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Negativity Bad – Ontology – 2AC

Negativity prevents us from truly knowing our own being and resists our very manifestation

Schwab 2k (Gabriele, Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Director of the Critical Theory Institute @ UC Irvine, *New Literary History* 31.1, 73-89, Muse)JFS

For Iser, the need for fiction is intimately tied to its generation of a productive negativity that must be retained at all costs, both in writing and in reading literature. Such commitment to negativity, however, creates a certain predicament--one Samuel Beckett voiced most succinctly in The Unnamable: "If only I were not obliged to manifest." 3 This "resistance to manifestion" marks a distinct cultural sensibility typical of the historical moment in which Iser develops his theories. Derived from a profound philosophical and epistemological skepticism, the pervasive suspicion against manifestation requires Iser to search for a radically new form of thinking and writing--a search in which Beckett becomes the most inspiring source. Beckett serves as a model for Iser's new aesthetics of negativity, which is designed to forgo the pitfalls of concrete manifestation, and ultimately to undermine any form of determinacy. Iser's own "resistance to manifestation" emerges in recursive loops that consistently qualify his statements, marking the epistemological premises and basic political stance of his work, as well as its emotional energy or underlying mood. This mood is neatly summed up in Iser's anthropological claim that "determinacy . . . makes us feel disappointed." Or, as he states in The Act of Reading: "What the language says [End Page 74] is transcended by what it uncovers, and what it uncovers represents its true meaning" (AR 142). Determinacy exerts a double constraint in the production of meaning, both from the side of the referent and that of the signifier. Accordingly, meaning in Iser's aesthetics of negativity is both antireferential and highly mobile, sensitive to context and open to change. Indeterminacy, then, assumes the status of the most basic and productive aesthetic category. 4 In a similar vein, The Fictive and the Imaginary features "staging" as an anthropological mode that introduces indeterminacy by bringing "to light what is excluded from knowledge and experience." 5 We can easily see that this "aesthetics of double meaning" favors what is not said over what is said. In a "space between" that requires readers to develop the "negative capability" of reading between the lines, the "unformulated" gains prominence over the formulated. Aesthetic experience engages in a productive negativity, performing readings as an act of creation rather than reception. It is the silence in a literary work--the unsaid--that functions as an "enabling blank," a productive textual energy that, in turn, becomes the determining force in the constitution of meaning. Silence, for Iser, also precludes that the text assumes absolute authority. Instead of engaging in a power game, the rules of which are negotiated between textual authority and interpretive community, Iser's "implied reader" engages in a play of resonance and difference. Within this framework, fictionality and negativity emerge as the two fundamental anthropological modes which human beings of all times have used to refashion their world. Iser sees such refashioning itself as an anthropological need, arising from an excentric position that places on human beings the burden of being cognizant of their own mortality, but prevents them from ever fully knowing themselves.

Loss of identity kills value to life and guarantees wars

Norman 9 (Emma R. Norman, University of the Americas Puebla, Mexico Department of International Relations and Political Science, September 4th 2009, Applying Carl Schmitt to Global Puzzles: Identity, Conflict and the Friend/Enemy Antithesis, p28-9)JFS

But Schmitt’s tacit assumption here is even more radical. The friend-enemy distinction is the most fundamental of human antitheses for Schmitt precisely because he felt that the threat of losing one’s identity is the strongest (if not the only) motivation for a human being to choose to die for their beliefs. This sounds inconsistent and highly contestable at first: dying, of course, ends one’s identity—unless one’s particular beliefs indicate otherwise. Yet there is a difference between losing it and ending it. The idea starts to make more sense when we consider that the threat of remaining alive and yet being forced to subsume one’s identity under that of another group in times of conflict has been a perennial motive for dying for one’s “country,” nation, religious or ideological views, cultural values whether one is a professional or conscripted soldier, insurgent, suicide-bomber, or civilian. From Yugoslavia to Rwanda, this has been the underlying force in the fragmentation and collapse of these states amidst waves of inter-ethnic violence. The basic point to tease out of Schmitt here is that “country,” nation, religion, cultural values are secondary tokens of what he saw as their underlying raison d’être: identity.

