### 1NC Procedurals

**The offcase is topicality—first page is procedurals**

The affirmative’s failure to advance a topical defense of federal policy undermines debate’s transformative and intellectual potential

#### 1. “Resolved” means debate should be a legislative forum

Army Officer School ‘4

(5-12, “# 12, Punctuation – The Colon and Semicolon”, http://usawocc.army.mil/IMI/wg12.htm)

The colon introduces the following: a. A list, but only after "as follows," "the following," or a noun for which the list is an appositive: Each scout will carry the following: (colon) meals for three days, a survival knife, and his sleeping bag. The company had four new officers: (colon) Bill Smith, Frank Tucker, Peter Fillmore, and Oliver Lewis. b. A long quotation (one or more paragraphs): In The Killer Angels Michael Shaara wrote: (colon) You may find it a different story from the one you learned in school. There have been many versions of that battle [Gettysburg] and that war [the Civil War]. (The quote continues for two more paragraphs.) c. A formal quotation or question: The President declared: (colon) "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." The question is: (colon) what can we do about it? d. A second independent clause which explains the first: Potter's motive is clear: (colon) he wants the assignment. e. After the introduction of a business letter: Dear Sirs: (colon) Dear Madam: (colon) f. The details following an announcement For sale: (colon) large lakeside cabin with dock g. A formal resolution, after the word "resolved:"¶ Resolved: (colon) That this council petition the mayor.

#### 2. The United States is the country composed of the 50 states

Encarta ‘7

[The Encarta Online Dictionary. “United States” 2007 encarta.msn.com]

U·nit·ed States [ [y ntəd stáyts](http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/Pronounce.aspx?search=United+States) ] country in central North America, consisting of 50 states. Languages: English. Currency: dollar. Capital: Washington, D.C.. Population: 290,342,550 (2001). Area: 9,629,047 sq km (3,717,796 sq mi.) Official name United States of America

#### 3. The federal government is the government in Washington DC – not its individual members

AHD ‘2

[The American Heritage Dictionary. 2002, Pg 647//GBS-JV]

Of or relating to the central government of a federation as distinct from the governments of its member units.

#### 4. “Should” means the debate is solely about a policy established by governmental means

Ericson ‘3

(Jon M., Dean Emeritus of the College of Liberal Arts – California Polytechnic U., et al., The Debater’s Guide, Third Edition, p. 4)

The Proposition of Policy: Urging Future Action In policy propositions, each topic contains certain key elements, although they have slightly different functions from comparable elements of value-oriented propositions. 1. An agent doing the acting ---“The United States” in “The United States should adopt a policy of free trade.” Like the object of evaluation in a proposition of value, the agent is the subject of the sentence. 2. The verb should—the first part of a verb phrase that urges action. 3. An action verb to follow should in the should-verb combination. For example, should adopt here means to put a program or policy into action though governmental means. 4. A specification of directions or a limitation of the action desired. The phrase free trade, for example, gives direction and limits to the topic, which would, for example, eliminate consideration of increasing tariffs, discussing diplomatic recognition, or discussing interstate commerce. Propositions of policy deal with future action. Nothing has yet occurred. The entire debate is about whether something ought to occur. What you agree to do, then, when you accept the affirmative side in such a debate is to offer sufficient and compelling reasons for an audience to perform the future action that you propose.

And independently a voting issue for limits and ground---our entire negative strategy is based on the “should” question of the resolution---there are an infinite number of reasons that the scholarship of their advocacy could be a reason to vote affirmative--- these all obviate the only predictable strategies based on topical action---they overstretch our research burden and undermine preparedness for all debates

5 net benefits to our interpretation

### 1NC – Civic Engagement

#### Second page is civic engagement – there is a youth crisis of it now

Zwarensteyn, 12 (Ellen, Masters of Science, Communications thesis, “High School Policy Debate as an Enduring Pathway to Political Education: Evaluating Possibilities for Political Learning,” Grand Valley State University, August, <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1034&context=theses>)

