### T

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.

#### First, 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

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 pp45-

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, constraints are key to creativity---challenging ourselves to innovate within the confines of rules creates far more creative responses than starting with a blank slate

Mayer 6 – Marissa Ann Mayer, vice-president for search products and user experience at Google, February 13, 2006, “Creativity Loves Constraints,” online: <http://www.businessweek.com/print/magazine/content/06_07/b3971144.htm?chan=gl>

When people think about creativity, they think about artistic work -- unbridled, unguided effort that leads to beautiful effect. But if you look deeper, you'll find that some of the most inspiring art forms, such as haikus, sonatas, and religious paintings, are fraught with constraints. They are beautiful because creativity triumphed over the "rules." Constraints shape and focus problems and provide clear challenges to overcome. Creativity thrives best when constrained.¶ But constraints must be balanced with a healthy disregard for the impossible. Too many curbs can lead to pessimism and despair. Disregarding the bounds of what we know or accept gives rise to ideas that are non-obvious, unconventional, or unexplored. The creativity realized in this balance between constraint and disregard for the impossible is fueled by passion and leads to revolutionary change.¶ A few years ago, I met Paul Beckett, a talented designer who makes sculptural clocks. When I asked him why not do just sculptures, Paul said he liked the challenge of making something artistically beautiful that also had to perform as a clock. Framing the task in that way freed his creative force. Paul reflected that he also found it easier to paint on a canvas that had a mark on it rather than starting with one that was entirely clean and white. This resonated with me. It is often easier to direct your energy when you start with constrained challenges (a sculpture that must be a clock) or constrained possibilities (a canvas that is marked).

#### Third, 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

Esberg & Sagan 12 \*Jane Esberg is special assistant to the director at New York University's Center on. International Cooperation. She was the winner of 2009 Firestone Medal, AND \*\*Scott Sagan is a professor of political science and director of Stanford's Center for International Security and Cooperation “NEGOTIATING NONPROLIFERATION: Scholarship, Pedagogy, and Nuclear Weapons Policy,” 2/17 The Nonproliferation Review, 19:1, 95-108

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

#### Fourth, 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

Patricia Roberts-Miller 3 is Associate Professor of Rhetoric at the University of Texas "Fighting Without Hatred:Hannah Ar endt ' s Agonistic Rhetoric" JAC 22.2 2003

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.

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.

#### Effective deliberation is the lynchpin of solving all existential global problems

Christian O. Lundberg 10 Professor of Communications @ University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, “Tradition of Debate in North Carolina” in Navigating Opportunity: Policy Debate in the 21st Century By Allan D. Louden, p311

The second major problem with the critique that identifies a naivety in articulating debate and democracy is that it presumes that the primary pedagogical outcome of debate is speech capacities. But the democratic capacities built by debate are not limited to speech—as indicated earlier, debate builds capacity for critical thinking, analysis of public claims, informed decision making, and better public judgment. If the picture of modem political life that underwrites this critique of debate is a pessimistic view of increasingly labyrinthine and bureaucratic administrative politics, rapid scientific and technological change outpacing the capacities of the citizenry to comprehend them, and ever-expanding insular special-interest- and money-driven politics, it is a puzzling solution, at best, to argue that these conditions warrant giving up on debate. If democracy is open to rearticulation, it is open to rearticulation precisely because as the challenges of modern political life proliferate, the citizenry's capacities can change, which is one of the primary reasons that theorists of democracy such as Ocwey in The Public awl Its Problems place such a high premium on education (Dewey 1988,63, 154). Debate provides an indispensible form of education in the modem articulation of democracy because it builds precisely the skills that allow the citizenry to research and be informed about policy decisions that impact them, to son rhroueh and evaluate the evidence for and relative merits of arguments for and against a policy in an increasingly infonnation-rich environment, and to prioritize their time and political energies toward policies that matter the most to them.

The merits of debate as a tool for building democratic capacity-building take on a special significance in the context of information literacy. John Larkin (2005, HO) argues that one of the primary failings of modern colleges and universities is that they have not changed curriculum to match with the challenges of a new information environment. This is a problem for the course of academic study in our current context, but perhaps more important, argues Larkin, for the future of a citizenry that will need to make evaluative choices against an increasingly complex and multimediatcd information environment (ibid-). Larkin's study tested the benefits of debate participation on information-literacy skills and concluded that in-class debate participants reported significantly higher self-efficacy ratings of their ability to navigate academic search databases and to effectively search and use other Web resources:

To analyze the self-report ratings of the instructional and control group students, we first conducted a multivariate analysis of variance on all of the ratings, looking jointly at the effect of instmction/no instruction and debate topic . . . that it did not matter which topic students had been assigned . . . students in the Instnictional [debate) group were significantly more confident in their ability to access information and less likely to feel that they needed help to do so----These findings clearly indicate greater self-efficacy for online searching among students who participated in (debate).... These results constitute strong support for the effectiveness of the project on students' self-efficacy for online searching in the academic databases. There was an unintended effect, however: After doing ... the project, instructional group students also felt more confident than the other students in their ability to get good information from Yahoo and Google. It may be that the library research experience increased self-efficacy for any searching, not just in academic databases. (Larkin 2005, 144)

Larkin's study substantiates Thomas Worthcn and Gaylcn Pack's (1992, 3) claim that debate in the college classroom plays a critical role in fostering the kind of problem-solving skills demanded by the increasingly rich media and information environment of modernity. Though their essay was written in 1992 on the cusp of the eventual explosion of the Internet as a medium, Worthcn and Pack's framing of the issue was prescient: the primary question facing today's student has changed from how to best research a topic to the crucial question of learning how to best evaluate which arguments to cite and rely upon from an easily accessible and veritable cornucopia of materials.

There are, without a doubt, a number of important criticisms of employing debate as a model for democratic deliberation. But cumulatively, the evidence presented here warrants strong support for expanding debate practice in the classroom as a technology for enhancing democratic deliberative capacities. The unique combination of critical thinking skills, research and information processing skills, oral communication skills, and capacities for listening and thoughtful, open engagement with hotly contested issues argues for debate as a crucial component of a rich and vital democratic life. In-class debate practice both aids students in achieving the best goals of college and university education, and serves as an unmatched practice for creating thoughtful, engaged, open-minded and self-critical students who are open to the possibilities of meaningful political engagement and new articulations of democratic life.

Expanding this practice is crucial, if only because the more we produce citizens that can actively and effectively engage the political process, the more likely we are to produce revisions of democratic life that are necessary if democracy is not only to survive, but to thrive. Democracy faces a myriad of challenges, including: domestic and international issues of class, gender, and racial justice; wholesale environmental destruction and the potential for rapid climate change; emerging threats to international stability in the form of terrorism, intervention and new possibilities for great power conflict; and increasing challenges of rapid globalization including an increasingly volatile global economic structure. More than any specific policy or proposal, an informed and active citizenry that deliberates with greater skill and sensitivity provides one of the best hopes for responsive and effective democratic governance, and by extension, one of the last best hopes for dealing with the existential challenges to democracy [in an] increasingly complex world.

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

### Case

#### Latin American neoliberalism is critical to reducing poverty and inequality

Miroff ‘12[December 1st, 2012, Nick, collective winner of a Pulitzer prize, writer for NPR, the Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, “Latin American Equality: Free Markets or a Left Wing Success?” <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/americas/121130/latin-america-middle-class-equality-poverty-left-wing-success-story>]

HAVANA, Cuba — Latin America has long been a case study in the social ills brought by sharp economic inequality, its class-stratified societies marked by too few haves and too many have-nots. But even as income divisions widen across the United States and much of the developing world, they are narrowing in Latin America. Poverty in the region is at its lowest point in decades, according to several new reports, and millions are moving upward into the middle class. A World Bank survey released this month said Latin America’s broadening middle grew by 50 percent between 2003 and 2009. It was followed by a new United Nations regional economic study showing the percentage of Latin Americans living in poverty at the lowest level in 30 years. Now the question is: Who gets credit for these trends? The region’s improved economic outlook has coincided with the rule of left-wing governments in some of Latin America’s biggest economies: Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela. They have devoted a greater share of their national resources to anti-poverty programs and development projects, boosting social spending. Yet the drop in poverty has also come as Latin governments adopt many of the market-driven policy prescriptions long vilified by the left as “neoliberalism.” Foreign investment has poured into countries like Peru, Colombia, and Chile as they’ve opened their economies and embraced globalization. Foreign direct investment into Latin America topped $150 billion last year, UN data shows, up from around $25 billion in 1990. Regardless of political orientation, Latin American governments have also benefited from soaring demand for raw materials, much of it fueled by China. High global commodity prices have allowed countries to reap billions in tax revenues and direct income from sales of copper, gold, soybeans, oil, beef and other exports. In its report, the World Bank credited regional governments for improved economic stability and the delivery of social programs, saying upward mobility has been driven by higher levels of formal employment, urbanization, reduced family size and greater numbers of women in the workforce. It defined the middle class broadly, as anyone earning between $10 and $50 a day, and said about half the population of Latin America now falls into that range. “The recent experience of Latin America and the Caribbean shows the world that policies balancing economic growth while still expanding opportunities for the most vulnerable can spread prosperity to millions of people,” World Bank President Jim Yong Kim said of the findings. “Governments in Latin America and the Caribbean still need to do much more — one-third of the population is still in poverty — but we should celebrate this achievement of growing the middle class and learn from it,” Kim said. Learning from the trend is now a matter of defining what’s really driving it. Left-populist leaders such as Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez, Bolivia’s Evo Morales, and Ecuador’s Rafael Correa have won at the polls in the past decade by railing against their country’s economic elites and promising to re-slice the pie in favor of the masses. By directing more of their nations’ resource wealth to social spending, they have eased poverty and invested billions into health care, education and other services. But their state-driven development models are heavily dependent on high commodity prices, and often contrasted with the so-called “Brazilian model” made fashionable by former President LuizInacio “Lula” da Silva. His leftist government remained friendly to foreign investors and maintained pro-business policies even as it lifted tens of millions out of poverty with greater social spending. Geoff Thale, program director at the DC-based Washington Office on Latin America, said splitting the region into those two models is an oversimplification. “While there's a lot of discussion about the differences between left-populists like Chavez and social democrats as in Brazil, I don't think that the lines are drawn that clearly or that either camp has a single, well-defined approach,” he said. “In reality, it's more an era of experimentation than of ideological lines.” Thale said he views the region today as dominated by “post neoliberal” governments, “whose leaders believe that the state can and should play an active role in the economy and the market, and that social spending targeted at the poorest sectors (even when it's wrapped in neoliberal languageabout conditionality) is an important government function.” “I think those left-of-center beliefs, shared by a wide range of governments, have had an impact on both poverty and inequality,” Thale added.