Negativity Bad – Ontology – Impact

Self-knowledge is critical to free agency

SEP 8 (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/self-knowledge/#3.4)JFS

The role of self-understanding in agency is a complex topic, and we can only briefly examine some leading positions on the issue here. Knowledge of one's relatively stable traits and dispositions—one's character—is believed, by some, to be crucial for the exercise of free agency. For instance, Taylor claims that self-reflection is imperative for being human (where this means, in part, being capable of agency), [T]he human animal not only finds himself impelled from time to time to interpret himself and his goals, but … he is always already in some interpretation, constituted as human by this fact. (Taylor 1985, 75) In a somewhat different vein, Frankfurt maintains that the capacity to rationally evaluate one's desires is required for freedom of the will. This rational evaluation issues in second-order desires, that is, desires concerning which desires to have or to act upon. [N]o animal other than man … appears to have the capacity for reflective self-evaluation that is manifested in the formation of second-order desires. (Frankfurt 1971, 7) It is only because a person has volitions of the second order that he is capable both of enjoying and of lacking freedom of the will. (ibid.,14) These claims by Taylor and Frankfurt go beyond the merely pragmatic observation that a reasonable degree of self-understanding is required for effective action. Instead, they assert that what is distinctive about the exercise of a free will, in determining one's course of action, is that this exercise involves the capacity to critically reflect on one's basic goals and desires. (For a related recent view, see Bilgrami 2006.) While Taylor, Frankfurt, and Bilgrami stress that a broad self-understanding is crucial for responsible agency, others claim that particular actions require some awareness of one's intentions in performing that action. For instance, Searle (1983) argues that intentions are always self-referential, in that when one performs an action X intentionally, the relevant intention to act includes an intention to X so as to fulfill that intention itself. Anscombe (1981) similarly emphasizes the significance of one's awareness of intentions in acting. In fact, on her view thoughts about actions, intentions, postures, etc. have a special status: it is only thoughts about such aspects of the self that are “unmediated, non-observational, and also are descriptions (e.g., ‘standing’) which are directly verifiable or falsifiable about the person” (Anscombe 1981, 35). And she also believes that action requires some awareness of these features of oneself. For criticism of the idea that action requires awareness of intention, see Cunning (1999). One contemporary theory of practical reasoning, offered by Velleman (1989), casts knowledge of the self in a particularly important role. Velleman notes that we strongly desire to understand ourselves and, in particular, to understand our reasons for acting. On his view, this desire leads us to try to discern our action-motivating desires and beliefs. (He calls this attempt to gain self-awareness “reflective theoretical reasoning”.) But strikingly, Velleman thinks that the desire for self-understanding also leads us to model our actions on our predictions about how we will act. In this way, our expectations as to how we will act are themselves intentions to act. “Intentions to act … are the expectations of acting that issue from reflective theoretical reasoning” (Velleman 1989, 98). Thus, Velleman can say that our desire to understand what we are doing, at the moment we are doing it, is usually satisfied, since our predictions about how we will act are themselves intentions to act, and hence our beliefs about what we will do are “self-fulfilling expectations”.

Negativity Bad – Ontology – Impact

Agency is the foremost impact – key to rights

Lang 99 (Anthony Jr., The American University in Cairo, European Journal of IR, Vol. 5 (1): 67-107, p. 77-79)JFS

