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Effective deliberation requires a forum of discussion that facilitates political agonism and the capacity to substantively engage the topic at hand---in short, a forum of switch side debate where the negative can predict and respond to the aff is the most intellectually effective---this is crucial to affecting productive change in all facets of life---the process in this instance is more important than the substance of their advocacy

They should lose the debate for eliminating our ability to adequately test their ideas. This failure undermines debate’s transformative and intellectual potential

This provides equitable ground that is key to productive inculcation of decision-making and advocacy skills in every and all facets of life---even if their position is contestable that’s distinct from it being valuably debatable---this still provides room for flexibility, creativity, and innovation, but targets the discussion to avoid mere statements of fact---

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Debate is a means of settling differences, so there must be a difference of opinion or a conflict of interest before there can be a debate. If everyone is in agreement on a tact or value or policy, there is no need for debate: the matter can be settled by unanimous consent. Thus, for example, it would be pointless to attempt to debate "Resolved: That two plus two equals four," because there is simply no controversy about this statement. (Controversy is an essential prerequisite of debate. Where there is no clash of ideas, proposals, interests, or expressed positions on issues, there is no debate. In addition, debate cannot produce effective decisions without clear identification of a question or questions to be answered. For example, general argument may occur about the broad topic of illegal immigration. How many illegal immigrants are in the United States? What is the impact of illegal immigration and immigrants on our economy? What is their impact on our communities? Do they commit crimes? Do they take jobs from American workers? Do they pay taxes? Do they require social services? Is it a problem that some do not speak English? Is it the responsibility of employers to discourage illegal immigration by not hiring undocumented workers? Should they have the opportunity- to gain citizenship? Docs illegal immigration pose a security threat to our country? Do illegal immigrants do work that American workers are unwilling to do? Are their rights as workers and as human beings at risk due to their status? Are they abused by employers, law enforcement, housing, and businesses? I low are their families impacted by their status? What is the moral and philosophical obligation of a nation state to maintain its borders? Should we build a wall on the Mexican border, establish a national identification can!, or enforce existing laws against employers? Should we invite immigrants to become U.S. citizens? Surely you can think of many more concerns to be addressed by a conversation about the topic area of illegal immigration. Participation in this "debate" is likely to be emotional and intense. However, it is not likely to be productive or useful without focus on a particular question and identification of a line demarcating sides in the controversy. To be discussed and resolved effectively, controversies must be stated clearly. Vague understanding results in unfocused deliberation and poor decisions, frustration, and emotional distress, as evidenced by the failure of the United States Congress to make progress on the immigration debate during the summer of 2007.

Someone disturbed by the problem of the growing underclass of poorly educated, socially disenfranchised youths might observe, "Public schools are doing a terrible job! They are overcrowded, and many teachers are poorly qualified in their subject areas. Even the best teachers can do little more than struggle to maintain order in their classrooms." That same concerned citizen, facing a complex range of issues, might arrive at an unhelpful decision, such as "We ought to do something about this" or. worse. "It's too complicated a problem to deal with." Groups of concerned citizens worried about the state of public education could join together to express their frustrations, anger, disillusionment, and emotions regarding the schools, but without a focus for their discussions, they could easily agree about the sorry state of education without finding points of clarity or potential solutions. A gripe session would follow. But if a precise question is posed—such as "What can be done to improve public education?"—then a more profitable area of discussion is opened up simply by placing a focus on the search for a concrete solution step. One or more judgments can be phrased in the form of debate propositions, motions for parliamentary debate, or bills for legislative assemblies. The statements "Resolved: That the federal government should implement a program of charter schools in at-risk communities" and "Resolved: That the state of Florida should adopt a school voucher program" more clearly identify specific ways of dealing with educational problems in a manageable form, suitable for debate. They provide specific policies to be investigated and aid discussants in identifying points of difference.

To have a productive debate, which facilitates effective decision making by directing and placing limits on the decision to be made, the basis for argument should be clearly defined. If we merely talk about "homelessness" or "abortion" or "crime'\* or "global warming" we are likely to have an interesting discussion but not to establish profitable basis for argument. For example, the statement "Resolved: That the pen is mightier than the sword" is debatable, yet fails to provide much basis for clear argumentation. If we take this statement to mean that the written word is more effective than physical force for some purposes, we can identify a problem area: the comparative effectiveness of writing or physical force for a specific purpose.

Although we now have a general subject, we have not yet stated a problem. It is still too broad, too loosely worded to promote well-organized argument. What sort of writing are we concerned with—poems, novels, government documents, website development, advertising, or what? What does "effectiveness" mean in this context? What kind of physical force is being compared—fists, dueling swords, bazookas, nuclear weapons, or what? A more specific question might be. "Would a mutual defense treaty or a visit by our fleet be more effective in assuring Liurania of our support in a certain crisis?" The basis for argument could be phrased in a debate proposition such as "Resolved: That the United States should enter into a mutual defense treatv with Laurania." Negative advocates might oppose this proposition by arguing that fleet maneuvers would be a better solution. This is not to say that debates should completely avoid creative interpretation of the controversy by advocates, or that good debates cannot occur over competing interpretations of the controversy; in fact, these sorts of debates may be very engaging. The point is that debate is best facilitated by the guidance provided by focus on a particular point of difference, which will be outlined in the following discussion.

Second, specific policy-questions is crucial for skills development---we control uniqueness: university students already have preconceived and ideological notions about how the world operates---our form of discussion is vital to force engagement with and resolution of competing perspectives to improve social outcomes, however those outcomes may be defined---and, it breaks out of traditional pedagogical frameworks by positing students as agents of decision-making

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These government or quasi-government think tank simulations often provide very similar lessons for high-level players as are learned by students in educational simulations. Government participants learn about the importance of understanding foreign perspectives, the need to practice internal coordination, and the necessity to compromise and coordinate with other governments in negotiations and crises. During the Cold War, political scientist Robert Mandel noted how crisis exercises and war games forced government officials to overcome ‘‘bureaucratic myopia,’’ moving beyond their normal organizational roles and thinking more creatively about how others might react in a crisis or conflict.6 The skills of imagination and the subsequent ability to predict foreign interests and reactions remain critical for real-world foreign policy makers. For example, simulations of the Iranian nuclear crisis\*held in 2009 and 2010 at the Brookings Institution’s Saban Center and at Harvard University’s Belfer Center, and involving former US senior officials and regional experts\*highlighted the dangers of misunderstanding foreign governments’ preferences and misinterpreting their subsequent behavior. In both simulations, the primary criticism of the US negotiating team lay in a failure to predict accurately how other states, both allies and adversaries, would behave in response to US policy initiatives.7