#### Anti-neoliberalism movements fail---only neolib works

Ferguson ‘10 [2010, James, Professor of Anthropology at Stanford, “The Uses of Neoliberalism,” Antipode, 41.1, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00721.x/abstract>]

This problem in recent progressive scholarship strikes me as related to a parallel problem in progressive politics more broadly. For over the last couple of decades, what we call “the Left” has come to be organized, in large part, around a project of resisting and refusing harmful new developments in the world. This is understandable, since so many new developments have indeed been highly objectionable. But it has left us with a politics largely defined by negation and disdain, and centered on what I will call “the antis.” Anti-globalization, anti- neoliberalism,anti-privatization, anti-imperialism, anti-Bush, perhaps even anti-capitalism—but always “anti”, not “pro”. This is good enough, perhaps, if one’s political goal is simply to denounce “the system” and to decry its current tendencies. And, indeed, some seem satisfied with such a politics. In my own disciplines of anthropology and African Studies, for instance, studies of state and development tend, with depressing predictability, to conclude (in tones of righteous indignation) that the rich are benefiting and the poor are getting screwed. The powerless, it seems, are getting the short end of the stick. This is not exactly a surprising finding, of course (isn’t it precisely because they are on the losing end of things that we call them “powerless” in the first place?). Yet this sort of work styles itself as “critique”, and imagines itself to be very “political”.But what if politics is really not about expressing indignation or denouncing the powerful? What if it is, instead, about getting what you want? Then we progressives must ask: what do we want? This is a quite different question (and a far more difficult question) than: what are we against? What do we want? Such a question brings us very quickly to the question of government. Denunciatory analyses often treat government as the simple expression of power or domination— the implication apparently being that it is politically objectionable that people should be governed at all. But any realistic sort of progressive politics that would seek a serious answer to the question “what do we want?” will have to involve an exploration of the contemporary possibilities for developing genuinely progressive arts of government.

#### A revolution is in a debate space is ineffective – instead, we should use the debate as a method for better CBA for the future – has the best potential to change in the real world – negation theory serves as a DA

#### Consequences matter – the tunnel vision of moral absolutism generates evil and political irrelevance

Issac, 2002 (Jeffery, Professor of Political Science at Indiana University, Dissent, Vol. 49 No. 2, Spring)