This article proposes that the attribution of state responsibility undermines the agency of individual citizens. This consequence is morally important because agency is the basis of first generation human rights, or political and civil rights. Without agency, individuals will be subjects and not citizens, that is, they will become pliant adherents to the will of the government and not political actors interested in and able to affect the future of their political community. Certainly, other factors will contribute to the undermining of' first generation human rights, ones that have no relation to the attribution of state responsibility, or even a relation to foreign policy. But, as this article will argue, the attribution of state responsibility contributes toward the undermining of those rights in a number of ways. What is agency, and why is it so important for civil life? The concept of agency has been a part of' sociology since Max Weber's analyses of it (Weber, 1964: 87‑157). In the past 15 years, it has found its way into the discipline of International Relations as well, specifically through the works of Alexander Wendt (Wendt, 1987) who has generally followed the debates in sociology that focus on agency and structure. The debate in International Relations parallels that between Weber from Marx ‑ are individual, goal seeking persons or social and political structures more important in understanding human interaction? In International Relations, the question has been posed as ‑‑ are individual, goal seeking states or the structure of the international system more important in understanding the outcomes of international political interaction? While drastically simplified, this question captures the debate in the social sciences, including International Relations, concerning the question of agency. The notions of agency that underlie the arguments of' this article, however, are drawn more from political philosophy than from the sociological literature. More specifically, my notion of' agency draws on three political philosophers. Hannah Arendt has argued that action defines the human person in the political realm, that without the ability to remake the web of social and political relations that action provides there can be no separate sphere defined as the political(Arendt, 1958). Charles Taylor has also placed agency at the center of his attempts to understand the political. He has argued persuasively that human agency is primarily the ability to interpret the self's actions in a meaningful way, i.e. a self‑ interpretation that cannot be reduced to mere biological desire (Taylor, 1985). Richard Flathman's analyses of liberalism rely on a form of agency in his argument that liberalism requires individuals who are able to resist the encroachments of normalization and institutionalization as they assert themselves through their actions, words and thoughts (Flathman, 1992). Following these three thinkers, I assume the following meaning for agency ‑‑ agency is the ability to act and speak publicly with meaningful intentions in such a way as to have an effect on the world. It requires the ability to interpret those actions in ways that may not always be communicable at first, but do presume some sense of shared meaning (Taylor, 1985: 25).18 Furthermore, following Arendt, the ability to act is central to the creation of the political sphere. Without action, politics could not take place, for it is through actions that communities are constituted. Finally following Flathman, strong notions of agency are necessary for liberal and democratic citizenship. Unless individuals can think and act qua individuals, they will be unable to create a political community in which their rights are protected. Agency is a necessary,although not sufficient, condition for creation of a community that respects civil and political rights. While this definition cannot be considered final, the elements of meaningfulness, publicness and willfulness are all central to the understanding of agency I am using here. How does the attribution of state responsibility undermine individual agency? Because the attribution of state responsibility does not depend on the responsibility of individuals within the state, there is a prima facie sense in which individual agency is irrelevant to considerations of international responsibility. While being irrelevant does not cause something to disappear, it certainly does not help in making that thing an important consideration. But even more importantly, certain manifestations of state responsibility tend to undermine individual responsibility and agency. This article focuses on three aspects of agency ‑‑ physical, legal and political. Each one of these aspects of agency is necessary to be an active citizen as opposed to simply a pliant subject of a community. Physical agency means having a level of health and welfare that would allow one to pursue political activity. Legal agency means having the legal status as a citizen necessary to protect one's civil rights. Political agency, perhaps the most difficult to identify, is the set of political beliefs and ideas that prompt an individual to act on behalf of his or her own interests in the public sphere. Again, Arendt's work on political action captures the idea suggested here ‑‑ the idea that political action is not just an addition to our daily lives, but something ‑which distinguishes us from animals and which is necessary for our happiness. To inculcate the idea that political action is a value in and of itself is a necessary step in the direction of a true democracy (Arendt, 1958)

Negativity Bad – Ontology – Impact

Knowledge of self is critical for shaping of identity and value to life

SEP 8 (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/self-knowledge/#3.1)JFS