By university age, students often have a pre-defined view of international affairs, and the literature on simulations in education has long emphasized how such exercises force students to challenge their assumptions about how other governments behave and how their own government works.8 Since simulations became more common as a teaching tool in the late 1950s, educational literature has expounded on their benefits, from encouraging engagement by breaking from the typical lecture format, to improving communication skills, to promoting teamwork.9 More broadly, simulations can deepen understanding by asking students to link fact and theory, providing a context for facts while bringing theory into the realm of practice.10 These exercises are particularly valuable in teaching international affairs for many of the same reasons they are useful for policy makers: they force participants to ‘‘grapple with the issues arising from a world in flux.’’11 Simulations have been used successfully to teach students about such disparate topics as European politics, the Kashmir crisis, and US response to the mass killings in Darfur.12 Role-playing exercises certainly encourage students to learn political and technical facts\* but they learn them in a more active style. Rather than sitting in a classroom and merely receiving knowledge, students actively research ‘‘their’’ government’s positions and actively argue, brief, and negotiate with others.13 Facts can change quickly; simulations teach students how to contextualize and act on information.14

Third, switch-side is key---Effective deliberation is crucial to the activation of personal agency and is only possible in a switch-side debate format where debaters divorce themselves from ideology to engage in political contestation

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Totalitarianism and the Competitive Space of Agonism

Arendt is probably most famous for her analysis of totalitarianism (especially her The Origins of Totalitarianism andEichmann in Jerusa¬lem), but the recent attention has been on her criticism of mass culture (The Human Condition). Arendt's main criticism of the current human condition is that the common world of deliberate and joint action is fragmented into **solipsistic and unreflective behavior**. In an especially lovely passage, she says that in mass society people are all **imprisoned in the subjectivity of their own singular experience**, which does not cease to be singular if the same experience is multiplied innumerable times. The end of the common world has come when it is seen only under one aspect and is permitted to present itself in only one perspective. (Human 58)

What Arendt so beautifully describes is that isolation and individualism are not corollaries, and may even be antithetical because obsession with one's own self and the particularities of one's life prevents one from engaging in conscious, deliberate, collective action. Individuality, unlike isolation, depends upon a collective with whom one argues in order to direct the common life. Self-obsession, even (especially?) when coupled with isolation from one' s community is far from apolitical; it has political consequences. Perhaps a better way to put it is that **it is political precisely because it aspires to be apolitical**. This fragmented world in which many people live simultaneously and even similarly but not exactly together is what Arendt calls the "social."

Arendt does not mean that group behavior is impossible in the realm of the social, but that social behavior consists "in some way of isolated individuals, incapable of solidarity or mutuality, who **abdicate their human capacities** and responsibilities to a projected 'they' or 'it,' with **disastrous consequences**, **both for other people and eventually for themselves**" (Pitkin 79). One can behave, butnot act. For someone like Arendt, a German-assimilated Jew, one of the most frightening aspects of the Holocaust was the ease with which a **people who had not been extraordinarily anti-Semitic could be put to work industriously and efficiently on the genocide of the Jews**. And what was striking about the perpetrators of the genocide, ranging from minor functionaries who facilitated the murder transports up to major figures on trial at Nuremberg, was their **constant and apparently sincere insistence that they were not responsible**. For Arendt, this was not a peculiarity of the German people, but of the current human and heavily bureaucratic condition of twentieth-century culture: we do not consciously choose to engage in life's activities; we drift into them, or we do them out of a desire to conform. Even while we do them, we do not acknowledge an active, willed choice to do them; instead, we attribute our behavior to necessity, and we perceive ourselves as determined—determined by circumstance, by accident, by what "they" tell us to do. We do something from within the anonymity of a mob that we would never do as an individual; we do things for which we will not take responsibility. Yet, whether or not people acknowledge responsibil¬ity for the consequences of their actions, those consequences exist. Refusing to accept responsibility can even make those consequences worse, in that the people who enact the actions in question, because they do not admit their own agency, cannot be persuaded to stop those actions. They are simply doing their jobs. In a **totalitarian system**, however, everyone is simply doing his or her job; **there never seems to be anyone who can explain, defend, and change the policies**. Thus, it is, as Arendt says, rule by nobody.

It is illustrative to contrast Arendt's attitude toward discourse to Habermas'. While both are critical of modern bureaucratic and totalitar¬ian systems, Arendt's solution is the **playful and competitive space of agonism**; it is not the rational-critical public sphere. The "actual content of political life" is "the joy and the gratification that arise out of being in company with our peers, out of acting together and appearing in public, out of inserting ourselves into the world by word and deed, thus acquiring and sustaining our personal identity and beginning something entirely new" ("Truth" 263). According to Seyla Benhabib, Arendt's public realm emphasizes the **assumption of competition,** and it "represents that space of appearances in which moral and political greatness, heroism, and preeminence are revealed, displayed, shared with others. This is a competitive space in which one competes for recognition, precedence, and acclaim" (78). These qualities are displayed, but not entirely for purposes of acclamation; they are **not displays of one's self, but of ideas and arguments**, **of one's thought**. When Arendt discusses Socrates' thinking in public, she emphasizes his performance: "He performed in the marketplace the way the flute-player performed at a banquet. It is sheer performance, sheer activity"; nevertheless, it was thinking: "What he actually did was to make public, in discourse, the thinking process" {Lectures 37). Pitkin summarizes this point: "Arendt says that the heroism associated with politics is not the mythical machismo of ancient Greece but something more like the existential leap into action and public exposure" (175-76). Just as it is not machismo, although it does have considerable ego involved, so it is not instrumental rationality; Arendt's discussion of the kinds of discourse involved in public action include myths, stories, and personal narratives.

Furthermore, the competition is not ruthless; it does not imply a willingness to triumph at all costs. Instead, it involves something like having such a passion for ideas and politics that one is willing to take risks. One tries to **articulate the best argument, propose the best policy, design the best laws, make the best response**. This is a risk in that one might lose; advancing an argument means that **one must be open to the criticisms others will make of it**. The situation is agonistic **not because the participants manufacture or seek conflict**, but because **conflict is a necessary consequence of difference**. This attitude is reminiscent of Kenneth Burke, who did not try to find a language free of domination but who instead theorized a way that the very tendency toward hierarchy in language might be used against itself (for more on this argument, see Kastely). Similarly, Arendt does not propose a public realm of neutral, rational beings who escape differences to live in the discourse of universals; she envisions one of different people who argue with passion, vehemence, and integrity.

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Eichmann perfectly exemplified what Arendt famously called the "banal¬ity of evil" but that might be better thought of as the bureaucratization of evil (or, as a friend once aptly put it, the evil of banality). That is, he was able to **engage in mass murder** **because he was able not to think about it,** especially **not from the perspective of the victims**, and he was able to **exempt himself from personal responsibility** by telling himself (and anyone else who would listen) that he was just following orders. It was the bureaucratic system that enabled him to do both. He was not exactly passive; he was, on the contrary, very aggressive in trying to do his duty. He behaved with the "ruthless, competitive exploitation" and "inauthen-tic, self-disparaging conformism" that characterizes those who people totalitarian systems (Pitkin 87).