A lack of political learning opportunities reveals how difficult it may be for students to discover or find themselves in politics. As a result, many students are separated and isolated from connections to political worlds and policy analysis. Studies demonstrate how students entering college do not have a firm grasp on political education. Colby (2008) cites an overall decline in political learning despite more students attending college. Moreover, Galston (2001) advances how despite overall advancements in education since the 1950s, political knowledge levels remain stagnant. “If we compare generations rather than cohorts—that is, if we compare today’s young adults not with today’s older adults but with the young adults of the past—we find evidence of diminished civic attachment” (Galston, 2001, p. 219). Specific measures regarding willingness to talk about the news, caring about current events, voting, watching the news or reading the paper, and other traditional forms of political involvement have declined with each generation (Galston, 2001, p. 220-221). The most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress Report documents one consequence to this rote approach to government. Even after a historic presidential election in 2008, students are less involved in political learning and demonstrate less proficiency in 2010 than even in 2006 (National Center, 2011, p. 34). Moreover, “…individuals emerge from the educational system with a lower level of knowledge about current political figures and alignments than 30 or 40 years ago. And individuals of all ages are less able to answer questions about current politics than their counterparts with similar education backgrounds in the past” (Delli Carpinin and Keeter, 1991, p. 607). Schools seem to focus on teaching facts as the end goal of a political education rather than how facts are necessary to understand the fluidity and complexity of current events. Together, the prospects for enduring and thoughtful political engagement are dim in light of these facts.

#### Fragmenting social dialogue through the critique exacerbates social ills – destroying civic engagement.

Block, 5 (Peter, author of *Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Experience Used, Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-Interest,* and others, consultant at Designed Learning, Masters Degree in Industrial Administration from Yale University, “Civic Engagement and the Restoration of Community,” <http://www.peterblock.com/_assets/downloads/Civic.pdf>)

Civic engagement as used here is about a shift in the language and conversation we use to make our community better. We treat civic engagement as something more than voting, volunteering, and supporting events designed to bring people together. While civic engagement is about action, it is not about community action and community development as we normally think of it. The conventional view of community action and development addresses what we usually call problems; areas such as public safety, jobs and local economy, affordable housing, universal health care, education. In the context of civic engagement, these are really symptoms. The deeper cause is in the un-reconciled and fragmented nature of our community. This fragmentation creates a context for solving the symptoms that only sustains them. Otherwise why have we been working on these symptoms for so long, and so hard, and even with so many successful programs, seen too little fundamental change? The real intent of civic engagement is to shift the context within which traditional problem solving, investment, and social and community action takes place. It is aimed at the restoration of the experience and vitality of community. It is this shift in context, expressed through a shift in language, that creates the condition where traditional forms of action can make a difference.

#### Civic engagement is vital to solving collective action problems

Choi, 14 (Young Whan, Civic Engagement Coordinator @ Oakland Unified School District, BA in History from Brown University, Masters Degree in Education from the Teachers College of Columbia University, “Why Does Civic Engagement Matter in Schools?” 1/29, *Educating for Democracy in the Digital Age*, <http://eddaoakland.org/2014/01/29/why-does-civic-engagement-matter-in-schools/>)

These academic benefits cannot be overstressed, but there is still another compelling reason for schools to care about civic engagement. Civic engagement promotes social and political development. One of the great criticisms of the United States is that we, as a country, prize individualism above the needs of the larger society. The push for students to strive for their own individual success and achievement begs for the countervailing balance of a healthy sense of connection and community. Students must also learn that they are an integral part of a larger society and that they have both rights and responsibilities within that society. They cannot develop a sense that they belong to a larger society or live within a political system through theory alone; they must experience society and they must experience that political system. For example, learning about the three branches of government must be coupled with opportunities to effect change through action taken at the local, state, and/or national level. In her government class, Maryann Wolfe has asked her students to do just that. Similarly, being told that they should be compassionate takes on new meaning when students experience what it feels like to care for others through a service learning project. Michelle Espino’s students are acting with care and developing their sense of responsibility to the ecosystem through their recycling project. Finally, instead of banning smartphones and other devices that connect students with the world, schools can provide students with guidance on how to use these powerful tools to take actions that benefits others. Jo Paraiso’s students see themselves as part of an online community, engaging in respectful dialogue with students and adults via their social issue research blogs.