In self-attributing a mental state, I recognize the state as mine in some sense, and my self-attribution partially consists in a reference to myself. This reference is reflexive, in that I think of myself as myself and not, e.g., as BG, or as the shortest person in the room. Nozick (1981) underscores the significance of being able to thus refer to oneself: “To be an I, a self, is to have the capacity for reflexive self-reference.” This raises the question: how is it that I identify myself, and distinguish myself from others? Consider: seeing a flushed red face on film, I might wonder whether the face I see is mine or my identical twin's, and therefore I may say, “someone is embarrassed, but is it me?” Evans (1982) argues that for some kinds of self-attributions, such a question will not arise. Adopting the term from Shoemaker (1968) mentioned above (2.4), he describes self-attributions of the relevant type as “immune to error through misidentification.” None of the following utterances appears to make sense when the first component expresses knowledge gained in the appropriate way: “Someone's legs are crossed, but is it my legs that are crossed?”; “Someone is hot and sticky, but is it I who am hot and sticky?”; “Someone is being pushed, but is it I who am being pushed?” (Evans 1982, 220–1) Evans believes that my immunity to error through misidentification, in such cases, shows that I identify myself directly in these cases. If in identifying myself as the one who is hot and sticky, I used some information beyond the information involved in determining that someone is hot and sticky, then I could possibly be justified in believing that someone was hot and sticky but mistaken in thinking that it was me. Because that scenario doesn't “make sense”, he thinks, I must recognize myself directly, without any identifying information. Others deny that self-identification is direct, claiming instead that it occurs by way of some sort of description. For instance, Rovane argues that, in self-reference, the way one thinks of oneself can be analyzed as “the series of psychologically related intentional episodes to which this one [the current intentional episode] belongs” (Rovane 1993, 86). While Rovane sees intentional states as the anchor to self-reference, Howell (2006) provides an alternative descriptive picture, in which the self is identified through awareness of an occurrent sensation. Proponents of descriptive accounts claim that such accounts can accommodate the fact that we don't actually err about who it is that is hot and sticky. For instance, Rovane claims that it is unsurprising that we are reliable self-identifiers, given that understanding ourselves and our place in the world is required for genuine agency. (We return to the issue of agency in 3.4 below.) Still, there is an important epistemic disagreement between those, like Evans, who claim that self-reference is “identification-free”, and those who claim that we refer to ourselves via a description. The former maintain that there is, in a real sense, no room for error about who is hot and sticky, whereas the latter will say that while such errors are possible, we simply avoid them. Notably, both “direct reference” and descriptive accounts capture the reflexivity of first-person reference. (For descriptive accounts, this reflexivity lies in the fact that ‘this one’ refers to the very thought of which it is a part.) They thereby fit with the widely accepted belief that self-reference in the distinctively first-person mode is essentially indexical. (See Castañeda 1966, Perry 1979, Lewis 1979.) The dispute between Evans and Rovane is then, in part, a disagreement as to whether the indexical term ‘I’ refers to the self directly, as Evans believes, or instead refers via an implicit indexical of another sort, e.g. ‘this’ or ‘here’. In general, one's epistemology of self-identification will depend on what sort of indexical one considers most fundamental, in self-reference.

Negativity Bad – Atrocities

A philosophy of negativity is an endorsement of atrocity – root cause of Holocaust

Schwab 2k (Gabriele, Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Director of the Critical Theory Institute @ UC Irvine, *New Literary History* 31.1, 73-89, Muse)JFS