Arendt's theorizing of totalitarianism has been justly noted as one of her strongest contributions to philosophy. She saw that a situation like Nazi Germany is different from the conventional understanding of a tyranny. Pitkin writes,

Totalitarianism cannot be understood, like earlier forms of domination, as the ruthless exploitation of some people by others, whether the motive be selfish calculation, irrational passion, or devotion to some cause. Understanding totalitarianism's essential nature requires solving the **central mystery of the holocaust**—the objectively useless and indeed dysfunctional, **fanatical pursuit of a purely ideological policy**, a pointless process to which the people enacting it have fallen captive. (87)

Totalitarianism is closely connected to bureaucracy; it is oppression by rules, rather than by people who have willfully chosen to establish certain rules. It is the triumph of the social.

Critics (both friendly and hostile) have paid considerable attention to Arendt's category of the "social," largely because, despite spending so much time on the notion, Arendt remains vague on certain aspects of it. Pitkin appropriately compares Arendt's concept of the social to the Blob, the type of monster that figured in so many post-war horror movies. That Blob was "an evil monster from outer space, entirely external to and separate from us [that] had fallen upon us intent on debilitating, absorb¬ing, and ultimately destroying us, gobbling up our distinct individuality and turning us into robots that mechanically serve its purposes" (4).

Pitkin is critical of this version of the "social" and suggests that Arendt meant (or perhaps should have meant) something much more complicated. The simplistic version of the social-as-Blob can itself be an instance of Blob thinking; Pitkin's criticism is that Arendt talks at times as though the social comes from outside of us and has fallen upon us, turning us into robots. Yet, Arendt's major criticism of the social is that it involves seeing ourselves as victimized by something that comes from outside our own behavior. I agree with Pitkin that Arendt's most powerful descriptions of the social (and the other concepts similar to it, such as her discussion of totalitarianism, imperialism, Eichmann, and parvenus) emphasize that these processes are not entirely out of our control but that they happen to us when, and because, we keep refusing to make active choices. We create the social through negligence. It is not the sort of force in a Sorcerer's Apprentice, which once let loose cannot be stopped; on the contrary, it continues to exist because we structure our world to reward social behavior. Pitkin writes, "From childhood on, in virtually all our institutions, we reward euphemism, salesmanship, slo¬gans, and we punish and suppress truth-telling, originality, thoughtful-ness. So we continually cultivate ways of (not) thinking that induce the social" (274). I want to emphasize this point, as it is important for thinking about criticisms of some forms of the social construction of knowledge: **denying our own agency is what enables the social to thrive**. To put it another way, **theories of powerlessness are self-fulfilling prophecies**.

Arendt grants that there are people who willed the Holocaust, but she insists that totalitarian systems result not so much from the Hitlers or Stalins as from the bureaucrats who may or may not agree with the established ideology but who enforce the rules for no stronger motive than a desire to avoid trouble with their superiors (see Eichmann and Life). They do not think about what they do. One might prevent such occurrences—or, at least, resist the modern tendency toward totalitarian¬ism—by thought: "critical thought is in principle anti-authoritarian" (Lectures 38).

By "thought" Arendt does not mean eremitic contemplation; in fact, she has great contempt for what she calls "professional thinkers," refusing herself to become a philosopher or to call her work philosophy. Young-Bruehl, Benhabib, and Pitkin have each said that Heidegger represented just such a professional thinker for Arendt, and his embrace of Nazism epitomized the genuine dangers such "thinking" can pose (see Arendt's "Heidegger"). "Thinking" is not typified by the isolated con¬templation of philosophers; it requires the arguments of others and close attention to the truth. It is easy to overstate either part of that harmony. One must consider carefully the arguments and viewpoints of others:

Political thought is representative. I form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent; that is, I represent them. This process of representation does not blindly adopt the actual views of those who stand somewhere else, and hence look upon the world from a different perspective; this is a question neither of empathy, as though I tried to be or to feel like somebody else, nor of counting noses and joining a majority but of being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not. The more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am ponder¬ing a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for represen¬tative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinion. ("Truth" 241)

There are two points to emphasize in this wonderful passage. First, one does not get these standpoints in one's mind through imagining them, but through listening to them; thus, good thinking requires that one hear the arguments of other people. Hence, as Arendt says, "**critical thinking**, while still a solitary business, does not cut itself off from' all others.'" Thinking is, in this view, **necessarily public discourse**: critical thinking is possible "**only where the standpoints of all others are open to inspection**" (Lectures 43). Yet, it is not a discourse in which one simply announces one's stance; **participants are interlocutors** and not just speakers; they must listen. Unlike many current versions of public discourse, this view presumes that speech matters. It is not asymmetric manipulation of others, nor merely an economic exchange; it must **be a world into which one enters and by which one might be changed.**

Second, passages like the above make some readers think that Arendt puts too much faith in discourse and too little in truth (see Habermas). But Arendt is no crude relativist; she believes in truth, and she believes that there are facts that can be more or less distorted. She does not believe that reality is constructed by discourse, or that truth is indistinguishable from falsehood. She insists tha^ the truth has a different pull on us and, consequently, that it has a difficult place in the world of the political. Facts are different from falsehood because, while they can be distorted or denied, especially when they are inconvenient for the powerful, they also have a certain positive force that falsehood lacks: "Truth, though powerless and always defe ated in a head-on clash with the powers that be, possesses a strength of its own: whatever those in power may contrive, they are unable to discover or invent a viable substitute for it. Persuasion and violence can destroy truth, but they cannot replace it" ("Truth" 259).

Facts have a strangely resilient quality partially because a lie "tears, as it were, a hole in the fabric of factuality. As every historian knows, one can spot a lie by noticing incongruities, holes, or the j unctures of patched-up places" ("Truth" 253). While she is sometimes discouraging about our ability to see the tears in the fabric, citing the capacity of totalitarian governments to create the whole cloth (see "Truth" 252-54), she is also sometimes optimistic. InEichmann in Jerusalem, she repeats the story of Anton Schmidt—a man who saved the lives of Jews—and concludes that such stories cannot be silenced (230-32). For facts to exert power in the common world, however, these stories must be told. Rational truth (such as principles of mathematics) might be perceptible and demonstrable through individual contemplation, but "factual truth, on the contrary, is always related to other people: it concerns events and circumstances in which many are involved; it is established by witnesses and depends upon testimony; it exists only to the extent that it is spoken about, even if it occurs in the domain of privacy. It is political by nature" (23 8). Arendt is neither a positivist who posits an autonomous individual who can correctly perceive truth, nor a relativist who positively asserts the inherent relativism of all perception. Her description of how truth functions does not fall anywhere in the three-part expeditio so prevalent in bothrhetoric and philosophy: it is not expressivist, positivist, or social constructivist. Good thinking depends upon good public argument, and good public argument depends upon access to facts: "Freedom of opinion is a farce unless factual information is guaranteed" (238).