### 1NC Roleplaying

#### Third page is roleplaying--discussion of specific policy-questions is crucial for skills development---we control uniqueness: university students already have preconceived notions about how the world operates---government policy discussion is vital to force engagement with and resolution of competing perspectives to improve social outcomes, however those outcomes may be defined

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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

### 1NC Limits – Generic

#### Fourth page is limits--a limited topic of discussion that provides for equitable ground 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.

### 1NC SSD

#### Fifth page, 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.¶ Continued…¶ 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.

### Case

#### The aff’s claim to emancipation collapses the real material difference between our position as debaters and oppressed individuals for whom resistance is not a simple language-game---their deployment of an unproblematic posture of victimization spotlights the aff’s righteousness while robbing the oppressed of protest

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Until the very end of the novel, Jane is always excluded from every available form of social power. Her survival seems to depend on renouncing what power might come to her as teacher, mistress, cousin, heiress, or missionary's wife. She repeatedly flees from such forms of inclusion in the field of power, as if her status as an exemplary subject, like her authority as narrator, depends entirely on her claim to a kind of truth which can only be made from a position of powerlessness. By creating such an unlovely heroine and subjecting her to one form of harassment after another, Brontë demonstrates the power of words alone. 18¶ This reading of Jane Eyre highlights her not simply as the female underdog who is often identified by feminist and Marxist critics, but as the intellectual who acquires power through a moral rectitude that was to become the flip side of Western imperialism's ruthlessness. Lying at the core of Anglo­American liberalism, this moral rectitude would accompany many territorial and economic conquests overseas with a firm sense of social mission. When Jane Eyre went to the colonies in the nineteenth century, she turned into the Christian missionary. It is this understanding—that Brontë's depiction of a socially marginalized English woman is, in terms of ideological production, fully complicit with England's empire­building ambition rather than opposed to it—that prompted Gayatri Spivak to read Jane Eyre as a text in the service of imperialism. Referring to Brontë's treatment of the "madwoman" Bertha Mason, the white Jamaican Creole character, Spivak charges Jane Eyre for, precisely, its humanism, in which the "native subject" is not created as an animal but as "the object of what might be termed the terrorism of¶ 12¶ the categorical imperative." This kind of creation is imperialism's use/travesty of the Kantian metaphysical demand to "make the heathen into a human so that he can be treated as an end in himself." 19 In the twentieth century, as Europe's former colonies became independent, Jane Eyre became the Maoist. Michel de Certeau describes the affinity between her two major reincarnations, one religious and the other political, this way:¶ The place that was formerly occupied by the Church or Churches vis­à­vis the established powers remains recognizable, over the past two centuries, in the functioning of the opposition known as leftist….¶ [T]here is vis­à­vis the established order, a relationship between the Churches that defended an other world and the parties of the left which, since the nineteenth century, have promoted a different future. In both cases, similar functional characteristics can be discerned….20¶ The Maoist retains many of Jane's awesome features, chief of which are a protestant passion to turn powerlessness into "truth" and an idealist intolerance of those who may think differently from her. Whereas the great Orientalist blames the living "third world" natives for the loss of the ancient non­Western civilization, his loved object, the Maoist applauds the same natives for personifying and fulfilling her ideals. For the Maoist in the 1970s, the mainland Chinese were, in spite of their "backwardness," a puritanical alternative to the West in human form—a dream come true.