This quotation constitutes one of the rare occasions upon which Iser alludes to the historical time and place in which he conceived his theories. The resistance against manifestation materializes as a desire to resist ideology and ideological discourse. Iser began to formulate his theories, which, in turn, enfold a distinct philosophy of life, in the shadow of World War II and the Holocaust in postwar Germany. Many scholars and intellectuals at the time avoided facing this history in their writings, yet their silence resonates for generations to come. This silence cannot be fully accounted for by the sheer incomprehensibility and unspeakability of the Holocaust. Theories that posit the Shoah as "the unspeakable"--even though undoubtedly right in a radical sense--inevitably face the dilemma that silence is always haunted by the specter of "silencing" and therefore remains highly ambiguous, if not complicitous, as a political stance. Guilt and shame, or what Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich diagnosed as an "incapacity of mourning" resulting from overwhelming collective guilt, cannot account for the existential and cultural ramifications of this silence either. The German silence after the Holocaust inevitably marks any subsequent production of knowledge, and therefore also bears and weighs on Iser's aesthetics of negativity and its resistance to manifestation. Many scholars and intellectuals after the war took refuge in rejecting politics and political involvement altogether. This reaction describes a pervasive [End Page 84] mood in postwar Germany, a mood born of the desire for a sanctuary from the real and harboring the illusion that one was able to transcend politics and ideologies of whatever coloration. The generation born after the war could no longer share this desire to stay clear and clean of politics, nor could they share the belief in an apolitical "blank space" free of ideology. Yet, there is another silence, resulting from the translation of political into radical epistemological skepticism, which deeply marked major theoretical movements in the postwar intellectual climate in and beyond Germany. It is this epistemological skepticism that the postwar generation needs to acknowledge, assess, and address as a cultural legacy that cannot simply be ignored. I see such diverse theorists, philosophers, and writers as Beckett, Adorno, Iser, and Derrida sharing this profound epistemological skepticism--albeit with very different stakes and goals. Speaking through indirection and/or radical self-reflexivity, the "silence" that inhabits this radical epistemological skepticism borders on paradox in its attempt relentlessly to face the epistemological and moral traps of speech and manifestation. It is in this historical and philosophical context that I perceive silence in Iser's work. I am tempted to argue that the very forms Iser's writing and theories assume over time, and the very moves he reiterates time and again, betray a confrontation with World War II, albeit one marked by a deliberate, sometimes desperate, practice of indirection. As we learn from Beckett--who had worked in the French resistance and was to become the deepest inspiration for Iser's work--there are many forms of silence. Iser's writings resonate with a Beckettian silence--a silence born of the fear of committing to something confining, something whose consequences can never be known entirely, something that can be appropriated to different or, as Iser would say, ideological ends. I see Iser's silence as an intellectual version of this far more general disposition and mood of the time. Translated into a philosophy of negativity, it even shuns any explicit connection to the very historical context that tacitly marks it.

Negativity Bad – Atrocities

Their negative response to historical atrocities ensures that they happen again

Eckmann 7 (Monique, prof of sociology, social policy and social psychology @ U of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland in Geneva, Stifftung, http://www.stiftung-evz.de/w/files/publikationen/evz\_publ\_mrb\_166-191.pdf)JFS

The issue of “education after Auschwitz” necessarily recalls Theodor Adorno’s imperative in the wake of the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt from 1963 to 1965. Adorno directed his argument that the “premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again” against the tendency to repress the reality of the past.17 In the decades that followed, this imperative became one of the central themes of memorial education and work. Adorno’s demand and the educational concepts derived from it were formulated under the specific historical conditions of the 1960s, which focused on the issue of Germany as a “society of perpetrators” and descendants of those perpetrators. Today, that imperative must be reformulated in light of decades of social and demo- graphic change that have produced a multinational, multiethnic and multicultural community. This debate is particularly difficult and compelling because of the central importance of the memory of Na- tional Socialism and the Holocaust to Germany’s self-conception and politics. In contrast to other topics in historical education, the profound normative judgments connected to Germany’s past are not negotiable, despite the changes in Germany’s societal makeup. The programmatic duty of memory to which all Germans are more or less obligated, which is the result of a long process of confrontation with Germany’s national memory, and the underlying the concept of a German community of memory and responsibility, almost nec- essarily conflicts with the pedagogical imperatives of an immigrant society, which many commentators argue must also be incorporated into the project of memory work. Different positions in this debate have generated a wide range of responses to this issue.

Negativity Bad – Atrocities

Their negative stance is at opposition with action – that's key to prevent atrocities and turns the impact to the K

Ketels 96 [Violet. Prof of English @ Temple. “Havel to the Castle!” The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol 548, No 1. Nov 1996]JFS