Politics, in large part, involves contests over the distribution and use of power. To accomplish anything in the political world one must attend to the means that are necessary to bring it about. And to develop such means is to develop, and to exercise, power. To say this is not to say that power is beyond morality. It is to say that power is not reducible to morality. As writers such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Max Weber, Reinhold Niebuhr, Hannah Arendt have taught, **an unyielding concern with moral goodness undercuts political responsibility**. The concern may be morally laudable, reflecting a kind of personal integrity, but it suffers from three fatal flaws: **(1) It fails to see that the purity of one’s intentions does not ensure the achievement of what one intends.** Abjuring violence or refusing to make common cause with morally comprised parties may seem like the right thing, but **if such tactics entail impotence, then it is hard to view them as serving any moral good beyond the clean conscience of their supporters**; **(2) it fails to see that in a world of real violence and injustice, moral purity** is not simply a form of powerlessness, it **is often a form of complicity in injustice.** This is why, from the standpoint of politics-as opposed to religion-pacifism is always a potentially immoral stand. In categorically repudiating violence, it refuses in principle to oppose certain violent injustices with any effect; and **(3) it fails to see that politics is as much about unintended consequences as it is about intentions; it is the effects of action, rather than the motives** of action, **that is most significant**. Just as the alignment with “good” may engender impotence, **it is often the pursuit of “good” that generates evil.This is the lesson of communism in the twentieth century: it is not enough that one’s goals be sincere or idealistic; it is equally important, always, to ask about the effects of pursuing these goals and to judge these effects in pragmatic** and historically contextualized **ways. Moral absolutism inhibits this judgment.** It alienates those who are not true believers. It promotes arrogance. **And it undermines political effectiveness.**

#### Status quo solves their internal link – representative democracy is checked by the federal systems of checks and balances and allows MORE voices which outweighs

#### The AFF demands a violent revolution which will be destroyed and only result in a new dictatorship

Feldheim (Prof of Philosophy @ SUNY) 8

(Andrew, REPLY TO WARD CHURCHILL, dspace.sunyconnect.suny.edu, GoogleScholar)

Churchill’s assumption that, when a nonviolent group becomes a viable threat to an oppressive government, this group would be destroyed or become self-eliminating, does not match the evidence, since both Dr. King’s movement in the United States and Gandhi’s movement in India survived their successes. In many of the cases under discussion, violent resistance simply does not make good practical sense, and would result in unacceptable losses, while contributing relatively little to the overall cause. One reason for the inappropriateness of violent action in these circumstances is stressed repeatedly by Sharp and others. Implicit in almost all the situations under discussion is the assumption that the group doing the oppressing has more weapons, soldiers and all the other necessary ingredients for violent action than the group being oppressed. In such cases, if the subjugated group insisted on using violent means as their primary mode of operation, their movements would effectively amount to suicide, and the actual benefit to their cause would probably be negligible. It may be objected at this point that some groups and individuals protesting in this way, and willingly giving their lives, could inspire others through their martyrdom. Their sacrifice could possibly elicit the sympathy of other groups that may be willing to help their cause. In answer to this, one only has to consider the response that people are likely to elicit using this method in a nonviolent, as opposed to a violent, way. The Buddhist monks who immolated themselves in protest during the Vietnam War, and the followers of Gandhi who were beaten and killed, represent this method done nonviolently. They sacrificed their lives while making sure to harm no one else. In contrast, consider the suicide bomber who kills herself in the middle of a crowded marketplace, taking as many people as possible along with her. She is representative of martyrdom conducted violently. Both are types of martyrdom; but to the former, we assign virtue, while, to the latter, condemnation. The nonviolent variation is far more likely to elicit the support

 of other groups and even nations. It is practically superior. There is also something to be said about the difference in results that are obtained when a dictatorship is overthrown through violent means, as opposed to nonviolent means. Gene Sharp notes that, essential to the removal of a dictatorship and the establishment of democracy, is a fundamental redistribution of the governmental power structure. Violence may be less conducive towards this goal. According to Sharp, A military coup d’ etat against a dictatorship might appear to be relatively one of the easiest and quickest ways to remove a particularly repugnant regime. However, there are very serious problems with that technique. Most importantly, it leaves in place the existing maldistribution of power between the population and the elite in control of the government and its military forces. The removal of particular persons and cliques from the government positions most likely will merely make it possible for another group to take their place. (Sharp, 2002, p. 5) Sharp feels that, unless the dictatorial power structure is changed to a more democratically oriented power structure, the stage is set for another tyrannical group to simply take the place of the deposed one. At this point, in order to avoid the same reliance on absolutes that I find inappropriate in Churchill’s argument, it is important to recognize the crucial role that the uniqueness of every situation has in determining the proper methods to be employed on behalf of an oppressed or subjugated group. There are kernels of truth in Churchill’s contentions that have more or less import in accordance with the specific situation. There are cases, both historical and theoretical, for which violent action seems the only logical alternative. The extermination of the European Jews during World War II seems like such an instance. One important difference between this example and the oppression of Indians by the English, or African-Americans by the United States, is that, in the case of the Nazis, it was not an instance of the same type of repression. They did not wish to subjugate or exploit the Jews; they simply wished to kill them. Fortunately, however, the Nazi example is the exception rather than the rule. Most cases of oppression stem from a wish to subjugate a population in order to profit unfairly from their labors, or to usurp their property. To give Mr. Churchill his due, even in cases such as these, there may be factors, specific to particular situations, which call for violent resistance or a mixture of violent and nonviolent resistance. Each situation must be evaluated on its own merits. My contention is not that there is no truth in Churchill’s position. Rather, it is his use of absolutes, his insistence that violence or the threat of violence is always necessary, that demands a refutation. Churchill presents his contention, that violence or the threat of violence is a necessary constituent of successful resistance to tyranny, in a way that makes it unfalsifiable. This, however, does not add to its merit. To potential counterexamples, Churchill simply relies on the presence of groups which may be potentially violent. The very nature of tyranny, however, naturally encourages feelings of resentment and hostility on the part of the oppressed. If one looked hard enough, he could always find some indication of potential violence, even if not overt. Churchill’s argument will, in this sense, always be true, but gives us no more actual information than a tautology. Also, since Churchill supposes a causal relationship between violent resistance and the defeat of dictatorships, and this construct is placed within an historical context, we can never know what would have happened if there had been no violence or the threat of violence, but only nonviolent resistance. While it may not be possible to prove Churchill’s argument unsound, its very nature makes it of limited utility.