The sort of thinking that Arendt propounds takes the form of action only when it is public argument, and, as such, it is particularly precious: "For if no other test but the experience of being active, no other measure but the extent of sheer activity were to be applied to the various activities within the vita activa, it might well be that thinking as such would surpass them all" (Human 325). Arendt insists that it is "the same general rule— Do not contradict yourself (not your self but your thinking ego)—that determines both thinking and acting" (Lectures 3 7). In place of the mildly resentful conformism that fuels totalitarianism, Arendt proposes what Pitkin calls "a tough-minded, open-eyed readiness to perceive and judge reality for oneself, in terms of concrete experience and independent, critical theorizing" (274). **The paradoxical nature of agonism** (that it must involve both individuality and commonality) makes it difficult to maintain, as the temptation is great either to think one's own thoughts without reference to anyone else or to let others do one's thinking.

Arendt's Polemical Agonism

As I said, agonism does have its advocates within rhetoric—Burke, Ong, Sloane, Gage, and Jarratt, for instance—but while each of these theorists proposes a form of conflictual argument, not one of these is as adversarial as Arendt's. Agonism can emphasize persuasion, as does John Gage's textbook The Shape of Reason or William Brandt et al.'s The Craft of Writing. That is, the goal of the argument is to identify the disagreement and then construct a text that gains the assent of the audience. This is not the same as what Gage (citing Thomas Conley) calls "asymmetrical theories of rhetoric": theories that "presuppose an active speaker and a passive audience, a speaker whose rhetorical task is therefore to do something to that audience" ("Reasoned" 6). Asymmetric rhetoric is not and cannot be agonistic. Persuasive agonism still **values conflict, disagreement, and equality** among interlocutors, but it **has the goal of reaching agreement,** as when Gage says that the process of argument should enable one's reasons to be "understood and believed" by others (Shape 5; emphasis added).

Arendt's version is what one might call polemical agonism: it puts less emphasis on gaining assent, and it is exemplified both in Arendt's own writing and in Donald Lazere's "Ground Rules for Polemicists" and "Teaching the Political Conflicts." Both forms of agonism (persuasive and polemical) require substantive debate at two points in a long and recursive process. First, one engages in debate in order to invent one's argument; even silent thinking is a "dialogue of myself with myself (Lectures 40). The difference between the two approaches to agonism is clearest when one presents an argument to an audience assumed to be an opposition. In persuasive agonism, one plays down conflict and moves through reasons to try to persuade one's audience. In polemical agonism, however, one's intention is not necessarily to prove one's case, but to make public one' s thought in order to test it. In this way, communicability serves the same function in philosophy that replicability serves in the sciences; it **is how one tests the validity of one's thought**. In persuasive agonism, success is achieved through persuasion; in polemical agonism, success may be marked through the quality of subsequent controversy.

Arendt quotes from a letter Kant wrote on this point:

You know that I do not approach reasonable objections with the intention merely of refuting them, but that in thinking them over I always weave them into my judgments, and afford them the opportunity of overturning all my most cherished beliefs. I entertain the hope that by thus viewing my judgments impartially from the standpoint of others some third view that will improve upon my previous insight may be obtainable. {Lectures 42)

Kant's use of "impartial" here is interesting: he is not describing a stance that is free of all perspective; it is impartial only in the sense that it is not his own view. This is the same way that Arendt uses the term; she does not advocate any kind of positivistic rationality, but instead a "universal interdependence" ("Truth" 242). She does not place the origin of the "disinterested pursuit of truth" in science, but at "the moment when Homer chose to sing the deeds of the Trojans no less than those of the Achaeans, and to praise the glory of Hector, the foe and the defeated man, no less than the glory of Achilles, the hero of his kinfolk" ("Truth" 262¬63). It is useful to note that Arendt tends not to use the term "universal," opting more often for "common," by which she means both what is shared and what is ordinary, a usage that evades many of the problems associated with universalism while preserving its virtues (for a brief butprovocative application of Arendt's notion of common, see Hauser 100-03).

In polemical agonism, there is a sense in which one' s main goal is not to persuade one's readers; persuading one's readers, if this means that they fail to see errors and flaws in one' s argument, might actually be a sort of failure. It means that one wishes to put forward an argument that makes clear what one's stance is and why one holds it, but with the intention of provoking critique and counterargument. Arendt describes Kant's "hope" for his writings not that the number of people who agree with him would increase but "that the circle of his examiners would gradually be en¬larged" {Lectures 39); he wanted interlocutors, not acolytes.

This is not consensus-based argument, nor is it what is sometimes called "consociational argument," nor is this argument as mediation or conflict resolution. Arendt (and her commentators) use the term "fight," and they mean it. When Arendt describes the values that are necessary in our world, she says, "They are a sense of honor, desire for fame and glory, the spirit of fighting without hatred and 'without the spirit of revenge,' and indifference to material advantages" {Crises 167). Pitkin summarizes Arendt's argument: "Free citizenship presupposes the ability to fight— openly, seriously, with commitment, and about things that really mat¬ter—without fanaticism, without seeking to exterminate one's oppo¬nents" (266). My point here is two-fold: first, there is not a simple binary opposition between persuasive discourse and eristic discourse, the conflictual versus the collaborative, or argument as opposed to debate.

Second, while polemical agonismrequires diversity among interlocutors, and thus seems an extraordinarily appropriate notion, and while it may be a useful corrective to too much emphasis on persuasion, it seems to me that polemical agonism could easily slide into the kind of wrangling that is simply frustrating. Arendt does not describe just how one is to keep the conflict useful. Although she rejects the notion that politics is "no more than a battlefield of partial, conflicting interests, where nothing countfs] but pleasure and profit, partisanship, and the lust for dominion," she does not say exactly how we are to know when we are engaging in the existential leap of argument versus when we are lusting for dominion ("Truth" 263).

Like other proponents of agonism, Arendt argues that rhetoric does **not lead individuals or communities to ultimate Truth**; **it leads to decisions that will necessarily have to be reconsidered.** Even Arendt, who tends to express a greater faith than many agonists (such as Burke, Sloane, or Kastely) in the ability of individuals to perceive truth, insists that self-deception is always a danger, so public discourse is necessary as a form of testing (see especially Lectures and "Truth"). She remarks that it is difficult to think beyond one's self-interest and that "nothing, indeed, is more common, even among highly sophisticated people, than the blind obstinacy that becomes manifest in lack of imagination and failure to judge" ("Truth" 242).

Agonism demands that one **simultaneously trust and doubt one' s own perceptions**, **rely on one's own judgment and consider the judgments of others, think for oneself and imagine how others think.** The question remains whether this is a kind of thought in which everyone can engage. Is the agonistic public sphere (whether political, academic, or scientific) only available to the few? Benhabib puts this criticism in the form of a question: "That is, is the 'recovery of the public space' under conditions of modernity necessarily an elitist and antidemocratic project that can hardly be reconciled with the demand for universal political emancipa¬tion and the universal extension of citizenship rights that have accompa¬nied modernity since the American and French Revolutions?" (75). This is an especially troubling question not only because Arendt's examples of agonistic rhetoric are from elitist cultures, but also because of com¬ments she makes, such as this one from The Human Condition: "As a living experience, thought has always been assumed, perhaps wrongly, to be known only to the few. It may not be presumptuous to believe that these few have not become fewer in our time" {Human 324).