Intellectuals can choose their roles, but cannot not choose, nor can we evade the full weight of the consequences attendant on our choices. "It is always the intellectuals, however we may shrink from the chilling sound of that word ... who must bear the full weight of moral responsibility."55 Humanist intellectuals can aspire to be judged by more specifically ex-acting criteria: as those whose work is worthwhile because it has human uses; survives the test of reality; corresponds to history; represses rationalizing in favor of fact; challenges the veracity of rulers; refuses the safety of abstraction; recognizes words as forms of action, as likely to be lethal as to be liberating; scruples to heal the rupture between words and things, between things and ideas; re-mains incorruptibly opposed to the service of ideological ends pursued by unnecessary violence or inhumane means; and, finally, takes risks for the sake of true witness to events, to the truth even of unpopular ideas or to the lies in popular ones. Above all, intellectuals can resist the dreary relativism that neutralizes good and evil as if in defense of the theoretical pseudo-notion that distinguishing between them is not possible. The hour is too late, the situation too grave for such pettifoggery. Bearing witness is not enough, but it is something. At the dedication of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum inWashington, D.C., Elie Wiesel spoke. "We must bear witness," he said. "What have we learned? ... We are all responsible. We must do some-thing to stop the bloodshed in Yugoslavia." He told a story of a woman from the Carpathian Mountains who asked of the Warsaw Uprising, "Why don't they just wait quietly until after the war?" In one year she was packed into a cattle car with her whole family on the way to Auschwitz. "That woman was my mother," Wiesel said. Viclav Havel, the humanist intellectual from Bohemia, spoke too: of the Holocaust as a memory of democratic appeasement, live memory of indifference to the danger of Hitler's coming to power, of indifference to the Munich betrayal of Prague. "Our Jews went to concentration camps. . . . Later we lost our freedom." We have lost our metaphysical certainties, our sense of responsibility for what comes in the future. For we are all responsible, humanly responsible for what happens in the world. Do we have the right to interfere in internal conflict? Not just the right but the duty. Remember the Holocaust. To avoid war, we watched-silently and, so, complicitly, unleashing darker, deadlier demons. What should we have done about Yugoslavia? Something. Much earlier. We must vigilantly listen for the early warning signs of threats to freedoms and lives everywhere. We must keep the clamorous opposition to oppression and violence around the world incessant and loud. Cry out! Cry havoc! Call murderers murderers. Do not avoid violence when avoidance begets more violence. There are some things worth dying for. Do not legitimize the bloodletting in Bosnia or anywhere by negotiating with the criminals who plotted the carnage. Do not join the temporizers. Take stands publicly: in words; in universities and boardrooms; in other corridors of power; and at local polling places. Take stands prefer-ably in written words, which have a longer shelf life, are likelier to stimu-late debate, and may have a lasting effect on the consciousnesses of some among us.

Negativity Bad – Atrocities

**We access extinction – human survival is dependent on responses to catastrophe**

Ketels 96 [Violet. Prof of English @ Temple. “Havel to the Castle!” The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol 548, No 1. Nov 1996]JFS

Characteristically, Havel raises lo-cal experience to universal relevance. "If today's planetary civilization has any hope of survival," he begins, "that hope lies chiefly in what we understand as the human spirit." He continues: If we don't wish to destroy ourselves in national, religious or political discord; if we don't wish to find our world with twice its current population, half of it dying of hunger; if we don't wish to kill ourselves with ballistic missiles armed with atomic warheads or eliminate ourselves with bacteria specially cultivated for the purpose; if we don't wish to see some people go desperately hungry while others throw tons of wheat into the ocean; if we don't wish to suffocate in the global greenhouse we are heating up for ourselves or to be burned by radiation leaking through holes we have made in the ozone; if we don't wish to exhaust the nonrenewable, mineral resources of this planet, without which we cannot survive; if, in short, we don't wish any of this to happen, then we must-as humanity, as people, as conscious beings with spirit, mind and a sense of responsibility-somehow come to our senses. Somehow we must come together in "a kind of general mobilization of human consciousness, of the human mind and spirit, human responsibility, human reason." The Prague Spring was "the inevitable consequence of a long drama originally played out chiefly in the theatre of the spirit and the con-science of society," a process triggered and sustained "by individuals willing to live in truth even when things were at their worst." The process was hidden in "the invisible realm of social consciousness," conscience, and the subconscious. It was indirect, long-term, and hard to measure. So, too, its continuation that exploded into the Velvet Revolution, the magic moment when 800,000 citizens, jamming Wenceslas Square in Prague, jingled their house keys like church bells and changed from shouting 'Truth will prevail to chanting" Havel to the castle."