¶ In the 1980s and 1990s, however, the Maoist is disillusioned to watch the China they sanctified crumble before their eyes. This is the period in which we hear disapproving criticisms of contemporary Chinese people for liking Western pop music and consumer culture, or for being overly interested in sex. In a way that makes her indistinguishable from what at first seems a political enemy, the Orientalist, the Maoist now mourns the loss of her loved object—Socialist China—by pointing angrily at living "third world" natives. For many who have built their careers on the vision of Socialist China, the grief is tremendous. In the "cultural studies" of the American academy in the 1990s, the Maoist is reproducing with prowess. We see this in the way¶ 13¶ terms such as "oppression," "victimization," and "subalternity" are now being used. Contrary to Orientalist disdain for contemporary native cultures of the non­West, the Maoist turns precisely the "disdained'' other into the object of his/her study and, in some cases, identification. In a mixture of admiration and moralism, the Maoist sometimes turns all people from non­Western cultures into a generalized "subaltern" that is then used to flog an equally generalized "West." 21¶ Because the representation of "the other" as such ignores (1) the class and intellectual hierarchies within these other cultures, which are usually as elaborate as those in the West, and (2) the discursive power relations structuring the Maoist's mode of inquiry and valorization, it produces a way of talking in which notions of lack, subalternity, victimization, and so forth are drawn upon indiscriminately, often with the intention of spotlighting the speaker's own sense of alterity and political righteousness. A comfortably wealthy white American intellectual I know claimed that he was a "third world intellectual," citing as one of his credentials his marriage to a Western European woman of part­Jewish heritage; a professor of English complained about being "victimized" by the structured time at an Ivy League institution, meaning that she needed to be on time for classes; a graduate student of upper­class background from one of the world's poorest countries told his American friends that he was of poor peasant stock in order to authenticate his identity as a radical "third world" representative; male and female academics across the U.S. frequently say they were "raped" when they report experiences of professional frustration and conflict. Whether sincere or delusional, such cases of self­dramatization all take the route of self­subalternization, which has increasingly become the assured means to authority and power. What these intellectuals are doing is robbing the terms of oppression of their critical and oppositional import, and thus depriving the oppressed of even the vocabulary of protest and rightful demand. The oppressed, whose voices we seldom hear, are robbed twice—the first time of their economic chances, the second time of their language, which is now no longer distinguishable from those of us who have had our consciousnesses "raised."¶ In their analysis of the relation between violence and representation, Armstrong and Tennenhouse write: "[The] idea of violence ¶ 14¶ as representation is not an easy one for most academics to accept. It implies that whenever we speak for someone else we are inscribing her with our own (implicitly masculine) idea of order." 22 At present, this process of "inscribing" often means not only that we "represent" certain historic others because they are/were ''oppressed"; it often means that there is interest in representation only when what is represented can in some way be seen as lacking. Even though the Maoist is usually contemptuous of Freudian psychoanalysis because it is "bourgeois," her investment in oppression and victimization fully partakes of the Freudian and Lacanian notions of "lack." By attributing "lack," the Maoist justifies the "speaking for someone else" that Armstrong and Tennenhouse call "violence as representation."¶ As in the case of Orientalism, which does not necessarily belong only to those who are white, the Maoist does not have to be racially "white" either. The phrase "white guilt" refers to a type of discourse which continues to position power and lack against each other, while the narrator of that discourse, like Jane Eyre, speaks with power but identifies with powerlessness. This is how even those who come from privilege more often than not speak from/of/as its "lack." What the Maoist demonstrates is a circuit of productivity that draws its capital from others' deprivation while refusing to acknowledge its own presence as endowed. With the material origins of her own discourse always concealed, the Maoist thus speaks as if her charges were a form of immaculate conception.¶ The difficulty facing us, it seems to me, is no longer simply the "first world" Orientalist who mourns the rusting away of his treasures, but also students from privileged backgrounds Western and non­Western, who conform behaviorally in every respect with the elitism of their social origins (e.g., through powerful matrimonial alliances, through pursuit of fame, or through a contemptuous arrogance toward fellow students) but who nonetheless proclaim dedication to "vindicating the subalterns." My point is not that they should be blamed for the accident of their birth, nor that they cannot marry rich, pursue fame, or even be arrogant. Rather, it is that they choose to see in others' powerlessness an idealized image of themselves and refuse to hear in the dissonance between the content and manner of their speech their own complicity with violence. Even though these descendents of the Maoist may be quick to point¶ 15¶ out the exploitativeness of Benjamin Disraeli's "The East is a career," 23 they remain blind to their own exploitativeness as they make "the East" their career. How do we intervene in the productivity of this overdetermined circuit?