Yet, there are **important positive political consequences of agonism.**

Arendt' s own promotion of the agonistic sphere helps to explain how **the system could be actively moral**. It is not an overstatement to say that a central theme in Arendt's work is the **evil of conformity**—the fact that the modern bureaucratic state **makes possible extraordinary evil** carried out by people who do not even have any ill will toward their victims. It does so by "imposing innumerable and various rules, all of which tend to 'normalize' its members, to make them behave, to exclude spontaneous action or outstanding achievement" (Human 40). It keeps people from thinking, and it keeps them behaving. The agonistic model's celebration of achievement and verbal skill **undermines the political force of conformity**, so it is **a force against the bureaucratizing of evil.** If people think for themselves, **they will resist dogma**; if people think of themselves as one of many, they will empathize; if people can do both, **they will resist totalitarianism**. And if they talk about what they see, tell their stories, argue about their perceptions, and listen to one another—that is, engage in rhetoric—then they are engaging in antitotalitarian action.

In post-Ramistic rhetoric, it is a convention to have a thesis, and one might well wonder just what mine is—whether I am arguing for or against Arendt's agonism. Arendt does not lay out a pedagogy for us to follow (although one might argue that, if she had, it would lookmuch like the one Lazere describes in "Teaching"), so I am not claiming that greater attention to Arendt would untangle various pedagogical problems that teachers of writing face. Nor am I claiming that applying Arendt's views will resolve theoretical arguments that occupy scholarly journals. I am saying, on the one hand, that Arendt's connection of argument and thinking, as well as her perception that both serve to thwart totalitarian¬ism, suggest that agonal rhetoric (despite the current preference for collaborative rhetoric) is the **best discourse for a diverse and inclusive public sphere**. On the other hand, Arendt's advocacy of agonal rhetoric is troubling (and, given her own admiration for Kant, this may be intentional), especially in regard to its potential elitism, masculinism, failure to describe just how to keep argument from collapsing into wrangling, and apparently cheerful acceptance of hierarchy. Even with these flaws, Arendt describes something we would do well to consider thoughtfully: a fact-based but not positivist, communally grounded but not relativist, adversarial but not violent, independent but not expressivist rhetoric.

Effective decision-making outweighs---

Key to social improvements in every and all facets of life

Steinberg & Freeley 8 \*Austin J. Freeley is a Boston based attorney who focuses on criminal, personal injury and civil rights law, AND \*\*David L. Steinberg , Lecturer of Communication Studies @ U Miami, Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making pp9-10

If we assume it to be possible without recourse to violence to reach agreement on all the problems implied in the employment of the idea of justice we are granting the possibility of formulating an ideal of man and society, valid for all beings endowed with reason and accepted by what we have called elsewhere the universal audience.14

I think that the only discursive methods available to us stem from techniques that are not demonstrative—that is, conclusive and rational in the narrow sense of the term—but from argumentative techniques which are not conclusive but which may tend to demonstrate the reasonable character of the conceptions put forward. It is this recourse to the rational and reasonable for the realization of the ideal of universal communion that characterizes the age-long endeavor of all philosophies in their aspiration for a city of man in which violence may progressively give way to wisdom.13

Whenever an individual controls the dimensions of" a problem, he or she can solve the problem through a personal decision. For example, if the problem is whether to go to the basketball game tonight, if tickets are not too expensive and if transportation is available, the decision can be made individually. But if a friend's car is needed to get to the game, then that person's decision to furnish the transportation must be obtained.

Complex problems, too, are subject to individual decision making. American business offers many examples of small companies that grew into major corporations while still under the individual control of the founder. Some computer companies that began in the 1970s as one-person operations burgeoned into multimillion-dollar corporations with the original inventor still making all the major decisions. And some of the multibillion-dollar leveraged buyouts of the 1980s were put together by daring—some would say greedy—financiers who made the day-to-day and even hour-to-hour decisions individually.

When President George H. W. Bush launched Operation Desert Storm, when President Bill Clinton sent troops into Somalia and Haiti and authorized Operation Desert Fox, and when President George W. Bush authorized Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom in Iraq, they each used different methods of decision making, but in each case the ultimate decision was an individual one. In fact, many government decisions can be made only by the president. As Walter Lippmann pointed out, debate is the only satisfactory way the exact issues can be decided:

A president, whoever he is, has to find a way of understanding the novel and changing issues which he must, under the Constitution, decide. Broadly speaking ... the president has two ways of making up his mind. The one is to turn to his subordinates—to his chiefs of staff and his cabinet officers and undersecretaries and the like—and to direct them to argue out the issues and to bring him an agreed decision…

The other way is to sit like a judge at a hearing where the issues to be decided are debated. After he has heard the debate, after he has examined the evidence, after he has heard the debaters cross-examine one another, after he has questioned them himself he makes his decision…

It is a much harder method in that it subjects the president to the stress of feeling the full impact of conflicting views, and then to the strain of making his decision, fully aware of how momentous it Is. But there is no other satisfactory way by which momentous and complex issues can be decided.16

John F. Kennedy used Cabinet sessions and National Security Council meetings to provide debate to illuminate diverse points of view, expose errors, and challenge assumptions before he reached decisions.17 As he gained experience in office, he placed greater emphasis on debate. One historian points out: "One reason for the difference between the Bay of Pigs and the missile crisis was that [the Bay of Pig\*] fiasco instructed Kennedy in the importance of uninhibited debate in advance of major decision."18 All presidents, to varying degrees, encourage debate among their advisors.

We may never be called on to render the final decision on great issues of national policy, but we are constantly concerned with decisions important to ourselves for which debate can be applied in similar ways. That is, this debate may take place in our minds as we weigh the pros and cons of the problem, or we may arrange for others to debate the problem for us. Because we all are increasingly involved in the decisions of the campus, community, and society in general, it is in our intelligent self-interest to reach these decisions through reasoned debate.

Only portable skill---means our framework turns case

Steinberg & Freeley 8 \*Austin J. Freeley is a Boston based attorney who focuses on criminal, personal injury and civil rights law, AND \*\*David L. Steinberg , Lecturer of Communication Studies @ U Miami, Argumentation and Debate: Critical Thinking for Reasoned Decision Making pp9-10

After several days of intense debate, first the United States House of Representatives and then the U.S. Senate voted to authorize President George W. Bush to attack Iraq if Saddam Hussein refused to give up weapons of mass destruction as required by United Nations's resolutions. Debate about a possible military\* action against Iraq continued in various governmental bodies and in the public for six months, until President Bush ordered an attack on Baghdad, beginning Operation Iraqi Freedom, the military campaign against the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. He did so despite the unwillingness of the U.N. Security Council to support the military action, and in the face of significant international opposition.