Negativity Bad – Cede the Political

Negation guts agency – it is impossible for negativity to have political applications

Pourciau 5 (Sarah, PhD from Princeton, Modern Language Notes (MLN), 120.5, Published by Johns Hopkins University, 1066-1090, Muse)JFS

The soldier's decision can provide a (metaphorical) model of the embodied negation Schmitt conceptualizes in the name of politics, but it can not do more than that, for the two kinds of decision have ultimately little more in common than a striking analogy of structure, and the representative ideal of incarnated meaning cannot be derived from the static encounter of analogy, where terms remain distinct in spite of the likeness that binds them. The structural similarity of individual death and political negation, thus exploited, serves only to reinforce the very schism—between concrete and political reality, between the plurality of selves and the political self—that the concept of death was intended to obscure. An individual's capacity for giving form to his own life by acknowledging the "real possibility" ["reale Möglichkeit"] of its negation, relates him analogically to a political entity that can be likewise negatively defined; it does not, however, increase his chances of finding himself represented within the political realm. Indeed, as long as his relation to the political entity can be defined solely by his capacity to die concretely in its stead, political existence becomes merely one more instance of the liberal bifurcation. By relinquishing the power to decide on anything beyond his own death, the individual contributes to the formation of a public, collective "body" that corresponds neatly to the decisive capacities of the sovereign "mind," thereby quite clearly reproducing the total transfer of agency and economy of substitution that Schmitt claims so categorically to avoid. Like the liberal theory he critiques, Schmitt's politics of acknowledgement ultimately rests on the duplicity of denial, for it is in his failure to *acknowledge* the possibility of a gap between those who decide and those who die, that he loses his war with the liberal binaries.

Even if negativity can have political possibilities, they are diluted to the point of being useless

Pourciau 5 (Sarah, PhD from Princeton, Modern Language Notes (MLN), 120.5, Published by Johns Hopkins University, 1066-1090, Muse)JFS

Schmitt's alternative notion of meaning draws both its strength and its content from his vehement rejection of the conceptual ground underlying the traditional understanding of meaning. The traditional philosophical approach to the practice of definition originates with the Aristotelian method of delimiting the categories, where, in a hierarchical system based on increasing levels of generality, each new category distinguishes itself from the previous, more general category, or genre, through an attribute known as the specific difference. Any single category can thus be defined with perfect accuracy as long as both its genre and its specific difference are known. To take a famous and particularly relevant example: Aristotle defines the category "man" with the phrase "living being that speaks" (zôon logon echon), where "living being" names a genre and "speaking" a specific difference. From the perspective of the Aristotelian worldview, this definition of definition is unimpeachable, and it remained the standard point of reference for definitional projects of all kinds until well into the twentieth century. Schmitt finds fault not with the definitional structure per se, but with the underlying worldview, which presupposes a bird's eye, cartographic notion of "world," and an experience carved into categories with fixed and knowable relationships—a worldview, therefore, that does not conform to the realities of human rootedness, and neglects to acknowledge the necessarily fictional nature of the objective standpoint. Against the Aristotelian method, Schmitt maintains the two notions of common space (genre) and differentiating moment (specific difference), but reverses their order of precedence, so that, in place of an initially undifferentiated universe parceled into ever-smaller territories by the negative power of difference, he offers a confrontational event, which first makes thinkable the notion of relational, divisible space. Negation precedes identity as the precondition for all substance, and familial similarity becomes the consequence of the oppositional relation with an external other. This prioritization of negation over an objectively available and compartmentalizable world transforms [End Page 1074] the specific difference from the unchanging, logically necessary attribute of an existing substance (as "speaking" is an attribute of man) to the temporal manifestation of negative force, with the power to generate substance where there was previously none. Negation in the form most relevant to the realm of real, human experience eschews the abstract, ahistorical stasis of differential attributes and logical opposition in favor of a head-on confrontation between two opposing vectors, in which all definitional consequences must be experienced in order to be accurately observed. From Schmitt's perspective, then, the liberal view of negation as logical opposition abstracts from the temporally-grounded potency of negation as force to produce a weak, diluted notion of the definitional power intrinsic to political conflict. Inadequate, however, as liberal theory may be to account for the realities of political action, its perversion of the political nonetheless wields a political power massive enough to generate Schmitt's impassioned polemic, which aggressively combats the two manifestations of the perspective that have the most radical consequences for the political sphere.