#### And this true in North America too – The immediate effect of the alternative would be a massive increase in direct anti-Black and anti-Red violence

Fire Rider (advocate from the Northern Ontario Ojibwe and American Indian Movement) 5
(Marty, Why Churchill Political Agenda is Wrong for Indians, February 2005, http://aimfireca.tripod.com/id44.html)

I think we can agree that Churchill's political philosophy is liberal socialism regarding foreign policy. If that is his position he is entitled to that. In describing his fellow Americans, for instance, Churchill cannot refrain from using the language of spite. The victims of the Sept. 11 attacks he compares to Nazis; even middle-class Americans he disparages as vapid hedonists too engrossed in materialism to care about the sufferings of "brown-skinned" people overseas. Basically, he advocates that America is the evil empire of the world and needs to be replaced or severely weakened. But if America was to collapse as a legal government does Churchill or anyone believe that in a chaotic world with no laws that Indians would fair any better. It would be a world of unchecked Indian racism and discrimination by all hate groups be it left or right. If the September 11th victims are technocrats supporting the evil economic empire of America as Churchill professes, then is not he a hypocrite by educating American youth who will graduate with degrees to enter the technocratic economy of America? But what does the U.S. foreign policy have to do with a starving Indian on the Reservation or urban living? What has Churchill done for the poor Indian. Our AIM organization has helped to repair Indian elders homes; provide reservation security to protect the people against police abuse and tribal goons; written legal constitutions for reservations; legal research for tribes and individuals; feeding and clothing Indians; having the local Bureau of Indian Affairs office investigated for incompetence and complacency by the Inspector Generals Office, including other agencies as well, or advising Tribal governments. Further, our national Indian radio talk show is effective in educating and empowering our people. In other words we are in the field fighting daily for our people. We are AIM and we would lay our lives down in defense of our people, but only if attacked. If violence was the only Indian way we as a people would have been exterminated a long time ago. We in AIM do not support, nor condone violence. We do not need someone making noisy speeches about foreign policy, we need leaders fighting for and helping our people on domestic issues, that is the real AIM. Sadly, there is much discrimination in the world regarding indigenous people. But American Indians have problems nearly as equal such as third world living conditions on many reservations. Churchill's foreign policy speeches using the September 11th victims to make his political point only reflects negatively on all Indians and harms the good name of the American Indian Movement and it true leaders. Unfortunately, Churchill is causing division in Indian country. Indian strength lies in our unity, not disunity. And his actions and words only leads to Indian disunity. That was the same strategy used by non Indians to divide and conquer Indian people to take our lands. If ones walks the Red Path they remain balanced in the middle thus avoiding the political extremes of left or right. Remember being Indian is not a democrat or republican, liberal or conservative. Being Indian is following the traditional ways of tolerance, accepting all races and culture, spirituality with respect for all life. Taking of any life was only for defense, not taking a life for a political belief or to make a statement. Churchill's ways of advocating violence against innocent lives makes a mockery of the Great Spirits teachings that all life is sacred. If you are going to be an Indian activist you have to do more than beat the drum to make a lot of noise. You have feel the drum beat in your heart. Times have changed, and people like Churchill can stand outside the government while make all the noise, however very little has changed in 30 years for American Indians. Our future success will come through not only our unity, but by Indians learning the American political and legal landscape while working from within the system to change the system for Indian justice and sovereignty. We need to remove the path of ignorance, apathy and hatred to build a bridge of respect and honor of those who have walked before us. We need to never lose site of our culture by staying spiritually strong. Eventually the changes can be positive for our people. But advocating the overthrow of the American government is irresponsible resulting in a destabilizing political environment where Indians would be subject to further violence, racism and discriminating.