Meanwhile, and perhaps equally difficult for the parties involved, a young couple deliberated over whether they should purchase a large home to accommodate their growing family or should sacrifice living space to reside in an area with better public schools; elsewhere a college sophomore reconsidered his major and a senior her choice of law school, graduate school, or a job. Each of these\* situations called for decisions to be made. Each decision maker worked hard to make well-reasoned decisions.

Decision making is a thoughtful process of choosing among a variety of options for acting or thinking. It requires that the decider make a choice. Life demands decision making. We make countless individual decisions every day. To make some of those decisions, we work hard to employ care and consideration; others seem to just happen. Couples, families, groups of friends, and coworkers come together to make choices, and decision-making homes from committees to juries to the U.S. Congress and the United Nations make decisions that impact us all. Every profession requires effective and ethical decision making, as do our school, community, and social organizations.

We all make many decisions even- day. To refinance or sell one's home, to buy a high-performance SUV or an economical hybrid car. what major to select, what to have for dinner, what candidate CO vote for. paper or plastic, all present lis with choices. Should the president deal with an international crisis through military invasion or diplomacy? How should the U.S. Congress act to address illegal immigration?

Is the defendant guilty as accused? Tlie Daily Show or the ball game? And upon what information should I rely to make my decision? Certainly some of these decisions are more consequential than others. Which amendment to vote for, what television program to watch, what course to take, which phone plan to purchase, and which diet to pursue all present unique challenges. At our best, we seek out research and data to inform our decisions. Yet even the choice of which information to attend to requires decision making. In 2006, TIMI: magazine named YOU its "Person of the Year." Congratulations! Its selection was based on the participation not of ''great men" in the creation of history, but rather on the contributions of a community of anonymous participants in the evolution of information. Through blogs. online networking. You Tube. Facebook, MySpace, Wikipedia, and many other "wikis," knowledge and "truth" are created from the bottom up, bypassing the authoritarian control of newspeople. academics, and publishers. We have access to infinite quantities of information, but how do we sort through it and select the best information for our needs?

The ability of every decision maker to make good, reasoned, and ethical decisions relies heavily upon their ability to think critically. Critical thinking enables one to break argumentation down to its component parts in order to evaluate its relative validity and strength. Critical thinkers are better users of information, as well as better advocates.

Colleges and universities expect their students to develop their critical thinking skills and may require students to take designated courses to that end. The importance and value of such study is widely recognized.

Much of the most significant communication of our lives is conducted in the form of debates. These may take place in intrapersonal communications, in which we weigh the pros and cons of an important decision in our own minds, or they may take place in interpersonal communications, in which we listen to arguments intended to influence our decision or participate in exchanges to influence the decisions of others.

Our success or failure in life is largely determined by our ability to make wise decisions for ourselves and to influence the decisions of others in ways that are beneficial to us. Much of our significant, purposeful activity is concerned with making decisions. Whether to join a campus organization, go to graduate school, accept a job oiler, buy a car or house, move to another city, invest in a certain stock, or vote for Garcia—these are just a few of the thousands of decisions we may have to make. Often, intelligent self-interest or a sense of responsibility will require us to win the support of others. We may want a scholarship or a particular job for ourselves, a customer for out product, or a vote for our favored political candidate.

### Off

**The OTHER is EVERYTHING, from organisms to the artificial, we owe ourselves to it - letting beings-be is the only moral imperative.**

**Introna 10** (LUCAS, PROFESSOR OF ORGANIZATION, TECHNOLOGY, AND ETHICS @ LANCASTER UNIVERSITY, AI & SOC, 2010, VOL. 25, “THE ‘MEASURE OF A MAN’ AND THE ETHOS OF HOSPITALITY: TOWARDS AN ETHICAL DWELLING WITH TECHNOLOGY,” PG. 93-102)

Instead of creating value systems in our own self-image, the absolute otherness of every Other should be the only moral imperative, so argues Levinas and Derrida. We need an ethics of the artificial that is beyond the self-identical of human beings. Such an ethics beyond anthropocentric metaphysics need as its ‘ground’, not a system for comparison, but rather a recognition of the impossibility of any comparison—every comparison is already violent in its attempt to render equal what could never be equal (Levinas 1991[1974]). How might we encounter the other, ethically, in its otherness? This is what I will no turn to. 3 Hospitality as the ethics of a community that have nothing in common ‘‘Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others. Insofar as it has to do with the ethos... ethics is hospitality; ethics is entirely coextensive with the experience of hospitality, whichever way one expands or limits that.’’—Jacques Derrida, On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness, p. 16–17. The fundamental problem for the android Data is that the question of the ethical, its imperative, is already colonised by humans. In this ethical landscape, it becomes impossible for Data to state his case unless it is made in human terms—terms such as ‘machine’, ‘property’, ‘sentience’, etc. It is us humans who are making the decisions about the validity, or not, of any criteria or category for establishing the ethical significance of a being. It is Data— and by extension all non-humans—that is on trial, not we humans. Our moral worth is taken for granted. As such we are the measure. For example we often take ‘sentience’ as criteria for considering moral significance or worth because we argue that it is a necessary condition for the feeling of pain (Singer 1977). Why should pain be a criterion for moral significance? Is it because we can feel pain? Are not all our often-suggested criteria such as originality, sentience, rationality, autonomy, and so forth, not somehow always already based on that which we humans by necessity comply with? Is not the essential criterion for moral worthiness (in most ethical thought) a being in our image, like us? Is our ethics not always an ethics of those with whom we have something in common? Obviously one can legitimately ask whether it is at all possible for us humans to escape our own moral prejudices—especially if we realise the intimate link between ethics and politics. Furthermore, it seems that every attempt one might have to define common inclusive ethical categories or criteria for all things will fail, as it already violates every entity by exactly denying that which is most significant—its radical otherness. Indeed, as was suggested, most attempts (even some radical environmental ethics) are mostly informed by the assumption that at some level we can indeed compare the incomparable—and, ultimately that the only legitimate reference point for such comparison is that which is in the image of the human Other. But what about the non-human Other, the inanimate, the artificial? What about the community of those with whom we have nothing in common? 2 There has been many attempts to define more inclusive ethical categories and values such as a biocentric ethics (Goodpaster 1978; Singer 1977), an ecocentric ethics (Leopold 1966; Naess 1995) or even an infocentric ethics by Floridi (2003). The non-human (inanimate) other One might suggest that, for us human beings, a wholly Other, that is indeed wholly Other, is the inanimate Other. In many respects, the destitute face of the human Other, in the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas for example, is already in some sense a reflection of the human face opposite it. We can indeed substitute ourselves for the Other (become her hostage) because we can imagine—at least in some vague sense—what it must be like for the human Other to suffer violence because we suffer violence. It is possible for us to substitute ‘us for them’ because it could have been my friend, my child, my partner, etc.). As Husserl (1970/1929) argues, in his Cartesian Mediations, through empathy, ‘‘we project ourselves into the alien cultural community and its culture’’ (p. 135) in which the ‘‘the Other’’ exists ‘‘phenomenologically [as] a ‘modification’ of myself’’ (p. 115). Through empathy, our egos constitutes a ‘‘single universal community’’ of human intersubjectivity (p. 140)—a community with a common unity. As human beings, that also encounter ourselves as Other, we know that we always exceed and overflow the caricatures that the intentionality of consciousness endeavours to impose on us, that we are always infinitely more (or radically other) than any and all such caricatures. It is this infinity that Levinas points to when he claims ethics as ‘first philosophy.’ What about the inanimate Other? In his book Technology and Lifeworld Ihde (1990) argues for an extension of Levinas’ notion of alterity (or quasi-otherness) to inanimate things.3 He argues that the ‘religious object’ ‘‘does not simply ‘represent’ some absent power but is endowed with the sacred. Its aura of sacredness is spatially and temporally present within the range of its efficacy’’ (98). Ihde argues, however, that this quasi-otherness always remains in the domain of human invention. In other words, it is still within the realm of that which we humans bring to it—even if it is unintentional or not for instrumental purposes, hence his designation of the object as quasi-other. One might say it is plausible to see the religious object as an Other in some way (even if it is quasi-other) but what about everyday objects such as the table? I want to suggest with Harman (2002, 2005) that the table (and all other inanimate objects) are also infinitely other, always more than that which human intentionality brings to it. In Tool-Being Harman (2002) argues that even the table, in the fullness of its being, is infinite. Although the intentional acts of consciousness transform it by necessity into a caricature (into some form of present-at-hand being), such acts do not, and never can, exhaust it. As Harman (2002) suggests: ‘‘However, deeply we meditate on the table’s act of supporting solid weights, however, tenaciously we monitor its presence, any insight that is yielded will always be something quite distinct from this act [of being] itself’’ (22)—what he calls its tool-being. The table, here before me, is always more than all the perspectives, levels or layers that we can enumerate, more than all the uses we can put it to, more than all possible perspectives, levels, layers or uses. Harman (2002, 2005) argues that any and all possible relations between humans and things will inevitably fail to grasp them as they are; they are, in the fullness of their being, irreducible to any and all of these relations.4 In short: they are, in the fullness of their being, infinite and wholly Other. Indeed, as was suggested above, one might claim that they are in a sense more Other (if one can say this at all) than the human Other since we can never in any sense put ourselves ‘in their shoes,’ as it were. Thus, if the infinitely otherness of the Other is what compels us—puts our own right to existence into question, as Levinas argues—then we have no basis for excluding the inanimate Other from the kingdom of Others—even if Levinas did not arrive at this conclusion. His Other is always the humanistic, or ultimately, the theistic Other. This paper endeavours to go beyond this boundary, to forsake all boundaries, to enter into a community that have nothing in common (Lingis 1994). Is such a community possible?