Negativity Bad – Doesn’t Solve

Pure negation of the existing order is fruitless – must propose solutions

Martin 70 (James J., Men Against The State, p. iv)JFS [we do not endorse gendered language]

Mere dissatisfaction with or opposition to the existing order anywhere is gravely insufficient to serve as evidence of anarchist sentiments. Nor is a program of pure negation or obstructionism more than faintly related; anarchists are not advocates of replacing something with nothing. An example of resumption is the widespread interchangeable use of the terms "nihilism" and "anarchism." Actually, the anarchist proposes specific solutions for social problems. His occasional tendency to mask them by encouraging the greater disintegration and decay of the older order may lead to identifying him with an element which desires plan-less, cumulative revolutionary disorder. But the anarchist and those enamored with perpetual revolutionary dynamism part company long before this.

Offense – pure negation ensures that hegemonic structures gain power

Martin 70 (James J., Men Against The State, p. 155)JFS [we do not endorse gendered language]

Andrews indicated from the nature of a number of criticisms a knowledge of some current allied activities and influences. The Garrisonian school of "no-government men" drew some expression of sympathy, although he considered their brand of "unterrified Democracy" theoretically consistent but practically illogical. Without economic reform in their desired social organization, degrading conditions would return and require violations of individual personal dignity once more. Reform was not synonymous with pure negation; if government was the source of societally disruption, it was necessary to introduce positive principles which would become the foundation of a stable society, otherwise, if temporarily replaced, government in the undesirable sense would soon return.

Relativism Bad – Atrocities

Epistemic relativism ensures disasters

Sokal 96 (Professor of Physics at New York University, 1996 (“A Physicist Experiments With Cultural Studies”

http://www.physics.nyu.edu/faculty/sokal/lingua\_franca\_v4/lingua\_franca\_v4.html)JFS

Why did I do it? While my method was satirical, my motivation is utterly serious. What concerns me is the proliferation, not just of nonsense and sloppy thinking per se, but of a particular kind of nonsense and sloppy thinking: one that denies the existence of objective realities, or (when challenged) admits their existence but downplays their practical relevance. At its best, a journal like Social Text raises important questions that no scientist should ignore -- questions, for example, about how corporate and government funding influence scientific work. Unfortunately, epistemic relativism does little to further the discussion of these matters. In short, my concern over the spread of subjectivist thinking is both intellectual and political. Intellectually, the problem with such doctrines is that they are false (when not simply meaningless). There is a real world; its properties are not merely social constructions; facts and evidence do matter. What sane person would contend otherwise? And yet, much contemporary academic theorizing consists precisely of attempts to blur these obvious truths -- the utter absurdity of it all being concealed through obscure and pretentious language. Social Text's acceptance of my article exemplifies the intellectual arrogance of Theory -- meaning postmodernist literary theory -- carried to its logical extreme. No wonder they didn't bother to consult a physicist. If all is discourse and ``text,'' then knowledge of the real world is superfluous; even physics becomes just another branch of Cultural Studies. If, moreover, all is rhetoric and ``language games,'' then internal logical consistency is superfluous too: a patina of theoretical sophistication serves equally well. Incomprehensibility becomes a virtue; allusions, metaphors and puns substitute for evidence and logic. My own article is, if anything, an extremely modest example of this well-established genre. Politically, I'm angered because most (though not all) of this silliness is emanating from the self-proclaimed Left. We're witnessing here a profound historical volte-face. For most of the past two centuries, the Left has been identified with science and against obscurantism; we have believed that rational thought and the fearless analysis of objective reality (both natural and social) are incisive tools for combating the mystifications promoted by the powerful -- not to mention being desirable human ends in their own right. The recent turn of many ``progressive'' or ``leftist'' academic humanists and social scientists toward one or another form of epistemic relativism betrays this worthy heritage and undermines the already fragile prospects for progressive social critique. Theorizing about ``the social construction of reality'' won't help us find an effective treatment for AIDS or devise strategies for preventing global warming. Nor can we combat false ideas in history, sociology, economics and politics if we reject the notions of truth and falsity.