1. **The alternative to government is the state of nature---this devolves into a constant state of war**

**Williams, 05** - Ph.D. in Government from Manchester University and Senior Lecturer at Lancaster University (Garrath, 7/5/05, "Hobbes: Moral and Political Philosophy", http://www.iep.utm.edu/hobmoral/#SH4d, KONTOPOULOS)

The state of nature is “natural” in one specific sense only. For Hobbes political authority is artificial: in the “natural” condition human beings lack government, which is an authority created by men. What is Hobbes’s reasoning here? He claims that the only authority that naturally exists among human beings is that of a mother over her child, because the child is so very much weaker than the mother (and indebted to her for its survival). Among adult human beings this is invariably not the case. Hobbes concedes an obvious objection, admitting that some of us are much stronger than others. And although he’s very sarcastic about the idea that some are wiser than others, he doesn’t have much difficulty with the idea that some are fools and others are dangerously cunning. Nonetheless, it’s almost invariably true that every human being is capable of killing any other. Even the strongest must sleep; even the weakest might persuade others to help him kill another. (Leviathan, xiii.1-2) Because adults are “equal” in this capacity to threaten one another’s lives, Hobbes claims there is no natural source of authority to order their lives together. (He is strongly opposing arguments that established monarchs have a natural or God-given right to rule over us.) Thus, as long as human beings have not successfully arranged some form of government, they live in Hobbes’s state of nature. Such a condition might occur at the “beginning of time” (see Hobbes’s comments on Cain and Abel, Leviathan, xiii.11, Latin version only), or in “primitive” societies (Hobbes thought the American Indians lived in such a condition). But the real point for Hobbes is that a state of nature could just as well occur in seventeenth century England, should the King’s authority be successfully undermined. It could occur tomorrow in every modern society, for example, if the police and army suddenly refused to do their jobs on behalf of government. Unless some effective authority stepped into the King’s place (or the place of army and police and government), Hobbes argues the result is doomed to be deeply awful, nothing less than a state of war.

1. **That makes peace impossible and turns all of the aff impacts**

**Williams, 05** - Ph.D. in Government from Manchester University and Senior Lecturer at Lancaster University (Garrath, 7/5/05, "Hobbes: Moral and Political Philosophy", http://www.iep.utm.edu/hobmoral/#SH4d, KONTOPOULOS)

Why should peaceful cooperation be impossible without an overarching authority? Hobbes provides a series of powerful arguments that suggest it is extremely unlikely that human beings will live in security and peaceful cooperation without government. (Anarchism, the thesis that we should live without government, of course disputes these arguments.) His most basic argument is threefold. (Leviathan, xiii.3-9) (i) He thinks we will compete, violently compete, to secure the basic necessities of life and perhaps to make other material gains. (ii) He argues that we will challenge others and fight out of fear (“diffidence”), so as to ensure our personal safety. (iii) And he believes that we will seek reputation (“glory”), both for its own sake and for its protective effects (for example, so that others will be afraid to challenge us).

#### Neoliberalism is key to maintain the free market, the value of an individual, and free trade

**Olssen 5** -- Professor of Political Theory and Education (May 2005, Mark Olssen, Professor of Political Theory and Education, PhD Political Studies, and Michael A. Peters, Ph.D. Philosophy of Education, M.A., Philosophy, Professor Educational Policy Studies, Adjunct Professor School of Foriegn Studies, Journal of Education Policy, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 313–345, “Neoliberalism, higher education and the knowledge economy: from the free market to knowledge capitalism,” ebscohost, ngoetz)

 Within higher education neoliberalism has introduced a new mode of regulation or form of governmentality. In order to understand this it is necessary to understand that the welfare liberal mode it replaced maintained fundamentally different premises at the level of political and economic theory, as well as at the level of philosophical assumption. The central defining characteristic of this new brand of neoliberalism can be understood at one level as a revival of many of the central tenets of classical liberalism, particularly classical economic liberalism. The central presuppositions shared include: 1. The self-interested individual: a view of individuals as economically self-interested subjects. In this perspective the individual was represented as a rational optimizer and the best judge of his/her own interests and needs. 2. Free market economics: the best way to allocate resources and opportunities is through the market. The market is both a more efficient mechanism and a morally superior mechanism. 3. A commitment to laissez-faire: because the free market is a self-regulating order it regulates itself better than the government or any other outside force. In this, neoliberals show a distinct distrust of governmental power and seek to limit state power within a negative conception, limiting its role to the protection of individual rights. 4. A commitment to free trade: involving the abolition of tariffs or subsidies, or any form of state-imposed protection or support, as well as the maintenance of floating exchange rates and ‘open’ economies.