**They start from the wrong standpoint - prefer out animalistic or object oriented standpoint, only this method can create counter-narratives to challenge the root cause of violence -speciesism.**

Best 9 - UT El Paso philosophy professor (Steven, “The Rise of Critical Animal Studies: Putting Theory into Action and Animal Liberation into Higher Education “, Journal for Critical Animal Studies, Volume VII, Issue 1, 2009, http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/JCAS/Journal\_Articles\_download/issue\_9/JCAS%20VII%20Issue%201%20MAY%20ISSUE%20The%20Rise%20of%20Critical%20Animal%20Studies%20pgs%209-52.pdf,)

Postmodern critiques have been hugely influential in many theoretical strains of animal studies, but theorists could not employ the insights of postmodernism without overcoming their limitations. This is crucial for two reasons. First, deconstructionists and social constructionists are typically speciesists and dogmatic humanists (even those who deconstruct “humanism”!) who rarely challenge the human/animal dichotomy and analyze how it is used to advance false views of all animal, human and nonhuman. Second, they fail to see that the human/animal opposition underpins oppositions between reason/emotions, thought/body, men/women, white/black, and Western/non-Western. Yet as noted by theorists (e.g., Keith Thomas, Jim Mason, and Charles Patterson) 9 with broader optics and more inclusive theories than humanism, speciesism and animal domestication provided the conceptual template and social practice whereby humans begin to clearly distinguish between “human rationality” and “animal irrationality.” 10 Animals – defined as “brute beasts” lacking “rationality” – thereby provided the moral basement into which one could eject women, people of color, and other humans deemed to be subhuman or deficient in (Western male) “humanity.” Whereas nearly all histories, even so-called “radical” narratives, have been written from the human standpoint, a growing number of theorists have broken free of the speciesist straightjacket to examine history and society from the standpoint of (nonhuman) animals. This approach, as I define it, considers the interaction between human and nonhuman animals – past, present, and future -- and the need for profound changes in the way humans define themselves and relate to other sentient species and to the natural world as a whole. What I call the “animal standpoint” examines the origins and development of societies through the dynamic, symbiotic interrelationship between human and nonhuman animals. It therefore interprets history not from an evolutionary position that reifies human agency as the autonomous actions of a Promethean species, but rather from a co-evolutionary perspective that sees nonhuman animals as inseparably embedded in human history and as dynamic agents in their own right. 11 The animal standpoint seeks to illuminate the origins and development of dominator cultures, to preserve the wisdom and heritage of egalitarian values and social relations, and to discern what moral and social progress means in a far deeper sense than what is discernible through humanist historiography, anthropology, social theory, and philosophy. However “critical,” “subversive,” “groundbreaking,” or “radical” their probing of historical and social dynamics, very few theorists have managed to see beyond the humanist bias in order to adopt a proper analytical and moral relation to other animals; they have failed, in other words, to grasp the importance of nonhuman animals in human life, the profound ways in which the domination of humans over other animals creates conflict and disequilibrium in human relations to one another and to the Earth as a whole. Thus, the animal standpoint seeks generally to illuminate human biological and social evolution in important new ways, such as reveal the origins, dynamics, and development of dominator cultures, social hierarchies, economic and political inequalities, and asymmetrical systems of power that are violent and destructive to everything they touch. Providing perspectives and insights unattainable through other historical approaches, the animal standpoint analyzes how the domination of humans over nonhuman animals is intimately linked to the domination of humans over one another, as it also brings to light the environmental impact of large-scale animal slaughter and exploitation. A key thesis of animal standpoint theory is that nonhuman animals have been key driving and shaping forces of human thought, psychology, moral and social life, and history overall, and that in fundamental ways, the oppression of human over human is rooted in the oppression of human over nonhuman animal. Animal standpoint theory thus leads us ineluctably to understanding the commonalities of oppression, and hence to alliance politics and the systemic revolutionary viewpoint of total liberation. 12 It demonstrates – would that dogmatic Left, eco-humanists, and so-called “environmentalists” take note! -- the profound importance of veganism and the animal rights/liberation movement for human liberation, peace and justice, and ecological healing and balance.