#### The claim that ethics should be the basis for winning a debate round is a pretty good example of our link argument---the ballot is not a tool of emancipation, but rather a tool of revenge---it serves as a palliative that denies their investment in oppression as a means by which to claim the power of victory

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Guilt and Ressentiment We need to think carefully about what is at stake here. Why is this perspective appealing, and what are its effects? At first glance, the argument appears simple: white, privileged women, in their theoretical and practical interventions, must take into account the experiences and conceptual work of women who are less fortunate and less powerful, have fewer resources, and are therefore more subject to systemic oppression. The lesson of feminism's mistakes in the civil rights era is that this “mainstream” group must not speak for other women. But such a view must be interrogated. Its effects, as I have argued, include a veneration of the other, moral currency for the victim, and an insidious competition for victimhood. We will see in later chapters that these effects are also common in situations of conflict where the stakes are much higher. ¶ We witness here a twofold appeal: otherness discourse in feminism appeals both to the guilt of the privileged and to the resentment, or ressentiment, of the other. Suleri's allusion to “embarrassed privilege” exposes the operation of guilt in the misunderstanding that often divides Western feminists from women in the developing world, or white women from women of color. The guilt of those who feel themselves deeply implicated in and responsible for imperialism merely reinforces an imperialist benevolence, polarizes us unambiguously by locking us into the categories of victim and perpetrator, and blinds us to the power and agency of the other. Many fail to see that it is embarrassing and insulting for those identified as victimized others not to be subjected to the same critical intervention and held to the same demands of moral and political responsibility. Though we are by no means equal in power and ability, wealth and advantage, we are all collectively responsible for the world we inhabit in common. The condition of victimhood does not absolve one of moral responsibility. I will return to this point repeatedly throughout this book.¶ Mohanty's perspective ignores the possibility that one can become attached to one's subordinated status, which introduces the concept of ressentiment, the focus of much recent interest in the injury caused by racism and colonization. Nietzsche describes ressentiment as the overwhelming sentiment of “slave morality,” the revolt that begins when ressentiment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values. 19 The sufferer in this schema seeks out a cause for his suffering—“ a guilty agent who is susceptible to suffering”— someone on whom he can vent his affects and so procure the anesthesia necessary to ease the pain of injury. The motivation behind ressentiment, according to Nietzsche, is the desire “to deaden, by means of a more violent emotion of any kind, a tormenting, secret pain that is becoming unendurable, and to drive it out of consciousness at least for the moment: for that one requires an affect, as savage an affect as possible, and, in order to excite that, any pretext at all.” 20 In its contemporary manifestation, Wendy Brown argues that ressentiment acts as the “righteous critique of power from the perspective of the injured,” which “delimits a specific site of blame for suffering by constituting sovereign subjects and events as responsible for the ‘injury’ of social subordination.” Identities are fixed in an economy of perpetrator and victim, in which revenge, rather than power or emancipation, is sought for the injured, making the perpetrator hurt as the sufferer does. 21¶ 30¶ Such a concept is useful for understanding why an ethics of absolute responsibility to the other appeals to the victimized. Brown remarks that, for Nietzsche, the source of the triumph of a morality rooted in ressentiment is the denial that it has any access to power or contains a will to power. Politicized identities arise as both product of and reaction to this condition; the reaction is a substitute for action— an “imaginary revenge,” Nietzsche calls it. Suffering then becomes a social virtue at the same time that the sufferer attempts to displace his suffering onto another. The identity created by ressentiment, Brown explains, becomes invested in its own subjection not only through its discovery of someone to blame, and a new recognition and revaluation of that subjection, but also through the satisfaction of revenge. 22¶ The outcome of feminism's attraction to theories of difference and otherness is thus deeply contentious. First, we witness the further reification reification of the very oppositions in question and a simple reversal of the focus from the same to the other. This observation is not new and has been made by many critics of feminism, but it seems to have made no serious impact on mainstream feminist scholarship or teaching practices in women's studies programs. Second, in the eagerness to rectify the mistakes of “white, middle-class, liberal, western” feminism, the other has been uncritically exalted, which has led in turn to simplistic designations of marginal, “othered” status and, ultimately, a competition for victimhood. Ultimately, this approach has led to a new moral code in which ethics is equated with the responsibility of the privileged Western woman, while moral immunity is granted to the victimized other. Ranjana Khanna describes this operation aptly when she writes that in the field of transnational feminism, the reification of the other has produced “separate ethical universes” in which the privileged experience paralyzing guilt and the neocolonized, crippling resentment. The only “overarching imperative” is that one does not comment on another's ethical context. An ethical response turns out to be a nonresponse. 23 Let us turn now to an exploration of this third outcome.