#### 10. Free trade promotes peace and decreases the likelihood of war—empirically proven

Griswold 98 (Daniel, Associated Director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the CATO Institute, “Peace on Earth, Free Trade for Men,” 31 Dec, http://www.cato.org/dailys/12-31-98.html)

 Advocates of free trade have long argued that its benefits are not merely economic. Free trade also encourages people and nations to live in peace with one another. Free trade raises the cost of war by making nations more economically interdependent. Free trade makes it more profitable for people of one nation to produce goods and services for people of another nation than to conquer them. By promoting communication across borders, trade increases understanding and reduces suspicion toward people in other countries. International trade creates a network of human contacts. Phone calls, emails, faxes and face-to-face meetings are an integral part of commercial relations between people of different nations. This human interaction encourages tolerance and respect between people of different cultures (if not toward protectionist politicians). Ancient writers, expounding what we now call the Universal Economy Doctrine, understood the link between trade and international harmony. The fourth-century writer Libanius declared in his Orations (III), "God did not bestow all products upon all parts of the earth, but distributed His gifts over different regions, to the end that men might cultivate a social relationship because one would have need of the help of another. And so He called commerce into being, that all men might be able to have common enjoyment of the fruits of the earth, no matter where produced." Open trade makes war a less appealing option for governments by raising its costs. To a nation committed to free trade, war not only means the destruction of life and property. It is also terrible for business, disrupting international commerce and inflicting even greater hardship on the mass of citizens. When the door to trade is open, a nation's citizens can gain access to goods and resources outside their borders by offering in exchange what they themselves can produce relatively well. When the door is closed, the only way to gain access is through military conquest. As the 19th century Frenchman Frederic Bastiat said, "When goods cannot cross borders, armies will." History demonstrates the peaceful influence of trade. The century of relative world peace from 1815 to 1914 was marked by a dramatic expansion of international trade, investment and human migration, illuminated by the example of Great Britain. In contrast, the rise of protectionism and the downward spiral of global trade in the 1930s aggravated the underlying hostilities that propelled Germany and Japan to make war on their neighbors. In the more than half a century since the end of World War II, no wars have been fought between two nations that were outwardly oriented in their trade policies. In every one of the two dozen or so wars between nations fought since 1945, at least one side was dominated by a nation or nations that did not pursue a policy of free trade.

#### Capitalism and Globalization are good—it’s responsible for most of the good in the world. The root cause of structural violence is a lack of free markets.

Goklany 7 (Indur, scholar who has 25 years of experience working and writing on global and national environmental issues. He has published several peer-reviewed papers and book chapters on an array of issues Author of The Improving State of the World: Why We're Living Longer, Healthier, More Comfortable Lives on a Cleaner Planet, Mar. 23, http://www.reason.com/news/show/119252.html, twm)