Our alternative is uncivilized writing and speaking – only by viewing ourselves as objects in a larger web and shattering subjectivity can we be at peace with the Universe.

The Dark Mountain 9 (*Uncivilization*, The Dark Mountain Manifesto, <http://dark-mountain.net/about/manifesto/>, 2009)

Against the civilising project, which has becomfe the progenitor of ecocide, Uncivilised writing offers not a non-human perspective—we remain human and, even now, are not quite ashamed — but a perspective which sees us as one strand of a web rather than as the first palanquin in a glorious procession. It offers an unblinking look at the forces among which we find ourselves. It sets out to paint a picture of homo sapiens which a being from another world or, better, a being from our own — a blue whale, an albatross, a mountain hare — might recognise as something approaching a truth. It sets out to tug our attention away from ourselves and turn it outwards; to uncentre our minds. It is writing, in short, which puts civilisation — and us — into perspective. Writing that comes not, as most writing still does, from the self-absorbed and self-congratulatory metropolitan centres of civilisation but from somewhere on its wilder fringes. Somewhere woody and weedy and largely avoided, from where insistent, uncomfortable truths about ourselves drift in; truths which we’re not keen on hearing. Writing which unflinchingly stares us down, however uncomfortable this may prove. It might perhaps be just as useful to explain what Uncivilised writing is not. It is not environmental writing, for there is much of that about already, and most of it fails to jump the barrier which marks the limit of our collective human ego; much of it, indeed, ends up shoring-up that ego, and helping us to persist in our civilisational delusions. It is not nature writing, for there is no such thing as nature as distinct from people, and to suggest otherwise is to perpetuate the attitude which has brought us here. And it is not political writing, with which the world is already flooded, for politics is a human confection, complicit in ecocide and decaying from within. Uncivilised writing is more rooted than any of these. Above all, it is determined to shift our worldview, not to feed into it. It is writing for outsiders. If you want to be loved, it might be best not to get involved, for the world, at least for a time, will resolutely refuse to listen. A salutary example of this last point can be found in the fate of one of the twentieth century’s most significant yet most neglected poets. Robinson Jeffers was writing Uncivilised verse seventy years before this manifesto was thought of, though he did not call it that. In his early poetic career, Jeffers was a star: he appeared on the cover of Time magazine, read his poems in the US Library of Congress and was respected for the alternative he offered to the Modernist juggernaut. Today his work is left out of anthologies, his name is barely known and his politics are regarded with suspicion. Read Jeffers’ later work and you will see why. His crime was to deliberately puncture humanity’s sense of self-importance. His punishment was to be sent into a lonely literary exile from which, forty years after his death, he has still not been allowed to return. But Jeffers knew what he was in for. He knew that nobody, in an age of ‘consumer choice’, wanted to be told by this stone-faced prophet of the California cliffs that ‘it is good for man … To know that his needs and nature are no more changed in fact in ten thousand years than the beaks of eagles.’ He knew that no comfortable liberal wanted to hear his angry warning, issued at the height of the Second World War: ‘Keep clear of the dupes that talk democracy / And the dogs that talk revolution / Drunk with talk, liars and believers … / Long live freedom, and damn the ideologies.’ His vision of a world in which humanity was doomed to destroy its surroundings and eventually itself (‘I would burn my right hand in a [14] slow fire / To change the future … I should do foolishly’) was furiously rejected in the rising age of consumer democracy which he also predicted (‘Be happy, adjust your economics to the new abundance…’) Jeffers, as his poetry developed, developed a philosophy too. He called it ‘inhumanism.’ It was, he wrote: a shifting of emphasis and significance from man to notman; the rejection of human solipsism and recognition of the transhuman magnificence…This manner of thought and feeling is neither misanthropic nor pessimist … It offers a reasonable detachment as rule of conduct, instead of love, hate and envy… it provides magnificence for the religious instinct, and satisfies our need to admire greatness and rejoice in beauty. The shifting of emphasis from man to notman: this is the aim of Uncivilised writing. To ‘unhumanise our views a little, and become confident / As the rock and ocean that we were made from.’ This is not a rejection of our humanity — it is an affirmation of the wonder of what it means to be truly human. It is to accept the world for what it is and to make our home here, rather than dreaming of relocating to the stars, or existing in a Man-forged bubble and pretending to ourselves that there is nothing outside it to which we have any connection at all. This, then, is the literary challenge of our age. So far, few have taken it up. The signs of the times flash out in urgent neon, but our literary lions have better things to read. Their art remains stuck in its own civilised bubble. The idea of civilisation is entangled, right down to its semantic roots, with city-dwelling, and this provokes a thought: if our writers seem unable to find new stories which might lead us through the times ahead, is this not a function of their metropolitan mentality? The big names of contemporary literature are equally at home in the fashionable quarters of London or New York, and their writing reflects the prejudices of the placeless, transnational elite to which they belong. The converse also applies. Those voices which tell other stories tend to be rooted in a sense of place. Think of John Berger’s novels and essays from the Haute Savoie, or the depths explored by Alan Garner within a day’s walk of his birthplace in Cheshire. Think of Wendell Berry or WS Merwin, Mary Oliver or Cormac McCarthy. Those whose writings [15] approach the shores of the Uncivilised are those who know their place, in the physical sense, and who remain wary of the siren cries of metrovincial fashion and civilised excitement. If we name particular writers whose work embodies what we are arguing for, the aim is not to place them more prominently on the existing map of literary reputations. Rather, as Geoff Dyer has said of Berger, to take their work seriously is to redraw the maps altogether — not only the map of literary reputations, but those by which we navigate all areas of life. Even here, we go carefully, for cartography itself is not a neutral activity. The drawing of maps is full of colonial echoes. The civilised eye seeks to view the world from above, as something we can stand over and survey. The Uncivilised writer knows the world is, rather, something we are enmeshed in — a patchwork and a framework of places, experiences, sights, smells, sounds. Maps can lead, but can also mislead. Our maps must be the kind sketched in the dust with a stick, washed away by the next rain. They can be read only by those who ask to see them, and they cannot be bought. This, then, is Uncivilised writing. Human, inhuman, stoic and entirely natural. Humble, questioning, suspicious of the big idea and the easy answer. Walking the boundaries and reopening old conversations. Apart but engaged, its practitioners always willing to get their hands dirty; aware, in fact, that dirt is essential; that keyboards should be tapped by those with soil under their fingernails and wilderness in their heads. We tried ruling the world; we tried acting as God’s steward, then we tried ushering in the human revolution, the age of reason and isolation. We failed in all of it, and our failure destroyed more than we were even aware of. The time for civilisation is past. Uncivilisation, which knows its flaws because it has participated in them; which sees unflinchingly and bites down hard as it records — this is the project we must embark on now. This is the challenge for writing — for art — to meet. This is what we are here for.