events presented in sensations. For the empiricist experiment must be unintelligible precisely because the idea of hidden or disguised powers of objects is banished by the empiricist reduction that resolves to treat being only in terms of what is present or given in sensations. Accordingly, elsewhere, in a moment of humor, Bhaskar will write that ...the Humean account depends upon a misidentification of causal laws with their empirical grounds. Notice that as human activity is in general necessary for constant conjunctions, if one identifies causal laws with them then one is logically committed to the absurdity that human beings, in their experimental activity, cause and even change the laws of nature![27] This absurdity would follow from the claim that causal relations are nothing more than constant conjunctions of events or sensation, forbidding any hidden powers in objects, thereby leaving the only site for the emergence of new sensations in the experimenter.