#### Environmentalists and globalization foes are united in their fear that greater population and consumption of energy, materials, and chemicals accompanying economic growth, technological change and free trade—the mainstays of globalization—degrade human and environmental well-being. Indeed, the 20th century saw the United States’ population multiply by four, income by seven, carbon dioxide emissions by nine, use of materials by 27, and use of chemicals by more than 100. Yet life expectancy increased from 47 years to 77 years. Onset of major disease such as cancer, heart, and respiratory disease has been postponed byetween eight and eleven years in the past century. Heart disease and cancer rates have been in rapid decline over the last two decades, and total cancer deaths have actually declined the last two years, despite increases in population. Among the very young, infant mortality has declined from 100 deaths per 1,000 births in 1913 to just seven per 1,000 today. These improvements haven’t been restricted to the United States. It’s a global phenomenon. Worldwide, life expectancy has more than doubled, from 31 years in 1900 to 67 years today. India’s and China’s infant mortalities exceeded 190 per 1,000 births in the early 1950s; today they are 62 and 26, respectively. In the developing world, the proportion of the population suffering from chronic hunger declined from 37 percent to 17 percent between 1970 and 2001 despite a 83 percent increase in population. Globally average annual incomes in real dollars have tripled since 1950. Consequently, the proportion of the planet's developing-world population living in absolute poverty has halved since 1981, from 40 percent to 20 percent. Child labor in low income countries declined from 30 percent to 18 percent between 1960 and 2003. Equally important, the world is more literate and better educated than ever. People are freer politically, economically, and socially to pursue their well-being as they see fit. More people choose their own rulers, and have freedom of expression. They are more likely to live under rule of law, and less likely to be arbitrarily deprived of life, limb, and property. Social and professional mobility have also never been greater. It’s easier than ever for people across the world to transcend the bonds of caste, place, gender, and other accidents of birth. People today work fewer hours and have more money and better health to enjoy their leisure time than their ancestors. Man’s environmental record is more complex. The early stages of development can indeed cause some environmental deterioration as societies pursue first-order problems affecting human well-being. These include hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, and lack of education, basic public health services, safe water, sanitation, mobility, and ready sources of energy. Because greater wealth alleviates these problems while providing basic creature comforts, individuals and societies initially focus on economic development, often neglecting other aspects of environmental quality. In time, however, they recognize that environmental deterioration reduces their quality of life. Accordingly, they put more of their recently acquired wealth and human capital into developing and implementing cleaner technologies. This brings about an environmental transition via the twin forces of economic development and technological progress, which begin to provide solutions to environmental problems instead of creating those problems. All of which is why we today find that the richest countries are also the cleanest. And while many developing countries have yet to get past the “green ceiling,” they are nevertheless ahead of where today’s developed countries used to be when they were equally wealthy. The point of transition from "industrial period" to "environmental conscious" continues to fall. For example, the US introduced unleaded gasoline only after its GDP per capita exceeded $16,000. India and China did the same before they reached $3,000 per capita. This progress is a testament to the power of globalization and the transfer of ideas and knowledge (that lead is harmful, for example). It's also testament to the importance of trade in transferring technology from developed to developing countries—in this case, the technology needed to remove lead from gasoline. This hints at the answer to the question of why some parts of the world have been left behind while the rest of the world has thrived. Why have improvements in well-being stalled in areas such as Sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world? The proximate cause of improvements in well-being is a “cycle of progress” composed of the mutually reinforcing forces of economic development and technological progress. But that cycle itself is propelled by a web of essential institutions, particularly property rights, free markets, and rule of law. Other important institutions would include science- and technology-based problem-solving founded on skepticism and experimentation; receptiveness to new technologies and ideas; and freer trade in goods, services—most importantly in knowledge and ideas. In short, free and open societies prosper. Isolation, intolerance, and hostility to the free exchange of knowledge, technology, people, and goods breed stagnation or regression.

#### Economic modeling is good – it creates understanding about systemic patterns of behavior – their claims of oversimplification misunderstand the function of modeling and make systemic analysis impossible

Harford 5

(Tim, Tim was the first Peter Martin Fellow at the Financial Times, and was a member of the Financial Times editorial board from 2006-2009, He previously worked for Shell and for the World Bank, member of the Royal Economic Society council and a visiting fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford, The Undercover Economist, pgs. 11-12)

But many of us love the fact that Ricardo was able, nearly two hundred years ago, to produce insights that illuminate our understanding today. It’s easy to see the difference between nineteenth-century farming and twenty-first-century frothing, but not so easy to see the similarity before it is pointed out to us. Economics is partly about modeling, about articulating basic principles and patterns that operate behind seemingly complex subjects like the rent on farms or coffee bars. There are other models of the coffee business, useful for different things. A model of the design and architecture of coffee bars could be useful as a case study for interior designers. A physics model could outline the salient features of the machine that generates the ten atmospheres of pressure required to brew espresso; the same model might be useful for talking about suction pumps or the internal combustion engine. Today we have models of the ecological impacts of different disposal methods for coffee grounds. Each model is useful for different things, but a “model” that tried to describe the design, the engineering, the ecology, and the economics would be no simpler than reality itself and so would add nothing to our understanding. Ricardo’s model is useful for discussing the relationship between scarcity and bargaining strength, which goes far beyond coffee or farming and ultimately explains much of the world around us. When economists see the world, they see hidden social patterns, patterns that become evident only when one focuses on the essential underlying processes. This focus leads critics to say that economics doesn’t consider the whole story, the whole “system.” How else, though, could a nineteenth-century analysis of farming proclaim the truth about twenty-first-century coffee bars, except through grossly failing to notice all kinds of important differences? The truth is that it’s simply not possible to understand anything complicated without focusing on certain elements to reduce that complexity. Economists have certain things they like to focus on, and scarcity is one of them. This focus means that we do not notice the mechanics of the espresso machine, nor the color schemes of the coffee bars, nor other interesting, important facts. But we gain from that focus, too, and one of the things we gain is an understanding of the “system”—the economic system, which is far more all-encompassing than many people realize.